



Dignity. Equality and Freedom

FILM BRIEF: Decriminalisation in our time: A focus on Botswana and the Penal Code

Iranti is seeking talented and committed filmmakers to apply themselves to a film project about decriminalisation of homosexuality in Botswana and the region.

Please download and study the brief carefully, submitting a detailed proposal for this project by no later than **14 March 2019**.

Submissions and queries to kellyn@iranti.org.za

ABOUT IRANTI

Iranti is a Johannesburg based regional non-profit organization (NPO) founded in January 2012 to focus on lesbian, transgender and intersex rights (LTI). Our intention is to build local partnerships and movements to advocate for the rights and recognition of LTI people across Africa through, the use of multi-media platforms, advocacy and research and documentation.

Iranti is committed to probing and developing a deeper understanding of human rights violations, and seeks ways to change policies, laws and individual mindsets, attitudes and social behaviours to confront and challenge homophobia, transphobia and intersexphobia from an intersectional lens.

Iranti participates in national, regional and global advocacy platforms, partnering with local organizations wherever possible,

VISION

Iranti envisions a just world where everyone lives with dignity, respect and equality and where sex, gender and sexuality are celebrated freely.

MISSION

Iranti advocates for the rights of LGBTI individuals in Africa, and lesbian, transgender and intersex persons in particular, through the use of multi-media story-telling, advocacy and research and documentation.

IMPACT STATEMENT

We strive to achieve the following impact:

Lesbian, transgender and intersex people on the African continent have increased access to and experience of their rights, with a focus on promotion of safety, health and education.

OUR CONTEXT

The essence to building community lies in our innate human need to connect and to belong. LTI persons are often stripped from the right to self-determination, to self-identify, and to collectively create and emerge within a collective free to celebrate the basic human rights afforded to every person on the planet. The right to life, the right to human dignity, the right to freedom of expression and the right to movement form part of the inalienable right all humans are afforded. However, the denial of enjoyment of these basic rights by Governments and Religious institutions have exacerbated a growing conservative nationalism that intentionally erases the existence of LTI persons. A growing conservative push back against human rights is evidenced in how increased stigma is crafted in state and religious messages in how conservative leaders and their followers act with impunity against LTI persons. Increased violence forced migration and displacement, poor access to health, jobs and safety are all intentional strategies to erase persons that are 'othered', not considered to be the norm. LTI persons are an integral part of society and we exist in a multitude of ways. We exist as workers, family members, parents, children of parents, spiritual beings, artists, politicians, and many other aspects that makes any human seek a complete and fulfilling existence.

We believe that the push back from conservative leaders and communities and individuals exist because we are present in the greater fabric of society and that we find it unacceptable that any human being should suffer at the hands of dominant powers which seek to invisibilise and erase them. We stand with minority groups working towards end ableism, racism, sexism, poverty and that our collective work can end homophobia, transphobia and intersexphobia.

Iranti means 'memory' and it is our guarded position to state that we will not be erased, that our collective efforts to effect change will be embedded in the herstories of our world, that erasure will be stopped, violence should end. Memory and remembrance will forge a path of resistance against violence and tyranny. Our resilience will be documented and remembered for those who come after us and we follow the path of those who led us to continue our pursuit for justice, freedom and dignity.

THEORY OF CHANGE

If Iranti creates effective messaging and partnerships for the advancement of lesbian, trans, and intersex rights in Africa, is able to support and strengthen LTI communities and organizations, impacts key stakeholders in society AND produces evidence to support and direct policy advocacy at opportune moments THEN perceptions and practices will change, stigma and discrimination decreases, the rights of lesbian, transgender, and intersex people are realized and we will all live in a more just world where sex, gender and sexuality are celebrated freely.

Overview of Botswana Context

In 2018, Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana (LEGABIBO), an LGBTI rights organisation in Botswana, launched an application to the high court against the state, requesting the court to remove all penal codes and laws that criminalise homosexuality. Section 164 of the Penal Code extends unnatural offences to include any person who:

“has carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature; [or] permits any other person to have carnal knowledge of him or her against the order of nature.”

The code sanctions the freedom of sexual identities and gender expression in Botswana despite no existence of a specific Act which overtly criminalises homosexuality. However, the overarching Penal Codes prescribe the many ways in which people may choose to interact sexually and otherwise, particularly for the LGBTI community. Despite this, there have been seminal victories in Botswana which have had a significant impact in the move to protect the rights and dignity of the LGBT community. The first being the legal recognition and registration of LEGABIBO as a recognised NGO. The Botswana Court of Appeal found that the government’s refusal to register an LGBT organisation was unconstitutional. The Southern African Litigation Centre (SALC) noted in 2016 that the case “created important precedent on the right to freedom of association, and the right of LGBT persons to advocate for law reform.”

The second important case was heard for the right of a transgender man have his gender-marker changed. Judge Nthomiwa Nthomiwa ruled that the “recognition of the applicant’s gender identity lies at the heart of his fundamental right to dignity. Gender identity constitutes the core of one’s sense of being and is an integral [part] of a person’s identity.”

Despite these two ground-breaking cases and the development of legal jurisprudence in Botswana, the process of decriminalising or repealing existing Penal Codes has been slow-paced. However, on the 14th of March 2019, the court will sit for the first time to hear the matter related to why decriminalization of homosexuality is a fundamental and basic human right to privacy, right to life and human dignity.

Decriminalisation Film Brief

Iranti makes a public call to production media houses to submit a film proposal to pitch to take on this project. We require a **40-45-minute** film on **decriminalization of homosexuality with a focus on Botswana**. This film aims to explore the conversation on decriminalisation of laws which criminalise and discriminate against LGBT persons, through Botswana as its focal point, using various narratives, case studies, expert analysis, and policy discussions. Further than this, this film ought to highlight the lived experience and the fundamental resilience of LGBT people, their families, religious leaders and politicians despite increased homophobia. We are seeking a message of hope and power that can shift and inform viewers and build a deep sense of care and support. At its core the film’s intention is to change, and track attempts to change the perceptions, behaviours, practices, and belief systems of people, communities, and key stakeholders who hold anti-homosexual attitude and beliefs.

Iranti's Messaging Approach

Iranti makes use of a heart-centred approach in ensuring that through its media, it produces effective and impactful content. This approach is two-pronged; it makes use of media as a powerful medium for educating individuals and raising public awareness on lesbian, trans, and intersex issues in within our region. On a deeper level, this approach is vital in shifting perceptions and mindsets with the intention of radically changing individual practices and behaviours related to violence, stigma, and discrimination. Our fundamental and core values in messaging is that it must change hearts and minds. We are seeking a film that is shaped by this messaging strategy that appeals to the audience's empathy and their humanity.

Audience details

The film is intended for a diverse audience and we seek this film targeting the nation of Botswana, the continent and our global community.

Iranti's Branding and copyright ownership

Iranti owns all material and copyright. If you wish to bring financial resources to the project, Iranti is open to negotiate a joint partnership.

Deliverable dates

This is a 6-month project

Lines of reporting

Report to the Research Manager and the Director of Iranti