

WATCHDOG



youth coalition

FEATURED ARTICLES

IDAHO 2016

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INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA & BIPHOBIA**MAY 17**

A Worldwide Celebration of Sexual and Gender Diversities



IDAHOT 2016 Watchdog

Marking the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT, or IDAHOBIT), the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights is very excited to release our fourth annual edition of the IDAHOT Watchdog!

With this year's IDAHOT theme of mental health and well being, this edition highlights some of the many issues faced by the LGBTIQ community from the perspective of young people. Entirely youth-authored, our submissions come from all around the world representing nine countries including Russia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Australia, Colombia, Kenya, Belgium, Burundi and Belarus. While their individual contexts vary greatly, we are honored to be able to bring their voices together in this publication.

The theme of mental health and well-being calls attention to the various ways LGBTIQ identities are pathologized and often labeled disorders. Further, the theme highlights the negative mental health effects that stigma, self-stigma, violence, and discrimination can have on LGBTIQ individuals. However, this theme also allows for LGBTIQ people to share their stories of love, hope, community, and well-being, stories that are found even in the face of oppression.

As people the world over struggle to realize their rights related to sexual orientation and gender identity, let us celebrate the diverse ways in which these movements continue to grow and take shape.

In solidarity,

Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights

On the Cover Miss

Samantha Tarrow
Russia

Oil on canvas. "Sometimes a piece of art is full of emotional associations, connections and interactions with its surroundings."

The New Underworld

Christine King
23 | Australia

I freeze the world cold
And I'm on something
Weeks on end
Into the new underworld

Old scenes collide
With the new
It is this the beginning

This is the new demo city
The world falls down
To the ground
Around us

We see what's really there
And it makes us run
In all different directions
There is no one direction to take

I freeze the world cold
And I'm on something
Weeks on end
Into the new underworld

Laughter fills up the darkness
Even if its only for a second
Everything's joined together
We take it upon ourselves
To make it better

I freeze the world cold
And I'm on something
Weeks on end
Into the new underworld

We take it upon ourselves
To make it better

Письмо к маме

Yagodina Alexandra
16 | Russia

Мам, ты помнишь, как в давнем детстве
Ты учила меня любить?
Как учила меня свободе,
Как учила ее ценить?

Мам, ты помнишь, как мы часами
Говорили с тобой тогда?
Но сейчас у меня есть тайна,
Что скрываю я от тебя.

Мам, ведь помнишь, как ты спросила,
Почему я молчу сейчас?
Почему от тебя закрылась,
Почему ты не видишь глаз?

Мам, прости, но все это - тайна.
Ты прости, но должна молчать,
Ведь узнаешь всё если, мама,
Плакать будешь ты иль кричать.

Будешь думать: за что же горе?
Будешь думать, что я больна,
Только, мамочка, я здорова,
Хоть такая в семье одна.

Я «другая», «болезнь». Я знаю.
Знаю я: лучше мне сгореть.
Знаю я. И поэтому тайну
Буду изо всех сил беречь.

Мам, прости, что твои желанья
Позабыла - увы! - учость,
Что забыла про все мечтанья
И семьи всей попрали честь.

Но ответь же мне только, скажи:
Недостойна твоей любви,
Недостойна и уваженья
Лишь за то, что родилась би?..

"When You Are a Boy"
Arch Chekatouski
19 | Belarus

HEAVEN LOVES YOU, THE CLOUDS
PART FOR YOU, NOTHING STANDS
IN YOUR WAY **WHEN YOU'RE**
A BOY! When you're a boy
you can wear a uniform
when you're a boy other
boys check you out. You
get a girl. These are your
favorite things when
you're a boy!

LIFE IS A POP OF THE
CHERRY!

WHEN YOU ARE
A BOY!

Привет, меня зовут Саша

Hello, My Name is Sasha

Sasha Travers
26 | Russia

Translation by Evdokia Romanova

А это по-настоящему? У тебя был секс с мужчинами, чтобы убедиться, что тебе это не подходит? Может быть, это какой-то невроз? Наверное, у тебя травма из-за того, что мы развелись с твоим отцом. Ты просто боишься мужчин, в этом все дело. Не афишируйте свои отношения, это неуважение по отношению к другим людям. Я не понимаю, зачем вы тыкаете этим в лицо, вот когда за руки вечно держитесь. Надеюсь, вы никому не рассказываете. Как это все друзья знают? Друзья могут вас выдать! Из-за тебя никто никогда не женится на твоей сестре, никому не нужно такое в семье. Ты испортишь репутацию нашей семье. Соседи перестанут со мной здороваться. Это грех!

Мне кажется, не хватит и пяти страниц, чтобы перечислить все те слова, все те фразы, все те вопросы, которые я регулярно продолжаю слышать от своей матери. Мы вместе с моей девушкой уже 4 года, мы планируем в следующем году сыграть свадьбу, мы хотим провести вместе всю жизнь, и мы уже прошли через огромное количество преград - начиная моей самостигматизацией и заканчивая войной, идущей между нашими странами (я из России, она из Украины).

Но в наших странах браки между людьми одного биологического пола запрещены, отношения осуждаются, и даже заключенный в другой стране законный брак здесь признан не будет - несмотря на это, мы все равно планируем поехать в Данию и пожениться.

И когда об этом узнала моя мать, первое, что она спросила, было - в России об этом никто знать не будет? Вы же понимаете, что может быть?

Я ловлю себя на том, что порой оглядываюсь, когда мы держимся за руки или обнимаемся на улице, я подсознательно жду агрессивных слов, действий или взглядов на улице почти каждый раз.

Я чувствую себя дискомфортно, когда незнакомые люди задерживают на нас взгляд.

Я понимаю, что когда мы поедем к моей знакомой портной шить свадебное платье для моей девушки, в лучшем случае нам придется соврать, что я подружка невесты, а никак не жених. В худшем -

Is it for real? Did you try having sex with a man, to be sure that such connections do not fit your taste? Maybe it is a psychological issue? Is it a trauma due to my divorce with your dad? Why do you always need to show it off, like when you hold hands with her? You should not demonstrate it so openly; this is disrespectful to other people in society. I hope you never tell anybody. How come your friends know about it? You should not trust your friends, they will tell others! Because of you your sister may never get married, nobody needs such things in his or her family. You are ruining the reputation of our whole family. Our neighbors will stop greeting us. This is sin!

I think even five pages is not enough to list all the words, phrases, and questions that I constantly hear from my mother. I have been with my girlfriend for the past four years. We are planning on getting married next year; we want to spend our lives together. We had to pass through the various barriers - starting with my self-stigma and ending with the war that is going on between our countries (I am from Russia and she is from Ukraine).

In our countries marriages between two people of the same sex are prohibited. Such relationships are judged harshly, and marriages that have been performed in other countries are not considered valid here. Despite this fact, we are still planning on going to Denmark to get married.

When my mother found out about it, the first thing she asked was - *nobody will find out about this in Russia, right? Do you understand what may happen?*

I catch myself looking around when we hold hands on the streets or when we hug each other. Almost every time I am waiting for aggressive verbal reactions, aggressive actions, looks.

I feel a strong discomfort when people we don't know stare at us on the street.

I do understand that when we go to the tailor we will have to lie and say that I am a bridesmaid, not a groom. This is the best-case scenario. In the worst-case scenario, I might not go with her at all.

My colleagues assume that we are just roommates. My

мне вовсе не стоит ее сопровождать.

Мои коллеги думают, что мы просто соседи. Мои родители вообще не говорят никому о том, что я живу не в одиночестве.

Я представляюсь всем новым друзьям гендерно-нейтральным интернациональным именем. Я воспринимаю свое имя по паспорту просто как должность и переживаю, что в нашей стране со сменой имени связана слишком большая бюрократическая волокита, и что 90% окружающих меня людей все равно будут звать меня тем, первым, паспортным именем.

Моя мама периодически пытается отвести меня в магазин и купить мне платье или туфель на каблуках. Моя сестра спрашивает, почему на аватарке в инстаграме у меня нарисованный человек непонятного пола. Мальчик это или девочка, спрашивает сестра.

Я понимаю, что у меня заняло 25 лет «выйти из шкафа» перед родителями и сказать им, что их младшая дочь - лесбиянка.

Я понимаю, что не знаю, сколько еще лет у меня займет, чтобы выбраться из этой Нарнии из страха, боли и паранойи, просто чтобы открыть дверь и сказать:

«Привет. Меня зовут Саша. Я ваш сын».

parents do not talk to anybody about me and her. They say that I live alone.

I introduce myself to all new friends with my gender-neutral international name. I just accept my name in the passport, as I understand that to change my passport name in my country is too much of a bureaucratic procedure, and even after that 90% of people will still be calling me by my passport name.

My mom is still attempting to bring me to the store to buy me dresses or shoes on the high hills. My sister is asking me why my Instagram profile picture is showing a person of a weird gender. She is asking me if it is a boy or a girl.

I do understand that it took me 25 years to get “out of the closet” and to tell to my parents that their daughter is a lesbian.

I do understand that I have no idea how many years it will take me to get out of this Narnia of fear, pain and paranoia, just to open the door and say:

“Hello. My name is Sasha. I am your son.”

Voices everywhere

thevidcloset
26 | Zimbabwe

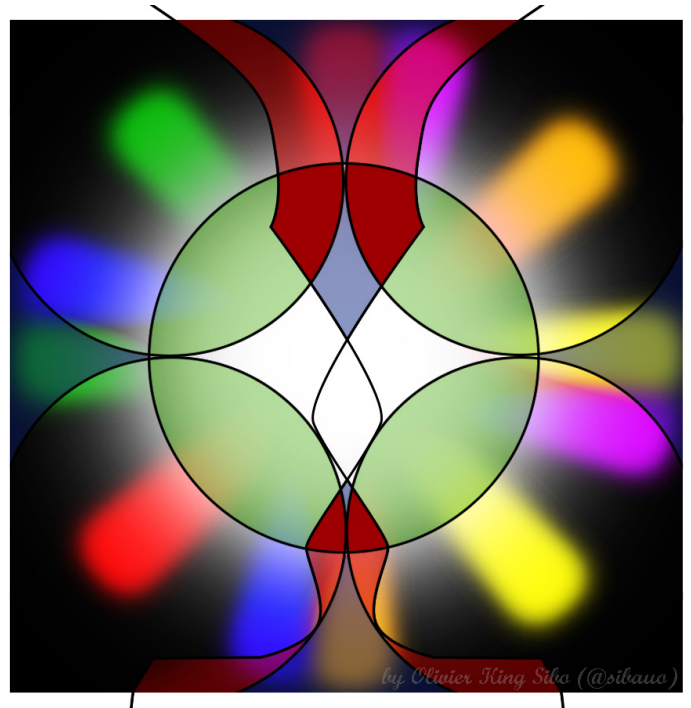
Content Warning: This piece includes references to self-harm.

Voices everywhere. How do I shut them out? I scream loud but it is pointless. I rush to my mother, I look at her in my teary eyes. There is concern on her face but she remains quiet. I stretch out my arms longing to be embraced but she turns away with a sad affect. The walls start closing on me about to crush me into pulp. My father looks on fury in his eyes. Why are they not hearing my cries , and plea to be accepted. My body crashes onto the floor. I can't take it anymore.

The room darkens. I feel slimy things crawling on my body. Something pierces through my heart. I love the pain, I embrace it. It is my pain. I take ownership of it. It has become my comfort. "You are ugly! You are a disgrace! You are evil! You are a danger to humanity! You are a criminal!" The voices get louder. The more I try to fight them the more vicious they become. I hug my knees try to rock myself to sleep, but the world seems cold and all my dreams are frozen. They say I was born a criminal, outcast a disgrace. They said I am not human but was I not borne of a woman. If it was a choice who would want to go through all this emotional trauma and torture?

I sniff, inject, smoke and drink my escape. I float for a moment, fly. Everything is beautiful, vivid and smiles everywhere. I am hurting my body, but I need that bit of emotional solace. As my escape wears off I am left on the cold hard ground. Back to sub-zero. I need help but no one listens. I feel like ending my life to spare me the humiliation, torture , "correctional rape" , life sentence or if lucky death sentence. I thought criminals were a bad element to society but my crime is love. I am being persecuted for whom I love what I look like or choose to wear. My offence which they are all calling for my blood for is simply being me...

Everything will be alright I tell myself. There is light at the end of the tunnel. I will pull through. Hope is all I am left with. It keeps me warm as I drift off to sleep.



"Spark Within"
Oliver King Sibö
24 | Burundi

Spark Within is an abstract illustration made as stained glass. The illustration symbolizes a melting moment of wellness, love and fulfillment between two humans. (follow the red colors and green colors in a circle; you can see them appearing)

Society, watch me survive you

Meeni Levi
19 | Belgium

An article told me LGBT people are three times more likely to try and kill themselves and I said

« *Society, watch me survive you.* »

Red is the light in my mind
That says
STOP and screams:
They don't know who you are
they'll hate you they'll hate you they'll hate you.

Orange is the smile
That gets me through panic attacks.

Yellow is the smell
Of pajamas sticky with sweat
When my bed is a hurricane and I can't swim.
(My shampoo smells yellow too - convenient.)

Green is the liquor
That washes down orange.
Congrats for surviving eighteen years.

Blue is rehearsing for roll call,
Not knowing which name to use,
Thinking it would be more simple
To just cross it out.

Violet would be easier
If people listened
Instead of making up my face
With fangs and erasers.

(The missing indigo is people
Telling me I have a knack
For being complicated.
I tell them they have a knack
For making me so
And not understanding what I mean.)

We Have a Dream

Emmanuel Odhiambo
Youth Coordinator - YHEPP Kenya
24 | Kenya

YHEPP Kenya is an organization supporting LGBT youth aged 18-27 with mental and social challenges as a result of their sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV status.

Six years ago the 2010 Constitution of Kenya was signed. This new national policy document was a great beacon light of hope to all sexual and gender minority groups in Kenya who had been suffering under the shadow of oppressive traditions. But just six years later the gay Kenyan still is not free. Just six years later the life of the gay Kenyan youth is still badly crippled by the manacles of corruption and the chains of discrimination. Six years later the gay youth lives in a lonely single room of poverty in the midst of a vast culture of material prosperity. Six years later the gay refugee youth is still languished in the corners of Nairobi City and finds himself in the hands of homophobic authorities in a land miles away from home. The architects of our constitution wrote words that were a promise that all men --yes, men of all sexualities-- would be guaranteed the inalienable rights to life and freedom of association.

It is obvious today that Kenya has defaulted on this promissory note in so far as her rainbow community is concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, Kenya has written the gay youth a bad memo, a memo which has come back with the title "under receivership." Without delay, now is the time to make justice a reality for all. It would be fatal for Kenya to overlook the urgency of the moment. These hard days of the gay Kenyans' legitimate discontent will not pass until there is a confirmation of petition 440 of 2013[1] and decriminalization of consensual same-sex practice. Those who hope that gay people were simply guessing and will now be stigmatized and forced to retreat will have a rude awakening if their movement returns to business as usual. There are those who are asking Kenyan devotees of gay rights, "When will you be satisfied?"

We can never be satisfied as long as men who have sex with men are the victims of the unspeakable horrors of police and County council brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as gay couples, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of Thika highway and the hotels along Moi Avenue. We cannot be satisfied as long as the basic mobility of gay refugee youth is from a small ghetto in Nairobi to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our gay peers are stripped of better adulthood and robbed of their dignity in the name of the Lord. We cannot be satisfied as long as gay youth in Kisumu cannot vote and lesbian youth in Garissa believe they have nothing for which to vote. We say to you today, our friends, even though we face the never-ending challenges of today and tomorrow, we still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in equality.

We have a dream that one day on the vast arena of opportunity in Nairobi, gay youth will be able to play a larger role in the National Youth Service and the civil rights movement. We have a dream that one day the government of Kenya will wake up to the undeniable existence and needs of minority people, and establish a special 'Minority Police Unit.'

We have a dream that one day even Garissa County, a region sweltering with the heat of gender injustice, covered under a blanket of oppressive traditions, will be transformed into a symbol of equality -by its people, we



Oliver King Sibó
24 | Burundi

have a dream...

We have a dream that future gay and lesbian students at our colleges and universities will one day study in a school where they will not be judged by who they love but by the content of their character we have a dream...

We have a dream today ... we have a dream that one day gay people will rise up and establish a Life Skills Center for the many youthful members of the rainbow community, who are at risk of economic dwarfism.

We have a dream that one day gay rights devotees will once again lead the way to the inclusion of sexual orientation as a ground for non-discrimination in Article 27(4) in the Constitution of Kenya. We have a dream...

[1] Eric Gitari v NGO Coordination Board & Attorney General was a case seen before the High Court of Kenya over the blocking of Gitari's request to register a human rights group that represents Kenyan gays and lesbians. The court ruled in Gitari's favor in April 2016 stating that the law protects the rights of minorities. This court case also set an important precedent on the right to association in Kenya.

Трансгендер

Shosha Aizenberg
17 | Russia

Вы мне не верите.
Ну, что ж,
Порой я сам себе не верю.
И, тем не менее, и , все ж,
Я по другому не умею.

Я для кого-то идиот,
А для кого-то идеал,
Я размышляю
Прав ли тот,
Кто вот таким меня создал?

Я очень странен и смешон,
Хоть о себе другого мнения.
Безумным я провозглашен,
Но, не смотря на все их рвения,
Меня исправить, осудить,
Я остаюсь таким, как есть,
И им меня не опустить.

Пусть и несчастен, пусть страдаю,
Однако я уверен в том,
Что быть другим мое призвание,
Что не таким я был рожден,
Ко мне вернется воздаяние,
За все страдания и грусть.
Я вам не нравлюсь? Ну и пусть.

Я буду счастлив.
В самом деле,
Кто мне посмеет помешать?
Хотите, злитесь, осуждайте.
Мне глубоко на вас плевать.

El tiempo pós CIPD: Dónde están los derechos de las personas trans?

Carlos Acosta

22 | Colombia, living in Brazil

El Programa de Acción de la Conferencia Internacional de Población y Desarrollo adoptado en 1994 reconoció por la primera vez en un acuerdo internacional la salud sexual y reproductiva y los derechos reproductivos de todas las personas y estableció que “los programas de atención de la salud reproductiva deberían proporcionar los más amplios servicios posibles sin ningún tipo de coacción. Todas las parejas y todas las personas tienen el derecho fundamental de decidir libre y responsablemente el número y el espaciamiento de sus hijos y de disponer de la información, la educación y los medios necesarios para poder hacerlo.” (Principio 8, CIPD, 1994)

Sin embargo, a más de 20 años de la adopción de este acuerdo internacional, todavía los derechos humanos y especialmente los derechos sexuales y reproductivos de las personas trans son altamente vulnerados y sus decisiones y oportunidades son limitadas por la discriminación y la violencia que existe en la sociedad cuando las personas no se adecuan a la heteronormatividad.

Esto se refleja en el limitado acceso de las personas trans a información, educación y servicios de salud sexual y reproductiva. Estas barreras se agravan dependiendo del nivel socioeconómico, edad y etnia. Esto se traduce en la violación de los derechos y en el impacto negativo de la salud física y emocional de las personas trans.

La arraigada transfobia y discriminación basada en la orientación sexual e identidades de género en la sociedad en general, pero específicamente en el personal de salud, influye en el hecho de que no se ha incorporado en la currícula del sector salud, ni en los servicios la atención integral a las necesidades de las personas lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y transexuales (LGBT). De igual forma no existe interés ni voluntad política para realizar investigaciones o evaluaciones que busquen el mejoramiento de las intervenciones en salud con esta población.

El derecho de las personas trans a decidir libremente sobre su sexualidad y reproducción dentro de los servicios se ve limitado por ejemplo cuando estas personas no reciben consejería e información sobre métodos anticonceptivos, porque existen mitos sobre su sexualidad y su reproducción, como asumir que no desean tener hijos, que no pueden embarazarse por el uso de hormonas o existe el deseo de pasar por procedimientos de readecuación genital o hormonioterapia, entonces la atención se reduce a ciertas patologías, en vez de proveer atención integral.

El derecho a decidir libremente el número y el espaciamiento de los hijos y de disponer de los medios necesarios para poder hacerlo es una de las áreas donde los hombres trans viven aún mayores barreras que las existentes para las mujeres cisgénero, ya que existen barreras legales, sociales y culturales que limitan su acceso al aborto seguro, a servicios de fertilidad y a la adopción.



Aun para los hombres trans que logran optar por un embarazo, es difícil obtener los cuidados prenatales y acompañamiento psicológico necesario. De acuerdo a estudios realizados en Estados Unidos, solamente la mitad de los hombres trans reciben acceso a tratamiento de complicaciones resultantes de un embarazo complicado, como preeclampsia, diabetes gestacional y anemia entre otras.

Para lograr que toda persona, incluyendo las personas trans tengan el derecho al disfrute del más alto nivel posible de salud física y mental, necesitamos como movimiento hacer mayor incidencia en que los Estados adopten medidas para asegurar, en condiciones de igualdad el acceso universal a los servicios de atención médica, lo que pasa por construir un sistema de salud público inclusivo y de calidad para todas las personas.

When Minority Becomes A Middle Name

Nyasha Mmethi
23 | South Africa

YES, all they ever said was true. The thought of it kills me
We can never choose our parents, race, ethnicity and gender
It all comes naturally, but I hate when my fellow man calls me names
Some even treat me with spite; they take it for granted that someone can choose to be different.
For an average man like me it never makes sense. How can I choose to be unwanted?
To trodden in the trash with daily mockery and sarcasm.
This is the same hate that has killed men like me. Why do you laden us with social expectations?
In the dark a faithful man dies with psychological pressure slowly turning into personality disorder.
Last time I went to see a doctor, he stared at me with disdain
Seemingly judging me for a sin I never committed. Do I look like trash to you?
After all it is because of LOVE that I sit here reciting my painful history to you.
YES, I bind my breasts. Not willingly but it stems from the need to pass.
It is the same society that labels me, hence I have to pass the hard painful way.
I have scars on my chest some of them untreated, I must to pass and forget about my feminine body
Don't judge my symptoms as evidence of promiscuity; rather it is a history of pain I endured.
Forced in to sex, taken by some presumed straight elder women as a sexual experiment.
For some reason a cisgender man laid in bed with the woman of my dreams...
transmitted this venereal illness to me.
Yet with all this pain you still call me Names, even when I have never been in bed with your lover
If you cannot love me or accept me why can't you tolerate me?
After all we all want the same things, respect, love and dignity.
Think of it, is this what happens when Minority is your Middle Name...
Does it mean I have to struggle to get treatment and instead get blamed for it?

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