

# UN Free & Equal Campaign Progress Report 2016



UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



**FREE & EQUAL**  
UNITED NATIONS FOR LGBTI EQUALITY

# Introduction

UN Free & Equal is a global United Nations campaign for equal rights and the fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bi, trans (LGBT) and intersex people everywhere. The campaign, launched in July 2013 and led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), aims to raise awareness of sexual, gender and bodily diversity and challenge negative stereotypes of LGBT and intersex people. Campaign materials – including videos, factsheets and infographic materials – have been viewed and shared hundreds of millions of times on social media and generated widespread coverage in print and broadcast media. Celebrities have been engaged to help carry campaign messages to the widest possible audience, and the campaign has provided a platform for high-profile events at UNHQ and on the ground in more than 25 countries around the world. Today, Free & Equal stands as one of the UN's most popular ever human rights campaigns, helping provoke and sustain the kinds of conversations needed if social attitudes towards LGBT and intersex people are to evolve.

**Launched:** 26 July 2013

**Overall Aim:** To raise awareness of sexual, gender and bodily diversity, and promote equal rights and fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex people everywhere.

## Objectives:

- To project United Nations' messages of LGBT and intersex equality and acceptance in traditional and social media.
- To support country-level United Nations advocacy for the human rights of LGBT and intersex people, including through distribution of public information materials and tools.
- To lend support and legitimacy to the work carried out by civil society organizations to counter prejudice and harmful stereotypes directed at LGBT and intersex people.

## Implementation:

Led by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with support from the UN Department of Public Information, the UN Department of Management and UN Country Teams (incl. UN Resident Coordinators, the UN Development Programme, UNICEF, UN Women, UNAIDS and the International Labour Organization). In 2016, the United Nations Postal Administration also participated in the campaign, by publishing a set of commemorative UN Free & Equal stamps.

## 2016 Highlights

- Released 13 original videos, 63 electronic postcards, and two fact sheets in all UN languages - made available via a dedicated campaign website at [www.unfe.org](http://www.unfe.org) and disseminated online and through the media. The campaign also created an interactive map showing the history of gay criminalization from 1799 to today, and the world's first stamp set dedicated to the cause of LGBT equality, which sold almost 150,000 units and was featured in media reports all over the world.
- Campaign content was visible in the social media streams of more than 1.5 billion people around the world and was mentioned in 964 individual newspaper articles and 262 blog posts reaching at least 58 million readers around the world. Radio and TV reports reached millions more.
- Reached a further 4 million people with Free & Equal campaign videos via social media – and many millions more through TV and other off-line channels.
- Launched the UN's first campaign for intersex awareness, featuring a video and dedicated webpage with information and advice for governments and parents. The mini-campaign received high praise from intersex activists and the video was seen by more than a million people in its first week.
- Continued to support national UN Free & Equal campaigns and events in some 25 countries, including new campaigns in Albania, Bhutan, Jamaica, Japan and Serbia.
- Supported an LGBT Core Group ministerial-level event in New York during the UN General Assembly in September on measures taken in countries around the world to protect the human rights of LGBT people, as well as helping publicize a rainbow crosswalk placed in front of UN Headquarters during the opening week of the new UN General Assembly.
- Continued to engage the campaign's nine Equality Champions in support of the campaign, including on social media, and work with a number of other celebrities to help extend the reach of campaign messages and materials. (Equality Champions are Puerto Rican pop star Ricky Martin, South African musician Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Brazilian singer Daniela Mercury, Bollywood actress Celina Jaitly, U.S. rap duo Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, and members of the U.S. band "fun.")
- The campaign's impact was recognized with several new awards in 2016, including the Harvey Milk Foundation's Global Champion Medal, awarded to UN Equality Champion Celina Jaitly; the Elton John Foundation Founders' Award, awarded to outgoing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; and OutRight Action International's OutSpoken Award.

Why We Fight



# Campaign Outputs

## Videos

As of 31 December 2016, UN Free & Equal had published 45 campaign videos, which were watched more than 18 million times on social media and many more on television and via public screenings. Thirteen of these were produced in 2016, garnering almost four million views online.

The video was created to draw audiences to a landing site where they could learn more and find sharable materials about the human rights concerns of intersex people, and was viewed by almost one million people in its first week.

### Intersex Awareness



The centrepiece of a mini-campaign to promote awareness of human rights issues facing intersex people, this emotional video traces the journey of a young family from shock and concern to acceptance and celebration upon learning that their new baby is intersex. Its message; intersex children are perfect just as they are.

### Why We Fight



To celebrate the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia on 17 May 2016, the UN Free & Equal campaign asked LGBT and intersex activists from around the world to help create a video that captures the strength and spirit they bring to their work, and the sheer diversity of causes that help make up the global movement. The result is a celebration of activism – and a reminder of why we fight – set to Rachel Platten’s “Fight Song”. “Why We Fight” has been seen by more than 1.8 million people.

Intersex Awareness



# National Level Campaigns

## For a Free & Equal Bhutan

Free & Equal Bhutan launched two videos in 2016 to celebrate the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia featuring testimonies from local activists and UN staff taking a stand for LGBT equality.

## Brazilian Portraits

Livres & Iguais Brasil launched a series of seven vignettes featuring interviews with local LGBT activists, including a father who lost his son to homophobic violence, a mother with her lesbian daughter talking about the importance of family acceptance, and a young, black lesbian talking about intersecting forms of discrimination and resistance. The vignettes were watched by more than 360,000 people on social media.

## Love Turns Prejudice Around

Livres & Iguais Brasil also launched a video celebrating Transgender Day of Visibility developed in partnership with the Government of the State of Minas Gerais. The film tells the story of a trans woman who finds love and acceptance from her conservative family and was watched by almost 20,000 people on social media.

## For a Free & Equal Jamaica

The UN country team in Jamaica has worked with local activists and Government officials to develop a national campaign, due to launch in early 2017. A compelling launch video has been produced, featuring the faces of diverse Jamaicans calling for respect and acceptance. The new video and related materials have benefited from message testing and development carried out across Jamaica in 2016.

*Brazilian Portraits*




# Mememes/E-Postcards

In 2016, the campaign created 63 mememes (branded images with text superimposed) and GIFs (a short series of looping images and text), designed for easy-sharing on social media, conveying key facts and campaign messages in a clear and engaging way.

Mememes and GIFs have featured messaging on human rights law, facts about the detrimental effects of


violence and discrimination, supportive statements by the campaign's celebrity Equality Champions and senior UN officials, and ways to honor key dates, such as Human Rights Day on 10 December, International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia on 17 May and Intersex Awareness Day on 26 October.

*Up to 1.7 percent of babies are born with sex characteristics that don't fit typical definitions of male and female.*



That makes being intersex as common as being a **redhead**

**Like and share to spread the word**  
visit [www.unfe.org/intersex-awareness](http://www.unfe.org/intersex-awareness)  
for more information



FREE & EQUAL  
UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERSEX AWARENESS



**"I appeal to all governments and societies to promote the values of tolerance and respect for diversity, and to build a world where no one has to be afraid because of their sexual orientation and gender identity."**

UN Secretary General-Elect António Guterres



FREE & EQUAL  
UNITED NATIONS FOR LGBT EQUALITY

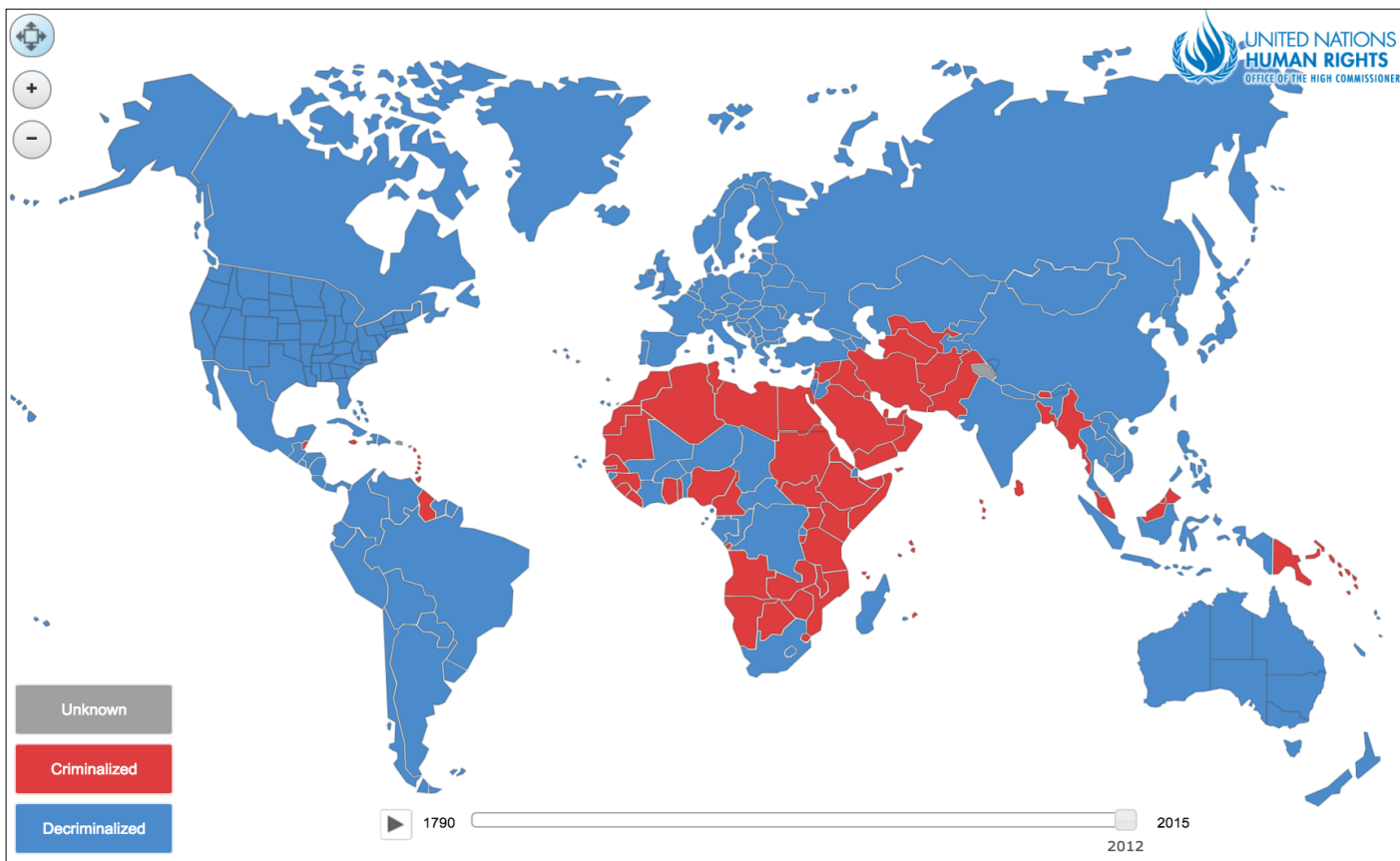
# Fact Sheets

The campaign has created a popular series of short fact sheets – most of which focus on particular types of human rights violations experienced by LGBT and intersex people. Eight factsheets have been produced to date – including on violence, criminalization, discrimination, sex characteristics, refuge and asylum, LGBT rights in international law, and frequently asked questions about sexual orientation and gender identity. All factsheets are available in all UN

languages, easily accessible on the campaign website and formatted for easy printing by OHCHR and other UN field offices, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. Two new factsheets on bullying of LGBT and intersex youth and the rights of trans people, both of which were prepared in 2016, will be launched in early 2017 as part of planned mini campaigns.

## The History of the Right to Love (if You're Gay)

The campaign also created an interactive map that shows where gay relationships have been criminalized from 1799 to today.

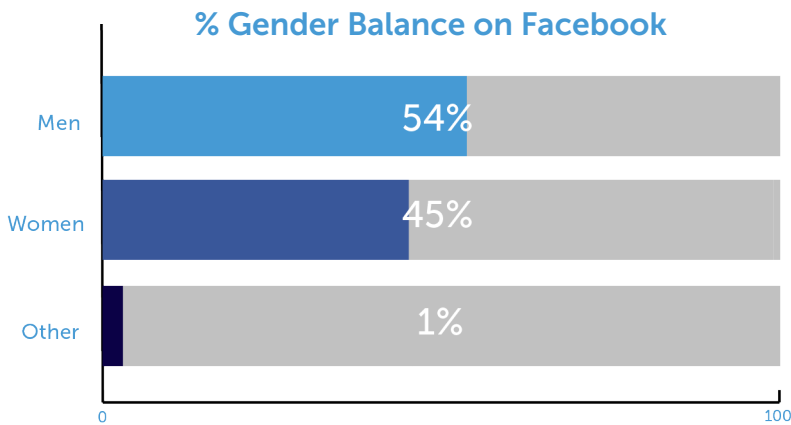


# Campaign Reach

## Social Media

As of 31 December 2016, the campaign was followed by more than 82,000 people on Facebook and Twitter. Campaign posts were liked, shared or commented on more than 222,000 times in 2016, up from 125,000 times in 2015. The campaign was also mentioned almost 1.5 million times by other social media users on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

### Facebook



Top 10 Facebook Countries	
Indonesia	
Cambodia	
Philippines	
India	
U.S.A	
Nepal	
Brazil	
Mexico	
Malaysia	
Thailand	

**United Nations Free & Equal**  
Published by Rikke Elisabeth Hennum (?) · November 26, 2016 ·

There is a long way to go until #LGBTI equality is a reality – especially for #intersex people. Find good examples from 65+ countries of what your government can do in this new United Nations Human Rights and demand change! <http://www.ohchr.org/.../Discrimin.../Pages/LivingFreeEqual.aspx>

**67 STATES**

PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT REGARDING SEXUAL ORIENTATION

**20 STATES**

PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON GENDER IDENTITY/EXPRESSION

**3 STATES**

PROTECT INTERSEX PEOPLE FROM DISCRIMINATION

115,497 people reached View Results

Like Comment Share

Heteroking Heteroboss, Aris Barcelos and 31K others Top Comments

41 shares

**United Nations Free & Equal**  
Published by Rikke Elisabeth Hennum (?) · May 13, 2016 ·

La campagne des Nations Unies « Libres et égaux » a demandé aux militants et alliés du monde entier de nous aider à créer une vidéo qui capture l'esprit du mouvement LGBTI. Le résultat est splendide!  
See Translation

LA LUTTE POUR L'ÉQUITÉ, LA DIGNITÉ ET LA JUSTICE SOCIALE

851,453 people reached View Results

333K Views











Like Comment Share

Rafik Khellouf, Laurina Dsm and 1.1K others Top Comments

553 shares



# Twitter

Top 10 Twitter Countries	
U.S.A	
U.K	
Canada	
Mexico	
Australia	
India	
Brazil	
France	
Spain	
Italy	

 UN Free & Equal @free\_equal · 13 May 2016

#LGBT activists are changing the world! Share this video to show them your <3 ! #WhyWeFight [unfe.org/fight](http://unfe.org/fight)



FIGHTING FOR EQUITY, DIGNITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

9 143 109

 UN Free & Equal @free\_equal · 7 Apr 2016

End #homophobia and #transphobia! Share & stand up for #LGBTQ youth! #WorldHealthDay



**Homophobia and transphobia harms the mental health of LGBT youth: gay, lesbian & bi youth are 4x, and young trans people almost 10x, more likely to have attempted suicide than their straight peers.**

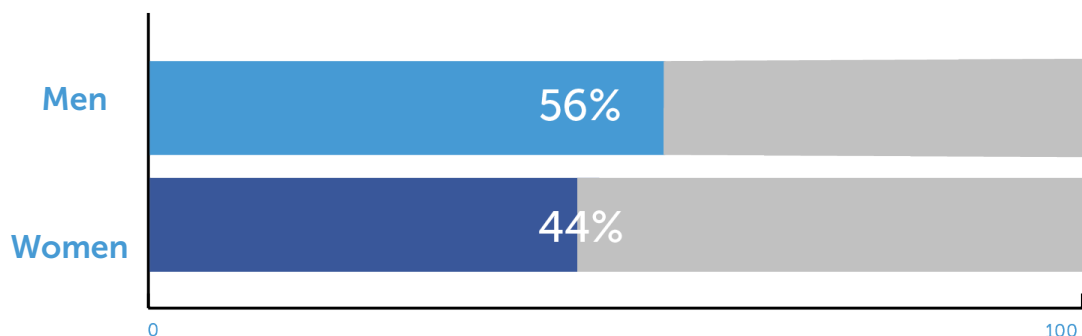
#WorldHealthDay

Source: The Trevor Project

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35 406 319

## % Gender Balance on Twitter





FREE & EQUAL

United Nations for Intersex Awareness

*Intersex babies are perfect  
just as they are.*

### Mini-Campaign for Intersex Awareness

Ahead of Intersex Awareness Day on 26 October 2016, UN Free & Equal launched the first UN public information campaign on the human rights of intersex people.

The mini-campaign was developed in close collaboration with intersex activists from around the world, and featured a campaign video, a series of memes and GIFs sporting key facts and

human rights messages, and a landing page that highlighted messages from intersex activists, along with advice for governments and parents of intersex children.

The campaign video was seen more than one million times on social media during its first week and mentioned more than 800 separate times in social media and news reports, reaching almost 26 million people around the world.

## Website

In 2016, the campaign’s home page, [unfe.org](http://unfe.org), was visited by almost 300,000 people, generating over almost 650,000 page views. On average, visitors spent almost 10 minutes exploring the site.

The campaign website is currently going through a complete redesign and will be relaunched in the spring of 2017 – modernized and more accessible than ever.

## UN Free & Equal in the News

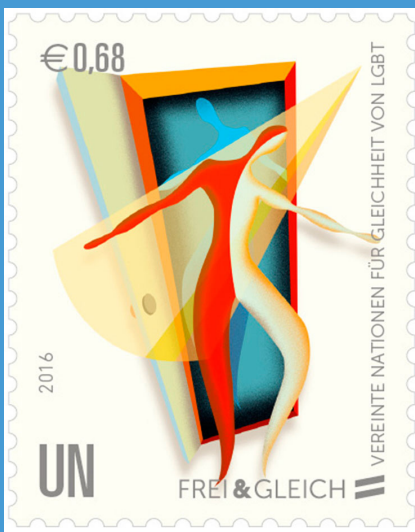
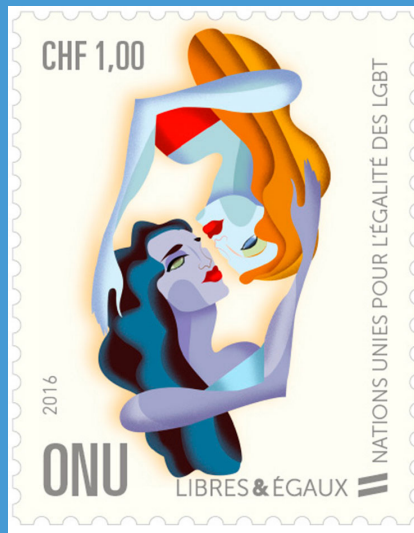
1,226 news stories and blog posts about UN Free & Equal were published in 2016 in media outlets in every part of the world, hereunder 964 individual newspaper articles and 262 blog posts reaching at least 58 million readers and radio and TV reports reaching millions more. Outlets included AllAfrica.com (pan-Africa), The New York Times (U.S.), Bangkok Post (Thailand), The Guardian Nigeria (Nigeria), The Telegraph (UK), Manila Times (Philippines), The Huffington Post (global), Daily Times Pakistan (Pakistan), Forbes (U.S.) and The Jerusalem Post (Israel). Free & Equal campaign director Charles Radcliffe also published a regular blog in The Huffington Post, highlighting key moments in the campaign.

## UN Free & Equal Stamps for LGBT Equality

In February 2016, the UN Postal Administration launched the world's first set of postage stamps to promote LGBT equality. The stamps – dedicated to the UN Free & Equal campaign and sporting the campaign's logo and messaging – were unveiled at a ceremony at UNHQ on 4 February, sparking extensive international press coverage and interest on social media.

Following the launch, the stamps were mentioned almost 2,000 separate times in social media and news articles reaching more than 44 million people all over the world.

Some 150,000 stamps from the collection were sold at UN postal counters and via the UN Stamps website.



# UN Free & Equal Around the World

Since the global campaign was launched at a press event in Cape Town, South Africa, in July 2013, national and regional launches and events have taken place in some 25 countries. OHCHR works closely with UN country teams, national authorities and activists to make sure that the human rights messaging of the global campaign is framed to maximize relevance to local political debates and cultural contexts. In addition to providing content and programmatic support, the global campaign team has made available a range of advocacy and

promotional materials for dissemination at national launches, including UN Free & Equal posters, booklets, tote bags, pins and bracelets.

In 2016, new national campaigns were initiated in Albania, Bhutan, Jamaica, Japan and Serbia, while UN country teams in Brazil, Cambodia, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Honduras, Peru and Panama, Pacific Islands, Sri Lanka and Timor Leste continued local spin-off campaigns or organized stand-alone UN Free & Equal events. Film screenings and panel debates were also hosted in ten countries as a part of the campaign's Global Film Series.

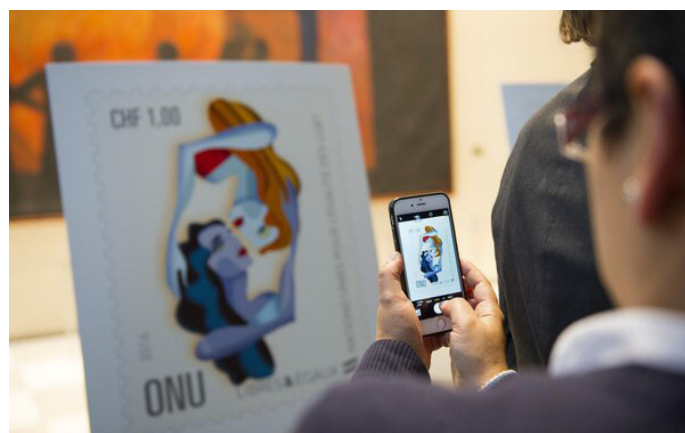
## UN Headquarters Events

### Launch: UN Free & Equal Stamps

On 4 February 2016, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Postal Administration unveiled a set of commemorative UN Free & Equal stamps at a special event in at the UN General Assembly building lobby that featured a performance by the New York Gay Men's Chorus. The event was sponsored by Member States of the LGBT Core Group at the United Nations.

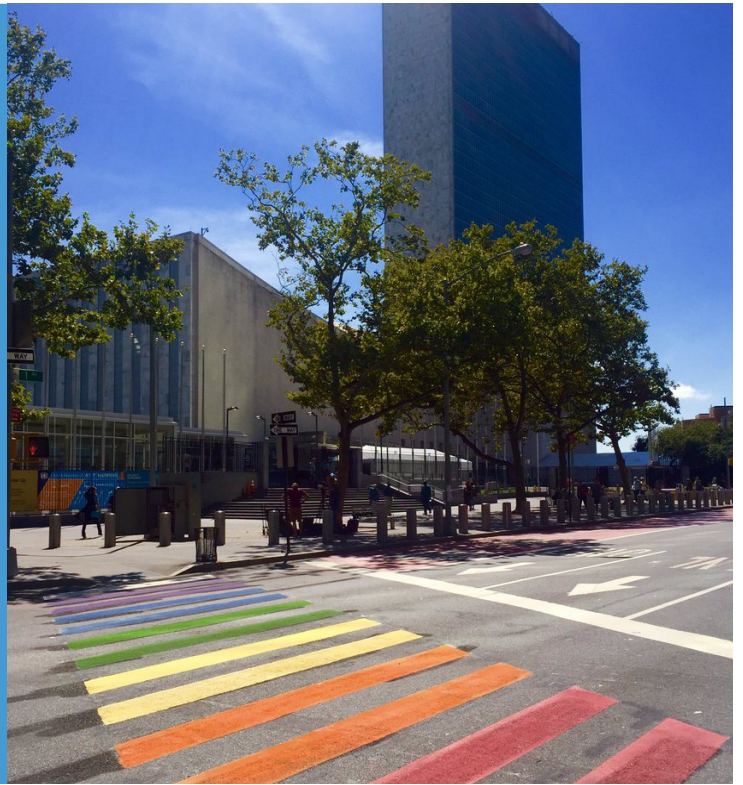
### Global Leaders Discuss Progress Towards LGBT Equality

On 21 September 2016, in the margins of the high-level week at the start of the new General Assembly session, UN Free & Equal supported a ministerial meeting on the protection of the rights of LGBT people, organized with the LGBT Core Group at the United Nations. Featured speakers included UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg and Belizean activist Caleb Orozco.



## #Path2Equality

As world leaders gathered at the UN headquarters for the General Assembly, UN Free & Equal worked with the LGBT Core Group (a cross-regional group of UN Member States) to launch the #Path2Equality – a rainbow crosswalk in front of UN Headquarters aimed at drawing attention to the human rights of LGBT and intersex people around the world. The crosswalk and its accompanying hashtag were a hit on social media with almost 1,300 mentions during the opening week of the General Assembly. The crosswalk was also written about in news media in Australia, India, New Zealand and the U.S. All in all, news about the rainbow crosswalk reached more than 23.5 million people around the world.



## National Campaigns

### Albania

The UN Human Rights Office and UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Albania launched a national UN Free & Equal campaign on 15 December 2016. Local activists and representatives from the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, international organizations and the international diplomatic community took part in the launch event, which was covered in local media, including by the national news agency. The event kicked off a social media campaign disbursing key facts about the human rights situation for LGBT people in the country and related human rights messages, reaching more than 50,000 people nation-wide.



## Bhutan

The UN Country Team and local activists in Bhutan launched a mini Free & Equal campaign in May 2016 ahead of the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. UN officials and members of the LGBT community celebrated the International Day by hoisting the rainbow flag for the first time in the country's history. A social media campaign helped raise awareness of the human rights challenges facing members of Bhutan's LGBT community, and a local video was launched featuring the voices of local activists and the UN Resident Coordinator.

## Brazil

Since its launch in April 2014, Livres & Iguais Brasil has been UN Free & Equal's most ambitious and widest reaching national campaign. In 2016, Livres & Iguais Brasil created and disseminated eight campaign videos and launched several mini-campaigns on issues such as lesbian and bisexual visibility. The Brazil team also mobilized 11 UN agencies, funds and programmes to take part in the country's national LGBT conference, hosted a four week course on the Human Rights of LGBT people at the UN and several LGBT themed events at the UN country headquarters. Livres & Iguais Brasil is implemented in close collaboration with civil society and local and national decision makers.



Bhutan



Brazil

## Cabo Verde

Livres & Iguais Cabo Verde was launched on Human Rights Day in December 2015. In the year following its launch, the campaign held a series of events and publicity stunts to promote “a fairer, more loving, more tolerant Cabo Verde”. Sporting UN Free & Equal clothing, a UN Free & Equal team that included the First Lady of Cabo Verde and the UN Resident Coordinator took part in the annual Liberty Parade commemorating the National Day of Democracy and Freedom.

In December 2016, the campaign celebrated its one year anniversary with an outdoors concert in the capital, Praia, featuring Mayra Andrade and rapper Hélio Batalha. The concert was attended by thousands of people, including representatives from the government, the National Assembly, and the Praia municipal government. The concert was accompanied by a social media campaign that reached tens of thousands of people around the country.

Mayra Andrade



Cabo Verde



## Cambodia

Since 2015, the UN Human Rights Office in Cambodia has promoted UN Free & Equal campaign videos and materials in the media and at major national events, including on the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. The Office has also supported civil society partners in carrying out activities promoting LGBT equality in the provinces and rural areas. Social media has been used to promote campaign messages and videos in local languages, as have TV and radio programmes, where the team has engaged with panellists and guest speakers, to address issues of discrimination and social exclusion.

In May 2016, the UN team in Cambodia celebrated Pride Week with a photo booth where people could take selfies holding signs with Free & Equal messaging. The photos were widely shared on UN and partner social media channels. In June 2016, five UN agencies – the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Women, UNAIDS, the UN Human Rights Office and the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) – published a joint op-ed on the human rights situation of LGBT people in Cambodia in English and Khmer language newspapers.



## Colombia

Launched in July 2014, Libres e Iguales Colombia focused in 2016 particularly on the human rights of transgender people, with an event on Human Rights Day in December 2016, the distribution of book bags with the message “I respect the rights of trans people” and social media posts highlighting the human rights concerns of transgender people in Colombia.

## Honduras

Libres e Iguales Honduras kicked off in May 2015, and has since launched a series of videos featuring local activists and UN staff speaking out for LGBT equality. In 2016, the campaign helped to promote the Spanish version of the UN Free & Equal video ‘Faces’ at events and on social media, and disseminated a press release to mark national LGBT Awareness Day in July.



## Pacific Islands

In 2016, Free & Equal Pacific hosted a panel discussion on mental health where several UN Free & Equal videos were screened, and campaign messaging and materials were used to support UN advocacy in favor of repeal of the law criminalizing same-sex relations in Nauru, which was overturned in May 2016.

## Peru

2016 has been an active year for Libres e Iguales Peru. In March 2016, the campaign co-hosted a debate for congressional candidates on national legislation to promote the human rights of LGBT people and later invited Members of Parliament to a performance of "Simon the Mole", a children's play that explores issues of homophobia and discrimination. Continuing its collaboration with universities across Lima, the campaign co-hosted several talks and created a campaign video with students and activists. Libres e Iguales Peru also collaborates with the LGBT Festival of Lima, where in 2016 the campaign organized a film-screening of "A Place in the Middle" from the Free & Equal Global Film Series.



Peru

## Serbia

Free & Equal Serbia launched on 7 November 2016 at the Museum of Science and Technology in Belgrade. The launch featured an exhibit of portraits of local lesbian women and graphic presentations of data on hate crimes and public attitudes in Serbia. Following the launch event, Free & Equal Serbia ran an intensive awareness raising campaign on social media on the effects of LGBT bullying in schools, reaching more than 230,000 people. The UN team has also initiated a study on LGBT bullying in high schools in Serbia. The study will continue in 2017 and result in concrete policy recommendations for the government and the education sector. The campaign is implemented in close collaboration with a civil society partner Labris, and is based on broad consultations with Serbian decision makers and activists.



Serbia

# National Level Events:

## Jamaica

In 2016, the UN team in Jamaica started planning for the launch of Free & Equal Jamaica with the development of a campaign video featuring local activists, a campaign website and other communications materials based on message testing and community consultation. The campaign, which will launch in 2017, will also feature town hall style events at the University of the West Indies. The campaign is being planned in collaboration with the local civil society organization J-FLAG.

## Panama

The UN team in Panama launched Libres e Iguales Panama in May 2014. In May 2016 the OHCHR Regional Office in Panama marked the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia through a half day workshop for UN staff and activists to boost information sharing and cooperation in the efforts to promote LGBT equality in the region. The office has also supported civil society efforts to get new anti-discrimination legislation passed in Panama.



## Japan

In July 2016, the UN team in Japan organized a UN Free & Equal photo exhibition, featuring 100 photographs of LGBT people in Japan by renowned fashion photographer Leslie Kee. The UN team also ran a social media campaign throughout the year with translated multimedia content from the global campaign, including a Japanese version of the UN Free & Equal video 'The Price of Exclusion'.



## Sri Lanka

The UN team in Sri Lanka marked the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia by hoisting the rainbow flag above the UN country office and inviting local LGBT activists to a breakfast celebration featuring a rainbow cake and a screening of a local remake of the UN Free & Equal video "Why We Fight", all of which were extensively covered on the team's social media channels.



Sri Lanka

## Timor Leste

In 2016, the UN team in Timor Leste celebrated pride month with a workshop promoting the human rights of LGBT people in collaboration with a local youth organization. The human rights advisor's team has also mainstreamed LGBT issues into trainings for human rights defenders, health workers and the police, and distributed campaign bags, pins, and booklets, as well as factsheets translated into local languages.



Timor Leste

# Free & Equal Global Film Series

The Free & Equal Global Film Series was launched in collaboration with the UN Department of Public Information and with support from Film Independent in July 2015, and features short documentary and narrative films that address various issues facing LGBT and intersex people around the world. To date, 17 screenings and post-screening debates have taken place, including in Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Georgia, Madagascar, Peru, Senegal and the USA in 2016.



# Thank You

The UN Free & Equal campaign is forever grateful for the activism of our Equality Champions; Celina Jaitly, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, Ricky Martin, Daniela Mercury and members of the band Fun. We would also like to thank Rachel Platten for lending us her battle-anthem "Fight Song", Shape History and Prime Content for helping us create campaign videos and Community Systems Foundation for developing our interactive map of the history of the right to love.

A big thank you to our amazing volunteer translators Alexander, Ezeddin, Ghaith, Iris, Islèm and Karen, and to the intersex activists who helped us create our intersex awareness campaign, and especially to Esan, Hida, Julius, Kimberly, Pidgeon, Small, Katie and Arlene for lending their voices to our website.

UN Free & Equal would not be possible without financial contributions from the Governments of Norway and the United Kingdom, or the support of the United Nations LGBT Core Group.