canaries in the coal mines

An analysis of spaces for LGBTI activism in Namibia

COUNTRY REPORT
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Angola        Malawi        
Zambia       Mozambique       
Botswana     Mauritius       
Namibia     Swaziland       
Lesotho       Zimbabwe
Namibia has experienced visible and tangible change on LGBTI human rights issues in recent years with a marked move away from the homophobia expressed by then head of state, Sam Nujoma, following independence. LGBTI people continue to experience severe levels of marginalization and social exclusion but are also clearly poised to make significant advances in the coming few years if a coherent national strategy can be consolidated by existing LGBTI organizations and their allies. Some sectors (such as health) have made significantly more gains than others (such as religion and education), and there has been a sea change of evolving public attitudes towards non-normative sexualities and genders. This broad shifting in social attitudes is due to several factors, including the efforts of LGBTI organizations.

Since the early successes of the Rainbow Project, there is support for strategizing for progressive social change for LGBTI people within broader civil society. Allies in key state posts could be successfully engaged with for substantial change.

The legislative environment is not conducive to living openly as an LGBTI person, but this too, is being challenged on several fronts. At state level, the Office of the Ombudsman, is pursuing an inclusive human rights agenda that clearly includes the human rights of LGBTI people. While the 2013 Baseline Study Report on Human Rights issued by the Office of the Ombudsman states that Namibia has been known for its ‘intransigence in accepting homosexuals as equal partners in a just society,’ this scoping study indicates that increasingly public opinion is not reflected in the official stance. A national human rights survey of 1280 households – also conducted by the Office of the Ombudsman in 2013 – found that 73% of respondents felt that people with a ‘different sexual orientation’ have equal rights in Namibia, though there was less support for same-sex marriage.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
This country report was written for The Other Foundation by Finn Reagan informed by engagement with individuals and organizations in Namibia. Finn Reagan is an experienced researcher and writer whose technical expertise in doing LGBTI-focused and educational research is highly sought after. He recently moved from the LGBTI anchor organization Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA), based in Johannesburg, to the South African Government’s Department of Basic Education. The production of the report was supported by George Murumba and benefited from editorial contributions given by Mark Gevisser. The final text of the report was edited by Sarita Ranchod and Sonja Boezak from Under the Rainbow.
“... a homosexual in itself, in our African tradition, means contraceptive measures against childbirth. With a small population in our country we cannot afford to promote homossexualism, but those who are behaving themselves in this fashion are not prosecuted ... Homosexualism, lesbianism, can be practised as long as it is not imposed on others in public; just as we cap smoking in public.”

(Namibian delegation, Universal Periodic Review Working Group, 2011)

Under German colonial rule until 1915, then being administered by apartheid South Africa, Namibia’s independence was realized in 1990. Ethnically diverse, with a population of a little over 2.5 million people, approximately 85% of the population is Christian.

Namibia is a stable multi-party democracy and the protection of human rights is enshrined in the Constitution.

Gender-based violence (GBV) has received much attention in recent years, across all sectors. Various instruments have been used to address GBV such as legal frameworks, political platforms, religious arenas and civil society.

Namibia prides itself on the freedom of its media, and freedom of expression more broadly.

73% of respondents in a national human rights survey of 1280 households felt that people with a ‘different sexual orientation’ have equal rights in Namibia.
Male same-sex acts are illegal under common law in Namibia and no legal mention is made of female same-sex sexuality. The sodomy law has been in existence since 1927 and was subsequently strengthened in 1980 by the Combating of Immoral Practices Act. Sodomy and certain sexual acts (such as mutual masturbation and oral sex) between consenting adult males are criminal offences, though homosexuality itself is not illegal. Although these laws are seldom applied, they continue to have a detrimental impact on LGBTI people.

“The presence of sodomy laws on Namibian statute books makes gay men particularly susceptible to discrimination and interference with their privacy ... The continued presence of sodomy laws also mistakenly creates the impression that the practice or otherwise of homosexuality is illegal in this country and this is wrong...”  
The first post-independence Labour Law (1992) included the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, replaced by the Labour Act 11 (2007) which prohibits discrimination based on sex, but not sexual orientation. While organizations such as the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) petitioned the National Assembly for including sexual orientation, this was unsuccessful. The Office of the Ombudsman has recommended that protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation be reintroduced into the Labour Act 11 of 2007. While Namibia is signatory to the Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which include sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) under ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), this is not applied, despite an ILO Committee of Experts in May 2014 exhorting Namibia to ensure protection on the grounds of sexual orientation in the Labour Act. According to key contributor Linda Baumann (OutRight), there is ongoing debate regarding the inclusion of LGBTI human rights in the Labour Act, the Domestic Violence Bill and the national Human Rights Action Plan which specifically articulates LGBTI people as a vulnerable category.

2.2 Social security benefits
Social security benefits apply to both opposite and same-sex partners, eligible to receive once-off death benefits under the Social Security Act 34 of 1994. However, this occurs only if the surviving partner can prove dependence on the deceased for maintenance. The reality is that the Social Security Commission pays out the benefit only in the absence of a surviving child or spouse. Similarly, under the Employees’ Compensation Act 30 of 1941, both opposite and same-sex employees can claim compensation in the case of accidental death of a partner during employment, but only if dependence on the deceased can be proven, and only in the absence of a spouse and children of the deceased. The opposite sex cohabiting partner of the deceased would take priority over a same-sex partner.

2.3 Marriage
Same-sex marriage is not permissible and the courts have yet to adjudicate on whether this exclusion is Constitutional. While social workers sometimes allow same-sex partners to adopt by allowing one person to adopt as a single, divorced or widowed applicant, in terms of the Children’s Act 33 of 1960 same-sex couples do not enjoy joint adoption rights. In terms of artificial reproductive techniques, legislation on ovum and sperm donation is only considered in the context of married couples. As a result, for LGBTI people the ovum or sperm donor remains the legal parent of the child, and surrogacy is not currently legislated for.
2.4 Women and the Law
While there are no laws that regulate women’s same-sex sexuality, the old South African abortion law is restrictive and permits termination of pregnancy only in limited situations such as rape, incest, if the mother’s life is in danger, or if there is medical evidence that the baby will be severely disabled. More generally, it is difficult to get a public abortion and women are often unaware of their sexual and reproductive health rights. In 2016 the newly appointed Minister of Health proposed a referendum on abortion and there has been policy reform regarding teenage pregnancy with a focus on keeping girls in school.

2.5 Transgender People and the Law
While the Constitution is silent on the human rights of transgender people, the apartheid South African law on sex reassignment surgery and document change is still in place. Nevertheless, the presence of transphobia and bureaucratic obstructionism has resulted in very few trans people having access to sex reassignment surgery or subsequent change of identity documents. Therefore, while Act 81, Sex Reassignment Policy from 1963 permits gender reassignment surgery, very few trans people are able to access this provision even though sex reassignment surgery is covered in government medical aid. Some trans people have successfully transitioned in-country.

Similarly, while it is possible for trans people to change their identity documents, bureaucratic obstructionism makes this impossible for most. Complete transition should, in theory, allow a trans person to officially change gender, as the Secretary of State can change a person’s gender if the necessary medical documents are available. There is no law related to crossdressing. However, the old Prohibition of Disguises Act 16 of 1969, inherited from apartheid South Africa, was adopted to prohibit crossdressing.
As independence and the liberation struggle become historical facts, the loosening of related discourse has led to increasing tolerance of LGBTI communities. This is not to deny the backlash against LGBTI people but to highlight the broader historical arc.

### 3.2 Religious Sector

The Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) has released affirming statements concerning sexual orientation. The religious sector, according to key contributors, remains predominantly hostile to LGBTI people.4 This discourse continues to be conservative and espouses stereotypical notions of non-normative sexualities and genders which relate to sinfulness and demonic possession. In an interview with Madeleine Isaacks (TULINAM), she said: “A pastor will tell you: ‘You are the devil’s spawn.’ It’s not a great picture, but it’s not as if we’re being killed in the street. It’s not Uganda or South Africa.”

### 3.3 Media

Media discourse has often been affirming of LGBTI people in Namibia. The Namibian as well as The Namibia Sun newspapers tend to cover LGBTI issues in an ethical and supportive way.

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3.1 Shifting Discourse

An increasingly sophisticated language has emerged on SOGI issues. This is largely due to greater exposure to media, and online content from outside Namibia; LGBTI activists and leaders traveling abroad and returning with new linguistic frames of reference; the relative silence of the church; and an increasingly confident LGBTI community buoyed by the support of key allies at the national level. While the general cultural environment may be understood in terms of post-colonial, post-independence stagnation, the presence of a vocal LGBTI community on the streets of the capital is having an enlivening effect. This includes exhibitions of queer art. Artistic and cultural vibrancy continues to attract backlash from more conservative quarters such as the church. The homophobia of former President Nujoma should be understood in the context of the broader anti-colonial and anti-apartheid independence struggles across the region revealing clear parallels with the post-independence rhetoric of President Mugabe of the ZANU-PF in neighbouring Zimbabwe.3 These discourses can be understood as a proxy for an anti-colonial pushback against the historical and continued presence of European and North American hegemony in the region. As independence and the liberation struggle become historical

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4 In 2001, the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) released a statement and “rejected any form of discrimination based on sexual orientation” (IRIN, 2001).

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3.4 Tradition

Culture and tradition do not universally function as sites for exclusion of LGBTI people and their experiences of such spaces are not always negative. Historically, rituals such as funerals and burials play an important role in community gathering. These settings have functioned as sites of exclusion for LGBTI people by using pronouns not used by the deceased, and/or denial of the deceased’s sexuality or gender identity. However, reports from key contributors indicate that traditional spaces are slowly opening to LGBTI realities: “I’ve seen pastors and clergy recognizing: ‘This person is not a ‘he’ but is known as a ‘she’’. This is a huge step forward and leads to huge relief in the whole congregation, which is very emotional” (Madelene Isaacks).

Traditional leaders are potentially important allies. One traditional leader said the following with regards to the changing attitudes around LGBTI issues: “Remember how it was with AIDS, we can do the same with this!”

The disapproval from politicians, parliamentarians, religious leaders and some community members is at odds with the attitudes and opinions of the LGBTI communities themselves. What is apparent is cycles of progress, followed by backlash, exemplified by the inclusion and then the removal of sexual orientation as prohibited grounds for discrimination in the country’s Labour Law.
The shifting attitudes towards LGBTI people in Namibia can be attributed to several reasons, including increased media coverage and access to online information; the emergence of language to signify non-normative sexualities and genders; and allies in influential positions who are able to contribute to national debate on LGBTI human rights issues.

The first five years following Namibia’s independence from South Africa were successful days for LGBTI activism because the non-discrimination clause in the Constitution concerning sex was presumed to be applicable to LGBTI people as well. In 1996, and the years that followed, President Nujoma and his Minister of Home Affairs, who talked of ‘eliminating gays’, made their stance on the human rights of LGBTI people clear. In recent years, the perception that Namibia is a homophobic state has changed.

This transition has been spearheaded by a few prominent organizations including an active women’s movement in the run up to and after independence in 1990. Black lesbians have emerged as a core, vocal constituency in the recent LGBTI movement. There has been a predominantly middle class white gay scene in Windhoek for several decades, however, this group was not focused on activism, and appeared to be exclusionary based on race, class and gender, said key contributor Jo Pogge.

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The LGBTI movement, and LGBTI people, have experienced backlash from families and communities rejecting LGBTI people, leaving many homeless and living in poverty. In response, several LGBTI organizations have been offering outreach and pastoral services to community members to meet survival needs.

Escalating levels of violence, especially GBV – some of which are rooted in unresolved issues from the independence struggle and colonial legacy – and high levels of poverty and inequality disproportionately affect LGBTI people given their vulnerability.

### 5.1 OutRight Namibia (ORN)

ORN is an LGBTI, MSM and WSW human rights organization formed by LGBTI activists in 2010. ORN advocates as the voice for LGBTI people to address, redress and arrest homophobic rhetoric. ORN has accessed substantial funding for key populations work in the health sector.

### 5.2 Sister Namibia

Established in 1989, Sister Namibia is a feminist and women’s rights organization and has been vocal about gender equality since Namibia’s independence.

### 5.3 Women’s Leadership Centre (WLC)

WLC is a feminist organization that promotes women’s writing and other forms of creative expression as a form of resistance to discrimination. The organization’s focus is on cultivating an indigenous feminist activism, and facilitates empowerment processes for young lesbians across the country.

### 5.4 Wings to Transcend Namibia (WTTN)

WTTN is a transgender organization advocating and lobbying for the recognition of the human rights of trans people. Their work includes: legal gender recognition; psychosocial support; safe spaces; the wellbeing of transgender people; eradicating transphobia, stigma, discrimination and violence against transgender people.
4.5 The Young Feminist Movement (Y-Fem)
Y-Fem is a lesbian feminist organization – founded in 2009 – whose work centres on rural women working in mining regions with a focus on economic justice for young lesbians. Y-Fem advocates for sexual health rights education and the promotion of young women’s human rights.

4.6 TULINAM
Founded in 2010, TULINAM is a faith-based organization that engages faith communities on LGBTI issues, working to change the discourse around LGBTI people that labels them abominable sinners. TULINAM’s mission is to strengthen and support LGBTI people, allies and sympathetic clergy to understand and confront religious fundamentalism, and to create safe spaces for dialogue to empower sexual minorities, faith communities and allies to engage with each other and recognize the human rights of all.

4.7 Voice of Hope Trust
Voice of Hope Trust works with transgender sex workers and offers a space for information sharing, awareness raising, and advocacy for the human rights of sex workers.

4.8 Rights Not Rescue Trust
The Rights Not Rescue Trust (RnRT) offers programmes for sex workers, with a specific focus on MSM, transgender people and lesbians. The organization offers counselling and healthcare referral services, and documents GBV enacted upon sex workers in collaboration with LAC. The organization is led by sex workers. It promotes access to health, human rights, education and the safety of sex workers. RnRT is also working to decriminalize sex work and a rights-based work environment for all sex workers, to access their reproductive health rights, as well as legal services.

4.9 African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHeR)
AMSHeR is a coalition of LGBTI/MSM-led organizations across sub-Saharan Africa, established to address the disproportionate effect of HIV/AIDS on LGBTI individuals. AMSHeR aims to redress the human rights violations these populations face on the continent. AMSHeR was formed to develop ‘home-grown’ strategies to address local issues.
LGBTI organizations have employed locally specific strategies to bring about positive change for LGBTI people. Gains have included stronger partnerships; a shifting national discourse; and greater LGBTI visibility. The efforts of LGBTI organizations have contributed to advances through ongoing awareness raising across sectors; and the creation of several successful, national organizations.

5.1 Mainstreaming LGBTI Human Rights in Civil Society

Historically, The Rainbow Project (TRP) worked extensively with mainstream civil society to educate and inform stakeholders about LGBTI human rights issues. As a result, LGBTI issues are a core agenda item in the broader human rights movement and enjoy widespread support. The collective effect of these approaches is that “there is a lot less of the Nujoma homophobia.”

TRP had as a key strategy to be deeply embedded in the broader civil society movement in Namibia under the umbrella of the Namibian NGO Forum Trust (NANGOF). TRP pushed LGBTI issues at NANGOF and argued that they related to the broader issues of the sector, including youth and sex work, and the benefits of the broadly accepted idea that LGBTI rights are human rights.

5.2 Media Training

The Rainbow Project worked with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) to roll out sensitisation and awareness training for journalists and editors. This successful initiative, while now concluded, assisted already left-leaning press to report on LGBTI issues in an informed and affirming way.

Jo Rogge, Interview, 21 April 2016
Recommendations from the submission to the committee under Article 40 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) include: abolishing the sodomy laws; including same sex relationships in the new Domestic Violence Act (such provisions were originally included but then removed); reform of the Labour Act; and legislating for the rights of same sex couples generally.

5.3 Law Reform

The Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) has cautioned against using law reform as a key strategy given the conservatism of the judiciary and the attitudes of SWAPO, the ruling party. Nevertheless, law reform is seen increasingly as a potentially successful route to follow. Recommendations from the submission to the committee under Article 40 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) include: abolishing the sodomy laws; including same sex relationships in the new Domestic Violence Act (such provisions were originally included but then removed); reform of the Labour Act; and legislating for the rights of same sex couples generally.

The National AIDS Policy presents opportunities for broader change, as does the recent Human Rights Action Plan which sits in the Office of the Ombudsman. A lesbian was appointed to lead the Law Reform and Development Commission (LRDC). There is also a movement to decriminalize sex work which offers a useful entry point for advocacy on LGBTI human rights.

5.4 Developing Safe Spaces

Overall, fear around coming together in a safe space is one of the major obstacles for many LGBTI people. A key initial strategy in bringing about social justice for LGBTI people is the development of safe spaces for LGBTI people to gather.

5.5 Using Social Media

Social and online media is underutilized but is recognized as a possible future strategy. Young lesbian feminists often engage online and on social media sites, though they rarely use these spaces for LGBTI activism, said Jholerina Brina Timbo during an interview. Organizations such as Y-Fem have found that the communities they serve do not engage robustly on online platforms, because of severe inequality and poverty, the lack of access to computers in LGBTI organizations; and a lack of training on the use of social media for advocacy.
the needs and experiences of LGBTI people: social in/exclusion

6

6.1 Violence and Police Brutality

The significant experiences and needs of LGBTI people relate to the prevalence of physical and sexual violence, including general violence, police violence, rape and rape by police.

Violence against LGBTI people is pervasive and there are “high levels of sexual and other violence targeting people because of their sexual orientation and gender identity [which] are endemic in some areas of our country.” (ORN Human Rights Report on LGBTI People in Namibia, 2013).

Upwards of 40% of MSM experience human rights abuses including rape and violence, and this violence is reported as one of their main health challenges.

Hatred, extreme violence and rejection from family and communities, including lack of financial support, is a significant challenge and there is often a refusal on the part of police to prosecute violence against LGBTI people. (Sister Namibia, Building the Feminist Movement in Namibia, Annual Report: January to December 2009, 2010, “Namibia: Treatment of sexual minorities by society and government authorities; recourse and protection available to sexual minorities who have been subjected to ill treatment.”)

and brutality at the hands of the police is a reality and police create methods to humiliate trans people, including forcing them to strip in public.

Martin, a trans woman sex worker in Windhoek, Namibia, shared her recollections of finding a friend, Carolyn, another trans sex worker, badly beaten by the police. “They had ripped her clothes off,” she said. “It aggravates them more that you are a man so they give you a heavier beating.”

The Office of the Ombudsman (2013) has found that LGBTI people experience multiple forms of violence including the ‘corrective rape’ of lesbian women, rejection from families, and general insults and attacks. The Ombudsman also found that police generally lack sensitivity to and awareness of homophobic and transphobic violence and abuse and that they actively discourage reporting in their response to LGBTI victims.

6 Sister Namibia, Building the Feminist Movement in Namibia, Annual Report: January to December 2009, 2010, “Namibia: Treatment of sexual minorities by society and government authorities; recourse and protection available to sexual minorities who have been subjected to ill treatment.”

Violence in schools is a concern. The Ombudsman report states that: LGBTI children ... face a high level of homophobia and transphobia at the hands of their teachers and fellow learners. This form of bullying leads LGBTI people in schools to drop out by the end of their educational careers, and this at times leads to suicides.

6.2 Healthcare Provision

Incorrect and insensitive LGBTI healthcare information is routine, as well as discrimination against LGBTI patients. Approximately one fifth of surveyed men avoided healthcare services because of possible negative responses to their sexual orientation and a further 8% indicated that they had been denied service because of responses to their sexual orientation. Overall, LGBTI people experience verbal abuse from medical professionals and have concerns about confidentiality. As a result, LGBTI people are ‘often denied access to health care services due to stigma and discrimination from health care officials’. The Namibian newspaper, reporting on an LGBTI workshop in Ohgwediva, pointed to ongoing discrimination in healthcare including the ridiculing of LGBTI people by health professionals. LGBTI health concerns are also generally absent from national health plans and policies, which have a detrimental impact on service provision to LGBTI populations including in relation to HIV/AIDS.

The Hospitals and Health Facilities Act 36 of 1994 clearly stipulates that every person may access state healthcare and that medical professionals are duty bound to confidentiality in common law. Similarly, the Ethical Guidelines for Health Professionals stipulates that patient care must not be compromised by the personal beliefs of medical professionals related to ‘lifestyle’, ‘gender’ and ‘sexual orientation’. The Patient Charter (1998) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender; and in the case of a breach of these duties, complaints may be made to the relevant Health Professionals Council. These provisions are routinely ignored.

6.3 Transgender Issues

While trans people have been at the forefront of the LGBTI movement, they have often received little or no support in terms of service provision. Trans people experience discrimination from within the LGBTI community as well as from service providers and the police, among others.

There are numerous cases of secondary victimization of LGBTI people when they report violence and harassment to the police. The cumulative effect of this discrimination and marginalization in terms of mental and physical wellbeing is not being addressed. There is no psychosocial support for trans people. Among healthcare professionals and across sectors, there is a lack of sensitization and awareness of the needs of trans populations, with little or no understanding of transitioning. There is no training for school counselors to support young trans learners and anecdotal evidence points to high levels of early school-leaving due to victimization, affecting education levels, employability and a means out of poverty. Trans people who find work can be found in specific sectors such as hospitality.

9. Trans people have been at the forefront of the LGBTI movement, they have often received little or no support in terms of service provision. Trans people experience discrimination from within the LGBTI community as well as from service providers and the police, among others.
There are several non-LGBTI organizations that are openly supportive of the human rights of LGBTI people. There are also a few key state positions and offices that are promoting the human rights of LGBTI people, along with a generally affirming press. The climate has changed to the point that these organizations and officials are now speaking openly about LGBTI lives, which contrasts significantly with a more hostile discourse in the past when allies remained covert. There have also been many key personalities in the public sphere who have acted as LGBTI allies, most notably the ex-parliamentarian Rosa Namises who was also the Director of Women’s Solidarity Namibia, and who was outspoken on the issues during her time in opposition in Parliament. These and other allies have tended not to back down in the face of public opposition to the human rights of LGBTI people.

7.1 Positive Vibes
Positive Vibes envisions open, equitable and healthy societies in Southern Africa in which civil society organizations play a key role in influencing progressive social development in partnership with government and the private sector. Its mission is to facilitate and promote positive social change through a process of personalization, dialogue and voice.
7.2 Legal Assistance Centre

The LAC’s main objective is to protect the human rights of all Namibians and is the only organization of its kind in Namibia. It works in five broad areas: Litigation; Information and Advice; Education and Training; Research; Law Reform and Advocacy.

7.3 AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA)

ARASA is a regional partnership of over 90 NGOs working together to promote a human rights response to HIV and TB in Southern and East Africa, through capacity building and advocacy.

7.4 Namibian NGO Forum Trust (NANGOF)

NANGOF Trust was formed to support civil society organizations in Namibia through advocacy activities for a conducive legal environment, facilitating access to funding, capacity building, dissemination of information, and enhancement of service delivery.

7.5 Office of the Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman is a strong advocate for respecting the human rights of LGBTI people, and has consulted with LGBTI organizations and groups. Other allies include the South African Christian Initiative, which is a regional organization that includes a focus on LGBTI advocacy in religious communities.

The National Human Rights Action Plan launched in 2015 specifically mentions several vulnerable groups including: women; people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, indigenous peoples and LGBTI people.

ways forward & recommendations
LGBTI people occupy multiple and increasing spaces in Namibia which have been and continue to be secured through several key strategies. LGBTI narratives are shifting in tangible ways and positive and affirming narratives are increasingly being reinforced. The discourse is being reframed at both community and government levels.

One of the key shifts is away from the ‘it’s unAfrican’ argument, which is increasingly untenable given the number of young black Namibians identifying as LGBTI. Simultaneously LGBTI-related language is becoming more pervasive and increasingly normalized as the visibility of the LGBTI community grows.

What is important to note in terms of future strategy is that there are currently key allies in important positions at national level providing opportunities for progress on the human rights of LGBTI people while the environment is conducive. This window of opportunity demands programming improvement and strategic planning for the sector; improved information sharing and greater collaboration between organizations; LGBTI organizations have successfully come together to bring about change.

8.1 Recommendations
> Even with the ongoing backlash from the religious right and in communities, there is a limited window for law reform which makes the time ripe for strategic litigation.
> There is a strong and vibrant movement to decriminalize sex work in Namibia. This movement has a clear overlap with the LGBTI movement. It is apparent that the push to decriminalize sex work may be a strategic way to repeal the sodomy law.
> While social and online media can play a key role in LGBTI progress, this space is underutilized and increased funding could enhance LGBTI use of online platforms more strategically.
> Trans issues have emerged and require increased funding and support including in relation to: law reform; change in education to make schools more inclusive; greater access to services; and legal reform on changing identity documents.
> Sensitivity and human rights training for the police and law enforcement is required.

Ian Southey-Swartz, Interview, 22 April 2016.
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country report: Namibia