

ANNUAL REPORT
2017

ILGA

ASIA

Proposed Citation:

ILGA Asia. *ILGA Asia Annual Report 2017. 2018*, Bangkok, Thailand

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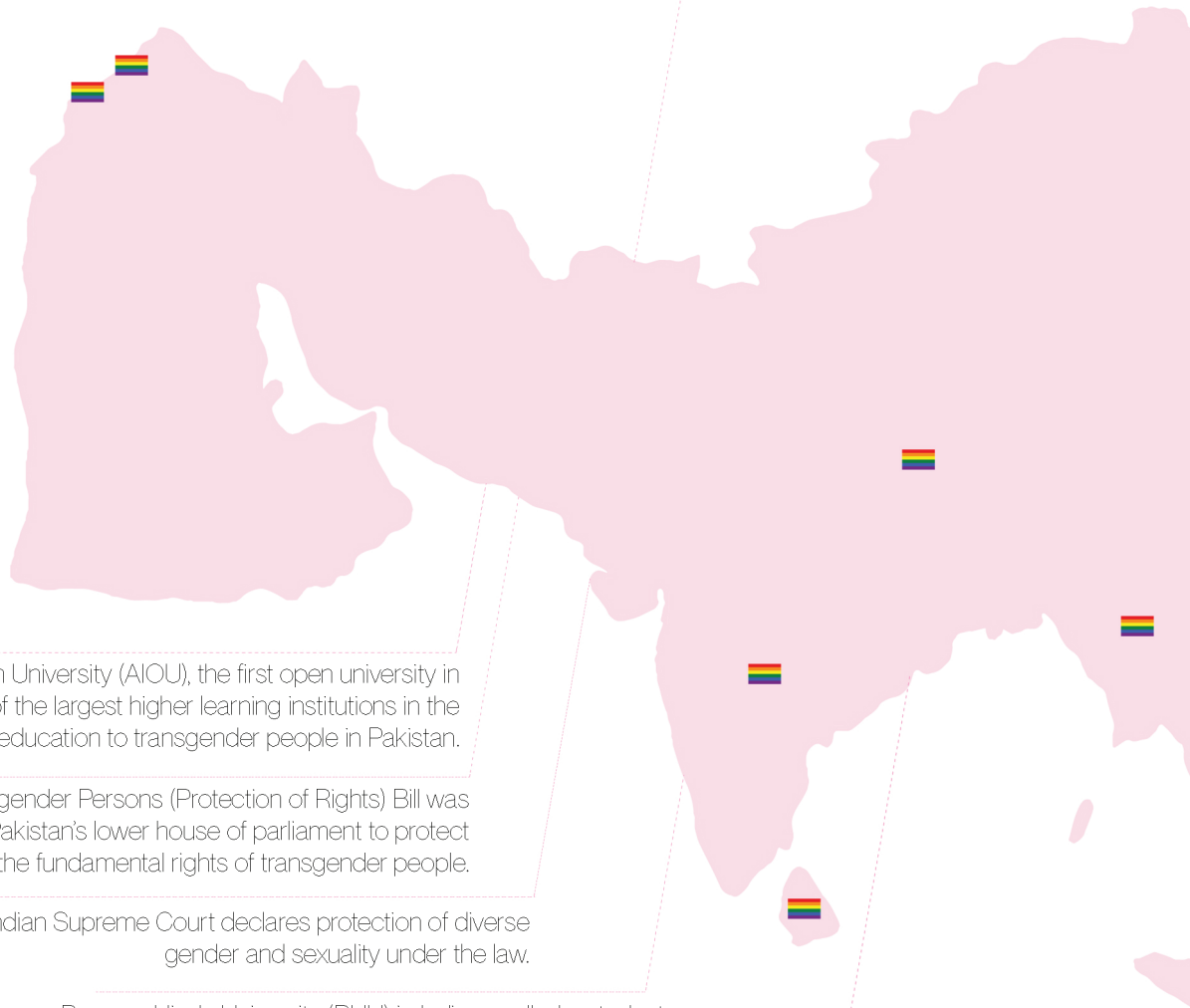
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**ILGA ASIA
ANNUAL REPORT
2017**

Major events taking place in 2017



A group of armed men opened fire on transsexuals, in an affluent neighbourhood in Pakistan.

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIQU), the first open university in Asia and one of the largest higher learning institutions in the world offered free education to transgender people in Pakistan.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill was introduced in Pakistan's lower house of parliament to protect the fundamental rights of transgender people.

Indian Supreme Court declares protection of diverse gender and sexuality under the law.

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in India expelled a student from dormitory because of her perceived sexual orientation.

Supreme Court of Nepal ruled in favor of changing sex assigned of birth in accordance with their gender identity under the citizenship law.

Singapore banned foreigners from participating in their annual Pink Dot event.

Islamic boarding school Pondok Darul-Fatah provided a safe haven for transgender people in Indonesia amid a harsh crackdown.

transgender people, killing
trans in city of Karachi.

South Korea's Supreme Court has ordered the government to allow a lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights foundation to legally register as a charity.

Taiwan's highest court ruled in favor of marriage equality. The government now has the responsibility to make it a reality.

South Korean government defended its ban on homosexual relationship in the military.

134 couples have used same-sex partnership systems across Japan.

Sungkonghoe University planned to build gender neutral restroom in South Korea.

China shut down the leading lesbian app
ReLa 热拉

Hong Kong was selected to be the first Asian city to host the Gay Games.

The Philippines legislators approved the new SOGIE bill against LGBTI discrimination.

Vietnam proposed law to officially recognize transgender people.

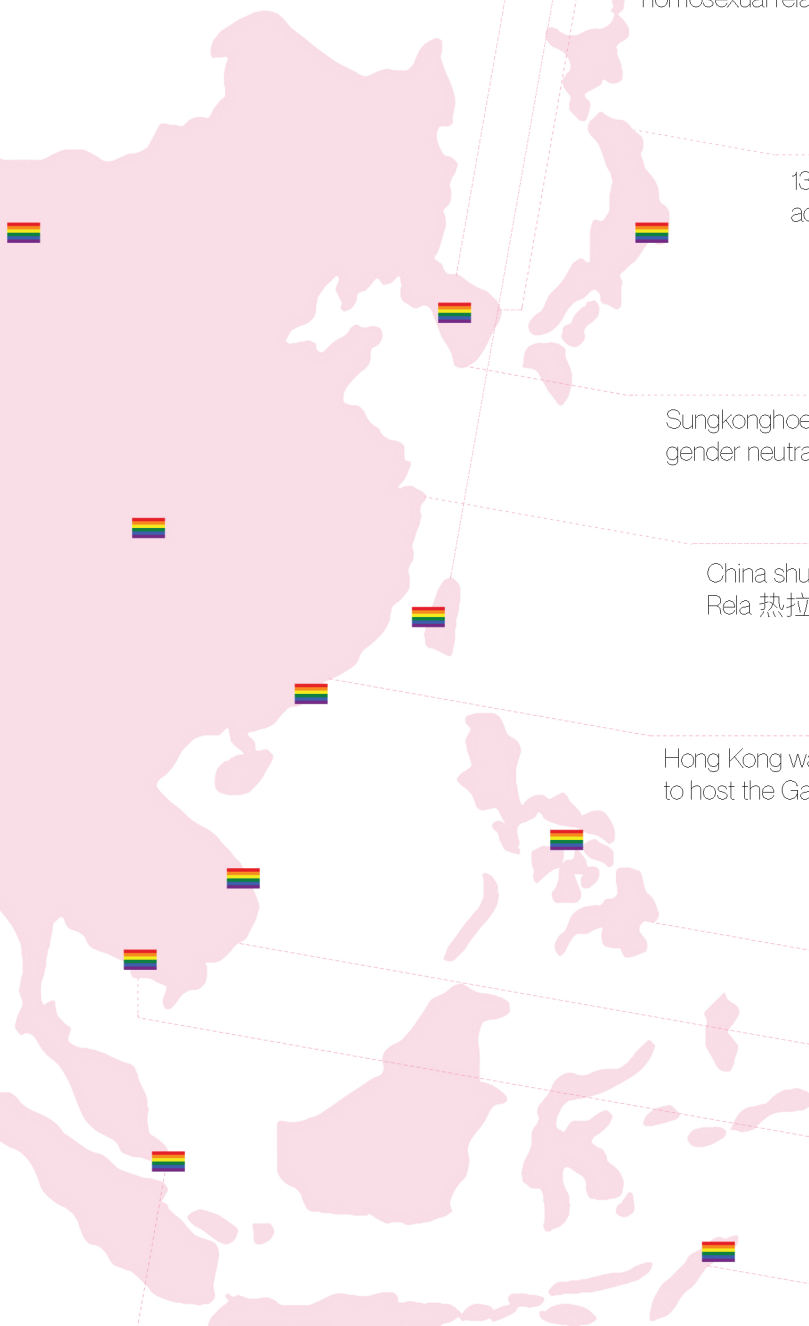
The biennial ILGA Asia Conference took place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus reported on violence and corrective rape among LBT women in Timor-Leste.

participating in
Dot event.

Wahid Pesantren Waria
transgender people
own on LGBT rights.

Indonesian delegations accepted 2 Universal Periodic Review recommendations to improve the situation of LGBTI people in the nation.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report covers ILGA Asia's activity from 1 January 2017 – 31 December 2017.

In 2017, ILGA Asia started to execute its annual work plan based on the first strategic plan for 2017-2019. Early 2017 saw the adoption of the governance manual, the first step to strengthen capacity of the board and staff in governance of the organization. The governance manual helped to further clarify the decision-making processes within ILGA Asia to become more efficient, and the roles and responsibilities of the Executive board and the Thailand Foundation board in accordance with Thai law, among other issues.

ILGA Asia continued to raise fund for the annual work plan, with varying success. Some activities were delayed or moved to the following year because of the lack of funding. For instance, the first of a series of human rights training did not take place until December, while the second training was delayed to 2018. Development of the website and other communication channels did not happen.

ILGA Asia continued to work with the Thai government to register itself as a Non-for-profit Foundation. The process was supposed to complete within 2017, but the decease of the late king slowed down the operation of the government office, which delayed its completion to 2018.

In July 2017, ILGA Asia worked with ILGA to organize the training on digital security for 25 LGBTI human rights defenders with support from ProtectDefenders.eu and technical direction of Digital Rights Pakistan. The 3-day residential training provided participants with basic knowledge of the internet and equip them with tools to encrypt their message and prevent hacking. Participants found the content very helpful to the security threats they were facing, sometimes they were not even aware of.

In December 2017, ILGA Asia organized the 7th Asian conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia with the host Rainbow Community of Kampuchea. The Asian Executive Board met prior to the conference to meet with the host organization and prepare for the conference. This was the 3rd board meeting ever since they were elected in 2015.

The 5-day conference attracted 281 participants, 89 of whom were coming on a scholarship. With the theme "United for Love", the conference wanted to symbolize the regional solidarity in a time when adversity against LGBTIQ community is taking place across Asia, including the murder of gay activists in Bangladesh, violence against trans people in Malaysia and the Philippines, police raids of community gathering in Iran and Indonesia, and government's inaction or harmful policies towards community in Singapore. The conference brought up important and emerging issues in Asia, such as the marriage equality movement and the rising religious fundamentalism and state-sponsored homophobia and transphobia. The conference elected 10 members to the Asian Executive Board, 4 of whom are from the previous board. This was the first time the Asian board had the 2 West Asian representatives, trans representative and intersex representative. The Constitution was also amended to reflect the change of ILGA Asia office to Thailand among other things.

2017 PROGRESS REPORT

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2019

Based on these progresses and challenges in the region, ILGA consulted with memberships throughout late 2016 to develop a strategic plan mapping out key areas for the next few years: building the capacity of LGBTI civil society in human rights mechanisms so they could make their government more accountable at the global level while monitoring progress fulfilling their human rights commitment with the international community, and the same time learning to enhance their safety in carrying out their work; and working with selected social influencers – religious leaders and parents of LGBTI people to improve public understanding of LGBTI people and their issues. Along with these areas is the need to build a database of strategic information for LGBTI communities in Asia, useful and accessible to everyone, and the need to maintain and strengthen solidarity of our community. This first strategic plan was adopted by ILGA Asia Executive Board during the 2nd meeting in December 2016 and was implemented starting from 2017.

Along with the strategic plan, an annual work plan for 2017 and a budget were also adopted by the Executive Board. In addition to the ongoing support from the ILGA office in Geneva and the Finnish Government, ILGA Asia started to approach donors for funding throughout 2017 and had received some commitment during the first half of the year. However, these commitments did not materialize until the second half of the year. Some of the very common challenges included the lack of legal status and bank account at ILGA Asia, and the priorities of donors that do not fit into ILGA Asia's strategic plan.

By the third and fourth quarter of 2017, ILGA Asia had received financial support from Arcus Foundation, Open Society Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union, Swedish Embassy, French Embassy, UN Women and COC Netherlands. Although ILGA Asia did not meet the expected incomes, which compromised some of the activities in 2017, the initial funding allowed ILGA Asia to realize its first ever strategic plan and the vision of its memberships in Asia.



STRENGTHENED CAPACITY OF LGBTI CIVIL SOCIETY ON WORKING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

Provision of training on human rights mechanisms and documentation of human rights violations to LGBTI civil society

ILGA Asia planned to organize 3 different trainings on engagement with UN mechanisms and documentation of human rights violations against LGBTI people in Asia. Each training was to target a different area: East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. However, the first training did not take place until December 2017 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

From 11-13 December 2017, ILGA Asia and COC Netherlands, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, Fortify Rights and Sangsan Anakot Yawachon held a training on human rights for 14 LGBTI activists from South and Southeast Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Vietnam. These countries were selected on the basis that the deadline of their UPR submission was within the next 2 years. Of these 14 activists, 5 of them identified as trans women, 2 as trans men, 3 gay men, 1 intersex person, 2 lesbian women and 1 bisexual woman.

Participants came with varying degrees of knowledge of UN human rights mechanisms. The training gave them an overview of the international human rights standards and the UN system, and other tools that could be helpful for their advocacy such as the Yogyakarta Principles. Specific mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review, the treaty bodies system, Human Rights Council, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention against Torture and other Special Procedures. The training helped participants understand the use of these human rights mechanisms with actual experiences from Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, and how they could support their domestic advocacy efforts. The limited time allowed only brief introduction of different tools without practicing the skills necessary to employ these tools, along with some tips to protect safety of the activists while accessing these tools. A more in-depth training on security and the UPR was recommended by participants. Feedbacks from participants during this training were being used to develop other trainings to follow in 2018.



Provision of training on digital security for LGBTI activists in Asia

With the support of ProtectDefenders.eu through ILGA, ILGA Asia organized a training on digital security from 11-14 July 2018 in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand. A similar training had been organized in Africa the year before for the African LGBTI activists. The training invited 10 LGBTI organizations coming from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Because of the nature of the training, where participants were asked to hold follow up discussion with their colleagues in the organization to spread the safe practices, each organization was asked to nominate 2-3 candidates. The training ended up receiving 25 people. Technical support was provided by Digital Rights Pakistan through a competitive selecting process.

The workshop provided LGBTI activists with basic knowledge about the Internet and the threats of using it, cyber-attacks and security issues. The workshop then introduced various tools that could be used for secured and encrypted web-browsing, chatting, video call. Beyond the software, the training helped participants to be mindful of the risks, especially when using social media, and to avoid unnecessary exposure and dangers.

All participants found the tools provided to them very helpful for securing their work, in an increasingly unsafe environment in the region. Participants from Bangladesh especially expressed that these tools would have helped them to avoid the violent incident that had taken place in their community the year before.

At the same time, not all the tools introduced were available to all the countries where participants came from. Some of them had been blocked, so participants would need to look for alternatives. There is also a trade-off between security and convenience: using new tools means setting up more applications in the devices and spending more time managing them. Moreover, social apps only work when other partners and colleagues also use the same app, so participants also have to promote the apps they are using to their network. These barriers prevent people from changing their habit and switching to more secured alternatives. There should be more program on digital security targeting habitual changes of LGBTI activists in the long run in order to be effective.

The training on digital security was hosted by APCOM Foundation Thailand.

STRENGTHENED CAPACITY OF ILGA ASIA EXECUTIVE BOARD AND STAFF

Prior to 2017, the ILGA Asia Executive Board functioned in accordance with the ILGA Asia Constitution. The document while indicates the roles and responsibilities of board members, it doesn't however provide enough details on how the Executive Board should manage the organization and facilitate the decision-making process in between the biennial regional conference, which is the highest decision-making body of ILGA Asia. Therefore, a Governance Manual was developed and adopted in January 2017 by the Executive Board. The Governance Manual instructs in details how to manage relationship among board members, between staff and board, and between ILGA Asia network and the legal representatives of ILGA Asia in Thailand.

With the adoption of the Governance Manual, the Executive Board significantly improved its efficiency in making decisions to operate ILGA Asia and implement its strategic plan. Although bring the operation in full alignment with the new Governance Manual is still a challenge, the document has been acting as a reference whenever there was a confusion or dispute in decision-making in the past year.

There were not many opportunities for ILGA Asia board to meet during 2017 due to the lack of core funding to support management cost. In fact, there was only 1 board meeting immediately prior to the ILGA Asia conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The 2-day meeting allowed the board to clear the final business before concluding their terms and preparing the handover to the new Executive Board elected in the following days. The board also had a chance to meet with staff and the host organization of the conference – RoCK – their first meeting ever. There was also no opportunity for the board and staff to strengthen capacity in governance and management in 2017.

Despite the lack of funding for face-to-face meeting, the Executive Board and its Coordinator managed to convene an online meeting every 2-3 weeks. These online meetings had played a critical role in ensuring the smooth implementation of the strategic plan, rapid response to current events, and marked transformation of ILGA Asia within the past year. All of these meetings came with the minutes, which help ILGA Asia to build up its institutional knowledge in the long run.

ILGA Asia closed its office in Hong Kong in 2017 after opening a new office in Bangkok, Thailand at the decision of the Executive Board in 2016. ILGA Asia was in the process of being registered as a Foreign Private Organization under the Regulations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare on the Entry of Foreign Private Organizations to Operate in Thailand. Under this law, three persons of Thai nationality had been selected by the then Executive Board to act as the legal representative for the new entity on the voluntary basis. The process had been taking longer than originally expected due to the macro impact of political events having taken place in Thailand. ILGA Asia was not registered yet at the end of 2017.

One staff member was maintained throughout 2017. The Communication Officer and Finance Officer were never recruited.



DATABASE FOR STRATEGIC INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND BUILDING

ILGA Asia's website was not developed, but another website was created to promote the ILGA Asia conference. This conference website features all the applications, program and relevant information to the conference. The website also published statements from different meetings during the conference. The results from the conference are available in the final conference report, so the website won't be maintained after the conference concludes. Any important information will be transferred to ILGA Asia's official website at ilgaasia.org.

ILGA Asia continued working with other partners to respond to critical events to the LGBTI community. For one instance, ILGA Asia and ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, APCOM, Asia Pacific Transgender Network released a statement in response to the vote of the United Nations General Assembly deciding the continuation of the mandate by the Independent Expert in SOGI. ILGA Asia also joined another statement to protect the rights and health of all Indonesian citizens by supporting efforts to end the growing mistreatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Indonesia. These joint statements were widely shared with our members in Asia and partners.

The Communication Strategy was developed and adopted in 2017, but implementation was not on track due to the lack of dedicated staff to communication. Database of contacts was consolidated towards the end of the year after the ILGA Asia conference, which would be utilized for future communication activities.

SOLIDARITY OF LGBTI COMMUNITIES IN ASIA THROUGH NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

The 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference took place from 4-8 December 2018 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, hosted by Rainbow Community Kampuchea. The conference was divided into 2 days of pre-conference and 3 days of main conference. Some of the pre-conference meetings were not open to the public, while all of the sessions during the main conference were open to everyone, although decision-making right was only possible by memberships present at the conference.

ILGA Asia and RoCK welcomed 281 participants coming from 82 organizations in 35 countries, most of which were in Asia. There were 41 member organizations present, although only 28 were able to exercise their voting rights. Those who had their membership registered in other regions and those who had not paid their membership fee in accordance with ILGA Constitution were not able to vote.

There were 249 scholarship applications to attend the conference, out of which 74 had been selected: 10 of whom self-identified as intersex, 23 identified as lesbian, bisexual and queer woman (trans and cis), 20 identified as trans, and 20 identified as gay, bisexual and queer man (trans and cis); 27 of whom were under the age of 30. Geographically, 15 of the scholars were from East Asia, 29 from South Asia, 28 from Southeast Asia and 3 from West Asia. These scholars were selected by the ILGA Asia Executive Board on the basis of their engagement at the conference, either through organizing, facilitating or speaking at a workshop; the community they represented; and the region they came from. Applications that were incomplete or submitted after the deadline were not being considered.

There were 6 pre-conferences taking place during the first 2 days: Bisexual; UN and Advocacy; Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women; Interfaith; Trans; and Intersex pre-conferences. The Youth Caucus was independently organized by a group of youth organizations and youth activists present at the conference. The Trans Caucus was taking place as a part of the trans pre-conference. All of these meetings, except for the UN and Advocacy, produced a statement to the conference, and all were adopted by the conference prior to the Closing Ceremony.

During the main conference, there were 4 plenary sessions, 19 experiential and information workshops, and 4 general workshops. The 4 general workshops made recommendations to the plenary sessions to be approved by members. These sessions were selected by the ILGA Asia Executive Board out of 54 proposals, with priority given to topics that had never been discussed at previous ILGA Asia conferences, emerging issues with huge impact to Asian communities, and those featuring speakers representing diverse identities and geography of Asia.

The conference elected a new Executive Board comprising of 10 members, 5 of whom were re-elected from the previous board. The previously vacant positions were filled during this election: 1 trans representative, 1 intersex representative and 2 West Asian representatives. The Constitution was amended to remove member organizations in Central Asia from ILGA Asia to support the decision at the ILGA World conference in Bangkok 2016, among other changes. The next ILGA Asia conference was decided to take place in Seoul, South Korea in 2019.

In 2017, ILGA Asia also strengthened collaboration with other partners beyond the regional conference. Our human rights training was convened in collaboration with ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, Fortify Rights, and COC Netherlands. ILGA Asia was also a partner of the HERO AWARDS: HIV, Equality and Rights convened by APCOM to acknowledge outstanding service to the HIV response in Asia and the Pacific, and to the region's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities.

KEY CHALLENGES



Some of the key challenges facing ILGA Asia Executive Board and Staff in 2017:

1. The lack of legal registration and bank account made it challenging to operate, particularly to organize meeting and issue visa for participants, to deal with transaction and payment, to support working permit for staff members.
2. Late arrival of funding also delayed some activities to later in the year or the following year. Some activities were not attractive to donors or did not meet their strategic objectives, and did not receive funding at all (building website, board meeting, etc.)
3. ILGA Asia was not included in some meetings by partners, especially in early 2017 because they were not aware of the new office and new staff.
4. Limited capacity of staff members in different technical areas also limited ILGA Asia's capacity to deliver and implement the strategic plan 2017-2019

MOVING FORWARD TO 2018

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2024

As 2019 is approaching, so is the end of Strategic Plan 2017-2019's timeline. ILGA Asia will create a plan to consult memberships and partners to formulate the new Strategic Plan spanning the next 5 years. The new strategic plan is to be approved by the 8th ILGA Asia Conference in Seoul, South Korea in 2019. ILGA Asia will also conduct a mid-term evaluation of the current strategic plan, whose results will also feed into the process of consultation with memberships for 2020-2024.

STRENGTHENED CAPACITY OF LGBTI CIVIL SOCIETY ON WORKING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

ILGA Asia will continue to organize trainings on human rights advocacy for other areas, including the first training in East Asia and the second training for South and Southeast Asia. Moreover, there will be human rights and leadership training targeting LGBTI human rights defenders under the age of 30. ILGA Asia will also be hosting the first ever Asia Intersex Forum in Bangkok, Thailand.

ILGA Asia will work with other regional and international partners, including Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies, APCOM Foundation, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, and Asia Pacific Transgender Network to integrate wellbeing and self-care to our programs targeting LGBTI human rights defenders in Asia. ILGA Asia will mainstream wellbeing practices in our activities with LGBTI activists.

INCREASED UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE PUBLIC ON SOGIESC ISSUES THROUGH KEY SOCIAL INFLUENCERS

ILGA Asia will convene a meeting of organizations working with parents of LGBTI people in their advocacy strategy. It has been proven to be an effective advocacy tool in several Asian countries given the prominent role of parents in Asia. The meeting will allow groups to study challenges and best practices in working with parents of LGBTI persons and helping them grow in the long run. Some parents who have been engaging with social awareness campaign will also be invited, but in limited number due to challenges in communication.

STRENGTHENED CAPACITY OF ILGA ASIA EXECUTIVE BOARD AND STAFF

To comply with the Constitution of ILGA Asia, the first meeting for the newly elected Executive Board will take place in early 2017 to review the activities of 2017 and approve the work plan and budget for 2018.

ILGA Asia will continue to work with the government of Thailand to establish a legal entity in the country and build the Bangkok office as its regional hub.

As a joint initiative with Pan Africa ILGA (PAI), there will be a training on governance and leadership for board members and staff of both regions, to be taking place in Botswana immediately following the PAI conference.

As ILGA Asia is establishing its office and presence in Bangkok, it will continue to improve its operation through development of necessary policies. A workshop will be conducted with board members and staff, and a consultant will be employed to develop human resources policy, finance policy, etc.

DATABASE FOR STRATEGIC INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND BUILDING

ILGA Asia will launch the official website in English, with eventual plan to make it available in several other languages used in Asia. Newsletter will be launched with LGBTI news around Asia, incorporating the existing contacts database. Social media channels will continue to be used to reach out to the public and key stakeholders.

In 2018, ILGA Asia will start the collaboration with IDAHOT committee to consolidate information about activities and events taking place around May 17 in Asia.

SOLIDARITY OF LGBTI COMMUNITIES IN ASIA THROUGH NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

ILGA Asia will work with the winning bidder of the 8th ILGA Asia Conference – SOGILAW – to prepare for the conference in 2019. There will be a coalition of host comprising of a number of LGBTI organizations in South Korea under the umbrella Rainbow Action in hosting the conference.

ILGA Asia and PAI will organize cross regional exchange as their board and staff will visit each other's conference in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

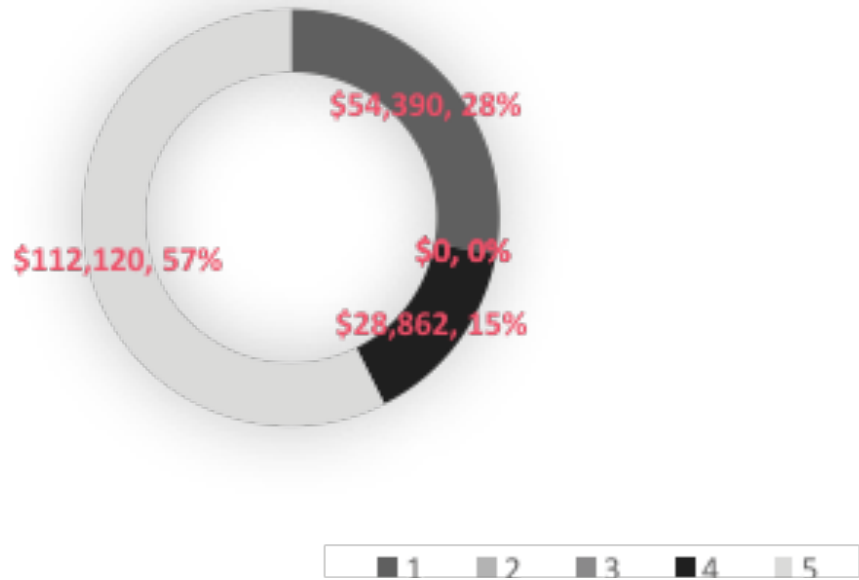
As the ILGA World conference will take place in Wellington in 2019, ILGA Asia will prepare for the Asian Caucus to take place during the conference.



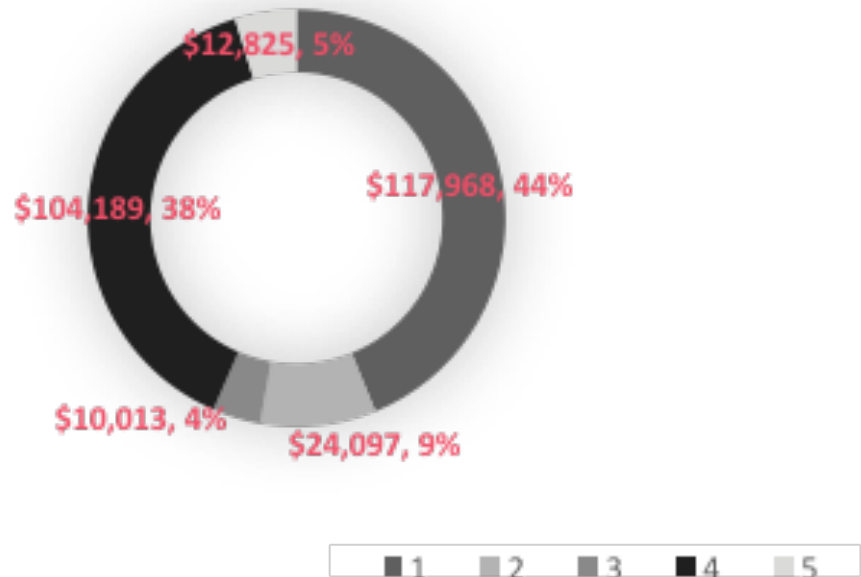
EXPENDITURES IN 2017 AND
PROJECTED EXPENDITURES IN
2018

The expenditures are divided into 5 different strategic objectives as specified in the Strategic Plan 2017-2019.

ILGA Asia expenditures 2017 – 225,655 USD



ILGA Asia projected expenditures 2018 – 315,314 USD



SPONSORS AND PARTNERS





**Asian Region of the International Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA)**

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