



GENDER DYNAMIX NEWSLETTER

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Gender Change in ID Took 20 Yrs

"My life has not been an easy one. Throwing away my female ID will let me close all the old books and start afresh. I am fifty two years old. I have waited for my male ID book for 20 years."

Charl is the bookkeeper and resident writer at Gender Dynamix. After going through the gender program at Grootte Schuur in the early nineties he attempted to apply for a change of his gender at the Department of Home Affairs. He was met with disbelief, denial and ultimately humiliation at the counter of the Home Affairs office in Cape Town. The clerk at the front desk told him that it was impossible to change one's gender, laughed at him loudly and sent him away. When Charl insisted that it was possible he responded by telling him that in his opinion Charl had not had enough surgeries to qualify. He sent him away.

Another clerk called him back and told him that he could change his name and that his chosen name would at least reflect his gender. This woman was kind and sympathetic and assisted him to get the new ID book with his male name in it within months.

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Exchange Programme Report Back

The first leg of the long-awaited Exchange Programme involving transgender activists from five countries on the African Continent kicked off in Namibia on 24 May and went on until 29 May 2010. The second leg of the two-tiered programme will take place in September in Cape Town. The organisations represented there, were Gender Dynamix from South Africa, SIPD from Uganda, SMUG from Uganda, Rainbow Identity from Botswana, Trans Bantu from Zambia and Outright Namibia from Namibia. Sixteen people attended.

One of the more interesting items on the programme was a dialogue with Gender Students at the University of Namibia facilitated by Robert Hamblin from Gender Dynamix and Immaculate Mogotse, Lecturer in Gender Studies at the University. The dialogue explored what a norm is, how it is policed by society, and what that means for transgender people as norm-breakers.

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Liesl Theron and Tebogo Nkoana from Gender Dynamix. Play and work in Namibia.



Participants in the meeting room.

Mama Trans in Mozambique

The 19th and 20th June yet again served to add important dates on the African trans history timeline. During this weekend Portuguese speaking activists from Angola and Mozambique came together to learn and share about Gender Identity. This remarkable workshop was initiated by the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) and included Gender Dynamix and Lambda, the local LGBT organisation in Maputo, as partnering organisations. This workshop resulted from the previous joint venture between IGLHRC and GDX with the gender identity workshop hosted in Cape Town in December 2008.

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Barcelona Transgender Conference

The workshop facilitated by Liesl Theron, Executive Director of Gender Dynamix and Tebogo Nkoana, Outreach Officer, at the International Congress on Gender Identity and Human Rights in Barcelona, Spain in June 2010, was attended by few people, but it was well received, and the audience participated fully, and contributed with their own experiences.

Tebogo spoke about "Working with Diverse Communities", which highlighted the challenges like language and culture.

"Different languages and cultures would each have their limitations and we need to find different ways of dealing with issues," Tebogo said.

Over and above difficulties Trans people experience in society in general, they face even more challenges in the LGBT community. Those who decide they do not want to go through surgery are discriminated against, even by transsexuals who subscribe to the notion of "true transsexuals". There is also discrimination against transgender homosexuals by other LGB people who still do not understand the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation. Facing discrimination in society as a whole, a number of transgendered youths drop out of school and society, then face even bigger problems

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Message From The Chairperson



Mzi Nduna

Lithuba elibalulekileyo kakhulu kum eli lokuba ndibe lilungu leKomoti eqwalasela umsebenzi weGender Dynamix. Ndibulela amalungu aleKomiti endisebenzisana nawo ngenxaso abandinika yona nangokundithemba bandenyule ukuba ndibe nguSihlalo walombutho.

[..ENGLISH](#)

No to Surgery for Documents OBAMA & WPATH

During June The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) released statements urging "governments and other authoritative bodies to move to eliminate requirements for identity recognition that require surgical procedures."

The WPATH Board of Directors said that in the interest and well-being of transgender and transsexual people world-wide, no person should have to undergo surgery or accept sterilisation as a condition of gender recognition.

"If a sex marker is required on an identity document, that marker could recognise the person's lived gender, regardless of reproductive capacity."

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18th International Conference on Aids

Caroline Bowley of Gender Dynamix will be attending the 18th International Conference on HIV/AIDS to be held in Vienna, Austria, which will take place from the 18th to 23rd of July this year. Although it's main focus will be on Eastern Europe, prevention and treatment strategies in all other parts of the world will also be put under the spotlight. The conference will be co-chaired by Julio Montaner from Canada and Brigitte Schmied from Austria.

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Love Does Not Conquer All

Love did not conquer all, Malawian Tiwonge Chimbalanga discovered after her imprisonment following a very public engagement to Steven Monjeza, and subsequent pardon by Malawian President Bingu wa Mutharika.

The couple have split up, "due to pressure from their families and the homophobic society and laws", and Steven recently announced that he will be marrying a genetic woman, Dorothy Gulo. The big shock, however, is the allegation by Steven that he was forced into what he termed the "gay drama".

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The Young Lady Who Beat the Odds

Transsexuality is a relatively newly exposed phenomenon in South Africa and though much research has gone into it, there is a great lack of information on this condition. This came at a high price for Jennifer* who endured sodomy and humiliation at the hands of other teens looking for her "hidden vagina". This is the story of a courageous young lady who beat the odds and overcame adversities to live a life other's find fascinating ... this is Jennifer's* story.

Upon meeting Jennifer, I was taken aback by how femininely she comes across. It is evident this 28 year old pays particular attention to fashion sense and grooming. Jennifer was born in January 1982 as a male child. Jennifer always knew she was different and remembers having a strong desire to wear dresses like the cousin she grew up with.

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Youth Day Testimony

Siyahlngana meaning "we are coming together" is a support group initiative of Gender Dynamix. The group focuses on female to male transgender people and their masculine identified lesbian friends. The group was asked to speak at a Youth Day gathering initiated by Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (IAM).

Two Siyahlngana members presented their life stories. Patrick spoke to the audience about the difficulties he has in his community because he finds it hard to pursue a relationship. He tells the story of his young life as an intersex child who was medically mistreated in hospitals.

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Newsletter Will Sport New Name

The winning name of the newsletter is Trans in Formation! and will be in lights as of next month in the end of July newsletter. Congratulations Caroline Bowley for winning the most votes for this name. The last vote was counted on Thursday 8 July at 10h20. Caroline has kindly agreed to donate her book as a prize at a fundraiser happening later this month on which we will report in the next newsletter.

Robert Wears a Dress To Church



Robert from Gender Dynamix poses with the ladies from the church

The New Apostolic Churches in Manenberg Cape Town asked GDX for a presentation for their very long school holiday programme during the time of the World Cup Soccer in June. Robert offered to talk to the children about Caster Semenya, identity and human rights. He chose to don an outfit that consisted of layers of T-shirts with comic book heroes on them. Rolled up under the t-shirts he had a skirt on which would make an appearance at the end of the presentation.

At each church he spoke to to between 20 and 30 children between the ages of seven and thirteen. He entered with a box in his arms covered with a cloth. When the children settled down he would reveal the gift wrapped box filled with small shiny gifts bags. He proposed to the children that each small gift bag contained a gift in the form of a birthday. The right to have a name, to live with your family, to go to the doctor... He pointed to his T-shirt and asked the children if Sponge-Bob (on the T-shirt) was a human and if he should have human rights?

Later in the presentation when all the small gift bags were out of the big box, (now lined up on a table) he peeled off the Sponge Bob T-shirt and asked the children whether The Hulk was a human. Some said he was a monster, others remembered that he had been a human once and that he only became a monster when he was angry.

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