

Sydney WorldPride Refugee / Asylum Seeker Caucus / Pre-Conference

Tuesday 28 February from 3.30pm to 6.00pm at Aerial UTS Function Centre, Building 10 – Level 7 – 235 Jones Street, Ultimo NSW 2000.

The caucus was organised by Many Colored Sky and Forcibly Displaced People Network (FDPN). Questions were discussion included current issues for LGBTIQ+ displaced people and how broader LGBTIQ+ movement needs to be addressing these issues. Summary of the main points:

- German context: No tailored support in Germany for LGBTIQ Ukrainians; linked up with Russian speaking community only that creates tension due to Russian invasion.
- Global: There needs to be a better focus on HIV positive persons as they are no accepted for visa; so asylum is the only option
- Global: Assimilation after they are getting the status; funds are cut for settlement; courses are not compulsory; English classes and their issues. Homophobia in classroom.
- Australian context: discrimination (incl. racism, homophobia, transphobia) in services prevails. According to FDPN survey report around 45% reported these experiences.
- Global: There is a need for funding for LGBTIQ+ refugee-led work; funding goes to large orgs. Such orgs while possessing resources aren't helping these communities.
- Global: Need more visibility within the LGBTIQ movement
- Global: The needs of displaced people who are currently experiencing displacement (ie. In transit or camps) are not being met.
- Global: the asylum system across the world is not accessible; improvements are needed.
- Australian context: need to do work with LGBTIQ+ displaced people by embedding trauma-informed practice.
- Global: the need for meaningful empowerment, refugee leadership and representation of communities. Many influential actors in the space do not have lived experience and are not mentoring those with lived experience to come after.
- Global: service conditionality – need to present yourself in particular ways to get service access; white saviour complex in humanitarian and settlement service settings; unspoken selective criteria of choosing who is a victim and who deserves to be helped
- MENA region: Lesbians and trans aren't being prioritised for resettlement
- Global: lack of training in refugee status determination (eg. having kids from previous marriage makes it hard to seek asylum) and the need for fair and equal assessment for all claims; due diligence.
- Global: active exclusion from LGBTIQ+ and refugee movements
- Global: survival guilt and shame, including lateral violence from LGBTIQ+ communities in host countries (eg. comments that a person should have stayed)
- Global: racism of LGBTIQ+ movement
- Global: challenge for LGBTIQ+ displaced people on how to maintain activism both in the regions of origin and resettlement countries. being forced to leave some expertise is being lost.
- Global: LGBTIQ+ displaced people are not being paid when engaged in any capacity

- Global: the need to provide opportunities for people with lived experience – like internships, take a step back and give space to empower others who come after us.

Examples of best practice:

- UK Micro Rainbow: Safe houses project that provided 17 houses (30000 beds a year). These are Places to stay that are free from violence; as discrimination in the state housing thrives. Funded by the UK govt and philanthropic. In addition provides employment assistance and social belonging activities.
- Many colored Sky: LGBTIQ+ refugee-led support group in Australia
- Forcibly Displaced People Network: specific research on the experiences of LGBTIQ+ settlement
- Queer Refuge: dedicated mental health support group.