



FREE & EQUAL
UNITED NATIONS FOR LGBTI EQUALITY

2019



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



INTRODUCTION

UN Free & Equal is a global United Nations campaign for equal rights and the fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people everywhere.

Launched in Cape Town, South Africa, in July 2013, the campaign is led by the United Nations Human Rights Office.

In its first six years, UN Free & Equal has generated a stream of widely shared materials – including more than 56 videos, hundreds of sharable e-postcards and a series of popular, plain-language fact sheets. Several campaign videos – including launch video “[The Riddle](#)”, the Bollywood-

inspired “[The Welcome](#)” and 2018’s “[Be There](#)” – rank today among the most watched videos ever produced by the United Nations.

Other campaign initiatives include a global film festival, a rainbow crosswalk in front of UN Headquarters, and the world’s first set of postage stamps for LGBT equality.

Alongside the global campaign, UN Free & Equal has also inspired and supported national level campaigns and events in countries around the world, with 17 full-scale national campaigns currently up and running and more being planned for 2020.





Launched: 26 July 2013

Overall aim:

To enhance equality and counter discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people everywhere by

- » supporting UN-system public advocacy on the human rights of LGBTI people at the national and global level; and
- » contributing to increasing public support for diverse societies that are inclusive of LGBTI people, and for stronger legal protections against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics.

Implementation:

Implementation is led by the United Nations Human Rights Office with support from UN partners (including UN Resident Coordinators and UN country teams), as well as national and municipal governments, and civil society organizations. In 2019, UN partners at the national level included the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women, the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNAIDS, and the World Health Organization (WHO).





2019 AT A GLANCE

2019 was a year of transition for UN Free & Equal. In previous years, the campaign has mostly focused on awareness raising, and on conveying the simple message that LGBTI people everywhere deserve equal rights and fair treatment, targeting a diverse and often-skeptical global audience. But while raising awareness is a necessary component, simply giving people more information is unlikely to change their beliefs or behaviour.

To help create sustainable social and political change – tangible action from governments and communities that can make a difference in the lives of LGBTI people around the world – we need to focus more on strategic communications, strategic partnerships and advocacy. To facilitate this change in priorities, the UN Free & Equal campaign has expanded its focus from the global to the national level – a shift that will continue over the next few years.

This allows the campaign to maximize the relevance of strategic messaging and activities to local political debates and cultural contexts, while broadening the ownership of the campaign to include more UN partners and civil society organizations.

The campaign has also gone for a more targeted approach at the global level, launching mini-campaigns and other communications materials with narrower target audiences, directed at encouraging new allies to take concrete action in their communities.





TO THIS END, UN FREE & EQUAL HAS IN 2019:

- » Expanded at the national level, increasing the number of national and regional campaigns from 12 to 17, including in Albania, Brazil, Cambodia, Cabo Verde, Dominican Republic, The Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mongolia, Peru, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vietnam, and a sub-regional campaign in Central America. Additional campaigns are planned for 2020.
- » Produced and launched a series of mini-campaigns on social media that were seen by more than 14.3 million people around the world. We advocated for the rights of trans people on Trans Day of Visibility and the need to ensure justice and protection for the LGBTI community on International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. We called on our allies to protect LGBTI and other kids from bullying on Spirit Day and celebrated their courage with an unprecedented video series featuring prominent African supporters of LGBTI equality.
- » Continued to promote global LGBTI standards for business, produced by the UN Human Rights Office, that guide private sector allies on how to foster diversity and promote equality both in the workplace and in the communities where they and their business partners operate. More than 270 companies have signed up as supporters of the standards and the UN Human Rights Office has developed a toolkit aimed at activists who engage with the private sector (to be launched by mid 2020).





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GLOBAL CAMPAIGN



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UN FREE & EQUAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**9.2 million
interactions
with posts**

**14.3 million
video views**

**187,000
followers**
(from 157,000 in 2018)

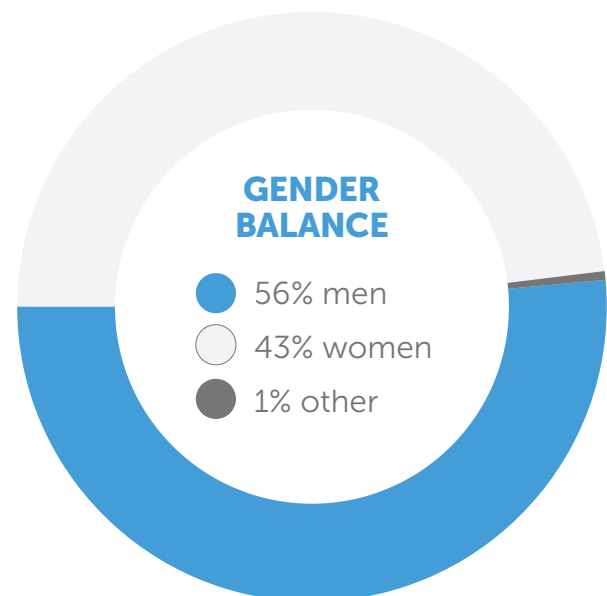
f Facebook

TOP COUNTRIES

1. India
2. Nepal
3. Indonesia
4. Philippines
5. Cambodia

TOP AGE GROUP

Young adults 18-34



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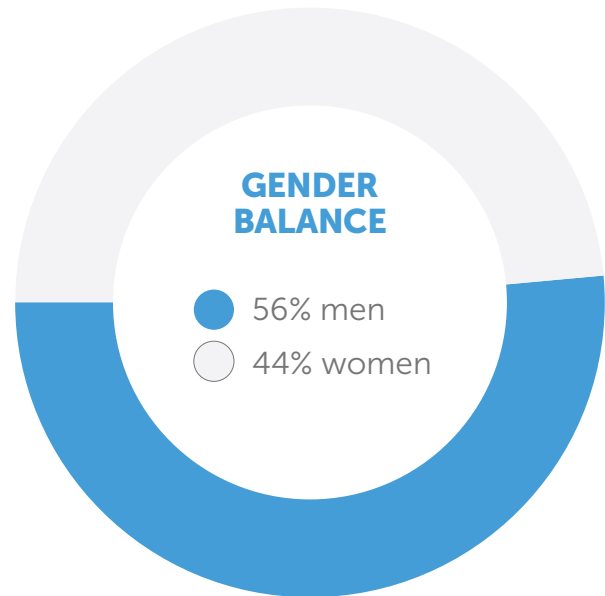
Instagram

TOP COUNTRIES

1. United States
2. India
3. Brazil
4. Venezuela
5. Argentina

TOP AGE GROUP

Young adults 18-34

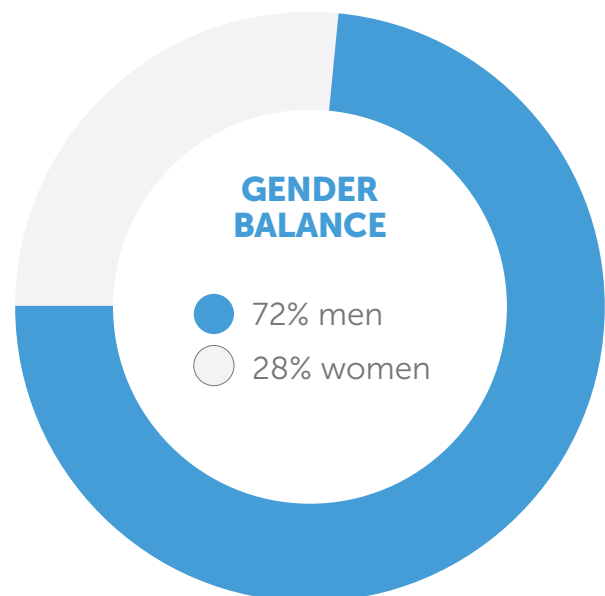


Twitter

TOP COUNTRIES

1. United States
2. Nigeria
3. India
4. Brazil
5. Pakistan

* Twitter doesn't disclose age groups of followers



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MINI-CAMPAIGNS

On social media, nothing rivals video when it comes to stirring empathy and emotional resonance, which can help overcome previously held opinions and prejudices. In 2019, the UN Free & Equal campaign created four flagship mini-campaigns for general distribution, featuring videos accompanied by dedicated landing sites with more information and practical, real-life advice on how allies can stand up for the rights of LGBTI people in their communities.

This year we experimented with a more targeted approach

Unlike previous years, when our strategy was to maximize the number of views in markets across the globe, we have this year experimented with a more targeted approach, launching mini-campaigns and other communications materials more directly aimed at narrower target audiences and encouraging them to take concrete actions in their communities.





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Celebrating trans visibility

In March, the UN Free & Equal campaign celebrated Transgender Day of Visibility with a mini-campaign aimed at showing allies what concrete steps they can take to help build a more trans inclusive world. The campaign featured a short animated video, a [landing page](#) with advice for allies, and a factsheet with more information about the human rights of trans people.

The video honored the courage that trans people show by living as their authentic selves in a world that often rejects and fears them. It tells the story

of how MC, a young trans woman, finds the courage to be her true self – with a little help from allies she meets along the way. All materials were produced in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

While the video was seen by a relatively low number of people by UN Free & Equal standards – 2.5 million – it had much higher interaction numbers than average, with 72,000 comments, likes and shares across platforms, indicating that the video was through provoking for the audience.

**CELEBRATE
TRANS VISIBILITY**



72,000
comments,
likes and
shares across
platforms



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Advocating for justice and protection for all

In May, the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia was marked with a mini-campaign featuring a short music video, a [landing page](#) and three beautiful macros exploring how we can ensure justice and protection for LGBTI people around the world. While addressing a serious topic, the video was a crowd pleaser – not least because of its engaging soundtrack – with 4.7 million views and more than 60,000 interactions.

It celebrates how far we have come in the fight for LGBTI equality in many parts of the world, while also reminding audiences how much remains to be done before LGBTI people can enjoy the same rights as everyone else.

All multimedia products were rolled out in all the official UN languages and Portuguese.



4.7 million
views and more
than 60,000
interactions



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Calling for an end to bullying

UN Free & Equal launched a mini-campaign to mark Spirit Day in October - a day of action to end bullying, isolation and abuse of LGBTI kids and young people.

Spirit Day is the largest, most visible LGBTI anti-bullying campaign in the world and was started by American civil society organization [GLAAD](#), which was a partner in the roll-out of the initiative.

The mini-campaign included an emotive, live-action, video, a series of macros and a [landing page](#) exploring

how we can make the world a more welcoming place for LGBTI youth.

The video, published in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish, was our most seen of the year, with 5.5 million views and 101,000 interactions.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN staff supported the campaign by publishing pictures of themselves wearing the Spirit Day shade of purple on the day itself.



TAKE A
STAND
AGAINST BULLYING

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5.5 million views
and 101,000
interactions



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Amplifying voices for equality

Of the 70 countries around the world that still criminalize same sex relationships, 33 are in Africa. However, just in the past five years, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique and the Seychelles have all decriminalized consensual same sex conduct. In South Africa, the Government has launched a new push to tackle hate crime. And across the continent, LGBT-led human rights organizations and allies are at work, demanding further reforms.

In December, UN Free & Equal launched a mini-campaign to celebrate the dedication and bravery of some of Africa's most inspiring allies; Willy Mutunga, Former Chief Justice from Kenya; Seun Kuti, musician and activists from Nigeria; Bishop Ssenyonjo, theologian from Uganda, and Alice Nkom, Lawyer from Cameroon. The mini-campaign features interviews with the four allies and macros with many more, and was developed in collaboration with UNDP and Kenyan production company None On Record. All assets can be seen on the campaign's [landing page](#). The videos were seen by more than 840,000 people, predominantly in Africa.



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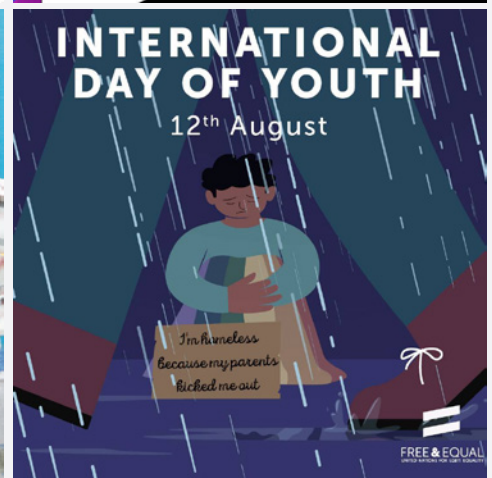
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OTHER ORIGINAL CONTENT

E-postcards (branded images with text superimposed) and GIFs (a short series of looping images and text) are other creative ways of engaging audiences in conversation on social media.

E-postcards and GIFs are particularly useful as awareness-raising tools,

featuring key facts about the LGBTI community or easy-to-understand explanations of relevant terminology in a condensed and sharable format. In 2019, the global UN Free & Equal campaign published 92 new e-postcards and GIFs. Some of our most popular are featured on this page.



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EVENTS AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS



OutRight Action International

UN Free & Equal co-hosted three events at United Nations Headquarters in New York in 2019.

In May, we marked International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia with a panel debate co-hosted with the LGBTI Core Group, a group of member states working to raise awareness and advocate for

LGBTI equality in multilateral spaces. Speakers included Executive Director and Project Coordinator of Guyana Trans United Candace McEwan, the Operations Manager at the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya Yvonne Oduor and the Commissioner of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Flávia Piovesan, who discussed legal and policy reforms needed to



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deliver justice and protection for LGBTI people in front of approximately 400 audience members.

This was followed by a July event on non-binary gender identities, the first of its kind at the United Nations, co-hosted with UN Women, UN Globe, the Missions of Argentina and the Netherlands and OutRight Action International. The event, attended by some 500 people, featured a panel debate that included Permanent

Representative of Argentina Martín García Moritán, Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcukaas, UN Independent Expert Victor Madrigal Borloz, and activists Katlego Kai Kolanyane-Kesupile and Geena Rocero. The event was moderated by journalists and activists Imara Jones, and opened with a performance by poet Kay Ulunday Barrett.

During the UN General Assembly UN Free & Equal again teamed up with the LGBTI Core Group to host a high-level discussion on hate-speech against the LGBTI community. The session was opened with a panel debate featuring High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, LGBTI activist from St. Lucia Kenita Placide, Managing Editor NBC Out Brooke Sopelsa, and Head of Advocacy and Government Affairs at the Trevor Project Sam Brinton. The debate was followed by in interactive dialogue in which some ten member states participated.



OutRight Action International



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NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS



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2019

has been a year of growth at the national level for UN Free & Equal, with the number of national and regional campaigns increasing from 12 to 17. There are now full-scale spin-off campaigns in Albania, Brazil, Cambodia, Cabo Verde, Dominican Republic, The Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mongolia, Peru, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, Ukraine, Uruguay and Viet Nam, and a sub-regional campaign in Central America. We hope to grow even further in 2020. Expanding the scope of the campaign at the national level is part of a strategic shift to increase the campaign's impact on the ground.



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Albania

Free & Equal Albania




TË LIRË & TË BARABARTË
KOMBET E BASHKUARA

Being LGBTI still carries enormous stigma in Albania, especially outside of urban areas. As a result, LGBTI young people who come out to their parents and communities often end up rejected and isolated.

Ending this cycle of stigma and rejection is the focus of Free & Equal Albania.



Our online campaign “I Am Your Child”, which is now in its second year, seeks to change the narratives around family values through videos and other social media content carrying a simple message; supporting your kids – no matter who they are or whom they love – is what family is all about.



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In 2019, the roll out of the social media campaign was amplified by well-known and respected psychologists, teachers and sociologists, as well as the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, the Albania People's Advocate and the UN Resident Coordinator, who used their reputation, platform and strong arguments to help spread the message of the campaign. Overall, the social media campaign reached almost 347,000 people. Another 300,000 people were reached through coverage of the campaign in traditional media.

The Free & Equal team moreover worked directly with parents of LGBTI individuals, setting up a support group for parents in rural areas together with the NGO Open Mind Spectrum Albania. Around 30 parents, many of whom had experienced shame and rejection by their relatives and neighbours for standing

by their LGBTI children, participated in meetings where they could find mutual support and share their experiences. Presentations by UN staff and community members helped increase the group's understanding of the issues their children face and the importance of family support.

The
campaign
reached
almost
650,000
people

Over the past few years, Free & Equal Albania has also been working with journalists to eliminate use of stigmatizing language and negative stereotypes about minorities in traditional media, which

greatly contributes to the stigma LGBTI people face. In 2019, the team hosted 40 journalists from traditional and conservative regions of Albania in a training workshop on fair and ethical reporting, resulting in five media stories in the local press reaching around 100,000 people. Feedback collected after the training sessions showed that this was the first training of its kind for most of the participants and that the new terminology and insights would help them report on LGBTI related stories without the use of derogatory language.

Plans for 2020 include continuing the "I am Your Child" campaign both online and with in-real-life parents' groups. The team will also, in collaboration with Free & Equal Serbia, focus on outreach to the business community using the Standards of Conduct for Business that were recently translated into Albanian.



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Brazil

Free & Equal Brazil has been pushing for equal rights and fair treatment for LGBTI people together with local activists and municipal authorities since 2014, and was the largest and most ambitious national Free & Equal campaign of 2019.

Efforts are not just public-facing – the team has been working to mainstream LGBTI

equality into the work of the entire UN presence in the country through years of sensitivity trainings and workshops.

In 2020, four UN staff identifying as trans have been hired and the number of UN organizations implementing activities on LGBTI issues has grown considerably. The years of public advocacy are also

showing results. The team has helped grow the intersex movement in the country and positioned the subject on the national political agenda. The team's work on trans rights has moreover generated very positive feedback from community members and activists.

In 2019, the political context changed, which posed



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municipal-level governments. The ground-breaking Supreme Court ruling in June outlaws discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity opened new opportunities.

During the course of 2019, Free & Equal Brazil implemented more activities than planned, as civil society organizations increasingly turned to the UN system for support.

Activities included the continuation of the “TransFormação” project (“Transformation”, in English), a capacity-building initiative targeting trans people outside the formal labor market.

Through a series of 10 workshops, 23 trans activists from Salvador State in in the Bahia region worked with mentors, such as health workers, public defenders and the police. 250 additional members of the trans community

indirectly benefitted from the program, gaining access to information on rights and services for trans persons. A handbook compiling key services for trans people in the country was also disseminated through the

The
campaign
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655,410
people via
social media

challenges for many of the LGBTI organizations that had partnered with UN agencies in previous Free & Equal activities in the country.

Even so, collaboration with the government has remained strong in areas related to workplace inclusion of trans people, a priority of Free & Equal Brazil for several years.

A strong partnership has also been maintained with institutions such as the Public Prosecutor’s Offices, the judiciary and state and

initiative. Participants often refer to “TransFormação” as a turning point in their lives, not only for increasing their self-esteem and knowledge of their rights but even more for positioning them as key drivers of change. Many of the former participants are currently



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well positioned in the board of social organizations and governmental institutions, positions they thought were not achievable before.

This project has also greatly strengthened the network of governmental and civil society institutions supporting the rights of trans people in areas where it has taken place, such as the Federal District and Salvador, which have since gone on to join forces in other advocacy and awareness-raising activities promoting trans equality.

The private sector is another key partner in this work. In 2019, the Brazil team hosted training workshops and events for 121 private sector companies and 40 public prosecutors for labor issues who learned more about how they can play their part in promoting LGBTI equality.

Since 2018, the team has brought onboard 30 companies as public

supporters of the UN Human Rights Office's LGBTI Standards of Conduct for Business.

Social media is another venue for Free & Equal Brazil's advocacy. The national campaign launched two original campaign videos; created three mini-campaigns on lesbian, bisexual and intersex visibility respectively; and wrote nine articles on LGBTI equality issues for UN media services.

The campaign team also translated and disseminated locally content from the mini-campaigns created by the global campaign. Overall, the campaign in Brazil reached some than 655,410 people via social media, and received at least 28,610 interactions on social media posts.

Hundreds of people attended events hosted at UN headquarters in Brasília, marking key dates such as International Day against

Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, and the national Trans Visibility Day.

For 2020, Free & Equal Brazil will continue to advocate for action against trans discrimination through a national technical meeting and a web-based training platform.



Free & Equal Brazil

The team will also continue to raise awareness about the human rights situation of intersex people.



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Cabo Verde



Free & Equal Cabo Verde

In Cabo Verde same-sex relationships are not banned and the promotion and protection of human rights is enshrined in the constitution.

Despite the favorable legal situation, discrimination is still a problem for many LGBT people – including from government agencies such as the police and health

care providers. This includes lack of official recognition of same-sex relationships, lack of protection of the property rights of same-sex couples, and lack of clear policies and procedures for changing gender in official records.

Winning hearts and minds has been a focus for the campaign since Free & Equal

Cabo Verde launched four years ago. During that time, the team has contributed to building a now-vibrant and dynamic LGBTI civil society in the country through regular meetings and workshops.

Cabo Verde has become members of both the intergovernmental Equal Rights Coalition and the



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LGBTI Core Group at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The national campaign team has also developed videos and other assets for social media that have been seen by millions of people across the country and the region.

Online advocacy work continued in 2019, with the development of a documentary called “D. Monica, um elogio à Igualdade” (“Dona Monica, in praise of equality”).

The film follows Dona Monica, a street-sweeper for the Praia municipal government, who has been openly trans for more than three decades, and offers an empathic and celebratory depiction of the challenges she has overcome to live as her true self.

Twenty screenings of the documentary are planned for 2020, including on national television, in commercial cinemas, at local film festivals,

and in training sessions with UN staff and government officials. A shorter version will also be promoted on social media.

In 2020, Free & Equal Cabo Verde will, among other projects, challenge two young filmmakers and one graphic designer from Cabo Verde to create short films exploring acceptance, tolerance and respect that will be rolled out late in the year.

Free & Equal Cabo Verde



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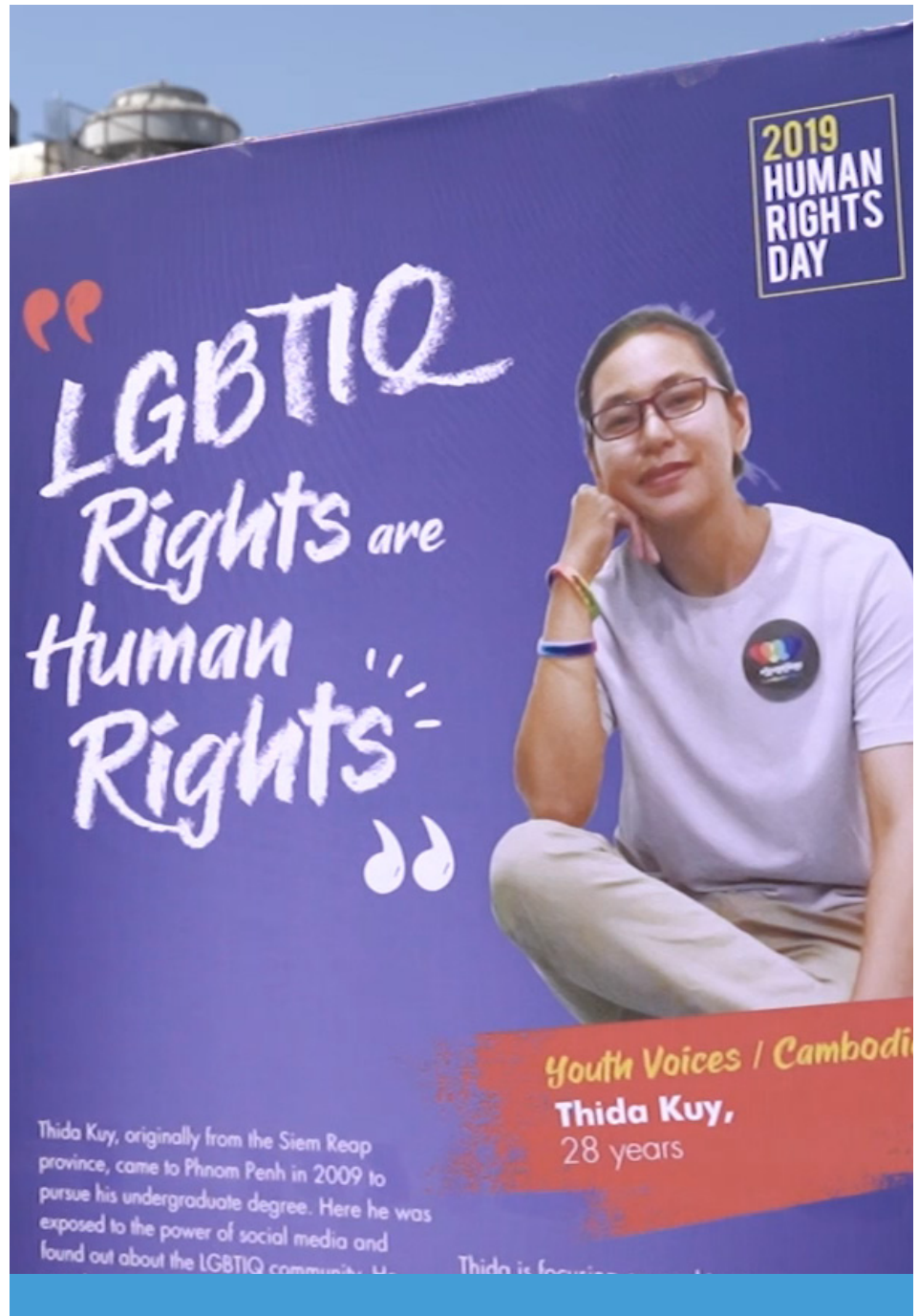
Cambodia

Free & Equal Cambodia

Domestic law does not criminalize same-sex relationships in Cambodia but it is difficult for trans people to change their gender marker, there is no anti-discrimination protection, and powerful, traditional social norms impact social attitudes on gender. As a result, LGBTI people continue to face discrimination and exclusion in their families, at school and in health care settings.

Free & Equal Cambodia has campaigned for LGBTI equality since 2014, particularly around international days such as Zero Discrimination Day, Pride Week and Human Rights Day.

In addition to building capacity among civil society partners and UN personnel, the aim of the campaign is to raise awareness and break down social barriers that keep LGBTI people from fully participating in society.



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In 2019, this work was done both on social media and through public events.

The locally produced video “Know the Person and Prejudice Disappears”, telling the story of a gender non-conforming gay man who is supported by his family members and ultimately turns out to be a role model for his relatives, was seen by more than 2.7 million Facebook users across Cambodia.

The team also organized events during Pride Week and for Human Rights Day where the more than 6000 participants could pick up fliers with messages of equality and Free & Equal swag.

Cambodia had its human rights record reviewed as a part of the Universal Periodic Review process in 2019 where by UN member states assess each other’s human rights challenges and achievements at the Human

Rights Council. Cambodia accepted all the nine LGBTI related recommendations it received, and the Free & Equal team and civil society partners used the opportunity to engage with government partners to advocate for an implementation plan, including specific tasks for relevant ministries.

In October, the national campaign team organized a workshop with more than 200 government officials, civil society representatives and members of the international community to discuss implementation of the recommendations in the

The video was seen by more than 2.7 million Facebook users across Cambodia

year to come. The dialogue with the government will continue in 2020 with a follow-up workshop planned for February.



Free & Equal Cambodia



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Dominican Republic



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Free & Equal Dominican Republic/ONURD

Free & Equal Dominican Republic is implemented in partnership with the UNDP-led initiative Being LGBTI in the Caribbean, which aims to enhance knowledge, partnerships, and capacities of LGBTI communities, civil society and States to reduce human rights violations and negative attitudes towards LGBTI people in the Caribbean.

As such, Free & Equal activities serve as the public information and advocacy arm of a broader United Nations effort to promote equality for the LGBTI population in the region. Free & Equal Dominican Republic and Being LGBTI in the Caribbean have succeeded in strengthening partnerships between government and the LGBTI

community, including by making sure that LGBTI civil society groups participated in consultations where the development of national policies was being discussed. As a result, the Ministry of Women, the Ministry of Youth and the Judiciary included access to justice by LGBTI people and socio-economic inclusion in their national plans.



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Free & Equal Dominican Republic/ONURD

The Free & Equal team advocated on social media for most of the year, reaching more than 387,000 people with human rights messaging on Twitter and Facebook. This will continue in 2020, with a video on the human rights of intersex people and another on LGBTI inclusion in the labor market already created.

The UN team also celebrated Pride, both online and off. More than 60 UN staff marched together with LGBTI community members and allies in the annual Pride parade, and a video the team created from the celebration was seen by almost 76,000 people on social media. UN representatives also spoke to local reporters covering the parade about the need for LGBTI equality.

The theatre community in Dominican Republic is an important partner for the campaign. From October to November 2019, the team put on a theatre production to



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raise awareness of violence against members of the LGBTI community in schools. Later in the year, the campaign also hosted an acting workshop for members of the trans community that let the participants work through their personal experiences of violence and discrimination.

Six trans men and 14 trans women completed the training and received their certificates of participation from representatives of the organizing institutions.

The group put on a graduation show, "The Trans Monologues", at the Narciso González Cultural Center, which was covered extensively in local media.

LGBTI refugees represented another important focus for Free & Equal Dominican Republic in 2019. The refugee crisis in Venezuela is one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, and many LGBTI refugees are seeking

The Free & Equal team advocated on social media for most of the year, reaching more than 387,000 people with human rights messaging on Twitter and Facebook

refuge in neighboring countries. To ensure that this group is treated with dignity and respect, the team has put together a guidance booklet for decision makers and service providers in collaboration with civil society, to be launched in early 2020.

The campaign also hosted a training workshop for LGBTI civil society members to ensure service provision and assistance to newly arrived refugees.

2020 will see a similarly ambitious agenda, with activities ranging from self-defense and self-care classes for lesbian, bi and trans women and anti-discrimination trainings for local health care professionals, to social media advocacy and creative workshops for community members to promote visibility and understanding through artistic expression.



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Gambia

The Gambian Criminal Code outlaws same sex relations with punishments ranging from five years to life in prison and while a proposal to reduce the sentencing has been proposed in Parliament, the new bill has not been brought to a vote.

Traditional media in the region consistently feature negative, sensational and

misleading reports about the LGBT community. This includes likening them to vermin, mosquitoes and leprosy and repeated calls to expel, evict and deny housing to people suspected of being gay.

The toxic media environment is an important contributing factor to the high prevalence of negative stereotypes and

misconceptions about these communities among the general public. Working with journalists to ensure that the media treat LGBT people with the same fairness, integrity and respect as other people is therefore a major focus for the campaign in the Gambia.

To this end, efforts began in 2019 with a research project on the press



Free & Equal Gambia



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The campaign's major focus is to work with journalists to ensure that the media treat LGBT people with the same fairness, integrity and respect as other people

coverage of LGBT people in the Gambia from 2008 to 2019, documenting key patterns and the real-life consequences these have for the members of the community.

This was followed by a roundtable hosted by the UN team together with the Gambian Press Union and Women in Liberation and

Leadership where participants from among others Gambian Media Council and the School of Journalism could meet with members of the LGBT community to discuss possible solutions.

Both the journalists and LGBT activists participated expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to discuss these issues face-to-face for

the first time and eagerness to continue the discussion.

In 2020, further initiatives are planned, including several training sessions for journalists on how to ensure rights-based reporting on LGBT people, free from derogatory language and negative stereotypes.





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Guatemala



Free & Equal Guatemala/OHCHR



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The 2019 elections contributed to an increasingly polarized debate around LGBT equality in Guatemala – resulting in increased levels of discrimination and violence against community members.

Last year alone, the UN Human Rights team in the Country documented the murder of nine gay men, two lesbian women, one bisexual man and six trans women.

There have also been proposals in Congress that would undermine the human rights of the LGBTI community.

As a result, Free & Equal Guatemala focused on providing United Nations support to a broad coalition of activists and civil society organizations fighting for equality.

The campaign hosted two training sessions for 20 local human rights defenders on human-rights based advocacy. The team also hosted five networking meetings with LGBT organizations and other parts of civil society to cement alliances to respond to the socially regressive proposals.

The campaign is also trying to change negative narratives about LGBTI people in on

social media, where the campaign promoted positive messages of justice and equality, reaching 6,862 people.

This work will be continued and expanded in 2020, when the team will also start working with the private sector and other non-traditional allies, whose voices are needed in support of equality.

Free & Equal Guatemala/OHCHR



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Haiti

As in the Dominican Republic, Free & Equal Haiti is run in parallel with the UNDP-led Being LGBTI in the Caribbean project.

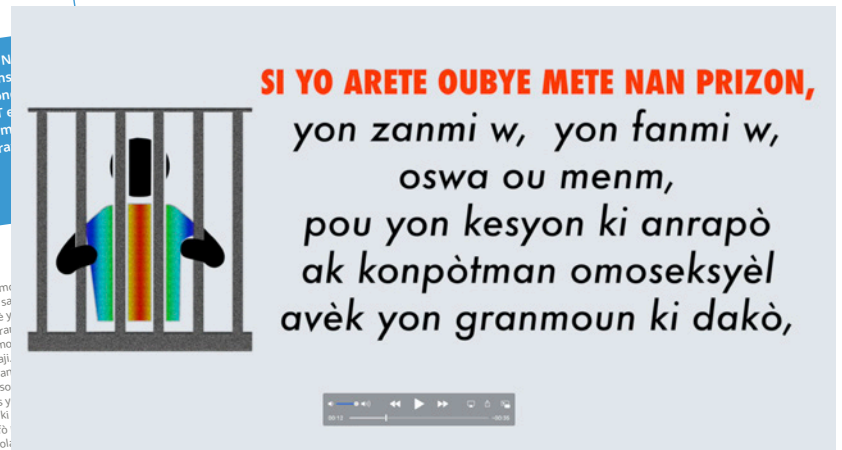
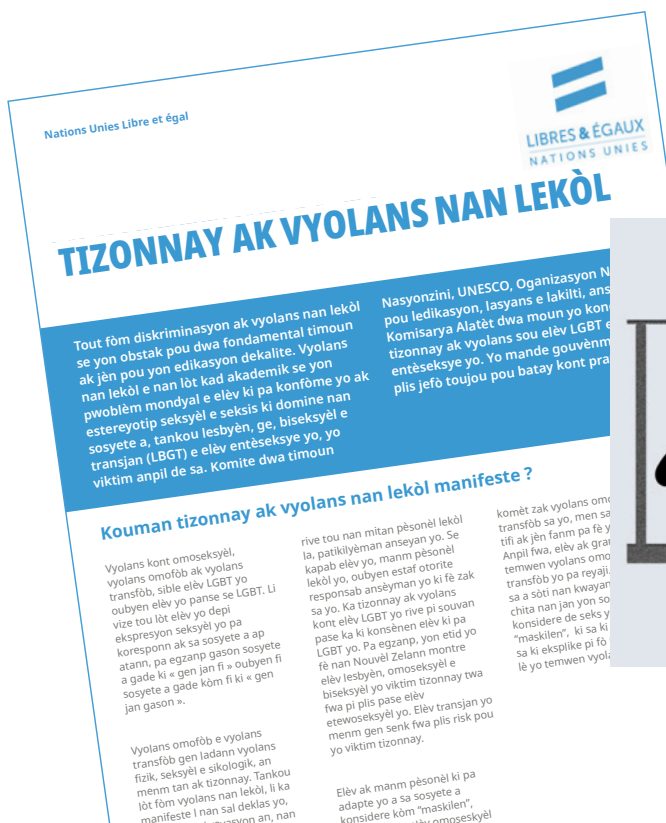
The overall goal of the campaign is to promote the human rights of LGBTI people and increase acceptance of

the LGBTI community in the country through advocacy and awareness-raising activities, and by working together with local civil society groups

Because of civil unrest and political instability, campaign activities were paused in

the first half of 2019, before resuming in the second part of the year.

A series of four extra-large posters with human rights messaging hung in 200 high-traffic areas of the capital and in Jacmel City were seen by an estimated 10,000 people.



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Four short advocacy videos and a factsheet on LGBTI human rights were distributed on social media and received more than 9,000 views

Four short advocacy videos and a factsheet on LGBTI human rights were distributed on social media and received more than 9,000 views.

Campaign materials were shared with civil society partners, who used them in their training activities and advocacy.

Free & Equal Haiti



In addition to public-facing advocacy work, Free & Equal Haiti trained more than 100 UN staff in the country on how to ensure that the concerns of the LGBTI community are incorporated effectively and sensitively into UN work. More videos and advocacy materials are under development for 2020.



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Mongolia

Free & Equal Mongolia worked closely with LGBT civil society through The Coalition for Equality, which brings together civil society and international organizations, academic institutions,

government agencies, and the private sector to celebrate Pride and to advocate for the rights of members of the LGBT community. The UN team actively participated in the Equality & Pride Days

in August, supporting a queer film festival and art show during the week-long celebration, and marching alongside community members and allies in the Pride march itself.



Free & Equal Mongolia



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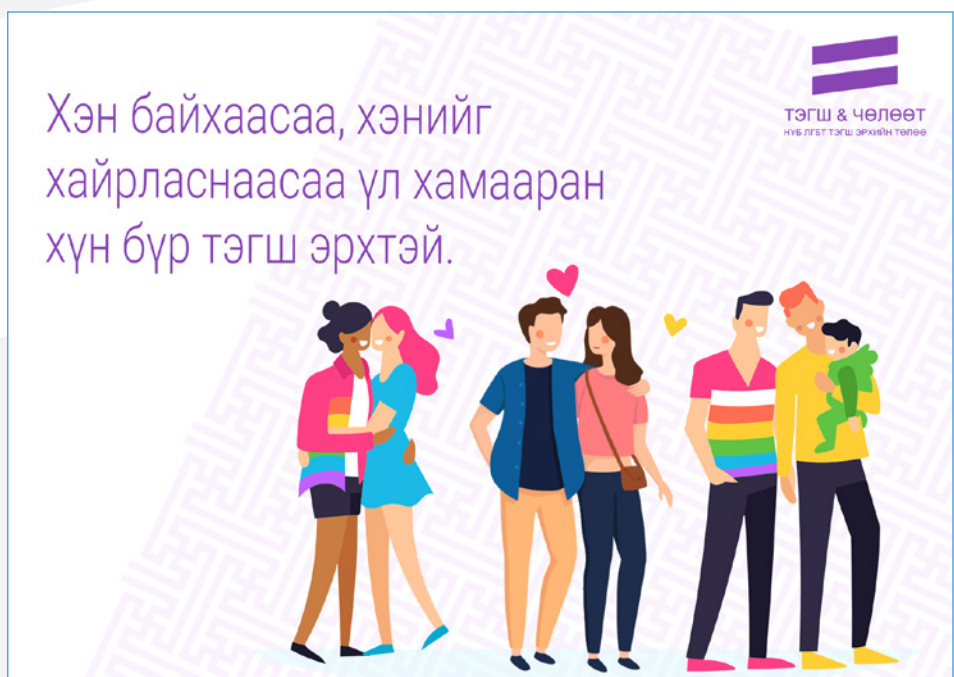
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On social media, the Free & Equal team reached more than 80,000 people with videos and other posts promoting LGBTI equality

The events involved almost 1000 participants. Around 90 staff from the UN and partner institutions also took part in LGBT inclusion trainings hosted by the team and feedback from participants suggested that they felt more knowledgeable as a result of the session.

On social media, the Free & Equal team reached more than 80,000 people with videos and other posts promoting LGBTI equality in Mongolian. Posters with human rights messaging could also be seen at bus stops all around the capital Ulaanbaatar.

Free & Equal Mongolia



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Peru

Free & Equal Peru's goal for 2019 was to advocate for LGBTI equality in national political debates by making the concerns of LGBTI citizens visible to the public and challenging negative stereotypes about LGBT people.

Over a ten-week period, an estimated 70,000 people visited a Free & Equal photo exhibit called "Pure

Nonsense", which toured public spaces and parks in the capital Lima.

The exhibit portrays LGBT individuals in their day to day life and directly confronts hate-mongering and myths that are often spread about the community.

The campaign also created an online version of the exhibit that was featured in local

media and by United Nations news outlets.

Challenging negative stereotypes of LGBTI people was a recurring theme of the campaign's social media advocacy.

Three videos and other content were disseminated in 2019, reaching more than 32,000 people. The social media content produced by





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Three videos and other content were disseminated in 2019, reaching more than 32,000 people

Free & Equal Peru has been well received, with more than 80 percent of comments being positive. Two additional videos on the same themes will be produced in early 2020.

Private sector collaboration has been another focus area in 2019. The Peru team co-hosted several advocacy meetings together with Pride Connection, a regional network of companies that promotes inclusive work environments for the LGBT community, and aims to help the local business community become more vocal in supporting LGBTI rights. During 2019, more

than 200 representatives from local businesses took part in regular meetings. Free & Equal Peru also played a role in increasing Pride Connection's membership, with eight new companies joining in 2019.

The collaboration with the private sector will continue

in 2020, as will advocacy, which next year will focus specifically on the rights of trans people to have their gender identity legally recognized.

Free & Equal Peru



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Serbia



Free & Equal Serbia/MARIJA PIROSKI

Since 2018, Free & Equal Serbia has focused on unemployment among LGBTI people, caused in part by high levels of prejudice and stigma.

To meet this challenge, the campaign has sought to raise awareness in the private sector of companies' human rights responsibilities, and appealed to business to become partners in the

work to end LGBTI exclusion in the workplace. In late 2018, the team translated the UN Human Rights Office-produced Standards of Conduct for Businesses on Tackling Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, & Intersex People into Serbian and launched the document at an event in Belgrade. In 2019, the roll-out continued and the team

translated the standards into Albanian and launched them in Tirana in November, with about 50 people from the private sector and civil society in the audience.

The campaign also created a public information campaign around the standards in Serbia, including a video showing the positive impact that inclusion and



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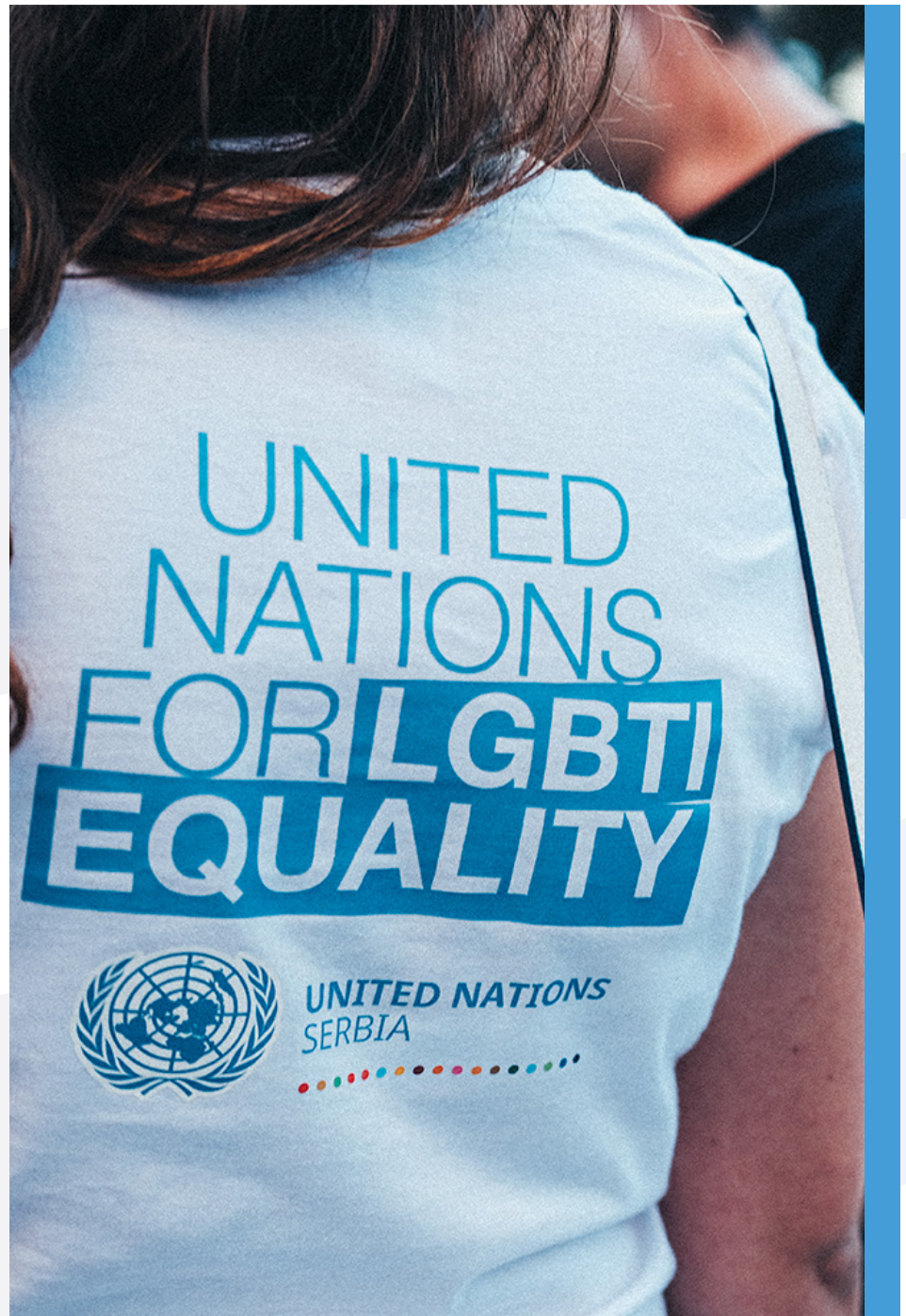


diversity efforts have had at local company Hemofarm. The video was also shown at events with the private sector as an example of how companies can help realize equal rights for all.

Three big Serbian corporations publicly endorsed the Standards of Conduct in 2019 and numerous additional businesses took part in LGBTI related events such as Pride Parade.

Free & Equal Serbia also focused on de-pathologizing trans identities.

The national legal system does not recognize transgender identities, and in the health care system being trans is still classified as a mental disorder. Free & Equal Serbia has sought to facilitate discussion between government partners, civil society organizations, trans activists and other expert participants about





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Free & Equal Serbia



how to change the current regulations, allowing the trans community to become active participants in shaping a part of the legal framework that impacts their lives.

Free & Equal Serbia has also actively appealed to public opinion through a series of public information activities.

These included an exhibit documenting the lives of trans people in Serbia at the Belgrade Youth Centre, which

Three big Serbian corporations publicly endorsed the Standards of Conduct in 2019 and numerous additional businesses took part in LGBTI related events

Free & Equal Serbia
ALEKSANDAR CRNOGORAC & MARIJA PIROSKI



ranks as one of the most visited exhibits in the space ever, and a social media campaign seen by more than 50,450 people across platforms.

In 2020, the team will continue working together with the trans community and government counterparts with a view to supporting necessary changes in legislation and policy relating to trans identities.



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Sri Lanka

Same-sex relationships are still criminalized, and violence, discrimination and hate speech directed at members of the LGBTI community remain serious problems in Sri Lanka. Progress has, however, been made for the trans population, who can now have their gender recognized on birth certificates and national identification papers. The UN Independent Expert on

Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity has moreover been invited to the country to engage in dialogue with the government and civil society.

Following the announcement of a nationwide state of emergency after the April 2019 terrorist attacks and consequent adoption of expansive emergency powers,

the the UN team had to suspend their planned Free & Equal launch in 2019, but the consultation process with local civil society groups and outreach to local advertising firms was restarted towards the end of the year so the campaign can be launched in 2020.

The trans population can now have their gender recognized on birth certificates and national identification papers



Free & Equal Sri Lanka



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Timor Leste

UNFPA, IOM, UN Women

Same sex relationships are not criminalized in Timor Leste and legislation against hate-crimes and discrimination is in place. Despite legal protections, LGBTI people face family violence, discrimination and social stigma.

The country's third ever Pride March was held in Dili in July. The celebration was organized by members of the LGBTI community and youth groups and more than 3,000 Timorese and international allies and community members took part, including members of the UN Country Team. In a historical first, the President of the Republic made a public address calling on everyone to embrace diversity. Translated and locally developed Free & Equal campaign materials were distributed throughout the day.

The team in Timos Leste also organized a workshop for 60 members of the



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In a historical first, the President of the Republic made a public address calling on everyone to embrace diversity

LGBTI community and their family members in Liquica Municipality in July. Participants shared experiences of discrimination, violence and the need for increased acceptance and equal rights. Catholic nuns also addressed the event, calling for respect for everyone in society.

The Timor Leste team continued their collaboration with local civil society and co-organized a one-day seminar with the NGO Coalition for Diversity and Action and the Youth Group Hatutan to raise awareness about the rights of LGBTI people.

The team also did human rights trainings in schools and for the community police together with the Movimentu Feto Foin Sa'e Timor-Leste.

As a result, 31 secondary school students from across Dili and 31 youth representatives from the

Community Police know more about human rights in general, and the rights of LGBTI people and people with disabilities specifically. According to informal feedback after the session, participants found the trainings useful, particularly for learning non-stigmatizing words for these population groups.

These youth programs will continue in 2020, among other activities.



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Ukraine



Free & Equal Ukraine/Andriy Krepih

The primary objective of Free & Equal Ukraine is to encourage acceptance and inclusion of the LGBTI community.

Negative stereotypes and prejudice towards the LGBTI community are widespread and public events, such as the annual Pride parade, are

often met with threats and other efforts to intimidate the participants. 2019 also saw a series of attacks and threats against LGBTI individuals that caused fear among community members.

To counter this stigma, the team in Ukraine has developed a social media

campaign called 100 Questions, in which members of the general public ask questions that are answered by members of the LGBTI community.

The resulting 14 videos are being pushed out on social media in late 2019 and 2020, and have so far reached

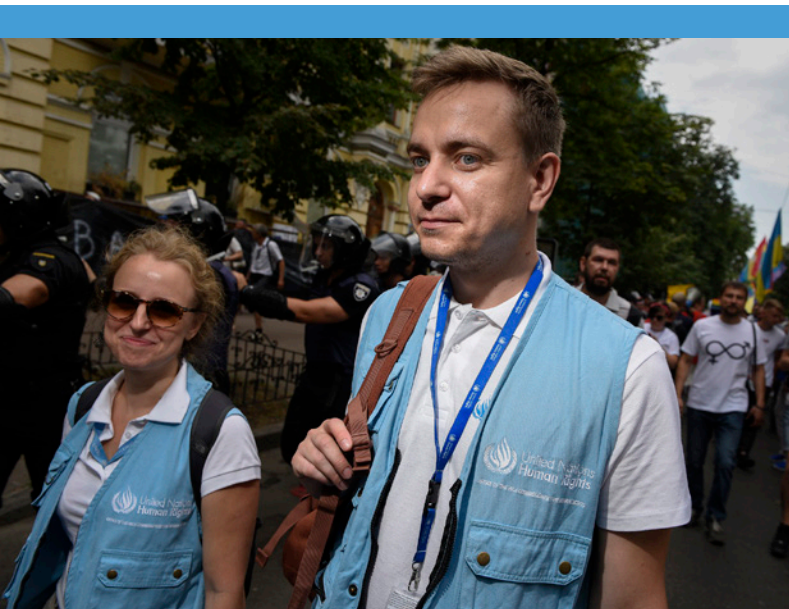


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Free & Equal Ukraine/Andriy Krepkh



Free & Equal Ukraine/Andrew Kravchenko



more than 30,000 people and sparked countless online conversations. about LGBTI equality.

Ensuring the protection of LGBTI events is the responsibility of the National Police and Free & Equal Ukraine has over the past two years worked with LGBTI activists and international

police officers to train the National Police in how to safeguard the LGBTI community.

In 2019, four training sessions for 80 mid-ranking and junior police officers have taken place. Participants report that the trainings have been helpful and relevant, not just in terms of technical learning

outcomes, but also as a door-opener, helping police officers and LGBTI activists to get to know one another face to face – and discuss several of the same questions that were brought up in the 100 Questions online video series.

Both the police trainings and online advocacy will continue in 2020.



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Uruguay

Free & Equal Uruguay launched in September 2019 and despite the short implementation period, the team has already started a range of initiatives.

The campaign, which is implemented together with the Government of Montevideo and the Ministry of Social Development,

produced and launched three videos on social media reaching almost 260,000 people.

This included the “We are the city that celebrates diversity” campaign which was also featured on Montevideo TV station TVCIUDAD and accompanied with stickers and pins featuring the same

slogan. Campaign posters adorned Montevideo’s main street from September onward. Free & Equal Uruguay also supported the national March for Diversity, with more than 20 UN staff marching in the parade itself, and organized workshops for UN staff to make sure that they can implement LGBTI human rights into their day-





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to-day work. The Free & Equal team organized several public events and lectures for stakeholders such as representatives from the justice sector.

On International Human Rights Day in December, the team hosted a street festival together with grassroots groups, government entities, schools and neighborhood groups.

Activities took place across Montevideo and included a Free & Equal soccer cup, and other summer activities for children and

youngsters that participate in summer programs in the poorest neighborhoods. The celebration was widely covered in local and national media, including on-air interviews.

Building on interest from partners and participants, Free & Equal Uruguay will be expanded in 2020.

The campaign will continue working in education centers and through sports to promote values such as equality, teamwork, resilience and fairness.

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ONU Uruguay



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Viet Nam



UN in Viet Nam/Akbota Norzhanova

The United Nations team in Viet Nam celebrated Diversity Day on 7 December with a “Diversity Ball” tournament hosted at the Hanoi University of Science and Technology’s soccer field.

More than 40 players participated in four mixed-gender teams in a soccer competition with a rule twist - that all players (except

the goalkeeper) had to hold hands. This served to even the playing field and make the game safe and fun for all participants.

The referees of the tournament were two former players from the Vietnamese national women’s football team. Civil society organizations, a university gender equality club, the

Hanoi University of Science and Technology and the United Nations Viet Nam set up nine interactive booths in the area of the tournament where they provided more information about the LGBTI community in Viet Nam and services such as HIV testing.

A Diversity Choir with members from the LGBTI and other vulnerable communities



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performed on the soccer field. So did drag performer Miz GG, who offered drag make-up tutorials when not on stage.

Participants could also visit two photo exhibitions and learn sign language signs for words such as love and diversity. The award ceremony also featured a dance performance by UN staff.

Around 500 people, mostly students and other young people, took part in the celebration. The students, including ones that are not part of the LGBTI community, showed great curiosity and willingness to learn when engaging with the LGBTI activists and other allies in the booths.

Participating community members also expressed

excitement about the event, which for some was the first time taking part in this kind of celebration of the LGBTI community. The event was covered by online media and national television channels VTV1 and VTV3.

Leading up to the event, the UN team ran a social media campaign with LGBTI equality messaging that reached more than 60,000 people.



UN in Viet Nam/Akbota Norzhanova



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Sub-Regional Campaign in Central America



Free & Equal ROCA

In 2019, the UN Human Rights regional office for Central America launched a new, sub-regional campaign covering Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras & Panama. These countries face

many of the same challenges when it comes to the human rights of LGBTI people; while great legal strides to address discrimination, violence and exclusion of LGBT people have been made in most of

the region, the community is stigmatized and advocates are attacked as proponents of the so-called “gender ideology” out to undermine traditional values, religion and the family. These negative narratives are



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Free & Equal ROCA

currently growing in strength. Violence and discrimination are common, particularly for members of the trans community.

Since its launch, the team behind Free & Equal Central America has been working to counter these negative narratives and to increase support for equality among the general public.

Much of the initial work of the campaign has been focused on building the coalition necessary to sustain such a geographically broad campaign.

So far, civil society organizations from across the region, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the University of Panama and the Spanish international news agency EFE, the fourth largest wire agency in the world, have signed up as partners in the campaign. Advocacy efforts also commenced towards the



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end of the year, with locally developed advocacy materials aimed at promoting the adoption of legislation and public policies in the different countries.

These were pushed out on social media, traditional media outlets and through EFE wire services reaching a total of 35 million people across the region.

The campaign celebrated International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in May with a public forum together with the University of Panama and the Ombudsman's Office.

The more-than 80 people in the audience and panel engaged in passionate discussion about the



Locally developed advocacy materials reached a total of 35 million people across the region

current political situation vis-à-vis the LGBTI community.

Participants welcomed the forum, as the first one addressing LGBTI issues at the University of Panama, and highlighted the importance of promoting social debate on key issues, such legal recognition of gender identity and same-sex marriage.

In 2020, the team will continue promoting main messages from last year's campaign with special focus on rural areas.

They will also build up their direct political advocacy by engaging with relevant authorities and duty-bearers together with civil society partners.



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ENLISTING THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR EQUALITY



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Enlisting the Private Sector



Fabrice Houdart

UN Free & Equal has been working to harness the power of the private sector since 2017, when the UN Human Rights Office introduced a set of global standards to support companies who are working to end discrimination against LGBTI people in the workplace and beyond.

Since their launch, the standards have been presented at a series of UN Free & Equal-hosted events in business hubs around the world and translated into

French, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish, and Tetum. So far, more than 270 companies have come out as public supporters of the standards, making this the world's largest corporate LGBTI inclusion initiative.

Outreach to new potential supporters is done in collaboration with Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality - a coalition of organizations and companies committed to leveraging their



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individual and collective advocacy to accelerate LGBTI equality and inclusion in the workplace and in the broader communities in which they operate.

The Partnership was announced at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos January 22, 2019. The Partnership is supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and is operated in collaboration with the Forum.

The central idea behind the standards is to build the broadest possible coalition for equality. Private sector companies have a role to play, not just by fostering a culture of respect and equality in the workplace, but also in the communities where they and their business partners operate.

To take a public stand for LGBTI equality comes with inherent risks in many contexts, both for the businesses themselves and for the LGBTI community, who might bear the brunt of any backlash. The only way to mitigate these risks and to ensure

maximum impact of private sector advocacy is to ensure that companies work hand in hand with community members and activists fighting for change. In 2019, the UN Human Rights Office has therefore been working on developing a toolkit helping activists engage with the private sector and started off the process by hosting a meeting with business representatives and LGBTI civil society in Berlin in July.

This included 46 LGBTI activists from Australia, China, Costa Rica, India, Iraq, Germany, South Africa, Italy, Czech Republic, The Netherlands, Singapore, Thailand, Israel, Spain, Brazil, Italy, Ukraine, Kenya, Morocco, Uganda, Vietnam, Serbia, United Kingdom and the United States of America, and 25 representatives from the private sector partners headquartered in Europe, the Americas and Asia.

The publication, "Minding the corporate gap: how activists & companies can work together to tackle LGBTI discrimination", which builds on the lessons from the consultation process, will be released in mid 2020.





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PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS



Kenneth Cole Productions



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Gap Inc.

For the fourth year running, UN Free & Equal celebrated Pride with Gap Inc. In 2019, Gap Inc.'s largest and most comprehensive collection of Pride-themed t-shirts, other Pride-themed accessories, and e-gift cards were sold online and in stores around the world with proceeds going to support UN Free & Equal. Gap Inc. brands Athleta, Banana Republic, Banana Republic Factory, Gap, Gap Factory joined the partnership.

Employees also joined LGBTI advocates at Pride marches across the U.S. and around the world honoring the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots as well as Gap's 50th birthday. During Pride Month, Gap Inc. invited out Olympic skier and medalist Gus Kenworthy to an employee townhall where he spoke on the significance of living authentically.

During the year, Gap Inc. employees also attended high-level UN LGBTI Core Group meetings at UN headquarters in New York.



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Kenneth Cole Productions

A groundbreaking partnership with Kenneth Cole Productions and UN Free & Equal continued into 2019. KCP released its most expansive Pride Collection – including footwear, t-shirts, caps, underwear, and sunglasses - pegged to World Pride in New York City and the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.

Kenneth Cole created and led an impactful, trailblazing campaign with Broadway’s award-winning musical “The Prom,” which received a Silver Clio Award in the category of “Live Entertainment: Partnerships and Collaborations.”

This holistic campaign included a special edition Kenneth Cole t-shirt, which was sold at The Prom’s theater and on KC.com and had proceeds go to UN Free & Equal. It also included events, such as in-theater talk backs and intimate in-store performances, which garnered the participation of UN diplomats from around the world as well as Mr. Kenneth Cole. KCP employees also joined OHCHR staff and diplomats at marquee UN events promoting LGBTI equality.



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H&M



UN Free & Equal teamed up with H&M to help launch the company's 2019 Pride collection. With over 30 pieces – including gender neutral options and the UN Free & Equal logo – the partnership raised both awareness and funds for UN Free & Equal for the second year in a row.

The collection was featured in H&M stores in more than 50 countries globally and promoted through celebrity champions including actress and advocate Laverne Cox; actor Rickey Thompson; and influencer Shannon Beveridge. A dazzling kickoff bash was also held in May at the House of Yes in Brooklyn, New York.



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THANK YOU

We are forever grateful for the support of our Equality Champions: Celina Jaitly, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, Ricky Martin, Daniela Mercury and members of the band fun.

A big thanks also to our volunteer translators Aleksander, Ghaith and James, our friends at the UN Foundation, ElkanoData, Shape History and Ecstasy of Gold, and to all the activists who have provided feedback and ideas throughout 2019.

UN Free & Equal would not be possible without financial contributions from the Governments of Iceland, Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, corporate supporters H&M, Gap Inc. and Kenneth Cole Productions and the support of the United Nations LGBTI Core Group.



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