

HOOP Submission

HOOP (House of Our Pride) is a support group for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Inter-sex (GLBTI) people. HOOP was established in July 2009 and has over 30 registered active members. HOOP is currently housed under a Non-Governmental Organization called Swapol (Swaziland Positive Living). HOOP is headed by a chair person, vice chairman and a 6 steering committee member's board who administer HOOP objective and responsibilities. HOOP with the aids of some NGO carries out the following activities: capacity building, advocacy and are also currently looking at also carrying out human rights workshops. HOOP administrative activities are coordinated by a National coordinator. HOOP is currently funded by OSISA (an America organization). HOOP is currently working with HOH (HOUSE OF HOPE) and still reaching for other NGO (s) for support to strengthen its capacity in Swaziland.

Executive Summary

The government of Swaziland has been passively supportive of the operations of LGBTI in Swaziland, but a lot more need to be done to protect the rights and interests of LGBTI in Swaziland. These measures include: the de-criminalization of LGBTI practices currently treated as sodomy and the provision of extensive health care.

ISSUES

Work places

LGBTI are often discriminated against at work and there have been well know cases of such happening.

Public places

It is a common scene for LGBTI to be verbally insulted by by-passers in public places. Defamatory name calling and people yelling out to see a LGBTI person's reproductive part are some of the issues facing LGBTI in Swaziland.

Social Gathering

Faith houses have been known to discriminate against LGBTI, advocating for the alienation of LGBTI in the family and society, while maintaining that these LGBTI are possessed by demons.

Health Care

LGBTI are often not administered treatment in medical facilities, if reported to be infected, as additional measure are required from them by medical staff that is not required from other Non-LGBTI people.

Community Meetings

LGBTI are hugely discriminated against in the community, as they are not recognized at community meetings and their points are often not minute at these meetings nor are they allowed to take part in community services.

Law enforcement

LGBTI are not treated with the same parameters as non- LGBTI. Violence cases involving LGBTI are often ridiculed if/when reported to the police. A good example of such practices is in the on-going case of a well known LGBTI in Swaziland, Patricia Dlodlu, who is currently in incarceration for a different offence but is constantly ridiculed by the media and police because of her sexuality.

Gender sensitive

Lesbian partners are often separated using coerce measures and partners taken away to different locations, so they can not be together.

RECOMMENDATION

- The government of Swaziland has made available free condoms for the general population. Same measure should be taken to supply LGBTI, with oral dam, lubricants, Sex toys and anal condoms
- Issues relating to LGBTI should be included in the Government of Swaziland Agenda, as this will help to increase the acceptance of LGBTI, even at community levels.
- LGBTI activities should be decriminalized and given due recognition in the society.
- The government of Swaziland should bring into place laws that protect LGBTI people's rights at workplaces, social, faith and community gatherings and also protect their right to inherit their partner's belonging, if willed to them on their partner's passing away. The above law should be strictly enforced and culprits severely punished.

Positives/Best Practices

In Swaziland, LGBTI are allowed the freedom of assembly without violation. Howbeit, they are not protected from public and media ridicules, which makes such gatherings baits and are therefore often avoided by LGBTI who can not stand public harassment.

Although LGBTI practices are still considered sodomy in the Kingdom of Swaziland, interested NGO (s) operating in Swaziland that associates/works with LGBTI, do so without interruption by the government.