

Statement from Trans Pre-conference 2022

We, the activists participating in Trans Pre-conference 2022, had, critical, constructive, and empowering discussion together on 28th November 2022 during the 9th ILGA Asia Conference taking place in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The wide range of issues are considered, and deliberated at the pre-conference including legal gender recognition legislation, access to gender affirming healthcare, conversion therapy, hate crimes and speech, anti-gender movement, extremist attack against trans activists, operational challenges of trans led groups and organisations, exclusion of non-binary people, young trans people, and trans with intersectional identities.

Key issues are,

- There is still a lack of legal gender recognition in the Asia region. In where it is available, the process is complicated and pathologized, preventing numerous trans people from accessing the legal gender markers and name changing. In South Asia, trans peoples are not allowed to change their gender markers from female to male, or male to female. In Vietnam, there is some progress on the legal gender recognition from the government side. The age limitation and parental consent for accessing gender recognition are also in the concerns of young trans people as many violences against trans people are committed by family members. To address the exclusion of non-binary people in the legislation of legal gender recognition, activist groups in Thailand conducted a survey and found that trans and non-binary people would like to be identified with the gender marker X.
- Trans affirming and competent care is not accessible, affordable, and acceptable for trans people in general, and the issue is exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic. To tackle the challenge we have during the pandemic, The systemic discrimination need to be adressed while there is a lack of legislative progress in most of Asian Countries. For example, the anti-discrimination law consideration in the Phillipines is significantly delayed.
- Concerns about the adoption of intersectionality approaches in the work of regional trans and larger LGBTI movement, as well as in organizing the ILGA conference are flagged consistently at the pre-conference. The concern related to the inclusion and meaningful participation, as well as leadership of young trans people, and people living with disability, and non-binary trans people in the activities of regional organizations and regional conferences are the most frequently raised. The concerns of underrepresentation of South Asian trans are also discussed.
- Aside from the need to build the capacity of organizational operations, some of the small and loose organized trans activist groups are undersupported in terms of funding and resources. They have felt pressed by professionalism, and ableism in order to access the resources.
- In the research area, the cultural approach is also missing to understand the diverse trans and gender diverse communities in Asia.

- The awareness of exclusion and violence within trans communities are also raised at the pre-conference.

Recommendations

We urges ILGA Asia and other regional network and organization working on trans related issues to;

1. Facilitate cross-learning and brainstorm spaces to exchange the knowledge on advocacy for legal gender recognition, and legal protection protection for trans people from hate crime and conversion therapy, as well as create regional advocacy roadmap to tackle the issues.
2. Raise awareness of the exclusion and violence within transgender communities
3. Facilitate the meaningful participation of young trans people, promote youth leadership in their works, and foster regeneration with young trans people, and create intergenerational discussion to unify the movement better.
4. Allocate and increase the programme and project which addresses the concerns of young trans people, such as social acceptance of young trans people, access to education, age limitation and parental consent for accessing legal gender recognition, mental health issues. The work on social media campaign need to be increased as it resonates to young people
5. Support community based research pertaining to legal gender recognition and use the cultural approaches to conduct research project more to better understand Asian trans communities in future
6. Aside from increasing the resources to help trans-led groups operationalise or establish organizations, regional organizations should also facilitate the dialogue between trans groups and donors to advocate for the equity in funding allowing the smaller and loose organized trans group to access the funds.
7. Recognise and embrace the intersectional identities of trans people in the work, namely, youth, queer, non-binary, indigenous, refugee and migrant status, informal worker, people in rural area, urban poor people, disability, neurodivergence, political prisoner, unemployed, and under-employed. They need to be included in the conversion and decision making process.
8. Address accessibility concerns at the regional conference, including registration cost, physical access, safe and quiet spaces, COVID-19 prevention measures, comprehensive programme and logistical notes. Gender-neutral languages should also be used throughout the conference.
9. Embrace and increase more cultural works of the communities.
10. Increase the representation of South Asian trans and gender diverse people and strengthen the transparency of the scholarship selection.