



EQUALITY MOVEMENT

EQUALITY MOVEMENT
ANNUAL REPORT
2020

Introduction

In 2020 Equality Movement has been working in three main strategic directions:

1. Providing LGBTQ community with social and medical services
2. Mobilizing and supporting the social integration of LGBTQ community
3. Forming a supportive environment for empowering LGBTQ community in Georgia

Due to the pandemic of COVID-19 Equality Movement had to modify its work and adjust the regulations created by the government. The organization had also to change planned activities in agreement with donors. In the beginning of the pandemic EM financially supported independent initiatives for Trans community. During the first wave of COVID-19 EM worked on a rapid support mechanism for supporting LGBTQ people affected by COVID - crisis. EM has modified part of the planned activities and they took place online. According to the recommendation of NCDC services like HIV testing and PrEP program remained at our Tbilisi community center.

EM also created an online platform <http://selftest.ge> which can be used to order free HIV self-test kits, condoms and lubricants and Glovo will deliver it to the indicated address.

In the beginning of 2020 EM organized general assembly of the members of the organization and the new board was elected.

2020 Advocacy Report

HIV/AIDs Advocacy

- On February 17, 2020, Equality Movement applied the recommendations to The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs in order to determine the restriction of the blood donation for MSM persons for 12 months- duration of “Window Period” for HIV. According to the recommendation, the limitation of donation of blood for MSMs for a longer period than is necessary for exclusion of False Negative response in blood tests is disproportionate and unconstitutional. The ministry has followed the recommendation of the “Equality Movement” and minimized the period of ban on blood donation for the MSM persons from 10 years to 12 months.¹
- During the spring, 2020, Equality Movement has worked with the community organizations and other NGOs, as well as with the experts, on HIV/AIDS Advocacy Action plan. As a result of the working process, an action plan was developed and was planned to be submitted to the Human Rights Council of the Government of Georgia;
- In June, 2020, Equality Movement submitted a draft law of article 131 of the criminal code to the Parliament of Georgia. The draft law proposes amendments to the current article in order to eradicate discriminatory regulation. Article 131 Section 1 reads: “Intentional submission of another individual to a threat of getting infected with HIV is punished with imprisonment for a period three to five years.” The entire article creates inconsistency in approaching the intent, the circumstance of the perpetrator being aware of their status and intentionally infecting the victim; the circumstance of the infection not occurring is also punishable.
- On July 1, 2020, Equality Movement applied the recommendations to The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs. The recommendation included: (1) approval of the list of blood and sexually transmitted diseases; (2) defining the list of activities in accordance with the Law of Georgia on HIV/AIDS, which may lead to the dismissal or refusal of an HIV-positive person to work.

¹. <http://www.equality.ge/en/5508>

Analytical documents/reports

- Coalition for Equality – Report on The Right to Non-Discrimination in Practice for Various Groups In Georgia. The present report is the Coalition’s fourth and assesses the situation in Georgia for 2019 in terms of the realization of the right to equality of separate groups (including LGBT+) and the fight against discrimination.²
- Coalition for Equality – Report on Activities of The Coalition for Equality, 2019. The report outlines 8 cases taken by Equality Movement litigated in the Public Defender-s Office and the Common Courts based on the “Law of Georgia on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination”.
- OSCE/ODIHR – In April, 2020, Equality movement reported hate crime data to OSCE the office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The data was released on International Tolerance Day, which fell on 16 November.
- UPR - the Coalition for Equality submitted the review Report on Georgia’s UPR third Cycle which covered the period 2015-2020. The report assessed the implementation of the accepted recommendations concerning equality and vulnerable groups such as LGBT+ community. The implementation of recommendations to enhance the national anti-discrimination institutions was also evaluated.
- UPR – the report was prepared by the NGO coalition focusing on sexual and reproductive rights and health issues, which is a nonformal alliance consisting of six organizations working on different SRHR issues in Georgia – Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC), Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health - Tanadgoma, Association HERA XXI; Women’s Initiative Supportive Group (WISG), and Equality Movement (EM).
- HRCtee Alternative Report - “Equality Movement” and Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity (ECOM) submitted a joint report on human rights

². http://equalitycoalition.ge/files/shares/2019_report_Eng.pdf

violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Georgia. The document aims to update HRCtee members with the recent violations within the LGBT community in Georgia related to the Right to Equality before the Law, Freedom of Assembly, Sex Education, LGBT Families and Privacy, as well as The Universal and Inalienable Right to Health.³

- ILGA-Europe - Equality Movement, together with the Women's Initiative Support Group (WISG) and Tbilisi Pride, has prepared an annual report on the legal framework and rights of LGBT + people.

Policy Documents

- In February 17, 2020, as a result of intense cooperation between state agencies, the Public Defender's Office, and civic organizations, such as Equality Movement and others, Chapter 15 of the Government Action Plan on Human Rights Protection 2018-2020 was adopted. Chapter 15 of the Action Plan includes three goals and aims to combat hate-motivated crimes, raising awareness on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) and the improvement of SOGI-specific social and healthcare services.
- Equality movement had made recommendations and remarks in the primary document of the Strategic Priorities, Goals and Objectives of the Government Human Rights Strategic 2021-3030.

Strategic Litigation

- Equality Movement appealed to the Public Defender's Office on November 2, 2018 and June 14, 2019 to respond to alleged discrimination cases. According to the statements, the terms and expressions used in Forensic Medicine and Bioethics textbooks of Tbilisi State Medical University reinforce stereotypes and encouraging discrimination against LGBT + people. In February 27, 2020, the Public Defender of Georgia gave a recommendation to Medical University that to provide the courses Forensic Medicine and Medical Law as well as Bioethics with appropriate teaching materials corresponds to the basic human rights within the current academic year. The recommendation includes

³. <http://www.equality.ge/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ECOM-Equality-Movement-HRCtee-Georgia.pdf>

changes in existing editions of textbooks as an annex and implementation them into the curriculum.⁴

- The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics has satisfied the complaint of WISG and the EM in regards to respondent of a TV program spreading the stigma and misinformation towards hepatitis C and HIV positive people.
- The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics has satisfied the complaint of Equality Movement and considered that Imedi TV encouraged discrimination against LGBTQI community.

Trainings

- In July Equality movement organized remote trainings for the Prosecutors Office of Georgia on hate crimes and discrimination based on SOGIGE, in which 40 prosecutors and investigators have participated.
- In September Equality Movement has conducted trainings for the police officers. The trainings covered the analysis of the current criminal legislation, international standards of the investigation of hate crimes based on SOGIGE, questioning of the victims and witnesses, prevention of hate crimes.

⁴. <http://www.equality.ge/en/5520>

Projects

Project Title	Sensitizing the key stakeholders on LGBTQI issues
Project Duration	31.10.2019 – 31.10.2020
Project Donor	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Project Budget	252031.00 Lari 77237.22 EUR
Project Content	<p>1. What is the project about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forming the environment for improved integration of the community <p>2. What were the goals of your project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved media coverage of LGBTQI issues - Improved access to LGBTQI friendly healthcare - Reducing homophobic climate in educational institutions - Improving access to state services in regards to bullying and domestic violence for LGBTQI underage individuals - Improving the environment LGBTQI people live in and raising the awareness in general population - Improving the agendas on LGBTQi issues among the political parties - Creating anti-bullying training module for the teachers - Incite academic interest in LGBTQI issues via researches and scholarships <p>3. Activities and indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training for the journalists - Training for medical personnel - Preparation of publication for trans individuals - Training for psychologists - Training for social workers - Training for young politicians and decision-makers - Student researches - Academic Conference - Project achievements presentation and planning of the future strategies

4. Results – Where indicators achieved? What was postponed or canceled because of Covid-19

- Two academic courses on Queer theory in Tbilisi state university and Ilia state university were completed. Overall, 149 students took the courses
- All of the scheduled trainings took place for all of the selected stakeholders and interested parties.
- Research on trans people healthcare services was completed
- Training moodle for the educational institutions representatives was prepared
- Academic conference took place
- Overall, 229 individuals took participation during the implementation of the project
- Trainings were postponed, but implemented withing the project duration period
- Meeting with LGBTQI community regarding the presentation of the project achievements was canceled due to the high risks of the COVID-19 spread.

Project Title	Improving HR of LGBT people in Georgia
Project Duration	2019-2022
Project Donor	RFSU - Swedish Association for Sexuality Education
Project Budget	RFSU main budget - 211 531.66 GEL Additional Funding – 58 441.43 GEL Joint Activity (EM, WISG, EMC) – 98 010 GEL
Project Content	<p>1. What is the project about?</p> <p>The organization works on three main directions within the framework of the intervention: 1. Service provision; 2 Advocacy; 3. The mobilization and empowerment of the LGBTQ+ community.</p> <p>Service provision: Multidisciplinary group consisting of the social worker, psychologist and lawyers operates in the frame of the intervention. The main objective of the team is comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the individual needs of the members of the community and establishment of the complex support system based on the individual needs.</p> <p>Advocacy: The advocacy plan has been implementing throughout the project aimed at improvement of the investigation of the hate crimes and development of the effective implementation mechanisms of the anti-discriminatory policies. Furthermore, within the scope of the project, advocacy on elimination of homophobic and transphobic bullying has been initiated as well as the work has been started on the development of the advocacy plan on the accessible shelter for LGBTQ+ community members. Strategic litigation has been implemented within the framework of the project.</p> <p>The mobilization and empowerment of the LGBTQ+ community: The mobilization and empowerment of the community is ensured through creation of the safe space for the community members as well as raising awareness on the needs and HRs of the LGBTQ+ people.</p> <p>2. What were the goals of your project?</p>

	<p>The overall objective of the project: People of Georgia can truly enjoy SRHR</p> <p>Short term objective of the project: HR situation of LGBTQI people in Georgia has improved and is better represented</p> <p>3. Activities and indicators</p> <p>The services of the social worker have been used by 101 community members throughout the year. The lawyers have had 75 new legal cases. The number of current legal cases managed by the lawyers is 90. Psychologist has provided with the service 40 community members (Note: the data conducted through January-November, 2020). The fund for the LGBTQ+ people affected by Covid-19 crisis was created within the scope of the project.</p> <p>The following activities, aimed at raising awareness on the HRs of the LGBTQ+ people and queer and feminist theory, were implemented over the year: 1 academic article was translated; 8 blogs/articles were written.</p> <p>The campaign “You are not alone” was launched at the beginning of the year. The campaign aimed at raising awareness on the homophobic and transphobic bullying at schools. The first volume of queer magazine “Egalite – Manual for The Youth” was published, 6 videos were created aimed at actualization of the issue. The videos included promo video of the campaign and 5 videos representing the personal stories of the LGBTQ+ people.</p> <p>Online campaign on International Lesbian Visibility Day was conducted within the scope of the project. Contest of Articles was conducted and 5 personal stories were published as a result. Posters and other visual materials have been dispersed through social media.</p> <p>The 17th of the May was acknowledged by spreading the video “Let’s Equate” that aimed at revealing the challenges and issues that LGBTQ+ community members face in everyday life and exhibiting the common grounds of the oppressions that unite the community with the rest of the society.</p> <p>9 community meetings were organized over the year that varied based on the content of the meetings as well as the target audience.</p>
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Over the year 5 small scaled grants were awarded to activist groups as well as queer artists that aimed at empowerment of the independent groups and encouragement of creation of the queer art. The following groups/artists have been financed within the scope of the project: Tansgender People Solidarity Group, Lesbian* Resistance, SAGA – Sexual and Gender Alliance; Performance conducted by Andro Dadiani.

Throughout the year A Research on Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying was finalized and its presentation was held at the 7th of December, within the framework of the 16 days campaign against gender based violence

At the same time, as a result of the Covid-19 crisis new challenges such as social and economic injustices emerged in the agenda of the LGBTQ+ community members. Based on the analysis of the current situation, Equality Movement initiated a research on the accessibility of shelters for the community members. Working on the research has been started and development of the further action plan based on the research is planned.

4. Results – Where indicators achieved? What was postponed or canceled because of Covid-19

As a result of the project 216 community members used the services of multidisciplinary group.

As a result of the Fund for LGBTQ+ people affected by Covid-19 crisis, 54 community members were provided with food and hygiene objects, rent subsidies and medical services/medicine. Totally 7775 GEL was allocated on the matter (Note: Data includes 02/11/2020)

Blogs/Articles: Blogs had 5 739 unique viewers over the year.

The campaign “You are not alone” reached 106 000 persons in total (considering only EM social media and webpage)

The videos created within the framework of the campaign had 102 000 unique viewers on social media and web-page.

250 hard-copies of the magazine “Egalite” were published. 200 copies were dispersed among the target groups including the Psychology Center of the Resource Officers, Public Library, Social Workers of the Crisis Centers, etc. The articles of the magazine published online had 3700 unique viewers.

	<p>The campaign also had media attention, including coverage by Mtavari Channel and Formula. The campaign was mentioned by the online sources such as Publika, On.ge and Netgazeti.</p> <p>Online Campaign on The International Lesbian Visibility Day: The main target of the campaign was LBQ women community and the general public. As a result of the Article Contest 5 queer women were provided with opportunity to reflect on the challenges that they face and to share their personal stories.</p> <p>As a result of the campaign, 11 000 persons were reached on social media.</p> <p>The video “Let’s Equate”, IDAHOT: The video reached 110 000 persons on the social media and had 35 200 unique views. The shorter version of the video was covered by 5 TV channels average over a month as a social advertisement. The following Channels broadcasted the video: TV Pirveli, Mtavari Channel, Public Broadcaster, Adjara TV, Formula.</p> <p>As a result of community member meetings about 370 LGBTQ+ community members attended various events.</p> <p>As a result of the Covid-19 crisis following activities have been cancelled and/or postponed: 1. Professional trainings. 2 Krav-Maga, 3. Joint Activity planned in partnership with EMC and WISG. Furthermore, the implementation of such activities as offline campaigns, attending festivals, public lectures, etc. was affected.</p>
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Project Title	Urgent Fund for LGBTQ+ people affected by Covid-19 crisis
Project Duration	13.07.2020-26.11.2020
Project Donor	UNDP
Project Budget	14 969.30USD
Project Content	<p>1. What is the project about? The project was aimed at meeting the basic needs of the LGBTQ+ community members resulting from the Covid-19 crisis.</p> <p>2. What were the goals of your project? To ensure that the basic needs of the LGBTIQ people in Georgia are met during the COVID-19 crisis.</p> <p>3. Activities and indicators The main activities of the project were provision LGBTQI_ persons with: 1. Food and hygiene items; 2. Healthcare services; 3. Rental costs.</p> <p>4. Results – Where indicators achieved? What was postponed or canceled because of Covid-19 As a result of the project, in total 117 LGBTQI+ persons received food and hygiene items, rent subsidies and/or healthcare services. 83 persons received food and hygiene items. 59 food vouchers were distributed to the community members in Tbilisi, whereas 17 vouchers were allocated to Batumi and additional 7 to Kutaisi. During the project 74 persons received the rent subsidies. Out of the total number, 53 rent subsidies were distributed in Tbilisi and 21 in regions (Batumi – 17, Kutaisi – 4). As a result of the project 2 transgender persons used healthcare services based on their individual needs.</p>

Project Title	Burn-in, don't burn-out. Strengthening LGBTIQ activists in Georgia
Project Duration	01.01.2020 – 30.11.2020
Project Donor	ILGA-EUROPE
Project Budget	14 999,60 (EUR)
Project Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Via this project, Equality Movement assess the psychological support needs of community activists, develop and conduct psychological group sessions and train master trainers in resilience and coping strategies. 2. The project enhances psycho-social wellbeing for LGBTIQ activists to improve and maintain their resilience, coping-strategies and mental health. EM plan was to provide LGBTIQ activists training on burnout prevention and mental health in a safe space that gives participants the opportunity to share stressful experiences and support each other. Afterward, master trainers were trained to ensure sustainability. 3. Activity #1 - Assessment of psychological and mental health needs of LGBTIQ activists Activity #2 Developing mental health training manual Activity #3 Organizing and conducting the training Activity # 4 Developing master trainer concept in collaboration with Global Initiative in Psychiatry (GIP) Activity # 5 Organizing and conducting master training

RESULTS:

- Due to the situation related to the coronavirus, the focus groups were canceled. Instead, qualitative (interview) and quantitative (questionnaire) surveys were conducted online, based on which main mental health needs of LGBTIQ activists are identified.

The quantitative study included members of the LGBTIQ non-activist community in addition to LGBTIQ activists.

A total of 124 respondents participated in the studies.

- Training manual on mental health is developed (with emphasis on stress resilience)
- Four trainings were organized and delivered: One training for trainers and three trainings for activists

43 LGBTIQ activists are trained in resilience and other identified topics.

10 participants for master training have been identified and trained.

Project Title	Making Art for Empowerment
Project Duration	01.07.2020 – 01.06.2021
Project Donor	Embassy of Switzerland Embassy of Canada
Project Budget	17.702,20 (GEL)
Project Content	<p>This project aims to empower LGBTIQ-(friendly) artists, movie-makers, media talents, and creative heads to change negative perspectives of LGBTIQ through increased visibility and exposure, especially in times of COVID-19.</p> <p>EM, through this project, is planning to empower LGBTIQ and LGBTIQfriendly creative individuals or groups to change negative stereotypes of LGBTIQ and contribute to mutual understanding through creating social ads.</p> <p>By supporting LGBTIQ artists through this highly visible project, EM strives to encounter stigma and prejudice against the LGBTIQ community. It is vital that more LGBTIQ cultural representation is seen in public, especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The sponsored art projects on social media will become a vehicle for storytelling, including to share, explore, and challenge existing misconceptions and misinformation, stigma, and stereotypes surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).</p> <p>- EM, in consultation with the Swiss Embassy, will form an expert panel to select artwork through an open call of interest on social media. The panel will also include EM’s project manager/coach to accompany the production of social commercials/Ads.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EM will develop calls for proposals for scholarships and share the announcement on Equality Movement’s website and social media channels. - EM and the expert panel will select the four scholarship holders or groups (applicants can either apply as individuals or as a group for their idea) in a consultative meeting. - EM will sign contracts for the projects with the four scholarship holders or groups. - EM will host an (online) induction meeting for the selected scholarship holders and groups to inform about LGBTIQ in Georgia. This meeting will furthermore serve the scholarship-holders to get to know each other better and establish contact between the candidates and EM. EM incl. EM coach will, from this time on, offer LGBTIQ-related technical assistance and individual advice to the candidates. Monthly follow-up meetings will be conducted to discuss project implementation processes, monitor progress, and strengthen ties among each other. - EM will distribute small grants via bank transactions to selected artists or groups of artists according to the donor’s and Equality Movement’s financial procedures and regulations. - EM will promote the selected projects and showcase the final results via social media and other channels. - EM will invite the group of selected candidates for bi-yearly meetings at EM’s office to strengthen their involvement in the organizations and give platforms to show performances and artwork at EM’s events and activities. <p>RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert panel is formed; - A call for proposals is published;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Four projects are selected;- An introduction meeting took place;- A group of LGBTIQ-interested artists is formed and meet regularly
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Project Title	HIV/AIDS prevention in LGBT community
Project Duration	1 Year
Project Donor	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
Project Budget	602.944.00 Gel
Project Content	<p>1. What is the project about? The organization offers its beneficiaries free and anonymous rapid tests for the HIV infection. The beneficiaries of the organization are regularly provided with condoms and lubricants, in order to reduce new cases of the HIV infection.</p> <p>2. What were the goals of your project? The main goal of the program is to provide medical and social service to MSM people (Males who have sex with males) in order to prevent HIV infections</p> <p>3. Activities and indicators A variety of educational meeting and leader trainings are regularly conducted in the organization, in order to raise awareness for the HIV/AIDS-related issues in the LGBT community. In 2020 project indicators were: 3700 people covered with basic prevention packages. 2970 people with HIV Testing.</p> <p>4. Results – Where indicators achieved? What was postponed or canceled because of Covid-19</p> <p>Due to the Covid-19 pandemic indicators were not fully achieved: 2900 people were covered with basic packages and 2500 with HIV testing. Also number of training and educational meetings were reduced because of restrictions. During the covid-19 pandemic online platform www.selftest.ge was introduced. Customers have a possibility to order HIV self-testing device and it will be delivered by a Glovo courier. From 2020/03 about 600 people have used this service and 7 HIV positive cases detected.</p>

Project Title	PrEP – Pre-exposure prophylaxis in MSM and Transgender Women
Project Duration	1 year
Project Donor	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
Project Budget	118 000 GEL
Project Content	<p>1. Project content</p> <p>EM offers its beneficiaries to get involved in PrEP program for HIV prevention. Through the program community members can be provided with Emtricitabine/Tenofovir medication and other health benefits. The service is absolutely free and anonymous.</p> <p>2. The goal of the project</p> <p>HIV prevention in MSM and Trans populations</p> <p>3. Activities and indicators</p> <p>In 2020 250 people should be involved in the program. By the end of December 2020 the sum of the beneficiaries who are involved in PrEP should be 750.</p> <p>4. Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since February 2020 PrEP program fully operates on the basis of EM Tbilisi office and community members can get all the medical services at our office. • In 2020 221 msm and trans people were involved in program • By the end of December 2020 694 community members are involved in PrEP program

Tbilisi, Georgia 2020
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