



Board Activities Report

The Global Interfaith Network

for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender
Identities and Expressions (GIN-SSOGIE)

– 2017/18

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Introduction

This Board Activities report prepared for our members in advance of our first ever online General Members' Meeting is intended to inform our members of our activities over the last financial year stretching from March 2017 to February 2018. It is not a formal annual report.

As noted in the section Key Programme Highlights our activities in this financial year have fallen into three areas: solidifying governance processes, groundwork for implementing programmes, and increased networking with members and others.

Highlights of these have been the finalisation and first meeting of GIN's first ever regionally representative Board, the appointment of a new executive Director, and processes of preparation for and implementation of programmes.

In addition, we have continued to engage our members, and although this remains a mammoth task – since you are spread across the globe, and across cultures, languages and faith traditions – we are seeing a strengthening of our global network.

The GIN Secretariat and Board remain committed to the GIN project – to build

“A just world in which the dignity, faith, spirituality, and human rights of persons of all sexes, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions are honoured, supported and protected.”

We hope that you, as GIN members, will continue to join with us in this aim!

Ymania Brown & Rev Judith Kotze

Board Co-Chairs

Key Highlights

The 2017 financial year began with the appointment of a Transitional Consultant, who was tasked with managing GIN through the transition from Interim Steering Committee to formal Board. In 2017, our key work processes have revolved around three areas of work: solidifying governance processes, groundwork for programmes, and networking with members and others.

1. Solidifying governance processes

- Regionally representative board finalised:
 - Up until November of 2016, GIN had been governed by an Interim Steering Committee (ISC) which had been elected in January 2014 at the launch conference consisting of 9 members.



In November 2016 at the General Members' Meeting (GMM) a regionally representative Board was elected. In order to give more balance in terms of regional representation, it was decided that each region of GIN (8 in total) would have a regional representative. The decisions concerning the 8 board members (and 3 South African representatives) were included in the updated GIN Constitution, which was finally approved by members via a process of email consultation in March 2017.

- The elections which took place at the GMM in Bangkok selected some Board members, but since there were (in some cases) too few representatives of the regions present, not all. The following Board members were elected:
 - Kakay Pamaran - East and Southeast Asia
 - Ian McKnight – Caribbean
 - Ymania Brown – Pacific
 - Jide Macaulay - Sub-Saharan Africa
- Sanjay Sharma was nominated, but not confirmed, for the representation of South and Central Asia. It was decided that Jan Bjarne Sødal would remain representative of the last region (Europe, United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) until the online elections.
- The remaining representatives
 - Tania Irias - Latin America

- Jacq Carver - Europe, United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand
were officially nominated and elected via an online voting procedure in May 2017.
- Sanjay Sharma - South and Central Asia, was confirmed by a process of email consultation.
- We did not elect a Board member for the Middle East and North Africa region as we had only 4 members in the region in May 2017, and after consultation, were advised that electing from such a small pool would not be wise. Instead, we have embarked on a process of network building and engagement with the hope that we will be in position to elect a Board member for this region in October 2019 when the next Board elections take place.
- The three South African Board Members that GIN was advised as required for registration are:
 - Phumzille Mabizela
 - Sharon Cox
 - Judith Kotze
- Our new board therefore consists of the following people:

Name	Gender	Country of origin (residence)
Jacq Carver	O	The Netherlands
Ian McKnight	M	Jamaica
Kakay Pamaran	F	Philippines
Sanjay Sharma	M	Nepal
Ymania Brown	F (MTF)	Samoa (Australia)
Jide Macaulay	M	UK/Nigeria (UK)
Tania Irias	F	Nicaragua
Judith Kotzé	F	South Africa
Sharon Cox	F	South Africa
Phumzile Mabizela	F	South Africa

- The first formal Board meeting of the new Board took place in June 2017, in Johannesburg, and elected the following officers:
 - Board co-chairs: Ymania Brown, Judith Kotze
 - Treasurer: Ymania Brown
 - Secretary: Jacq Carver (with Sanjay Sharma as shadow)

- Human Resources and Finance Sub-committees were also constituted.



Some of our Board members and staff at the first Board meeting

- Putting procedures and structures in place:
 - 2017/18 continued the process of putting in place policy documents governing how GIN is managed. These include a finalized constitution and bylaws as well as a financial procedures manual and so forth.
- New Executive Director
 - Toni Kruger-Ayebazibwe was appointed as a Transitional Consultant in March 2017, to manage GIN through the transition from Interim Steering Committee to formal Board. In December 2017, she came on board as the new Executive Director (ED) of GIN. GIN had been without an ED since December 2015, so Toni's appointment brought stability to the organization.
 - The Board announcement at the time indicated that Toni's tenure as Transitional Consultant had demonstrated successfully her ability to manage difficult processes and achieve outputs, and that the human resources subcommittee of GIN had unanimously recommended Toni to the Board to be our next Executive Director, a recommendation which the Board unanimously approved.
- GIN's Secretariat is now solidly established, with a total of 4 staff including the ED.
 - Victoria Petitjean and Thomas Ndayiragije were appointed as Programme Managers in October 2016. Unfortunately Thomas proved not to be a good fit, and left in September 2017. He was replaced in January 2018 with Pierre Buckley, and Victoria (based out of Paris) and Pierre (Johannesburg) are going from strength to strength in managing and expanding the programmatic work of GIN.
 - In June 2017, we appointed Wendy Lissom-Bayemi as our Finance and Administration Officer, to take over the financial duties which had previously been performed by Inerela+, who had been our fiscal sponsor for the preceding 18 months. Wendy is also based in Johannesburg and provides a solid core of administrative stability to the organization.

2. Groundwork for implementing programmes

2017/8 saw GIN staff putting in place the groundwork for implementing a number of programmes, as well as continuing to manage the Individual Engagement Plans that came out of the GMM in Bangkok in November 2016. Three primary programmes to be run by the Secretariat were identified and significant work was done to move towards implementation. They are the Family & Traditional Values Seminar series, the Religious Dialogue Partners' process and the Speakers' Bureau. The pilot Family & Traditional Values Seminar took place in February 2018.

2.1. *Family & Traditional Values Seminar series*

In 2017/8 GIN laid the groundwork for a series of seminars on "Faith, Family & Traditional Values," regional seminars that bring together activists, scholars, and human rights advocates to develop counter narratives that are regionally and contextually located and that in turn aim to educate and bolster existing formal human rights strategies and local campaigns.



Participants in the Family & Traditional Values Seminar, February 2018, Johannesburg.

This project stems from the observation that, for several years now, and increasingly so in recent years, there has been a hijacking of the concepts of family and traditional values

within local, regional and international arenas, including, at the UN. Such spaces are being increasingly occupied by right-wing forces and coalitions of religious groups who promote messages based on conservative, static and ill-thought through notions of traditions and the family. There is a strong need to develop counter arguments (in summarized and extended versions) to provide to CSOs, FBOs, political, diplomatic and religious leaders, for them to be better equipped to counter such argumentation.

This project forms part of a wider strategy for GIN to provide value added in work already being done, by 1) helping to reclaim the concept of the family and promoting it at regional and global levels, including within the UN arena (research production), 2) The output produced will be used for the training of a GIN Speakers Bureau (training) 3) To speak and carry out advocacy work at regional and international events, including within the UN space (advocacy).

From 19 to 21 February 2018 at Auckland Lodge, Johannesburg, South Africa, GIN organized the first seminar in the series, gathering rights defenders, scholars, theologians, researchers, and religious leaders from diverse family backgrounds and traditions, including African traditional religions, Islam and Christianity.

The gathering of approximately 25 participants sought to reclaim and affirm the diversity of natural families in Sub-Saharan Africa, which also include the families of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people and to promote and defend these families locally, regionally and internationally. It produced The Johannesburg Declaration (<http://www.gin-ssogie.org/johannesburg-declaration/>) to which all are invited to sign onto in support. At least one academic article and fact sheets are planned.

2.2. The Religious Dialogue Partners' process

GIN worked with a faith collective consisting of LGBTIQ people of faith with experience of dialogue with religious leaders from a range of Southern African countries (including Inclusive and Affirming Ministries and Tulinam, long time GIN members), FRI (the Norwegian organisation for Sexual Diversity), FOCCISA (the Fellowship of Christian Councils of Southern Africa), and Positive Vibes to develop a curriculum to train LGBTI people of faith to participate in a series of dialogues with the Christian Councils of all SADC countries. An 'engine' meeting was held in November 2017 (following an earlier initial meeting early in 2017) to finalise the curriculum which is titled 'Hearts Set on Pilgrimage' in preparation for piloting it with the first group of LGBTI people of faith in 2018.

The aims of the curriculum are to prepare and equip LGBT people of faith to participate in dialogue with religious leaders, and to build the internal capabilities of LGBT people of faith to claim their faith with confidence and resilience, as part of the community of believers. It assists participants to integrate their spirituality and sexuality and develop a 'personal' theology which enables them to stand 'on solid ground' as they engage in dialogue.



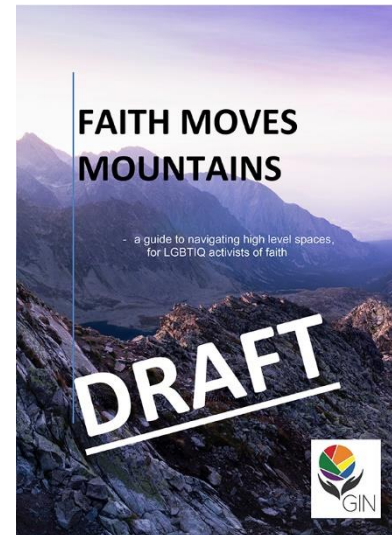
The curriculum was piloted in April 2018, and GIN convened and co-facilitated the workshop with great success. 15 participants from Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Mozambique went through a selection process and were then taken through the training. They are proceeding to engage in dialogue with members of the Christian Councils in their countries of origin in a process convened by FOCCISA. The dialogue partners for the remaining SADC countries will need to be trained in a second workshop which will take place in 2019.

2.3. *The Speaker's Bureau*

Linked to the Religious Dialogue Partners' process and extending it, is the Speakers' Bureau. In 2017/8, GIN put in place plans to launch a Speakers Bureau that amplifies under-represented faith-based LGBTI narratives and pairs our Speakers with staff support and funding to connect them to high level speaking opportunities.

The strategic aim of the process is to bring the voices of LGBTIQ people of faith from Key Affected Contexts into high-level human rights spaces, where LGBTIQ identities are often framed as 'unAfrican' or as Western impositions. It is hoped that by doing so this framing will be undercut, as will the framing which sees LGBTIQ identities as automatically opposed to faith and cultural tradition.

As a first step in this process, we commissioned the production of a manual, titled *'Faith Moves Mountains'* which is designed to serve as a guide for LGBTI people of faith in engaging high-level human rights spaces. It includes background about GIN and our work, as well as the activities of the religious right, and information about the planned Speakers Bureau, information on the high-level spaces landscape, strategies for engagement, and a resource kit, including advocacy guides, UN processes and schedules, and a theological guidance pack.



In 2018, a curriculum based on this manual will be commissioned and potential speakers will go through a further training process to inform them about how high-level political fora function, about how the religious right functions in these fora, and to develop their speaking skills enabling them to tell their personal stories of faith and sexuality / gender identity. We are in an ongoing process of research to identify the most relevant and appropriate events for us to bring forward our inclusive messages.

We will aim to identify and train at least 5 individuals to be part of the Speakers Bureau in 2018, and a further 5 in the course of 2019; originating in part from the religious dialogue training sessions we will have coordinated and during which we will have identified individuals willing and confident enough to be part of the Speakers Bureau and attend international human rights events and conferences. We will also work to identify other possible speakers through a process of consultation with GIN members.

2.4. Individual Engagement Plans

As part of the planning for the General Members' Meeting in November 2016, it was decided that members would be asked to commit to developing an individual engagement plan. The GMM was thus the opportunity for members to come up with projects that were to be implemented throughout 2017, in coordination with staff (28 individual and collective engagement plans were submitted) and in line with GIN's three priority programmatic areas: Creating Religious Dialogue, Human Rights: Policy and Legal Advocacy, Education and Training Resources. Some of our members decided to submit both individual and collective engagement plans, committing themselves to working on SSOGIE and interfaith issues within their own regions and in connection with other parts of the world.

The aims of this project were to build our footprint, increase accountability and partnership with members, and specifically develop programming strategies that are relevant at the local level. The overarching aim was and continues to be putting our procedural and covenantal documents into practice with our membership, and engaging in modest programs that build brand recognition, members' organizing capacity, and our principal educational resources. We also aim to provide opportunities for our members and colleagues to build capacity for justice work that is competent and strategic in the use of a faith-based message at the local, national, regional, international and formal human rights levels.

Results have been more vigorous member-led programming that solidifies GIN’s commitment to being member-centered and coordinating our members into regional or thematic working groups that help sustain their work, as well as concrete and captivating stories, media, and best practices to share among our member network and with our colleagues, thereby increasing the footprint of and respect for faith-based LGBTI strategies.

Of these 28 plans, approximately half were finally implemented. GIN disbursed ZAR119 456 to ten projects (the remainder did not require funding). We are continuously working on capturing concrete and captivating stories, media and research from our members which we feature in our communications. The projects are listed below.

Project name	Implementing organisation / individual	Location
Samoa Youth for Interfaith Engagement Day	Samoa Youth for Interfaith	Samoa, Pacific
Youth camp	YIFOS	Indonesia, South East Asia
Training of trainers for Queer Muslim activists	Amir Mukambetov	Kyrgyzstan, South and Central Asia
Global Network of Rainbow Catholics conference (a contribution)	Global Network of Rainbow Catholics	Germany, Europe
Dialogues with religious leaders	Blue Diamond Society	Nepal, South and Central Asia
Dialogues with LGBT religious leaders	Rev Nokuthula Dhladhla	South Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa
Spirituality retreat LGBTI activists	Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition	Jamaica, Caribbean
Dialogue with religious leaders	Sexual Minorities Uganda	Uganda, Sub-Saharan Africa
Interfaith dialogue	Beyond the Boundary Knowing and Concerns Intersex	Hong Kong, South East Asia
Dialogue with religious leaders	Tulinam	Namibia, Sub-Saharan Africa



Youth camp, YIFOS, Indonesia, South East Asia

Projects which were implemented but did not require funding included work by:

- the Tonga Leitis Association (Tonga, the Pacific)

- the Inner Circle (Cape Town, South Africa)
- The European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups (Warsaw, Poland) (in progress)
- Muslims For Progressive Values (New York, USA) (in progress)
- Church of Sweden (Sweden)

3. Increased Networking

During the period of March 2017 until February 2018, the Secretariat of GIN-SSOGIE engaged in numerous local, regional and international fora. Through its actions, the Secretariat worked on developing GIN's stronger footprint and brand recognition at the local and international levels in the Human Rights & SOGIESC fields, and progressive faith spaces.

Firstly, we introduced and facilitated spirit spaces in major SOGIESC and human rights conferences and meetings in Asia and Africa: ILGA Asia annual conference (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, December 2017), ICASA (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, December 2017).

As we carried out these initiatives, we sought to build stronger relationships with our existing members, partners and new collaborators. In this spirit, we attended the annual conference of our organizational member, the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups, in Gdansk (Poland), in May 2017.

In August 2017, GIN attended the V Latin American Congress on Gender and Religion, hosted at the Faculdades EST in Sao Leopoldo (Brazil). GIN's main goal in attending the Congress was to connect with our new Latin American Board member, Tania Irias, to facilitate her connection to other GIN members on the continent, and to promote GIN in that space and to meet and invite people to participate in GIN.

In that same month, GIN also participated in and engaged with our organizational member, the Interfaith Diversity Network of West Africa (IDNOWA)'s launching conference, in Accra (Ghana).

We also attended and again supported IDNOWA's Conflict in Diversity seminar, in Lome (Togo), in February 2018.

One of the must-work-in spaces for GIN is the UN – and we worked hard to develop relationships with our faith-based partners working in the UN space. We attended the 4th meeting (annual) between the Global LGBTI Coalition and the WCC Staff Group on Human Sexuality, in September 2017, in Geneva (Switzerland). GIN has now been integrated as a partner of the Global LGBTI Coalition group, and is seeking to develop working relations in various projects with this partner.

We have continuously worked to develop GIN's presence and partnership, as well as a deeper understanding of this particular forum and its intricacies.

- We participated at the UN Commission on Status of Women (New York, USA, March 2017 and March 2018). In March 2018, we co-organised a side event with IFOR and the Global Faith and Justice Project, with two speakers, Tuisina Ymania Brown and Dr Yvette Abrahams speaking on faith and family. Our aim was to provide space for crucial conversations on diverse family models and the interconnection with faith and traditional values.



Speakers Tuisina Ymania Brown and Dr Yvette Abrahams, with co-convenors and supporters at CSW, March 2018.

- We participated in the Human Rights Council 35th session, in June 2017, in Geneva (Switzerland)
- We supported the organization of a UN-based event in October 2017, the Ethics of Reciprocity, in collaboration with IFOR and the Global Faith and Justice Project, in New York (USA).

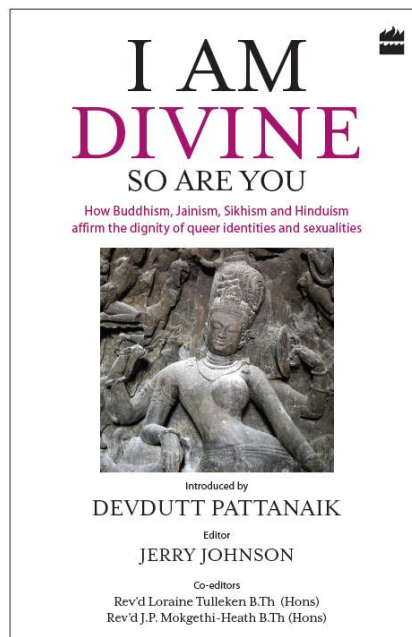
Publications

I Am Divine, So Are You

I Am Divine, So Are You, which is the second book in the Human Dignity Human Sexuality series, following *Behold I make all things new*, and dealing with the Karmic faiths, was launched at the ILGA Asia conference in December 2017 in Phnom Penh by some of the GIN Secretariat and the editors..

The book was introduced by Devdutt Pattanaik, and edited by Jerry Johnson, in collaboration with the Reverend Loraine Tulleken B.Th (Hons) and The Reverend JP Mokgethi-Heath B.Th (Hons), one of the original founder members of GIN. It deals with human dignity and human sexuality through the lenses of the Karmic faith traditions (i.e. Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Hinduism) and is the second in a series of three books. The series is a collaboration between GIN and the Church of Sweden.

The book has sold nearly 6000 print copies, and a small number in e-book sales. The GIN Secretariat and Board have also continued to distribute hard copies of both it and it's elder sibling, *Behold, I make all things new*. The third book, which deals with indigenous faith traditions the world over, is in preparation.



Conclusion

Overall GIN is in a much better position now than it was in March 2017. We have solidified our structure, appointed new staff and elected a regionally representative Board. We are delighted that the Secretariat has begun implementing our planned programmes, alongside our members Engagement Plans, and that the organisation is growing in its networking presence globally. Next steps include further implementation of the Religious Dialogue Partners' process, the Speakers' Bureau and the Family and Traditional Values seminar series, and a concerted effort to access more funding which will allow us to expand our work.

Financial comparison 2015/16 to 2016/17 to 2017/2018

	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016
	ZAR	ZAR	ZAR
Income			
LLH (FRI)	-	31 477	419 576
Church of Sweden	125 872	128 836	215 921
IAM	-	-	264 620
Arcus	1 321 923	1 476 277	-
OSISA	393 888	428 751	-
Ford Foundation	1 681 388	-	-
Soulforce	40 216	-	-
FRI Refund	-69 467	-	-
	3 493 820	2 065 341	900 117
Other income - interest received	5 141	-	-
Expenditure			
Accounting & Secretarial fees	60280	25 374	1 850
Administration & management fees	46534	154 920	0
Advertising	120000	16 229	12 039
Bank charges	30029	16 651	6 129
Cleaning	0	1 300	0
Computer expenses	0	5 232	0
Consulting & professional fees	886863	162 317	0
Consumables	28082	0	0
Depreciation, amortisation & impairments	15061	1 550	0
Employee costs	767602	278 152	384 386
Entertainment	12562	2 194	0
Relocation cost	0	0	40 000
Conference expenses	465148	409 198	245 082
Assets less than R7000	4947	0	0
Seed funding	119456	0	0
Insurance	1239	3 000	0
Lease rentals on operating lease	40415	0	0
Legal expenses	1500	4 200	0
Penalties paid in respect of taxes	6614	0	0
Postage	2393	0	0
Printing & Stationery	18909	600	9 825
Profit & loss on exchange differences	34274	0	0
Subscriptions	14392	0	0
Telephone & fax	7769	0	2 503
Travel - local	508141	37 662	11 330
Travel - overseas	178902	555 204	68 772
Total expenditure	3 371 112	1 673 783	781 916

Operating surplus	127 849	391 558	118 201
Finance costs	1 017	1 977	
Surplus before taxation	126 832	389 581	118 201
Taxation	38 070	109 636	33 068
Surplus for year	88 762	279 945	85 133

Appendix: About GIN

The Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions (GIN-SSOGIE or GIN) is a facilitating and convening network that provides our members and partners with the information, networks, collaborative work opportunities and structures to accomplish strategic, necessary and meaningful gains for a just society where faith traditions are not used against people of all SSOIE. GIN was established in 2012, and formally registered in 2015 (in South Africa) and has approximately 270 members globally, both individuals and organisations, and works across 8 global regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, the Pacific, South and Central Asia, East and South-East Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and lastly, a region which encompasses Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

- GIN makes visible the realities of LGBTI people of faith, as lived and experienced in their communities, and who use their faiths and traditions for the improvement of the lives of LGBTI people and their human rights. Therefore we celebrate our faiths as a life source for us, and from there comes the strength and commitment to advocacy and work for change towards a just society for all.
- GIN prioritises Key Affected Contexts, by which we mean contexts where violence and power collude with religion, culture and tradition most viciously to instigate homophobic and transphobic discrimination.
- GIN members aim to prophetically critique their faith traditions when those traditions uncritically support stigma, discrimination, homophobia, transphobia, racism, and economically unfair or patriarchal value systems.

Vision: A just world in which the dignity, faith, spirituality, and human rights of persons of all sexes, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions are honoured, supported and protected.

Mission: GIN-SSOGIE comprises individuals and organisations engaged with faith and spirituality. We are committed to using our beliefs and traditions to ensure that the views, values and rights of people of all sexes, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions are recognised, respected, and valued.

Objectives: In the belief that all faiths are inherently inclusive of people of all sexes, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions (SSOGIE), GIN-SSOGIE will:

- Create safe spaces for people of faith of all SSOIE to come together, in physical and other fora, to
 - heal the experienced separation between faith identities and SSOIE
 - develop and share knowledge, resources and best practices
 - strengthen the voice of people of all SSOIE within their religious communities

- Assist members in engaging in dialogue with religious leaders and communities to become active voices in advocating for acknowledging the dignity, equality, justice and human rights of people of all SSOGIE.
- Collaborate with faith-based and secular organisations and individuals for whom faith and spirituality are positive forces for advocating for and acknowledging the dignity, equality, justice and human rights of people of all SSOGIE in local, national, regional and international fora, as needed.
- Provide, as far as possible, opportunities for building capacity and resources needed at the local, national, regional and international levels (e.g. educational projects, skills building and leadership development)
- Develop and implement communication strategies to amplify and expand faith-based advocate voices on SSOGIE issues.