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Dear Friend,

What a year these past two years have been. Many of you, without a doubt, have had to cope with lockdowns, mental health issues, financial troubles, and a variety of other problems resulting from the COVID-19 epidemic. A pandemic that struck and transformed the world as we knew it. Just like you, as individuals and an organisation, we have had to confront these issues head-on with as much grit as possible.

We started 2020 with recognition for the crucial and consistent work we do. This recognition made us even more committed to doing more for our community and advocating for the rights of African LGBT+ youths. We did not realise the year would be more complex than anticipated until the pandemic came into full force a few months later. We spent the remainder of the year learning about our current, yet unknown, situation resulting from the pandemic.

We looked within for help, both for ourselves and for our community. Furthermore, we launched our investigation into how COVID impacted LGBT+ youths. We started a new project to help young African LBT+ women and a COVID impact support fund.

With many unknowns and an ever-mutating virus, 2021 seemed like an extension of 2020. However, vaccines and lower infection rates sparked optimism, but sudden COVID mutations and global restrictions impacted our plans. Nevertheless, we persevered, formed new partnerships, increased our COVID community impact support fund.

We expanded and improved our advocacy efforts at the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights. We also completed the second phase of our Fuelling Digital Activism training, which has become essential because of the pandemic’s new reality of extended virtual work and lifestyle. Over the last two years, it has become apparent that our power as a community working together for the greater good produces incredibly positive results.

We know we can achieve success despite any obstacle when we stand united. We’ve heard harrowing stories of challenges many of our community members faced during this period. However, we’ve equally heard stories of resilience, love, support, and chosen family.

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These stories inspire and motivate us to keep advocating for the mental health and general wellbeing of LGBT+ youths in Africa. We believe in changing laws, hearts, and minds while empowering and creating safe spaces for our community members to live well-meaning lives.

As we look forward to a new era of change, great prospects, and mountains to scale, we renew our commitment to doing more for the community. We are grateful to all of our collaborators, community members, and people who help us carry out this critical job. We still have a long way to go; however, we will fight for our rights peacefully and consistently, and we shall win.

By learning more about our work, giving, and standing in solidarity, we want to continue to depend on your critical support for African LGBT+ youth. We hope that you will be inspired by our challenges and numerous achievements throughout the period covered by this report. And as we head on upward and ahead, may you and your loved ones always be surrounded by love and light.

In Solidarity,

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Our 2020–2021 Board Members

Weema Askri
Chair
Tunisia

Orneill Latiyah
Co-Chair
Ivory Coast

Amavi Ayité
Treasurer
Togo

Qwin Mbabazi
Member
Uganda

Mariyem Gamar
Secretary
Morocco

Nalumino Likwasi
Member
Zambia

Amutwendize Rodgers
Members
Rwanda
Our Members 2020/2021

Amanda Bosco  
Uganda

Harry Ilie  
Nigeria

Ifeatu Nnaobi  
Nigeria

Youba Darif  
Morocco

John Sam  
Ghana

Terrence Moyo  
Zimbabwe

Jürgen Lasavanne  
Mauritius

Shamim Salim  
Kenya

Abongile Matyila  
South Africa

Najeeb Fokeerbox  
Mauritius

Junior Basosila  
Congo

Lix  
Burkina Faso

Obse  
Ethiopia

Sibo Olivier King  
Burundi

Dongmo Theo  
Cameroon

Clara Shuma  
Tanzania

Mahmoud  
Egypt

Dumisho Gatsha  
Botswana

Thangenzi Potsane  
Namibia

Evane Yamamoto  
Mali

Rado Nendrassana  
Madagascar

Sandra Nafula  
Kenya

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Our Staff Members

Basiru Alumbugu (Esq)
Program Manager

Lamyâ Achary (Hd)
Research and Documentation Officer

Emma Onekekou
LGBT+ Women Program Officer

Stephen C
Executive Coordinator

Amanda Play
Operations Associate

Saratu Umar
Finance Officer

Emeka Amaechi
Staff Assistant

Timiebi Ebitibiwuwa
Membership & Communications Officer

Raj Bassey
Strategic Communications Consultant

Fehintoluwa Ayinla
Communications Assistant
Our History

We created the African Queer Youth Initiative (AQYI) in 2015 as a bold and essential endeavour to close the gap between regional youth leadership and collaboration among African LGBT+ youths. The absence of real youth leadership and representation, particularly within the larger movement, was a source of frustration for the young LGBT+ Africans who convened for the 5th Changing Faces, Changing Spaces Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. The AQYI was founded to address this situation and broader issues and to act as a unifying force for LGBT+ youths throughout Africa. Efforts began with planning and strategic representation at conferences across the continent and worldwide. However, our decision to build a formal organisation and structure to assist us to achieve our aims and objectives of furthering the sexual health and rights of LGBT+ youths in Africa was influenced by the interests of many African LGBT+ youths and community members. Since our inception, we have grown exponentially and continues to work with African LGBT+ youths to develop innovative and peaceful strategies for empowering LGBT+ youths across Africa, as well as platforms that allow them to engage actively and have an authentic voice in the fight for their freedom.
**Our Mission**

Our mission is to amplify the voices of queer African youths and to ensure that their sexual health and rights, and general wellbeing are respected, guaranteed, and promoted.

**Networking**
Offering platforms and opportunities for LGBT+ youth to connect and exchange information, establish a shared agenda, and work together, thereby strengthening youth network development and the overall LGBT+ movement in Africa.

**Training**
Increasing the ability of organisations and activists to undertake national and transnational campaigns aimed at LGBT+ youths in Africa by promoting the focused development of African LGBT+ youth leaders.

**Research and Documentation**
Documenting and sharing best practices for LGBT+ youth interventions and creating comprehensive baseline data to help build a solid knowledge base on the lived realities of LGBT+ youths in Africa.

**Advocacy**
Advocating for the sexual health and rights of African LGBT+ youths through personal experiences, involvement in high-level spaces, and keeping policymakers accountable.

**Resourcing**
Facilitating a direct small funding mechanism for LGBT+ youth organisations and activists fighting for change on the ground.

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IMPACTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Our work has centred on supporting interventions and initiatives in under-resourced regions and developing activists’ and organisations’ resource management capacity.

150 Youths Trained
We trained and offered direct support to our community members through our Fuelling Digital Activism program, Mawulisa Fellowship, training on engagement with African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, and Leadership development programs.

$95,000 in direct grant support
Through small grant programs, the COVID Impact Support Fund, and Fellowship grants, we ensured that LGBT+ Africans received direct help, no matter how little.

Safe Space
We launched www.safequeers.org to provide African LGBT+ youths with the information and support they need to build and maintain safe places, guarantee their online safety, and seek the security assistance they require.

New Partnerships
We developed the Global Queer Youth Network and a global campaign to promote and build collaboration among LGBT+ youths worldwide in partnership with regional and international partners.

Research
We launched and conducted a “first-of-its-kind” regional research to learn more about how COVID-19 has influenced the LGBT+ youth movement in Africa and ideas for advancing our community in the future.

Opportunities
We curated and disseminated almost a thousand links and information on community opportunities through our creative platform www.opportunitypoint.org

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Social media has been instrumental to our work and reach in Africa, with queer youths constantly engaging on all our platforms.

**Representation**
We ensured that the voices of African LGBT+ youths were heard loud and clear. We achieved this by facilitating their representation at critical spaces such as the International AIDS Conference, the United Nations, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the World Movement for Democracy, regional gatherings and conferences, and many others.

**Upendo Fund**
Following the pandemic's peak, we provided support to over 100 African LGBT+ youths through our Upendo fund, intending to reduce the burden of COVID-19 on their daily lives.

**COVID-19 Support**
We provided virtual meditation and yoga sessions for people during the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak and also supported over 30 activists in Africa with emergency funding to address basic sanitary and medical requirements.

**Recognition**
The Safe Space Alliance in New Zealand awarded us the Outstanding Safe Space Award for our work within the community.

**Social Media Reach**
Social media has been instrumental to our work and reach in Africa, with queer youths constantly engaging on all our platforms.

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<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>▲ 30%</td>
<td>▲ 20.7%</td>
<td>▲ 26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>▲ 52.6%</td>
<td>▲ 20.5%</td>
<td>▲ 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>▲ 36.3%</td>
<td>▲ 12.7%</td>
<td>▲ 6.3%</td>
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As soon as the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we knew we needed to tackle it head-on. We needed to prioritise specific actions to alleviate the potential negative impact of the pandemic. One such move was the intervention initiative we launched to mitigate exacerbated challenges within the community due to the pandemic. Activities included in the intervention comprised virtual meditation sessions, virtual yoga/stretching sessions, happy hours and direct cash support to community members. We designed these activities to provide relief to community members and address the following objectives:

- Reduce stress, anxiety, depression, pain/increase peaceful feeling, and physical & mental wellbeing.
- Relieve members from incurring extra work-related expenses as a result of the pandemic. Provide support to members who may have lost their jobs or source of income.

From our evaluation, 25% of respondents from the Yoga sessions experienced increased flexibility; 12.5% experienced increased muscle strength and tone; 25% experienced Improved breathing, energy, and vitality; 25% said they had experienced all the above.

After the meditation sessions, 22.22% of respondents attested to getting off to sleep more easily; 11.11% of respondents experienced improvements in dealing with thoughts, and 66.67% experienced stress reduction. It is safe to say that the aim was achieved.
The meditation has helped me manage stress during the peak of the pandemic, embracing silence and focusing on only things that matter. It has made me more silent and less noisy. It made me more self-aware about situations and my surroundings.

Gaiya Abba Zechariah
Nigeria

I liked having someone who listened to me and understood me during the therapy session.

Aubrey
Mali
Upendo means "love" in Swahili and nothing more precisely expresses what our community members required at the height of the pandemic. We created the Upendo Fund to help alleviate some of the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of LGBT+ youths in Africa. The fund grants a $100 one-time financial assistance to African LGBT+ youths whose sources of income or employment had been impacted by the pandemic. The Fund helps them meet the fundamental necessities that they are unable to meet due to COVID-19. Take a look at some of the Upendo fund’s beneficiaries’ testimonies.

Young and Outside the Margin: Impact of COVID-19 on African LGBT+ Youth.

Amidst lockdowns and travel restrictions, it became evident that minorities were disproportionately affected by the COVID pandemic. At the same time, specific disparities meant that vulnerable communities like ours were on the verge of losing the gains we have achieved so far. So, we launched our Young and Outside the Margin report to delve deeper and understand the impact of the pandemic on African LGBT+ youth and what recommendations were necessary for a post-COVID future. Check out some significant findings from our research below and read the full report here.

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The fund came at a dire minute when I needed money to write my teacher licensure exams, and all hope was lost. Thanks to the fund I was able to pay, register, write, and pass the exams successfully. I am very grateful for that. I was able to use part of the money to support my second-hand slipper wear that I sell, which had almost collapsed as a result of COVID.

Samuel J
Ghana

This fund came at the right time as I had just lost my job and needed to offset some personal bills. I am grateful to AQYI for the Upendo fund

Paulette
Congo

Now I can navigate through the everyday life challenges with peace of mind that I can at least put food on my table, pay for my rent, and put the basic fundraising plan to action so that I can raise more funds to keep me financially independent.

Itta
Namibia
As violence against the LGBT+ community in Africa continues to rise and virtual work becomes the norm, digital safety and security are unquestionably critical. African LGBT+ youths, activists, and organisations often face security threats to their privacy and sensitive data and we continue to receive numerous reports of violence targeting them and their communities in the digital space. Against this backdrop, we created SafeQueers in collaboration with Out In Tech with the sole purpose of providing digital safety and security tips.

SafeQueers.org offers tips about remaining safe online, navigating hookup applications like Grindr and Jack’d securely, and maintaining anonymity. It also includes download links for apps and browser extensions that help users stay secure online. There are additional resources for creating safety guides that organisations may use to offer online safety training in their communities. The website also has instructions for erasing browser history and concealing location to reduce the chance of discovery.

We designed SafeQueers for queer people worldwide to access and use, especially for LGBT+ youths and communities in hard to reach areas. As a result, the website runs on slow internet speed. It also has an offline version that can be downloaded and printed as booklets for distribution. The built-in translation capabilities support multiple languages, ensuring it is fully accessible to everyone.
Needs Analysis Workshop And Fuelling Digital Activism

In partnership with All-Out, we continued our Fuelling Digital Activism project by holding virtual needs analysis workshops to understand the challenges affecting LGBT+ youths in Africa. We conducted these sessions on the 28th and 29th of November, the 5th and 6th of December, and the 12th and 13th of December 2020. They covered the sub-regions of West, East, and Southern Africa, respectively.

The workshop featured focal persons (young LGBT+ activists) from each sub-region. They talked about their LGBT+ experiences, resilience, and advocacy in their countries, focusing on the digital landscape and online activism. The virtual workshop’s recommendations and outcomes influenced the curriculum for our Fuelling Digital Activism course, held in West Africa.

Findings

The following conclusions emerged from the analysis as common concerns and requirements across the various regions.
Common Threads: Popular Attitudes

- Negative religious influence.
- Little to no acceptance from the general public.
- Lack of acknowledgement or support from the government.
- Police targeting LGBT+ people.
- Mixed representation in media.
- Knowledge gaps within the movement.
- The legal ramifications of some existing laws are harmful for LGBT+ people.

Common Threads: Knowledge Gaps (Campaigning, Fundraising, Communications)

- Capacity building & lack of training for movement leaders.
- Language barriers (Lack of resources in local languages).
- Tech skills.
- Education gaps and privilege.
- Generational knowledge gaps.

Common Threads: Online Channels

Facebook, Whatsapp, TikTok for some but not all, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter.

Common Threads: Mental Health

- Lack of safe or affordable resources for LGBT+ people.
- Isolation due to COVID - lack of safe spaces & community.
- Mental health issues among the community result from violence, trauma, isolation.
- Not welcome in religious or spiritual places that provide help to others.

Common Threads: Risks

- Digital and physical security threats.
- Risks in being publicly “outed.”
- Risk of participating openly in LGBT+ campaigns.
- Detention, arrests, and abuse from authorities (increased during COVID).
- Legal backlashes.
- Employment discrimination.
- Difficulties around organizational registration.

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WEST AFRICA

Common Threads: Popular Attitudes
- Dominant religious narratives.
- Non-acceptance of LGBT+ folks.
- Attitudes are largely expressed in digital spaces.
- The Media is not independent.
- Little recognition of intersectionality.
- Police, politicians, and religious leaders are largely opponents.

Common Threads: Risks
- The backlash from religious groups
- Arrest, mental or emotional abuse, physical attacks, and discrimination.
- The threat of additional laws being introduced.
- Attacks on organisations and further isolation.
- Sensationalism and backlash from media.
- Attacks on safe spaces.

Common Threads: Knowledge Gaps
(Campaigning, Fundraising, Communications)
- Advocacy implementation.
- Access to resources that meet local needs.
- How to build and reach allies who are decision-makers.
- How to develop and reach allies in other movements.
- Access to funds.
- Ability to maintain community during and after COVID.
- Using national-level human rights mechanisms.

Common Threads: Online Channels
- Social media when it's safe.
- Other, more secure methods like Signal are important for organising.
- Importance of using local languages.
- Whatsapp when it's safe.

Common Threads: Mental Health
- Isolation from the community during the pandemic and what it can lead to (trauma, depression, anxiety).
- Lack of mental health resources.
- Lockdown with abusers and/or homelessness to avoid lockdown with abusers.
- Restriction on access to safe spaces.
Common Threads: Knowledge Gaps (Campaigning, Fundraising, Communications)

- There could be more coordination and trust within the movement.
- Pathologising of the movement - funding available if doing health-related work.
- The need to integrate other social needs (e.g. employment, housing etc.) with other allies to fight the common enemy.
- Need for digital security and physical security.
- Lack of safe space (including shelters).
- More coordination between civil society and the government.

Common Threads: Popular Attitudes

- Not acknowledging gender diversity, non-binary and trans identities.
- Negative narratives promoted by state and religious authorities.
- Stigma, discrimination, victimization, and degrading treatment from the general public.
- Failure of the legal system and lack of access and understanding of the legal system.
- The negative attitude around identity documents with immigration officers and other law enforcement agencies.
- Lack of access (health / other social services) for trans identities.

Common Threads: Risks

- Risks around personal safety.
- Risk of being outed (especially linking to intimate partners).
- Intimate Partner Violence.
- Not accessing health or legal services for fear of retribution.
- Risk of arrests.
- Infiltration of safe spaces.
- Being ostracised by the immediate community.

Common Threads: Online Channels

- Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Email, Grindr and Mamba Online (South Africa).

Common Threads: Mental Health

- Psychosocial support.
- Involving Parents/caregivers.
- Intimate partner violence.
- COVID-related mental health issues (e.g. job losses from sex workers).
- Accessibility of drugs.
Following the needs assessment workshop findings, which informed our training curriculum, we organised a training for twenty African LGBT+ youths from West Africa. It was three days of learning, connecting, and devising action plans for local impact in their respective communities. Our partner, OutInTech, delivered training on digital security campaigns and other sessions focused on issues like M&E, SRHR, fundraising, human rights, and general welfare.

With COVID-19 looming and tensions in the sub-region over LGBT+ issues, many participants arrived determined to keep pressing for change, looking to connect safely and find solitude. Throughout the training period, we provided group therapy sessions to help participants relax, recharge, and enjoy the solitude that many of them had sought. You can watch a short video we created from the training here.

The following conclusions emerged from the training as common concerns and requirements for the region.

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Common Threads: Knowledge Gaps (Campaigning, Fundraising, Communications)

- Movement Leaders would like more access to capacity building and training.
- Language barriers (Lack of resources in local languages).
- Tech skills - not everyone felt confident using technology to advance their cause.
- There is a lack of traditional African queer history.
- Little recognition of intersectionality.
- Lack of well-trained and reliable legal representatives (the case study of the Ghana 21 was shared).

Common Threads: Popular Attitudes

- There is still internalised homophobia and transphobia even within the community.
- Police targeting LGBT+ people.
- Knowledge gaps within the movement.
- While laws are mixed, harmful legal ramifications for LGBT+ people.
- Breaking down harmful norms such as femme-phobia was highlighted.
- Disabled people are not yet part of the discourse.
- Communication in local languages is still neglected. For hearts and minds to really be changed, local languages need to be utilised more.

Common Threads: Online Channels

- Facebook, Whatsapp, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and Radio are media forms that the participants feel confident using.
- The internet plays a significant role in LGBT+ activism. However, participants also reported trolling and unwanted outings, which can be minimised with their new digital security skills.

Common Threads: Mental Health

- Many participants shared that the wellness sessions were the first time they had had to relax in such a long time.
- Participants highlighted the need to invest in mental health care for frontline activists.
- Community spaces and physical gatherings have shrunk due to the pandemic.
- Lack of mental health personnel who are queer/trans or allies.
The quality of the training was outstanding, the trainers were knowledgeable about the topic they covered with us. I would definitely recommend this training to people within my network when the opportunity comes again.

Mariama
Senegal

I learnt so many new things that were relevant to the work my organisation does. The training was practical so it was easy to understand the concepts. I most especially loved the mental health part, it gave me a chance to relax and breathe.

Sibo Kollie
Liberia

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MawuLisa Fellowship

We launched the MawuLisa fellowship program to support emerging and mid-career young African LBTQ women/activists with the resources and enhanced capacity that they need. The aim of the fellowship is to provide them with the resources and support they need to design and implement initiatives that focus on solving challenges impacting them in their local communities and advocating for their rights.

Our five inaugural fellows came from Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria. They were trained in project and budget planning, work plan development, execution, and monitoring and evaluation. After the training, we provided each fellow with financial support of $5000 to implement their proposed initiative in their respective communities.
Dorathy Doose, our Nigerian fellow’s project Rights, Evidence and Action (REA) created a visual documentary. The documentary highlights the challenges and issues LBQT+ women in northern Nigeria face due to exclusion from the wider LBQT+ networks. It serves as an advocacy tool to demand the proper inclusion of LBQT+ women in northern Nigeria into wider LBQT+ networks and programs at the national, regional, and global levels to build their capacity and improve their recognition as equal members of society.
Mariam Kone, our Mali fellow’s project was a documentary that centred on protecting and respecting the rights, dignity, and safety of LBQT+ victims of human rights violations in Mali. The project raises awareness on violence due to actual or perceived sexual orientation, and the difficulty around access to justice for LBTQ persons in Mali. The most significant impact of this initiative was the availability of psychological and legal support to survivors.
Audrey Diana Coulibaly, our Ivory Coast fellow, implemented her project Un Café; Un Livre, which focused on bringing LGBTQ women from Ivory Coast together for a writing and story telling workshop. They used writing as an advocacy tool to document the experiences of LGBTQ persons and fight against depression within the LGBTQ community in Ivory Coast.
Our Senegalese fellow, Bineta, Ndiaye’s initiative, “Project to revitalize the LGBTQ movement in Senegal,” used sports as a tool to advance the recognition and rights of LGBTQ women in Senegal. They had a football match and social activities that included heart-to-heart discussions on how social activities like sports can be used to advance LGBTQ women’s issues in the country.
Malick Bamogo hails from a homophobic and violent community in Burkina Faso. The LGBT+ community are victims of all kinds of aggression in society; these events inspired her project on self-defense. The project involved self-defense activities with LGBTQ persons and a training session with a professional coach. The objective was to empower participants on self-defense and protection in cases of physical violence due to their real or perceived sexual orientation or identity.
In June 2021, we partnered with Synergia to provide a four-day virtual training to young LGBT+ activists from several African countries. The activity aimed to improve the knowledge, participation, and engagement of African LGBT+ youths in the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPRs) and African Union processes. Thirty young people (18 to 30) from various African countries participated.

During the workshop, Commissioner Rémy Ngoy Lumbu from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights spoke with the attendees about the Commission's institutions and the necessity of furthering human rights on the continent. He reiterated the Commission's commitment towards safeguarding human rights regardless of status or orientation when answering questions. Commissioner Lumbu also expressed his support for queer youths working to engage the Commission on issues that affect their community.

We also created a brief information flyer to guide the participants on how LGBT+ youths can engage with the Commission.
We started a monthly webinar series called Queerbinar to promote continual interaction within the community and spark debate on critical issues. The Queerbinar also acts as a discussion forum for various subjects relating to the lived realities of young African LGBT+ folks.

Throughout 2020, AQYI hosted 12 Queerbinars on topics such as Queer pleasure, Gender roles and intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships, Phobia within our queer community, COVID-19's long-term impact on the queer community, the way forward for consent in queer relationships, and the role of entertainment in LGBT+ advocacy in Africa, among others.
Staff Retreat

Our staff met in person despite the difficulty with COVID and other obstacles brought on by the pandemic. We had an annual retreat on April 23rd - 26th, 2021, in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The retreat was a chance for us to unwind, refresh, and re-energize for the work ahead.
We Were At The 2020 Virtual AIDS Conference

Due to the novel Coronavirus pandemic, the International AIDS Society (IAS) virtually hosted the 23rd International AIDS Conference. From July 6 to 10, we took part in the virtual AIDS2020 conference. Despite technical difficulties and the absence of face-to-face connection, we participated in various dynamic programming, including satellite panels, a youth-driven "Global Village" booth, and an exhibition booth with on-demand film screenings.

AQYI member King Sibo presented at the integrated healthcare for co-infections and conditions symposia. He talked about designing services for people who use them.

We based our attendance at the conference on two main goals:
- Project the issues and challenges of African queer youths with HIV intervention in Africa.
- Share the lessons learnt with the broader AQYI membership and young African LGBT+ people.
We Were At The ACHPR Civil Society Organisations Side Events (ACSE)

At the ACHPR, we hosted a youth-led side session. The theme for the session was "COVID-19 and Access to Civic Space: Is it time to rethink African Youth Advocacy?" Youth activists from across Africa shared their perspectives on the issues, including Wiem Askri, 2020-2021 board chair of AQYI (Tunisia); Itie Harry, a Nigerian journalist and media activist; Dumiso Gatsha, founder of Success Capital (Botswana); and Orneill Latiyah, founder of Transgenres et Droits (Ivory Coast).
Our Program Officer, Emma Onekou attended the 2020 Queer African Youth Network fifth activist school held in Lomé.

Emma teamed up with other participants/activists to act as facilitators throughout the training sessions, honing their leadership abilities and expanding their knowledge of their communities' challenges. Participants were also able to improve and grow their advocacy abilities while creating new relationships and, in some cases, strengthening old ones within the community. The course ended with a graduation ceremony filled with laughter, camaraderie, photos, and bittersweet goodbyes.
We Were At The United Nations

On April 7, 2021, our Executive Coordinator delivered a plenary speech at the ECOSOC Youth Forum. His speech centred on COVID-19 and its negative impact on African youths, inequalities, and ensuring the inclusion of African LGBT+ youths in the Sustainable Development Goals’ goal of leaving no one behind. He also addressed arrests and abuse directed at African queer youths living in hostile environment and the need for urgent action to address these critical issues.

Queer Youth Dialogues

As part of the Global Queer Youth Network, we organised and participated in the Queer Youth Dialogues, a year-long campaign to establish a stronger worldwide youth movement for LGBT+ human rights with more significant resources, support, and power. The dialogue is a collaborative project of the United Nations Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth (OSGEY), the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (IE SOGI), ILGA World and the Global Queer Youth Network.
Members Activities

Defiance: Voices Of A New Generation
Harry Itie, our member from Nigeria successfully produced and launched an audacious documentary project. It explores the lives of young queer people in Nigeria who are out, visible and loud in the campaign for equality. The short film also looks at Nigeria's draconian criminal laws and how they affect the daily lives of LGBT+ persons. Enjoy the full documentary here.

Favourite Tunes On Queersounds
Have you ever wondered what some of our members' favourite songs are? Wonder no more. Dumi, our member from Botswana, spoke with Hanna Van Rhee of the Queersounds podcast to explore some of their favourite tracks and the importance of their work in our community. Listen to Dumi's fascinating conversation with Hanna here.

Outright Religion Fellowship (2020 Fellows)
Two of our members, Amanda Bosco from Uganda and Shamim Salim from Kenya, were part of the Outright 2020 Religion Fellowship Program. The Fellowship aims to defend LGBT+ people from the impact of religiously motivated violence and discrimination. Their participation in the fellowship ensured that the voices of African LGBT+ youths were heard loud and clear, and that religious intolerance towards our community is addressed.
Joining the AQYI in 2019 provided me with the opportunity to develop my leadership skills and get engaged in a bilingual space where I can influence decision-making while advocating for my African trans people, particularly the Francophone communities.

Orneill Latiyah
Ivory Coast

I am proud to be part of a network of human rights defenders working to ensure the respect, promotion and advancement of LGBTQIA+ rights in Africa.

Jürgen Lasavanne
Mauritius

I joined AQYI in 2017, and being a member and serving on the board has helped me learn and grow as a queer activist. It has also allowed me to meet exceptional African LGBT+ young leaders doing incredible work in their respective countries.

Weema Askri
Tunisia
There was a 45.4% increase in expenditures on more projects, events and programs.
Most of our 2020 initiatives, which primarily involved travel and actual engagement, were halted due to movement restrictions.

Many members of our community, including team members have reported experiencing a high level of brain fog and burnout from extended virtual arrangements.

Restrictions and government policies due to COVID meant significant difficulties in reaching African LGBT+ youths in hard to reach areas.

Shifting priorities due to COVID meant too many uncertainties and limitation in fund raising goals.

There are still significant limitations and lack of core/meaningful funding for African LGBT+ youth led groups and projects.
We are grateful to our community and to partners who share in our goals and objectives.
Our members successfully shared their stories and spoke out favouring African LGBT+ youths through media interviews with global, regional, and local news organisations.
Donate

We rely on generous donations from champions like you to do this critical work.
Please consider donating to us by scanning the QR code with your phone camera, or clicking the donate button.

www.aqyi.org
Internships
We offer a 6-months internship for individuals interested in developing their relevant skills and understanding of the context in which we operate. Watch out for our next call for internship applications.

Partnership
As a growing and dynamic organisation, we are open to creating meaningful partnerships with organisations and activists in Africa and beyond. To join other groups and activists, or to collaborate with us on programming, fundraising, and other projects, contact our team at admin@aqyi.org.

Volunteer
Are you a queer youth interested in contributing to our work and the general queer community in Africa? Or perhaps you are just an ally interested in understanding and gaining skills within our context? As a youth-driven organisation, we accept applications for volunteers on a rolling basis. Interested individuals can send in their applications to admin@aqyi.org.