



# CHOOSING TO CHALLENGE



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2021

# **WOMEN'S DAY REPORT**

On 8th March various LBQ womxn met at Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG) to celebrate International Women's Day. The day's theme was "Chose to Challenge." Under this theme, participants watched a documentary titled "Silence To Resistance' about the struggle and journey for inclusivity of LBQ persons in the United Nations Human Rights High Commission. This documentary highlights the path taken by the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) to attain observer status and its withdrawal and the impact thereof on African LBQ persons. FARUG is one of the founder-members of CAL and one of the oldest LBQ organizations in the country. Its members were briefed about the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the role of FARUG as a community-based organization in policymaking for LBQ womxn.

During the discussion, the following were highlighted as recommendations by participants;

- The need for LBQ persons to be respected by the public.
- A need for freedom of association without fear of being despised or ridiculed.



- The employment sector policies need to be revised to be more inclusive for LBQ persons.
- Zero tolerance for discrimination of LBQ womxn.
- Provision of more asylum opportunities.
- Revision of the Penal code Act, Equal Opportunities Act, and Miniskirt bill especially for LBQ persons who are also sex workers.
- Catering for the protection of LBQ womxn from acts of violence.
- Sensitization of people in communities; including their leaders about LBQ related issues.
- Sensitization of religious leaders about LBQ related issues.
- Stopping discrimination and scapegoating of LBQ persons by political leaders.
- Sensitizing lawmakers to recognize and cater to the unique needs of LBQ persons.
- Inclusivity of LBQ women in national matters for example the national budget.
- Creation and implementation of laws protecting LBQ persons against unnecessary stigma.
- Creation of laws offering LBQ persons job security in all sectors of employment.



- Enforcing the right for LBQ persons to marry whomever they want.
- Justice for those murdered because they are LBQ and compensation to their families.
- Provision of mental health care specifically for LBQ persons who are at high risk of developing mental health challenges.

During the day's discussions, some participants shared their suggestions on what can be done to improve the LBQ situation in Uganda. Pseudonyms have been used instead of the participant's actual names. This has been done to protect their identity and privacy.

*Alex says, "we are human and therefore need to be respected".*

*Bertha also says, "we need to be respected as LBQ persons".*

*Raymond says, "people within the education, religious, and employment sectors should be sensitized so that LBQ persons are not sent out of their places of work and worship because of their sexuality and gender".*



*Rachel wishes, there were more asylum opportunities, especially for trans men.*

*Leo wishes, the Penal code act, Equal Opportunities Act and Miniskirt bill would be revised and that hopefully there would be no discrimination against sex workers and LBQ people as a result of this.*

*Patricia hopes that measures would be put in place to protect LBQ womxn against acts of violence like rape and that there would be no discrimination against LBQ womxn.*

*Ronella wishes, it would be possible for activists to sensitize people within communities about LBQ issues.*

*Kibuuka wishes, there would be peace among LBQ persons. Jessica wishes that policymakers in various sectors would be sensitized about LBQ issues. Some of these include people within the Ugandan health sector, legal aid, and economic sector. This may increase LBQ visibility and enlightenment about LBQ issues.*



*Joanna wishes, that there would be equal rights for all people. This should just be a constitutional law but also implemented.*

*Briana says, "she wishes political leaders would stop scapegoating LBQ persons for selfish reasons and political gain. She says many times they have taken advantage of LBQ persons inability to speak up for themselves in the political arena and used their words against them".*

*Viane says, "LBQ persons should not be denied employment. Stella says she wishes LBQ persons' would be granted the right to marry whoever they want".*

*Bridget wishes, government and lawmakers would be sensitized to recognize LGBT people while making laws. Families and communities should also be sensitized about LBQ issues and legalize gay marriage.*

*Veronica says, "she hopes that women will stop discrimination against LBQ persons, people within governing bodies should be sensitized about sexual"*



*Orientation and gender-identity issues and Local Council Chairpersons should be educated too.*

*Janice says, "she hopes that compensation is given to families whose loved ones were murdered because they are LBQ".*

*Margaret hopes that there will be more solutions and ways for LBQ people to deal with mental health issues like intergenerational trauma that will be made possible and available.*

*Betsy says, "she wishes that there would be more sensitization and mindset change by equipping people with knowledge that homosexuality existed even in history".*

*Tasha wishes, that LBQ womxn will be included and integrated and thus not be labeled by the public.*

*Shakira says, "we should work on sensitization particularly for religious leaders to let them know that LBQ persons are human, being gay is not unholy or sinful".*





*Families should also be equipped with knowledge about LBQ persons so that isolation and segregation reduces among them.*

*John wishes, that more queer-friendly employment opportunities will be made available for LBQ persons.*

**This report was compiled by Ms. Elizabeth Nabunya.**

