

GUIDEBOOK TO REPORTING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Edited by
Lai Oso
Steve Aborisade
Segun Sangowawa



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Projekthope
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Thank you,

Esther Ajayi-Lowo (Mrs)

For, and, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Projekthope

PREFACE

The emerging realities, in terms of news trend, sub-culture, identities etc. demand that we constantly reappraise the functions of some of our social institutions and processes. As the popular saying goes, the only permanent thing in nature is change. Every society is constantly changing. In response to these changes and in order to cope with them, we must develop our social capacities to accommodate the emerging realities.

The mass media, particularly journalism, have become the main institutions which are expected to reflect these changes and realities. They not only report them but also and crucially so, provide the evaluation and interpretative framework through which the people understand these issues. The media not only set agenda, they provide framework through which we apprehend reality.

It is in this context that the authors of the articles in this book provide not only guidelines for writing news on gender and sexuality but food for thought for journalists. Journalists are called upon to consider the social context and implications for their reports.

The common trend running through the articles is the need for journalists to understand the human rights aspect of their work. Without doubt the right to self-expression remains the cornerstone on which journalism stand. Journalism must provide a forum for self-expression for all social groups in the society.

To be socially relevant, journalism must give voice to marginalized social groups. To symbolically exclude some groups for whatever reason or present them negatively is to deny such group their fundamental human rights.

The strength of the guidebook lies in the multicity of the perspective adopted by the authors. The articles combine both professionalism and theoretical insights in their discussions. This will no doubt assist journalist in engaging with the complex issues in gender and sexuality reporting.

Lai Oso

Professor of Media and Communication.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS SPECIFIC TO GENDER AND SEXUALITY

<i>AIDS</i>	<i>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome is a disease in which there is a severe loss of the body's immunity, greatly lowering the resistance to infection and malignancy. The cause is a virus called the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) transmitted in blood, sexual fluids and breast milk. HIV destroys the body's ability to fight off infection and disease.</i>
<i>Ally</i>	<i>This person works to end oppression personally and professionally through support and advocacy of an oppressed population. In this context such oppressed population refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Asexual individuals.</i>
<i>Anal Taboo</i>	<i>A general avoidance of any reference to the anus because of socially constructed myths that associate the anus with shame, guilt and even dirt.</i>
<i>Androgyny</i>	<i>Androgyny is a gender identity that is distinct from the sex of the body. It is not biological nor is it synonymous with sexual behavior, nor necessarily indicative of sexual orientation.</i>
<i>Asexual</i>	<i>A person who does not experience sexual attraction or has lost interest in sex but may still have romantic interests.</i>
<i>Bisexual</i>	<i>An adjective describing someone who is attracted sexually and/or romantically to two or more genders.</i>
<i>Bottom</i>	<i>A slang term referring to the receptive partner during anal sex, the opposite of a 'Top'.</i>
<i>Closeted, 'in the closet'</i>	<i>Refers to a person who wishes to keep secret his or her sexual orientation or gender identity.</i>
<i>Coming out</i>	<i>Short for "coming out of the closet." Accepting and letting others know of one's previously hidden sexual orientation or gender identity.</i>
<i>Cross-dresser</i>	<i>A preferred term for a person who wears clothing most</i>

	<i>often associated with members of the opposite sex. Not necessarily connected to sexual orientation or synonymous with transgender or drag queen.</i>
Cruising	<i>Visiting places where opportunities exist to meet potential sex partners. Not exclusively a gay phenomenon.</i>
Discrimination	<i>The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people on grounds of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity and presentation.</i>
Down low	<i>Usually refers to black men who secretly have sex with men, often while in relationships with women, but do not identify as gay or bisexual. Sometimes abbreviated as DL. Use with caution, as people generally do not identify themselves with this term.</i>
Dyke	<i>A derogatory term for lesbian. Some lesbians have reclaimed this word and use it as a positive term, but it is still considered offensive when used by the general population.</i>
Fag/Faggot	<i>A derogatory term for a gay man. Some gay men have reclaimed this word and use it as a positive term, but it is still considered offensive when used by the general population.</i>
FTM/Trans Man	<i>A transman, or female-to-male transsexual, starts his life with a female body, but his gender identity is male. Always use male pronouns in reference.</i>
Gay	<i>An adjective describing a man who is attracted sexually and/or romantically to other men. Some women also describe themselves as "gay."</i>
Gender	<i>Gender is the socially constructed (socially constructed means that these differences are not natural but are created by society) differences between men and women. Gender is manifest in the different behaviors and roles that are assigned to men and women. For example, in many societies women are expected to</i>

	<i>have different and even polar-opposite characteristics to men. Men and women are often expected to fulfill different roles too. For example, women are expected to be caregivers, while men are looked at as providers.</i>
Gender and Sexual Minorities (GSM)	<i>A term that can be used instead of "LGBT" — Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender — because of its relative inclusiveness, is comprised of individuals with varying sexual and gender identities and expressions.</i>
Gender Expression	<i>Refers to all of a person's external characteristics and behaviors – such as dress, grooming, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions – socially identified with a particular gender.</i>
Gender Roles	<i>These are the set of roles and behaviors assigned to females and males by society. Our culture recognizes two basic gender roles: masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females).</i>
Gender Queer	<i>A term used by persons who may not entirely identify as either male or female.</i>
Hate Crime	<i>An action that causes physical, mental or emotional harm to someone simply because they are part of, or thought to be a part of, the LGBTI (or other diverse) community. Often the result of homophobia, this can also be seen as "gay bashing."</i>
Heteronormativity	<i>A social construct that views all human beings as either male or female with the associated behavior and gender roles assigned, both in sex and gender, where sexual and romantic thoughts and relations are viewed as normal only between people of opposite sexes. All other behavior is viewed as "abnormal".</i>
Heterosexism	<i>Presumption that heterosexuality is universal and/ or superior to homosexuality. Also refers to prejudice, bias or discrimination based on such presumptions.</i>
Heterosexual / Straight	<i>Attraction between two people of the opposite sex on various levels: emotionally, physically, intellectually,</i>

	<i>spiritually and, most prominently, sexually.</i>
HIV	<i>The Human Immunodeficiency Virus is a retrovirus that causes AIDS by infecting helper T cells of the immune system. The most common serotype, HIV-1, is distributed worldwide, while HIV-2 is primarily confined to West Africa. It is one of many sexually transmitted infections.</i>
Homophobia	<i>Irrational fear of homosexual feelings, thoughts, behaviors, or people and an undervaluing of homosexual identities, resulting in prejudice, discrimination and bias against homosexual individuals. Homosexual individuals are shamed and hated.</i>
Homo-prejudice	<i>Prejudice against people of diverse sexual identities, all non-heterosexual.</i>
Homosexual	<i>As a noun, a person who is attracted to members of the same sex. As an adjective, of or relating to sexual and affectional attraction to a member of the same sex. Use only in medical contexts or in reference to sexual activity.</i>
Human Rights	<i>The basic rights that all people are entitled to regardless of nationality, sex, age, nationality or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, or other status. The other status refers to, for example, a person's HIV status. Freedoms around sexual orientation and gender identity are also basic human rights.</i>
Intersex	<i>An adjective referring to individuals born with genitalia, anatomy, or chromosomes that do not match society's strict definitions of "female" or "male."i.e. to be born with ambiguous genitalia, or sex organs that are not clearly distinguished as female or male, one is said to be intersexed formerly referred to as hermaphrodite.</i>
Internalized Homophobia	<i>Self-identification of societal stereotypes by lesbian, gay and bisexual people, causing them to dislike and resent their sexual orientation or gender identity.</i>

Key populations	<i>These refer to individuals at higher risk of HIV exposure i.e. those most likely to be exposed to HIV or to transmit it – their engagement is critical to a successful HIV response i.e. they are key to the epidemic and key to the response. In all countries, key populations include people living with HIV. In most settings, men who have sex with men, transgender persons, people who inject drugs, sex workers and their clients, and seronegative partners in sero-discordant couples are at higher risk of HIV exposure to HIV than other people.</i>
Lesbian	<i>A preferred term both as a noun and as an adjective, for women who are sexually and affectionately attracted to other women. Some women prefer to be called “gay” rather than “lesbian”; when possible, ask the subject which term she prefers.</i>
LGBTQ	<i><u>L</u>esbian, <u>G</u>ay, <u>B</u>isexual, <u>T</u>ransgender, and <u>Q</u>ueer. Acronym used to describe people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer. It implies inclusivity to people of all gender and sexual orientations.</i>
Lifestyle	<i>The term "lifestyle" is inaccurately used to refer to the sexual orientation of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Avoid using this term. As there is no one heterosexual or straight lifestyle, there is no one lesbian, gay, bisexual lifestyle.</i>
Men who have sex with men (MSM)	<i>A term used in the medical and social sciences to describe a behavior among males, males who have sex with other males. This term is especially useful because it does not specify one's sexual identity (e.g. gay) or sexual orientation (e.g. homosexual)</i>
Metrosexual	<i>Part of gender expression for males, where one's appearance is highly valued and well-groomed.</i>
MTF / Trans Woman	<i>A transwoman, or male-to-female transsexual individual, starts her life with a male body, but her gender identity is female. Always use female pronouns in reference.</i>
Openly gay/lesbian	<i>As a modifier, “openly” is usually not relevant; its use</i>

	<p>should be restricted to instances in which the public awareness of an individual's sexual orientation is germane. Examples: Harvey Milk was the first openly gay San Francisco supervisor. "Ellen" was the first sitcom to feature an openly lesbian lead character. "Openly" is preferred over "acknowledged," "avowed," "admitted," "confessed" or "practicing" because of their negative connotations.</p>
Outing (from "out of the closet")	<p>Publicly revealing the sexual orientation or gender identity of an individual who has chosen to keep that information private. Also a verb: The magazine outed the senator in a front-page story.</p>
Pansexual	<p>Defined as someone who is attracted to other people regardless of their gender or sexual orientation; essentially, they are "gender blind". This person experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions.</p>
Partner	<p>The commonly accepted term for a person in a committed gay or lesbian relationship.</p>
Practicing	<p>Avoid this term to describe someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. Use "sexually active" as a modifier in circumstances when public awareness of an individual's behavior is germane.</p>
Polysexual	<p>A person who self-identifies as having an emotional, sexual, and/or relational attraction to multiple genders and/or sexes</p>
Queer	<p>Describes all people who are not heterosexual or who do not conform to rigid notions of gender and sexuality. For many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender people. This word has negative connotation; however, some are comfortable using it and have reclaimed the word as a symbol of pride.</p>
Rainbow flag	<p>A flag of six equal horizontal stripes (red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet) symbolizing the diversity of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender</p>

	communities.
Safe sex, safer sex	<i>Sexual practices that minimize the possible transmission of HIV and other infectious agents. Some publications prefer “safer sex” to denote that no sexual contact is completely safe.</i>
Sex	<i>Sex is the biological or physical make-up of the person that makes them male or female. This means that most people have either male or female sex organs or characteristics.</i>
Sex reassignment	<i>The preferred term for the medical process by which transgender people change their physical, sexual characteristics to reflect their gender identity. May include surgery, hormone therapy and/or changes of legal identity. Often used with “surgery.” Synonymous with gender reassignment. Avoid the antiquated term “sex change.”</i>
Sexuality	<i>How people experience and express themselves as sexual beings, within the concepts of biological sex, gender identity and presentation, attractions and practices. Culture and religion have a huge impact on how individuals see themselves as sexual beings, especially within relations of power.</i>
Sexual Attraction	<i>A feeling of wanting to be sexual with another person(s). This can often occur because of emotional or physical factors, but not always.</i>
Sexual Health	<i>This is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity.</i>
Sexual Identity	<i>The overall sexual self-identity, which includes how the person identifies as male, female, masculine, feminine, or some combination of these, and the person's sexual orientation.</i>
Sexual Minority	<i>A group whose sexual identity, orientation or practices differ from the majority of the surrounding society. Initially, the term referred primarily to lesbians and</i>

	gays, bisexuals and transgender people. These four categories (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) are often grouped together under the rubric LGBT.
Sexual Orientation	The direction of an individual's erotic desire and attraction to partners of the same sex (homosexual), opposite sex (heterosexual), same and opposite sex (bisexual).
Sexual Practices	All behavior that creates sexual pleasure, practiced by one or more than one person, individually, or together.
Sexual Preference	Sometimes used to mean the same thing as sexual orientation. Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people find this term to be offensive because it implies that their sexual orientation is a choice
Stigma	This is when a certain individual, with certain characteristics, e.g. an HIV positive individual or transwoman, is rejected by their community or society because of that characteristic which might be considered as "abnormal". These individuals' lives might be at risk, and they may possibly be threatened and abused.
STI	Sexually transmitted infections, either bacterial or viral. Collective term for various sexual acts that some countries have deemed illegal. Not synonymous with homosexuality or sex between gay men.
Sodomy	An umbrella term which is often used to describe a wide range of identities and experiences, including transsexuals, FTMs, MTFs, transvestites, cross-dressers, drag queens and kings, gender-queers, and intersex individuals may also identify as transgender. Use the name and personal pronouns that are consistent with how the individual lives publicly. When possible, ask which term the subject prefers. As a noun, use "transgender people."
Transgender	A person who was considered female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. Transgender people

	<i>sometimes use the acronym FTM, or female to male. Sometimes shortened colloquially to 'trans man'. Use in news stories only when transgender status is germane; otherwise, identify a news subject as a man.</i>
Transgender man Transgender woman	<i>A person who was considered male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. Transgender people sometimes use the acronym MTF, or male to female. Sometimes shortened colloquially to 'trans woman'. Use in news stories only when transgender status is germane; otherwise, identify a news subject as a woman.</i>
Transsexual (n. and adj.)	<i>Avoid this antiquated term in favor of “transgender” and “transgender people.” Some individuals prefer it, but it can carry misleading medical connotations.</i>
Transitioning	<i>The process of changing one's gender presentation to align with the internal sense of one's gender. For transgender people this may sometimes include sexual reassignment surgery, but not always.</i>
Transvestite	<i>An individual who dresses in the clothing of the opposite sex, for a variety of reasons, and who has no desire to change or modify their body permanently. Avoid this antiquated term. Synonymous with cross-dresser.</i>
Transphobia	<i>Fear, hatred or dislike of transgender people or transsexuals. May be harbored by gays, lesbians and bisexuals in addition to heterosexuals.</i>
Top	<i>A colloquial term referring to the penetrating partner during anal sex, or an 'insertive' partner.</i>
Versatile	<i>A colloquial term referring to the partner who plays both roles during anal sex, i.e. one who can penetrate or be penetrated by another partner.</i>
Women who have sex with women (WSW)	<i>A sexual practice irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity. A WSW can be hetero-, bi- or homosexual. This term is more technical and is not necessarily an identity.</i>

INTRODUCTION

**“all beings are born free and
equal in dignity and rights”**

Universal Declaration Of Human Rights, Article 1

The Guidebook to Reporting Gender and Sexuality provides instruction and practical help to journalists about how to rise to the challenge and navigate the pitfalls of reporting on an issue of which little is known. Overtime, we have seen how the Nigerian media, to varying degrees, simplify, sensationalise and stereotype Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons and the issues crucial to them. A recent content monitoring research of media coverage of LGBT issues that we conducted validates this assertion.

It is interesting to also observe in debates on the human rights of LGBT persons, the erroneous impression and assumptions that the protection of their human rights amounts to appealing to a new rights regime previously unknown. We know as a matter of certainty that this thread of reasoning is misleading, as all human beings, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity, are entitled to all rights and freedoms deriving from the inherent dignity of the human person.

Several arguments have been advanced in the past, that, in making a case for non-discrimination against people of minority sexual orientations, the issue is not to create new laws, but rather to be subjected to existing laws in Nigeria, such as our Constitution, regional instruments of which the African Charter on Peoples and Human Rights is one and other international conventions to which Nigeria subjected herself to be guided by. To be sure, our media must ask questions and provide answers to the causes of the retrogression being witnessed in the promotion and tolerance of basic human rights of the Nigerian people. We can determine, for instance, why people of minority sexual orientation cannot cohabit in harmony, be accepted as members of the society even when they are deemed deviant. To what should we ascribe as fuelling these new waves of hatred and violence? What role do the media have to play in all of these? Primarily, sexual orientation and gender identity are integral to individual dignity and humanity and as such should not be a justifiable ground for discrimination or

abuse. This is what we must clearly understand.

In similar vein, we are not unmindful of the challenges facing the media today – that of keeping in touch with the accelerating pace of changes in our communities. What were taken for granted some few years ago are issues that may come with dire consequences today. One of the most important changes we must appreciate is one involving the diversity of gender identity and sexual orientation. It is a desire to align with this change that motivated the production of this Guidebook.

This Guidebook is thus designed to help journalists respond appropriately to the challenges of reporting the changing texture of community reaction to issues of gender and sexuality to reflect the growing necessity for tolerance on the part of the people, it also provides a greater understanding of the realities that those who identify as belonging to any of the broad group of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people continually face. The media has a vital role to play in fast tracking the process of making our communities more inclusive and tolerant.

This guide will help journalists avoid the pitfalls of language, emphasis and ignorance as they report about issues and on members of the community, and to show what impact inaccuracies or insensitivity may have on the people who bear the brunt of the outcomes of reports. The guide provides a freeze of our changing world, highlights agenda for development on gender and sexuality and draws on examples of best practice from various media contexts about how best to deal with the most intimate and private aspects of people's lives, which can be difficult to write about and discuss publicly in the context of cultural sensitivities and taboos surrounding sexuality. Importantly, it shows how the average LGBT person defines himself/herself, how their context embrace or reject them, how they are shaped by the world they live in and how they have a space in our society.

The motivation for the guide rests on the need to instil a progressive attitude that aids accurate storytelling in framing and constructing minority narratives progressively, and to ensure that all individuals and communities have the dignity they deserve irrespective of their social status, gender or sexual orientation. This will be seen to be consistent with the ethical obligation of journalism which, among other thing demands that journalists should avoid allowing individual biases to influence reporting; stipulates that journalists

promote the universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity and peace; tasks journalists to give subjects of their reports the opportunity to present their points of view prior to publication; requests that people's civil rights, including the rights to privacy and a fair trial be respected; that facts are never to be altered in ways to mislead the public; and which places strong emphasis and requires that the diverse values, viewpoints and lives of the people in our communities are truthfully covered in ways that avoid the stereotypes of race, gender, sex, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, disability, physical appearance and social status. That obligation supports giving voice to the voiceless in the interpretation of information; documenting the undocumented, and reporting the underreported. Communities are to be engaged as an end, rather than as a means, while the needs of the community being reported must be understood, as well as seeing and seeking the publication of alternatives that minimize the harm that may result from published works.

The Guidebook is divided into three sections. Section one, which focuses on the issues of gender, sexuality and sexual orientations, has four chapters. The first chapter by Dr. Matilda Kerry examines the question of gender and sexuality from an African perspective and the dominant argument in this chapter is that minority sexual orientations are not strange to Africa. The chapter by Segun Sangowawa does not only focus on gender, sexual orientation and behavior but also pursues a public health perspective to these issues. From a public health perspective, he explores things such as condom usage and its effectiveness against HIV, sexual practices between men and men, men and women and the risks of contracting HIV and other STIs. Dr Cheikh Eteka Traore, in his chapter, uncovers the myths about homosexual and transgender identities and captures some of the common pitfalls that journalists fall into when reporting, or discussing diversity in sexuality or gender. Policing Gender and Sexuality by Sola Ogundipe is the last chapter in this section. Sola reflects on the issues of regulating the sexual behavior and identities of LGBT persons and indicates that criminalizing specific sexual behaviour only predisposes such people to the marauding HIV/AIDS.

Section two sets the agenda for media coverage of issues on gender and sexuality. The overall argument of this section is that journalists and media houses should come to terms with the reality of the LGBT community and

should report the issues of this community with care and understanding. Their reports should not only rely on hearsay or popular opinion but should reflect a firm and comprehensive grasp of issues being reported. This is the argument that Lai Oso and Jide Jimoh make in their chapter on the imperative of interpretative journalism. The motivation for this brand of journalism is, as they argue, to provide understanding of the complex nature of modern day society, especially with regards to the concerns of the LGBT community in Nigeria. The chapter by Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika and Ganiyat Tijani-Adenle also advances similar argument with emphasis on the need to give equal media attention to the underreported group in the society: women and sexual minorities. Lanre Idowu pursues the question of ethical journalism in the last chapter of this section. He argues that journalists need to be committed to being guided by a value-system anchored on moral codes of decency, honesty, and fairness, especially as it relates to reporting on gender and sexual minorities. The last section contains narratives from and about the LGBT community: Jide Macauley; Micheal Ighodaro; Olumide Popoola; Adejoke Tugbiyele and others shared their perspectives of what we understand and what the reality actually is for so many people. On the surface the stories detail on the challenges of being gay, but a critical reading of the narratives reveals a group of people in dire need of understanding.

The book also provides a glossary of terms and definitions that are specific to gender and sexuality. The idea is to ensure that journalists have a ready resource to consult when preparing their reports on LGBT-related matters. It is my belief that this in the hand of journalists will make for responsive, sensitive reports on the LGBT community in Nigeria.

Steve Aborisade

Founder and Executive Coordinator of Projekthope

SECTION ONE

ISSUES ON GENDER, SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

1

**UNDERSTANDING GENDER AND
SEXUALITY IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT**

Dr. Matilda Kerry

Introduction

Gender and sexuality are two often misunderstood and misconstrued terms that require clarification, especially when operating in a profession as complex as journalism. It is important that we always strive to use the least derogatory and most progressive language when employing terms related to Gender and Sexuality in reporting.

Defining Concepts**Sexuality**

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human that is manifested throughout life. It encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles and relationships and while sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed.

Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors. Positive sexuality has an effect on our total well-being, which means that our sexual satisfaction, sexual self-esteem and sexual pleasure are all associated with our sexual health, physical health, mental health, and overall well-being (WHO working definition 2002).

Gender vs. Sexual Orientation

In order to properly conceptualize the issue of gender identity; we should

understand that the term sex categorizes individuals into male and female based on their biological makeup, while *gender* describes socially constructed roles, behaviors and attributes expected of either the male or female sex. The terms *gender* and *sex* have been used synonymously to refer exclusively to the two classes - male and female. In other words, gender was used to being automatically assigned based on the sex of the individual. Today, it is understood that gender is not exclusively determined by an assigned sex at birth, but determined by a person's sense, belief, and ultimate expression of self. One's gender identity is a deeply felt psychological identification as a man, woman or some other gender which may or may not correspond to the same sex assigned to them at birth. **For instance, the term *Transgender* describes an individual whose gender identification, expression and/or behavior is *inconsistent* or not culturally associated with their *biological sex*. The term has often been used to describe other gender minorities such as;** queer, inter-sex, androgynous, cross-dressers and drag queens but this should be avoided as these other identities differ from one another and from the transgender identity. A transgender man, also known as *Trans man*, is an individual who was assigned female at birth but has a male gender identity. A transgender female or *Trans female* is an individual who was assigned male at birth but has a female gender identity.

The concept of sexual orientation refers to one's physical or emotional attraction to the same sex, another sex, the same gender or another gender. It is classified into heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and newer classes of asexuality, pansexuality, omnisexuality and polysexuality. Heterosexuals are attracted to the opposite sex to theirs, while homosexuals are attracted to the same sex as theirs. Homosexual men are also known as *gay*, while homosexual women are known as *lesbian*, although some homosexual women prefer to be called *gay* as well. The term *sexual minority* is popularly used to describe this group of people whose sexual orientation, gender identities and/or practices differ from the mainstream of the immediate society. They include the homosexuals, transgender persons, bisexuals and others. In a society, it is expected that the male gender be sexually attracted to the female gender and vice versa, in other words sexual orientation is socially constructed. In truth however, sexual orientation remains independent of one's chosen gender, perhaps with time societies will be mandated to understand the real intersections between sexuality and gender.

Furthermore, research has demonstrated that gender identity, in many cases, is independent of sexual orientation. For example, transgender men may be attracted to men, women or both, and transgender women may be attracted to men, women or both. Transgender men may also partner with other transgender men and transgender women, and transgender women may also partner with other transgender women and transgender men. The basic understanding of what *sexual orientation* means will serve as a guide and broaden a reporter's interpretation of other terminologies associated with sexuality and gender.

Historical, Cultural and Religious context of Gender and Sexuality in African Societies

Culture is a way of life and African culture is very diverse, influenced over time by both internal and external forces. Religion is a product of culture and remains intertwined with culture. Currently, in most parts of Africa, gender and sexuality are perceived under very strict categories of male and female with heterosexual relationships valued as the norm and others outside this mainstream viewed as taboo, but this was not always the case. Same-sex relationship is reportedly being proscribed in over 80% of Africa's countries with the death penalty or vigilante executions permissible in Sudan, Mauritania, Uganda, Somalia, and Algeria.

It is interesting to note that diverse sexual orientations and gender identities have been present in Africa for centuries. The first homosexual couple in Africa by the names of Khnumhotep and Niankhkhnum, was recorded in Egypt in 2400 BC. In pre-colonial times (9th century), documentations of African sexualities south of the Sahara displayed unbridled sexuality by men and derogatory practices against women. Group sex, rape and offerings of wives and female servants to visitors were normal practices by African Muslims in this time and region. In fact, the African Muslims displayed a more relaxed and permissive attitude towards sexuality than Muslims in other regions. Homosexuality was mainly tolerated by societies until the latter half of the 12th century. It was with the repression of many minorities like the Jewish, Muslim, as well as sexual minorities by Christian institutions that the intolerance of homosexuality and same-sex relations began.

In Nigeria, the Hausa Bori or Hausa Animism was a cultural practice and main stay religion up until the 14th century, when Islam was introduced to the Northern part of Nigeria. Gender crossing, homosexuality and bestiality were

commonly practiced as part of this religion that focused on spirituality. There is also documentation of the *Kuruwai* – “Lesbians guild”, *Yan dauda* – “homosexuals” and *Dan Daudu* – “Homosexual wife” guild in the northern parts of Nigeria. Same-sex marriages between women in specific situations are also well documented in the Igbo region of Nigeria. By the 16th century, flexible gender systems still existed in many regions of Africa, notably homosexual practices and prostitution are well documented in the Congo. Female warriors (Amazons) socially identified as males were culturally accepted and esteemed by society in the Congo. In South Africa, the *Chibadi*, were men attired like women, and behave as women, ashamed to be called men. Gender crossing with males commonly adopting the female gender and acting as wives to males in society was also well documented in the region of the now modern day Angola.

In European colonial times (19th century), African culture and their representations of gender and sexualities were strongly impacted by European ideologies which frowned at the existing flexible gender systems, heterosexual virility displayed in polygamy, as well as negative gendered practices like female circumcision, girl child marriages and gender bias. These practices were gradually altered by external influences of Christian missionaries and colonial officials in an attempt to civilize the African culture and ultimately African sexuality. These religious and social influences lead to a modification of the original African culture and sexual practices replacing it with mainstream heterosexuality. Despite the colonization of Africa, sexual minorities persisted. Women of Lesotho South Africa were known to engage in socially sanctioned "long term, erotic relationships" called *Motsoalle* and up until the 20th century, male Azande warriors in the northern Congo routinely took on young male lovers between the ages of twelve and twenty, who helped with household tasks and participated in sexual activities with their older husbands. Many communities in Maale of southern Ethiopia also commonly practiced gender crossing.

Homophobia in Africa

Nowadays, with the notion that homosexuality is un-Africa; there arise tensions whenever African LGBT communities press for their reproductive and sexual health rights. Perceptions that homosexuality is alien to African culture seems to stem from religious fundamentalism. The Christian population of sub-Saharan Africa climbed from 9% in 1910 to 63% in 2010

with many church leaders fuelling homophobia with anti-gay messages to their congregations.

There also seems to be some strong political motivation regarding the treatment of homosexuals and other sexual minorities in Africa. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni noted on an interview with BBC's "Hard Talk" show in March 2012 that homosexuals had always existed in small numbers in Uganda and that they were never prosecuted or discriminated against, but in 2014 he signed the Anti-Homosexual bill against upcoming early 2016 presidential elections. In Nigeria, the senate passed a bill on November, 2011 banning same-sex marriages, with up to a 14-year sentence for anyone convicted of homosexuality. This was signed into law in January 2014 and was speculated to be politically motivated in order to gain the approval of majority Nigerians that are opposed to same-sex unions.

The link between homosexuality and HI/VAIDS at the start of the global HIV epidemic also fuelled homophobia around the world and in Africa, a situation that has led to challenges in controlling the spread of HIV till present day. For instance, at the end of 2007, about 33.2 million persons were estimated to have been infected with HIV globally. Nigeria has the second largest number of people living with HIV and account for 10% of global HIV burden. Nigerian **men who have sex with men** (MSM) are disproportionately affected by HIV, with an estimated HIV prevalence of 17%, in comparison with the 3% prevalence in the general population. Bisexuality has been found to be common amongst African MSM, with more than two-thirds of African MSM reporting sex with both men and women, as a result HIV has continued to spread from the homosexual community to the heterosexual community in Africa. Fear of contracting HIV-AIDS led to fear and intolerance of MSM.

Also, socio-behaviorists have a theory that homosexuality is a learned behavior and their theories have led to widespread parental fear of children being exposed and influenced by homosexual practices in the environment.

Sexual Rights of Sexual Minority

The LGBT community fights against discrimination and violence that is based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity. Sexual rights embrace human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus statements. The sexual rights of the LGBT community should be recognized and promoted in all societies

for the health and well-being of all. These rights include the right of all persons:

- to freedom from coercion, discrimination and violence;
- to the highest attainable standard of sexual health, including access to sexual and reproductive health care services;
- to seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality;
- to sexuality education;
- to respect for bodily integrity;
- to choose their partner;
- to decide to be sexually active or not;
- to consensual sexual relations;
- to consensual marriage;
- and to decide whether or not, and when, to have children; and pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.

The responsible exercise of human rights requires that all persons respect the rights of others.

The Role of the Media

The press has always played a very important role in the way the world views sexual minorities. Sadly, reporting has been mainly negative with headlines like “Alert over Gay plague” published in 1983 fueling homophobia in many societies. Recently, following the Anti-gay Bill in Ugandan, a small Ugandan paper – *Rolling Stone*, published photos of gay people with the headline reading “Hang them”. Within the publication were the names and addresses of these people clearly instigating that they be sought out and brutally punished for their behavior. Responsible and truthful reporting should be the objective of African journalism when it pertains to sexuality issues rather than fuelling homophobia and ultimately genocidal tendencies within populations.

The media plays a very important and powerful role in attitude formation, and behavioral change/modification of its target audience. Sadly, the media in Africa records low coverage and shallow analysis of sexuality issues.

Misinformation and disinformation are commonly identified in media communications reporting sexuality issues in Africa. Therefore,

- The media can begin to change the way in which African sexuality is portrayed and viewed by giving well researched information to the public, especially when referencing the history of African sexuality.
- The media also needs to employ the most progressive and least derogatory language when reporting on gender and sexuality based issues, as the language employed by media are absorbed and reciprocated by their target audience. They must avoid reporting propaganda laden stories without due interactions and communication with professionals working in the field of human sexuality or without proper investigations of reports.
- The media also plays an important role in the health of all Africans. The HIV pandemic is of concern to all nations in Africa and is taking a back step with the criminalization of homosexual and same sex marriages. In Nigeria, following the passing of the Anti-gay bill into law, there was a sharp decline in the number of MSM accessing healthcare services in Abuja with 96.6% of Nigerian MSM expressing a declining interest for continuous engagement in HIV intervention programs as a result of the new law. Africa needs to understand the role that this minority group plays in the dynamics of the HIV spread and this information needs to be provided and continuously reinforced by media.
- The media needs to focus more on responsible reporting, covering stories that center on sexual rights and reproductive health rights, laying less emphasis to salacious sexual scandals of high profile individuals in society.

The more open about, and indeed the more comfortable reporters are about their sexualities, the more varied and in-depth the media coverage would be on this topic. This means that more training and exposure to sexuality workshops will see the media more inclined to positive reporting and agenda setting on African sexualities.

With a better understanding of the dynamics that surround sexual orientation and gender identity it is hoped that future reporting will aim to reduce homophobia and enhance the education of the mainstream society on the

important role that sexual minorities may play in defining modern day society.

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2 | UNDERSTANDING GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Olusegun Sangowawa

Introduction

As the media coverage of gender and sexuality issues increases, journalists are constantly finding themselves assigned to report on stories relating to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex and Transgender (LGBIT) community. However, a lack of familiarity with the community and the community's complexity has resulted in several cases of bad journalistic practices. Some of these practices include the development of “non-stories” based solely on a person's sexuality, reporters covering stories in ways that offend members of the LGBIT community, and stories that negatively impact the personal lives of the people involved. The fair and accurate representation of LGBIT issues has been an increasing concern for many news publications and media outlets following pushback from the LGBIT community and the general public. Most prevalent are stories which only exist because they involve a person in the LGBIT community or focus so much on a person's sexuality that the most important aspects of the story are lost.

Reporting on gender and sexuality requires that journalists understand terms associated with the concepts so that their reporting can be accurate. By correctly defining the terms, journalists are better able to research them, ask the right questions and interpret evidence in ways that can help the general public become better educated and informed about gender and sexuality.

This chapter seeks to encourage fair and accurate reporting of the LGBIT community while simultaneously providing journalists with useful guidelines on covering LGBIT/Gender and sexuality SRHR issues. Some of the common terms used in gender and sexuality reporting which journalists should know are examined below.

Linking Sex, Gender and Sexuality

The links between sex, gender and sexuality can be numerous and complex and many people are unaware of the differences between sex and gender, often lumping the two together. Sex, gender and sexuality are crucial to understanding how and why HIV spreads, especially as it applies to specific groups like men who have sex with men (MSM), and such understanding is important in curbing the spread of HIV.

Gender, like sex, is split into two categories that are closely tied to each biological sex.

GENDER	SEX
Masculine	Male
Feminine	Female

However, gender and physical sex do not always intersect because gender is socially constructed and not natural, and it is something that is very fluid or changeable. In more liberal contexts, women might take on characteristics usually associated with men or pursue hobbies and jobs which were once reserved for men and are still done predominantly by men. Some people might even have traits of both genders, displaying a mix of feminine and masculine gender identities.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to whether a person is sexually attracted to men or women or both, and it is generally divided into three groups:

- heterosexual or straight individuals are attracted to people of the opposite sex;
- homosexual or gay people are attracted to individuals of the same sex;
- Bisexual people may be attracted to people of either sex.

There is also a distinct group of people who do not have any sexual attraction to both people of the same sex or opposite sex, but are attracted in other ways, they are termed asexual.

There are many theories as to why some people are heterosexual and some people are homosexual. These range from biological and scientific

arguments to do with hormones and brain chemistry to social science arguments which pins sexual orientation down to socialization.

The Intersection between Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation

Most societies and many cultures expect the three attributes defined above to 'line-up' in a way that has come to be considered natural, normal or even *right* and *good*. This received perception expects gender and sex to flow 'naturally' from a male or female sexed person.

S E X	GENDER	SEXUAL ORIENTATION
Female	Feminine	Attracted to men (heterosexual)
Male	Masculine	Attracted to women (heterosexual)

However for many people these three attributes do not line up as neatly as heteronormative (the perspective that considers heterosexuality as dominant and normal) societies expect them to.

The most common case where these attributes do not align is when someone is homosexual or gay and most societies consider it as a *mismatch* between a person's sex and their sexual orientation.

SEX	SEXUAL ORIENTATION
Female	Attracted to women (homosexual)
Male	Attracted to men (homosexual)

Other cases where people's sex and gender do not align include people who might not act in a way that exactly expresses their outward sex e.g. a woman might behave in a way that is considered masculine and perform a role/s largely associated with men. At other instances, people might feel that they are trapped in the wrong body and seek to have a sex reassignment.

SEX	GENDER
Female	Masculine
Male	Feminine

It is important to note that like the mismatches that might occur between sex and gender, sexual orientation does not imply a particular gender identity and an ambiguous gender identity does not imply a particular sexual orientation. In other words, just because a woman is homosexual does not mean she does has a masculine gender identity and just because a woman might act in what is considered a masculine way does not mean she is necessarily homosexual

SEX	GENDER	SEXUALITY
Female	Masculine	Attracted to men (homosexual)
Male	Feminine	Attracted to women (homosexual)

Public Health Perspective on Sexual Behaviour

Public health helps us understand a lot of the behavioural aspects of sexuality. It has a strong focus on behaviours and how these behaviours impact on spreading disease, prolonging life, and promoting health. From a public health perspective, we can explore things such as condom usage and its effectiveness against HIV, sexual practices between men and men, men and women and the risks of contracting HIV and other STIs. In Nigeria, the key populations or key affected populations at a higher risk of HIV consists of Men who have sex with Men (MSM), Female Sex Workers (FSW) and People who Inject Drugs (PWID). These groups often face sexual and gender based violence as well as SRHR violations that have consequences on the spread of HIV and provision of adequate care and treatment.

They experience barriers when they attempt to access health services due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression as well as sexual practices and their use of drugs. These barriers create a challenge for the outreach programmes, as it makes sexual reproductive health services on issues like HIV, STIs, and other psychosocial needs like counselling inaccessible. Furthermore, many of the individuals in these key populations avoid, delay or receive inappropriate and inferior care because of stigma and discrimination from the general population. In the context of HIV/AIDS, respect for all people's SRHR is fundamental and special attention to the most vulnerable and most marginalised is imperative.

Men who have sex with men (MSM)

These include but are not limited to gay men. This is because many MSM, whilst having sex with men, do not identify as homosexual. This means that some MSM who might identify as heterosexual and have sexual relationships with women may also have sex with other men covertly or 'on the side'. This might be for fear of stigmatisation and discrimination in a society which continues to be intolerant towards homosexuality and those who practice it.

MSM and HIV Risk

Biologically, MSM face increased risk of HIV as the virus is easily passed on during unprotected anal sex. Unprotected anal sex carries a risk of HIV infection that is 18 times higher than vaginal sex and the receptive (bottom) partner is at even higher risk of HIV infection than the insertive (top) partner. The Integrated Bio-Behavioral Surveillance Surveys (IBBSS) reported an increase in HIV prevalence of 13.5% to 17.2% among MSM between 2007 and 2010.

MSM are also more vulnerable to HIV because of social factors like discrimination, and prejudice. Homophobia, a negative attitude towards people who engage in same-sex behaviour, force MSM 'into hiding.' This makes them reluctant to seek out sexual healthcare which in turn means that they are less likely to access HIV prevention and treatment. This is why MSM are often described as '**a hidden group**' in the HIV epidemic. Treatment and prevention messaging tailored for gay men often does not reach all MSM or they may feel it does not apply to them.

Anal Sexual Practices in Nigeria's General Population

Heterosexual sexual intercourse is the predominant mode of HIV transmission in sub-Saharan Africa. Anal sexual practice is usually associated with men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women. Research focused on MSM populations has uncovered some important facts about anal sex, including dangerous gaps in risk perception, condom and lubricant use around the world. Anti-sodomy laws further add to the stigmatization of anal sex and also link it to being something only MSM do. Some 76 countries including Nigeria criminalize homosexuality in some way, many by specifically outlawing "sodomy" - often understood to be anal sex. However, new evidence is emerging that the MSM focus may lead to assumptions that heterosexual intercourse does not include anal penetration and therefore sends the wrong message about who needs to protect themselves.

Some research studies in Nigeria has found the practice of heterosexual anal sexual intercourse among young people and women, who practice this for a

variety of reasons including pleasure, the preservation of virginity, contraception, economic gain and maintaining fidelity. However, despite it being a relatively common behaviour, there is a dearth of accurate information on its practice due to reluctance to explore the behaviour in studies which may be due to anal taboo, stigma around the anus as a body part. We have been conditioned to think of it as filthy and unclean so we do not talk about it. If we cannot talk about all sex acts and what is risky and less risky, people cannot really make intelligent choices. The risk of contracting HIV through unprotected receptive anal sex is almost 20 times greater than the HIV risk associated with vaginal intercourse. There is, therefore, the need to discuss more openly about sex to encourage public understanding of the multiple forms of sexual practices (vaginal, oral, and anal) and the risk of HIV infection associated with all the forms of sex.

Key Challenges Confronting Journalists

Journalists have some challenges in covering issues facing sexual minorities.

- **Legal Challenge:** Laws that criminalise homosexuality in deeply conservative countries create a hostile environment in which the media has to operate. For example, the Nigerian anti-gay law, which was signed by President Goodluck Jonathan, is one of the draconian anti-gay statutes. Gambia passed a bill imposing life sentences for 'aggravated homosexuality' while Malawi has suspended anti-gay laws until the 193-member parliament can decide on the contentious issue.
- **Attitudinal Challenge:** Another challenge is that some editors do not support publication of LGBTI articles because of personal attitudes. Some pro-LGBTI journalists are labelled with all sorts of names and that discourages others from taking an interest in the issue.
- **Linguistic Challenge:** Journalists also face the challenge of making the appropriate language choices when talking about the LGBT community and that has not sent out the right message, especially in sensitive issues. "Wrong use of language shapes or perpetuates misconceptions about LGBT issues and thereby shapes public opinion in a biased way". "
- **Information-access Challenge:** Journalists also do not receive enough support from media owners and editors. This problem is made worse by the limited information that is available to journalists on LGBT issues in their countries and a lack of certainty about who can be contacted to provide accurate information.

Guidelines for Journalists

- Radio, television and newspapers constitute some of the most influential sources of information for people in Nigeria and could play a crucial role, both in the representation of gender and sexual minorities and in the improvement of their position in society. This is not only important from a human rights perspective, but also from a public health point of view.
- Gender and sexual minorities (GSM) or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people (LGBTI) are more at risk of HIV infection, while discrimination and stigma make it more difficult for them to access prevention and treatment services.
- Gender and sexual minorities have the right to fair; accurate and inclusive reporting of their life stories and concerns as with all other members of society. The media should treat gender and sexual minorities with fairness, integrity and respect. Positive media coverage can help break down these barriers.
- Journalists should try and bring taboo subjects out in the open so they can be discussed.
- Journalists can help to reduce harmful stereotypes and ensure that a wider range of experiences and issues relating to gender and sexual minorities receive coverage in the media.
- Before any reporting of LGBT people and issues ask yourself whether labels such as “gay”, “lesbian” or “bisexual” are appropriate. If they are not necessary and relevant to the story, do not include them. A person's sexual orientation or gender identity status should only be mentioned if relevant to the story. Intrusion into people's private lives is only justified by overriding considerations of public interest and journalists should not produce material which is likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- While ever mindful of the need to facilitate free and open public debate, avoid publishing opinions, online comments or phone-in contributions that contain gratuitously offensive and possibly illegal statements and attitudes concerning LGBT people.
- Remember that not all organisations campaign for the rights of all LGBT people; some approach their issues from a public health, SRHR perspective, while others focus on human rights. Do a thorough research on organizations you contact for information about gender and sexual minorities.

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[gays-hesitate-at-the-closet-door](http://www.irinnews.org/report/79810/nigeria-gays-hesitate-at-the-closet-door)

Gay rights, sex workers and HIV prevention: Uganda's activists answer your questions.

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/gay-rights-sex-workers-aids-prevention-](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/gay-rights-sex-workers-aids-prevention-ugandas-activists-answer-questions/)

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Nigeria's new law leaves gays vulnerable.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/africa/2014/01/nigeria-new-law-leaves-gays-vulnerable-2014116211746236774.html>

Example of good reporting on anal sex in the media

HIV/AIDS: Anal sex HIV risk misunderstood among heterosexuals.

<http://www.irinnews.org/report/93032/hiv-aids-anal-sex-hiv-risk-misunderstood-among-heterosexuals>

Africa: Does the Global HIV Response Understand Sex?

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201408281501.html>

Shocking Facts on Anal Intercourse.

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Africa 'needs anal sex awareness'. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2993016.stm>

3 | UNCOVERING MYTHS ABOUT HOMOSEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER IDENTITIES

Dr Cheikh Eteka Traore

Introduction

In the past decade, journalists and commentators have been compelled to take positions or report news items about homosexuality or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people (LGBT)¹. The irruptions of these subjects have been motivated by widely publicized debates about sexual scandals, gay marriage, LGBT rights, or stories of famous celebrities 'coming out'. Nigerian media in particular, has covered and reported extensively on progress of the now enacted Same Sex (Marriage) Prohibition Act 2013².

Unfortunately, the approach of many journalists and media houses has been criticized by human rights defenders for the bias, lack of in-depth knowledge or perceived prejudice of commentators. More worryingly, some media houses have taken approaches which caused harm to the LGBT community or other people perceived to be part of it³.

This chapter tries to capture some of the common pitfalls that journalists fall into when reporting, or discussing diversity in sexuality or gender. Some of the examples given here should help journalists to question: *How does my lens shape how I view – and report – issues relating to LGBT people?* We live in a society where strict values and rigid gender norms apply to all citizens. This often results in several stereotypes and popular labels that the Nigerian

¹AGBLT (2009) LGBT Communication manual

²Federal Government of Nigeria. Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act. 2013

³Gishiri: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/2/15/mob-attacks-allegedgaysinnigeriancapital.html>

media reproduces in various ways. It might be interesting to note that the bias in reporting and understanding LGBT people have strong links with prevailing norms on gender and power relations between men and women in our society.

The chapter also tries to establish the link between gender and sexuality, and how they relate to LGBT people, as Sylvia Tamale has indicated; researching sexuality without looking at gender is like cooking pepper soup without pepper⁴.

Furthermore, the chapter explores factors that determine public and media perception of gender and sexual minorities - such as *medicalization* – and the reasons why sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular have been defined by the medical and psychiatric spheres and more recently public health imperatives to respond to the HIV epidemic. *Sexualisation* will also be discussed: the tendency to reduce homosexuality to a question of sex, as it has implications on the human rights violations that LGBT people experience in Nigeria.

Understanding stereotypes and their origin can help the concerned journalist or media house willing to improve human rights environments for marginalized groups. The suggested terminologies and good practices in this chapter are derived from the experience of human rights defenders working with Nigerian people who identify as 'LGBT'. The use of the *Yogyakarta Principles* is also useful in defining certain terminologies and their relationship with human rights legislation⁵ and international law.

Understanding identities

The complexity of our identities in general or sexuality in particular can be understood through one test: The soup test. If we imagine our favourite soup, we know it is recognizable by a number of characteristics: such as the flavour, aroma, appearance, taste, colour, texture and so on. Soups have distinct identities and often have distinct names. As individuals, we can make parallels with the soup metaphor and consider all the ingredients that make up our personality. Some of the ingredients that define who we are cannot be

⁴Sylvia Tamale, Researching and theorizing sexualities in Africa. In *African Sexualities: A reader*, Pambazuka Press 2011

⁵Yogyakarta Principles (2006) Principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

changed, for example our age, our race, or our genetic characteristics. Other ingredients are more amenable to change or can be optional; like our religion, our profession, our hobbies. It is also possible for us to make some of our identities known to others, just as it is also possible to hide them and keep them secret. The metaphor of the soup can be used to explain sexuality, or gender identity. We all know instances when our favourite soup is cooked with a special twist, or a slight change in recipe that makes it even more delicious. In this case the change in recipe could be a subtle change or addition in one or more ingredients. The same principle can be applied to individuals. There are aspects of ourselves that may appear obvious to the rest of society, for example our gender (whether we are male or female). In some instances, most people are comfortable for the world around them to know aspects of their sexuality (for example 'heterosexual'). We all have a sexual or gender identity that we may or may not want to share with others. In cases where aspects of our gender identity or sexuality are not valued or are considered 'deviant' by family, society or work colleagues, we may have reasons to conceal that identity.

Understanding bias

When you are in Rome... Behave like the Romans.

Our ability to grasp and analyze the world surrounding us is deeply shaped by our upbringing and the various experiences we go through in life. In many cases, we choose to *behave like the Romans*, which means that we *don't question* taboos, prejudices and norms which prevail in society. Formal education, religious teachings, personal life experiences are all powerful factors which shape who we are and our perceptions of others. Prevailing myths and norms within society are largely reflected in mainstream media. When it comes to taboo subjects such as homosexuality, most Nigerian media *behave like the Romans*. For instance,

- Positive representations of homosexual Nigerian men or women are quasi-absent.
- The majority of cases involving LGBT Nigerians in national media are either in the area of sensational coverage (scandals) or negative reporting.
- Editorials about sex, relationship and romance are strictly reported on

a simplistic binary: Nigerian men are attracted to women, and Nigerian women should be attracted to men.

On the subject of sexuality, religious leaders from both the Christian and Muslim faiths unanimously use condemning language (except for very few exceptions). However, when we conduct proper analysis of the lives and identities of their audiences, we are likely to find that realities are much more complex. Nigerians – like human beings all over the World – are not all designed to be heterosexual, neither do they belong to distinct Male-Female binaries of identities. People are much more diverse, than our media would like us to believe.

Understanding sexual orientation

Sexual orientation refers to each person's capacity for profound emotional, romantic and sexual attraction for individuals of the opposite, same or both genders. Three most common categories of sexual orientations are described: attraction to the same sex (homosexuality), to the opposite sex (heterosexuality) or to both genders (bisexuality). Characteristics of sexual orientation vary from person to person, but are generally fixed and difficult to change.

Desire, practice and identity

Several misconceptions found in the media are around the confusion between LGBT's identities, desires and practices. Although these factors are interlinked, they do not necessarily coincide⁶. For example, there are those who experience a particular desire, but deny it and do not have LGBT identities or same sex practices. For example; a man may have sex with another man, without identifying as being homosexual or gay. He may have homosexual practices, but continue to identify as being heterosexual. He may be in a specific situation; such as a prison, or an all-male institution, lodging or dormitory that warrants such practices. Or he may be a man who engages in sex with other men for transactional and monetary benefits.

Homophobia

This refers to the fear, aversion, or irrational hatred of homosexuals and consequently all those whose sexual orientation is seen to be different from

⁶ABGLT (2009) LGBT Communication Manual

heteronormative standards. It is an umbrella term that includes a wide range of phenomena related with prejudice, intolerance and discrimination against lesbian and gay people. Homophobia can manifest itself in various circumstances, in families, schools, workplaces, places of worship or in the media.

Gender expression

Gender expression can be defined as *the external expression of an individual, through a combination of factors such as appearance, social conduct, mannerisms on a scale which can be measured from femininity to masculinity*⁷. Gender expression is heavily influenced by gender norms. The concept of gender expression helps to understand how certain men may choose to have 'feminine' accessories. We all express ourselves according to gender norms which prevail in our society, culture or workplaces. It is important to observe that gender expression is not necessarily binary; there are a variety of possibilities in which we express ourselves. Gender expression should therefore be understood as a continuum of possibilities to which individuals choose to conform.

Gender norms

These are a set of economic, social, cultural and political responsibilities, rights, expectations, privileges related to the male or female status. Gender norms are also strongly linked to existing power relations between men and women, girls and boys. We all express ourselves according to gender norms which prevail in our society, culture or workplaces. External appearance through clothing, or accessories such as jewelry, neck ties, head gear are all powerful ways to express ourselves along the norm of a particular gender.

Understanding gender identity

Most of us have a very strong sense of which gender we belong to, from a very young age we know whether we are a boy or a girl, a man or a woman. However, there are many instances where this binary is challenged. For various reasons the notions of gender identity and 'transgender people' are poorly understood, or confused with the concepts of sexual orientation and homosexuality. Generally speaking, transgender people are *individuals*

⁷Samuel Killermann (2013); The Social Justice Advocate Handbook: A guide to gender

whose gender identity is different from the sex they were born with. They may have a heterosexual or bisexual identity. There has been very few studies on gender identity in Nigeria. However, some authors have looked at certain groups in Northern Nigeria. For instance, *yan daudu* – a group of feminine men – have been described since pre-colonial times⁸.

Transgender people are often confused for 'gay' or vice versa in the media. Similarly, several instances where the press reports arrests of homosexuals, an observation of circumstances often reveal that the arrests were motivated by non-conforming gender expression rather than homosexuality (for instance effeminate men, wearing feminine clothing).

Uncovering common myths about homosexuality

- Homosexuality can be cured:** One of the most enduring myths is that homosexuality is a disease, or a 'deviance' that can be cured. This is an enduring myth in Nigeria and around the World, despite the fact that medical, psychiatric and psychology institutions have declared that homosexuality is as⁹ natural as heterosexuality, or bisexuality. The Nigerian Medical Association does not consider homosexuality as a disease, and since May 1990, the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its list of diseases. The use of the term *sexual normality* is therefore incorrect; referring to *normality* in relation to sexual orientation or gender identity presupposes that there is a deviation from normality. It is therefore an expression that should be avoided when referring to LGBT people, as it can reinforce prejudice and discrimination against them. Equally, the term *sexual option* is incorrect; the accepted term is *sexual orientation*. The explanation for this is that sexual orientation or gender identity are not things that LGBT people 'opt' for. In the same way that a person (male or female) does not 'opt' to be heterosexual.
- Homosexuality is not African:** The anti-same sex marriage bill was first proposed during the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo. At the time he personally condemned homosexuality as “un-biblical, un-natural and definitely un-African”. The argument

⁸Rudolf Pell Gaudio, *Dire Straights in Nigeria*; Transition number 114, Gay Nigeria pp 60-69, Published by Indiana University Press

⁹

about an African cultural identity which excludes homosexuality has many supporters in politics, the media and the wider public. According to Ayo Sogunro¹⁰ (lawyer and writer), the argument about homosexuality and Nigerian culture is weak; first because of the multiplicity of Nigeria's ethnic groups and the myriad of often opposing cultural norms on gender within the country. Secondly, Sogunro argues that claiming African identity and culture to reject homosexuality is futile, given that traditional African cultures have already been 'sacrificed' by the adoption of Christianity and Islam, which are profoundly shaping our cultural norms. The claim that homosexuality is "un-African" poses several dangerous implications. It presupposes that somehow African sexualities are different than that of the rest of mankind. Ironically, many academics describe this concept – of essentially different African sexuality - as an import from the colonial era. Several colonialists who described the sexuality of Africans, described the sexuality of Africans as primitive, exotic and bordering on nymphomania (Gesheker, 1995 et al). Africans were often described as 'exotic' or backward, in comparison to the sexualities of Westerners. The claim of an essentialist African sexuality which can only be exclusively heterosexual and motivated by reproduction contributes to the racist colonial discourse.

- ***Cross dressing is a sign of homosexuality*** – the notion that men who appear feminine or women who wear masculine attires could be homosexual (either gay or lesbian). Understanding the concept of gender expression helps to dispel this myth. People generally choose to have an appearance which corresponds with their biological sex, but there can be variations, and many reasons why certain individuals will want to cross-dress. However, in parts of Northern Nigeria, there are laws against cross dressing, and a number of individuals have faced arrests or convictions under such laws. It is usually inappropriate to 'diagnose' someone as transgender or 'gay' or 'lesbian' on the basis of their external appearance and clothing. A woman who likes to dress with male clothing or accessories could belong to any sexual or gender category.

¹⁰Ayo Sogunro 92014) One More Nation Bound in Freedom. Transition, No 114, Gay Nigeria, pp 47 - 59

Sexualising LGBT people

Language

An examination of some of the words used to describe LGBT people – for instance the term “homosexual”, or local terms in Nigerian languages – shows that the function of sex, and sexual relations are used to define this group of people. These terms often mask the reality that sexuality is more complex and goes far beyond sexual acts between people. Several academics, like Sylvia Tamale agree that *“The various domains of sexuality include sexual knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours, as well as procreation, sexual orientation and personal and interpersonal and sexual relations”*. Sylvia also explains that *“sexuality touches on a wide range of issues including the human body, dress, self-esteem, gender identity, power and violence”*.

Motivation

Another way of sexualising LGBT people is when commentators look for reasons and motives for individuals to be homosexual or transgender. One of such 'reasons' is assumed to be financial, or for the pursuit of material wealth. *“They are doing it for the money”*. Again, a logical examination of such assertions is quickly challenged when we look at sex workers and their clients. The overwhelming majority of sex workers provide sexual services to people of the opposite sex; female sex workers sell sex mostly to men. Accounts of women selling sex to other women exist, but there is no evidence or comparison to the purchase and selling of sex among heterosexuals. However, many studies – mostly outside of Africa – show that many transgender women derive an income from sex work. These studies show that transgender people are so discriminated and excluded from formal education and labour markets, that very often sex work becomes their only source of livelihood¹¹

Sexual Desire

A common myth resulting from sexualisation is the reference to LGBT people as promiscuous. This is a result of characterising a group of people by sexual definitions. There is no evidence that LGBT people may be more

¹¹ UNDP (2013) Transgender people health and human rights. A discussion paper

promiscuous than the majority population. So care should be taken when describing a group as 'promiscuous'.

Child molestation and the issue of recruitment

In recent years, international media has often reported on scandals of child molestation and the abuse of children in religious institutions¹². Stories involving sexual abuse of boys by priests in the catholic and Anglican churches have received attention from Nigerian media. Commentators have argued that these debates have largely reinforced prevailing views that homosexual people are 'people' who sexually abuse children (usually men abusing younger boys). The view was so prevalent that it has motivated the Ugandan government to propose a draconian bill aiming to criminalise homosexual people with life imprisonment and even the death sentence¹³.

The association of homosexuality with pedophilia can be debunked by facts. Pedophilia is a crime in most legislations of the world, but a close examination of court cases shows that the prevalence of this crime is much higher among people of the opposite sex, crime rates of men who sexually abuse young girls are significantly higher. Discussions about sexual abuse of boys by older men, or sexual assault between men often get ignored in most legislation. However, it is pleasing to note that in Lagos state, parliamentarians have recently adapted the penal code to remove sodomy between consenting adults as an offence, and instead propose criminal sanctions for cases of rape against men¹⁴.

Medicalizing sexuality, and its impact on current terms

The term homosexuality was invented by Karoly Maria Mertheny, a Hungarian medical doctor in 1869. Since then, notably in Europe, concepts of sexuality were studied mostly by medical professionals and psychiatrists. With many of them trying to find explanations for homosexuality which was viewed as a disease or deviance. Homosexuality has long been considered a medical condition in the West, much of this legacy is observed in Nigeria and other African countries.

¹²<http://www.economist.com/news/international/21602248-bid-hold-catholic-leadership-responsible-paedophile-priests-looming-shadows>

¹³Uganda Anti-homosexuality Act. <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/530c4bc64.pdf>

¹⁴Lagos Sexual Offences Act http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng/justice/A%20BILL_CRIMINAL%20CONDUCT.pdf

However, sexuality has a biological basis and the concept of *biological sex* therefore has to be understood. Biological sex refers to the set of chromosomic, hormonal and anatomic characteristics that are used to categorise individuals as male or female. Again, in this case, there are individuals that will be difficult to classify in one category; they belong to the *intersex* category. Sometimes intersexed people are cited alongside LGBT people, because of the prejudice and discrimination they experience in society. The term *hermaphrodite* sometimes mentioned in the media should be avoided. The preferred terminology is intersex, or intersexed.

Another terminology created by the health industry is the acronym *MSM* to refer to *men who have sex with men*. In this case the terminology does not refer to the sexual orientation or gender identity of the men, but rather to their sexual behaviour. MSM are considered a priority population for Nigeria's HIV/AIDS national policy, as they are more at risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV compared to other groups in the country¹⁵. This commitment to enhancing services for MSM has been confirmed more recently by the President of the Republic¹⁶.

Some harmful practices noted in the media

- **“Outing” other people** - Social attitudes towards homosexuality and LGBT people is overwhelmingly negative. A survey carried out in several countries around the world, showed that Nigerians were among the most likely in the world – over 96% of people surveyed - to disapprove of homosexuality¹⁷. In such a context, the action of 'outing' people, i.e. revealing people's identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender can result in damaging consequences for these individuals. Instances of 'outing' by the Nigerian media have occurred at several times in recent history, and has led to people going into hiding, suffering violence, family ostracization or going into exile.
- **Organizing 'one-sided' debates** - It has been commonly observed during media debates regarding homosexuality or LGBT people to

¹⁵Federal republic of Nigeria(2010) HI/AIDS National Strategic Plan

¹⁶Federal republic of Nigeria (2013) President's Comprehensive Response Plan on HIV/AIDS

¹⁷ Pew Global Attitudes Survey, (pages 35, 83 and 117) 2007

see only opponents of homosexuality being given voice. Religious leaders are approached to express negative impressions on the subject. In order to give a more balanced and objective view to the public, journalists should also invite human rights defenders and allies of LGBT people to express their point of view. Where possible, the media should use the Nigerian democratic system to air the views of different opinion leaders and members of the LGBT community themselves.

Suggested beneficial practices by Media

The issue of violence towards members of the LGBT community is real and goes largely unreported by the media. Concerned media houses can contact human rights defenders and highlight the damages caused to individuals and families by homophobia. Specific days of the year are often used in Nigeria to highlight the issue of homophobic violence:

- International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT): 17th of May. On this date in 1990, WHO removed homosexuality from the list of diseases. This symbolic day is now marked by human rights defenders in Nigeria and other parts of Africa and the rest of the world to highlight the negative social impact of homophobia
- World Human Rights Day: 10th of December. The day is marked by the United Nations through the *Free and equal* campaign. On this date FreeAndEqualNigeria organizes a media drive to highlight violations against LGBT Nigerians within the wider human rights movement.

Conclusion

The media has a crucial role to play in human rights development:

- By promoting respect for religious, ethnic, racial, sexual and human diversities they can help build a peaceful world.
- As debates about sexuality, gender and LGBT people continue to grow globally, journalists need to stay informed about the terminologies and the concepts which underpin them.
- The use of appropriate terminologies ensures that journalists avoid contributing to human rights violations.

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4

POLICING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Sola Ogundipe

Introduction

Gender and sexuality are development issues. Though sexuality relates directly to development interventions to tackle issues such as population growth, health, and poverty, these links remain hidden and are rarely made explicit in policy or public debate. In Nigeria, and to a larger extent in other African countries, a number of contemporary policy debates on health still bypass culturally and politically sensitive questions about sexuality, sexual abuse, sexual education and responsibility, contraceptive use, access to safe abortion, etc. The rising cases of sexual crimes such as child abuse (defilement of a child below the age of 12), increasing incidences of child-pregnancy rates, rapes and abortions, particularly in children and adolescents among other concerns, consistently highlight the link between sexual behaviour and sexual practices within the community.

The media play a central role in disseminating information on sexuality, sexual health and sexual rights. So there is an excellent potential to promote good sexual and reproductive health outcomes, but the media often fail to prioritize sexual and reproductive health and rights issues or report them in an accurate manner (Lasswell, 1971). One common observation is that coverage of reproductive health issues HIV/AIDS, maternal mortality and morbidity, sexual violence (rape) and other sex/gender-related matters is generally poor due to the weak capacity and motivation for reporting these issues. (Hiebert, et al, 1974).

Rationale for regulate citizens' sexual behaviour and identity

Sometimes, it is hard to understand exactly what is meant by the term *gender*,

and how it differs from the closely related term sex. So, a clear understanding is required here. The term sex categorizes individuals into male and female based on their biological makeup, while gender describes socially constructed roles, behaviours and attributes expected of either the male or female sex. The terms gender and sex have been used synonymously to refer exclusively to the two classes - male and female. In other words, gender is automatically assigned based on the sex of the individual. Male and female are sex categories, while masculine and feminine are gender categories.

This helps when examining regulation of sexual behaviour. The regulation is done in numerous ways. Generally, the scope of behaviours that fall under societal regulation of sex and sexuality is broad and raises a multitude of health and human rights concerns. From a global perspective, it is important to know and understand how sex and sexuality are regulated within and across countries because it helps explain why laws and policies tend to facilitate or impede efforts to address health concerns either by affecting access to health information and services.

While national frameworks often criminalise specific sexual behaviours, Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR) remain paramount and effects of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV, gonorrhoea, syphilis, often provide a lens through which the harms caused to the health and well-being of individuals and populations can be seen (Oronje, et al, 2001; Saunders, 2004 ; Miller, 2009).

It is established that all Anglophone countries in Africa have enacted laws which directly address sexual offenses against minors. The law criminalises particular sexual behaviours. Among these are same sex interaction, Male-male (gay) and female-female (lesbianism). Others are paedophilia (sexual intercourse with minors), and incest (sexual relations among blood relations). Also, the age at which young people are protected by statutory rape laws varies in these countries, from under 13 years in Nigeria to under 16 years in Zimbabwe. Kenya specifically criminalizes both physical and verbal sexual harassment (Miller, 2004).

Regulation of sexual behaviour/identity

Every society has provisions for what it considers socially desirable and undesirable in terms of sexual behaviour and consequently differ in what it prevents or promotes. Basically, sexual control in the majority of human societies is not aimed at providing or depriving sexual satisfaction, but just ensuring what is “right”. But in recognition that humans cannot perpetually conform to the social code, there are, of course, well-defined exceptions on

sexual restrictions. For practical purposes, sexual deviations and sex offenses are best regarded as social definitions rather than natural phenomena. No type of sexual behaviour or attitude has a universal, inherent social or psychological value. The whole meaning and value of any expression of sexuality is determined by the social context within which it occurs (Fog, 1999).

Playing a valuable role in communicating important research findings and raising the profile of overlooked and contentious public health issues, such as SRHR is desirable. The potential of reporting these issues could be improved through building interest and capacity in accessing, interpreting and using evidence, to communicate effectively by utilising interactive approaches and other non-conventional ways of communication.

Assessing regulation of sex and sexuality across countries differs in how these issues are presented in national and international legal and policy frameworks. At national level, sexual behaviours are generally regulated while international legal and policy frameworks, and associated reporting mechanisms, tend to focus on population groups, often termed “vulnerable populations”, e.g., men who have sex with men (MSM) and sex workers, rather than from behaviours.

Activities:

- Define the basic tenets of regulation of sexuality behaviour
- Begin with an overview of relevant international legal standards on sex and sexuality regulation
- Examine publicly available data on sexual behaviour/identity
- Summarize the sexuality-related impacts of existing laws and policies in the public domain and highlight how sexuality is understood in law
- Highlight current debates on sexual behaviour and the evolving nature of regulation including up-to-date work around their documentation
- Present an analysis of available self-reported data produced by government, compare with independent reports and discuss the implications of the findings
- Use neutral and non-gender specific language to promote fair gender portrayal

- Demystify the concept of human sexuality and enhance the right sexual attitude within individuals in the society
- Advocate for appropriate and adequate education and information on sexuality and gender issues
- For better understanding of governmental efforts to control sex and sexuality, consider regulation in its broadest sense.

Rights of citizens and dignity of persons

One of the globally recognized indicators of violations of human rights that constitute a significant barrier to peace, sustainable development and the achievement of all internationally recognized development goals, is the tendency to discriminate on the basis of gender or considerations of sexual affiliations. (Gruskin, 2009, p 4). While sexuality and gender non-conformity can and do restrict access to employment and other forms of economic and social support, a host of other worries exist, such as risk for acquisition and transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including HIV.

Nevertheless, the question of sexuality education remains paramount and the perspective for policing sexual behaviour and identity is recognised. A point to note is that the sexual health and rights of gay men, lesbian women and bisexual men and women are often not in the media focus usually because such health rights are completely missing from sexual and reproductive health and rights policies, materials and documents.

The goal of advocacy is to establish the need for equal treatment of all individuals as human beings, in terms of their rights, responsibilities and opportunities, and not on whether they are born male or female. An instance is a publication in the Nigerian Tribune entitled “Paedophiles: Who should teach children sexuality education?” (October 22, 2012). It is a good example of media engagement in promotion of sexuality education. The message is clear: Write from a point of knowledge, present a convincing argument and initiate a call to action.

The International Human Rights law is a useful marker for judging the progression of international consensus. It affords insight into how responsibilities for regulating sex and sexuality are understood at global level, and provides the overarching framework within which national laws and policies should be situated. It can therefore act as a check if national laws do not conform to international consensus.

Activities:

- Reflect that gender equality is a fundamental human right that must be respected and upheld as a basic principle at all times and for all purposes.
- Identify/recognize relevant international norms of human rights and dignity
- Examine the advantages and limitations of the international human rights law, vis-a-vis existing national policies
- Initiate/promote debate or join debates on roles and gaps of how global and local legal instruments promote/ protect the rights of individuals and populations without distinction of any kind
- Discuss whether focusing on people rather than their behaviour has appreciable impact on ensuring that international standards guarantee protection for citizens' sexual and social rights
- Highlight how discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation/ gender identity is a determinant of health and access to health services.
- Present debate on argument around criminalisation of consensual sexual acts between adults, from perspective of sexual orientation or gender identity
- Look at increasing agitation for increased human rights protection
- Draw attention to the dearth of protections for minority groups/gender and others
- Do comparative analyses of existing rights laws in providing increased normative guidance with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Balancing minority/majority tensions

Democracy recognises the minority. As democracy is conceived today, the minority's rights must be protected no matter how singular or alienated that minority is from the majority society; otherwise, the majority's rights lose their meaning. In every constitutional democracy, there is ongoing tension between the contradictory factors of majority rule and minority rights

(Hatzenbuehler, 2009).

Furthermore, sexual minorities are at increased risk for multiple mental health burdens compared with heterosexuals. Determinants of this risk, including group-specific minority stressors and general psychological processes are common across sexual orientations. A framework postulates that (a) sexual minorities confront increased stress exposure resulting from stigma; (b) this stigma-related stress creates elevations in general emotion dysregulation, social/interpersonal problems, and cognitive processes conferring risk for psychopathology; and (c) these processes in turn mediate the relationship between stigma-related stress and psychopathology. It is argued that this framework can, theoretically, illuminate how stigma adversely affects mental health and, practically, inform clinical interventions. (Hatzenbuehler, 2009)

Sexual behaviour and orientation have major public health consequences. Sexual minority groups/populations have specific health care needs that have become more unique especially since emergence of the AIDS epidemic. Unfortunately, health concerns of sexual minority groups - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) – are often ignored or overlooked in contemporary media coverage. And in the instances that the media gives coverage, the focus tends to be skewed. Many journalists, for fear of being labelled or tagged, simply steer clear of reporting issues surrounding the LGBT community. On the other extreme are those that report the issues strictly from the perspective of their personal beliefs and moralistic judgement.

But a quick lesson here is that challenges that trail sexual /gender minority health should be tackled in line with mainstream agenda of contemporary biological, psychosocial, and cultural issues. Concerns of “straight” individuals or sexual majority should not overshadow that of the diverse **sexual** and gender **minority** population.

Activities:

- Improve your understanding of current and emerging minority/majority issues and their various manifestations.
- Recognise that the sexual minorities/populations have specific social and health care needs. These needs have become more unique since the emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, essentially because of the

link between HIV transmission and sexual activity.

- Accept that sexual behaviour/orientation/preference/ expression have major public health consequences.
- Be familiar with all terminologies of gender identities, orientation, preference, expressions, and how these relate to overall development issues
- Acquire relevant information on gender and sexuality issues and adopt a sexuality/gender sensitive code of ethics to assist in your reporting.
- Keep abreast with gender debates/issues. Let your coverage be balanced, fair and inclusive of all interests. Ensure a diverse range of perspectives on issues.
- Guard against complicating, or over-simplifying and reporting sexual/ gender minority issues out of context.
- **In mainstreaming minority health issues into media coverage, there must be a balance.** Give equal importance to minority/majority concerns through portrayal of relevant traditional and non-traditional, social, family, leisure activities, etc.

Role of the law and limits of the law

The law regulates sexuality in numerous, different ways, ranging from criminalisation or decriminalisation of particular sexual behaviours, rights protections and recognitions, to granting or restricting autonomy, privacy and capacity of individuals to make decisions about their sexual lives and behaviours, etc. The law is generally concerned with regulating behaviour (sexual activity, partnerships, reproduction etc.) but much of the campaigning that has sought to change the law has also made reference to identity (LGBT rights, women's rights etc.). This creates a question of rights recognition or redress in law. No doubt, the push for tougher anti-gay legislation and policing in recent years has been accompanied by mob violence, the murders of activists, and street protests. Defenders of anti-gay legislation in Africa said homosexuality is a threat to society and that the laws are about upholding religious and cultural values.

The Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA) prohibits the marrying of persons of the same sex within Nigeria, and criminalises various other day to

day acts of Nigeria's LGBTI community. Nigerian law on homosexual activity was codified in Chapter 77 of the Criminal Code Act (these laws are also known as sodomy laws). Sections 214, 215 and 217 spell out the nature of sexual offences and the punishments, while Section 284 of the Penal Code (Northern States) Federal Provisions Act, and sections 405 and 407 criminalize and punish sodomy as a means of livelihood or as a profession. In January 2014, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria assented to the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill 2011 thereby making it an Act enforceable in each of the 36 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory. Sections 5 and 7 of the Act criminalise the private living arrangements of persons of same sex and this constitutes an infringement of the right to privacy.

Human rights have been a key means of advancing issues of sexuality, in both international and domestic legal arenas. However, LGBT rights and sexual rights are drawn from a broader human rights framework and offer both significant opportunities and potential challenges for lawyers and activists. A great instance of how the law can be used to advance sexual rights is presented in "Sexuality and Social Justice: A Toolkit", (Institute of Development Studies).

Activities:

- Approach the issue of rights as claims against the state increasingly being used by different groups to secure protections and freedom for fundamental rights.
- Be aware that different states have different approaches to the way in which sexuality is regulated in law and that while it is helpful to consider different legal approaches and create alliances across jurisdictions, it is important to keep in mind the varied operation of the law in relation to sexuality.
- Study overviews of existing International laws, and the Nigerian provisions of the 1999 Constitution on sexual freedom.
- Identify the conflicts, inconsistencies, progresses of national laws on sexuality as they align or conflict with Nigeria's obligations under international law
- Point out direct state regulation of sexuality that arises primarily in family and personal status law, health administration, and criminal

law. Argue that more indirect regulation also operates through citizenship and immigration, housing and inheritance laws.

- Explain how traditional, state laws have been reluctant to interfere in matters concerning the private sphere – that is, the family and domestic life.
- Note limitations of interventions and focus on coercive behaviour that limit individuals' control over their own sexuality (such as FGM, forced or early marriage and lack of access to reproductive health care).
- Highlight the essence of privacy and rights. Examine how the law on privacy guarantees or restricts human rights
- Engage in the debate on right to privacy and the role of the state in regulation of people's intimate lives.
- Establish how states have a duty to protect individuals from sexual and domestic violence and investigate when such violence takes place. For instance, Turkey and Bulgaria failed to do this and as a result were in violation of their European Convention obligations.
- Identify and explore the relationship between privacy and violence in the domestic sphere
- State the issues surrounding demand for rights and protections as citizens, or making claims for sexual independence.
- Identify and list the traditionally 'private' areas in which state intervention and control is considered acceptable. For instance, many states regulate and sometimes criminalise private same-sex sexual activities, sex work, abortion, etc.
- Establish whether decriminalisation of same sex sexual activity in private, lead to public acceptance or state protection of expressions of same sex attraction in public.

INSIGHTS INTO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

The international UN conferences of the 1990s have been a turning point for the national and international field of family planning. The key conference

has been the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994. The Cairo Conference broadened the concept of family planning into a concept of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). It acknowledged worldwide each individual as a rights holder with regard to sexual and reproductive health. The new human rights-based approach turns governments, non-governmental organizations, parliaments, the media and the economy into duty bearers. They are obliged in their specific field to defend, to protect and secure the sexual and reproductive health of all people.

Sexual and reproductive health encompasses health and well-being in matters related to sexual relations, pregnancies, and births. It deals with the most intimate and private aspects of people's lives, which can be difficult to write about and discuss publicly. As a result, the public often misunderstands many sexual and reproductive health matters. In addition, cultural sensitivities and taboos surrounding sexuality often prevent people from seeking sexual and reproductive health information and care and preclude governments from addressing the issues.

Yet, sexual and reproductive health profoundly affects the social and economic development of countries. The issue of SRHR for the sexual minorities is usually under-addressed and there is not enough material or information to support the training of journalists which leads to more misunderstanding, misrepresentations and misinterpretations. This is due to a number of factors ranging from cultural, moral and legal issues associated with the sexual minorities. This vacuum for better awareness and understanding of the emerging SRHR issues leads to the lacuna or knowledge gaps it generates against the victims, resulting in more stigma and discrimination related to the sexual minorities, which can jeopardize their health and limit their opportunities to contribute to the development and productivity of their communities and countries.

Role of the Media

- The media are central in setting the agenda and influencing the nature and direction of public opinion about LGBTI people.
- The media also act as tools for shaping public policy and national laws by creating a platform for public debate on sexual and reproductive health issues of the gays, lesbians, transgender, and intersex people.

- The media do not only inform and educate the public about the rights and needs of sexual minorities, but also provides analytical and critical reporting that forms a basis for a more tolerant society and a more conducive legal environment.
- The media play a very important role in the conscientization of the public about sexual minority rights and their access to sexual and reproductive health services. Through the media, communities can be mobilized and influenced either positively or negatively to promote enjoyment of human rights by all.

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SECTION TWO

REPOSITIONING MEDIA COVERAGE ON GENDER AND SEXUALITY

5 | **REPORTING GENDER AND SEXUAL MINORITY: THE INTERPRETATIVE IMPERATIVE.**

Lai Oso and Jide Jimoh

Introduction

Journalism, in all its manifestations: news, feature, editorial, opinion writing, cartoon remains the main sense making institution in our contemporary world. The pictures we carry about in our head about our society, what we define as realities, the issues and topics we consider as important and the knowledge we have about our environment and the actions we are likely to support and/or take are often based on what we receive 'second-hand' from the mass media. In other words, media representation is of crucial importance based on "the assumptionthat how members of society see themselves, how they are viewed, and even treated by others is determined to a great extent by their media representation" (Bernstein 2002: 260).

The media permeate our everyday experiences, hence their power to structure our sense of social reality. A media scholar, Graham Murdock, was speaking in this vein when he said "the mass media therefore represent a key repository of available meanings which people can draw upon in their continuing attempts to make sense of their situations and find ways of acting within or against it...The mass media are therefore simultaneously both a key resource for the everyday construction of meanings, and a direction of such construction" (Murdock, 1974: 206-207).

Based on this, journalists as gatekeepers are expected to provide for the public more than just the fact inherent in an event or situation. But this is the predominant model of news journalism. Based on ~~the~~ adherence to objectivity and other routine values of news production, journalists function

more as stenographer of power, regurgitating the views of those they accord the privilege of access to the news columns. In this model of news journalism, the news is defined as “the account of an event...” (MacDougall 1977: 11).

The news thus defined cannot capture the complexity of today's society. For journalism to adequately fulfil its function, as the sense-making institution in a modern society, it must be able to provide understanding. The mere reporting of facts, however objective, fair and balanced cannot meet the informational and educational needs of the citizens in today's complex society. This calls for other models of journalism which transcend the limitation of routine news reporting. One of these models is interpretative reporting.

The essence and need for this brand of journalism was first enunciated by a commission of enquiry into the US press. At the time the Commission on Freedom of the Press; (Hutchins Commission) was conceived, constituted and when it gave its report in 1947, the complexity of the world was becoming increasingly clear. Since then, however, the complexity has grown and many more confounding realities have emerged in the society; political, technological, economic and indeed, all sphere of human endeavours. Thus, the recommendation of the commission otherwise known as Hutchins Commission is to the effect that the press should 'provide a full truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning'. In addition, part of the function of responsible press is to present and clarify “the goals and the values of the society,” (McQuail 2005: 171).

The impact of the above recommendation is to the effect that it was no longer enough for the press to be mere conveyer belt for the events of the day but must go beyond the events to provide explanations and relate them to wider contexts beyond the mere content of the news of the day. It must go beyond the sporadic, episodic relays that generally define news so that ordinary members of the society can make meanings out of the flurry of activities around them.

The imperative of the admonition of the commission was further amplified by journalism theorists like MacDougal (1977; 12) when he averred that 'the successful journalist of the future is going to have to be more than a thoroughly trained journeyman... He must be capable of more than routine

coverage and to interpret as well as report what is going on.” To do this, the journalist must adopt the interpretative lens in reporting both general and sensitive topics. One of the most sensitive topics in the contemporary world is the issue of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people (LGBTI), which is the subject of this chapter.

Interpretative reporting, also called indepth reporting is a genre of specialised reporting. It demands a firm and comprehensive grasp of issues in a particular beat or situation. There is no gainsaying the fact that only a knowledgeable reporter can interpret the facts given by his sources. As a form of specialised reporting, interpretative reporting:

- is analytical and explanatory.
- creates an understanding and in-depth meaning.
- is not episodic or event based.
- is contextual.

In order to meet the above criteria, the interpretative report must “contain a challenge made possible by record research and historical perspective” (Mollenhoff 1981:3). The interpretative reporter puts events in a stream of causes and effects, showing trends and consequences. As Melvin Mencher puts it “an event that is isolated for a news story is plucked from a larger cycle or stream of related events. The interpretative story puts the news event into this cycle or stream” (Mencher 1983:122). Another writer says interpretative reporting is “the deeper sense of news”. Echoing Mencher he goes further, “it places a particular event in the larger flow of event. It is the colour, the atmosphere, the human element that gives meaning to a fact. It is in short, setting, sequence and above all significance” (Lester Markel, quoted in MacDougall, 1977: p.164).

A summary of a typical report on LGBTI reveals the befuddling of issues involved because they lack interpretation and explanation, hence the inability of such reports to create understanding and empathy. They also lack depth since they are mere parroting of those who condemn the practice typically on cultural and religious grounds. The report is also episodic as they occur only when an action pops up in that realm. This is quite unlike in other 'pressing' issues of society- the economy, politics, and sports etc. which have dedicated specialist reporters and analysts who report on regular basis. But the explanation (not justification) for the dismal scenario is found in the philosophy and theory of the dominant perspective in journalistic writings. It

has been argued that the quest for mere 'balance' in news reporting leads to a certain formalism and formularizing in apprehending and comprehending the news narrative “like a mortice and tenon joint in carpentry” (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005:4) which has “sometimes risked appearing acontextual”.

Let us look at some of these tools of journalistic training and socialization.

The 5Ws and H

According to Potter (2006:12), “depending on the complexity of the story, a reporter might ask those questions in several different ways”:

WHO:

Who is involved in this story?

Who is affected by it?

Who is the best person to tell the story?

Who is missing from this story?

Who has more information about this?

Who is in conflict in this story? Do they have anything in common?

Who else can I talk to?

WHAT:

What happened?

What is the point of this story? What am I really trying to say?

What does the reader, viewer, or listener need to know to understand this story?

What surprised me? What is the most important single fact I learned?

What is the history here? What happens next?

What can people do about it?

WHERE:

Where did this happen?

Where else should I go to get the full story?

Where is this story going next? How will it end?

WHEN:

When did this happen?

When did the turning points occur in this story?

When should I report this story?

WHY:

Why is this happening? Is it an isolated case or part of a trend?

Why are people behaving the way they are? What are their motives?

Why does this story matter? Why should anyone read, watch, or listen to it?

Why am I sure I have this story right?

HOW:

How did this happen?

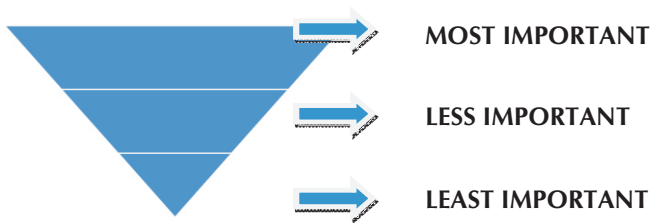
How will things be different because of what happened?

How will this story help the reader, the listener, or viewer? The community?

How did I get this information? Is the attribution clear?

How would someone describe this story to a friend?

Given the "history in a hurry" nature of the news on the beat, it is easier for a news story to fulfil the first 4Ws which may be suitable or sufficient for routine\beat\spot news. The structure of such news will also be presented in the traditional inverted pyramid style.



As stated at the beginning of this chapter, interpretative reporting goes beyond this content of a news idea to involve the context in order to provide explanations and background that will help to clarify the story and provide wide choice from which the reader can make more informed choices. Interpretative reporting involves:

1. More complex factors which must be explained for clarity.
2. Multiple sources (not just the dyadic polarities).
3. Differing or conflicting interpretations and perspectives obtained from different sources.
4. Goes beyond chronicling the facts, i.e. analysing the facts to give them meaning.

It is because of these characteristics that interpretative reporters are able to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How?
2. Why? and
3. So what?

Thus the consequence, impact and meaning of any story can be brought to the fore and the society can be said to be truly well informed and educated

In providing answers, the reporters must go beyond just the nose for the news to developing what Curtis MacDougall calls “a querying attitude towards life” (1977:164). In doing the interpretative report, the reporter goes deeper than the routine reporter to examine:

- Causes and motives
- Significance
- Comparison
- Situation and trends (historical perspectives)
- Consequences/Implications

In exploring any/or all these angles, his/her inquisitive mind tries to find answers to these questions (MacDougall 1977: 153):

1. What happened? That is, what really happened – the complete story, not just the end results of a series of incidents.
2. Why (or how) did it happen? That is, what is the explanation?
3. What does it mean? That is, how to interpret it?
4. What next? In the light of today's news, what may be expected to happen tomorrow?

5. What's beneath the surface? What are the trends, ideologies, situations and so on, of which one should be aware so that an overt news incident will make sense?

Putting issues and events in their proper contexts and perspective is the main rationale in interpretative reporting.

Indeed, Dennis and Ismach (1981) provide the differences in available forms of reporting in his three models of news reporting:

Models of News Reporting and Writing (Dennis & Ismach, 1981)

	CHARACTERISTIC USES	QUESTIONS ANSWERED	EXAMPLES
DESCRIPTIVE STORY	A straightforward description of the basic facts of a situation or event...	Who, what, where, when	Spot news stories, event coverage
ANALYTICAL STORY	A story focusing on the forces at work, the competing interests, points of view, possible explanations and interpretations of how and why the situation or event occurred	How, Why	Backgrounders explaining the forces (seen and unseen) behind the event or issue; shows how multiple sources, different views influenced the event.
CONSEQUENTIAL STORY	What the story means, both currently and in the long term... what consequence does it have...?	So what	Interpretive stories that grapple with meaning of issues, events, problems.

Source Dennis & Ismach (1981)

One genre of journalistic writing that gives wide room for analysis is the feature story which we shall consider next.

The Feature Angle

Since the straight news story is racy, time-bound and produced under the pressure of deadlines, one media content that yield itself to in-depth treatment of issues is the feature story. The feature story goes beyond the news to explore more angles, provide more background, context and interpretation. It engages more experts as sources on the subject. The feature story is particularly recommended to any writer on LGBTI matters because by its very nature, the issues involved are complex and sometimes confounding. The feature angle is favoured because:

1. It is not event dependent.
2. It allows for analysis and interpretation;
3. It allows the reporter to build reader's interest in the issues
4. It demands creativity and enterprise.

The feature functions to enhance readers' knowledge and understanding by elaborating and expanding information already provided in the news and by providing background and interpretation. The feature angle can be illustrated by the D EE formula.

1. D- Description
2. E-Explanation\Elaboration(providing context)
3. E-Evaluation(Expert opinions)

The formula removes the reporter from being a mere conveyor-belt of unprocessed information and a ventriloquist of society's dormant voices.

Guide to Good Interpretative Reporting

To be able to achieve the level of reporting and writing that society needs now, a specialized reporter-whether in news or feature-must take note of the under listed checklist:

- ▶ Gather all the relevant facts/information – 5Ws & H with more attention to the why and how?
- Provide all the major sources, viewpoints and

interpretations

- Account for why there are conflicting viewpoints/differences
- Explain what it all means
- Provide connections/comparisons
- Consequences/impact
- Examine trends
- Can you see a large picture?- connecting the events to larger contexts
It is only then that the larger picture emerges for society.

► Accuracy:

- Pay attention to every detail
- When in doubt check, when still in doubt check again, and leave out when doubt persists.
- A story can get all facts right and still be inaccurate if:
 - Pertinent facts are omitted;
 - When cause and effect are not properly stated.
- Give all sides a chance - no favouritism
- Give the readers all the relevant informaton/facts
- Make the story complete and relevant;
- Be careful of the use of adjectives/qualifiers;
- Use specific/concrete words;
- Avoid technical jargons (when inevitable, explain them);
- Brevity and conciseness; Don't overwrite

► To make story credible:

- Don't attribute the obvious but circumstances, causes, statement etc;
- Be wary of accepting official statistics – it is easy to lie with figures;

- Be careful of spurious accuracy;
- Be careful of faulty comparison:
- Illustrate – use tables, graphs, comparison and contrast, create a picture in the mind of the reader;
- Use statistics understandable by the reader – percentages, averages, etc;
- Use figures sparingly, making them meaningful and relevant.

Unlike the routine reporter who often waits for an event to happen before writing the news, the interpretative reporter must be able to develop story ideas and create his own reports. He must be innovative and enterprising. The following tips will be useful:

- Think, observe, listen
- Have nose for news
 - Recognise the news possibilities of an issue, event or information
 - MacDougall (1977) lists the following as its components:
 - Ability to recognise that the information can be made of interest to the reader;
 - Ability to recognise clues which may lead to the discovery of important news;
 - Ability to recognise the relative importance of a number of facts concerning the same general subject;
 - Ability to recognise the possibility of other news related to the particular information at hand.
- Consult other people, records and documents (library, internet);
- Make a list of ideas as they come;
- Evaluate, prioritise them – review;
- Make a list of potential sources, type of information required;

- Discuss your ideas with your superiors/editors.

In doing interpretative reporting, the following ethical points must be considered.

- Social responsibility vs. commercialism – service to the people and community must be the cardinal principle of all forms of responsible journalism;
- Maintain social distance and have a sceptical attitude – don't get compromised; Responsible journalism must jealously guide its independence and autonomy.
- Be careful of anonymous sources – look for documentary evidence;
- Respect confidentiality;
- Don't disregard secretaries, messengers etc.

One of the cardinal principles of journalism which has more or less become a cliché is that 'facts are sacred, comments are free'. To demonstrate the importance of these principles, opinions are separated from news which is expected to contain the facts. Interpretative reporting, despite the insistence on interpretation and backgrounding is based on facts, not opinions. There is a vast difference between the two as the former Associate Editor of *New York Times*, Lester Markel once insisted. In making the distinction, he said,

Interpretation is an objective judgement based on background knowledge of a situation; appraisal of an event. Editorial judgement, on the other hand, is a subjective judgement; it may include an appraisal of the facts but there is an additional and distinctive element, namely, emotional impact" (MacDougall, *ibid*: 164).

To drive home the difference, interpretative reporting must be based on adequate knowledge of the issue, research and multiple sources in order to provide contexts and perspectives which give meaning to facts reported in the news. As a brand of enterprise journalism, it is not armchair writing.

Stereotypes and the LGBTI

News production is influenced by many factors, some of which are beyond

the control of the reporter. A potent set of factors in this regard relate to cultural values and ideology. Inherent in these factors are the codes and conventions that journalists employ in representing the world as they report the news. Stereotyping is a major candidate in this regard. In media studies, McQueen has defined it as “the continuous repetition of ideas about groups of people in the media. It involves taking an easily grasped feature or characteristics assumed to belong to a group and making it representative of the whole group” (McQueen 1998:141).

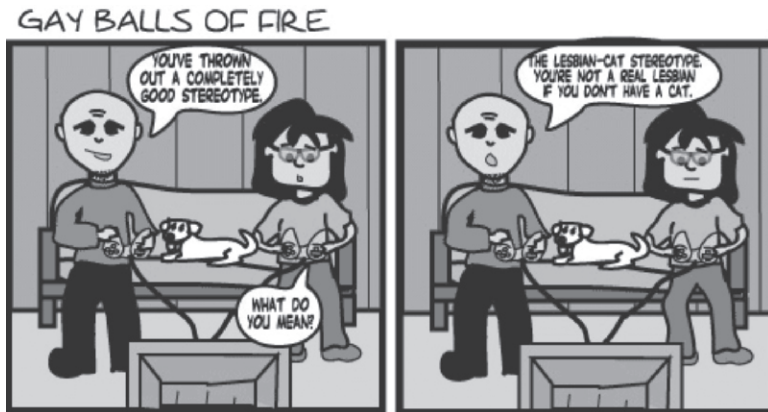
Although stereotypes are rampant in media reports, one of the most common sources of stereotypes is in reporting LGBTI. The reason is not farfetched: the long history of unease with their roles and relevance in society. Even on less controversial issues, it is difficult to swim against the tide because reality is usually socially defined. Journalists, despite the ethical demand for objectivity, neutrality and detachment, are members of the society. They breathe the prevailing cultural air, steeped in the current beliefs and values and in order to fulfill their social obligation to the society, journalists must be aware of their prejudice and stereotypes which may influence their perception and consequently their reports.

For journalists and other social workers, this reality must be borne in mind as they go about news production. The real situations are not as real as they seem. Social psychologists have written extensively on the motivation and effects of social categorizations like stereotypes. In a summary Tajfell and Frazer (1984:427) aver that:

- People show an easy readiness to characterize vast human groups in terms of a few fairly crude “traits” or common attributes;
- These characterizations tend to remain fairly stable for fairly long periods of time;
- They tend to change to some extent, slowly, as a function of social, political or economic changes;
- They become much more pronounced and hostile when social tensions between groups arise;
- They are learned early and used by children before emergence of clear ideas defining the groups to which they applied;

- They do not present much problem when little hostility is involved, but are extremely difficult to modify in a social climate of tension and conflict.

So, there is a theoretical connection between the process of categorization and the emergence of stereotypes and that is why journalists cannot afford not to go beyond general categorizations in defining and projecting social issues concerning groups in society. The “lens” with which the media project issues to society can and do affect the reality in society since the media set agenda for the society. In an increasingly complex world and with the proliferation of media outlets and convergence of platforms made possible by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), the role of the media has become increasingly critical. Different platforms are replete with stories and views on the LGBTI stories that on cursory look are usually full of stereotypes. For example, the cartoon below repeats long held views about Lesbians:



Gays and lesbians are one of the few groups that can still be discriminated against “legally.” America's gay rights group, The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), asked the studio heads behind Sacha Baron Cohen's movie, *Bruno* to add a tolerance message at the end of the film. GLAAD activists fear the Golden Globe-winning star's stereotypes of gays in the film go too far. The group insists that Cohen uses every negative depiction of homosexuals in his portrayal of the materialistic Austrian fashion journalist Bruno. A statement from the studio's press office reads, “Bruno uses

provocative comedy to powerfully shed light on the absurdity of many kinds of intolerance and ignorance, including homophobia.”

Given this pervasive negative representation, the media cannot afford to merely join the bandwagon but to penetrate the physical, social and psychological motivations and explanations so that people can make informed choices based on properly contextualized stories.

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6 | CONTEXTUALISING GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN DEVELOPMENT: REPORTING UNDER-REPORTED ISSUES

Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika & Ganiyat Tijani-Adenle

Introduction

“...there can be no sustainable development as long as discrimination of one of the two sexes/genders exists. The injustice created by inequalities based on gender/sex discrimination threatens in the long run not only the discriminated gender but the entire society.”

(Sarker, 2006:2)

Development objectives/goals cannot be achieved when inequality and prejudice are entrenched in the society (McGuire & Popkin, 2009). This is because one cannot effectively emancipate a population when a significant section of that population is subjugated. A major index for measuring development, therefore, is equality; a situation in which individuals in a society have equal opportunities for achieving their full potentials, regardless of their sex/gender and/or sexual orientation.

Individuals in every society are classified based on their sex - male or female (the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women); their gender, masculinities and femininities (the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that society considers appropriate for men and women) and their sexual orientations [the way and manner by which they satisfy their sexual desires – that is heterosexuals (who have sexual relations with the opposite sex), homosexuals (who have sexual relations with people of the same sex - Lesbian, Gay) and bisexuals (who can have sexual relations with both male and female)]. There are also some other categories of individuals who do not fit perfectly into the categories

mentioned above, like the transgender (whose physiology or gender expression do not match their assigned gender).

These categorisations are of interest because they determine the assumed obligations of individuals in the society, the privileges they can claim from the society, the way their fellow citizens will relate with them and how they will experience and/or challenge these realities. They are also important because analysing gender helps in examining:

The ways in which apparently obvious and natural differences between women and men have been constructed socially over time, and further examines the ways in which those supposed differences have been central to relationships of power and inequality (Gender Matters, n.d.).

Every society has guidelines (whether written or undocumented) on what (wo)men should be and how they should satisfy their sexual desires, with whom, when and where. Individuals who do not conform are gradually alienated and their rights systematically denied thereby limiting their development. Yet, no community can be said to be fully developed when a significant section of that society is deprived.

The role of the media in all these is therefore critical because the media influence societal perceptions of what is acceptable and not acceptable (Byerly & Ross, 2006). The power of the media to equally allocate or withhold “public recognition, honour and status to groups of people” (Carter & Steiner, 2004:1) has also been established. The media, due to newsroom cultures, profit and regulation (Franks, 2013) have also been known to “replicate the hierarchy of power much the same manner as the larger society” (Ross, 2004) thereby reinforcing societal cultures, norms and values, (rather than challenging them) regardless of their impact on the lives of women and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT, henceforth) peoples. The role of the media has also been brought under scrutiny due to the fact that sexist and hegemonic media contents continuously “socialise people, especially children, into thinking that dichotomised and hierarchical sex-role stereotypes are 'natural' and 'normal' (Carter & Steiner, 2004:2). This chapter, therefore, discusses the role of the media on gender and sexuality in development from the angle of reportage. That is, how the media can capture social change and emerging social complexities (surrounding gender and

sexualities) in the interest of an all-inclusive development.

Women, LGBT and Inequality

Gender is a key factor in the power, privilege and possibilities that some people have and some people do not have in our societies, and how this affects progress towards equality (Gender Matters, n.d.: 16).

The subordination of women to men the world over, and across all cultures and class due to patriarchy¹ has been recognised. According to Sherry B. Ortner (1974: 67), “the secondary status of women in society is one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact”. The inequality question is therefore not limited to a race, religion, region or rank but one that cuts across all sections.

A lot of women are restricted by childcare and household chores from earning an income, the few who do are constrained by patriarchy from earning equal salaries with their male counterparts [not in West Africa, but on some other continents – (Byerly, 2011:79)] or limited from reaching top positions; some women (in some cultures) cannot inherit property amongst others. Women are also deemed failures if they cannot sustain their marriages and the society tries to rationalise rape and other forms of violence on women by *blaming the victim* or *excusing the perpetrator*. Societal expectations therefore make women suffer all forms of abuse *in silence* just to conform to expectations. These and many more are the realities of the lives of countless women.

Situating women's freedom and equality in development is imperative, as most, if not all, of the eight MDGs cannot be achieved without gender equality and securing liberty for women. Extreme poverty and hunger cannot be completely eradicated if women are not free to inherit or own property, or if they are encumbered by household and childcare tasks and thus prevented from seeking employment or earning income. Also, universal primary education cannot be achieved if a section of the society is still holding on to the myths that women will end in the kitchen, girl-child education promotes promiscuity or education for women is not a necessity. Furthermore,

¹Patriarchy is a form of social organisation in which men are presumed superior to women, men hold political and economic powers while women's role are restricted to childcare and housekeeping due to perceived emotional and psycho-social weaknesses that may not allow them handle governance and/or leadership positions.

maternal nor child mortality cannot be reduced if delivering children through caesarian section is seen as a reproductive deficiency in women. HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases will still be rampant if women are not empowered to be sexually resourceful, whether within or outside of marriage and if men are still subliminally tutored to perceive masculine promiscuity as acceptable.

The certainty of the position of women in all societies in general and in Nigeria in particular, is that the subordinate position of women makes them vulnerable to various forms of abuse [both in the private sphere (the home) and in the public sphere (in the society)] and limits the actualisation of their potentials. Government laws and policies alone, cannot, therefore, positively impact the conditions of women if the foundation of women's inequality in the society (patriarchy) is not addressed. The reality therefore is that the abundance of development policies and the proliferation of development aids and programmes targeted at the population may be completely ineffective if patriarchy, the foundation of the gender norm/roles, stereotypes, limitation and prejudices that hinder women is not tackled (McGuire and Popkin, 1990; Sarkar, 2006).

The media consequently have important roles to play (as socialising agents) in challenging these hegemonic cultures and bringing to fore women's sufferings and trials through in-depth and adequate coverage of women's issues, framed in the proper perspectives. The *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (1996:99) notes that the media project "negative and degrading images of women in media communications" and this serves as a draw back for efforts targeted at securing gender equality and empowerment for all women, everywhere. *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* is 20 years September, 2015 and most of the observations about the media's projection of women have not changed. We wish to state categorically that the conditions of women will not improve until the societal perception and treatment of women improve and this cannot be achieved if the media do not adjust their negative coverage of women.

Sexual Minorities²: LGBT and Inequality

Individuals who are not strictly heterosexual³ (in sexual orientation) are exposed to homophobia⁴, transphobia⁵ and are vulnerable to hate crimes. We are not aware of any study in Nigeria which has examined the rate at which LGBT people are targets of hate crimes but Michelle Marzullo and Alyn Libman (2009: 2) in a study in the United States on *Hate Crimes and Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People* report that in 2007 alone, 1,265 LGB-biased hate crimes were reported to the FBI.

But apart from hate crimes, LGBT individuals suffer prejudice, discrimination and other negative reactions from people due to their sexuality and these affect their mental health and social development. Apart from the fact that societies do not like non-conformists, ignorance and the prevalence of myths about the LGBT people may also be responsible for homophobia and transphobia and the media have a responsibility to educate the people.

There is a very low level of media reportage of the LGBT community in Nigeria, partly because of the religious, socio-cultural constraints and the law [Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition Act) 2013] ratified in January 2014 against the propagation of homosexuality]. The reason could also be due to the fact that majority of Nigerians are against homosexuality and the media project the mainstream. A report of a survey (on attitudes to homosexuality) of 39 nations by United States' Pew Research Centre (2014) *The Global Divide on Homosexuality* shows that Nigerians are strongly against homosexuality and sexual minorities. The report claims that "at least nine-in-ten Nigerians (98%)" are against homosexuality and believe that it "should be rejected by the society". The Nigerian media, therefore, project the mainstream orientation and avoid unsettling the status quo. Meanwhile, the few times

²Sexual Minorities as used in this context refers to individuals whose sexual identities, orientations and/or practices differ from that of the majority of the people in the society or are not the mainstream heterosexual orientation like lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender. Although some of these groups reject this classification as they believe it entrenches discrimination or highlights their difference.

³Heterosexuals are individuals who have emotional and romantic attraction towards the opposite sex. This sexual orientation is the most common and widely accepted across all race, religion, region and class.

⁴Homophobia refers to negative feelings and reactions to homosexuals, individuals who have emotional and romantic attractions to people of their sex.

⁵Transphobia refers to fear of or prejudice and discrimination against people who are transgender or who are perceived to transgress norms of gender, gender identity or gender expression.

[Source: <http://www.lgbt.ie/information.aspx?contentid=84>].

the LGBT are reported, the media reports are framed round negative news values like 'oddity' and 'unusual', thus indirectly entrenching the myths about the sexuality of the LGBT.

This is in line with the Spiral of Silence theory. This theory of political science and mass communication was propounded by German political scientist, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in 1974. The theory postulates that the media publicises mainstream opinions and individuals with divergent, alternative, differing or controversial opinions become silent or refuse to voice their views for fear of isolation.

It can be harmless, therefore, to argue that the media, apart from the economic benefits of reporting more “profitable stories” are affected by the societal culture and orientation, and they would rather replicate the hierarchy of power much the same manner as the larger societal culture (Ross, 2004) rather than challenge it. This goes in line with the Spiral of Silence theory's postulate that people have the inclination to remain silent and not present a differing view when they feel that their outlooks are in opposition to the majority view (in the society) on a subject (Noelle-Neumann, 1991). It is also in line with critical media scholars' view that the media tend to reproduce the dominant cultural strains and hegemonic perspectives, thus supporting and maintaining the status quo. Gaye Tuchman has argued as far back as the 70s in her seminal work *Introduction: the Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media* that the media systematically segregate and annihilate minorities from media contents.

The media consequently rarely cover issues about the LGBT and the society is therefore denied the opportunity of appreciating their (LGBT) lives, perspectives and the realities they deal with as individuals in the society. With this absence of information and the subliminal curtailment of the LGBT voice in Nigeria comes the inability (of the LGBT people) to exercise the agency (personal involvement) required to hold the government and society accountable for their rights and the freedom to interact freely in the society in the manner they view themselves and the way they want the society to see them.

Reporting Women and the LGBT

Fair gender portrayal is a professional and ethical aspiration,

similar to respect for accuracy, fairness and honesty (White, 2009).

This section gives recommendations on how to report women and the LGBT fairly and accurately. Reporting as used in this context covers “any forms of journalism work, including writing, content creation, subediting, headline and caption writing, whether in print, digital and broadcast media. The guidelines are also applicable to journalism training and public relations” (NUJ, UK: n.d.).

Reporting Women

A plethora of recommendations abound to guide the media on the equitable coverage of women and men, including all vulnerable population. A few suggestions, specific to hard news reporting adapted from UNESCO's *Framework of Indicators to Gauge Gender Sensitivity in Media Operations and Content* (2012:39-48) are presented below to aid the media in projecting a balanced perception of women, a necessary condition for the creation of a just and equal society within which they can achieve their potentials:

Representation in the News: Journalists should balance the population of women and men used as sources of information and/or opinion in news and current affairs content; portray women seen, heard or read about in news and current affairs content (including images) in work-related scenarios, rather than focusing mainly on home/domestic related scenarios. Also, balance women and men seen, heard or read about in news and current affairs content across various social strata (e.g., wealthy, working class, political elite, poor and rural) rather than focusing on a particular class or sex; balance the use of women and men as sources of information/opinion for economy, sports, technology, real estate and other specialised stories in news and current affairs content; and dedicate a percentage of stories centrally/specifically on women and/or issues of special relevance to women (i.e. gender-based violence, women's rights, women's achievements etc.).

Fair portrayal of women and men and the elimination of stereotypes: The media should avoid stories with stereotypes (openly sexist interpretations of the characteristics and roles of women and men in society). Also, content producers should be careful not to entrench stereotypes that promote sexuality in stories (depiction of traditional “feminine”/“masculine” characteristics and male/female roles, thereby making them appear normal

and inevitable and excluding other possible traits and functions for men and women in society); and be careful not to over-portray women as victims (e.g., of crime, violence/atrocity, conflict, disaster, poverty, etc.). It is important to show women and men as survivors (i.e. with active agency despite adverse experiences/circumstances such as crime, violence/atrocity, conflict, disaster, poverty); provide multi-dimensional representation/portrayal of men and women (indicating journalistic effort to challenge/counter gender-based stereotypes). Journalists must be careful to avoid the use of sexist language by reporters or broadcasters, excluding in the case of direct quote from a source (i.e., indicative of bias, discrimination or stereotyping based on sex or gender role).

Coverage of Gender Equality and Equity Issues: Media organisations should publish/broadcast adequate stories focusing on issues of gender equality/inequality (stories about specific cases of equality or inequality between women and men, relevant policies, legislative issues, programmes designed to protect and promote human rights, women's rights and gender equality; and publish/broadcast stories highlighting the gender equality/inequality aspects of events and issues (including politics & government, economic & business, war & conflict, crime, violence/atrocity, poverty, science/technology, sports, etc.)

Coverage of Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Journalists in the coverage of GBV should use non-judgmental language, distinguishing between consensual sexual activity and criminal acts, and take care not to blame the victim/survivor for the crime. Also, journalists should use the term 'survivor' rather than 'victim' unless the violence-affected person uses the later term or has not survived; identify person(s) affected by gender-based violence as sources, with their evident consent; and take care not to invade the privacy and/or denigrate the dignity, of the violence-affected person on gender/sex lines. In addition, journalists should use background information and statistics to present gender-based violence as a societal problem, rather than as an individual, personal tragedy; and include local contact information (in stories/broadcast) for support organisations and services available to persons affected by gender-based violence.

Reporting the LGBT

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people have the right

to fair, accurate and inclusive reporting of their life stories and concerns. As with all members of society, the media should treat LGBT people with fairness, integrity and respect (UK NUJ: n.d.).

There is a difference between promoting homosexuality and providing the media's publics with accurate, fair and just information about the LGBT people and community. It is imperative therefore for the media to be balanced in their reporting as the LGBT are a part of the Nigerian community.

Below are some of the guidelines and terminologies to use or avoid (from the UK National Union of Journalists) when reporting the LGBT:

Guidelines on Terminology

While some LGBT groups and individuals have in an intentionally subversive manner adopted words generally regarded as demeaning if not downright hateful, such as “queer” and “dyke”, you should only include them in your work if they are used by the person being reported or quoted. Even then, use such terms with due consideration of context and audience.

Take care when using the word “homosexual”. Outside of scientific and clinical discourse, the word has outdated and discredited connotations of psychological disorder. When discussing homosexuality and transgender issues in social contexts, the preferred and more widely accepted terms are “LGBT”, “gay”, “bisexual”, “lesbian” and “transgender”.

Note that this is not an issue of political correctness. Rather, it is about the need to relate personal stories in ways that are clear and unambiguous, and reflect as far as possible the prevailing social consensus.

The words “gay” and “transgender” should not be used as nouns. Another example: “lesbian” is gender specific, so while “lesbian couple” is grammatically correct, the term “lesbian woman” is both unnecessary and tautological.

Similarly, avoid using such terms as “homosexual relationship”, “homosexual couple”, etc. Better to simply use “relationship”, or if necessary and directly relevant to the story, “sexual relationship”. Likewise, “couple”, or again if necessary and relevant, “gay couple”.

The term “sexual preference” is discouraged, as it does not reflect the

scientific consensus on the balance between nurture and nature in sexual development. The preferred term is “sexual orientation”. The term “sexual preference” suggests that being lesbian, gay or bisexual is a free choice. In some cases this may be true, but the term has been adopted by anti-LGBT individuals and organisations seeking to “cure” LGBT people of their “preference”.

“Gay lifestyle” and “homosexual lifestyle” are most often used in a pejorative sense. The lifestyles of LGBT people are as diverse as those of other folk, in which case the above terms are nonsensical.

“Admitted homosexual” and “avowed homosexual” are loaded with subjective judgement. To those concerned, the terms are downright offensive, given that the words “admitted” and “avowed” suggest that being gay is somehow shameful or secretive. If one must qualify the description of a person's sexuality with its degree of public visibility, the preferred terms are “openly lesbian”, “openly gay”, “openly bisexual”, or simply “out”, as in “an out gay man”. However, the latter assumes an appreciation of the term “come out of the closet”.

Try to avoid political shorthand such as “gay agenda”, “homosexual agenda”, or even “LGBT agenda”. These terms are used by some to create the perception of a co-ordinated, negative and sinister conspiracy, rather than the pursuit of equality for LGBT people. Better to use specific descriptions of the social issues concerned, such as the promotion of civil equality, and the tackling of workplace bullying and discrimination. This applies similarly to terms such as “special rights”, when “equal rights” or “equal protection” is a more accurate description of the LGBT issues involved.

Transgender

Transgender people are those for whom their current gender identity differs from that declared at birth, whether or not they have later undergone surgical gender reassignment (i.e., a sex-change operation). The term transgender also covers intersex people. That is, individuals who naturally possess both male and female biological characteristics.

As with lesbian, gay and bisexual people, a person's transgender status should only be mentioned in journalistic reporting if it is pertinent. Similarly, a journalist should not investigate a transgender personal life just because

they have declared themselves to be transgender. This includes investigating the private life of a transgender person just because they work in a position which carries a high degree of public responsibility. The same respect for privacy and the relevance of a person's personal life in investigating and reporting should be applied to transsexual people as other members of society.

Care should be taken in the use of "sex change", "pre-operative" and "post-operative". Unless, that is, you are referring specifically to the personal impact of surgical gender reassignment on the individuals concerned. Otherwise use "transition". Don't assume that a transgender person has undergone or intends to undergo sex-change surgery. It is also inappropriate to emphasise surgery when reporting on transgender people, as to do so underplays the breadth of their real-life stories.

As with lesbian, gay and bisexual word "transsexual" should not be used as a noun. Also, take care when using it in adjectival form. Its contemporary relevance is restricted largely to scientific and medical discourse.

In your reporting, always refer to a transgender person's chosen name, and ask them which personal pronoun they would prefer to be used to describe them. If this is not possible, use the pronoun consistent with the person's appearance and gender self-expression. Avoid putting quotation marks around a transgender person's name or pronoun. When referring to gender identity, use unambiguous terms. That is, a person who is born male and transitions to become female is a "transgender woman", whereas a person who is born female and transitions to become male is a "transgender man". Within the transgender community, members often refer to themselves using the shorthand 'trans'."

Reporting the Under-Reported

Requesting fair, accurate and non-stereotypical reporting of women and the LGBT should not be equated to feminism or promotion of LGBT. The essence of this chapter is the need for the media to be fair, accurate and just in their reporting of all individuals in the Nigerian society regardless of their sex, gender or sexual orientation. It can be argued that the core responsibility of the media is to inform, and not solve society's problems, and that the media is not responsible for hegemony and cannot solve it. However, the position of

the media as the fourth estate of the realm requires it to be socially responsible and fair to all. The media must therefore, not just merely inform the people, but empower every member of the society with accurate information for them to better relate with themselves, their fellow citizens and the community, especially in a multi-lingual, ethnic and religious nation like Nigeria.

It has been observed that the event-driven nature of the Nigerian media reportage deters them from capturing complex social issues (Tijani-Adenle & Oso, 2014). Media spaces should not only be given to politicians and managers of multinationals who host most public events. There is a need for the media to dedicate airtime and print pages to features and human interest stories, especially those affecting women and the LGBT (in the right frames) to provide the society with the opportunity to appreciate and understand these *minorities* in the 'appropriate' manner without the usual degrading images and myths.

Researchers have also observed that “many Nigerian journalists are not enlightened on gender issues” (Tijani-Adenle & Oso, 2014:103). There is a serious need for the civil society, media professional organisations and media training institutions to provide trainings and resources on gender and sexuality to media workers in Nigeria.

The social responsibility role of the media needs to be highlighted at this point. The media must serve as a “means of social integration” (McQuail, 2013:37) by “reflecting popular views” (McQuail, 2013:38) rather than just those of the dominant sections of the society. It is vital for the media to provide a level playing field for all in the society and appreciate the fact that they are not just any other industry, but an industry that should help in engendering freedom, justice, equality, peace and development.

This chapter therefore concludes that the media can accelerate gender and sexual orientation balanced development through rigorous and compelling reporting that investigates and explains credible responses to social problems from a fair, balance and just perspective. compelling reporting that investigates and explains credible responses to social problems from a fair, balance and just perspective.

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7 | **ETHICAL JOURNALISM: REPORTING GENDER AND SEXUALITY**

Lanre Idowu

Introduction

We begin with some clarifications. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with values; it deals with what is considered decent, moral, just, and appropriate conduct. Ethics is viewed as practical normative activity concerned with how we live without causing harm to others as we discharge our responsibilities. Journalism, on the other hand, refers to the craft of providing regular, intelligible reporting of happenings in society. Ethical Journalism, therefore, belongs to the province of providing society with regular, meaningful reporting that is guided by a sense of propriety. It is a professional practice that is guided by observance of agreed rules of engagement and shaped by good taste and conduct. The importance of ethical journalism is underscored in this view expressed by Stephen A. Ward “Journalists as members of news organisation have rights, duties and norms because as human beings, they fall under general and ethical principles such as to tell the truth and minimize harm, and because as professionals, they have social power to frame the political agenda and influence public opinion” (Ward, 2009, p. 296).

Characteristics of Ethical Journalism

- Emphasises the people's right to know
- Provides account of happenings in society by processing information into news and serving it in an easily understood manner
- Strives to serve the Public Interest in challenging journalists to be the eyes, ears, heads, hearts and voices of the general public in their

reporting and analyses.

- Deals with a mass audience by surmounting the barriers of time and space. What is served by the media in Lagos, Nigeria can be easily accessed by someone in Canberra, Australia or Cairo, Egypt either immediately it is posted or through archival research.
- Encourages the consciousness of the burden of providing news speedily across barriers of space and time, it matches speed with accuracy. Because what is disseminated is easily accessible online as soon as it is posted, it is imperative that what is published is near accurate as possible, otherwise the journalist that is supposed to be informing the public may end up being embarrassed and dismissed as purveyor of the untrue, a liability to self and organisation.
- Where there is error it requires that the party involved should quickly own up and correct the error. The journalist must not persist in error, mistaking his/her privileged access to a mass audience for license to disseminate untruth. The fall out of persisting in error is loss of credibility.
- Ethical reporting emphasises what the Diamond Awards for Media Excellence describes as the ABCADER principle:

Accuracy, **B**alance, **C**ontextual **A**nalysis, **D**epth of Research, **E**ngaging Use of Language, **R**elevance of the subject matter

Ethical Journalism: Levels of Responsibility

The journalist's commitment to being guided by a value-system anchored on moral codes of decency, honesty, and fairness can be explained on four levels: the personal, professional, constitutional and organisational.

Personal: This is at the level of the individual. An individual cannot offer what is not possessed. From childhood, every individual is steeped in some notion of what is right and wrong. Education and other agents of socialisation further nurture this sense of propriety so much that when faced with ethical choices, the individual recurses to this individual notion of responsibility to determine the appropriate response to the ethical challenge.

Professional: A profession is governed by some rules of behaviour. Usually classified as Codes of Ethics, they enunciate appropriate and inappropriate conduct. They build on the individual ethical foundation that has been laid at home, and reinforced by other socialising agents. Product of experience and research, these codes speak of the universality of the profession drawing inspiration and strength from all corners of the globe. A professional journalist is expected to drink from this rich fount, subconsciously measuring his/her actions against such settled principles. To put the code of ethics into practice, the journalist must know of its existence, internalise its contents, discuss it regularly to deepen understanding of its wider implications and apply it. The expectation is that the shame of professional censure should guide the true professional to avoid unprofessional conduct and tread the narrow and decent path. Conversely, the existence of a reward system through career growth and media awards should serve as necessary incentives for outstanding professional output.

Constitutional: The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) also prescribes for the media and its operatives the responsibility of serving as faithful watchdogs of society. Section 22 directs: "The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times BE FREE to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people". It is the duty of the journalist to be an agent of development by monitoring State efforts at nation building and critiquing them where they fall short of promoting public good. It is the responsibility of the media to ensure that governance is not done in secrecy but policies and pronouncements are analysed to determine if they are in the interest of the people. It is the responsibility of the media to remind the State of its obligations to respect statutes and conventions. A lot is expected of Nigerian journalists and it is expected that they will give Section 22 wide interpretation to ensure that the best interests of the people of Nigeria are upheld.

Organisational: Every organisation has its *raison d'être*. It has reasons for existing. For a media organisation, it could be to persuade its publics to share its world view, make money through sales/subscriptions/advertisements/sponsorships. It may be to wield power/influence. So every staff is expected to buy into the vision of the

organisation by discharging assigned responsibilities diligently. That notion of responsibility is expected to underpin the journalist's output in such an organisation. Without it the organisation cannot connect with its audience and when an organisation does not discharge its responsibilities to its audiences, it becomes irrelevant, and will not remain in business for long.

In summary, the notion of responsibility runs through journalistic work on the identified four levels—the personal, professional, constitutional and organisational. It is a lot of responsibility to shoulder.

Professional Code of Practice

The Nigerian media has a code of ethics to guide practice. The last one agreed upon by the organized media emerged on March 20, 1998 at what has been known as the Ilorin Forum organised by the Nigerian Press Council in Ilorin, Kwara State. The Nigeria Union of Journalists, Nigerian Guild of Editors and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, which make up the collective known as the Nigerian Press Organisation, formally ratified this Code on that occasion. The document known as the Ilorin Declaration reads:

“THE ILORIN DECLARATION

Delegates at the Forum for the implementation of the Code of Ethics affirm and declare as follows:

That we:

ACCEPT the imperative of a Code of Ethics as a vital pillar of journalism and the necessity for the application of ethics to enhance standards;

AFFIRM that self-regulation through a Code of Ethics and other structures drawn up by professionals would best serve the interest of both the profession and the public;

ENJOIN the Nigeria Union of Journalists, the Nigerian Guild of Editors and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria to ensure the implementation of the eligibility criteria for entry into and practice of journalism in Nigeria, as contained in the Nigerian Press Council Decree No 85 of 1992;

PLEDGE to abide by the Code of Ethics and to promote the observance of its

provisions by all journalists; and

URGE the Nigerian Press Council to collaborate with the Nigerian Press Organisation to publicise the Code of Ethics for the benefit of the press and the public, and ensure compliance with its provisions hereafter.

PREAMBLE

Journalism entails a **high degree of public trust**. To earn and maintain this trust, it is morally imperative for every journalist and every news medium to observe the **highest professional and ethical standards**. In the exercise of these duties, a journalist should always have a healthy regard for the public interest.

Truth is the cornerstone of journalism and every journalist should strive diligently to ascertain the truth of every event.

Conscious of the responsibilities and duties of journalists as purveyors of information, we, Nigerian journalists, give to ourselves this Code of Ethics. It is the duty of every journalist to observe its provisions.

1. EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

Decisions concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalist.

2. ACCURACY AND FAIRNESS

i. The public has a right to know. Factual, accurate, balanced and fair reporting is the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust and confidence.

ii. **A journalist should refrain from publishing inaccurate and misleading information.** Where such information has been inadvertently published, prompt correction should be made. A journalist must hold the right of reply as a cardinal rule of practice.

iii. In the course of his duties a journalist should strive to separate facts from conjecture and comment.

3. PRIVACY

As a general rule, a journalist should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects the public interest.

A. Information on the private life of an individual or his family should only be published if it impinges on public interest.

B. Publishing of such information about an individual as mentioned above should be deemed justifiable only if it is directed at:

- i. Exposing crime or serious misdemeanour;
- ii. Exposing anti-social conduct;
- iii. Protecting public health, morality and safety;
- iv. Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of the individual concerned

4. PRIVILEGE / NON-DISCLOSURE

- i. A journalist should observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and should not disclose the source of information obtained in confidence.
- ii. A journalist should not breach an agreement with a source of information obtained as “off-the-record” or as “background information.”

5. DECENCY

- i. A journalist should dress and comport himself in a manner that conforms with (to) public taste.
 - ii. A journalist should refrain from using offensive, abusive or vulgar language.
 - iii. A journalist should not present lurid details, either in words or picture, of violence, sexual acts, abhorrent or horrid scenes.
 - iv. In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries should be carried out and approaches made with sympathy and discretion.
- . Unless it is in the furtherance of the public's right to know, a journalist should generally avoid identifying relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime.

6. DISCRIMINATION

A journalist should refrain from making pejorative reference to a person's ethnic group, religion, sex, or to any physical or mental illness or handicap.

7. REWARD AND GRATIFICATION

- i. A journalist should neither solicit nor accept bribes, gratifications or patronage to suppress or publish information.
- ii. To demand payment for the publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as a fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event.

8. VIOLENCE

A journalist should not present or report acts of violence, armed robberies, terrorist activities or vulgar display of wealth in a manner that glorifies such acts in the eyes of the public.

9. CHILDREN AND MINORS

A journalist should not identify, either by name or picture, or interview children under the age of 16 who are involved in cases concerning sexual offences, crimes and rituals or witchcraft either as victims, witnesses or defendants.

10. ACCESS OF INFORMATION

A journalist should strive to employ open and honest means in the gathering of information.

Exceptional methods may be employed only when the public interest is at stake.

11. PUBLIC INTEREST

A journalist should strive to enhance national unity and public good.

12. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A journalist should promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace and international understanding.

13. PLAGIARISM

A journalist should not copy, wholesale or in part, other people's work without attribution and/or consent.

14. COPYRIGHT

- i. Where a journalist reproduces a work, be it in print, broadcast, art work or design, proper acknowledgement should be accorded the author.

ii. A journalist should abide by all rules of copyright, established by national and international laws and conventions.

15. PRESS FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

A journalist should strive at all times to enhance press freedom and responsibility.

-(See more at: <http://www.rjionline.org/MAS-Codes-NigeriaJournalists#sthash.76j8k9RS.dpuf>)

Media Credibility

Articles 3, 6, and 12 are relevant to any discussion of gender and sexuality reporting and they have been so highlighted to challenge us to pay more than a cursory attention to them. Much of what passes for sexuality reporting appears to have been driven by hysteria, fear of the unknown or the uncommon. Many grounds have been established in the Projekthope Study on Gender and Sexuality to show a lot is not well with today's journalism. There is evidence of shallow reporting, insufficient grasp of the rudiments of reporting to doctoring of reports and manufacturing of stories to serve narrow interests. Beyond that study, one sees similar examples in our media daily.

The journalist's work is expected to be governed by knowledge, not hysteria, not fear. The public needs to know many things so as to inform the public appropriately. Any talk of media credibility without anchoring it on ethical reporting is meaningless. Ethical journalism enhances media credibility, which is at the heart of the watchdog and gate-keeping functions of the media. A watchdog alerts its owners of danger. It does not bark without a reason. Ethical journalism must not give room to hysteria. It does not bark without a reason. It thrives on knowledge.

What to do with ethical infractions in the media?

Ordinarily, charges should be filed against offenders at the Press Council or the Independent Ombudsman established by the NPAN but both organs are not functioning in the way they should for a host of reasons ranging from a court judgment invalidating much of the Press Council's functions to insufficient commitment to the Ombudsman machinery.

Other options to be explored

- Ethical waywardness should be attacked, first by contacting the concerned media houses directly to give them the opportunity for correction.
- Where that fails, offenders should be named and shamed through professional associations or publications.
- Dedicated Online platforms should publish dubious awards for unethical conduct regularly as a way of mounting pressure on the wayward organisations and individuals.
- Relevant NGOs should be corralled into holding offending journalists to account.

Improving Gender and Sexuality Reporting

We all know the human race is made up of two sexes: male and female. Gender, however, refers to socially assigned roles, expectations and behaviours that are masculine or feminine. Many myths have been broken in human history. Sexuality deals with the sexual orientation of humans. Beyond the physical appearance of a person and the biological attributes endowed, a person may be sexually oriented in a way that does not meet popular wisdom or expectation. Is one born like that or nurtured by the environment to feel that way? The debate is still on and it is best addressed with an open mind. In fact one can say the march of history in many respects is the breakdown of the pillars of prejudice and discrimination. Blacks were once regarded and treated as slaves. Twins were once considered evil and killed in some parts of Nigeria. Some professions were once reserved for some sexes. Nursing is no longer the near-exclusive preserve of women. Marriage is no longer seen as union of man and woman in biological terms. In some cultures women are expected to cover their heads in public; not necessarily because they are Christians or Muslims for instance. In some churches, women are expected to cover their heads, whereas in some others it does not matter.

Journalists must reflect these changes as they occur in the society. The boundaries of ethics is not cast in stone, they change. In the scholarly opinion of word, "Ethics is the never-completed project of inventing, applying and

critiquing the principles that guide human interactions, define social roles and justify institutional structures" (ibid, p. 296). The social responsibility theory of the press enjoins the mass media to reflect the diversity in the society. Journalists have a responsibility to "publish the most accurate and comprehensive truth on matters of public interest..." The basic principles and functions are spelt out in report of the Hutchins Commission, titled *A Free and Responsible Press*. The report enjoins the press to provide "a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the news" and "a forum for the exchange of comments and criticism." The press is also expected to provide "a representative picture of the constituent groups in society; assist in the "presentation and clarification of the goals and values of society"; and "provide full access to the day's intelligence".

The point is that journalism should not marginalise, stigmatise or neglect any social group in the society.

Charge to the media

- Operate from a position of strengthened knowledge or knowledgeable strength. The main issue is reporting that underscores the people's right to know and does so in a fair and responsible manner.
- Vital need to familiarise yourselves with the rudiments of ethical reporting: factuality, fairness, depth of research and investigation, contextual analysis, sensitivity to what will deepen public understanding, emphasise issues in the public interest over those of public interest, accept mistakes and correct them promptly, provide adequate access to parties involved.
- Identify the issues at stake. Give context.
- Provide equitable access to the parties involved. Have an open mind.
- Maintain editorial independence; shun compromise through unethical and corrupt practices of seeking or accepting inducements to slant your report.
- Differentiate between reporting and commentary.

5-way Test of Ethical Reporting

- Is it a factual and well researched account?
- Is it in the public interest?
- Is it fair to all sides/parties to the issues?
- Is the language of presentation ennobling or destructive, sensitive or reckless?
- Does it tower above any pecuniary or vested interest?

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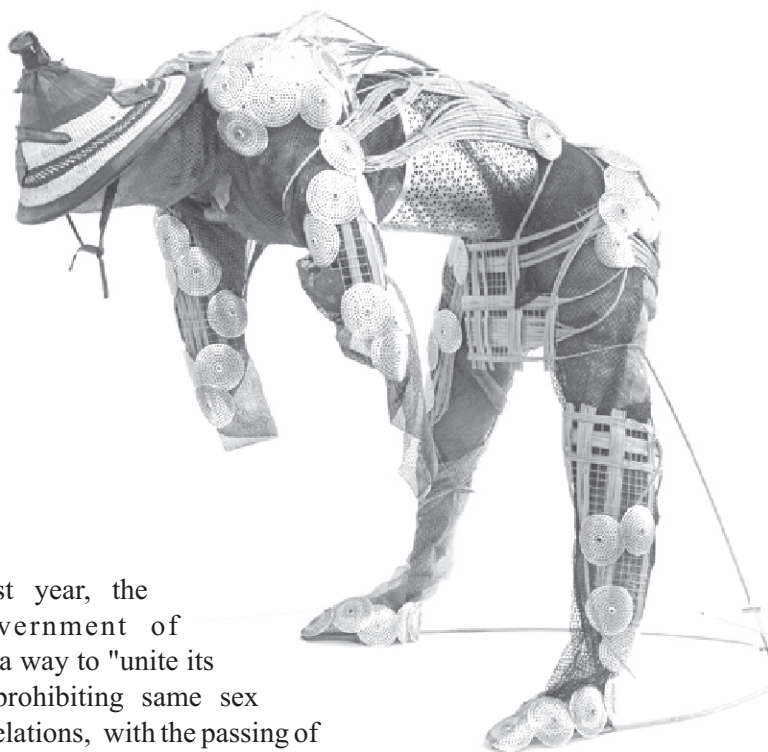
SECTION THREE

ACKNOWLEDGING THE DILEMMA OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY

8

PAST/FUTURE 2015

Adejoke Tugbiyele



This time last year, the Federal Government of Nigeria found a way to "unite its citizens" by prohibiting same sex marriage and relations, with the passing of the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act. But in reality, the entire citizenry of Nigeria is being deceived by its so-called leaders.

In my latest work, *Past/Future*, I use gesture and material to spark a conversation about the hardships that come with being gay - something so desperately needed

throughout Africa. Approached from the rear, the figure's bent-over posture evokes the sexual act of anal pleasure. From the front, the straw hat evokes the status of a worker, rather than the elite. The marriage of these two concepts - sex and labor - has its roots in Foucault's theories. But I have reconceptualised them through an African lens.

Through personal friends of mine in the African LGBT community I learnt that an enormous sex-work industry exists, and being criminalised can lead to extreme poverty, leaving queer Africans very little options on how to make a living. Sex-work becomes an easy choice for those in the lower class and in a country like Nigeria, where the gap between rich and poor is so wide, the wealthy elite often take advantage of poor gays. In addition, extortion is rampant - poor gays who seek to "out" the closeted, are extorted by their pastors, wives or employers. The on-going criminalisation of same-sex love in Africa feeds this monster.

I process these critical issues as I work in my studio. While my sexuality is not accepted by many Nigerians in my family, I cannot help but feel extremely privileged to be openly queer, African and living in America. I am thus inspired to use my art as a platform for healing, cleansing and empowering others.



9 | **IS THERE ROOM FOR GAYS AND LESBIANS IN NIGERIA TODAY?**

Reverend Rowland Jide Macaulay

In my decision to contribute to this project, I agonise about what is relevant and/or important. Who might be reading or listening to the voices of lesbians and gays in Nigeria and whether or not adequate responses are being made? I may agonise, but I am also assured that for many years, quite a few people have listened, some with a degree of inspiration and others perhaps with an attitude of disdain.

It is fair to say that for many years now, I have lived the life of blame and shame, but with increased tenacity, I now move to a conscious place with humility of being celebrated and respected. For many years, I decided to write about the religious hatred and state sponsored homophobia as it affected me and the work of House of Rainbow Fellowship. In this I find lots of power, the power to lift up the burdens and pain of the people and thus providing healing, hope and reconciliation.

Though I identify as a minority and such identification often seen as very controversial, there is often an expectation or limitation. I am African or classified as African descent, I am Nigerian or in certain cases of Nigerian descent, I am Black, brown skin and eyes, jet black kinky hair. I am gay or a homosexual, I am a man who is emotionally, mentally, physically, psychologically, sexually and spiritually attracted to the person of my own

gender, another male. I am a Christian, a follower of the teachings of Christ and I can be further described as a liberal or queer theologian, I am a gay parent, spiritual leader to a few thousands and many more. All of these descriptions place me in the heart of the minority clan. As long as I seek to embrace these identities, I would always be in the minority. I have since learnt that it is not a bad place to be except that there are many atrocities that come with and against minority groups. I will explain below.

As a gay African man or Nigerian, I am hated by the majority of misguided citizens, I have stepped over the line on many issues that people disagree with, particularly issues for the liberation and freedom of homosexuals. I continue to look for a radical approach for the inclusion of gays and lesbians into a society with culture and tradition, to fight against legal, religious and political homophobia. I still remain unpopular in certain circles.

I was born in London nearly 50 years ago, I was raised in Nigeria, my formative years were in the heart of Lagos and I was raised in the understanding of the cultures and surrounding traditions, so I know fully well what it is like to be Nigerian. I, like many, endured the wrath of failing systems and idiotic parenting, my family was typical, there was/is nothing special about my family, especially looking into the context of my family life and the effort to understand and embrace that minority aspect of my personality.

Talking about homosexuality never featured in my family, we never watched television enough to discover any homosexual characters. If you grew up in Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s, you will understand that the current bombardment of information was highly unlikely in those times. We were contented with the playground gossips and the news that came from carefully composed and recorded music, my favourites remain, Fela, Sunny Ade, Sonny Okosun, IK Dairo and Ebenezer Obey.

Navigating sexual orientation in today's understanding never surfaced when I was growing up. I was raised in a strict cultured African and Christian household, the phrase or terminology related to homosexuality, same sex attraction or gay was far removed from the realities of the time. For me it was simply a taboo, a word or expression that was never to be altered nor spoken.

Growing up gay was harsh; this was not a subject you could lightly introduce

at home, church or school. The fear of being judged or found out stood high amongst many things. There were no inclinations of who might be gay, there were many trials and errors, as sexual puberty sets in, boys my age, played sexually, some with a clear understanding though irrational about same sex love. We used the words my "best friend", how this is attributed to same sex love was different from the understanding of same sex behaviour. As a teenager, examining each other's genital was a playful thing, however for me it was more as I developed my rationale for being gay. It was also the same time that I was predisposed to Christian scriptures that blatantly condemned homosexuality to death and called it an abomination.

I never heard a sermon or a preacher speak against homosexuality as a young boy, but discovering the text with little or no understanding of its relationship in my context of same sex desires made it even more difficult. So I would often respond to my feelings of same sex attraction, and the consequences are often personal guilt and self trial, judgement and condemnation. This pattern continued until my late teens, but I can never recall when I specifically knew I was attracted to the same sex, it was just there, a feeling strong enough but unexplainable.

At school, I played with other boys my age who were sexually active, and I recall particularly falling in love with another boy to whom we enjoyed sex, rubbing and caressing each other's penis, orgasm was a myth, at this point I had not learnt much about ejaculation. Looking back at these encounters, it was difficult to know if the other boys responded the way I did. Perhaps, the one I presumed to date, was not gay, none of us knew who and what we were. This would be understood later in life for me.

In 1998, after living in England for nearly fifteen years, I decided to visit Nigeria; it was now four years after I had been divorced from a heterosexual marriage that lasted just three years. This was the time I was ready to meet other gay men, I had earlier met a few gay Nigerians visiting London through friends, but the excitement of meeting them and others in Nigeria was overwhelming. Unlike today with very good internet and social media, we had just email addresses and perhaps for the few privileged mobile phones.

In Nigeria, I will hang around many gay men, in places such as Ikoyi, Victoria Island, Ikeja. My arrival often made a trail of announcements and it was incredible how in a short time a score of gay men in their flurries would

assemble in friends' homes. Some of the newly emerging Pentecostal churches were a haven for homosexuals; we had a click or a caucus. On several occasions we would all go to church and end up at several lunch events such as barbecues or a pop up front room parties. You had to know who was who to be allowed in.

The pressure of being a minority at various levels comes with its own issues and there are more pains in living a lie. You have to be creative in telling stories that are not true, as it is difficult to remember these lies. You simply do not speak about who you have had sex with, where you have been and who with. The secretive nature of being a minority was uncanny.

I trained and qualified as a Christian theologian in 1998. It was not until 2005 that I was able to reconcile being gay with the office of a clergy.

Creating safe spaces depends on who you ask and what it is for? Many of the men I socialised with in Nigeria between 1998 and 2006, in particular are mostly closet gay or bisexual men, most were married, or engaged to be married and strongly believed that their homosexuality would pass away, it was to them a phase. There was a strong need and desire to please their families even if that caused anxiety and personal distress. Alarmingly, with the work I do today, I see a lot of frustrated gay, bisexuals and lesbian people, still struggling to find acceptance by forcing themselves into heterosexual relationships or marriage. Whilst I believe that we are able to make our choices, some of the choices we make are due to irrational and unnecessary pressure.

In 2006, after many years of feasibility studies and research in Nigeria amongst the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) community about setting up a Christian ministry that is inclusive; in the period advancing towards this idea, I dedicated my time also training in liberation, inclusive and queer theology, in England and which later took me to California USA and Calgary Canada. This was a time of personal triumph in my understanding of being gay and a Christian, it was too good to be true. After these experiences, all I wanted was to share the liberating factors with the world, with people in hostile regions, where being gay is a life sentence or even death. The message of liberation for me had become urgent and a matter of life and death, salvation and redemption.

Looking back at my own upbringing under the clouds of injustice, discrimination, religious dogma, marginalisation and misinterpretation of the scared text, when it came to homosexuality, I was outraged. All I wanted and envisioned was a new kind of safe space for LGBT people who acknowledged or at least self identified as LGBT and truly wanted to be part of the Christian faith. I was ready after my training with a passion to set up the first church ever in a hostile region of Africa. It is called House of Rainbow, a church that does not discriminate against whoever you are and with a primary mission to the LGBT people of Nigeria.

A safe space was established, but it wasn't for long. For about two years after the ministry began, there were backlashes and uproar in the Nigerian media about a gay church. Less than two year to the start of the ministry, we were faced with damaging media assaults, lives of our members were at risks, many were victims of extortions, arbitrary arrests, many suffered physical abuses, emotional and mental trauma. What we thought was a safe place became instant hell for many. In this new reality we stood firm and reorganised ourselves and reconsidered on how best to serve the needs of a growing community.

In 2015, House Of Rainbow Fellowship now meet in five major cities, with a growing membership, sadly due to the antigay laws passed in January 2014, we cannot go back to opening our doors and welcoming everyone. We are now extremely secretive about our locations and who is able to attend; we have in place policies about safety and security.

Social media has been very helpful in the way House of Rainbow has been able to organise, we are currently largely on various forms of social media, where we are able to provide personal one-to-one counselling and interaction, provide basic teaching of 'what the bible says about homosexuality'. We also convene and support members to attend conferences where they can learn and study more. The biggest part of our work is classically referred to as the "virtual fellowship".

This is a brief essay. I have written many other articles about being gay, Nigerian and a Christian. The joys and pains of being a minority or in the minority, is never easy nor will it get better, unless attitudes towards gay people changes, when legislations and religious teaching can be in line with the understanding of humanity and human sexuality.

There is no doubt about the psychological burdens on gays and lesbians in Nigeria, it is rather unfortunate that discrimination causes many to flee or live far away from families and communities and likewise often forces many to stay and conduct self destructive behaviours and adopt other alienating characters.

It is my hope in sharing this article that we understand how far we have come and how far we still need to go.

There is room for manoeuvring, only if we try. There is room only if the gays and lesbians also make a conscious decision to step up and speak out. However, I am mindful of the danger and emotional trauma. Whilst I hear many stories of fear and anxiety, I also hear stories of boldness and courage. Yet, my experience and that which we have enabled at House of Rainbow is still being challenged, whatever happens we will keep going. It's nearly our tenth anniversary.

10

MY LIFE AS A GAY NIGERIAN

Micheal Ighodaro

"Rejection, stigma and persecution define the life of an average gay person in Nigeria" - Mike Ighodaro.

My childhood wasn't the best any child would hope to have. But everything that happened during this period has made me who I am today; a strong, motivated young man, not defined by his sexuality.

At 17, I had only one choice to move out of my parents' home. I was mandated to move out by my mother, and I had to leave. Ever since, I have been on my own. When I moved out, I moved in with friends who were just like me, I also spent considerable time on the streets of Benin City, Southern part of Nigeria.

I confided in my parents quite early that I was gay. But that singular act turned things on their head, initially for me. My mom was a church leader, and dad was a very traditional man. When I told them I was gay, they went to a great length to make me straight. They took me to witch doctors; they took me to see so many pastors. I had to comply with several bouts of fasting, days and nights. From their desire to have me changed, I concluded that there must be something wrong with me. At the end of the day, all that was done to make me change did not yield result. During high school, I saw that I was not alone. I made friends that were like me, and concluded that there was nothing wrong with me. Those friends were all I got with the joy and happiness they gave. We were really close with each other, and still are.

Many people like me were sent away from their homes by the people they loved the most. So given that reality, and the need to be strong for one another, we agreed on a spot and began hanging together on a daily basis. We called it Jerry's corner, because our host was Jerry by name. We would meet there daily at about 2 p.m. Later on, I got very involved in helping people find places to stay and it fell on me to counsel them. That was how the seed of activism which defines my engagement today started off. Before I knew it, I began to get requests from people to visit their homes and speak with their parents about being gay. I became known for helping people in this way, and people called me many names, like "tall boy," "universe boy," because I was travelling a great deal.

So I was involved in getting group of gay members together, I helped to organize gay parties in hotels; we knew some gay hotel managers that would help secure it for a weekend. Gay people from all over Nigeria would come to meet others like them and enjoy a safe space for a couple of days. While organizing one of these events in Abuja, a friend told me about an LGBT organization in Abuja and I decided to visit. When I got there, I realized they were talking about HIV. It was the first time I had heard HIV being discussed for gay people. Until then I thought HIV was for heterosexuals alone, because it was always related to pregnancy or talked about in terms of intercourse with a vagina, and there was nothing about anal sex, so I figured, it's not for and about us.

When I saw the presentation about how HIV can be contracted through anal sex, I couldn't believe what I was seeing and hearing. After the presentation, I spoke to the director of the organization and told him that I wanted to be part of what they were doing. He told me that I could start as a peer educator. I started going to the field and handing out condoms and lubricants, giving information about HIV prevention, and they were giving me a monthly stipend of about \$30. For most people, being a peer educator was something extra, but for me it was my mainstay. The organization then also hired me as a cleaner for the office. This was a great opportunity for me, because apart from cleaning and running errands, I was asked to help type presentations and reports, to attend meetings, and I began to learn so much about human rights, gay rights, how to talk about HIV and health. I also moved into the office and slept there. Eventually the other staff stopped thinking of me as the cleaner. I

was doing so much there that they treated me like a member of the staff, but at the end of the day, I was still cleaning the office.

I began working closely with a doctor there. I would travel with him, conducting HIV testing. I was his counsellor. The emotions in me were so much to handle, because it was like out of five tests, maybe one would be negative. Counselling so many people who were finding out they were positive made me think about how I had been just as naïve as they were. I had a feeling that I too was positive, but I was really scared to get the test. When I finally did, I tested HIV positive. I immediately became very concerned for my friends. After I got tested I began making trips back to Benin on weekends to visit friends and share information with condoms and lubricants. Many of my friends also tested positive, and I realized that there were very few resources for gay people living with HIV. Everything was focused on prevention. So, I started focusing more on giving support to people who were positive, because without that support it was becoming more difficult to cope with the stigma out there. I started leading a large support group for HIV-positive gay men in Nigeria and eventually started my own organization that provided services to gay men living with HIV. And that is what took me to an International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C. which turned my life around.

One incidence that will remain forever fresh in my memory happened in September of 2012. I was making my way home from hanging out with friends. That was in Abuja. I heard someone call out my name, as I stopped to look back to see who it was. Suddenly, it came from nowhere really. By the time it was over, I had my ribs and hand broken by my attackers who spared nothing to beat me up, for no other reason other than the fact that I was a gay person. I could not even attempt getting treatment because at that time of the day and in my state, I may need a police report to show I was not a hoodlum. Reporting to the police was out of it as that would mean explaining why I had been beaten. That knowledge is not what you ordinarily share with police officers in Nigeria. Of course, I have seen several friends who have had similar fate befell them in the past. Some were only lucky to be alive. Meanwhile, the following morning, I got barrage of death threats in my phone and email inbox. Fearing for my life, the multiple-entry visa stamped on my passport previously for the AIDS Conference in DC became a last

resort. I can say I am lucky, for several of our community members; there is no visa to fall back to. This is a reality the average gay person must contend with in Nigeria today.

I feel Nigerians underestimate what this community faces on a daily basis. And again, it is important to understand that this is a very big community driven to the background largely. Because of the extreme situation in Nigeria, the gay community developed a very strong sense of family. Our persecutions are real, and I just wonder why that is the case? The media owe it as a responsibility to the gay community in Nigeria to report the challenges we face rather than fuel the hatred that people harbour for us which is largely driven by ignorance. That public education function is what the media have not really been top about. It is what it must take seriously.

I want people to know one thing, and it is an important fact. I am as real as the back of your hand. I am me, the way I am, and it is futile to blame me for how I have been created, because I am wonderfully made. You just must be courageous enough to accept the reality that some people are only made differently from you.

11

HOW TO DO FRIENDSHIP

**(An excerpt form the forthcoming novel
Fishing for Naija)**

Olumide Popoola

John opened the door and stepped out of the car. Uncle T was shifting from one of his loafers to the other, white handkerchief in hand, wiping his shiny forehead. He pulled on the other door so Karl could come out too. Karl didn't. The bungalow door opened. He could hear the excitement in John's voice. Greetings were exchanged. Words passed back and forth. Uncle T laughed. Happy, it seemed. John laughed too. A joke. Apparently. Karl remained in the taxi.

"I think you will need some privacy. We will be back in one hour."

John hugged him. Karl finally stood in the cemented driveway.

"I believe we have some catching up to do."

Stepping away from the entrance the father entered the room, leaving the door wide open, turned his head, scrutinized him, two deep lines furrowing the forehead, eyes a good stare in them. They were the opposite to Karl's, no deflection whatsoever, no putting things at bay, first, then processing in small bits, no warmth as far as Karl was concerned, but all getting into you, straight away.

"Carla."

It was musty inside. No one had bothered to open the windows when the electricity cut off in the morning.

"Sit down. What do you want? Water, soft drink?"

"I'm fine," Karl replied. The thank you was stuck in his throat.

"This is not what I've been expecting."

It was funny like that. *This is not when I was expecting you*, Karl thought. *You should have been at the airport.*

"What do you think of Nigeria so far?"

"I love it. Really."

He could see his father's legs, ashy feet in leather sandals with a large flap covering the top of the foot, a small ring for the big toe. They were obviously different. Very different. Uncle T and him. No moisturisation on this front. At all. The seat cushion shifted. The father leaned back, arms crossed over his head, touching the wall, eyes looking straight ahead. Very delaying tactic. For emphasis. For drama. As if rehearsed. But then again he'd had two weeks since Karl's arrival in Nigeria. Two weeks of leaving everyone in limbo, just so he could now come with heavy guns.

"I was expecting a daughter."

A mosquito was buzzing around, making the silence between their words like a spotlight. Karl followed it with his eyes.

"I always knew. As long as I can think. Mum always lets me be myself. As long as I do nothing wrong. Nothing real bad, I mean. Be polite. I want her to be proud of me. When puberty started I just said I wouldn't pretend to be a girl no more. She understood. She knew. I had never been one."

It was hot, no fan or air-conditioning to separate the time from the weight that

crushed down. His father was looking at him. Then back on the floor in front of him.

"Is it the reason you left the airport, why you disappeared?"

Karl looked at the father, from behind his long eyelashes, head cocked to the side. The mosquito buzzed and buzzed like there was no buzzing tomorrow.

"Who knows?"

"About my gender? Uncle T should have known but somehow he doesn't."

"Your mother never told him."

The father leaned back farther, as if that was possible, really, but once you are in over-the-top drama mode, you have to go there. All the

way.

"When he told me about you I asked him. Naturally I wanted to know. Is it a boy or a girl? He didn't know. All he knew was that there was a child."

Funny how life foreshadows better than spoiler alerts on Internet gossip magazines. The baby. He was his mother's child. Her baby. It was that simple, didn't need a long story.

The father was looking at him, arms up and behind his head.

"Who told you to dress as a boy? What is this?"

"I just told you – " but Karl stopped. The father was already showing him to the door. So much was clear.

"I cannot accept your behaviour. I think it's best for you to return to London straight away. There is no space here for people like you."

He lifted himself slowly off the cushiony chair. It was grand, the movement. Calculated for maximum impact.

"Please send my wishes to your mother."

For real? The mosquito must have found its way into one of the bedrooms. It was quiet. The buzzing would have helped.

"How did you know?"

Father had already closed for the day. Moved on like end of discussion and so forth. You could have almost mistaken him for talented. So much angling for effect showing in one body.

"Your uncle in London." He moved his feet. "What is his name?"

No eyes for Karl. He looked at himself. Metaphorically speaking.

"Godfrey."

The father was taller than Karl, a squarer version. Solid, well proportioned. He did his steady, confirming authority strides, all the way down the hall and he returned with a small plastic bag, folded. Karl studied him. Now that this part of fate was sealed he better checked whether they resembled each other at all. The face, yes, some of it, the body, in a shrunken kind of fashion but he had noticed the lashes. A little longer than usual and curved but nothing like Karl's.

"This is for John, for his help. You can stay with him tonight. Tunde, Uncle T, told me that you two are close."

He handed him the bag. It contained wads of bundled nairas.

"There is no need for him to know."

He looked at Karl again. Eyes all the way, straight into the mind. Something, wanting something. Something undiscussable.

"Or Tunde."

"He will probably wonder why I am not staying with you. This is the whole reason for my visit – "

"I will make an excuse. I will have someone arrange your flight back to London."

One last brief inspection, then the father returned to his bedroom, closing the door behind. Karl could hear a car climbing back onto the driveway. John. There had been no embrace. Their skin had not touched each other's in any way. He left the house, door ajar, stepped out. Away. (Later at John's, Karl's friend Nakale is staying over before Karl returns to London.)

"Are you sleeping?"

Nakale laughed. "Wetin you do my friend? You dey wash with toothbrush?"

Karl laughed too. "I'm just so tired Nakale. I needed a minute."

"I dey get am, my friend."

"No, it doesn't work like that. You get me or pidgin, not both."

"Why not?"

Nakale made bloody sense, like usual. Karl was lost in his track.

"Not sure. You're right. I dey get you."

"You fi teach me proper London pidgin o."

"For sure. But we don't call it pidgin."

When had he become so annoying? It was dark. There was no electricity. It was beautiful that way. Quiet. The neighbourhood seemed to be rationing their generator fuel. The thick air lay on Karl's feet pushing him into the ground.

"You want me to put on a candle?"

"Yes now. You fi pack your tings."

"Not really much you know. I can do it in the morning. John will help anyway."

Karl lay down on the slim mattress. He had put on his boxers and another t-shirt. It was hard to lie still. His body wanted to be lifted, feet on the cool ground.

"You dey a'right?" Nakale all worried, turned towards him, leaning on his side.

"Yeah. How's de mat? Sorry, it must be so hard. We can swap."

"Ah ah! Me, I have slept too many nights like dis. No be special like for you."

"Yeah."

Karl was tired of jokes. Tired of everything.

"Nakale...I need to tell you something."

The gap. It was reaching.

"We be friends, right?"

"Me and you, we be brothers from different mothers."

"Thanks."

The heat was like a blanket. Thick one. Maybe it wasn't going to be so bad. If you're enveloped like that what could happen?

"You know, on my papers—"

"Which papers? The one you write for village?"

"I mean my passport."

"Which kine problem you get for passport?"

"No problem really, well some times—"

"Karl, wetin?"

"It never say Karl. There is no Karl. Not on my passport."

They were quiet. Nakale rolled onto his back and folded his arms behind his head. He was staring up into the air. Karl spread his legs a little because it was still warm but a small breeze had found its way through the window. No need for those thighs to stick together just because of a little sweat.

"Me... I don't know how to say am."

"Karl—"

"Yes."

"For passport him say you be woman. Dis na be de thing you fi tell

me?"

There was an abyss. Nakale shuffled on his mat, and one arm came away from under his head. Karl was looking for the right words that would stop this suction that was pulling him into his thin mattress through the floor into the atmosphere, and who knew if his body would hold, if it would remain in one piece.

"How do you know?"

"The woman at the buka."

"But how does she know?"

"She just know. Maybe she feel am. Ah neva ask her. She just say people pretend that we can know everything by looking just one side. But we can't. It is never like dat. To be a friend is not to ask. It is to be there and wait for the time. And then listen."

He sat up. "When me and you become friends she tell me, make ah better be true friend if ah be any friend at all."

"She said that?"

"Yes."

"And?"

"And wetin?"

"What do you think? I mean—"

"Ahbeg, now you dey make say e be problem?"

Karl's breath was shallow. How great darkness could be. No viewing of his emergency lighting blush.

"De question I get is from de woman. If ah be friend make ah be real friend, she say. And me ah tink ah be true friend."

He turned around pointing his head towards Karl. Karl kept staring at the ceiling. There wasn't anything to see in this darkness but still. One didn't have to face one's friend head on. Not all the time, anyway.

"Karl, me I dey stay for here. You need some more explanation?"

12

THE WAY WE ARE!

Steve Aborisade

FOUR NIGERIANS SHARE THE CHALLENGES OF BEING GAY IN THE COUNTRY TODAY

A good way to understand the reality of homosexuality is to take an objective peep into the lives of individuals who belong to any of the broad categorization of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT). In attempting to do that, it was only proper to be led by members of the community in a learning journey through the curves and valley of what it really means to be of minority sexual orientation in Nigeria.

During an informal interactive session, four gay men shared what the average LGBT person goes through on a daily basis in the country, especially with a new law that further criminalises homosexuality coming into being. You will learn among other things how the average LGBT person describes himself/herself, how their context embraces or rejects them, how their lives are being shaped by the world they live in, which largely remains a function of the space that our society yields to them and their coping strategy in a country that has become increasingly hostile to them, threatening their very existence as human beings. In this report, four Nigerians who have been tagged A, B, C and D relate their experiences.

yes. its bold

The home as the first major hurdle to a purposeful life

A: My home remains a source of discomfort and a difficult place. My parent knew I was gay, and, painfully, they got to know for the wrong reason. I was actually caught in the act, when I was around seventeen or eighteen years old. I had a close friend who was always in my house, but no one suspected it

went beyond the mutual fondness we had for each other. He became almost like a part of the family. He had cooking skills, so he was always cooking for us. We would eat together, and I remember mom would say "your friend knows how to cook a lot o!" However, I didn't know my mom had been suspecting us, but she didn't confront me. But, one day, the bubble burst. We were locked up in my room and she must have been hearing moans, but she didn't interrupt us. She sat through it all in the sitting room and waited for me to get done just to find out what was going on and who it was that I had locked up in the room. Since we didn't know she was there waiting, my friend just went out of my room and straight into mum's hands in the sitting room. Even then, she said nothing. I sauntered out to see him off and also met mum seated in the living room. It was so sudden that I could not go back and lock my room in the confusion. By the time I got back, she had gone into my room and seen used condoms and the half used lube and had informed my dad. They confronted me, and it was clear there was nothing to deny again, because they threatened to tell my other siblings if I did not confess. My mum almost fainted, filled with disbelief. It was a bad experience. Meanwhile my dad is very religious, so each time I went out or got back from school, the only thing he told me was – Leviticus (the Chapter in the Bible), Sodom and Gomorrah – all the time. It was really frustrating. I would be happy outside home, but when it was time to head home, dejection would set in. Every day, I must contend with their admonition not to end up in hell, that God is unhappy with me, and that they don't want me to die young. I have asked myself several times, why I am this way, each time I asked, I don't get an answer. Eventually, I see I must accept my reality, I must accept the way I am. I had to leave home to be happy. I am who I am, people say I talk and behave like a lady. What can I do? I did not create myself.

B: Initially, my parents didn't take it as a big deal; they believed I would change as I grow up. They didn't really know much about homosexuality since they weren't educated. I left the village after high school, I left home (South East) for the North and then to Lagos. I like Lagos, I had the thoughts of meeting people and socializing and then I like it when people admire me, like they admire ladies, but Nigeria is not like other places. My family didn't know anything, what they usually say was that I behaved, talked and even walked like a lady. But I have been like this right from when I was born. But they never bothered to inquire beyond that. I was confused at first, because, I prefer to be

with women. Though I admire them, I see myself as one. Eventually, I met other men who were just like me and we became friends. Everything came to a head when my younger sister moved in and started living with me in my rented apartment. She must have noticed that I didn't have a female friend because ladies don't come looking for me, only guys did. She didn't say anything, but then she started bringing men to my home. I challenged my sister that she couldn't bring men home. Maybe she got angry about that; because I discovered that she had called home and told them that I was gay. My brothers called me and told me that they were coming for me and that I should prepare for them. So, I had to ask my sister to leave. I was summoned to the village and I went. When I got there, they asked me when I would be getting married, because they wanted their grand children. I just told them that since they had many sons, if they were really keen on grandchildren, they could call the others, some of whom were older than me to get married. More so, that I lack the financial means to see to their wishes. Then they started saying I had disappointed them and so on, and I just left.

C: My mother realised I was different and at some point confronted me. She called me and once asked sarcastically in Yoruba, *se won o ma beyin wole fun e bayi?* (I hope they have not been having anal sex with you this boy?) I wanted to know why she asked me the question. She said that I shook my butt like a woman. I denied it and frowned. But some of my brothers who are enlightened pressed further and accused me of being gay, because there was a friend of mine who used to come around to the house who also behaved like a lady. So they concluded that I was gay, I was around seventeen years of age at the time. I got fed up but there was nothing I could do. I concluded that I couldn't kill myself; at some point I sought for help from a church but they couldn't help me. My parents despise me; they see me as an outcast, being different and a homosexual. It's as if I am not a human being. Even my brothers do not care about me; they have all abandoned me because I am different.

D: My parents knew that I was gay but they never confronted me till date. My mum loves me, because I help her at home. She is always saying that I am a responsible guy. I am the one who helps her do everything at home. I cook very well, I do make-up for my sisters, and I tidy up the house. So I guess that pushed the fact that I am gay to the background. In fact, when I left home to

stay with my friend, I had to lie that I got a job close to my friend's house. They were even begging me to come back home. One day, my elder brother was shouting that I wanted to disgrace the family with my homosexual acts, my mom didn't understand, so, my immediate elder brother silenced him. Then, my elder sister is very supportive. One particular day, I was caught having sex with my neighbour's son and the boy's mum was trying to cause trouble, but my sister stood by me. She asked the woman why she was not confronting her son who is the same age as I. The women eventually apologised when she saw that it was a consensual sex.

Peculiar challenges faced by members of the community in Nigeria

A: Ha! Being gay in Nigeria is comparable to someone who has leprosy, and unfortunately, a leper cannot come out freely in the community. Lepers cannot even give handshake in the community. A leper is excluded and that depicts the lifestyle of an average gay person in Nigeria. It is a difficult situation.

B: Being gay in Nigeria is not easy. There was a day I was beaten up at Mokola in Ibadan. I was returning from a vigil. Meanwhile, I walk in a very feminine way, so this attracted attention, and before I knew it some people had gathered and they started like 'look at this stupid gay guy, you are a fag'. Before I looked back they had started slapping and beating me. I had no choice but to draw attention of passerby by shouting 'thief, thief'. It did the magic as people came around but my attackers had run away. The people asked me if I knew the individuals who attacked me and I told them I didn't, and truly, I had never seen those guys before. When I got home, my sister also asked me but I couldn't really tell her the reason why I was beaten. I eventually left home to stay with my friend, (pointed to his friend) here, I had to gain some freedom and be able to express myself without hindrance.

But in January 2014, a day after the same sex marriage prohibition bill was signed into law; some guys just stormed our room and started beating us. When we asked what happened, they shouted 'you guys are gay, we will burn this house and you people will go to fourteen years imprisonment'. They beat us and took all we had: phones, laptops and money. We had to leave the house for some time. We went to report at the police station, but nothing was done.

His friend corroborated the story and further indicated that the case was reported at Railway police station, and that after the attack they had to leave that environment for a safe place, because they were still being threatened. The people who attacked us lodged a complaint to the police station that they should come and arrest the gays staying in their areas. They arrested our friend and he spent two nights at the police station before the wife of his late brother came and secured his bail for N30, 000.

C: I have been beaten on a number of occasions before in Ibadan for being gay. There's a particular area at Dugbe in Ibadan, where I cannot walk, I will rather take a bike if I want to pass through that area. If I walk there, they could stone me. Most times they beat me up just for being gay. They complain about the way I walk and other things. But the most painful of my experiences was in Lagos. That was December 2014. I received a call from a friend's phone, the caller asked me what my relationship was with the owner of the phone. I answered that he was a friend and we were from the same town. He then said that my friend had lost his phone and that I should come and collect the phone for him. The person asked me to come to the National Theatre, at Iganmu in Lagos. When I got there, he was probing me about the relationship with my friend. He further said I had to go and sign at a police station inside the National Theatre. I asked why, and he said it was a precautionary measure since I was picking the phone up for a friend. He then grabbed me and started accusing me of being a homosexual, he said I was gay, and, before I could defend myself he had started beating me and eventually stripped me and put me behind the counter inside the police station. He turned out to be a police officer. I was let off when no one was forthcoming for my bail. They collected money from families of several boys they had rounded up through that process.

D: At work, people complain about my feminine features, my voice, gesticulation, the way I talk like a woman, walk like a woman; they started calling me gay and when I reported that to the management, they only told me that anytime they call me gay, I should also call them lesbians! This was at Kankanfo Hotel, in Ibadan. They would always complain that I handled everything like a lady and it was tiring and frustrating altogether. We were two though; one guy came after me who has features similar to mine. They bullied us, and when I could no longer stand it, I just stopped going to work.

Pressure to conform

A: I don't hide my sexuality, how will I even begin to hide it? Most people can add one and two together upon seeing me. So, I am open about who I am. I have heterosexual and homosexual friends. And when people say you can lure others to be a homosexual, I just laugh. A lot of my friends are quite supportive and are allies, but in terms of getting a job/employment as an openly gay person, that may be another thing altogether. Who will employ you? I always wonder sometime that if truly Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed because of homosexuality, I think by now there shouldn't be homosexuals again because all the homosexuals should have died with Sodom. This is one area where people should pause and think about.

B: I was born gay, I became aware at about age seven when I realised I had special feelings for same sex at that young age. I was very young, I was in primary four. When I was fourteen, I realised that my mates were growing and their voices became more masculine and mine was growing tinier, like a woman's voice. People started insulting me because I sounded like a lady. There was a day I entered my room and cried, asking God why he created me this way, I did that for two or three days and stopped because I realised that there was nothing I could do about it, so I continued my life. Meanwhile, there was a day I was dancing in front of the mirror, my sister just came in and said 'why are you dancing like a woman, are you gay?' I laughed and let it go, but I was wondering what the meaning of gay was. Funny enough, there was a day my dad's friend came, I was working at home, so when he saw me, he told my dad that 'don't you see your son is behaving like a woman?' My dad then told him that he gave birth to me like that. I felt ashamed at first but I loved the reply my dad gave him. People actually think I can change, some would suggest I fast and seek the face of God, but deep down, I have asked myself several questions, and now I am convinced God created me specially, only that people cannot see that.

C: I have no doubt I was born gay. From when I was five till around ten years of age, I realized that I wasn't doing what everyone else did. My peers played football, looked for girlfriends but for me; I loved cooking and plaiting hair then. People in the community used to refer to me as a lady but at that age I didn't know who I was. But as time went on, people began to refer to me as gay. I had to pick a dictionary and check and then I began to get the idea of

who I was and where I belonged. My parents weren't educated and my life continued until I was around fifteen to seventeen when things became clearer. They teach in churches that it is because of homosexuals that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. But I like people admiring me, just like they admire ladies, but I see that comes with a big price. Now with the rejection from my family members and the challenges I face at home, I have really learnt to just keep to myself. I learnt the bitter way that it is the best I can do in the circumstances confronting people like me.

Accessing Healthcare

A: Another issue that is very important is health. Besides HIV/AIDS which majority of our community have to cope with, there is little or no attention paid to what we face regarding sexually transmitted infections and diseases. In Nigeria as a gay person, if you have anal infections, it is very difficult to go and see a doctor, so a lot of people suffer in silence. When you report yourself and say you have anal warts for instance, the first thing that comes to the mind of such doctors is—this person must be gay. Otherwise, why would he have anal infection? In most cases, it marks the onset of discrimination and stigmatization. For instance I once had a friend who had an unpleasant experience at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU). He had anal bleeding. It was already at a critical stage, but instead of attending to him, they were interrogating him about his sexuality which I think is private. There wasn't support from his family, they deserted him, it was a few members of the LGBT community who knew him that were going to the hospital, assisting and supporting him. Eventually, he died.

So the reality is that most members of the community delay seeking help because of the experience in the hospital setting. And when they agree to treat you, it is with such disdain. Till date this remains as one of the biggest challenges facing the gay community in Nigeria.

B: I was diagnosed HIV positive in 2008. I have to use this opportunity to come open about it. When I was diagnosed, I was really confused. I felt that was the end of the road for me. Before I was diagnosed of being HIV positive, I was having stomach issues, non-digestive issues, ulcer and all these were issues that really got me thinking, but there was nothing I could do about it. I get my treatment at University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan. Till now, none of my family member is aware of what I face regarding my health. And it

is better I keep it to myself.

C: I was diagnosed HIV positive a year earlier, In 2007, I went for counselling and the woman asked if I was gay because I spoke like a lady. The woman said 'no, no, no, I can't touch you.' It became an issue because I took her up. She only concluded that I was gay because I spoke like a woman, not because she had any other fact. So another lady now walked up to me and apologized. I was not placed on drugs because my CD4 count was very high then. In 2013, I was sick, I had a problem in my anus so I walked up to a doctor and when I told him, he asked if I was gay and started preaching to me, quoting Leviticus and so on. You can imagine, instead of treating my ailment, he was preaching to me to change. If there is a way to change, belief me, I would have changed because I am really fed up with all the challenges I face.

Suggested Language on Gender and Sexuality

With the increase of gender and sexual minorities issues in the media, it is important to understand and use proper terminologies when talking about gender and sexual minorities issues in the media. One of the best ways this can be done is researching and learning proper terms and ensuring that coverage of gender and sexual minorities related topics is fair and inclusive. The language used for reporting issues of gender and sexuality should not promote stigma and discrimination of gender and sexual minorities.

Some guidelines

- *Use language that is fair and inclusive.*
- *Use language that is value neutral, gender sensitive and empowers*
- *Journalists should become fluent in gender and sexuality terminologies and then use language that is appropriate for the journalists' audience.*
- *Use descriptive terms which are preferred by the persons who are being described in the report on gender and sexuality.*

GUIDELINES ON TERMINOLOGY

- *While some LGBT groups and individuals have in an intentionally subversive manner adopted words generally regarded as demeaning if not downright hateful, such as “queer” and “dyke”, you should only include them in your work if they are used by the person being reported or quoted. Even then, use such terms with due consideration of context and audience.*
- *Take care when using the word “homosexual”. Outside of scientific and clinical discourse, the word has outdated and discredited connotations of psychological disorder. When discussing homosexuality and transgender issues in social contexts, the preferred and more widely accepted terms are LGBT, gay, bisexual, lesbian and transgender.*
- *Note that this is not an issue of political correctness. Rather, it is about the need to relate personal stories in ways that are clear and unambiguous, and reflect as far as possible the prevailing social*

consensus.

- *The words gay and transgender should not be used as nouns. Another example: lesbian is gender specific, so while lesbian couple is grammatically correct, the term lesbian woman is both unnecessary and tautological.*
 - *Similarly, avoid using such terms as homosexual relationship, homosexual couple, etc. Better to simply use relationship, or if necessary and directly relevant to the story, “sexual relationship”, likewise, couple, or again if necessary and relevant, gay couple.*
- *The term sexual preference is discouraged, as it does not reflect the scientific consensus on the balance between nurture and nature in sexual development. The preferred term is sexual orientation. The term sexual preference suggests that being lesbian, gay or bisexual is a free choice. In some cases this may be true, but the term has been adopted by anti-LGBT individuals and organisations seeking to cure LGBT people of their preference.*
- *Gay lifestyle and homosexual lifestyle are most often used in a pejorative sense. The lifestyles of LGBT people are as diverse as those of other folk, in which case the above terms are nonsensical.*
- *Admitted homosexual and avowed homosexual are loaded with subjective judgment. To those concerned, the terms are downright offensive, given that the words admitted and avowed suggest that being gay is somehow shameful or secretive. If one must qualify the description of a person's sexuality with its degree of public visibility, the preferred terms are openly lesbian, openly gay, openly bisexual, or simply out, as in an out gay man. However, the latter assumes an appreciation of the term “come out of the closet”. For example: “Ricky Martin is an out pop star from Puerto Rico.” Avoid the use of the word “homosexual” in any case.*
- *Try to avoid political shorthand such as gay agenda, homosexual agenda, or even LGBT agenda. These terms are used by some to create the perception of a co-ordinated, negative and sinister conspiracy, rather than the pursuit of equality for LGBT people. Better to use specific descriptions of the social issues concerned, such as the*

promotion of civil equality, and the tackling of workplace bullying and discrimination.

- *This applies similarly to terms such as special rights, when equal rights or equal protection is a more accurate description of the LGBT issues involved.*
- *Some anti-LGBT people and organisations (including governments) continue to peddle a false association between LGBT people and child abuse, pedophilia, incest, bestiality. This is deeply offensive and dangerous, and on a logical level, entirely inaccurate. Such claims, innuendoes and associations often are used to insinuate that LGBT people pose a threat to society, to families, and to children in particular.*
- *Terms such as 'most-at-risk adolescents' (MARAs), 'most-at-risk young people' (MARYP), and 'most-at-risk populations' (MARPs) should be avoided because communities view them as stigmatising. It is more appropriate and precise to describe the behaviour each population is engaged in that places individuals at risk of HIV exposure, for example unprotected sex among stable sero-discordant couples, sex workers with low condom use, young people who use drugs and lack access to sterile injecting equipment, etc. In specific projects where such expressions continue to be used, it is important never to refer to a person (directly or indirectly) as a MARA, MARYP, or MARP.*

Hermaphrodite vs. Intersex: The term hermaphrodite was used in the past to describe intersex people. Today, intersex people feel uncomfortable with this outdated derogatory term. This term only refers to animals and plants with ambiguous reproductive structures, NOT HUMANS! The preferred term is intersex.

Transgender

Transgender people are those for whom their current gender identity differs from that declared at birth, whether or not they have later undergone surgical gender reassignment (i.e., a sex-change operation). The term transgender also covers intersex people. That is, individuals who naturally possess both male and female biological characteristics

- *As with lesbian, gay and bisexual people, a person's transgender status*

should only be mentioned in journalistic reporting if it is pertinent. Similarly, a journalist should not investigate a transgender's personal life just because they have declared themselves to be transgender. This includes investigating the private life of a transgender person just because they work in a position which carries a high degree of public responsibility. The same respect for privacy and the relevance of a person's personal life in investigating and reporting should be applied to transsexual people as other members of society.

- *Care should be taken in the use of sex change, pre-operative and post-operative. Unless, you are referring specifically to the personal impact of surgical gender reassignment on the individuals concerned. Otherwise use transition. Don't assume that a transgender person has undergone or intends to undergo sex-change surgery. It is also inappropriate to emphasise surgery when reporting on transgender people, as to do so underplays the breadth of their real-life stories.*
- *As with lesbian, gay and bisexual word transsexual should not be used as a noun. Also, take care when using it in adjectival form. Its contemporary relevance is restricted largely to scientific and medical discourse.*
- *In your reporting, always refer to a transgender person's chosen name, and ask them which personal pronoun they would prefer to be used to describe them. If this is not possible, use the pronoun consistent with the person's appearance and gender self-expression. Avoid putting quotation marks around a transgender person's name or pronoun.*
- *When referring to gender identity, use unambiguous terms. That is, a person who is born male and transitions to become female is a transgender woman, whereas a person who is born female and transitions to become male is a transgender man. Within the transgender community, members often refer to themselves using the shorthand trans.*

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ABIGAIL ODOZI OGWEZZY-NDISIKA (PhD), teaches Mass Communication at the University of Lagos, Nigeria with emphasis on corporate and development communication; and has industry experience in the various professions of mass communication. In addition, she consults for various ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) of the Federal Government of Nigeria; international development agencies; and management consulting firms. She has published articles and books locally and internationally. Her areas of research are public relations, gender and communication, political communication, health communication, and news production.

ADEJOKE TUGBILEYE is a Nigerian-American sculptor and experimental video artist. She works in various mediums including wire, natural fibers, fabric, and wood. The themes in her work deal with spirituality, sexuality and human rights. Tugbiyele's work has been exhibited and screened at reputable institutions both in the United States and internationally including the The Center for Contemporary Art in Lagos Nigeria (CCALagos), the Museum of Arts and Design, The Centre for Contemporary Art in Torun, Poland, The Museum of Biblical Art, Spelman College Museum of Art and The United Nations Headquarters. She has also shown at Art Dubai 2014, the 6th Annual Joburg Art Fair in 2013, Johannesburg, South Africa and the 2014 video art fair, LOOP Barcelona, Spain and the Goethe Institute in Lagos, Nigeria.

After studying and practicing as an architect, Tugbiyele went on to receive a Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture from Maryland Institute College of Art (2013). She is the recipient of several awards including the Fulbright U.S. Student Fellowship 2013-14, The Amalie Rothschild Award (2013) and the William M. Phillips Award for best figurative sculpture (2012) at Maryland Institute College of Art. She has appeared/published as an artist and queer activist on CNN international, The Feminist Wire and the Huffington Post.

Dr. CHEIKH ETEKA TRAORE is a medical doctor with nearly fifteen years experience working at the intersections of human rights and public health. He graduated with a doctorate in Medicine from the National University of Cote d'Ivoire in 1995. After the completion of a Masters in public health at the London School of Hygiene and tropical Medicine, he worked as a health advisor for several agencies, including the Terrence Higgins Trust (London),

the Mayor of London's health policy team, and the UNDP HIV, Health and Development team (New York). His expertise is in provision of policy solutions, training and programming to remove barriers to health access for marginalized groups. He is now based in Lagos where he works as an independent consultant on gender and sexual diversity for various organizations including the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the Global Forum on Men Who Have Sex With Men and HIV, the Robert Carr Community Network Fund and the US Government's PEPFAR program.

Dr. MATILDA KERRY OSAZUWA is the Founder of the George Kerry Life foundation (GKLF) an NGO that focuses on disease, disability, illiteracy and poverty. Dr. Matilda Kerry gained her Bachelors degree in Medicine and Surgery at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos, and is currently pursuing a fellowship in community medicine and primary care at the Lagos university teaching hospital. She has a Masters of public health from the University of Lagos (2014) and has diverse international training in Cervical Health from the Whittington Hospital NHS trust - London (2010), Minor Surgery from the Royal College of General Practitioners - London (2012) and Occupational Health, safety and internal auditing OHSAS from Tatweer International - UAE (2013). She is a Sexuality Leadership Development Fellow of the Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre (ARSRC) and is trained to address contemporary issues and emerging best practices in policy and programming for sexual wellbeing.

GANIYAT TIJANI-ADENLE teaches Journalism at Lagos State University School of Communication, Nigeria. She practised journalism before joining the academia. She is a gender, media and communication expert.

JIDE MACAULAY is the founding Pastor of House Of Rainbow Fellowship. Jide is Anglican. British-Nigerian born in London, a Christian minister since 1998, a dynamic and an inspirational speaker, author, poet, pastor and preacher, holds a degree in Law, Masters degree in Theology and Post-graduate certificate in Pastoral Theology. Jide focuses his ministry on inclusion and reconciliation of sexuality, spirituality and human rights. He writes for various Christian and secular Journals. He has authored two books, *Poetry Inspired* 2001 and *Pocket Devotion for LGBT Christians* in 2005. He has won several awards including the 2003 and 2007 Black LGBT Community Award for "Man of the Year" for his work helping people of faith. He is also winner of the NAZ Black MSM Award 2014, and was shortlisted for the National Diversity Award 2014. He served from 2007 to 2013 as

Executive Board member and Co-Chair of Pan Africa International Lesbians and Gay Association. He is currently Co-Chair on the Steering Committee of Global Interfaith Network, Board of Trustee at Kaleidoscope Trust UK.

JIMOH, JIDE PETER

Jimoh obtained B.sc (1987) and M.sc (1999) in Mass Communication from the University of Lagos and MA (2008) and PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies (Media and Conflict) from the University of Ibadan. He is a member of the African Council on Communication Education (ACCE) among other professional groups. He won the maiden edition of the Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa Fellowship (2012-2013) of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), Brooklyn, USA based on his PhD proposal on conflict-sensitive journalism.

His professional experience spans journalism, public relations and lecturing. He is presently on the faculty of the School of Communication of the Lagos State University, Lagos. A former Features Desk Head of The Sunday Times, Jimoh has several publications in learned journals in the areas of media and conflict reporting, health communication, media law and ethics, human interest journalism and development studies.

LAIOSO is a Professor of Media and Communication Lagos State University, Lagos. He is the President of Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN). He has published in international and local academic journals in the areas of journalism, economy of mass media, media and politics and public relations. Before going into academics he worked as a reporter with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

LANRE IDOWU has enjoyed a distinguished career as a journalist and publisher in Nigeria. Apart from editing Media Review, an authoritative assessor of the Nigerian media, he is also a trustee of the Diamond Awards for Media Excellence (DAME), an annual programme that rewards outstanding media practice. He is the author of *The Popular is Seldom Correct: Selected Writings on Governance, Media and Democracy* and the volume of poetry, *Bridges of Memory*. He has edited many books, notably *Watching the Watchdogs: Media Review @ Twenty*, *Master of His Age: The Story of Anthony Enahoro*, and *Nigerian Columnists and their Art*. He is a fellow of the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE).

OLUMIDE POPOOLA is a UK based writer and university lecturer in creative writing. Publications include, long and short fiction, a play, essays and

poetry.

OLUSEGUN SANGOWAWA currently works for Population Council, an international non-profit research organization in Nigeria as program coordinator for behavior change communications and advocacy. He has programmatic experience in sexuality, sexual and reproductive health issues, especially HIV and AIDS. He has co-developed trainings and sensitized different stakeholders in Nigeria in the past five years on gender and sexual minorities and also developed various training materials. He was previously program officer information services with the Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre (ARSRC) which promotes a better understanding of human sexuality through informed public dialogue and advocacy for positive changes in policies and program in Africa.

STEVE ABORISADE is a media development professional, Founder and Coordinator at Projekthope. He was the founding Coordinator of the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ), where he successfully entrenched the initiative that aided the modest revival of the investigative genre of journalism in Nigeria. A one-time Program Coordinator at the Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND), Steve is an alumnus of the prestigious US State Department IVLP program and one of the pioneers of online journalism in Nigeria with his launch in 2005 of the HIV/AIDS news and information portal www.nigeriahivinfo.com. He conceived and co-edited *The Reporter's Guide to Investigative Journalism* in 2008.

SOLA OGUNDIPE is Health Editor, Vanguard Group of newspapers. He is the authoritative editor of “Good Health Weekly”, “Features Health & Living” and “Saturday Health Rendezvous” columns in the Vanguard, a mainstream national daily in Nigeria. An alumnus of the University of Lagos, he is a seasoned journalist, scientist, and reproductive health advocate, well appointed and acquainted with the Nigerian health sector, and with over 25 years field experience. His views on health issues are widely respected. As a Fellow of the Health Writers Association of Nigeria, and Contributing Editor to professional and general interest publications with primary interest in reproductive health and rights, he is helping to groom upcoming journalists in reporting specialized health and science-related issues particularly HIV/AIDS, Safe Motherhood, Child & Maternal Health issues and other reproductive health interests.

APPENDIX

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The following are evidence-based sources of information on sexual and gender minorities (GSM) and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) including HIV/AIDS and related topics.

The Foundation for AIDS Research, (amfar) is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to the support of AIDS research, HIV prevention, treatment education, and the advocacy of AIDS-related public policy.

www.amfar.org

African Men for Sexual Health and Rights [AMShEr] is a coalition of 18 MSM/LGBTI led organizations that was formed to provide a response to the grave human rights violations faced by LGBTI people and the disproportionate way in which HIV affects men who have sex with men (MSM) on the continent. AMShEr carries its mission through advocacy, information sharing, coalition building, networking, and exchanging advocacy tools and strategies within other movements including movements that fight against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and HIV/AIDS status primarily in Africa but also around the world.

www.amsher.org

African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that conducts policy-relevant research on population, health, and education issues in sub-Saharan Africa. Based in Nairobi, APHRC promotes the use of research in policy and practice, and strengthens the research capacity of African scholars and institutions.

www.aphrc.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a U.S. government agency whose mission is to promote health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability. It works throughout the United States and the world monitoring health, investigating health problems, conducting research, and implementing prevention strategies.

www.cdc.gov

Centre for the Rights to Health (CRH) advocates for the full realization of the right to health in Nigeria and promotes respect for ethics and human rights in healthcare policies and practices, especially for vulnerable groups such as People Living With

HIV/AIDS, women, youths and children.

<http://crhnigeria.org>

Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) are a global data collection effort funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and in-country governments, donors, and other organizations. These nationally representative household surveys collect data on demographic patterns, fertility, health, and nutrition for policy and program planning. The Journalist's Guide to the Demographic and Health Surveys provides demographic terms and web addresses for tools to use the DHS.

www.measuredhs.com

Global Health Gateway operated by the Kaiser Family Foundation provides journalists and others with the latest data and information on the U.S. role in global health, and on HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, child health, and other topics.

www.globalhealth.kff.org

Guttmacher Institute is a U.S.-based, nonprofit organization focused on sexual and reproductive health research, policy analysis, and public education.

www.guttmacher.org

Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights advances human rights and responds to the human needs of endangered populations—particularly the poor, the isolated, and the displaced—through the provision of comprehensive and respectful services and the promotion of permanent solutions leading to a more just global society.

www.heartlandalliance.org

International Centre for Advocacy on the Right to Health (ICARH) is a non-governmental organization, promoting the health and rights of sexual minorities and other marginalized population in Nigeria through research, education, training advocacy and direct services.

www.icarh.org

International Centre for Sexual Reproductive Rights – INCREASE, is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation, founded with the aim of creating an enabling environment for expanded access to sexual reproductive rights and health information and services. INCREASE advocates the sexual health and rights of society's most disenfranchised groups, including youth, sexual minorities, survivors of sexual violence, commercial sex workers, and widowed women living with HIV/AIDS. Through education programs in its outreach center and advocacy

throughout the community, INCREASE is promoting an understanding of sexual rights that is both protective (the right to say no to unwanted sex) and affirmative (the right to sexual expression)—and challenging the culture of silence around sexuality in a highly conservative environment.

INCREASE works with government representatives and policymakers on sexual and reproductive health and rights issues at regional, national, and international levels, and also provides legal services and leadership development training and conducts research related to these issues.

<http://increse-increase.org>

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) is a leading international organization dedicated to human rights advocacy on behalf of people who experience discrimination or abuse on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

<http://iglhrc.org>

International HIV/AIDS Alliance (IHAA) is a global partnership of nationally based governmental and non-governmental organizations which support community organizations that promote HIV/AIDS issues in developing countries. These partners help local groups and other organizations take action on AIDS, and they are supported by technical expertise, policy work and fundraising carried out across IHAA. It engages in a range of international activities such as support for South–South cooperation, operations research, training, good practice development, policy analysis and advocacy. In 2008, IHAA reached more than 1.3 million people. It stresses the importance of working with people who are most likely to affect or be affected by the spread of HIV. These are often people from marginalized groups who are the most vulnerable and the hardest to reach.

www.aidsalliance.org

Ipas is an international nonprofit organization that has worked for three decades to increase women's ability to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights and to reduce deaths and injuries of women from unsafely performed abortion.

www.ipas.org

Internews Kenya is an international media development organization whose mission is to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect, and the means to make their voices heard. Internews has worked in 16 countries in Africa since 1998. In Kenya, Internews runs Health, Democracy & Governance projects. The four-year Health Media Project (HMP) launched in January 2013 builds on the success of Internews'

Voices in Health media training program (2003-2012) that created a network of more than 900 health journalists trained over nine years.

www.internewskenya.org/health_media_project

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is a leading advocate for universal access to contraceptives, gender equality and safe abortion. IPPF aims to improve the quality of life of individuals by providing and campaigning for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) through advocacy and services, especially for poor and vulnerable people. The Federation defends the right of all people to enjoy sexual lives free from ill health, unwanted pregnancy, violence and discrimination.

IPPF works to ensure that women are not put at unnecessary risk of injury, illness and death as a result of pregnancy and childbirth, and it supports a woman's right to choose to terminate her pregnancy legally and safely. IPPF strives to eliminate sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and to reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS.

www.ippf.org

International Rectal Microbicide Advocates (IRMA) is a network of over 1,200 advocates, policymakers and leading scientists from six continents working together to advance a robust rectal microbicide research and development agenda, with the goal of creating safe, effective, acceptable and accessible rectal microbicides for the women, men, and transgender individuals around the world who engage in anal intercourse.

www.rectalmicrobicides.org

Media AIDS is an online resource portal focused on driving healthy media by providing media practitioners access to world-class experts and cutting edge research.

www.mediaaids.org

The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) advocates for equitable access to effective HIV prevention, care, treatment, and support services for gay men and other MSM, including gay men and MSM living with HIV, while promoting their health and human rights worldwide.

www.msmgf.org

New HIV Vaccine and Microbicide Advocacy Society (NHVMAS) formerly Nigeria HIV Vaccine and Microbicides Advocacy Group (NHVMAG), was born out of a collective vision of a few Nigerian activists to ensure proactive and early involvement of the Nigerian Government and its citizens in New HIV Prevention

Technology research and development. Their mission is to halt the spread of HIV and AIDS in Nigeria by increasing the range of HIV prevention tools through ensuring the availability of safe, effective, acceptable and affordable New HIV Prevention Technologies and tools for all Nigerians as soon as they are discovered and/or developed.

www.nhvmas-ng.org

NigeriaHIVInfo is a project of **The Projekthope**, a media response to combat the social reaction of stigmatization and discrimination facing people who are HIV positive (PLWH) in Nigeria including Gender and Sexual Minorities. This intervention is to counter the misinformation and re-present the realities about HIV/AIDS to the people. The site is designed to create constant, positive and visible examples of the realities of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria by strategically increasing the visibility of people living with the condition. It is poised to erase the fear and prejudice that lies at the core of the social reaction of stigma and discrimination being experienced by this group. It is also an avenue to educate our people and correct misinformation about HIV/AIDS.

www.nigeriahivinfo.com

Key Correspondents is a network of citizen journalists around the world writing on HIV, health and human rights. They help get the voices of those most affected into global debates. The correspondents report to influence HIV and broader health policy, programming and financing at a local, national and international level. They come from diverse backgrounds including representatives from marginalized groups most at risk of HIV and people living with HIV, and report the stories that matter to them. The network is supported by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, which assists with mentoring, training and opportunities for citizen journalists to be more widely heard.

www.keycorrespondents.org

Population Council conducts research to address critical health and development issues. Their work allows couples to plan their families and chart their futures. They help people avoid HIV infection and access life-saving HIV services. And empower girls to protect themselves and have a say in their own lives. The Council conducts research and programs in more than 50 countries, headquartered in New York with a global network of offices in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. From the beginning, the Council has given voice and visibility to the world's most vulnerable people and increases awareness of the problems they face and offer evidence-based solutions. In the developing world, governments and civil society organizations seek their help to understand and overcome obstacles to health and development. In developed countries, they use state-of-the-art biomedical science to develop new contraceptives and products to prevent the transmission of HIV.

www.popcouncil.org

Population Reference Bureau (PRB) aims to bridge the gap between research and policy on a wide range of topics including reproductive health, gender, global health priorities, population dynamics, the environment, and youth. The PRB website provides a wealth of population-related information including a graphics bank and tutorials on demographic issues.

www.prb.org

Society for Family Health (SFH) Nigeria is an NGO, incorporated in 1985, focused on providing malaria prevention and treatment (including intermittent preventive treatment), HIV prevention (including Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission), maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, family planning, cervical cancer screening and prevention and safe water systems. SFH uses social marketing, behavior change communication (communication through radio dramas, mass media messages, etc.) and research working in partnership with the government of Nigeria and community based organizations.

www.sfhnigeria.org

The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERs) is a Nigeria-based registered non-for-profit organization working to protect and promote the human rights of sexual minorities nationally and regionally. They are committed to bringing about a society that is free from discrimination and harm on the grounds of sexual orientation. They work towards this goal through education, empowerment and engagement with the many publics in Nigeria. They were founded in 2006 as a response to the discrimination and marginalization of sexual minorities in both HIV prevention programming and mainstream human rights work.

www.theinitiativeforequalrights.org

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) helps governments formulate policies and strategies to reduce poverty, improve reproductive health, promote girls' and women's empowerment, and work for sustainable development. The Fund also supports data collection and analysis in select countries.

www.unfpa.org

World Health Organization (WHO) is a UN agency established in 1948 whose mission is to help people attain the highest possible level of health. WHO monitors global health status and disease outbreaks, and publishes statistics on causes of death and disability by country and region.

www.who.int

UNAIDS the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, was established to help countries establish policies and programs to prevent new HIV infections, care for people living with HIV, and mitigate the impact of the epidemic. UNAIDS provides annual reports and country-level reports on the status of HIV and AIDS throughout the world.

www.unaids.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (GUIDE AND ONLINE MATERIALS)

- GBT Communication Manual. Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals. 2010
http://data.unaids.org/pub/manual/2010/lgb0_communication_manual_20100301_en.pdf
- UNAIDS Terminology Guidelines, 2011.
http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/JC2118_terminology-guidelines_en_0.pdf
- GLAAD Media Reference Guide. 2014. <http://www.glaad.org/reference>
- GLAAD Media Reference Guide - Transgender Issues
<http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>
- Reporting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Sexual Minorities: A Media Training Manual for Journalists in the SADC Region
<http://www.panos.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PSAf-Reporting-SRHR-Manual.pdf>
- A Journalist's Guide to Sexual and Reproductive Health in East Africa
<http://www.prb.org/pdf11/east-africa-media-2011.pdf>
- Manual for reporters covering HIV/AIDS online 2011
<http://www.ipsnews.net/aids/ipsgender2003.pdf>
- Speak Up, Speak Out: A Toolkit for Journalists Reporting on Gender and Human Rights Issues, 2012.
http://www.internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/Internews_SpeakUpSpeakOut_Full.pdf
- Nine ways journalists can do justice to transgender people's stories
<http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/229120/nine-ways-journalists-can-do-justice-to-transgender-peoples-stories>
- Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
<http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org>
http://www.rfsl.se/public/yogyakarta_principles.pdf
- An Activist's Guide to the Yogyakarta Principles (2010)
http://iglhrc.org/sites/iglhrc.org/files/Activists_Guide_Yogyakarta_Principles.pdf



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