
AQYI 2019 IN A SNAPSHOT





Dear Friends,

The year 2019 was a phenomenal one for the African Queer Youth Initiative. We welcomed three new staff to our management team, and successfully organised our annual general meeting and advocacy training in Mauritius. We trained fifty African LGBT+ youths and provided small grants to support in-country projects targeting LGBT+ youths in Togo, Uganda, Ivory Coast, and Morocco. Our members were present at important conferences and events around the world, speaking truth to power and holding policymakers and adult allies accountable.

Of course, we would not have achieved all these without your support and commitment to the human rights and well being of LGBT+ youth in Africa. However, we have a lot more that needs to be done. In Nigeria, [forty seven young gay men have gone on trial](#) on the grounds of homosexuality.

In Zambia, [two young men were unjustly sentenced to fifteen years](#) for engaging in gay sex. In [South Africa](#) and [Liberia](#), there have been reported cases of violence targeting lesbians and peaceful partygoers within the LGBT+ community. Just a few days ago, [the South African trans community buried one of their own who was brutally murdered in her home](#). LGBT+ youths in Africa are not only in a fight for their rights, but also a battle for their lives. They face violence on a daily basis and struggle with homophobic laws bent on erasing their existence, while dealing with poverty. African LGBT+ youths battle a myriad of mental health problems and neglect from family and friends. In many cases, all they have is a community like ours to look up to, and we must not let them down. They need us, they need you. Take a look at the successes we achieved together in 2019 and then imagine what we can do together in 2020 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Najeeb
Fokeerbux
AQYI Board
Chair

2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AQYI hosted its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in August 2019. The convening was an opportunity for a physical meeting, bonding, and space for meaningful conversations. It was a time to catch up with old acquaintances, build new friendships and networks, and give each other a push in the work we do. We identified gaps that needed to be addressed, and put our heads together to build a plan for a collective future and strength of purpose. It also served as an opportunity to learn more about advocacy and the situation of things as concerns the LGBT+ community all over Africa.

Highlights of the AGM included a training on advocacy which gave participants an update on the subject, exposed them both to new trends in advocacy and best international practices. There was a session on sexual pleasure which was a very relaxing moment for participants to share and learn new things and a social night which gave participants the opportunity to unwind after a rigorous week of brain racking activities. The two days of strategic planning sessions saw us mapping out our vision for AQYI and the African LGBT+ community. We cannot wait to implement our determined plans for the next five years.



STAFF PROFILE

We welcomed three new people to join our expanding AQYI family.
Check out their profiles below:



Akom Nya

Is a trained political analyst. He is a human rights advocate working to promote equality for the LGBTIQ community in Nigeria and Africa at large. He has worked in different positions across different organizations. Program Officer Center for Resourceful Health and Youth Development. He has also worked for The Center for Right to Health, all geared towards creating safe spaces for the LGBTIQ community in Africa. He serves as the Membership & Communication Associate at the AQYI.

Adeyosola Adebisi

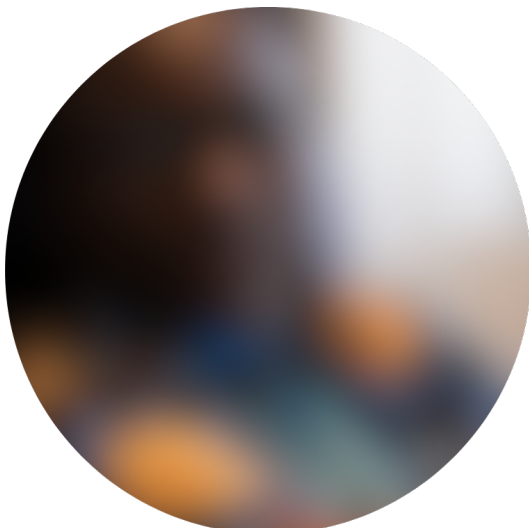
Is a vocal human rights activist who believes in the right of every human to equal access to education, health care, and the full expression of their humanity. She was a science and math educator for a number of years. She has also worked and volunteered within the healthcare system primarily within research. She has since channelled her love for making knowledge into the publishing industry, working as an editor and had a brief stint as a research consultant with TIERS. She serves as the Programs Manager at AQYI.



Amanda Lawson

Holds a degree in International Relationships. She has experience in digital marketing and previously worked with The Initiative for Equal Rights in Nigeria.

Amanda serves as the Operations and Staff Assistant at AQYI.



MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

In 2019, members of AQYI were in spaces that had a great impact on the work we do. It afforded us the opportunity to widen our horizon and network and build a stronger movement towards achieving our collective goal of the emancipation of Africa. Our members were at:

International Lesbian Gay Association (ILGA) World Conferences

The main highlight for us was the reflections panel on ILGA's journey, where insight was gained on different countries, regional and representation issues - gay, lesbian, trans, and the underlying dynamics.

Women Deliver Conference

We benefited from several sessions covering a diversity of subjects around the well-being of girls and women. Represented by our co-chairperson of the board, Wiem, we also had the amazing opportunity to be part of a panel during the Young Leaders & Alumni Workshop titled "Making Progress Despite Opposition." On the panel, we shared information about LGBT+ decriminalisation in Africa.

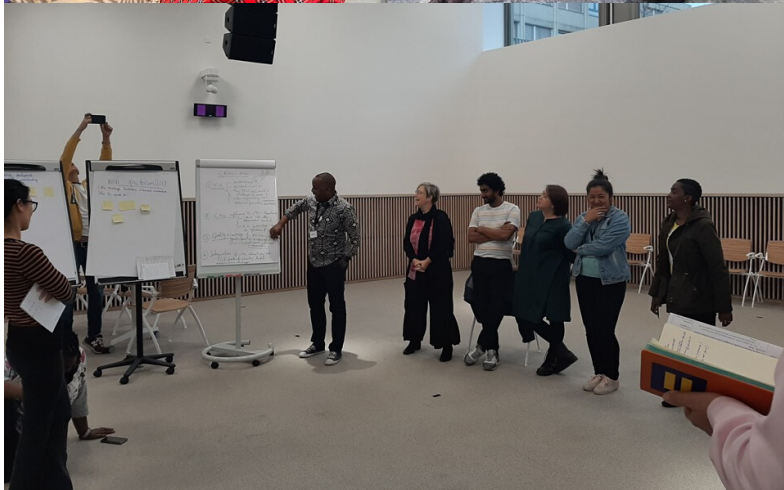
Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer (LBQ) Women's Conference

We left this first of its kind occurrence with experiences, ideas, knowledge, and a more determined spirit. Our sense of responsibility grew towards the sacrifices of all LBQ women. The conference reminded us of our responsibility as the new generation to make it easier for the next LBQ women to be born and thrive.

Changing Faces Changing Spaces

The pan-African biennial convening brought together sex worker and LGBT+ activists in Africa to strategize, network, plan, and reflect on achievements and challenges. Our AQYI members were privileged to sit as panellist on a legality plenary where they elaborated on the upcoming litigation to decriminalize homosexuality in Mauritius, the importance of having a proper legal strategy, the legal arguments to be used, the side-by-side social and advocacy strategy to prepare the general Mauritian population and Supreme Court to the change, and the importance of having young people in the litigation process.

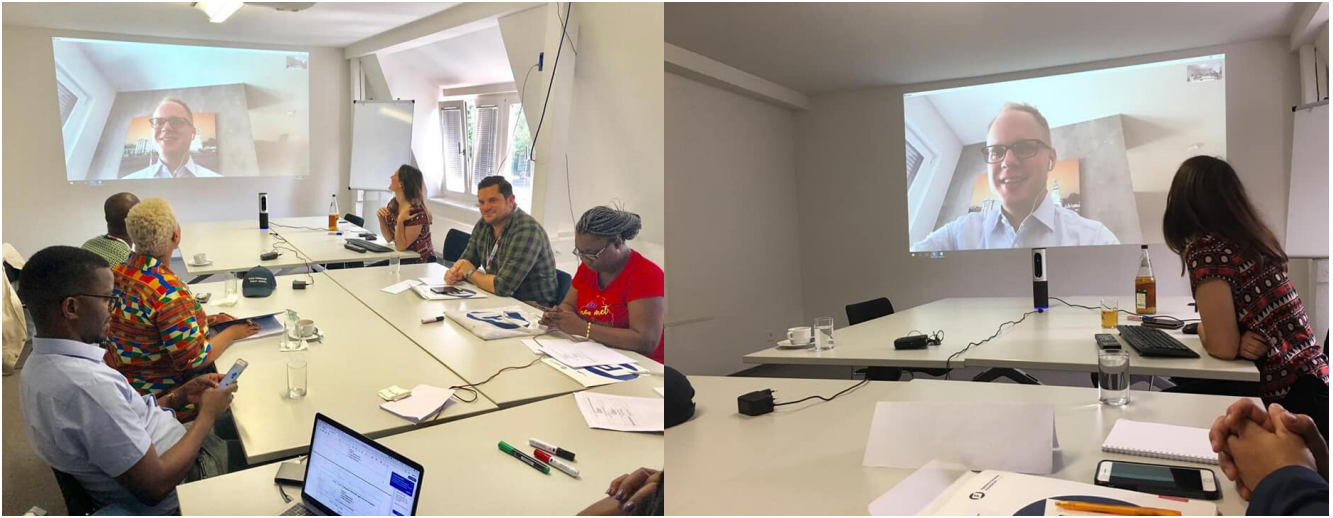
MEMBERS ACTIVITIES



The Diversity and Inclusion Group for Networking and Action (DIGNA)

We joined civil society participants from different African countries to record a podcast moderated by CivicUs titled "Importance of embedding the principles of diversity and inclusion within all forms of civil society and at all levels."

MEMBERS ACTIVITIES



Friedrich Naumann Foundation International Visitors Programme

We learned about the history of the LGBT+ struggle in Germany and got to meet with different LGBT+ organisations and individuals. We even got to interface with a member of parliament who is the current Speaker on Queer Rights for the Free Democratic Party.

We shared about the struggles of young people in Africa.

We were part of the prestigious SOGIE Strategic Litigation and Advocacy Workshop organised by the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria in South Africa discussing strategies for championing the rights of the African LGBTQI community. We met with members of the team that led the Repeal 162 case, as well as those who led the Botswana Repeal 164 case.

We discussed the different strategies utilized in the cases and how we can best tailor them to the existing legal systems in our individual countries.

Several of our members were also other important spaces such as ICASA; Kvinna TillKvinna convening; and Global Fund Community, Rights, and Gender Advisory Group (CRG - AG).

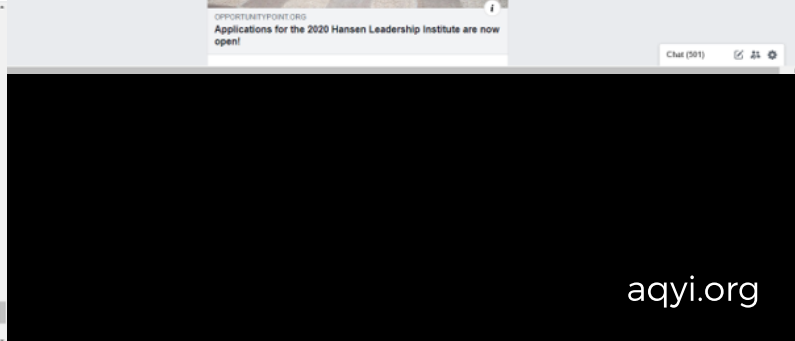
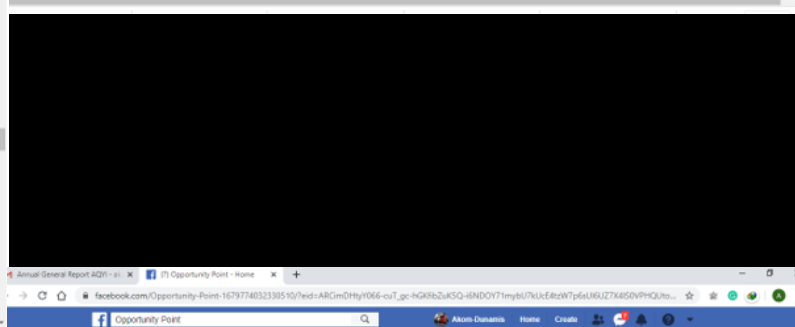
TRAININGS

AQYI, in partnership with All-Out, trained twenty-four young activists in a project aimed at contributing to creative, effective, non-violent youth activism for LGBT+ rights in East Africa. The training, tagged Fuelling Digital Activism, also allowed participants the opportunity to launch and run their own digital campaign through a state-of-the-art online activism platform.



OPPORTUNITIES

The AQYI curates a website called Opportunity Point. It is a one stop shop for opportunities for LGBT+ youths in Africa. Opportunities ranging from fellowships and grants to seminars and conferences, etc. are posted regularly for LGBT+ youths to take advantage of. We believe this has helped many young persons to travel and attend events that enhanced their lives and careers.



GRANTS

We provided grants to four deserving young LGBT+ Africans. In Togo, the grant will be used to organised capacity building geared towards educating LGBT+ Togolese youths on their sexual and reproductive health rights and care as well as on staying safe in homophobic Togo. Our recipient in Uganda will be using their grant to work towards improving healthcare access to members of the Ugandan trans community. In Côte D'Ivoire, similar work will be done with the trans community there. Finally, in Morocco, the grant will go towards research and movement building among Moroccan youths.



MEDIA COVERAGE

In the Mauritius Tribune dated 1st May, 2019, board chairman Najeeb Fokeerbux highlighted the state of LGBT+ rights in Mauritius discussing the many abuses endured by the LGBT+ community and the failure of the police to protect them. Full piece [here](#).

Members of the local media in Mauritius were on hand to speak to participants of our inaugural AGM and how it impacts the work they do in their country, this was another opportunity for participants to share their experiences. Read [here](#) and [here](#).

Dumiso Gatsha our member from Botswana spoke on: The need to support young people who stand up for human rights. [Enjoy](#).



CONTACT DETAILS



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