

CONFERENCE

Report 2025



ILGA Asia x
Blue Diamond Society



ILGA Asia
Conference
2025

Diversity Dynamics:
Unifying for a Just, Inclusive,
and Sustainable Asia





CONFERENCE

Report 2025



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Glossary



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Abbreviation

Full Form

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APCOM	Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health
BDS	Blue Diamond Society
EA Alliance	East Asia Alliance for Anti-Discrimination
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (of the United Nations)
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GPP	Global Philanthropy Project
GRR	Global Resources Report
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IE SOGI	Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
ILGA	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
INEGI	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Mexico)
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
LBQ	Lesbian Bisexual and Queer
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender. Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics
SPTOC	Strategic Plan and Theory of Change
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
YIFoS	Youth Interfaith Forum on Sexuality

Foreword

February 24-28, 2025

Kathmandu, Nepal

Diversity Dynamics:
Unifying for a Just, Inclusive,
and Sustainable Asia

Dear our beloved ILGA Asia Community,

On behalf of the Executive Board of ILGA Asia, we proudly present to you the proceedings of the 10th ILGA Asia Regional Conference held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 24 to 28 February 2026. Under the theme “Diversity Dynamics: Unifying for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Asia”, leaders, activists, community members, human right defenders and allies from all over Asia gathered to share, connect, reflect, learn from each other and together forge a way forward. The 10th ILGA Asia Regional Conference marked our biggest gathering yet with 604 participants from 49 countries — a celebration of our diversity and growing strength in the face of hardship and rising challenges affecting our community in Asia and worldwide.

This conference has served not merely as a forum for the exchange of ideas, but as a profound testament to the resilience, dedication, and collaborative spirit of our

community. As we reflected on the remarkable journey that has brought us to this point, we thought of the rigorous deliberation, meaningful engagement, collective wisdom, generosity and unwavering commitment in the face of adversity that stand as a powerful reminder of what is possible when we come together.

We extend our profound gratitude to our host, the Blue Diamond Society, the Government of Nepal, and our generous donors, whose invaluable support was instrumental in ensuring the success of this conference. We also wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to the organizing committee, volunteers, speakers, facilitators, and all participants who dedicated their time, energy, and expertise to create a vibrant and impactful space for learning, dialogue, and connection.

As we look ahead, the insights and connections forged during this conference will serve as guiding forces in our continued efforts to build a just, inclusive, and sustainable Asia. Let us move forward with strengthened resolve—honouring the legacy of those who have paved the way, and drawing inspiration from the courage and passion of all who journey with us.

Thank you, and see you at our 11th ILGA Asia Regional Conference in Manila, the Philippines!

With gratitude,

Phong Vuong & Aisha Mughal
Co-chairs, ILGA Asia Executive Board

Keynote Address

HENRY KOH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ILGA ASIA

Diversity Dynamics: Unifying for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Asia

Namaste, Salam sejahtera, and 大家早上好。
Honourable Minister Nawal Kishor Sah Sudi,
distinguished diplomats, UN IE Graeme Reid,
esteemed activists, allies,
and — above all — my beloved queer family.

Welcome to the 10th ILGA Asia Regional Conference.
Welcome to Nepal.

First, I want to extend our deepest gratitude to Blue Diamond Society, our local host organisation, our executive board, members, staff, and all partners at ILGA Asia for their tireless work in making this conference a reality. To the government and people of Nepal, thank you for graciously welcoming us to your country — a nation that has been a testament to diversity and progress in this region. Nepal holds a special place in our movement's history. From its constitutional recognition of gender minorities to its trailblazing court rulings affirming the rights of LGBTIQ people, Nepal has shown that change is not only possible — it is inevitable.

And today, in this breathtaking city cradled by the Himalayas, we are reminded that mountains are not just landscapes. They are symbols — of endurance, of struggle, of standing tall against time and tide. And isn't that what it means to be queer in Asia? To exist in a world that tries to erode us, yet remain unshaken? To carry generations of pain, yet rise with unbreakable dignity?

We are here because **we refuse to be erased**.
We are here because history has **tried to forget us, but we refuse to forget ourselves**.
We are here because the struggle for **dignity, for justice, for freedom** is far from over.

ILGA Asia | A Movement Rooted in Solidarity

For over two decades, ILGA Asia has stood by our members, providing not just advocacy but lifelines. We have mobilized resources for activists facing persecution. We have fought for legal protections, amplified voices in courts and parliaments, and taken our battles to global institutions where policies are shaped. At our core, we are a regional federation serving over 200 LGBTIQ-led member organisations — a living, active network of movements, communities, and individuals fighting for a world where being who we are is no longer an act of defiance, but simply... being.

We have built research that proves what we have always known: that inclusion is not just about justice — it is about **prosperity**. That our economies, our societies, and our futures are **stronger** whenever person, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics is free to live with dignity.

But we are not just here to fight for policies.
We are here to fight for **people**.
For every **trans child** who wonders if they have a future.
For every **intersex person** who was never given a choice.
For every **queer person** whose love is treated as a crime.

The Struggles We Carry Across Asia

To be queer in Asia is to carry both hope and heartbreak in the same breath. Yet across our continent, **many still wake up as criminals simply for existing**.

In **South Asia**, we see trans leadership emerging with resilience, past decriminalisation in India and Bhutan — Hijra, Khwajasira, and Kinnar communities demanding recognition, activists in Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka fighting for dignity, and LGBTIQ Afghans facing unimaginable persecution under Taliban rule, forced into exile or hiding for survival. And yet, violence remains constant, legal battles remain uphill, and progress is too often met with backlash. But even in the face of adversity, history is shifting — with the International Criminal Court recently affirming that the persecution of LGBTIQ people in Afghanistan can be considered a crime against humanity, marking a crucial step toward global justice.

In **Southeast Asia**, we see the vibrant strength of our movements — Thailand's marriage equality law, Singapore's decriminalisation — but we also see authoritarianism tightening its grip. Brunei still enforces Sharia laws that punish us. Indonesia sees rising intolerance. The Philippines, despite its vibrant community, still has no national legal protections. And in Myanmar, our queer siblings fight not only for their rights but for their very survival amid a brutal military regime; and so are our friends in West Papua fighting for their freedom.

In **East Asia**, Taiwan continues to shine as a beacon of possibility, proving that full equality can be achieved. Japan, though moving slowly, has seen court rulings affirming our rights. But in China and Hong Kong, the walls of censorship and control are rising, silencing queer voices.

The Senseless Wars That Burn Our World

And in **West Asia**, our struggles intersect with the devastation of war. We cannot gather here, speaking of justice, without acknowledging the injustices that rage beyond this room. **We cannot, and we will not, ignore Gaza**. For years, we bear witness to the devastation livecast to us not only in Palestine but in the surrounding lands of West Asia — where senseless wars have displaced millions, where families are torn apart, where life is reduced to numbers and rubble. As Arundhati Roy once said, “Once weapons were manufactured to fight wars, now wars are manufactured to sell weapons.”

Our queer siblings in Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, and across the Gulf continue to face brutal crackdowns. And beyond the laws that criminalise them, they live amid displacement, destruction, and the pain of being forced to fight battles they never chose.

To be queer is to understand what it means to have your existence debated. To be dehumanized. To have others decide whether you are worthy of freedom. And that is why our struggle can never be separate from the struggles of those who fight for land, for peace, for the right to exist.

Because queer liberation means freedom for all people. Or it means nothing at all.

The Cost of Homophobia, the Power of Equality

Let me say this clearly: **homophobia is not just a moral failure. It is an economic catastrophe.**

When societies exclude us, they do not just break hearts; they break economies. They lose innovation, talent, and productivity. They deepen inequality. They weaken businesses. They shrink markets.

LGBTIQ rights are not a side issue. They are an economic imperative. And the world is learning what we have always known: that when LGBTIQ people can thrive, societies thrive. And when we are held back, entire nations suffer.

Listening to the Pain, Honouring the Anger

As a movement that is powered by and for our community, we do not just fight against oppression—we also hold space for reflection, for accountability, for listening. We know that within our movement, there is pain. There is frustration. There are voices that feel unheard.

To those who have felt unseen, neglected—your anger is not a threat. It is a call to action. It is a demand for us to do better. **A movement that does not listen is a movement that does not last. And we are here to last.**

What We Must Remember

In a world that tells us to be small, **we take up space.** In a world that demands our silence, **we raise our voices.** In a world that tells us to hide, **we shine even brighter.**

And let us never forget: **Being queer is not just about struggle. It is about joy**—the radical joy of chosen families, of love without shame, of dancing even when the world tells us not to. **Being seen is not just about visibility. It is about belonging**—knowing that wherever we go, we carry the strength of those who fought before us and the dreams of those who will come after. **Being here is not just about today. It is about tomorrow**—about the world we refuse to leave unchanged.

The Future We Build, Together

We are not here to ask for permission. **We are here to take our rightful place.** We are not waiting for change. **We are the ones making it happen.** And so, to my queer family—across borders, across identities, across every line that was meant to divide us:

Your struggle is my struggle. My struggle is yours. But more than that—your joy is my joy. And my joy is yours.

Let this week be a space of power, of love, of transformation. Let our participation be safe, yet meaningful. Let this be a moment that will be remembered—not just for what we say, but for what we dare to do next.

This conference is not just about challenges. It is a declaration. A promise. A resistance. It is about possibility. About what you and I can build when we are Diverse. Dynamic. United.

Thank you.



Acknowledgment



We extend our heartfelt thanks to ILGA Asia for organizing this inclusive conference, which created a powerful platform for the LGBTIQ community across Asia to connect, share, and learn from one another. We are especially grateful to Pukar Bista for his continuous support and guidance from the initial orientation to the final revisions of this report. This report has been thoughtfully compiled by the CUE team: Doma Tsering Tamang, Prabina Shrestha, Prashant Ghimire, Adhish Gurung, Yashaswi Timilsina, and Anju Khatakho.

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The Pulse OF THE CONFERENCE

Milestones and Metrics



 ILGA Asia
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2025





Six hundred and four people found their way to this historic gathering, drawn by passion and held together by a shared pulse of purpose and belonging. Among them, five hundred and fifty-one placed their names on the official register, while fifty-three joined in less formal ways, slipping past the boundaries of forms and lists.

At the heart of the crowd were **258 participants (42.7%)** attended through Conference Waivers, making this the largest and most beautifully representative group, each presence a was a testament to many ways the community finds its way into the room.

207 ticket buyers (34.3%) chose to invest their own resources to show up and stand in solidarity, showcasing a powerful act of commitment to the movement and highlighting the importance of our conference. |

111 participants (18.4%) joined as **scholars**, each one carrying stories, struggles, and solutions from across the region, reminding us what these convenings are really for. Additionally, **61 Nepali activists** received full scholarships to attend the conference.

And holding the fort in countless quiet, strategic ways were **28 staff and board members**, who helped shape the entire experience behind the scenes.

This distribution speaks volumes about the soul of the conference, where generous waivers and scholarships opened doors wide, and the strong turnout from paying participants reflected a deep sense of commitment and belief in ILGA Asia work and this historic conference. Together, these numbers tell a richer story about how access, outreach, and shared purpose drew a truly diverse and invested community into the fold.

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Table 1: Total Participants

TOTAL REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS

551	181	TICKET PURCHASE
	105	SCHOLARS
	24	STAFF
	241	CONFERENCE WAIVER

TOTAL NON-REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS

53	26	TICKET PURCHASE
	6	SCHOLARS
	4	STAFF
	17	CONFERENCE WAIVER

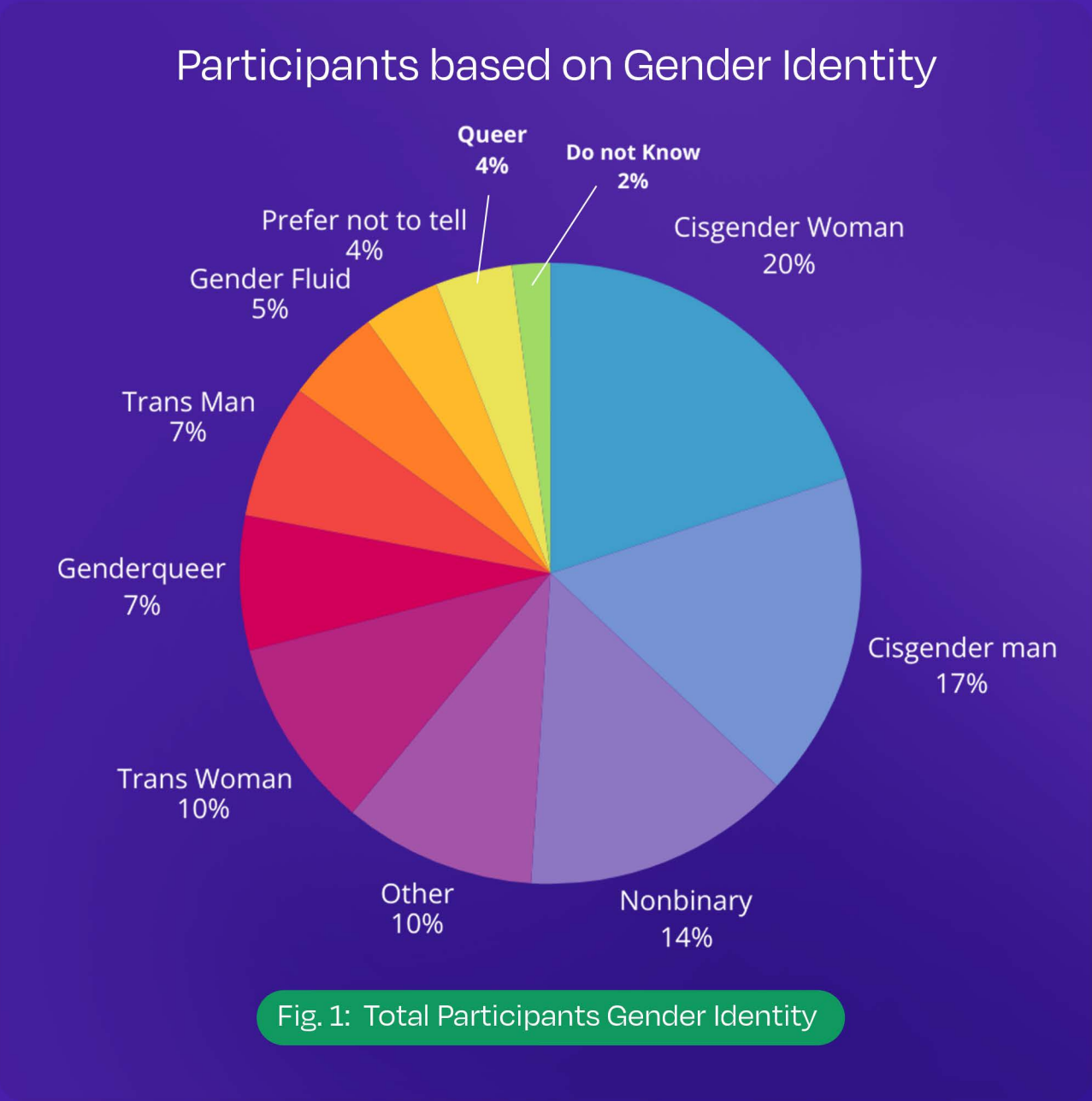
TOTAL SIGNED UP PARTICIPANTS

604	207	TICKET PURCHASE
	111	SCHOLARS
	28	STAFF
	258	CONFERENCE WAIVER



A GATHERING IN FULL COLOR: A SNAPSHOT OF CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

Among the 604 participants, gender identity emerged as a vivid spectrum of selfhood. Cisgender women made up 20 percent and cisgender men followed at 17 percent, forming a significant share of the community. Nonbinary participants accounted for 14 percent, while trans women stood at 10 percent and trans men at 7 percent. The presence of genderqueer, gender fluid, and queer identities, each ranging from 4 to 7 percent, added further nuance to the portrait. A small portion chose not to disclose. Together, this tapestry of identities reflected ILGA Asia's deep commitment to holding diverse spaces where each person is seen, valued, respected, and understood on their own terms.



The following figure on the sexual orientation across the 604 participants offers a window into the richness of the conference, where gay individuals formed the largest group at 23 percent, followed closely by heterosexual participants at 18 percent.

Just as striking was the vibrant presence of queer, lesbian, pansexual, and bisexual identities, each adding their own hue to the broad and beautiful spectrum that shaped this gathering.

Participants based on Sexual Orientation

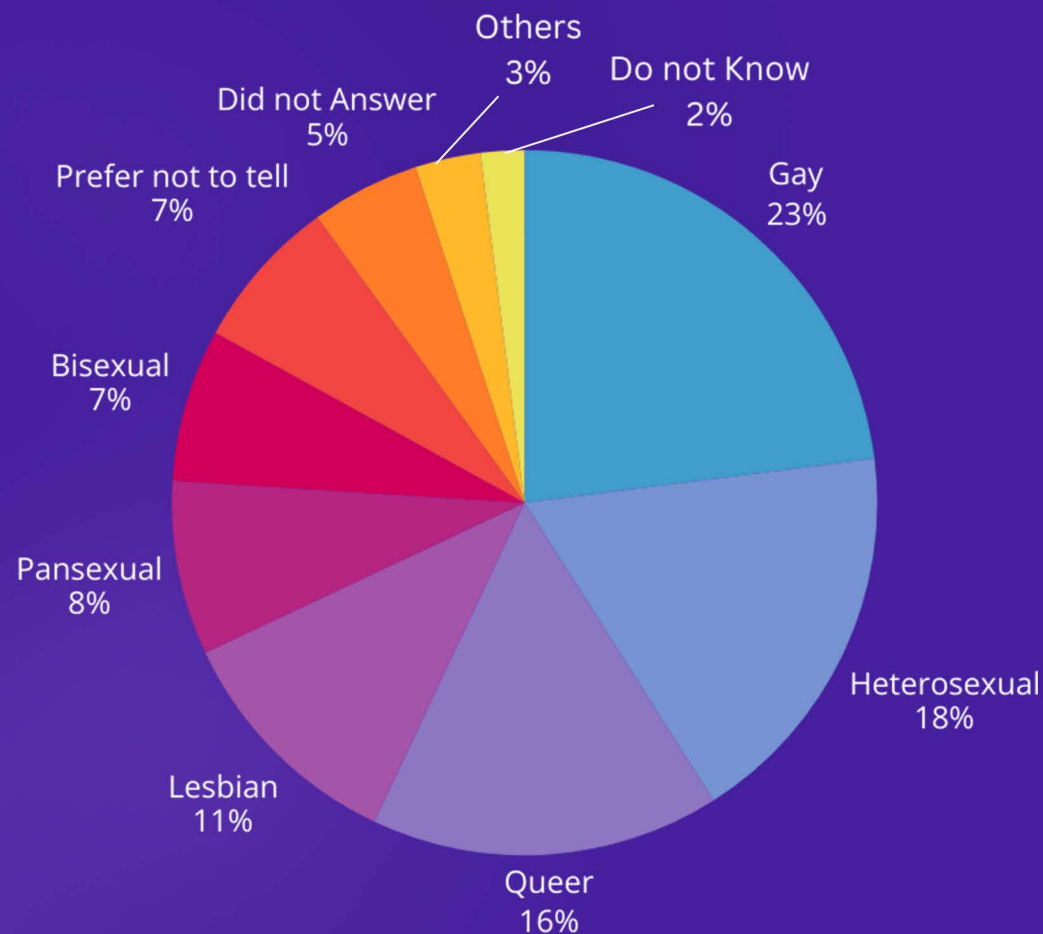


Fig. 2: Participants based on sexual orientation

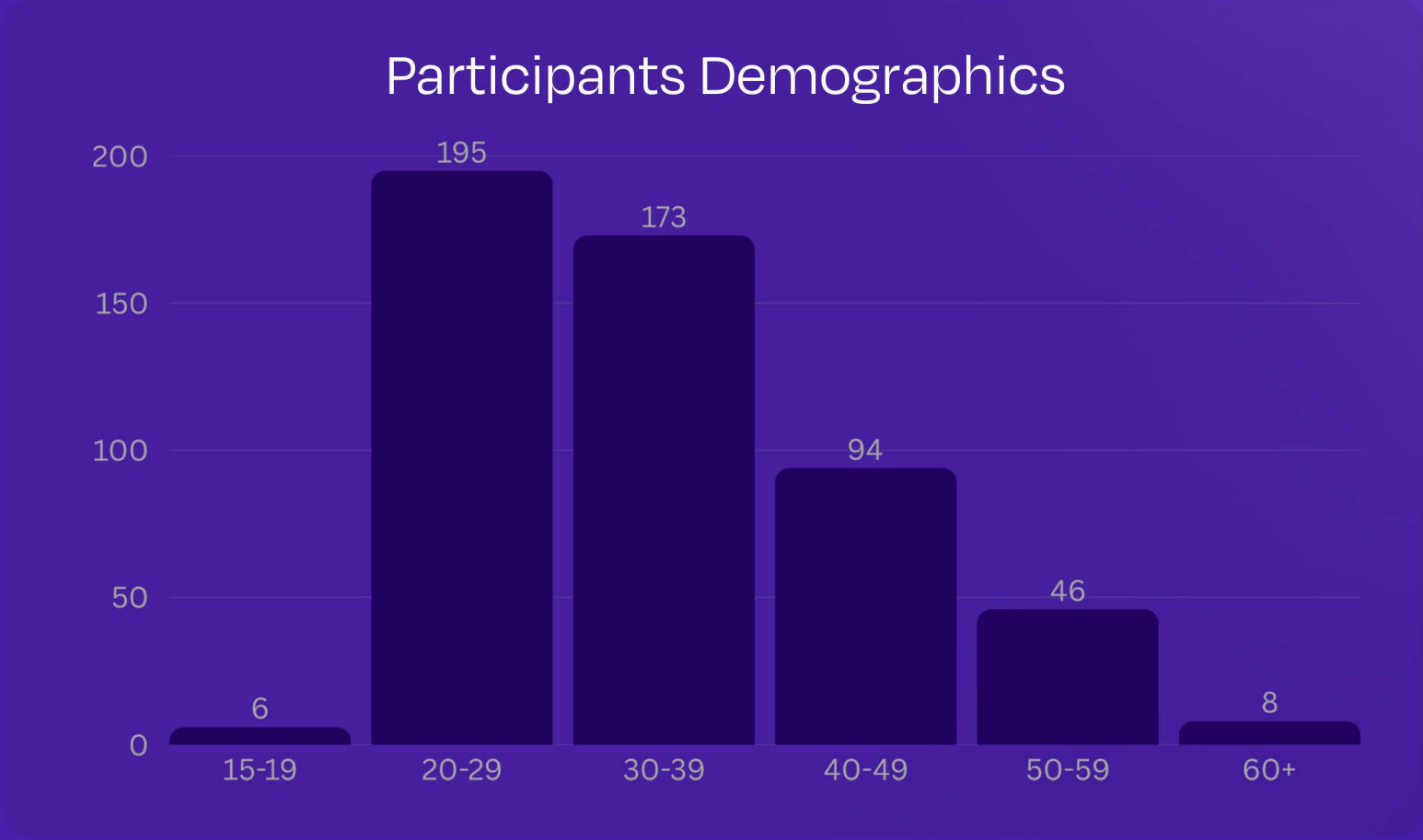


Fig. 3: Participants age group

The age landscape of the conference revealed a gathering rich in youthful energy and seasoned insight. The largest group came from those aged 20 to 29, with 195 participants (37.4%) bringing fresh perspectives. Close behind were the 173 individuals (33.1%) in their thirties, anchoring the event with both experience and drive. Participants in the 40 to 49 range contributed a solid presence with 94 voices (18%). Those in their fifties followed with 46 participants (8.8%), adding depth and long-standing commitment. The smallest cohorts, aged under 20 and over 60, included just a few — 6 and 8 respectively — but even their quiet presence added texture to a gathering that spanned generations.

Together, this spectrum underscored the conference's cross-generational relevance and its embrace of intergenerational learning.

CELEBRATING SCHOLARSHIP: RISING ACROSS ASIA, ROOTED IN NEPAL

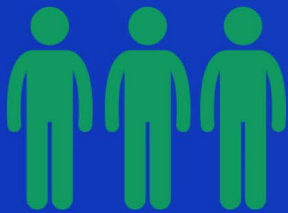
Offering scholarships to 111 activists from across Asia, including sixty-one from Nepal, was no small feat. It took months of dedicated fundraising, tireless engagement with donors, and many rounds of coordination between the local host and the ILGA Asia team. Behind every scholarship stood a collective commitment to make this conference truly accessible and representative. It was an achievement built on long email threads, late-night calls, shared spreadsheets, and a shared vision of justice.

By offering a significant number of scholarships to Nepali participants, the conference broke away from a model of symbolic inclusion. Local voices shaped the atmosphere, deepened the dialogue, and brought the region closer to the realities that so often go unseen. This moment raised the bar for future convenings. It showed what becomes possible when a conference honors its location and listens to those who call it home.



A HISTORIC FIRST:
CENTERING LOCAL
VOICES, SETTING A
NEW BENCHMARK
FOR FUTURE
CONFERENCES

Table 2: Total Scholarship Recipients



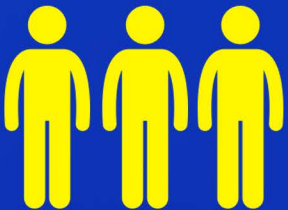
Total Registered

105



Total of Non Registered

6



Total Signed Up Participants

111

For the first time in ILGA Asia’s history, the regional conference was hosted in Nepal. With 61 Nepali scholars actively participating, the gathering moved beyond symbolic presence to meaningful inclusion. Their insights, lived realities, reflections, and leadership created moments of profound cross-learning where global conversations were anchored in local truths.

This kind of rooted participation deepened the experience for everyone involved. It encouraged transformative care, mutual recognition, respect, and dialogue. The conference stands as a reminder that when host communities are fully engaged, regional solidarity becomes stronger and more grounded in the people it aims to serve. Future conferences can build on this by continuing to center accessibility, inclusion, and local leadership from the start.



QUEER, BOLD, AND BEAUTIFUL: SEXUAL ORIENTATION AMONG SCHOLARS

Among all scholars, the spectrum of sexual orientations reflected a community alive with nuance and pride. The largest group identified as Queer, making up twenty-six percent, offering a bold and beautiful reminder of how language can stretch to hold multitudes. Gay and Bisexual identities followed with strong presence, each carrying histories of resistance, celebration, joy, and belonging.

Pansexual, Lesbian, Asexual, and Other identities added even more color to this collective portrait, each voice a vital thread in the fabric of LGBTIQ experiences. A few scholars shared that they preferred not to say or were still finding the words to describe themselves. These responses speak volumes about the need for spaces where all journeys are honored, all identities respected, and no one is asked to rush their becoming.

Sexual Orientation: Scholars

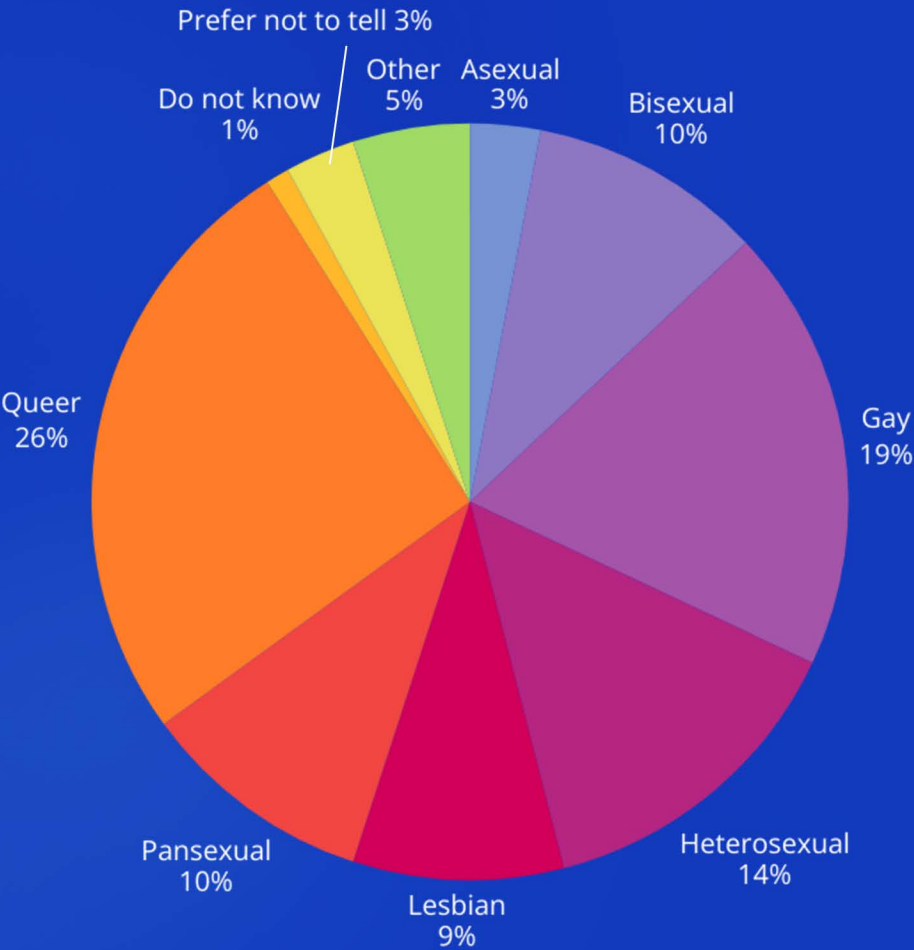


Fig. 4: Sexual Orientation of Scholars

Gender Identity: Scholars

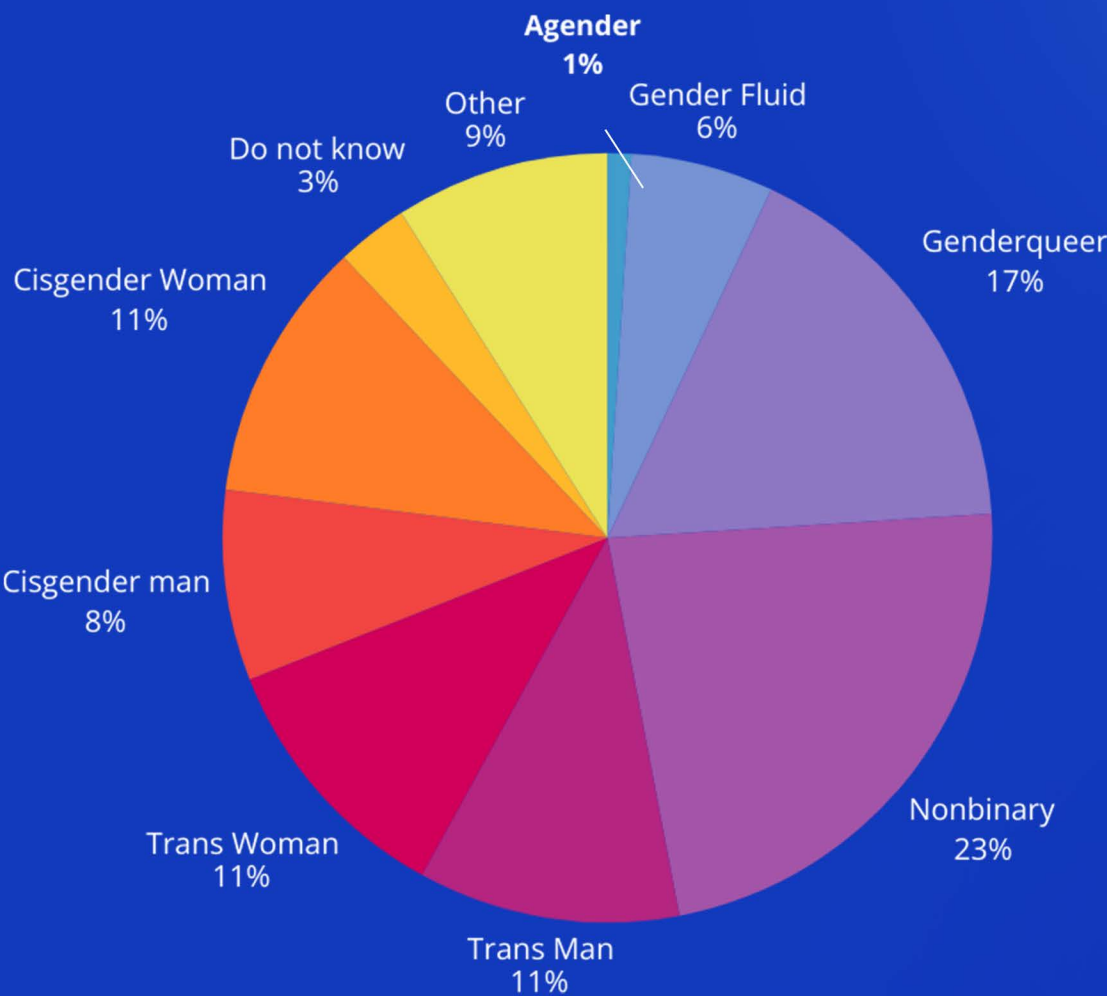


Fig. 5: Gender Identity of Scholars

EXPANSIVE, FLUID,
AND FEARLESS:
GENDER IDENTITY
AMONG SCHOLARS

Gender diversity bloomed in all directions, offering a stirring glimpse into the vast range of identities that shape our movements and moments. Nonbinary participants made up the largest group, nearly a quarter of the total, a reminder that lived truths often transcend tidy categories. Genderqueer voices followed close behind, steady and proud.

Trans men, trans women, and cisgender women stood side by side in equal numbers, each bringing their own strength, perspective, knowledge, and testimony. Cisgender men also took their place in this rich constellation. From gender fluid to agender to those who simply didn't have a name for their experience yet, each identity added dimension and color to the Conference. It was a collective presence that refused erasure, inviting us to imagine new ways of seeing, naming, being, and honoring each other in all our diversity.

SCHOLARS ACROSS TIME AND TERRAIN: A COLLECTIVE FUTURE REIMAGINED

A hundred and eleven scholars came together in Kathmandu, weaving a vibrant portrait of generational energy and regional depth. 51% of them were in their twenties, with many stepping into such a space for the first time, eager to learn, connect, follow, and lead. Another third were in their thirties, bringing lived experience and a sense of continuity to the room. A smaller but powerful group in their forties added perspective, while a handful of elders and younger teens reminded us that movements are held across generations, not confined by them.

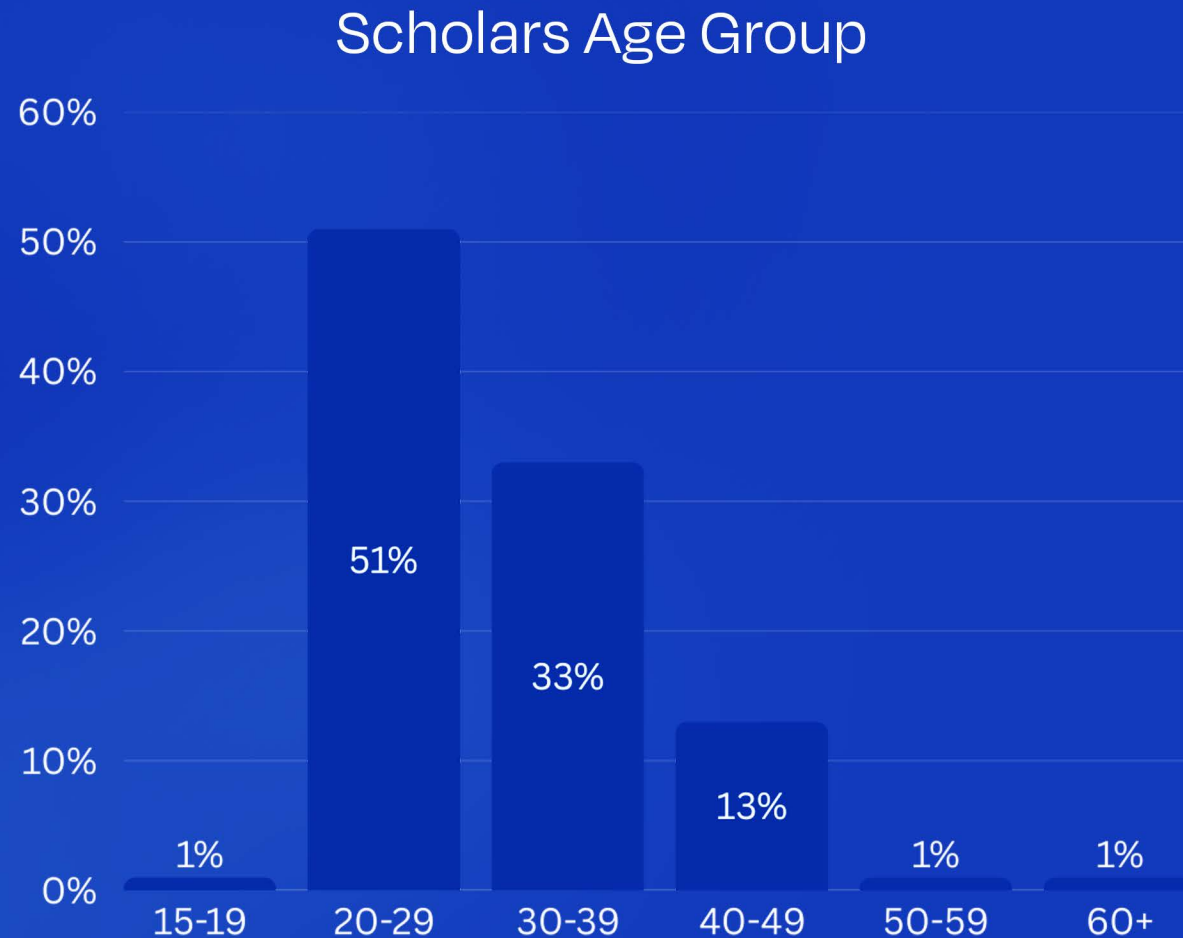
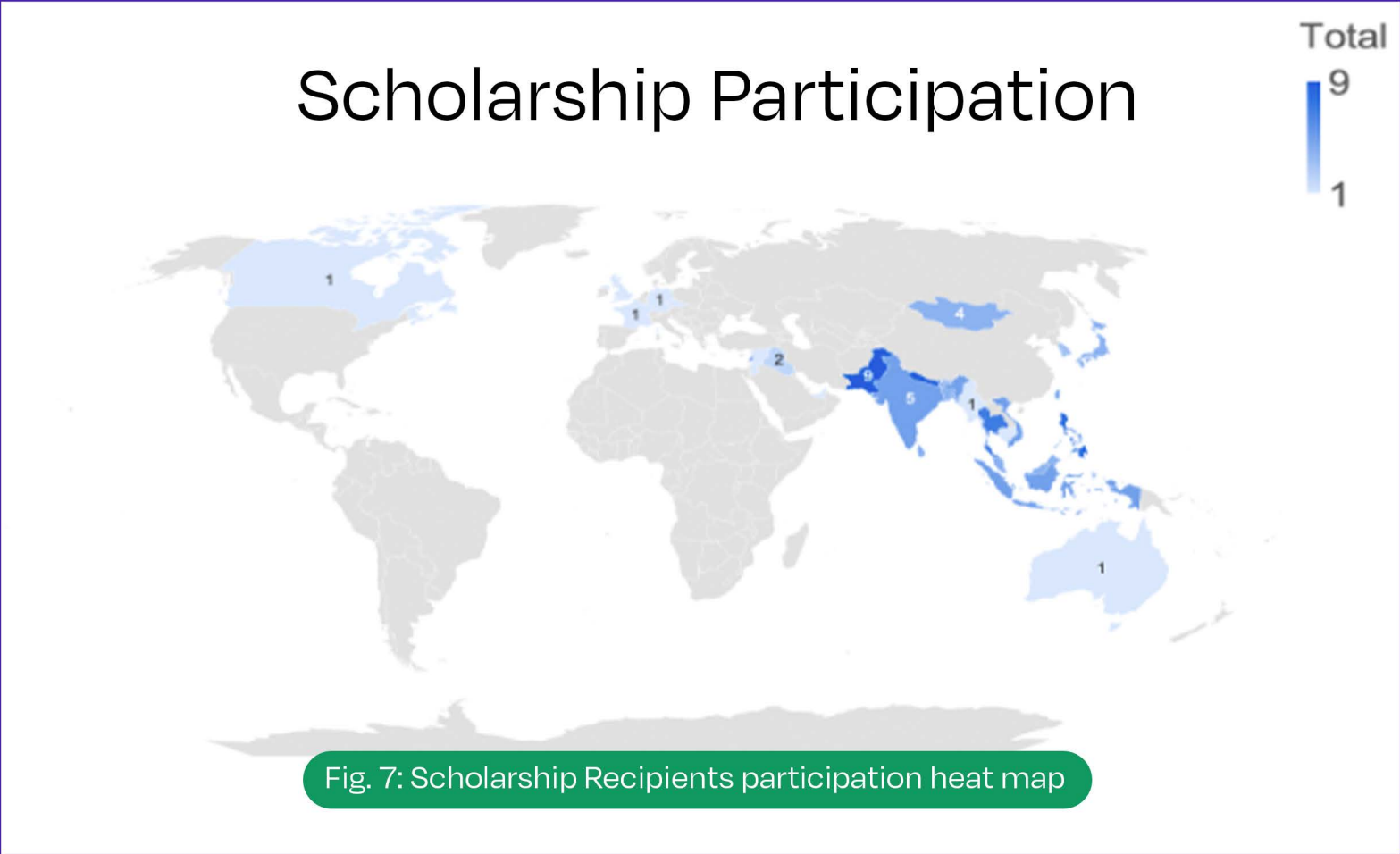


Fig. 6: Scholars Age Group

These scholars arrived to our conference from every corner of Asia. South Asia and Southeast Asia each made up nearly a third of the participants, bringing strong presence and diverse realities, making up 31% of the total participants. East Asia followed closely, with voices from Taiwan, Japan, Mongolia, and beyond adding important depth and nuance. West Asia's contribution grounded the space with stories from Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, among others. Together, they formed a regional chorus — each voice distinct and each one equally necessary for a collective reimagination of our futures.



ECHOES FROM THE CONFERENCE FLOORS

The response from participants painted a clear picture of an event that left a meaningful mark. On average, the overall experience of the conference was rated 4.2 out of 5. This strong score reflected a space that felt welcoming, worthwhile, and well-curated. When asked whether the gathering was useful for their personal journeys or professional growth, attendees responded with a glowing 4.3, affirming that the conference offered more than just panels and speeches. It offered tools, insights, and connections that mattered.

However, when it came to how engaged people felt during sessions, the rating came in slightly lower at 3.9. This gentle dip invites reflection. It suggests that while the content was compelling and the takeaways were real, there may be room to open up more space for dialogue, creativity, and participation. Even in a room full of energy, the invitation to speak, interact, and be heard still matters deeply. And that is where the next leap forward lies.

Conference Feedback Summary & Insights

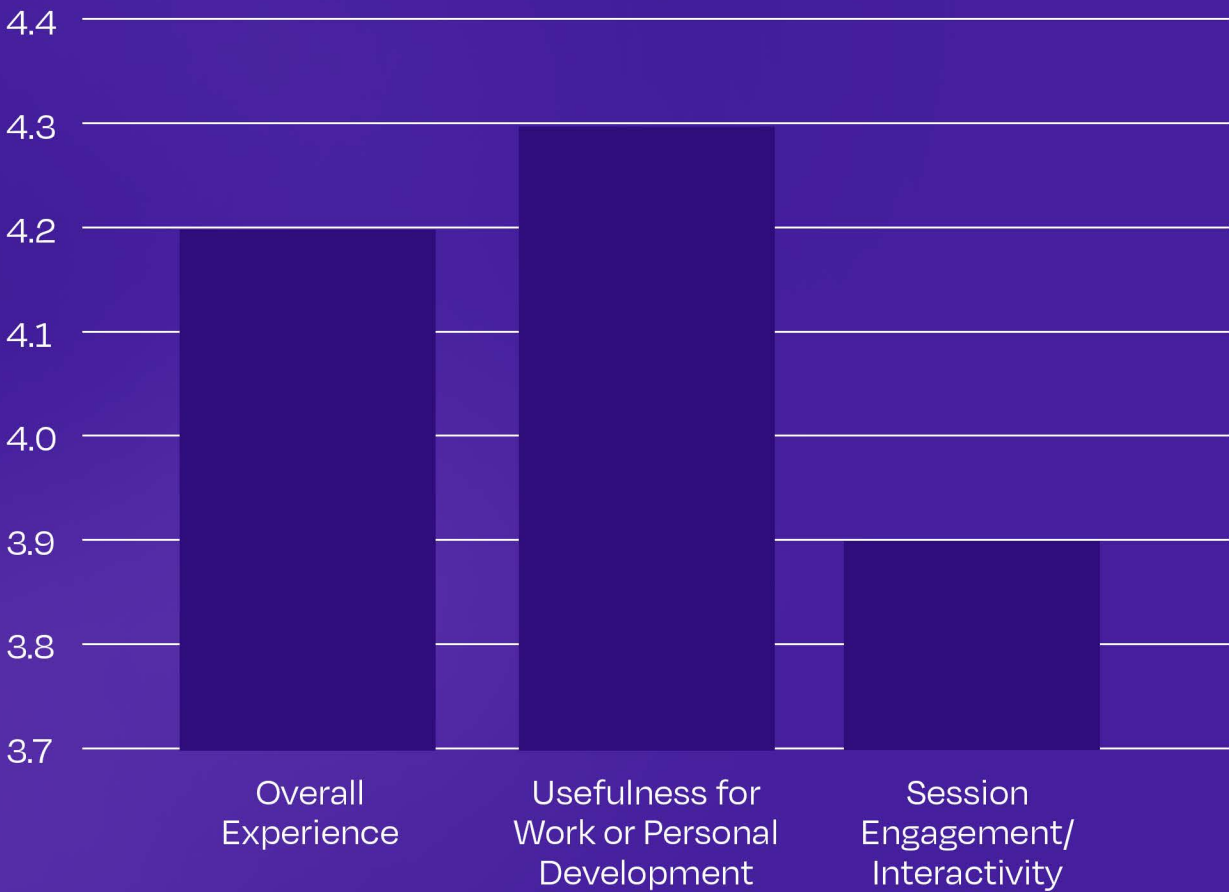


Fig. 8: Overall Conference Feedback

THE DETAILS BEHIND THE SCENES

When it came to logistics and conference organization, the conference held steady. Sound and visual quality landed an average score of 3.8, offering a reliable backdrop for deep conversations and powerful storytelling. Signage, directions, and overall design followed close behind with a rating of 3.9, helping guide hundreds of participants through the rhythm of the event. The same score was given to the ease of navigation and accessibility within the venue, pointing to some spaces where more attention could create a smoother experience for all.

Where the conference truly shone was in coordination and communication. With a score of 4.4, this aspect stood out as a highlight. From pre-arrival updates to on-the-ground support, it was clear that our thoughtful team had poured energy into making the entire experience as seamless and welcoming as possible.

Conference Logistics and Coordination

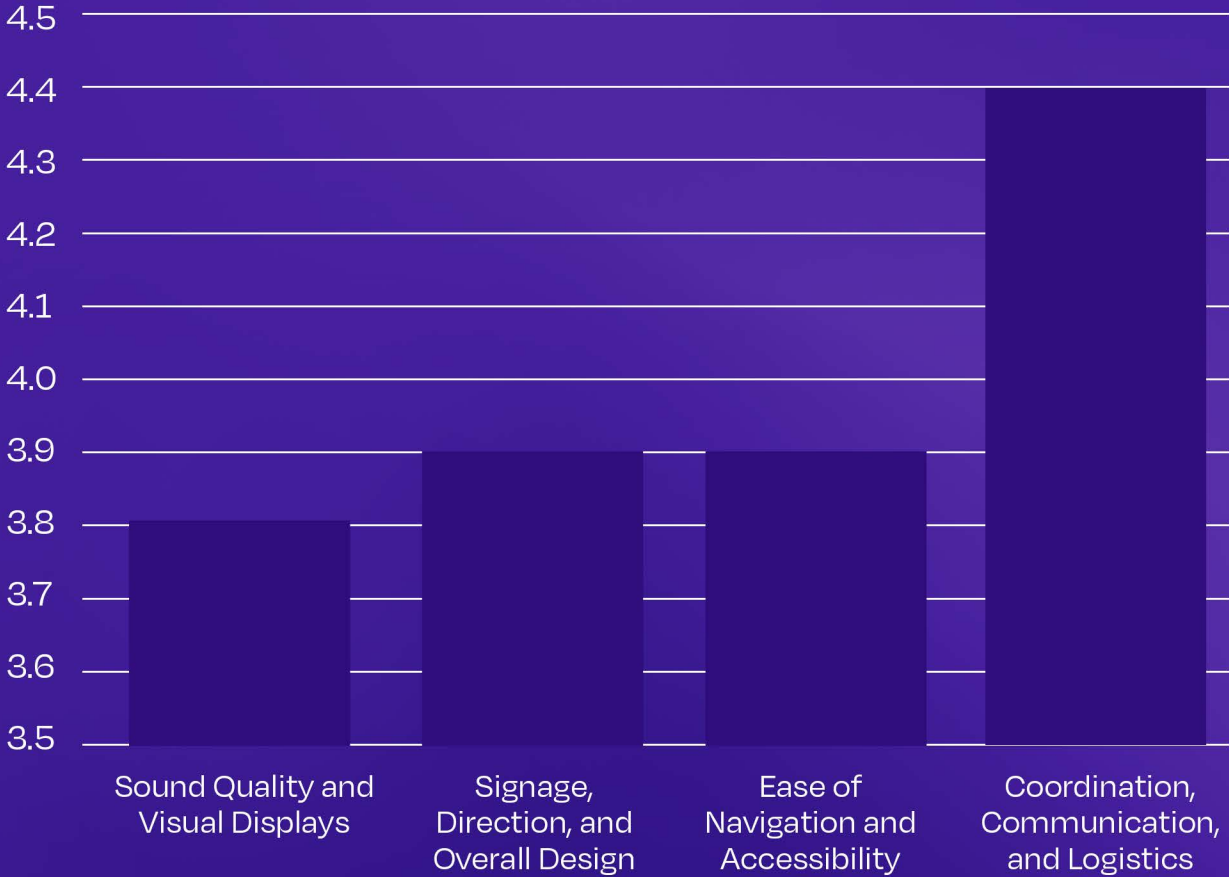


Fig. 9 Conference organization and logistics feedback

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Introduction



 ILGA Asia
Conference
2025





The 10th ILGA Asia Conference 2025, hosted in Kathmandu, Nepal from the 24th of February 2025 to the 28th of February 2025 at the Soaltee Hotel, was the biggest LGBTIQ conference in Asia. As the Conference brought together leaders, activists, community members, human rights defenders and many others from all over Asia and beyond to Kathmandu, Nepal, it stood out as a benchmark event for the LGBTIQ community in Asia. The Conference was supported by the Blue Diamond Society, a pioneer organization in Nepal advocating for LGBTIQ rights since 2001, who were the local host.

The conference encouraged diverse voices and groups to participate, organize, share and collaborate on defending individual and collective rights as they relate to gender, sexuality, identity, and human rights. As recent global events made a palpable impact on the conference proceedings, attendees recognized the need to build even stronger alliances and find creativity in sustaining movements across the region.

The conference was a celebration of the growing strength and impact of the LGBTIQ movements and groups across Asia and a call to action to continue working diligently in defending LGBTIQ rights. A series of preconferences curated clear and succinct discussion topics during the main conference.

CONFERENCE
Report 2025

CONFERENCE THEME

DIVERSITY DYNAMICS: UNIFYING FOR A JUST, INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE ASIA



Following the previous conference in Ho Chi Minh City, which was themed "Our Trials, Triumphs, and the Future We Demand," the 2025 conference sought to deepen the discourse on several critical areas. Entitled Diversity Dynamics: Unifying for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Asia" the conference explored the following sub-themes:

- Conflicts and Crises Ongoing: Root Causes and Gaps in LGBTIQ Inclusive Responses
- A Focus on Marriage Equality Movements Across Asia
- Centering the Voices of Asian LGBTIQ Youth
- Navigating Legal Landscapes: Progress and Challenges since 2022
- Unity in Diversity: Collaborative Advocacy for Human Rights
- Combating Anti-Rights Influence through Collective Action



Attendees engaged in diverse sessions, workshops, and plenaries addressing contemporary challenges and opportunities for the LGBTIQ community in Asia. With 604 participants from 49 countries, it was ILGA Asia's largest and most successful conference to date. Organized jointly with Nepal's Blue Diamond Society, the event featured impactful discussions alongside community spaces, performances, and networking opportunities.



CONFLICTS AND CRISES ONGOING:

ROOT CAUSES AND GAPS IN LGBTIQ INCLUSIVE RESPONSES

In 2025, we are still witnessing how LGBTIQ persons are inordinately impacted by these crises and left out of humanitarian and other relief responses. Sessions under this theme were:

- Humanitarian Pre Conference - Day 2
- Intersections of SOGIESC and Complex Emergencies in Asia: Building Resilient Communities and Inclusive Responses - Day 3
- Plenary 4: Conflict and Crisis - Day 5
- Queer Voices in Conflict: Advocacy, Inclusion, and Justice - Day 5



A FOCUS ON MARRIAGE EQUALITY MOVEMENTS ACROSS ASIA

In Japan and Nepal, court rulings are starting to pave the way for marriage equality, albeit with many legal hurdles for the requesting couples, and breaking down constitutional barriers. In Thailand, same-sex marriage is finally one step closer to being legalized by the passing of a marriage equality bill with overwhelming public and political support. Sessions under this theme were:

- Marriage Equality Preconference - Day 2
- Plenary 3 Marriage Equality Movements Across Asia (Day 4)



CENTERING THE VOICES OF ASIAN LGBTIQ YOUTH

LGBTIQ youth-led movements and organizations often suffer from lack of capacity and resources, inhibiting their growth, development, and potential impact. Sessions under this theme centered the voices of young LGBTIQ human rights activists and youth-led organizations:

- Youth Preconference - Day 2
- Love, Rage, Joy and Collective Care - Using Arts to build desi queer affirmative spaces for advocacy - Day 4
- Movements for LGBTIQ+ Youth and Children in Taiwan and Thailand - Day 3

NAVIGATING LEGAL LANDSCAPES: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES SINCE 2022

LGBTIQ communities across Asia continue to experience a mixed bag of legal and policy successes and setbacks, with serious regressions noticeable in the form of right-wing attacks on trans-inclusive legislation and the introduction of legislation that would criminalize—and in some cases prescribe capital punishment for—being LGBTIQ. Sessions under this theme were:

- Intersex Preconference - Day 1
- Informal Labor Preconference - Day 1
- Visible in Law, Invisible in Data: Constructing a Socio-Legal Framework to Include Intersex People in Official Statistics - Day 3
- The frontiers of law and policy in the East Asian trans equality movement
- The Economic Cost of Discrimination: Data, Insights, and Pathways to Inclusive Growth - Day 3

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

LGBTIQ people across Asia bear multifaceted identities and often experience compounded forms of discrimination, particularly those belonging to minority groups, who live with disabilities, who are economically insecure, communities discriminated on the basis of caste, who live with compromised health, and others who face systemic exclusions. Sessions include:

- Building Intersectional Solidarity: Navigating Invisible Disabilities in Queer Advocacy and Community Spaces - Day 3
- Mobilizing Cross-constituency Advocacy to Advance Sexual Rights in Asia and Pacific - Day 5
- Building and strengthening collaboration with businesses: Strategies of engaging corporates in LGBTIQ+ movements - Day 4
- AI and Disability: A look into the future of accessibility - Day 5

COMBATING ANTI-RIGHTS INFLUENCE THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION

Anti-rights and anti-gender actors influence, fund, and capacitate decision makers and non-state actors across Asia to develop and put into practice discriminatory laws, policies, and social practices that exacerbate pre-existing inequalities for LGBTIQ communities. Extremist and fundamentalist beliefs, oftentimes instrumentalized by these actors, provide a discursive basis for campaigns of hate, intolerance, and violence against LGBTIQ and other marginalized communities, and create barriers to services, access to justice, and contribute to shrinking civic/public space for LGBTIQ communities. Sessions include:

- Communication and Campaign Preconference - Day 2
- Unmask Organized Transphobic Attack: Understanding Anti-trans movements across Asia and our fightback - Day 4
- Trans Pre-conference - Day 1



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DAY 1 & 2 PRECONFERENCES



 ILGA Asia
Conference
2025





During the first two days of the Conference, several groups coalesced in preconferences around the main conferences themes. The primary objectives of the preconferences were to meet other participants from within each sub-group, discuss priority issues, and prepare a statement to be read on the final day of the Conference. Several of the organizers of the preconferences also subsequently organized sessions for the main conference that related to the preconferences. These preconferences allowed participants to come together, engage in discussion, and unite in voicing their issues, as well as drafting statements to be read on the final day plenaries.

CONFERENCE
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LESBIAN PRECONFERENCE

Led by Mitini Nepal and the Asia Feminist LBQ Network, the Lesbian Preconference focused on challenges faced by LBQ women in Asia, such as underrepresentation, legal discrimination, and lack of funding. Panelists highlighted the need for cross-regional solidarity, better data collection, stronger media engagement, and alliances with other social movements. Discussions centered on intersectional approaches in lesbian advocacy, community building, mental health support, and fostering collective learning through training, resource sharing, and enhanced visibility. To complement these discussions, organizers also hosted a yoga session, providing participants a calming space to reconnect with their bodies and practice mindfulness.

TRANS PRECONFERENCE

This pre-conference addressed the critical issues faced by transgender individuals across Asia in the face of rising anti-gender movements globally. The pre-conference provided a platform for transgender activists of all identities to assess these threats, strengthen advocacy, and reinforce regional solidarity. Discussions emphasized the need for inclusive, community-led approaches to create safe environments for LGBTIQ youth, with a particular focus on trans and gender-diverse populations, who often faced discrimination, problems of limited healthcare and targeted violence. Four key sessions covered topics such as advancing trans health, addressing the specific needs of transmasculine and transfeminine individuals, and fostering strategic regional planning, with panelists sharing their experiences from countries like Nepal, Thailand, China, Mongolia, and more. Key takeaways from the conference included actionable strategies such as advancing intersectional advocacy by addressing and tackling challenges related to race, class, and socio-economic background, improving healthcare access, and countering anti-gender movements to ensure meaningful progress.

INTERSEX PRECONFERENCE

During the preconference, Intersex Asia facilitated a closed session where intersex participants from across Asia shared personal experiences and challenges, including struggles with stigma and self-harm, in a safe and supportive environment. The session encouraged participants to list priority issues and propose recommendations for the larger Conference.

Key recommendations included increasing intersex visibility during and beyond the Conference by raising hands in plenaries, joining discussions, and openly identifying as intersex. Participants also stressed the need to raise awareness about what it truly means to be intersex, while addressing misconceptions such as conflating intersex with being transgender or stereotype that they are driven by sexual desire. A strong consensus was reached on preventing non-consensual surgeries on intersex people unless it's life threatening. The facilitators committed to drafting a comprehensive statement reflecting these concerns and recommendations, to be delivered at the final plenary.

BISEXUAL PRECONFERENCE

The preconference facilitated by the Asia Feminist LBQ Network brought together bisexual and multisexual spectrum communities including bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, and omnisexual participants through a workshop-style program divided into three parts: sharing Bi+ experiences, strengthening research visions, and building solidarity. As part of an ongoing research initiative led by the Network, participants contributed recommendations to broaden the scope of the research, highlighting areas such as reproductive health, political representation, police interactions, and access to justice.

Discussions also focused on dismantling harmful stereotypes, particularly the misconception that bisexual people “have choices in relationships” or are indecisive/confused about their identities. Participants emphasized how such notions erase Bi+ identities and reinforce systemic barriers. They called for an inclusive and intersectional approach in both research and advocacy to better reflect the diverse realities of Bi+ individuals and advance equal rights and representation.

WOMEN PRECONFERENCE

During the Women Preconference, participants stressed the importance of global solidarity, moving beyond the Western-centric activism to build alliances that challenge capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchal structures simultaneously. Strategies for effective solidarity included prioritizing intersectionality, resisting cancel-culture in favor of education and dialogue, and recognizing shared struggles that unite movements beyond individual identities. The conversation also emphasized the need for support particularly for women in conflict zones, and called for stronger collaborations between feminist and queer movements to create inclusive, justice-driven activism. The session concluded with a call for radical hope, collective imagination, and the centering of indigenous and working-class voices in global resistance efforts to achieve a more impactful and intersectional global solidarity resistant to co-optation by dominant power structures.

GPPXILGA ASIA

INTERMEDIARY DISCUSSION

The conference session on LGBTI Funding Infrastructure in Asia examined major disparities in global resource distribution. The Global Resources Report (GRR) showed that Asia receives 59% less funding, 68% fewer grants, and 65% fewer grants per donor compared to other regions. These inequities are driven by persistent misconceptions that Asia requires less funding, the region's restrictive legal and political environments, and the fact that many LGBTIQ organizations operate informally, limiting access to formal funding streams. Donor priorities also often focus on other regions, and unlike Sub-Saharan Africa—where three intermediaries account for 88% of regranting funds—Asia has very few intermediaries and limited regranting opportunities.

Panelists from the Queer Feminist Fund, Women's Fund Asia, and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund highlighted the critical role intermediaries could play if designed effectively: offering politically neutral channels, flexible arrangements, pooled donor resources, and stronger advocacy for Asian priorities. At the same time, they stressed that intermediaries are not a substitute for structural change. What the movement most urgently needs is high-quality funding support that is flexible, long-term, and sustained, while being firmly rooted in the actual priorities and strategies of LGBTIQ communities in Asia.





ANTIGENDER PRECONFERENCE

The Anti-Gender Preconference, explored the rising global anti-gender movement, its strategies, funding sources, and the urgent need for counteraction. Presentation by Jelle Postma of Justice for Prosperity, highlighted how anti-gender forces, backed by extremist, populist, and ultra-conservative groups, use misinformation, fear-mongering, and strategic funding for anti-gender driven organisations and individuals to push their agenda. The antigender movement is well-organized, utilizing secure communication channels, lawfare tactics, and emotionally driven messaging to manipulate public perception. The antigender movement is financially supported by the Global North forces. In countries like Indonesia and India, political and religious conservatism is instrumentalizing gender issues to consolidate power. Participants also highlighted the crossover between Christian and Muslim conservatism, stressing that the anti-gender agenda is no longer just a western agenda but a global one.

Recommendations from the presenter and follow-on discussions stated the need for better digital security, strategic counter-narratives, and intersectional activism that connects gender issues with broader struggles like caste and indigenous rights. Fact-checking mechanisms, media engagement, and community resilience were emphasized as key strategies, along with stronger collaboration between advocacy groups, intelligence networks, and grassroots organizations. The session concluded that the anti-gender movement is not just a religious or regional issue but a global, politically driven force that requires a unified, strategic response.

INFORMAL LABOR PRECONFERENCE

In this invite-only discussion, trans sex workers from three countries shared their experiences as sex workers, the challenges they face in their own communities, their struggles with social perception, and the State. The panelists shared that sex work has been a validating experience for them. However, they made it clear that they do not actively encourage others to pursue it. A resounding conclusion from the trans panelists was that for many trans people, sex work is often one of the few, or sometimes the only, available options to make a living due to systemic barriers.

Part of the discussion centered around an emphasis on decriminalizing sex work in Nepal, and holding abusers accountable. Following this thread, the impact of digitalization was discussed with some sex workers from the UK preferring it for the privacy in finding clients whereas some, such as sex workers in Nepal, did not favor it due to fear of being blackmailed and possibly leaks of their identity as a sex worker.

According to the panelists, digitalization could both assist or remove privacy based on the geographic and cultural contexts. The intimate setting of the session provided for open discussion and sharing of experiences without fear of judgment, leading to recommendations for the Conference such as acknowledging “sex work” as work that requires protection for the sex workers against violence and exploitation from various actors.



UN PRECONFERENCE

ILGA Asia curated ‘UN Preconference’, a guided discussion with agenda around 1. Taking stock of regional UN mechanisms engagement priorities; 2. Identifying focal points and organizations for specific UN mechanisms; and 3. Carving out time for discussion of advocacy support for the IE SOGI mandate renewal. Major highlights of the preconference was ILGA Asia sharing the need of local and national advocacy groups to engage in UN processes to improve their advocacy work on human rights of LGBTIQ people and their communities. While ILGA Asia shared their extended support to several countries in Asia that are engaged in UN processes including the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and Universal Periodic Review (UPR), representatives from many grassroots level organizations shared their skepticism around the funding gaps that might lead to shortcoming in their current advocacy on LGBTIQ movements with the UN system.

YOUTH PRECONFERENCE

This pre-conference focused on empowering LGBTIQ youth, advocating for their rights, and fostering inclusive, safe spaces within activism. Over four sessions, participants explored and discussed key challenges such as mental health issues, discrimination, lack of family acceptance, and underrepresentation in decision-making spaces. Sessions explored strategies for creating safe spaces, tackling ageism, and building solidarity, emphasizing the need for education, legal protection, and community support. Through personal stories, group discussions, and engaging activities like karaoke and interactive games such as Kahoot, the preconference highlighted the crucial role of youth activism in promoting cross-sectoral collaboration, policy changes, and allyship with youth advocating for legal reforms, creating and maintaining safe spaces, and leading educational campaigns. The event highlighted the importance of amplifying marginalized voices, embracing intersectionality, and supporting youth-led initiatives to ensure the well-being and rights of LGBTIQ individuals across the region.

MARRIAGE EQUALITY PRECONFERENCE

This Preconference brought together advocates from various Asian countries to share their advocacy strategies and campaigns for marriage equality rights. This platform highlighted country specific future mandates and updates so far as well. The day-long session provided safe space for the representatives to share case studies like Japan working on marriage equality in the form of business initiative, Cambodia's rural LGBTIQ activism, South Korea's experience included efforts to identify plaintiffs as part of a legal strategy to push for the recognition of marriage equality and video production efforts in Vietnam. Case study from Thailand's legislative success on SSM was celebratory for all participants. Similarly, the latter half of the session was focused on how to make marriage equality campaigns effective and included the discussions on the importance of engaging decision makers, recognizing their eco-chambers and developing strategies to win campaigns.

HUMANITARIAN PRECONFERENCE

Participants focused on finding the intersections of humanitarian responses from their local contexts, sharing experiences of successes and gaps in South Asia to generate a statement to be read on the final day of Conference with recommendations for ILGA Asia. Participants, in groups, shared experiences from Myanmar, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Lebanon among other Asian countries. Particular attention was paid to funding gaps in terms of donors being unable to fund non-registered LGBTIQ groups in countries where legal registration compromises safety of the communities. After two sessions throughout day 2, recommendations drafted included: (1) Recognizing expertise of people with disabilities in dealing with humanitarian responses for people with disabilities (2) Ending War, Conflict, and Promoting Economic Justice (3) Inclusive Humanitarian Policies and Practices (4) Funding and Sustainability of Humanitarian responses (5) Data Justice and Protection (6) Strengthening Crisis response mechanisms.

INTERFAITH PRECONFERENCE

The Interfaith Preconference session focused on co-creation and co-learning, exploring the intersection of faith and queerness while addressing anti-gender ideologies. The session paid tribute to queer Muslim leader Muhsin Hendricks and included interactive activities such as a fishbowl discussion on real-life experiences of religious exclusion, social discrimination, and forced conformity. Participants engaged in group work to identify key issues like binary ideology in faith spaces, religious extremism, and social stigmatization within religious institutions. Discussions emphasized the importance of reclaiming inclusive religious narratives, building LGBTIQ interfaith networks, and countering misinformation with progressive interpretations of scripture. Actionable solutions included fostering interfaith dialogues especially with other minority groups/marginalized groups to foster alliance, creating faith-based LGBTIQ resistance resources, and promoting visibility through storytelling and lived experiences. The session

highlighted the power of relationships in advocacy, with examples of faith communities gradually embracing LGBTIQ individuals through sustained dialogue and cultural exchange. The conference concluded with commitments to unlearning deeply embedded biases against the LGBTIQ community, fostering interfaith solidarity, and creating inclusive spaces for LGBTIQ individuals within religious institutions.



OUTRIGHT PRIVATE MEETING

The outright private meeting brought together LGBTIQ advocates from all around Asia to talk about social and legal developments, exchange strategies and tackle persisting challenges. Key themes included the importance of intersectionality, the value of forming alliances with the policy makers, and the role of the private sector in promoting and advocating the rights of LGBTIQ individuals. Significant legal milestones such as decriminalization in Bhutan and passage of marriage equality in Taiwan were highlighted. In the case of Bhutan, the speaker candidly acknowledged that part of the progress came from being in the “right rooms at the right time.” Advocates leveraged personal and professional relationships with key figures in government who were supportive allies. Their presence in parliamentary discussions and direct appeals to house speakers played a critical role in shifting political will. This reflects the importance of building trust and influence within policy circles, and highlights how coalition-building within government structures can be a decisive factor in achieving legal reform for LGBTIQ rights. The meeting underscored the incremental victories, need for collaborative approaches and strategic communications for the sustainable progress in the advocacy.

DONOR PRECONFERENCE

The GPP's Donor Pre-conference at ILGA Asia 2025 addressed the critical funding challenges for LGBTIQ movements in Asia, where only a small portion of global funding is allocated for the community, despite the region's sizable LGBTIQ population. The discussions emphasized the need for scaling, sustainable, and equitable funding. Key topics included disparities in sub-regional funding, the underfunding of trans and intersex communities, the impact of donor cuts — particularly from the U.S. — on HIV response and human rights initiatives, and the growing influence of anti-gender movements. Participants strategized on alternative funding models, youth engagement, digital security, and donor coordination to sustain and strengthen LGBTIQ movements amidst rising authoritarianism and funding shrinkage. Action items which were agreed upon included monthly donor meetings and improved data accessibility.

DISABILITIES PRECONFERENCE

The Disability Preconference highlighted key challenges and opportunities for the disability movement within the LGBTIQ community. Central discussions revolved around the "Wheel of Power" activity, which helped participants reflect on their vulnerabilities, and the significant lack of data and funding that limits advocacy and support for people with disabilities. Participants shared insights on outdated language usage, neurodiversity, and the need for cross-movement building to strengthen advocacy efforts.

Agreements included using the Washington Group Disability Statistics tool for better data collection, advocating for more inclusive policies, and creating platforms for independent activists to engage with larger organizations like ILGA. The participants recommended future conferences to focus on improving accessibility, such as adopting the Sunflower Lanyard Scheme, and involving people with disabilities in the planning process to ensure meaningful participation.



COMMUNICATION AND CAMPAIGN PRECONFERENCE

Two separate sessions focused on ILGA Asia funded communications activities in the region and a workshop on discussing current social media regulations. In the first session, three stories emphasized the effects of conversion therapy in Hong Kong, and one story on trans-hate in Malaysia whereas in the second session participants discussed common messaging challenges, particularly the role of social media platforms in spreading misinformation and lacking fact-checking. Recommendations on creating a successful communications campaign included creating a buzz, tapping into expert opinions, and seeking clearance from supportive leadership figures (such as health councils) before launching larger petition campaigns. Similarly, participants advised each other on holding social media platforms, such as Meta and X, accountable for their lack of content moderation on disinformation and hate-content. Participants also advised activists to back up information to organization websites and other platforms in order to protect their data in case of social media accounts being blocked or forcibly deactivated.

NON-BINARY PRECONFERENCE

The Non-Binary Preconference identity explored the systemic challenges faced by non-binary individuals in different aspects of life, including education, work, healthcare, and relationships. Discussions highlighted how heteronormative education reinforces binary gender roles from an early age, making identity realization in later years difficult; and how workplaces and healthcare systems remain deeply gendered, often forcing non-binary individuals to conform. The session also addressed the lack of gender-neutral language, particularly in queer spaces, leading to marginalization of non-binary identities in such spaces. Key recommendations included advocating for gender-neutral policies in education and healthcare, expanding inclusive terminology, and fostering greater acceptance of non-binary identities within LGBTIQ communities. The conversation underscored the importance of creating safe, affirming spaces and dismantling binary-driven structures to allow non-binary individuals to live authentically.





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DAY 3, 4, & 5
SESSIONS



 ILGA Asia
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2025





The final three days of the Conference marked the official opening to the general public including a welcome plenary. Over three days, organizers arranged for various panel discussions, workshops, and activities related to the conference themes. A total of five plenaries and 27 sessions were conducted.

CONFERENCE
Report 2025


OPENING PLENARY


Welcome remarks and Fireside Chat


DAY 3
FEBRUARY 26, 2025





OPENING CEREMONY


- 

Manisha Dhakal,
Executive Director
Blue Diamond Society
- 

Nawal Kishor Sah Sudi,
Nepal Minister of Women,
Children, and Senior Citizens
- 

Mr. Graeme Reid, Independent Expert
on protection against violence and
discrimination based on Sexual
Orientation and Gender Identity (IE SOGI)
- 

Henry Koh
Executive Director
ILGA Asia
- 

Co-Chairs of ILGA Asia
Executive Board
- 

ILGA Asia Conference
Chairing Pool

FIRESIDE CHAT

- 

Sarita KC
Executive Director - Mitini Nepal
- 

Laxmi Ghalan
- 

Meera Bajracharya

In the opening plenary of the 2025 ILGA Asia Conference, dignitaries and guests packed the main hall. Delegates from around the world and dignitaries were welcomed to Kathmandu, Nepal in the main conference hall. Blue Diamond Society’s Executive Director, Manisha Dhakal, warmly welcomed all to Nepal highlighting the country’s significant achievement in attaining milestones regarding marriage equality. Following Dhakal, Graeme Reid, UN IESOGI, highlighted positive movements happening in the Asian region as well as the distressing scenes in Afghanistan with regard to repressive laws against women, and the shortage of donor funding surrounding the uncertainty with USAID. Following Reid, Nepal’s Minister of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens, Nawal Kishor Sah Sudi, welcomed all to Nepal and spoke on the inclusive environment in



Nepal and its ambition to grow pink tourism in the country. Henry Koh, ILGA Asia’s Executive Director, made special mention of Gaza in his remarks and encouraged all participants to advocate for their own visibility and rightful place in society. Finally, ILGA Asia’s co-chairs presented facts about the Conference structure, attendance, and ambitions.

Following the opening remarks, Mitini Nepal’s Executive Director led a fireside chat between the 2007 plaintiffs, Meera Bajracharya and Laxmi Ghalan, of Nepal’s landmark same-sex marriage ruling. The plaintiffs discussed challenges they faced in Nepal prior to the ruling and positive impacts they anticipate from an ILGA Asia conference in Nepal.

VISIBLE IN LAW, INVISIBLE IN DATA:

CONSTRUCTING A SOCIO-LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO INCLUDE INTERSEX PEOPLE IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Panel discussion and audience Q&A



Prashant Singh,
Intersex Asia



Hiker Chiu,
Intersex Asia



Jeff Cagandahan,
Intersex Philippines
and Intersex Asia



Esan Regmi,
Campaign for
Change and Intersex Asia



Vino Dhan,
VoIS INDIA

In recent developments, many countries have started developing laws to include intersex people in national censuses, albeit, in an imperfect fashion, with Australia and New Zealand leading with sex markers on their census. The panelists from Taiwan, India, Nepal and Philippines discussed how intersex people are unable to access necessary medical services in their countries as they are 'invisible' in the official census data of their countries. The panel recommended incorporating disaggregated data on gender identity and sexual orientation, including "sex markers", in national censuses whilst adhering to ethical guidelines in order to protect intersex people from further discrimination, through awareness building on 'what it means to be intersex'. The recommendation was to try and make changes to census methodologies, even if there might be initial hurdles in accuracy.

Recommendations

- Advising governments to mandate disaggregated data collection on sex markers at birth and gender identity in adult years following ethical guidelines to prevent discrimination.
- Methodologies of the census need to be improved in India and Nepal where intersex people are mislabeled as other or third gender.
- Advising governments to include intersex variants for legal documents such as driving licenses and national identity cards.

ILGA ASIA GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP FACILITATED BY CHAIRING POOL (FOR ILGA ASIA MEMBERS ONLY)

(Format of the session - Discussion on
the presented Constitution and
Standing Orders documents)

The ILGA Asia governance workshop focused on reviewing and revising ILGA Asia's constitution and standing orders. Key discussions included improving inclusive language, particularly around disability, age threshold for youth, refining proxy voting processes, and ensuring fair governing practices. Agreement was made to allow individuals to vote on behalf of two organizations (their own and one proxy) and specific constitutional clauses like C.4.3 and C.7.3. were removed.

Recommendations

- Add a clear definition of disability. Rephrase D.14 to be more inclusive of hidden and intellectual disabilities, integrating both medical and social models (referencing the UNCRPD).
- Update E.2 from (The ILGA-ASIA Board shall consist of a maximum of fourteen (14) individuals from full member organisations consisting of two (2) representatives from each of the four (4) sub-regions in Asia (West, South, Southeast and East). At least one of the two sub representatives from each of the sub regions should identify as a woman. In the composition of the ILGA-ASIA Board, the diversity of the membership should be reflected. Therefore, in addition to the eight sub-regional representatives, there shall be one representative for the following, elected in accordance with the provisions in section D:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| E.3.1 Trans | E.3.5 Trans |
| E.3.2 Disabled | E.3.6 Women |
| E.3.3 Intersex | E.3.7 Youth |
| E.3.4 Non-Binary | |

to allocate one reservation for trans and add a new reservation for bi representation.

FUNDING THE NEXT GENERATION

(Format of the session - Panel discussion)



Moderator: **Tushar Malik (he/him)**,
Project Lead, Key Populations
Team, Aidsfonds



Bella Aubree (she/her),
National Coordinator,
Inti Muda Indonesia



Ael Napitupulu (He/Him/Dia),
National Coordinator, Youth
Interfaith Forum on Sexuality
(YIFoS Indonesia)



Dhia Rezki Rohaizad (he/they),
Deputy President, JEJAKA

Moderated by Tushar Malik (he/him), Project Lead, Key Populations Team, Aidsfonds, "Funding the Next Generation" session emphasized the importance of empowering youth-led organizations and fostering community-led decision-making. Panelists from Indonesia and Malaysia highlighted the need for donors to trust young leaders, provide technical assistance, and support cross-learning initiatives. They shared personal experiences on how mentorship and leadership transitions are essential for sustainable impact, especially in marginalized communities.

The panelists called for greater collaboration, data-driven advocacy, and flexibility in grant applications. The session concluded with a call to action for funders to connect youth organizations with broader networks and invest in long-term capacity building.

Recommendations

- Establish technical assistance programs to build youth leadership capacity.
- Collaborate with other organizations to build alliances, enhance collective resilience, and foster a deeper understanding of intersectionality. Working together amplifies impact and creates a stronger support system for advocacy.
- Become community-centered and leverage community insights to strengthen advocacy efforts, ensuring that initiatives are evidence-based, responsive, and reflective of the lived experiences of the community.
- Advocate for flexible grant applications (e.g., allowing audio submissions in place of written proposals).
- The panelist suggested auditing projects as a way to build trust with funders. This could refer to both financial audits and broader project evaluations, including impact assessments and compliance reviews.



CREATING INCLUSIVE AND SAFE CIVIC SPACES FOR LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITIES IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Research Presentation and Q&A



Moderator: **Nazek Selim**,
COC Netherlands



Dany Tariq Kheder,
Power of Pride Community of
Practice Member

The session "Creating Inclusive and Safe Civic Spaces for LGBTIQ Communities in Diverse Contexts" focused on research findings from Nigeria and Philippines, highlighting the impact of safe spaces on the mental health and well-being of LGBTIQ individuals. The presenters discussed the Power of Pride's Communities of Practice (CoP) approach, which involves online and in-person meetings to foster research and knowledge-sharing. Key themes included the definition and importance of safe spaces, challenges faced by LGBTIQ communities (such as legal barriers, internal discrimination, and societal stigma), and strategies to improve accessibility and psychological support.

The research highlighted a concerning trend of shrinking civic spaces for LGBTIQ communities. Increased visibility from past events and advocacy efforts often led to backlash from conservative groups, contributing to negative media portrayals and, in some cases, the red-tagging of activists, labeling them as terrorists. These dynamics have fostered an environment of fear and insecurity, further marginalizing LGBTIQ individuals. One poignant example shared involved a university student who was forced to drop out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, underscoring the real-world consequences of exclusion.

Additionally, the research identified significant structural challenges, including bureaucratic barriers such as a lack of dedicated funding and inadequate policy enforcement. The widespread stigma surrounding mental health further limits access to psychological support services for LGBTIQ individuals, exacerbating their vulnerability.

In response to these challenges, presenters recommended several strategies to enhance support systems. These included the establishment of peer support networks to provide community-based emotional care, the integration of psychological support services within educational institutions, and the strengthening of legal protections. Crucially, they also emphasized the need for dedicated funding for mental health interventions tailored to the needs of LGBTIQ communities.

Recommendations Shared by the Presenters (Based on Research):

- Enhance legal protection for LGBTIQ individuals. This recommendation stems from interviews and analysis conducted by the researchers, which highlighted legal gaps and lack of enforcement.
- Foster peer support networks to strengthen community resilience and mental well-being. This was recommended based on evidence from the fieldwork presented in the session.
- The research also identified internal discrimination within LGBTIQ communities through qualitative interviews and discussions. As a result, the following recommendations were made:
 - Address internal discrimination by creating inclusive practices and dialogues within the community.
 - Establish accountability mechanisms to ensure LGBTIQ spaces remain safe and inclusive for all members.

Recommendations from Participants during the Session:

- Use creative methods such as graphics, cartoons, and visual storytelling on social media to raise awareness and educate the public. These approaches can increase engagement and make complex issues more accessible.
- Incorporate the country-specific political, legal, and social contexts when designing and disseminating findings.



BUILDING INTERSECTIONAL SOLIDARITY: NAVIGATING INVISIBLE DISABILITIES IN QUEER ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY SPACES

Hybrid Panel discussion with audience Q&A

On the topic of invisible disability, the panel and moderators discussed personal experiences navigating everyday spaces with their own invisible disabilities and the prejudice they have suffered as a result. The overwhelming response from the panelists from India and Hong Kong was to 'reclaim rest as a right' rather than a privilege. The panelists described their overwhelming struggles in having to educate medical professionals, employers, friends, fellow activists, family members of their invisible disabilities that cause them to be extremely tired and exhausted while their conditions are dismissed as being 'not serious enough' to warrant rest.

Recommendations

- Reclaim rest as a right and collectively advocate against ableism.
- Create safe spaces within LGBTIQ groups for people with invisible disabilities to rest and recover as they participate in activism.



Tricia Ho (they/them),
Urgent Action Fund



**Mohammed Ali Khan
(they/them),** Youth Voices Count



Zee (she/they), Queer affirmative
counseling psychologist



Anoushka Virk (they/them), Initiative
for Health Equity, Advocacy, and
Research (iHEAR) at Sangath



Hemakshi (he/they), Support Group
facilitator for Queer Lifafa and
Founder of a support group for fat,
queer and disabled folx in India

Moderators:



Joshua Mark George, ADHD
Queeple and iHEAR, Sangath



Priyanka Chakrabarty,
ADHD Queeple

INTERSECTIONS OF SOGIESC AND COMPLEX EMERGENCIES IN ASIA: BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND INCLUSIVE RESPONSES

Workshop format with four facilitators leading four separate groups

In this workshop, facilitators from Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Philippines guided participants to discuss the challenges and recommendations concerning four sub-groups as follows: Climate change, Economic crisis, Conflict, and Emergency response. Each group had participants share their experiences dealing with the topics in relation to emergencies. The groups then collectively drafted a set of priority issues and recommendations to international donor agencies and governments. In conflict, LGBTIQ communities face added discrimination and violence as migrants and refugees, with relief not being SOGIESC inclusive. In climate change, LGBTIQ groups face similar discrimination. In an economic crisis, the work of LGBTIQ groups in assisting communities is rarely acknowledged, while in emergency response, LGBTIQ communities miss out on much needed aid as national emergency policies are often not geared to address the needs of LGBTIQ communities.

Recommendations

- Urge donors agencies to remove gender and sex identification requirements during relief disbursement in emergencies as LGBTIQ people might lack identification documents that align with their gender or sex identification.
- Make “rainbow kits”, containing essential items that cater to the specific needs of LGBTIQ people, available during natural disasters to disburse to LGBTIQ communities.



Dr. Thiyagaraja Waradas (He/Him)
Community Welfare and Development Fund - Sri Lanka



Joel Chester Pagulayan (He/Him, They/Them) - ASEAN SOGIESC Caucus



Ryan Silverio (They/Them)
ASEAN SOGIESC Caucus



Nandar (she/her)
Feminist Talks - Myanmar



Donna Nunez (She/Her)
ASEAN SOGIESC Caucus



Maruf Rahman (He/They)
ZE Project - Bangladesh



THE ECONOMIC COST OF DISCRIMINATION: DATA, INSIGHTS, AND PATHWAYS TO INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Panel discussion with audience Q&A



Keynote Address: **Dr. Albert Park**, Asian Development Bank



Roadmap Presentation: **Francesco Tornieri**, Asian Development Bank



Panel:
Moderator: **Aalap Shah**, Consultant Inclusive Economies and Financial Inclusion



Naomi Fontanos
APCOM



Maria Amelia Viteri, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)



Professor Lee Badgett, Koppa Labs



Hem Raj Regmi, National Statistics Office of Nepal



Mauricio Rodriguez Abreu (virtual), National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico

The panel discussion addressed the significant economic costs of discrimination and the urgent need for inclusive growth, emphasizing the challenges faced by marginalized communities, particularly LGBTIQ individuals. Discussions highlighted the substantial economic losses resulting from exclusion, the complexities of collecting data on LGBTIQ population, and the gaps between inclusive legal frameworks and effective policy implementation. Panelists stressed the importance of accurate data, collaborative efforts between governments and civil society, and targeted interventions to address intersectional discrimination, ultimately advocating for comprehensive, evidence-based policies that foster economic resilience and ensure equal opportunities for all.

Recommendations

- Enhance legal frameworks and ensure effective policy implementation to guarantee equal opportunities and dismantle discriminatory barriers.
- Prioritize the collection of comprehensive and accurate data that reflects the lived experiences of marginalized groups, enabling evidence-based policy development.

ILGA ASIA ANNUAL WORKPLAN AND FINANCE REPORT SESSION (FOR ILGA ASIA MEMBERS ONLY)

Presentation



Henry Koh,
Executive Director, ILGA Asia



Thae Su Su Thwe,
Finance Manager, ILGA Asia



Khine Su Win, Strategic
Development Director, ILGA Asia

This session on ILGA Asia's work plan and financial report provided an overview of the organization's activities and future directions, highlighting its commitment to advancing LGBTIQ rights across Asia. Discussions centered on ILGA Asia's extensive membership, its strategic goals, and its impact through advocacy, research, and humanitarian support. Key achievements included successful regional conferences, impactful UN engagement, and targeted programs for marginalized communities. Financial transparency and sustainability were emphasized, with detailed reports on income and expenditures, and plans for continued growth. .

Action Plan :

- Renew the Strategic plan and Theory of change (SPTOC)
- Gain ECOSOC status with the help of ILGA World or other organizations.

MOVEMENTS FOR LGBTIQ YOUTH AND CHILDREN IN TAIWAN AND THAILAND

Presentation with audience Q&A



Arty Sangsuwan
Project Coordinator of Young Pride Foundation



Cheng-Xian Yang, Director of Community Resources, Southern Office of the Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association.



Pollawat Raksachon (Juck), President of Sociology and Anthropology Student Committee and Youth Representative, Save the Children Thailand



Moderated by **Ami Peeranee Suparak**, Save the Children Thailand

This session highlighted the activism of LGBTIQ youth in Taiwan and Thailand, showcasing their efforts in driving social change while facing challenges such as discrimination, harassment, and mental health struggles. Discussions centered on the impact of Taiwan’s Gender Equality Education Act and the role of youth-led movements in advocating for same-sex marriage and gender-inclusive education. In Thailand, young LGBTIQ people continue to face harassment in schools and on online platforms, alongside high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts, which persists due to weak enforcement of legal protections. The session emphasized the need for sustained youth involvement, inclusive educational policies, and stronger community support to dismantle discriminatory barriers and ensure the rights and well-being of LGBTIQ youth.

Recommendations

- Improve education and strengthen legal protections by expanding SOGIESC education, enforcing anti-discrimination laws, and creating safer school environments.
- Supporting youth activism and mental health by providing leadership training, advocacy platforms, and access to mental health services for LGBTIQ youth and activists.

FIGHTING AGAINST THE ANTI-GENDER MOVEMENT IN EAST ASIA: THE PRACTICE OF EA ALLIANCE FOR ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Presentation with audience Q&A



Japan Alliance for LGBT Legislation (J-ALL)



Taiwan Equality Campaign



Rainbow Action (Korea)

The organizers presented key insights from their ongoing study, “A Comparative Study on LGBTQ+ Rights and Public Awareness,” which examined legal frameworks, public attitudes, and lived experiences of LGBTIQ individuals in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Using a modified Rainbow Europe Index**, the study found that while all three countries offer some legal recognition, comprehensive anti-discrimination protections remain absent. Taiwan leads in education and gender equality policies, South Korea has made progress in recognizing same-sex couples in health insurance, and Japan has introduced a policy paper on LGBTIQ suicide prevention, though restrictive policies persist in legal gender recognition, reproductive rights, and military service. Public attitudes, analyzed through World Values Survey (WVS) data, indicate increasing LGBTIQ acceptance, particularly in Japan and Taiwan, though South Korea has seen fluctuating support for gender equality. The session also explored how anti-gender movements in East Asia adopt Western rhetoric to influence local policies, particularly targeting trans rights.

Recommendations

- Call for action for coordinated activism, evidence-based policy advocacy, and sustained efforts to combat discriminatory rhetoric across East Asia.

***The Rainbow Europe Index by ILGA-Europe annually ranks 49 European countries (0–100%) based on laws and policies affecting LGBTI rights across seven key categories. It highlights both legislative progress and regression, offering a detailed, data-driven tool for comparison, analysis, and advocacy.*

QUEERING FORMAL WORKSPACES IN ASIA: A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Workshop format with guiding questions for discussions



Moderated by **Vandita Morarka**,
One Future Collective

The session explored the systemic challenges LGBTIQ individuals face in professional environments across Asia, highlighting widespread exclusion due to cultural biases, inadequate workplace policies, and the lack of legal protections. Participants from Indonesia, Lebanon, Japan, and Nepal shared firsthand experiences of job instability, lack of recognition, and the need to conceal their identities to secure employment. While some multinational corporations promote inclusivity, local companies often fail to do so. Trans individuals in Indonesia and Nepal face severe employment barriers, often resorting to informal work, while Lebanon's NGO sector offers slightly better opportunities than government and the private sector. In Japan, rigid corporate structures subject queer employees to microaggressions and pressures to conform. A common key issue across all the countries is the weak enforcement of existing inclusion policies, limiting their effectiveness in combating workplace discrimination.

Recommendations

- Establish Mechanisms for Measuring Success to ensure meaningful change and progress, examples:
 - Establish HR programs that foster allyship and take actionable steps toward inclusivity, especially in diverse regions where companies might be operating in both conservative and liberal areas. Examples:
 - Consistently discuss queer issues with top leadership, as their support is pivotal in driving change. A top-down approach can ensure that inclusivity initiatives are implemented more effectively and authentically.

- Help form Queer ally groups. The people joining the groups become visible allies of the queer community in their work places. The increased number of visible allies foster the sense of psychological safety for queer employees
- Encourage leadership teams to actively understand and support diverse identities.
- Implement affirmative action to ensure that queer and trans individuals have access to leadership roles.
- Introduce inclusive labor policies that offer equal opportunities and support trans and queer people in the workplace.
- To measure the success of queer-affirmative workplace strategies, companies should:
 - Collect quantitative and qualitative data, such as tracking the number of LGBTIQ employees and their experiences with inclusivity.
 - Use employee feedback to continuously evaluate the impact of inclusion policies.
 - Measure the retention rates and career progression of queer and trans employees to assess the effectiveness of the strategies in creating lasting cultural change.
- Foreign NGOs can offer support by amplifying Queer voices on the international stage and sharing their networks, enabling these communities to take charge of external aid and resources by managing the funds directly without an intermediary party.
- Queer people to explore diverse pathways to sustain and thrive economically, some examples already present in the room: business owners, government representative, entrepreneurs.



CULTURE AS CATALYST: HOW QUEER STORYTELLERS ARE SHAPING A COUNTER-NARRATIVE TO ANTI-LGBTQIA+ EXTREMISM

Presentations followed by Q&A



Diya Yonjan, writer, founder of The Melung Stories (The Queer Writer's room)



Shubham Negi, Filmmaker & Poet (Queer Frames screenwriting lab)



Jaane Haseena, Musician & Founder Zeenan Khana

The session explored the role of queer art and storytelling in resisting oppressive narratives. The presenters showcased their work across literature, film, and music, illustrating how queer storytelling serves as both a form of resistance and a means of reclaiming narratives. Their projects challenge dominant representations of queerness, highlight the lived realities of LGBTIQ communities beyond urban spaces, and create platforms for expression and solidarity. Through personal and communal storytelling, they emphasized the authenticity of queer voices, the need for more inclusive representation, and the transformative power of art in shaping counter-narratives to anti-LGBTIQ extremism.

Recommendations:

- Explore and invest in alternative in-person spaces where queer thoughts and identities can be shared more securely.
- Create, document, and archive Queer artistic traditions regardless of immediate recognition for even when stories are dismissed as unnecessary, preserving them ensures their cultural legacy remains intact.
- Support local queer artists by providing platforms, resources, and economic opportunities.
- Have a universal theme with queerness as a subtext to enable queer arts and stories reach wider audience

THE FRONTIERS OF LAW AND POLICY IN THE EAST ASIAN TRANS EQUALITY MOVEMENT

Presentations

DAY 4
FEBRUARY 27, 2025



Fumino Sugiyama,
Tokyo Rainbow Pride



Henry Tse,
Transgender Equality Hong Kong



Minhee Ryu, Korea Lawyers for
Public Interest and Human Rights



Ya-Hui Shen,
Taiwan Alliance to Promote
Civil Partnership Rights

This session on the frontiers of law and policy in the East Asian trans equality movement highlighted the ongoing challenges faced by trans individuals in countries like South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Key issues discussed included legal barriers to gender recognition, such as the requirement for surgical procedures and psychiatric evaluations, as well as the social stigma and discrimination faced by the trans community. Despite these challenges, panelists shared notable progress, including the elimination of sterilization requirements in Japan and successful legal cases in Taiwan where constitutional court case in for marriage equality in 2017 was won and then the first case for changing legal gender without surgery was won in 2021 and in Hong Kong where one of the panelists, Henry, shared their personal story of receiving an ID after 6 years of legal battle.

The speakers emphasized the importance of continued advocacy, strategic litigation, and public support to push for more inclusive policies.

Recommendations

- Need for alternative methods that are more equitable in proving gender identity, such as testimonies from family and friends.

LOVE, RAGE, JOY AND COLLECTIVE CARE - USING ARTS TO BUILD DESI QUEER AFFIRMATIVE SPACES FOR ADVOCACY

Workshop setting with group discussions



Pragya Sikka -
Friends Of Toto (FOT Foundation)



Yash Sharma
Official Humans Of Queer (OHOQ Foundation),
We Friends Of Toto (FOT Foundation)

The facilitators Pragya and Yash created a safe space for participants to share intimate stories of their experiences through art and illustration. Pragya showed how she started Friends of Toto, a space created for queer people to express themselves through arts when dealing with sexual violence, assault, that have created deep scars. Yash described the origins of Humans of Queer, inspired by Humans of New York, where he documents queer stories in Asia that highlight rural queer individuals as well as urban queer people.

Participants were asked to react to four prompts on Love, Rage, Joy, and Anger; then they were asked to express themselves through art or poetry or writing. Participants shared within their groups (if they felt comfortable enough to share).

This activity was designed for people to express emotion (some participants appreciated being able to draw or write poetry) without having to talk about their feelings. The moderators explained that talking about traumatic experiences can often be difficult and thus expressing emotions through arts and craft can help victims of sexual abuse deal with their wounds without having to share their trauma.



LEGAL MILESTONES AND HURDLES:

ADVOCACY FOR GENDER AND SEXUAL MINORITIES' RIGHTS IN SOUTH ASIA – A PAKISTANI PERSPECTIVE

Presentation from Session organizers followed by panel discussion



Mahnoor Aka Moon
(KSS, Prime Minister
Counsel, Member,
HRCP)



Alisha from Pakistan,
First Transgender School



Dr. Sayida from Pakistan



Anmol from Nepal,
Blue Diamond Society



Moderated by **Raza Haider**
(Dostana)

Moon presented the legal achievements through advocacy in Pakistan, highlighting the Transgender Person Act 2018 and the following amendments allowing transgender participation in elections. Later the panel discussion featured Anmol from the Blue Diamond Society (Nepal), Alisha from Pakistan (founding first transgender school in Pakistan), Dr. Sayida, currently serving transgender community in Pakistan and Moon as well. The moderated session addressed the persistent challenges, including criminalization of same-sex relations, barriers to gender recognition, and weak enforcement of laws, whereas the key discussions stressed on the importance of combining legal advocacy with social awareness campaigns promoting transgender inclusive education and countering misinformation. In conclusion, panelists highlighted grassroot organizations to collaborate with the policy makers to develop inclusive education and strong advocacy.



PLENARY 3 MARRIAGE EQUALITY MOVEMENTS ACROSS ASIA

Panel discussion with audience Q&A



Joyce Teng (Taiwan)

Executive Director,
Taiwan Equality Campaign



Phong (Vietnam)

Deputy Director, Institute for Studies of
Society, Economy, and Environment



Danny (Thailand)

President, Rainbow Sky Association
of Thailand



Sarita KC (Nepal)

Mitini Nepal



Taki Haro Kato (Japan)

Legal team member for MagiSoft lawsuit,
board member of Marriage for All Japan

The panel "Marriage Equality Movements Across Asia" brought together powerful stories of progress, movement building around marriage equality, and hope from across the region. Panelists from Taiwan shared how marriage equality has not only changed laws but also opened hearts in Taiwan helping families become more accepting of their LGBTIQ loved ones. Sarita KC from Nepal, highlighted that the fight for marriage equality has been fueled by storytelling and media mobilization, showing that behind every legal battle are real people and relationships. As Thailand celebrates their recent success, they acknowledged the collective effort of activists, political allies, and communities coming together to push for change, meanwhile also looking ahead to secure rights like surrogacy. Vietnam's journey highlighted the importance of public education, keeping marriage equality on the agenda for future legal reforms. In Japan, a blend of lawsuits and public support has shifted national attitudes, with 70% now backing marriage equality. The panel reminded everyone that marriage equality is more than a legal victory—it's a stepping stone towards dignity, protection, and equality.



UNMASK ORGANIZED TRANSPHOBIC ATTACK: UNDERSTANDING ANTI-TRANS MOVEMENTS ACROSS ASIA AND OUR FIGHTBACK

Panel Discussion with audience Q&A



Moderator: **Nhuun Yodmuang**,
Human Rights and Advocacy
Manager- Asia Pacific
Transgender Network



**Chitsanupong "Best"
Nithiwana**, Founder and
Executive Director, Young Pride
Foundation, Thailand



Angel Lama, Blue
Diamond Society, Nepal



Enkhmaa Enkhbold,
Mongolia LGBT Centre



Peach, Young Pride
Foundation, Thailand



Tama, Indonesia

This session on anti-gender backlash across Asia highlighted the increasing anti-gender rhetoric and discrimination, often justified through religious and cultural misinterpretations. Some of the reasons include political setbacks, misinformation campaigns framing trans rights as "Western ideologies", and withdrawal of funding from major organizations. Violence and discrimination remain rampant, with legal and structural barriers preventing access to healthcare and safety. Country-specific examples include Nepal's citizenship challenges, Pakistan's religious opposition, Thailand's legal progress alongside anti-gender movements, Mongolia's political and religious opposition, Indonesia's structural violence and more.

Recommendations

- Strengthen community networks, build alliances, combat misinformation, and advocate for inclusive legal protections and healthcare access through evidence-based advocacy and cross-border collaboration.
- Diversify funding by seeking support from multiple sources, such as grants, donors, and community fundraising, prioritize mental health and well-being, promote intersectionality, and hold perpetrators of anti-trans rhetoric accountable.

BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION WITH BUSINESSES: STRATEGIES OF ENGAGING CORPORATES IN LGBTIQ+ MOVEMENTS.

Presentation with audience Q&A



Sean Sih-Cheng du, Taiwan
Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline
Association, Secretary-
General, Taiwan



Sebastian Lin, Deputy
Executive Director ,Taiwan
Equality Campaign, Taiwan



Gon Matsunada,
Representative, Work
with Pride, Japan



Ramkrishna Sinha,
Co-Founder, Pride Circle,
India

This session focused on building and strengthening collaborations between LGBTIQ movements and corporations across Asia, with speakers from Taiwan, Japan, and India sharing insights on engaging businesses to support LGBTIQ rights and inclusivity. Key topics included finding mutually beneficial approaches, leveraging data to showcase economic benefits, conducting training and workshops, and developing inclusive workplace indexes like the Taiwan Inclusive Workplace Index and the Japan Pride Index. Challenges discussed involved sustaining corporate commitment, countering misinformation, and navigating global anti-gender movements. Emphasis was placed on building strong corporate relationships to ensure ongoing support for inclusive policies and fostering cross-country collaboration to strengthen advocacy efforts.

Recommendations

- Utilize inclusive workplace indexes, establish allyship networks, provide educational workshops, and leverage data-driven advocacy to promote LGBTIQ inclusivity while building strong, long-term relationships with corporations.
- Ensure sustained corporate commitment by integrating LGBTIQ inclusion into company policies, leadership engagement, and long-term strategies.
- Combating misinformation and resistance by providing education, aligning business and advocacy goals, and fostering open corporate dialogue on diversity and inclusion.

USING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH DIVERSE SOGIESC

Presentation with panel discussion



Phong Vuong (Vietnam)



Save the Children Cambodia



Peter (Nepal), BDS



Representative from the Philippines



Amy (Thailand, Save the Children Thailand)

This session explored how international human rights frameworks, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), can be leveraged to safeguard and promote the rights of LGBTIQ children. The discussion highlighted the role of civil society in monitoring compliance, submitting reports, and engaging in advocacy to ensure children's voices are heard in policymaking. Speakers from Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, Thailand, and the Philippines shared their experiences using these mechanisms to advance legal recognition, anti-discrimination policies, and inclusive education

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Many governments fail to submit their mandatory reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, leading to weak enforcement.
- Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in supplementing official reports to highlight overlooked issues.
- The UPR process provides recurring opportunities for advocacy, allowing activists to push for incremental changes.
- inclusive policy advocacy in Cambodia, and recommendations on sexual health education in the Philippines.
- Security risks and resistance from conservative groups remain major challenges, requiring discreet advocacy and coalition-building

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish allyship networks, provide educational workshops, and leverage data-driven advocacy to promote LGBTIQ inclusivity while building strong, long-term relationships with corporations.
- Civil society organizations should strengthen data collection efforts to provide evidence-based advocacy and highlight overlooked issues in national reports.
- Governments should integrate anti-bullying policies and inclusive education frameworks to create safe school environments for children with diverse SOGIESC.
- International human rights mechanisms should be leveraged to provide security and legal protections for activists and organizations advocating for LGBTIQ children's rights.



THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR LGBTQ+ INCLUSION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Presentation



Midnight Poonkasetwattana,
Executive Director, APCOM
Foundation



Liz Jacobs, Director of Global
Programmes, Open for
Business



Steph Galera, Head of
Southeast Asia, Open for
Business

The session presented key insights from “The economic case for LGBTQ+ inclusion in Southeast Asia”, a study which took place across Southeast Asia. Presentation contained compelling data, facts and figures showcasing how discrimination is impacting economies highlighting major issues such as reduced productivity, problems in talent retention, brain drain. The presenters made a compelling case for inclusive businesses, the discussion also underscored the need for reframing equality as social mobility, integrating LGBTQ+ inclusion into economic policies, and securing sustainable funding for community-led programs.

“Discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals leads to economic losses of up to 1.47% of GDP (33 billion Dollars) across Southeast Asian economies.”

Recommendations

- Obtaining and retaining funding for LGBTQ+ causes is a big challenge. The report data can be used to reframe the strategies to engage with funders and other stakeholders and make a stronger case for more investments for the causes. The data allows one to ask for changes with a capitalist approach of numbers, gains, and losses.
- Specific data from the report can be utilized to meet the country's goals. For example, the brain drain data would be relevant to countries like Indonesia, where there is already significant loss of talents to other inclusive countries, and for countries like Hong Kong, which would want to attract more talent.
- Looking into the intersection of the presented datasets with globally pressing subjects such as climate can be helpful in making the economic case for inclusion more strong.

SUBVERT AND SUSTAIN: CO-CREATING STRATEGIES TO RESOURCE FEMINIST MOVEMENTS TO COMBAT ANTI-RIGHTS AGENDAS

Workshop with moderators -
“storytellers” in each table



Joya Sikder, Sompurna -
Bangladesh



Rainbow, Qbukatabu -
Indonesia



Mario Patama, Transmen
Indonesia



Omkar Shinde, Nazariya
Foundation - India



Andi Suraidah, Legal
Dignity - Malaysia



Mehrub Moiz Awan,
Gender Interactive
Alliance - Pakistan

The session was structured around interactive storytelling and group discussions. The session began with participants reflecting on what resistance to anti-rights movements meant in their contexts. The room was then divided into six tables, each hosted by a storyteller from various South and Southeast Asian feminist and LGBTIQ organizations. These storytellers shared their lived experiences, advocacy strategies, and resource needs in resisting anti-gender movements. Participants then contributed their own perspectives, highlighting shared challenges and regional nuances.

Key challenges highlighted in the session included state-sponsored repression, threats from extremist groups, financial barriers, and the need for digital security. The session underscored the power of intersectional feminist and LGBTIQ coalitions, emphasizing that sustained change requires historical awareness, resource-sharing, and creative advocacy methods such as arts-based activism, queer feminist festivals, and online petitions.

Recommendations

- Use awareness, resource-sharing, and creative advocacy methods such as arts-based activism, queer feminist festivals, and online petitions for sustained change.
- Use Adaptability, coalition-building, and narrative reconstruction to resist anti-rights agendas.

PLENARY 4: CONFLICT AND CRISIS

Panel discussion with audience Q&A



Moderator:
Dr. Charbel Maydaa



Khine Su Win, Strategic
Development Director,
ILGA Asia



Nadia Rahman from
Bangladesh



Ribal Matouk, LGBTIQ+
TaskForce in Lebanon -
Co-chair



Thant from Myanmar



Angelique: Representative
of alQaws

Panelists from Bangladesh, Lebanon, Myanmar, Palestine and Afghanistan presented the humanitarian crisis situations each of those countries highlighting the particularly difficult conditions for LGBTIQ populations. Women in Afghanistan are adapting to over 100 regressive laws targeting dress code and public appearances, queer people in Lebanon are rallying against the movement to criminalize homosexuality, Myanmar queer groups are attempting to provide services to queer activists, Palestinian queer organizations are voicing their discontent and pink washing from the Israeli occupation state, and Bangladeshi queer groups face rising fundamentalists in the new administration. The overwhelming response from all panelists was to acknowledge that in certain regions queer groups are not able to formally register their organizations due to security threats, which is a major barrier to LGBTIQ organizations working in these countries as many donors have strict funding guidelines whereby they are not able to fund non-registered groups, limiting valuable resources for queer people in crisis situations. The panelists also urged participants to be aware of oppressive regimes using pink washing to justify their actions of oppression and violence.

Recommendations

- Fund non-registered groups in regions where it is not possible and/or risky for queer people to formally register their organizations.
- Training immigration officers dealing with asylum seekers on LGBTIQ needs during interviewing procedures .

DAY 5
FEBRUARY 28, 2025



MOBILIZING CROSS-CONSTITUENCY ADVOCACY TO ADVANCE SEXUAL RIGHTS IN ASIA AND PACIFIC

Open discussion with four presenters briefly sharing experiences



Samreen Shahbaz,
Independent Activist



Jean Chong, Asia Feminist
LBQ Network



Alexandra Johns, Asia Pacific
Alliance for Sexual and
Reproductive Health and Rights



Ryan Figueredo, Equal Asia
Foundation

The discussion kicked off with four participants sharing the scenario in their home countries across the region whilst focusing on the rise of fundamentalism, anti-gender movements, and opposition to bodily autonomy. The main topic discussed was SRHR with many participants sharing current hurdles to accessible SRHR in their countries and sharing methods of providing effective SRHR in their communities. There were some instances of improving conditions for LGBTIQ in the region, but primarily participants discussed how to navigate repressive laws. They advised finding legal loopholes that do not explicitly mention LGBTIQ but impact queer communities and amplifying those laws. These laws could indirectly protect queer people from gender and sexuality based violence. Also to better understand the needs of LGBTIQ people at the grassroots level, participants suggested investing more in grassroots activism such as finding and emboldening grassroots activists. There was a warning issued by a speaker not to revert back to traditional values in rejection of the rising Global North anti-gender movement as traditional values often also emphasize fundamentalism.

Recommendations

- Finding entry points and low hanging fruits on policies against gender based violence are easier to implement than changing the law entirely.
- Find laws generally that could protect LGBTIQ people even though they might not explicitly mention LGBTIQ in those laws and advocate for better enforcement of those laws as a method to protect LGBTIQ people

QUEER VOICES IN CONFLICT: ADVOCACY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE

Panel discussion and audience Q&A



Françoise Zanki, GEM



Danny Khder,
Independent activist



Yusuf, MOSAIC



Ribal Matouk, LGBTIQ+
TaskForce in Lebanon, Co-chair



Naziya Saeed, Journalist

Panelists from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Turkey described the challenges LGBTIQ people are facing in each of the countries in the region where war and crises have taken humongous human tolls. In Syria, the effects of torture and years of persecution of LGBTIQ people have had adverse impacts such as PTSD on communities, while in Lebanon the effects of war are being felt in present day. In Palestine, where apartheid is being enforced, activists reject Israel's acceptance of LGBTIQ values arguing apartheid has no place in LGBTIQ inclusion. Panelists collectively advocated for humanitarian response plans to have dedicated LGBTIQ mechanisms. Often in conflict, response plans do not prepare to work with LGBTIQ communities, often neglecting them in aid responses.

Recommendations:

- Advise international agencies, UN agencies, aid agencies to have an LGBTIQ plan in their humanitarian work before a crisis emerges.
- Be aware of PINK WASHING and prohibit occupying countries from using the LGBTIQ flag and talk about being progressive when their regime oppresses people in the region.
- Force humanitarian agencies through reporting mechanisms to be accountable and mobilize accordingly
- Allow local communities to receive assistance without being formally registered since those groups might be persecuted in their home countries. Those groups will have the most effective ways to administer support to their communities.

AI AND DISABILITY: A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE OF ACCESSIBILITY

Presentation with group discussions



Shane Bhatla (he/they) -
LGBTIQ+ and Disability Inclusion
Technical Expert (GEDSI)



Tharindi Devasurendra (they/them) -
Independent Consultant

This session explored the intersection of disability rights, technology, and LGBTIQ advocacy, highlighting the need for accessibility and inclusivity within the movement. Discussions covered the use of assistive technology at Pride events, the potential of 3D printing for creating customized assistive devices, and the biases present in AI and media representation of disabilities. The session included group discussions which aimed at simulating various disabilities and effectively demonstrating the everyday challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Participants shared their lived experiences of barriers related to mobility, communication, and accessibility, which highlighted the inadequacy of current infrastructures and societal attitudes. These activities highlighted that while technological solutions are valuable, human interaction, empathy, and understanding are equally critical in creating inclusive environments.

Recommendations

- Implement accessible technologies, reduce AI biases, and enhance virtual participation options.
- Promote social understanding, improve media representation, and provide effective human support systems.

POWER OF PRIDE ADVOCACY ACHIEVEMENTS: LGBTI ADVOCACY WINS & THE ROAD AHEAD – STRENGTHENING NATIONAL, REGIONAL & GLOBAL IMPACT

Presentation, followed by panel discussion

Moderator:



**Robert Akoto Abu
AFO**, Advocacy
Manager, Pan Africa
ILGA



Maria, Global
Advocacy Advisor,
COC Netherlands

Panelist:



Sarita KC
Mitini, Nepal



Phong Vuong
Vietnam



Tama
Indonesia

The session highlighted the impactful work of a 5-year strategic partnership (2021–2025) funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by COC Nederland, Pan Africa ILGA, and ILGA Asia. The session focused on key advocacy wins, including Vietnam's success in influencing the government's support for the first intersex resolution at the Human Rights Council, Indonesia's submission of the first trans-specific report spotlighting trans men's reproductive rights, and Nepal's push for LBT women's representation in policy discussions. Despite these gains, the panel addressed ongoing challenges such as data gaps for data driven advocacy, limited post-report funding, gender biases in healthcare, and geopolitical pushback driven by anti-gender movements.


Recommendations

- Enhance collaboration between national, regional, and global advocacy efforts to strengthen policy influence, share best practices, and secure sustained support for LGBTI rights.
- Diversify funding sources and invest in activists' capacity-building.
- Use community-led research to inform policy and influence international bodies.

POWER IN PARTNERSHIPS


Presentation, followed by panel discussion

Moderator:




Emily Dwyer,
Edge Effect


Panelist:



Charbel Maydaa,
MOSAIC-MENA



Pisey Ly
RoCK (Cambodia)



Bryant Roosevelt, Crisis
Response Mechanism

The session explored the complex dynamics between Global North funders and Global South implementing organizations, particularly those working in the LGBTIQ sector. Through panel discussions and interactive activities, participants examined how power imbalances manifest in international partnerships through control over project design, budgets, compliance requirements, and predetermined ways of working. The session highlighted the challenges faced by local organizations when budgets are designed without understanding local contexts, when sensitive information must be disclosed to receive funding, and when policies that affect the partners are established without involving primary beneficiaries. Participants shared personal experiences of successful partnerships, emphasizing that effective collaborations are built on trust, transparent communication, mutual respect, flexibility, and commitment to sustainability. The discussion acknowledged that while institutional relationships are important, successful partnerships are often driven by individuals with shared values and genuine communication that can withstand challenges and evolve over time.

Recommendations

- Ensure local organizations have meaningful voice and agency in all aspects of project design and implementation.
- Work collaboratively with partners to anticipate potential funding changes and develop contingency plans.
- Explore alternative funding approaches that promote sustainability beyond traditional donor relationships.



CHARTING THE FUTURE: INSIGHTS FROM THE QUEER FEMINIST FUND SCOPING RESEARCH

Presentation, followed by group discussion



Jean Chong
Executive Director,
Asia Feminist LBQ Network



Phoebe De Padua
Senior Program Associate, South
and Southeast Asia, Foundation
for Just Society

The session revealed critical funding challenges facing LBQ+ organizations across Asia. Led by Jean Chong from the Asia Feminist LBQ Network and Phoebe De Padua from Foundation for Just Society, the conversation-style discussion highlighted how these organizations struggle with intense competition for limited resources, lack of visibility, restrictive short-term grants, and complex application processes that favor urban groups. Research findings from 66 key informant interviews demonstrated that LBQ issues are systematically overlooked in both LGBTIQ and women's rights reporting. In response, the Queer Feminist Fund aims to disrupt traditional funding dynamics by establishing an activist-led approach that prioritizes multi-year core funding, addresses rural needs (covering 60% of Asia), and challenges Western-imposed frameworks. Participants emphasized the importance of trust-based funding models that recognize regional political complexities and support organizations working on systemic issues related to patriarchy, land rights, and indigenous communities.

Recommendations:

- Establish flexible multi-year funding structures with simplified application processes to empower LBQ+ organizations and to create sustainable change beyond the inadequate 12-month project cycles.
- Develop core operational funding streams specifically for underrepresented groups like Bi+ and indigenous LBQ+ communities while creating regional advisory councils to ensure funding decisions reflect local realities.
- Implement comprehensive capacity building programs alongside funding to address the skills gap in proposal writing and organizational development identified by conference participants.

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QUEERMUNITY COMMUNITY SPACE



 ILGA Asia
Conference
2025





In the outdoor area of the Conference venue, various organizations displayed helpful and informative tools, resources, information, and gifts for attendees at the Queermunity community space. These ranged from freebies such as underwear with emboldening messages to brochures about LGBTIQ organizations working in various countries to fundraising campaigns. Some of the displaying organizations were Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Foundation, Gehendra Dhimai Foundation, iSEE & ICS, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), A Queer Museum, Rainbodhi SG, and Youth Voices Count. Attendees were able to access invaluable information on health and safety, coalition building, and networking with other organizations.

CONFERENCE
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Arts and Culture Space



 ILGA Asia
Conference
2025





The Arts and Culture Space at the ILGA Asia Conference consisted of visual works from LGBTIQ artists and activists from across Asia including contemporary artworks, poetry, graphic novels, paintings, photography and much more. The space allowed attendees of the Conference to understand different cultures, learn from each other's various stories, and a space for introspection and learning. Approximately 11 artists and art collectives displayed their works over the course of the Conference. Some of the displaying collectives included Humans of Queer, Transgender equality Hong Kong, Art Haaat, Krishnachura: Center for Gender Minorities Rights, Gehendra Dhimal Foundation, A Queer Museum, and various individual artists.



CONFERENCE
Report 2025

OUR SUBSTANTIAL *Strides and Achievements*



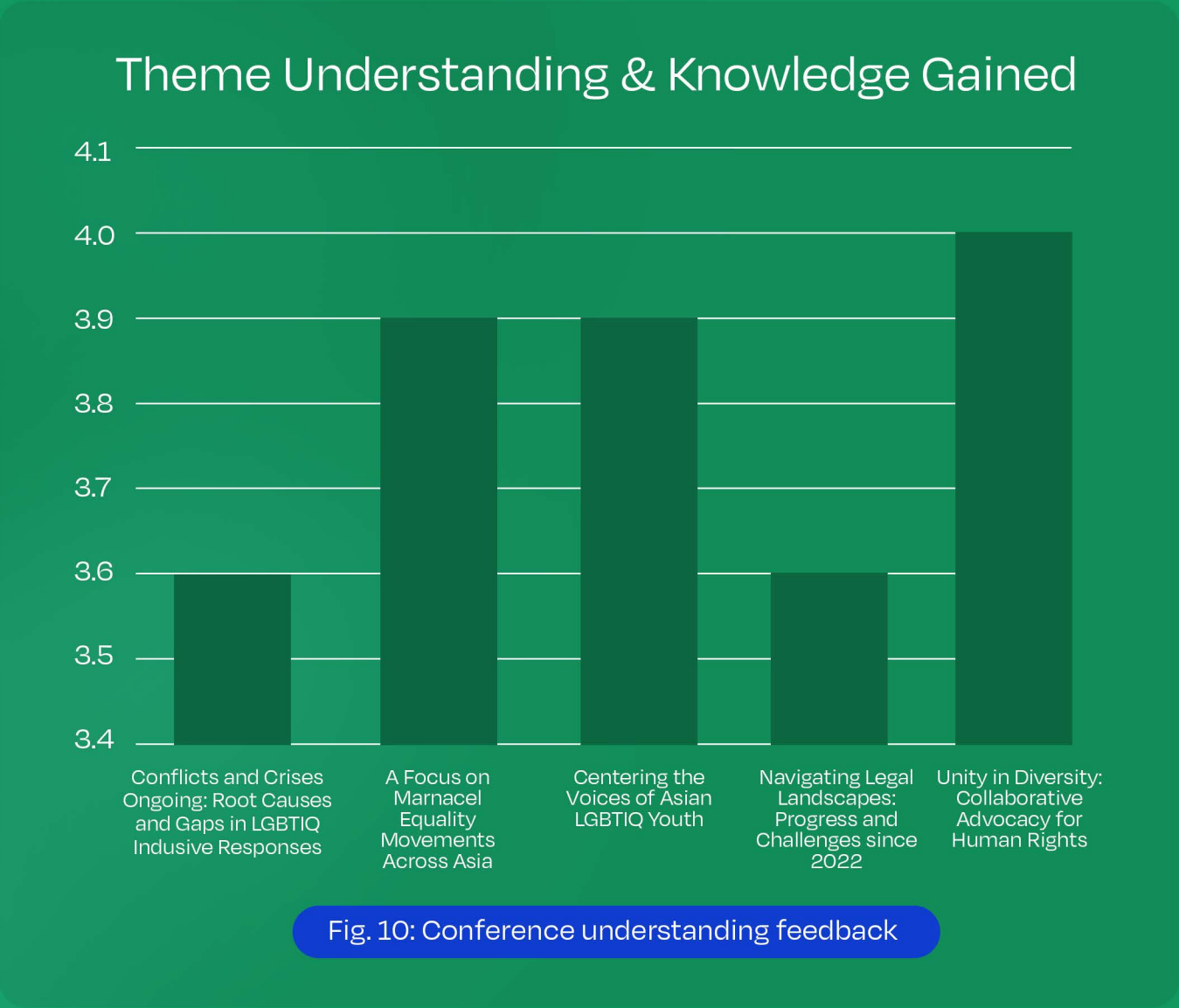
The 10th ILGA Asia Conference reached a significant milestone hosting its largest ever conference with 604 registered participants including 111 scholarship recipients who actively enriched the quality and discussions at the conference.

The local host organization, Blue Diamond Society, played a crucial role in the success of the conference by mobilizing dedicated volunteers. A total of 25 volunteers from Nepal were mobilized, with clear role divisions and coordination ensured by focal persons from both ILGA Asia and BDS. Their dedicated support in logistics, participant assistance, and event management was crucial in maintaining the smooth flow of the conference. Beyond operational efficiency, the volunteers' active involvement also demonstrated local ownership, strengthened community engagement, and created a welcoming environment, showcasing how grassroots participation is central to the success of regional movements.

The Conference was diligently organized through the dedicated efforts of 28 ILGA Asia staff and board members. Additionally, sign language interpreters and translators were employed throughout the Conference improving accessibility where possible to a wider range of participants. Also on site, there were medical professionals providing needed medical care for the attendees. Similarly, supporting the documentation of the Conference were a talented local media crew taking photographs and videos with consent from the attendees as well as a team of six diligent notetakers from CUE who attended every open session throughout the conference.

THEME UNDERSTANDING & KNOWLEDGE GAINED

The conference’s impact on participants' understanding of key themes varied. The topic “Conflicts and Crises Ongoing: Root Causes and Gaps in LGBTIQ Inclusive Responses” was rated 3.6, suggesting that while it provided insights, further clarity or discussion may be needed. The themes “A Focus on Marriage Equality Movements Across Asia” and “Centering the Voices of Asian LGBTIQ Youth” both received a 3.9, showing a moderate level of impact. “Navigating Legal Landscapes: Progress and Challenges since 2022” was also rated 3.6, indicating that this theme could be explored in greater depth in future conferences. The highest-rated theme was “Unity in Diversity: Collaborative Advocacy for Human Rights”, which received a 4.0, reflecting strong resonance among attendees.



MEMORABLE MOMENTS & KEY TAKEAWAYS

When asked about the most valuable or memorable moments, many attendees highlighted the importance of networking and community building. The first-day trans pre conference and the intersex pre-conference were particularly noted for their significance in fostering meaningful discussions. Some attendees also appreciated the mental health research findings session and the anti-gender pre-conference, which they found relevant and impactful. Additionally, the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the conference was highly valued, with one participant mentioning the importance of being represented as a lesbian woman with blindness.

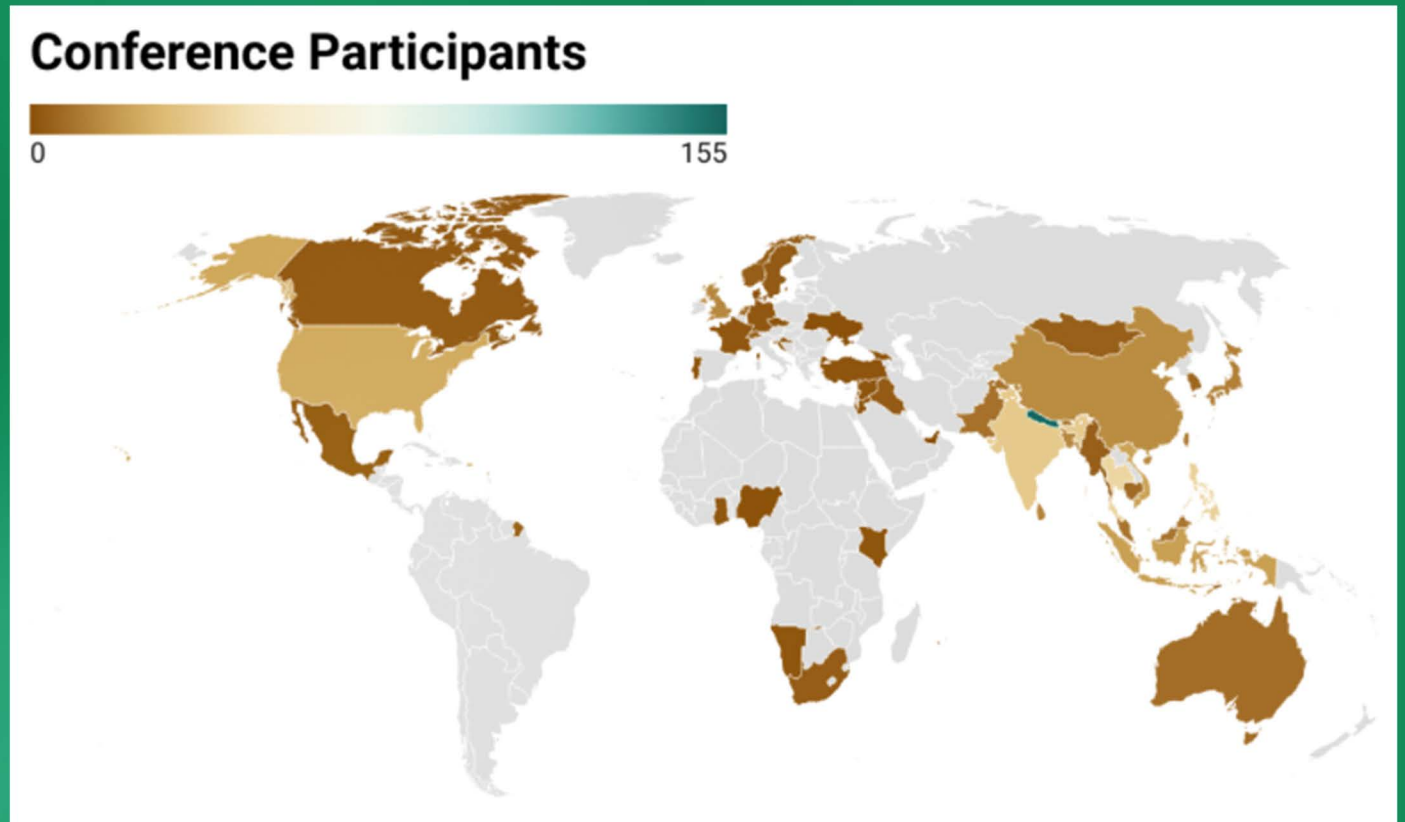


Fig. 11: Global Participation heat map

"I think this platform really helped me to build my networking skills and also my communication skills...everytime I hear someone else's story it's so much relat[able]. I think it has also healed me to be a better person...I felt really safe here because everyone is queer, and also people who are not from the queer community have been really respectful. This is the most safest that I have ever felt in my life"

Anmol, Nepal

"The most interesting part of this conference was meeting people from different countries, background, perspective and relating to them. Collective realization that it's not just Nepal going through a tough time but we all are experiencing this. This platform also has helped me build a network and encouraged me to open up. Everyone is open minded and it's super easy to smile and start a conversation without any hesitation"

Anonymous, Nepal

"The gatherings of different identities in one place really helped a lot of people...especially personally for me for 35 years, I thought that I am the only one in the world so this type of event really connects me with my community, with the people around me"

Anonymous Participant

"It feels like the entire queer world is here, there's a lot of safe space, a lot of supportive space, no masking.... you can just be your authentic self..... you can show up anyway you want and there will be no judgement.....I gained a lot of theoretical understanding, what else is happening in the rest of the world, how we can collaborate with other countries and organizations".

Anonymous, India

"I want to express my gratitude to ILGA Asia, the organizers and facilitators, for the success of this conference. The opportunity to be chosen as a fully sponsored ILGA Asia scholar has been priceless, and I'm incredibly appreciative and honored. Through the conference, I've gained so much insight into intersectionality, activism strategies and gotten a deeper understanding of anti-gender movements both in Asia and globally. I've also been moved by personal stories from activists and incredible activist art, proving that Activism and Edutainment are not only an effective strategy but perhaps crucial one. Additionally, it has been a great opportunity to connect with activists and representatives of groups that are making a difference on the ground. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this experience and returned home with more than 20 pages of ideas and strategies that I'm eager to implement in my own work."

Blake Chan, Hong Kong

"I want ILGA Asia to make more conference, session that includes, involves and discusses about transgender men, as the ratio of transgender men compared to others in this 5 days conference is very thin, I want ILGA Asia to create more space for us"

Raham, Indonesia

"It's my first time at the ILGA Asia conference, and I'm having a lot of fun. First of all, some of the pre-conferences were absolutely amazing. The new stuff I got to learn around anti rights and how anti rights movements are collating globally. The presenter's work - counter surveillance resonated really well with me because that is the sort of work we are doing in Pakistan as well. It was interesting to know that that sort of work was being done elsewhere."

What platforms such as these (ILGA Asia conference) do, is they grant us the opportunity to sit with each other, exchange notes, rub heads, nerd it out and see where we can take the movement in the future. I also do believe that given the fact Asia is so big and diverse and has very strong political movement from each particular region, I would love to see in the future, ILGA Asia conferences bringing much more emphasis on Muslim nations and people coming from Muslim majority context, with specific spaces and sessions curated so that they can come together, interact and develop a future that commensurates with how political Islam is functioning today. Thank you"

Mehrub Moiz Awan, Director of strategy, Gender interactive alliance, Pakistan

Media EXPOSURE

Erasing 76 Crimes

"This is an opportunity for Nepal to lead discussions that shape policies across Asia," BDS Executive Director Manisha Dhakal was quoted as saying by the Kathmandu Post. "Love is the foundation of our identities and movements. This conference has shown that love is a force for justice and positive change. Nepal's progress in LGBTIQ+ rights should inspire others to follow."

The Himalayan Times

"The sessions addressed the issues such as political repression, humanitarian crises, and anti-rights movements while uplifting youth-led initiatives driving change."

According to organisers, participants would return home with them the momentum built in Kathmandu. The conference set the stage for stronger cross-border collaborations, more inclusive policies, and a united stand against ongoing challenges. 'The road to equality is long, but with shared knowledge, solidarity, and the power of love, the movement continues to advance,' reads the release issued by organisers."

Nepal Monitor

"This conference arrived at a critical time. The US government is pulling back its support for global human rights, including LGBTQIA+ rights. This shift makes it more important for local groups and activists to unite and create change"

"Nepal has become a leader in LGBTQIA+ rights in South Asia. The country has made significant progress in recognizing the rights of sexual and gender minorities. Because of this, Nepal was the perfect place to host this key event"

Adobo Magazine

"Co-curated by ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), ILGA Asia, Blue Diamond Society, and the Queer Livelihood Project, the Arts and Culture Space at ILGA Asia provided an unprecedented platform for queer artists and cultural workers to assert their rightful place in LGBTQIA+ activism. Featuring over 60 artworks from more than 15 countries, including the Philippines, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Nepal, and Iran, this space was more than an exhibition — it was an act of defiance, a collective outcry, and a celebration of queer identities through various artistic expressions"



Rising Nepal Daily

"Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Nawal Kishor Sah Sudi, said the government was committed to improving the rights of sexual and gender minorities. 'Every person shall have the right to speak up [about their] own identity, sexual orientation, be free from discrimination and violence and achieve equality.'"



The DMN News

"Save the Children's research report, Healing the Rainbow: Bridging Mental Health Gaps for LGBTQI+ Children and Youth in Nepal and Bhutan, reveals alarming levels of mental health challenges faced by LGBTQI+ children and youth in both countries. The research was launched at The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA) Asia Conference.

According to the research, 42.7 percent of LGBTQI+ children and youth in Nepal and 76.7 percent in Bhutan reported experiencing anxiety or depression in the last two weeks. Moreover, more than two-thirds of LGBTQI+ youth in Nepal and Bhutan have never accessed formal mental health services due to stigma, discrimination, and a lack of LGBTQI+-affirming providers, and fear of breach of privacy and confidentiality. Transgender and non-binary youth in Nepal reported the highest mental health distress, citing societal prejudice and economic vulnerability as key stressors."



The Kathmandu Post

Nepal hosts international meet on LGBTIQ+ rights

Speaking at the event, Henry Koh, executive director of ILGA Asia, had a metaphorical take on the event's organisation in Kathmandu. "In this city cradled by the Himalayas, we are reminded that mountains are not just landscapes. They are symbols of endurance—standing tall against time and tide," Koh said. "And isn't that what it means to be queer in Asia? To exist in a world that tries to erode us, yet remain unshaken?"

Raj Chaudhary, a transgender man from Sudurpaschim Province, reflected on Nepal's shortcomings in trans healthcare and legal protections.

"We cannot forever remain content that Nepal is relatively more progressive [compared to many other Asian countries]," Chaudhary said. "We need to move forward more strongly."

Asia faces coordinated attack from anti-rights and anti-gender movements

"First, governments are using vague laws like 'morality' clauses and 'national security' regulations to criminalise activism. In Malaysia and Brunei, sharia laws are used to persecute queer individuals, while in Indonesia, local bylaws target gender and sexual minorities.

Second, anti-gender movements are gaining strength, backed by religious fundamentalists and nationalist groups. These movements spread disinformation and block gender-inclusive policies. In South Korea, they have prevented anti-discrimination laws, and in the Philippines, they oppose SOGIE [sexual orientation and gender identity/expression] equality bills that ensure rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity" - Henry Koh

Nepal News

“Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Nawal Kishor Sah Sudi, has said the government is committed to improving the rights of sexual and gender minorities.”

Opening the ILGA Asia Conference 2025 (Feb 24-28) themed “Diversity Dynamics: Unifying for a Just, Inclusive and Sustainable Asia” organised by the Blue Diamond Society here today, the Minister spoke the essentiality of cooperation and coordination among the government, civil society, international partners, media and communities to make policy reforms, institutionalize rights of sexual and gender minorities and bring positive change in the society.

“Collaboration and mutual understanding is a significant base for advancing gender equality,” he said, insisting on participation of communities in building the inclusive society.”

KhabarHub

“Pant, who made history as Nepal’s first openly gay parliamentarian in the first Constituent Assembly (2008-12), disowned the gathering, stating that the conference was too extravagant given the current challenges facing sexual and gender minorities worldwide, including in Nepal.”

Pant pointed out that the LGBTIQ+ community is at risk of losing essential services due to sudden funding cuts from the United States.

In an interview with RSS, Pant argued that instead of hosting a large-scale event, resources could be better allocated to smaller, community-based organizations to ensure their long-term sustainability. He emphasized that while international conferences are important for visibility and networking, they should not overshadow the immediate, pressing needs of vulnerable communities”

The United Church of Canada

“As a lesbian, the sight of hundreds of LGBTQIA+ participants in one place was something I’d never seen before and immersed me in a positive energy that I rarely experience elsewhere. Even in Japan, I often feel isolated. But in Kathmandu, I felt at home, with a profound sense of security and belonging that I still carry with me.”

The pre-conference began with sessions focused on lesbian, trans, bisexual, intersex, and other identities. I attended the lesbian session, where we exchanged experiences about the unique challenges facing lesbian communities across Asia, including the marginalization we often face. In regions where discrimination is severe, LBT women have fewer opportunities to come out. That kind of invisibility was something I had felt before deciding to be open about my sexuality.”

MOTIONS, VOTING AND NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD

A new executive board was also announced on the final day of the Conference after voting had been completed. Eight regional board members, six identity board members, two chairs, and two ILGA representatives for the ILGA World Conference were revealed with three alternate positions as well. One alternate position remained vacant.

Representatives from each of the preconference groups read a statement at the final day of the Conference with succinct recommendations for ILGA Asia and the wide community. ILGA ASIA announced that a copy of these statements would be available on their website later.

On the final day of the Conference, the Philippines was revealed as the next host country for the ILGA Asia Conference set to be hosted in 2027. Delegates of the Philippines came onto the stage and graciously welcomed all participants to the next conference. Japan had bid for the conference as well but decided not to pursue the bid in the end, making Philippines the sole bidder. The organizers thanked Blue Diamond Society and Nepal for hosting the successful conference.

Regional Representatives

East Asia: Sean Sih Cheng Du & Joyce Teng

South East Asia: Phong Vuong & Best Chitsanupong

South Asia: Tashi Tsehten & Mahnoor/Moon

West Asia: Bechara Samneh & Bakhan Qadir

Identity Representatives

Bisexual Representative: Raza Haider

Intersex Representative: Jeff Cagandahan

Non-Binary Representative: Artemis Akbary

Trans Representative: Aisha Mugall

Women's Representative: Claire de Leon

Youth Representative: Aabyaz Mustafa

Co-Chairs

Co-Chair 1: Phong Vuong

Co-Chair 2: Aisha Mugall

ILGA World Representatives

ILGA World Representative 1: Best Chitsanupong

ILGA World Representative 2: Tashi Tsheten

Alternates

Co-Chair Alternate 1: Raza Haider

Co-Chair Alternate 2: –

ILGA World Alternate Representative 1: Claire De Leon

ILGA World Alternate Representative 2: Sean Sih Cheng Du

Recommendations

FROM THE COMMUNITY



Context

Recommendation from the Intersex Community.
Context: Currently most countries in Asia have a single gender marker on official legal documents which is problematic for intersex persons whose sex at birth does not match sex at adulthood.

Recommendation to mitigate the gap of knowledge and social acceptance

Recommendations to fight rising backlash and discrimination

Recommendations

The Conference advises governments to mandate disaggregated data collection on sex markers at birth and gender identity in adult years, following ethical guidelines to prevent discrimination.

Decentralizing awareness - Awareness activities around Queer rights should not be limited to urban centers.

Develop intersectional counter-narratives, build digital security, and collaborate with grassroots & advocacy groups

Context

Recommendations

Recommendation from the Interfaith Preconference to tackle exclusion and binary ideologies in faith spaces

Foster interfaith dialogue, promote inclusive religious narratives, and amplify lived experiences

Recommendations to tackle the Issue of visibility, representation and data inclusion brought up in multiple sessions.

- Improve disaggregated data on SOGIESC
- Include intersex & non-binary options in legal IDs and census
- Increase visibility through storytelling & media

Recommendations to build intersectionality & cross- movement solidarity

- Center Indigenous, disabled, caste-marginalized, and working-class voices
- Promote joint feminist–queer–interfaith coalitions
- Resist co-optation through shared narrative-building

Recommendation for economic inclusion & equity in the workplace

- Develop inclusive workplace indexes (e.g., Taiwan, Japan)
- Implement affirmative hiring and leadership pathways
- Reframe inclusion as economic and productivity benefits

Recommendations to use art, culture and storytelling as resistance and healing

- Fund and archive queer arts initiatives
- Use art for trauma healing and advocacy
- Promote cultural production beyond urban centers

Context

Recommendations from the community to the Donors to tackle funding disparity and promote resource equity

Recommendations

- Fund Directly to Partners on the Ground
- Promote flexible, long-term funding tailored to local movements
- Prioritize underfunded groups (youth, trans, intersex)
- Build pooled donor models and reduce intermediaries
- Ensure that resources reach grassroots and frontline organizations that are actively engaged in advocacy and service delivery.
- Prioritize flexible, long-term funding that allows local partners to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Beyond financial support, create technical assistance, capacity-building, and security support for emerging organizations.
- Provide legal and administrative guidance to help smaller organizations access and manage funding effectively.
- Explore Group Funding Models
- Consider funding coalitions, networks, and collectives, allowing multiple organizations to share resources, knowledge, and advocacy strategies.
- Encourage regional and intersectional collaboration, strengthening movements across borders.

Recommendations from the community to HIV Funders

- Increase Funding to Transgender Communities
- Support trans-led organizations that can effectively advocate for policies and programs tailored to their communities.
- Support Community-Led Initiatives
- Focus on Advocacy and Intersectionality
- Promote positive narratives and emphasize the contributions of trans communities to society to counter the portrayal of transgender individuals as "society destroyers"
- Support public education campaigns that challenge harmful stereotypes and push back against anti-trans rhetoric.
- Embrace Hyperlocalization and Resist Western Narratives

Thank you to our donors and partners!



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
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Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



KALEIDOSCOPE
INTERNATIONAL TRUST



The Commonwealth
Equality Network



Women's Fund Asia



THE
QUEER
LIVELIHOODS
PROJECT



नेपाल रेडक्रस सोसाइटी



OUTRIGHT
INTERNATIONAL



RIGHT HERE
RIGHT NOW



International
Planned Parenthood
Federation



With sincere appreciation, we extend our deepest thanks to the ILGA Asia community, our other partners, and our members for their invaluable contributions to the conference.



ILGA Asia Conference 2025

Diversity Dynamics:
Unifying for a Just, Inclusive,
and Sustainable Asia

CONFERENCE
Report 2025



ilgaasia.org