



RE  
IMAGINING  
UGANDA

# PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CONVENING FOR RE-IMAGINING UGANDA

# 2023



## Introduction

We are delighted to present an update on the remarkable progress of the "Convening for Reimagining Uganda" project, spearheaded by Let's Walk Uganda. Initiated in June 2023, this project, dedicated to offering hope and shaping the future of the LGBTQ community in Uganda, is well underway. Currently at 75% completion, the project began with meticulous internal processes, including an inception meeting, stakeholder identification, and the mobilization of essential human resources. Noteworthy achievements include two successful online convenings and a impactful physical convening in Nairobi, Kenya, bringing together over 30 participants, including community members, community leaders, Allies, representatives from donor communities and members of the diaspora. These collaborative sessions have laid the groundwork for a transformative 15-year strategic plan, aimed at creating an affirming society for the LGBTQ community in Uganda. This report offers a detailed account of the pivotal developments that have shaped the ongoing strategic planning process, underscoring the dedication and success of the Let's Walk Uganda team and all participants involved. Congratulations to the team on this commendable achievement, and we eagerly await the launch of this transformative plan.

## Back ground

The genesis of the Convening Reimagining Uganda project stems from a series of insightful engagements with community members, leaders, organizations, allies, experts across diverse fields, and academics. These interactions unfolded on Twitter Spaces and individual bases, gaining momentum during and post the enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act in 2023. The project's inception was catalyzed by a collective reflection within the LGBTQ community, recognizing a critical need for a proactive approach to address the challenges it faces.

A poignant realization emerged from this introspection – that the LGBTQ community in Uganda had predominantly operated as a reactionary movement, responding to challenges as they arose rather than proactively strategizing for the transformative change they rightfully deserve. Notably, incidents surrounding the anti-homosexuality movement showcased a pattern of agendas being created, life-threatening bills being proposed, and the LGBTQ community being caught off guard since the annulment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act in 2014.

The consequences were stark – pain, profound suffering, human rights violations, and panicked responses to egregious atrocities faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda, especially post the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act in 2023. This reality finds corroboration in reports from the SRT and various community organizations such as HRAPF and Let's Walk Uganda.

A pivotal observation highlighted the imperative for the LGBTQ community to transition from mere reaction to strategic proactivity. Addressing immediate challenges was essential, but equally crucial was the need for a comprehensive strategy to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and prepare community members adequately. The urgency was underscored by the fact that the community faced persistent threats and bills proposed by the anti-gay movement.

Recognizing the significance of preparation, Let's Walk Uganda took the lead in initiating community dialogues and convening sessions titled "Convening for Reimagining Uganda." This brought together community members, thinkers, allies, activists, scholars, and organizing experts. The aim was to synergize ideas and devise collective strategies that the diverse LGBTQ community could implement, thus steering a course toward the transformative change they aspire to achieve.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

**The main goal of this convening project** was to bring together key stakeholders to engage in meaningful discussions and exchange of ideas on issues affecting the LGBTQ community in Uganda and develop strategies and actions that can lead to the protection and promotion of the human rights of LGBTQ individuals in Uganda.

This project was to be accomplished under 3 specific objectives:

### Objective 1:

#### **To Create a Think Tank for Public Attitude Change towards the LGBTQ Community.**

This objective aimed is to establish a think tank comprising diverse stakeholders to strategize on changing public attitudes towards the LGBTQIA+ community in Uganda. This think tank will provide a platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and innovative approaches to address the prevailing biases and prejudices.

## Objective 2:

### **To Foster Interorganizational Collaboration on Long-Term Advocacy.**

This objective aimed to facilitate collaboration among LGBTQIA+ organizations, human rights activists, and advocacy groups to strengthen their collective efforts in advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights in Uganda. By fostering collaboration and joint campaigns, the objective seeks to amplify the impact and effectiveness of their advocacy work.

## Objective 3:

### **To Build Capacity and Empowerment LGBTQ organizations and the Moment**

This objective focused on empowering LGBTQIA+ organizations, activists, and individuals through capacity-building initiatives. By providing training, knowledge, and support, the objective aims to enhance their skills and empower them to actively participate in advocacy, policy development, and public engagement.

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### **Online Grassroot Community Members' Convening.**

The "Convening for Reimagining Uganda" held a pivotal online grassroot community engagement on September 11th, 2023, navigating the intricate landscape of LGBTQ+ issues in Uganda. Nakato Ciara, a transgender woman and Executive Director of Trans Advocacy Initiative, skillfully moderated the discussion, bringing together a diverse group of over 35 participants from the LGBTQ+ community.

The selection process, involving online application submissions and direct invitations, ensured a varied and representative group.

### **Panelist**

- The esteemed panelists in discussion included;
- Musiime Alex Martin, a lawyer affiliated with Let's Walk Uganda;
- Bana Mwesige, an activist and programs director at Lifeline Youth Empowerment Centre;
- Ruby Loretta Nakandi, an activist and Executive Director of Diverse Empowerment;
- Winifred Mugambwa, an environmental feminist activist and Executive Director of Rights for Her Uganda.

These offered multifaceted perspectives and their collective expertise enriched discussions on the historical context, challenges, and potential solutions for the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda.



### **Key take-aways from the discussion included:**

- Encourage more people to come out as allies.
- Normalize the representation of LGBTQ+ people in mainstream media and society.
- Explore the idea of a business expo or page to support and connect minority-owned businesses.
- Consider implementing reconciliation efforts between dismissed and estranged community members.
- Discuss the importance of education and empowerment in diversity.

Investigate the possibility of an insurance scheme or economic empowerment programs for members.

- Encourage community members to engage in community activities and sensitize them to behave appropriately in the society.
- Explore solutions for the challenges faced by the trans community, such as dress code and behavior.

Consider the role of religion in community cohesion.

Participants, including prominent figures like Musiime, Bana, Kiyegga, and Ronald, passionately shared insights. Musiime delved into the impact of religious normativity and cultural practices on the legal landscape, particularly highlighting the influence of the evangelical movement from the United States. Kiyegga emphasized the need for reconciliation movements, reconstruction efforts, and an insurance scheme, underlining the challenges faced by activists negotiating with zealous or highly religious families.

Discussions spanned various critical areas, including the role of community leaders in setting positive examples, strategies for acceptance and support promotion, and the potential for partnerships between LGBTQ+ communities and grassroots organizations. The meeting explored economic empowerment, the challenges of accessing job opportunities, and the importance of education within the LGBTQ+ community. Fabian and Kimera Derrick the executive director of Let's Walk Uganda highlighted the need for caution in sharing information, self-acceptance, and mental health initiatives.

### **Conclusion:**

The meeting concluded with expressions of gratitude for its success, with Kiyegga underlining the pivotal role of the discussions in shaping a comprehensive 15-year plan for the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda. The call for participants to fill out a survey to capture additional ideas and the invitation to continue contributing through an open email contact underscored the commitment to ongoing collaboration. Overall, the meeting was hailed as mind-blowing and educational, promising a positive trajectory for the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda.

## LGBTQ Community Leaders, Allies, Experts and Diaspora community Online convening

The Convening was held on Friday, September 29th, 2023, from 10:00 AM to 12:40 PM (East Africa Time) via the Zoom platform. The meeting aimed to bring together LGBT community leaders, experts, Diaspora, and community allies to discuss critical issues facing the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda. The meeting was attended by over 30 Participants was moderated by John Grace the Executive director of Uganda minority shelter consortium (UMSC)- our partner organization.

### Introduction to the Project

The meeting began with an introduction to the project by the project Coordinator, Andrew Kiyegga. He provided an overview of the project's objectives and highlighted the importance of re-imagining Uganda with a focus on the 15-year strategic direction. This introduction was availed in a video form for proper comprehension about the convening for reimagining.

All participants, including experts and community allies, introduced themselves, sharing their backgrounds and affiliations.

### Panel Discussion

The panelists engaged in a comprehensive discussion covering a wide range of topics related to LGBTQ+ rights in the light of the recently passed anti-Homosexuality Act in Uganda. They shared their expertise and experiences, providing valuable insights for the participants.

### Eric Ndawula

Eric Ndawula played a vital role in shedding light on the findings from the Convening For Equality's Strategic Response Team (CFE's SRT) report, which focused on the numerous violations that have occurred since the enactment of Uganda's anti-homosexuality act. Mr. Ndawula also provided a comprehensive overview of three crucial petitions, specifically identified as Petitions No. 14, No. 15, and No. 16 of the year 2023. These petitions were filed to challenge the anti-gay law and its implications on the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda.

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During his presentation, Eric Ndawula discussed the grounds for these petitions. Among the various issues raised, one notable aspect was the conduct of the Speaker of Parliament. The Speaker's actions and decisions pertaining to the handling of the anti-homosexuality act and its implementation were deemed problematic and a subject of concern. Mr. Ndawula highlighted how these actions had raised questions about the fairness and impartiality of the legislative process.

Furthermore, Eric Ndawula drew attention to the unconstitutionality of certain provisions within the anti-gay law. These provisions were found to be in conflict with Uganda's constitution and human rights principles, making a strong case for their reconsideration and revision.

Additionally, Mr. Ndawula shared valuable resources from the Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF), including legal analyses of the anti-gay law. These resources provided essential insights and evidence for the arguments made in the petitions, strengthening the case against the discriminatory legislation.

Eric Ndawula went on to discuss the next steps in the petitioning process. He highlighted a significant date, October 2, 2023, when conferencing notes for the three petitions would be shared. This date was particularly significant as it marked an important milestone in the legal challenge. During this conference, the details, arguments, and strategies of the three petitions would be discussed, paving the way for potential consolidation of these petitions into a unified and more potent legal challenge.



## Stella Nyanzi

Her insights shed light on the challenges faced by the community, particularly regarding the criminalization of the production and distribution of knowledge and research related to LGBTQ+ persons within the country.

Ms. Nyanzi commenced her address by expressing gratitude to Mutebi Edward, the founder of Let's Walk Uganda, and to the dedicated community members who organized and participated in the conversation. This recognition highlighted the collaborative and grassroots nature of the movement, acknowledging the invaluable role of local activists and organizations in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights.

Stella Nyanzi went on to provide a historical perspective, discussing the origins and motivations behind homophobic laws, such as the anti-gay bill in Gambia. She emphasized that fear and misinformation often underpinned such legislation and were manipulated for political reasons, underscoring the importance of challenging these prejudices and misperceptions.

Moreover, Nyanzi addressed the limited research on LGBTQ+ movements in Africa, pointing out that a significant portion of this work was concentrated in South Africa. This concentration raised issues of representation and the need to diversify research efforts, giving voice to the unique experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ communities in various African countries, including Uganda.

Stella Nyanzi passionately appealed for donors to provide support for local Ugandan queer researchers, emphasizing the critical importance of building research capacity within the community. She highlighted the need to broaden research focus beyond the narrow confines of science and public health. While these areas were undoubtedly vital, she argued that it was equally essential to explore other disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, and the humanities, which were often neglected but crucial in understanding the full spectrum of LGBTQ+ experiences.

Another point made by Nyanzi was the disproportionate focus on men who have sex with men (MSMs) in research, while neglecting the unique challenges faced by lesbians, transgender persons, and intersex individuals.

This highlighted the need for more inclusive research methodologies and the importance of recognizing the diversity within the LGBTQ+ community.

Lastly, Stella Nyanzi emphasized the need for minority research conducted by minorities themselves. This included not only traditional research but also creative forms of expression such as art, media, literature, and policy documents. She stressed the importance of academic freedom and license to explore and disseminate knowledge without fear of censorship or retribution



### Prof. Lina Zedriga

Her insights revolved around strategies for organizing and emerging as a stronger and more unified community. Here is an in-depth exploration of her key points:

1. Being Intentional and Purposeful: Prof. Zedriga stressed the importance of intentionality and purposefulness when building the LGBTQ+ movement in Uganda. She emphasized the need for a long-term perspective, suggesting a 15-year horizon for planning and implementation. This extended time frame allows for the development of sustainable strategies that can withstand challenges and opposition. It requires careful and deliberate consideration of the movement's direction, objectives, and the steps needed to achieve them.
2. Focus on Re-imagining Uganda: One of the central themes discussed by Prof. Zedriga was the need to focus on what goals the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda needed to re-imagine for a better future. This perspective encourages community members and allies to envision a more inclusive and accepting society and actively work towards achieving that vision. It involves setting clear objectives and outcomes for the movement that can guide its efforts.

3. Preparedness to Find Solutions: In the face of adversity, Prof. Zedriga advocated for the LGBTQ+ community and its allies to be prepared to find innovative and creative solutions to the challenges they encounter. This implies adaptability and resilience, as well as the ability to pivot when necessary to navigate changing circumstances effectively.

4. Personalization and Humanization of LGBTQ+ Stories: To foster empathy and understanding, Prof. Zedriga recommended personalizing and humanizing LGBTQ+ stories. This approach involves sharing personal narratives and experiences within the community. By putting a human face on the challenges and triumphs of LGBTQ+ individuals, it becomes easier for allies and the broader public to relate to and support the cause.



5. Nurturing Group Cohesiveness: Building group cohesiveness within the LGBTQ+ community and its allies was another key point raised by Prof. Zedriga. This involves creating a strong sense of unity and solidarity within the movement.

Cohesiveness enables more effective collaboration, support, and advocacy efforts, as a united front is better equipped to bring about change.

6. Building Relationships: Prof. Zedriga highlighted the significance of building relationships, not only within the LGBTQ+ community but also with external stakeholders, such as other human rights organizations, political figures, and the general public. These relationships can lead to collaborative efforts, coalition-building, and the sharing of resources and knowledge to advance the movement's objectives.

7. Getting Started: Lastly, Prof. Zedriga emphasized the importance of taking action and not waiting for the perfect moment to begin the work of building a more inclusive Uganda. Getting started is often the most challenging step, but it is essential for progress. By taking the first steps, the LGBTQ+ community and its allies can learn, adapt, and evolve as they work toward their vision of a more accepting society

### Ayesiga Herbert Elvis.

Herbert Ayesiga Elvis made a substantial contribution to the Convening for Re-imagining Uganda online meeting by delving into the critical topics of fundraising and the decolonization of funding for the LGBTQ+ movement, particularly during times of crisis. His insights shed light on the challenges and disparities in the funding landscape and underscored the importance of donors being responsive to the specific needs of community members on the ground. Here's a more detailed explanation of his key points:

**1. Decolonization of Funding:** Herbert Ayesiga Elvis emphasized the need to decolonize funding for the LGBTQ+ movement. This term refers to the process of challenging and dismantling the historical and structural inequalities present in donor-funding relationships. It involves recognizing and rectifying the power imbalances that can exist between donors from more privileged regions or organizations and the marginalized communities they aim to support. Decolonization promotes a more equitable and collaborative approach to funding, one that respects the autonomy and agency of the communities being funded.

**2. Donor Understanding vs. On-the-Ground Context:** Ayesiga pointed out a common issue within the funding landscape, where donors often want to fund projects or initiatives based on their own understanding, without considering the unique on-the-ground context and needs of the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda. This can lead to the misallocation of resources, as projects may not align with the community's actual requirements.

**3. Prioritization of Funding Areas:** He highlighted a critical challenge regarding donor priorities. During times of crisis, donors might emphasize funding for specific areas, such as legal aid, which are considered crucial. While legal aid is undoubtedly essential, it may come at the detriment of other equally important areas like mental health support, education, advocacy, and community-building initiatives. This unequal allocation of resources can leave significant gaps in addressing the comprehensive needs of the LGBTQ+ community.

4. **Misalignment with Donor Goals:** Ayesiga acknowledged that many LGBTQ+ organizations and initiatives do incredible work but may not always align perfectly with donor goals and criteria. This misalignment can result in funding shortfalls for organizations that are making valuable contributions to the community. It underscores the importance of donor flexibility and a more nuanced understanding of the diverse needs and strategies within the LGBTQ+ movement.

5. **Responsiveness to On-the-Ground Needs:** Central to Ayesiga's message was the need for donors to be responsive to the actual needs and priorities of the LGBTQ+ community on the ground. He emphasized that funding decisions should be informed by local expertise and the input of community members who best understand the challenges and solutions required. This approach ensures that resources are effectively and meaningfully utilized to address the most pressing issues.

#### 4. Question and Answer Session

After the panel discussion, participants had the opportunity to ask questions to the panelists. The Q&A session allowed for a deep and meaningful exchange of ideas and information.

##### Dr. Stella Nyanzi

**1. Safety of Researchers in Light of the New Anti-Gay Law:** Stella Nyanzi received a question about the safety of individuals conducting research in the context of the new anti-gay law in Uganda. She responded by acknowledging that conducting research related to LGBTQ+ issues has never been entirely safe, given the societal and legal challenges that have existed for some time. However, she emphasized that in the current climate, where the anti-gay law has heightened these challenges, research is more important than ever.

Nyanzi's emphasis on the importance of research underscores its value in shedding light on the realities faced by the LGBTQ+ community and in advocating for their rights. She also highlighted the need for "the right science," suggesting that research should be conducted with integrity, thoroughness, and adherence to ethical standards. This point underlines the significance of credible research in advocacy efforts.

**2. Dealing with Ethics Boards:** In response to a question regarding how to deal with ethics boards, Stella Nyanzi emphasized the need for boldness and an understanding of the political nature of these boards. She recognized that ethics boards can sometimes be influenced by political considerations and may not always fully appreciate or support LGBTQ+ research.

Her recommendation for researchers to be bold underscores the importance of perseverance and a commitment to research that may challenge the status quo. It also highlights the need to advocate for the ethical review of research proposals that address LGBTQ+ issues without fear or compromise.

Understanding the political nature of ethics boards is crucial, as it encourages researchers to engage with ethics boards in a manner that takes into account the wider political and social context, and to be prepared to make a strong case for the importance of their research to the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights.

**3. Political Opposition's Stance on LGBTQ+ Rights:** In response to a question about the political opposition's stance on LGBTQ+ rights, Stella Nyanzi pointed out that political alliances require strategic thinking. She highlighted that cultivating allies of all political stripes and persuasions is an ongoing process.

Nyanzi's response recognized the complex political landscape in which LGBTQ+ rights advocacy takes place. Her emphasis on strategic thinking reflects the need for advocacy efforts to be flexible and adaptive in building alliances with political figures, regardless of their specific political affiliations.

### Elvis Herbert Ayesiga

Elvis Herbert Ayesiga's response to a question about investment in economic empowerment for LGBTQ community members during the Convening for Re-imagining Uganda online meeting revealed a deep understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community. Here's an expansion on his key points:

**1. Security Issues and Economic Empowerment:** Ayesiga highlighted a critical perspective by asserting that LGBTQ security issues are, in fact, economic issues. This statement underscores the interconnectedness of economic well-being and personal security for LGBTQ individuals in Uganda. It suggests that the economic vulnerability of LGBTQ community members directly impacts their safety and overall quality of life.

**2. Insecurity Linked to Economic Situation:** Ayesiga's assertion implies that the insecurity experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals in Uganda is intrinsically linked to their economic situation. Economic insecurity can manifest in various ways, such as unemployment, discrimination in the workplace, or a lack of access to economic opportunities. These economic challenges can leave LGBTQ+ community members in vulnerable positions, making them more susceptible to discrimination, violence, and social exclusion.

3. **The Vicious Cycle:** This connection between economic challenges and insecurity creates a vicious cycle. Economic vulnerability can expose LGBTQ individuals to discrimination and violence, which, in turn, further hampers their economic prospects. As they face discrimination and violence, their ability to secure stable employment, education, and financial resources becomes increasingly compromised.

4. **Importance of Economic Empowerment:** Recognizing that economic empowerment is a key aspect of LGBTQ+ rights and security, Ayesiga's response underscores the importance of investing in economic opportunities and financial inclusion for LGBTQ community members. Empowering individuals economically can help break the cycle of vulnerability, improve livelihoods, and ultimately contribute to their safety and well-being.

5. **Broader Implications:** Ayesiga's statement also has broader implications for advocacy efforts. It emphasizes that the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights is not limited to legal and social recognition but also encompasses economic dimensions. Advocates and allies must work to challenge economic discrimination and barriers that LGBTQ+ individuals face, in addition to addressing legal and social issues.

### **Dr Lina Zedriga**

Dr. Lina Zedriga's response to a question about the political opposition's stance on LGBTQ rights during the Convening for Re-imagining Uganda online meeting reflects a nuanced and strategic approach to LGBTQ rights advocacy. Here's a deeper exploration of her key points:

**1. Human Rights as Holistic:** Dr. Zedriga expressed her personal belief that human rights are holistic. This means that she views human rights as interconnected and indivisible, encompassing a wide range of rights and freedoms that should be guaranteed to all individuals without discrimination. In this context, LGBTQ rights are seen as an integral part of the broader framework of human rights.

**2. Cultivating Relationships:** Zedriga's response indicates that she is actively engaged in cultivating relationships with political figures within the opposition. Building these relationships is a strategic approach to advancing LGBTQ rights. By engaging in dialogue and fostering connections with political leaders, Zedriga seeks to influence their understanding of LGBTQ issues and build support for these rights within the opposition.

3. Consistency in Stance: Dr. Zedriga emphasized that her stance on LGBTQ rights has always been clear when engaging with her colleagues in the political opposition. Her consistency in advocating for LGBTQ rights demonstrates a principled commitment to the cause. This consistency helps build trust and credibility within the opposition, allowing for more productive dialogue and collaboration.

4. The Importance of Strategic Thinking: Zedriga's response implies that strategic thinking is crucial in the context of LGBTQ rights advocacy within the political opposition. It is not just about expressing one's stance but also about identifying opportunities for productive engagement, influencing policies, and ultimately achieving positive change. Building relationships and maintaining a clear stance are strategic tools in this process.

5. Broader Implications: The approach highlighted by Dr. Zedriga underscores the complexity of LGBTQ rights advocacy within a political context. It requires both principled consistency and the ability to engage with individuals or groups whose initial stance might be less supportive of these rights. Cultivating relationships and influencing political opposition figures can lead to a more inclusive and rights-affirming agenda within the broader political landscape.

### Eric Ndawula

Eric Ndawula's responses during the Convening for Re-imagining Uganda online meeting provide important insights into collaboration among LGBTQ+ organizations and activists in petitioning against the anti-gay law, as well as addressing government responses to funding issues. Here's a more detailed exploration of his key points:

1. Cooperation and Buy-in from Other Organizations and Activists: In response to a question about cooperation and buy-in from other organizations like Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) and activists in petitioning against the anti-gay law, Eric Ndawula stressed the unity of purpose. He mentioned that all the petitions are directed toward the same goal – the repeal of the Anti-Homosexuality Act. This unity of purpose is a critical aspect of advocacy and legal challenges. By working together and aligning their efforts, different organizations and activists can pool their resources, knowledge, and expertise to create a stronger, more coordinated push for change.

The fact that all petitioners in the three petitions are in conversation signifies a collaborative approach that maximizes the impact of their collective efforts. It's essential in legal challenges and advocacy efforts to ensure that everyone is on the same page, sharing information, and coordinating strategies to avoid duplication and enhance the effectiveness of the initiatives.

2. Addressing Government Response to Funding Halt from World Bank: Eric Ndawula's response to the question about the government's response to the funding halt from the World Bank, and the blame placed on the LGBTQ+ community, is characterized by a commitment to ethical and principled advocacy.

He pointed out the importance of challenging misinformation from the government. This highlights the need for the LGBTQ+ community and its allies to be vigilant in countering false narratives and providing accurate information to counteract negative stereotypes and prejudiced views.

## Conclusion

This Convening for Re-imagining Uganda online with leaders and allies was a successful and informative gathering of experts, diaspora, and community allies. The discussion, panel presentations, and the Q&A session provided valuable insights and strategies for advancing LGBTQ+ rights in Uganda. The commitment of the participants and panelists to the cause was evident throughout the meeting. The organizers expressed their gratitude to everyone for their participation and encouraged ongoing collaboration to create a more inclusive and accepting Uganda.



# The Physical Convening.

In a landmark event that brought together LGBTQ community thinkers and their allies, the Physical Convening of the Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda took place from the 23rd to the 25th of November 2023 at the Ibis Styles Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. This unique gathering marked the inception of a transformative 15-year project aptly named "Reimagining Uganda," aimed at reshaping the landscape for the LGBTQ community in the region.

## **Objective and Focus**

The primary objective of this convening was to facilitate an exchange of ideas among LGBTQ community thinkers and their allies. By doing so, the goal was to collectively brainstorm strategies and develop an implementation roadmap that would proactively advocate for the rights of the LGBTQ community. The overarching aim was to contribute to a fundamental and positive shift in public attitudes towards the LGBTQ community in Uganda.

## **Key Components of the Convening**

The Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda comprised multifaceted discussions and sessions, covering crucial aspects of the project. These included:

### **Mission and Vision:**

Participants engaged in thought-provoking discussions to articulate a clear and compelling mission and vision for the Reimagining Uganda project. This foundational step laid the groundwork for subsequent strategic planning.



## **Theory of Change:**

The convening delved into the development of a robust Theory of Change, mapping out the causal pathways through which the project's interventions would lead to desired outcomes. This exercise aimed to provide a theoretical framework for understanding and driving positive social change.

## **Fundraising Strategy:**

Acknowledging the financial aspects of such a transformative endeavor, participants collaboratively explored innovative fundraising strategies. This included discussions on potential funding sources, partnerships, and sustainable financial models to ensure the long-term success of the Reimagining Uganda project.

## **Problem Tree Analysis:**

A comprehensive analysis of challenges and barriers faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda was undertaken using the Problem Tree methodology. This exercise facilitated a nuanced understanding of the issues at hand, guiding the formulation of targeted and effective solutions.

## **Collaborative Atmosphere:**

The physical convening at the Ibis Styles Hotel provided a conducive environment for open dialogue, collaboration, and networking. Participants, comprising LGBTQ community thinkers, activists, and allies, engaged in spirited conversations aimed at fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.

## **Impact and Future Outlook:**

The outcomes of this convening are poised to have a lasting impact on the Reimagining Uganda project. The strategies, insights, and collaborative efforts generated during these four days are instrumental in shaping the trajectory of advocacy for LGBTQ rights in Uganda over the next 15 years.

As the delegates dispersed from the Ibis Styles Hotel, they carried with them not just a roadmap for change but a renewed sense of purpose and determination to drive a positive transformation for the LGBTQ community in Uganda. The Physical Convening of the Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda stands as a pivotal moment in the ongoing struggle for equality, paving the way for a more inclusive and tolerant future.

# DAY ONE

## Report on Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda - Day 1

**Date:** 28th November 2023

**Venue:** Ibis Styles Hotel

**Time:** 9:00am - 5:00pm

### 1. Program Coordinator's Introduction

The Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda commenced with a warm welcome and insightful introduction by Andrew Kiyegga, the Convening's Coordinator. Due to logistical constraints, Mr. Kiyegga addressed the participants through a video message, setting the tone for the entire event. In his introduction, he provided a comprehensive overview of the project, emphasizing its significance and the expected outcomes.

Mr. Kiyegga skillfully navigated through the participants' expectations, allowing each individual to express their thoughts. Participants introduced themselves, sharing their names, professional backgrounds, and expressing their anticipation for the convening. This interactive segment fostered a sense of community and collaboration among attendees, creating a foundation for meaningful discussions throughout the event.



## 2. Executive Director's Message



Following the Program Coordinator's introduction, Derrick Kimera, the Executive Director of Let's Walk Uganda, took the stage to extend a warm welcome to all attendees. Mr. Kimera emphasized the critical need for societal transformation regarding attitudes towards LGBTQ persons in Uganda. Through his impassioned message, he underscored the urgency of the convening's mission and the role each participant plays in driving positive change.

In addition to setting the tone for the event, Mr. Kimera introduced the dedicated staff and volunteers of Let's Walk Uganda. This served not only as a recognition of the organization's efforts but also as an opportunity for participants to connect with the individuals working towards a common goal.

## 3. Board of Directors Message

Akello Lucy Ebong, the Vice Chairperson and representative of the Board of Directors, delivered a heartfelt message, expressing gratitude to all attendees for their presence. Ms. Ebong officially opened the proceedings, marking the beginning of a series of discussions and collaborative sessions.



During her message, Ms. Ebong acknowledged the collective effort required to bring about meaningful change in societal perceptions. She emphasized the importance of unity and collaboration, setting the stage for the collaborative spirit that would define the subsequent sessions.

# PANEL

Day One Panel Discussion: The grave atrocities faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda

Panelists/Interviewees: Bamuloze Dahlyn, Eric Ndawula, Bob Bwana and Mutebi Edward



Host/Interviewer: Kiyegga Andrew Tendo



## Questions:

### **Dahlyn:**

as someone deeply involved in human rights advocacy, how do you perceive the impact of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill and subsequent legislation on the LGBTQIA community in Uganda?

### **Eric:**

being a petitioner, an activist and a media figure, how can the media play a role in challenging harmful social narratives against gender and sexual diversity, especially considering the devastating effects on LGBTQIA organizations and members?

### **Edward:**

From a legal perspective, how have you seen the legal environment evolve regarding LGBTQIA rights in Uganda, and what measures do you think are crucial for protecting the community?

### **Bob:**

As someone on the ground, what are the immediate challenges the LGBTQIA community faces in Uganda, and what grassroots initiatives have you seen making a positive impact?

## Introduction:

The inaugural day of the Convening For Re-Imagining Uganda commenced with a compelling and insightful panel discussion that addressed the grave atrocities faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda. The esteemed panelists, each with unique perspectives and experiences, shed light on various aspects of the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in the wake of the recently passed Anti Homosexuality Act 2023.

### **Bamuloze Dahlyn (Lawyer and Human Rights Advocate)**

Dahlyn contributed to the discussion by emphasizing the discriminatory practices in providing healthcare services to LGBTQ individuals as a consequence of the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023. Drawing from the recently released Strategic Response Team (SRT) Report, Dahlyn detailed instances of healthcare rights violations and their impact on the LGBTQ community.



Dahlyn, as a lawyer and human rights advocate, brought attention to the discrimination LGBTQ persons face in accessing healthcare services due to the Anti-Homosexuality Act. He outlined instances of healthcare rights violations documented in the recently released Strategic Response Team (SRT) Report. By highlighting these violations, Dahlyn shed light on the systemic challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in obtaining essential healthcare.

Dahlyn stressed that the violations detailed in the SRT Report represent only the tip of the iceberg. As an activist with a health and legal background, he expressed concern that many cases of discrimination and rights violations go unreported. This emphasized the severity of the issue, suggesting that the documented cases are likely only a fraction of the actual incidents occurring within the LGBTQ community.

Dahlyn identified specific sections of the Anti-Homosexuality Act—sections 12, 13, and 14—as problematic. He argued that these sections violate client confidentiality and privacy, which are fundamental rights in healthcare. The 'duty to report' clause, in particular, raised concerns for Dahlyn, as it empowers non-state actors to report on individuals' private lives, exacerbating the vulnerability of the LGBTQ community.

Dahlyn highlighted a significant observation from the SRT Report: most violations were committed by non-state actors. He underscored the concern that sections of the Anti-Homosexuality Act empower non-state actors, contributing to an environment where discrimination and rights violations can occur without accountability.

Dahlyn addressed the recent Ministry of Health Circular urging health workers to provide non-discriminatory healthcare services to "sexual minorities." Despite this directive, he noted that violations and stigma persist, rendering the circular ineffective. This highlighted the gap between policy and implementation, emphasizing the need for more comprehensive measures to address discrimination against LGBTQ persons in healthcare.



**Eric Ndawula** (Petitioner, Activist, and Media Figure; Executive Director of LifeLine Youth Empowerment Center)

Eric focused on the role of the media in sensationalizing LGBTQ lives and stories. He discussed the lack of objectivity in media coverage and the rise of hate speech on social media platforms. His insights provided a critical perspective on how media influences public opinion, especially considering the recent passing of the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023.

Eric Ndawula, also serving as one of the current petitioners against the Anti-Homosexuality Act, provided a valuable update on the progress of the legal challenge. He shared insights into the complexities, milestones, and challenges faced in the legal battle against the discriminatory legislation. This offered attendees a glimpse into the ongoing efforts to challenge and overturn the Anti-Homosexuality Act through legal avenues.

Eric brought attention to the significant role played by church leaders and church-owned media in shaping homophobic views and contributing to the sensationalism against LGBTQ persons. He highlighted the oversaturation of the Ugandan media market by these entities, emphasizing the need to address the influence they wield in perpetuating discriminatory narratives. By linking the influence of religious institutions with media, Eric underscored the depth of the challenge faced by the LGBTQ community.

When asked about how queer individuals can respond to media and sensationalist stories, Eric emphasized the necessity for creative, innovative, and aggressive approaches. Recognizing the power of storytelling, he encouraged the LGBTQ community to leverage various media platforms to counteract misinformation and hate speech effectively. This call for a proactive and imaginative response highlighted the importance of reclaiming narratives and challenging negative portrayals through strategic communication.

In response to a question about individuals who use the media to out LGBTQ persons, especially when they are part of the community themselves, Eric took a strong stance. He advocated for the shunning and avoidance of such individuals until they make amends for their actions. This stance reflected a commitment to holding community members accountable for harmful behaviors that contribute to the perpetuation of discrimination. Eric's position emphasized the need for solidarity and ethical conduct within the LGBTQ community.

## **Bob Bwana (Operations Manager of Icebreakers Uganda)**

Bob delved into the deep-seated stigma and discrimination that underpins the violations sanctioned by the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023. He highlighted the pervasive social, economic, and educational stigma faced by the LGBTQ community. Despite the challenges, Bob expressed optimism, emphasizing the resilience and innovation of LGBTQ individuals in navigating adversity.

Bob Bwana, as the Operations Manager of Icebreakers Uganda, emphasized the pervasive nature of stigma and discrimination as root causes of the violations imposed by anti-LGBTQ laws. By highlighting these societal challenges, Bob provided context to the difficulties faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda, extending beyond legal barriers to encompass social, economic, and educational dimensions.

Bob shed light on the ongoing social, economic, and educational stigma that persists against the LGBTQ community. His acknowledgment of these multifaceted challenges illustrated the complex and interconnected nature of the issues faced by LGBTQ individuals. By addressing these aspects, Bob provided a comprehensive view of the hurdles that need to be overcome for a more inclusive society.

In offering hope amidst challenges, Bob highlighted the resilience and innovation inherent in the LGBTQ community. By emphasizing the community's ability to persevere, he reframed the narrative, portraying LGBTQ individuals not just as victims but as creative and resilient individuals capable of overcoming adversity. Bob outlined different models and innovations employed by LGBTQ people and organizations to navigate anti-LGBTQ laws effectively:

- **Drop-In-Center (DIC) Mechanism:** Bob discussed the establishment of specifically tailored mini-clinics, providing essential Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services in a safe and efficient manner to LGBTQ persons. This model addressed the unique needs of the community while circumventing legal challenges.
- **Peer-To-Peer Model:** Bob highlighted the Peer-To-Peer model as an information-sharing tool within the community. This model ensures that each person reaches at least five others with essential safety, security, and health information. This grassroots approach fosters a sense of community support and disseminates vital information efficiently.

- **Mentorship and Professional Support Programs:** Bob acknowledged the importance of informal but effective mentorship and professional support programs, particularly for younger activists. These programs play a crucial role in building a supportive network within the LGBTQ community, fostering personal and professional development.

Bob urged the need to support queer persons in various sectors, ranging from entrepreneurs to farmers to creatives. This call for diversified support recognized the diverse talents and contributions of LGBTQ individuals and underscored the importance of inclusivity in supporting their well-being and success.

### **Mutebi Edward (Activist; Co-Founder of Let's Walk Uganda)**



Edward addressed the concerning silence of non-governmental actors, particularly international civil society organizations, in challenging the excesses of the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023. He drew attention to the abrupt closure of programs aimed at supporting LGBTQ Ugandans, signaling a lack of support from influential entities.



**1. Silence of Non-Government Actors:** Mutebi Edward, as an activist and Co-Founder of Let's Walk Uganda, drew attention to the concerning silence of non-governmental actors, particularly international civil society organizations, when confronted with the excesses of the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023. His highlighting of this silence underscored the need for a more vocal and active stance from entities with the capacity to influence change and challenge discriminatory legislation.

**2. Closure of Support Programs by International Organizations:** Edward specifically addressed the issue of international civil society organizations closing off programs that were previously working to support LGBTQ Ugandans. By bringing this to the forefront, he shed light on the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda due to the withdrawal of crucial support, emphasizing the detrimental impact on the fight against discrimination and human rights violations.

**3. Support for Ugandan LGBTQ Refugees:** In response to a question on how organizations back home can support Ugandan LGBTQ refugees, Edward emphasized the crucial need for inclusion. He drew parallels between the inclusivity of the gathering and the broader LGBTQ movement, stressing that support should extend beyond geographic boundaries. This call for global solidarity highlighted the interconnectedness of the struggle for LGBTQ rights worldwide.

**4. Grave Violations Resulting from the Anti-Homosexuality Act:** Edward detailed some of the grave violations resulting from the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023, such as forced anal examinations and forced undressing. By exposing these dehumanizing practices, he aimed to convey the urgency of addressing such human rights abuses and the severe impact of the legislation on the lives of LGBTQ individuals.

**5. Internal Migration and Displacement of LGBTQ Youth and Queer Parents:** Edward pointed out the internal migration and displacement of younger LGBTQ youth and queer parents as a consequence of the stigma brought about by the Anti Homosexuality Act. This highlighted the real-world consequences of discriminatory legislation, forcing individuals to uproot their lives due to fear, stigma, and threats to their safety.

**6. Support for Vulnerable LGBTQ Youth:** Edward emphasized the need to support LGBTQ youth, acknowledging them as the most vulnerable among the community. He addressed the impact of "recruitment" misinformation and hate speech perpetuated by religious leaders and opportunistic politicians. This underscored the importance of counteracting harmful narratives and providing support and education to vulnerable segments of the LGBTQ population.



## **Audience Feedback Insights:**

### **1. Calling Out Homophobes:**

A participant underscored the importance of actively calling out homophobes for being the biggest "promoters" of homosexuality, both online and offline. This perspective challenges the narrative often perpetuated by opponents of LGBTQ rights and emphasizes the need for the LGBTQ community to reclaim their own narrative. It also recognizes the paradoxical role of homophobes inadvertently drawing attention to LGBTQ issues through their opposition.

### **2. Accountability in Partnerships:**

Another participant emphasized the need for community members and organizations to reconsider their partnerships. Specifically, they advocated for disengaging with partners who back out when faced with laws negatively affecting LGBTQ persons. This feedback encourages a more discerning approach to collaborations, emphasizing the importance of solidarity and shared commitment in the face of challenges.

### **3. Collaboration between LGBTQ and Refugee Organizations:**

A participant highlighted the necessity for better collaboration between LGBTQ organizations and Refugee Organizations. This feedback recognizes the intersectionality of issues faced by LGBTQ refugees and stresses the importance of mutual support and information sharing. Improved collaboration between these entities can enhance advocacy efforts and provide more effective assistance to those in need.

### **4. Disproportionate Impact on the Poor:**

Another participant brought attention to the disproportionate impact of the Anti-Homosexuality law on poor individuals within the LGBTQ community. This feedback highlights a critical gap in existing programs, indicating a need for tailored initiatives that address the specific challenges faced by low-income queer persons. It underscores the importance of an inclusive approach to advocacy and support.





### **5. Lack of Organization within the LGBTQ Movement:**

A participant pointed out the lack of organization within the diverse LGBTQ movement in Uganda, especially during emergencies. This feedback draws attention to the challenges arising from a lack of cohesion and coordination within the movement. It suggests that a more organized and structured approach could enhance the community's ability to respond effectively to urgent situations and challenges.



# GROUP WORK: PROBLEM ANALYSIS

## GROUP 1



The Problem Analysis conducted by Group One at The Convening For Re-Imagining Uganda provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda. The analysis identifies root causes, major problems, internal challenges, sub-effects, main effects, and major/overall effects, shedding light on the complex web of issues that need to be addressed through the Reimagining Uganda project.

## Root Causes of Issues affecting the LGBTQ Community and Organizing in Uganda:

**Government Policies and Laws:** Discriminatory laws and policies contribute significantly to the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community, creating a legal environment that fosters discrimination and violence.

**Religion:** Deep-rooted religious beliefs and doctrines that condemn homosexuality contribute to the stigmatization and marginalization of LGBTQ individuals.

**Culture:** Prevailing cultural norms that reject or marginalize non-heteronormative identities and relationships pose a significant barrier to acceptance and inclusion.

**Ignorance on Homosexuality:** Lack of understanding and education about homosexuality contributes to prejudice and discrimination, perpetuating harmful stereotypes.

**Denial of Existence of Homosexuality:** The refusal to acknowledge the existence of homosexuality further marginalizes LGBTQ individuals, hindering open dialogue and understanding.

## Other Major Causes:

**Media Misinformation and Disinformation:** Inaccurate portrayals and biased reporting in the media contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes and misinformation about the LGBTQ community.

**Stigma and Discrimination:** Widespread societal stigma and discrimination create a hostile environment for LGBTQ individuals, affecting various aspects of their lives.

## Major Problems Affecting the LGBTQ Community:

**Violence:** LGBTQ individuals face physical and verbal violence, perpetuated by societal prejudices and discriminatory attitudes.

**Unemployment:** Discrimination in the workplace limits employment opportunities for LGBTQ individuals, leading to economic hardships.

**Denial of Social Services:** Barriers to education and healthcare services due to discrimination impact the overall well-being of the LGBTQ community.

**Mental Health Issues:** Ongoing stigma and discrimination contribute to mental health challenges within the LGBTQ community.

**Blackmail:** Threats and extortion create an environment of fear and vulnerability for LGBTQ individuals.

## Internal Challenges:

**Lack of Internal Accountability:** Internal challenges within the LGBTQ community, such as a lack of accountability, may hinder effective advocacy and support.

**Lack of Inclusion/Diversity:** Struggles for inclusion and diversity within the LGBTQ community may impede solidarity and collaborative efforts.

## Sub-Effects:

**Low Individual Self-Esteem:** Constant exposure to stigma and discrimination can lead to diminished self-esteem among LGBTQ individuals.

**Lack of Ability to Compete in the Labor Market:** Discrimination in employment hampers the economic empowerment and competitiveness of the LGBTQ community in the labor market.

**Infighting and Betrayals:** Internal conflicts and betrayals within the LGBTQ community can weaken collective efforts and unity.

### **Main Effects:**

**Community with Poor Health:** The cumulative impact of discrimination, violence, and denial of services results in a community with compromised physical and mental health.

**Unproductive Community:** Barriers to education and employment contribute to the overall lack of productivity within the LGBTQ community.

**Extortion and Endemic Poverty:** The prevalence of blackmail and economic challenges contribute to a cycle of poverty within the LGBTQ community.

### **Major/Overall Effects:**

**Death:** The hostile environment may lead to violence, mental health crises, and, in extreme cases, loss of life within the LGBTQ community.

**Internal and External Displacement:** LGBTQ individuals may be forced to relocate internally or seek asylum abroad due to the threats and violence they face in Uganda.





## GROUP 2

The Problem Analysis conducted by Group Two at The Convening For Re-Imagining Uganda provides a detailed examination of the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda. The analysis identifies root causes, major problems, internal challenges, sub-effects, main effects, major/overall effects, and key actors maintaining the status quo. This thorough examination is crucial for informing the development of strategies and an implementation roadmap during the 15-year Reimagining Uganda project.



## Root Causes of Issues affecting the LGBTQ Community and Organizing in Uganda:

**Negative Cultural Attitudes:** Deep-seated negative cultural attitudes contribute to the marginalization and stigmatization of the LGBTQ community.

**Faith and Religious Attitudes:** Prevailing religious doctrines and attitudes play a significant role in fostering discrimination against the LGBTQ community.

**Poverty:** Socioeconomic factors, particularly poverty, contribute to the vulnerability of the LGBTQ community and hinder their access to resources.

**Gender Inequality and Misogyny:** Gender-based discrimination and misogyny contribute to the broader challenges faced by the LGBTQ community, affecting both LGBTQ individuals and allies.

**Unfavorable Economic Environment:** Economic challenges in Uganda contribute to the overall difficulties faced by the LGBTQ community in accessing opportunities and resources.

## Major Problems Affecting the LGBTQ Community:

**Repressive Laws (Anti-Homosexuality Law):** Discriminatory laws, such as the Anti-Homosexuality Law, create a legal environment that fosters discrimination and poses a direct threat to the rights and well-being of LGBTQ individuals.

**Misinformation, Disinformation, and Hate Speech:** The spread of false information and hate speech contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypes and the marginalization of the LGBTQ community.



## Internal Challenges:

**Gatekeeping of Resources:** Limited access to resources within the LGBTQ community, potentially controlled by a select few, may hinder the effectiveness of advocacy efforts.

**Financial Exploitation:** Exploitative practices within the community may lead to financial challenges and internal divisions.

**Indiscipline and Bad Manners:** Internal conflicts arising from indiscipline and interpersonal issues can impede the cohesive functioning of the LGBTQ community.



## Sub-Effects:

**Internalized Stigma:** The internalization of societal stigma may contribute to psychological challenges among LGBTQ individuals.

**Mental Illness:** The overall hostile environment and discrimination may lead to mental health issues within the LGBTQ community.

## Main Effects:

**Scarcity of Funding:** The cumulative impact of legal restrictions, discrimination, and societal attitudes may result in a scarcity of funding for LGBTQ-focused initiatives.



## Major/Overall Effects:

**More Anti-Gay/Redundant Laws:** Persistent discrimination and negative attitudes may lead to the creation of additional discriminatory laws.

**Internal and External Migration/Displacement:** LGBTQ individuals may be forced to migrate internally or seek refuge abroad due to the hostile environment.

**Human Rights Violations:** The LGBTQ community may face severe human rights violations, including persecution, arrests, and imprisonment.

**Brain Drain as a Result of Displacement:** The forced displacement of LGBTQ individuals may lead to a loss of talent and intellectual resources for the country.

**Death:** The hostile environment may lead to violence, persecution, and, in extreme cases, loss of life within the LGBTQ community.

## Key Actors Upholding the Status Quo:

**Cultural Leaders:** Traditional leaders may play a role in maintaining negative cultural attitudes towards the LGBTQ community.

**Religious Clerics:** Religious leaders who propagate discriminatory doctrines contribute to the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community.

**Media:** Biased media reporting and misinformation contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes and discrimination.

**Conspiracy Theorists/Peddlers:** Individuals spreading conspiracy theories may further contribute to societal hostility towards the LGBTQ community.

**Opportunistic Politicians:** Politicians who exploit anti-LGBTQ sentiments for political gain contribute to the perpetuation of discriminatory practices.

**Misled/Misinformed Leaders:** Leaders who are not well-informed about LGBTQ issues may inadvertently contribute to discriminatory practices.

**Unreliable and Opportunistic Allies:** Individuals or groups that claim to be allies but act in ways that perpetuate discrimination.

**Anti-Gender Movement in the Region:** Movements opposed to gender equality may contribute to the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community, as both movements often intersect in their goals.



*Stella Nyanzi, The group two Coordinator Listening to her Group Members' Ideas.*

# GROUP WORK: Thematic areas: Grouping and defining challenges and solutions.

## Key Thematic Areas:

- Movement Building
- Social Inclusion and Community Support
- Safety and Security
- Spiritual and Cultural Affirmation
- Education and Research
- Economic Independence and Sustainability
- Litigation and Political-Legal Transformation

## GROUP 1

Group One at the Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda focused on several thematic areas to address the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda and to contribute to a positive change in public attitudes. Here's an expounded explanation of the thematic areas and the solutions proposed by Group One:

### **Movement Building:**

*Solutions:*

**Dialoguing:** Creating spaces for open and constructive conversations to bridge understanding.

**Resource Mobilization:** Securing funds and support for LGBTQ initiatives and advocacy.

**Meaningful/Purposeful Collaboration:** Establishing partnerships with organizations and individuals aligned with the cause.

**Harmonization of Work:** Coordinating efforts among different LGBTQ groups for a more unified approach.

**Technology and Innovation in Activism:** Utilizing digital platforms and innovative approaches to amplify advocacy efforts.

**National, Regional, and International Collaboration and Engagement:** Building alliances with stakeholders at various levels for broader impact.

## **Social Inclusion and Community Support:**

*Solutions:*

**Development of an Accountability Mechanism:** Establishing frameworks to ensure accountability within the LGBTQ community.

**Meaningful Representation:** Ensuring diverse voices and perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** Promoting the acceptance and integration of all Ugandans, regardless of age, gender, social status, or class.

## **Safety and Security:**

*Solutions:*

**Dialoguing:** Facilitating discussions with local councils, village leaders, neighbors, and landlords to foster understanding and support.

**Engagement of Local Councils, Village Leaders:** Involving local leaders in creating a safer environment for LGBTQ individuals.

## **Spiritual and Cultural Affirmation:**

*Solutions:*

**Taking Advantage of Tech and Digital Platforms:** Using online platforms to create safe spaces for spiritual and cultural expression.

**Creation of Online and Offline Virtual Spiritual Spaces:** Establishing spaces for LGBTQ individuals to explore and affirm their spirituality.

**Research on Queer Spirituality and Faith:** Conducting research to understand and validate the diverse spiritual experiences within the LGBTQ community.

## **Spiritual and Cultural Affirmation:**

*Solutions:*

**Investment in Tech and Innovation:** Applying technology for educational purposes and data collection.

**Documentation:** Recording and archiving LGBTQ experiences, challenges, and achievements.

**Fact Checking:** Ensuring accurate information is disseminated to counter misinformation.

**Investment in Queer Media:** Supporting media initiatives that represent and amplify LGBTQ voices.

**Queer Gerontology and Inter-Generational Dialogues:** Addressing the needs and challenges of different age groups within the LGBTQ community.

**Creation of an Academic/Resource Centre:** Establishing a hub for research, education, and resources related to LGBTQ issues.

### **Economic Independence and Sustainability:**

*Solutions:*

**Integration into Existing Government Programs of Poverty Alleviation:**

Advocating for the inclusion of LGBTQ individuals in poverty alleviation initiatives.

**Long-term and Targeted Resource Mobilization:** Securing sustainable funding for economic empowerment programs.

**Meaningful Engagement/Involvement/Representation in Economic Programs:**

Ensuring diverse representation of LGBTQ Ugandans in economic initiatives.

### **Litigation and Political-Legal Transformation:**

*Solutions:*

**Strategic Litigation:** Using legal strategies to challenge discriminatory laws and policies.

**Inter-Movement Engagement:** Collaborating with other social justice movements to create a more comprehensive approach to legal and political transformation.

## GROUP 2

Group Two at the Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda focused on specific thematic areas with the goal of contributing to a fundamental positive change in public attitudes towards the LGBTQ community. Here's an expounded explanation of the thematic areas, solutions, and goals proposed by Group Two:

### **Movement Building:**

*Solution:*

#### **Create a Platform for Information Exchange, Knowledge Sharing, and Cross Learning:**

Establishing a digital or physical platform for the LGBTQ community to share information, exchange knowledge, and learn from each other's experiences.

*Goal:*

#### **To Establish a Sustainable, Diverse, and United Movement that Drives Change:**

Focusing on creating a movement that is not only diverse but also sustainable, ensuring that it can withstand challenges and drive positive change over the long term.

### **Social Inclusion and Community Support:**

*Solution:*

#### **Advocate for Policies that Promote Social Cohesion of LGBTQ Persons to Equal Access Opportunities and Rights:**

Working towards the creation and implementation of policies that support the social inclusion of LGBTQ individuals, ensuring they have equal access to opportunities and rights.

*Goal:*

#### **To Build a Community that Fosters Mutual Support, Resilience, and Cultivates Safe Spaces where Diversity is Celebrated:**

Striving to create a community where LGBTQ individuals feel supported, resilient, and celebrated, with an emphasis on fostering safe spaces for diverse expressions.

## **Safety and Security:**

Goal:

### **Minimize Vulnerabilities to Various Risks, Including Physical, Emotional, and Social Threats for LGBTQ Persons:**

Working towards creating an environment where LGBTQ individuals are less vulnerable to physical, emotional, and social threats, promoting overall safety and security within the community.

## **Spiritual and Cultural Affirmation:**

Goal:

### **Encourage Mutual Respect and Understanding Among Diverse Cultural and Religious Groups:**

Focusing on initiatives that promote mutual respect and understanding between the LGBTQ community and diverse cultural and religious groups in Uganda.

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# DAY TWO

## Report on Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda - Day 2

**Date:** 29th November 2023

**Venue:** Ibis Styles Hotel

**Time:** 9:00am - 5:00pm

### 1. Program Co-Ordinator's Recap:

The first session of Day 2 at the Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda began with a comprehensive recap delivered by Mr. Andrew Kiyegga, the Convening's Program Co-Ordinator. Mr. Kiyegga skillfully guided the participants through a reflection on the previous day's activities, emphasizing the crucial aspects of group work that revolved around Objective Analysis, Problem Tree, and Thematic Areas.

Participants were reminded of the collaborative efforts undertaken in dissecting the key objectives, identifying challenges, and proposing potential solutions. The recap served as a valuable consolidation of the collective insights generated during the previous day's group discussions. It laid the foundation for the day's agenda, ensuring continuity and coherence in the ongoing conversations about re-imagining Uganda.



Mr. Kiyegga encouraged active engagement and participation, underlining the importance of leveraging the diverse perspectives present in the room to generate innovative solutions. The session successfully set the tone for the subsequent discussions, fostering a sense of continuity and shared purpose among the participants.

Following the Program Co-Ordinator's Recap, the floor was handed over to Mr. Derrick Kimera, the Executive Director of Let's Walk Uganda, who delivered a crucial Logistics Message. Mr. Kimera began by extending a warm welcome to all participants, expressing gratitude for their presence and commitment to the Convening's objectives.

The Logistics Message primarily focused on safety and security considerations during the convening. Mr. Kimera underscored the importance of maintaining a secure environment, urging participants to adhere to the established safety protocols. Additionally, he highlighted specific logistics details, such as the process for dinner refunds and guidelines for travel reimbursements. These practical details aimed at ensuring the smooth functioning of the event and the comfort of all attendees.

Mr. Kimera's delivery was not only informative but also emphasized the collaborative responsibility of all participants in contributing to a safe and productive gathering. The Logistics Message served as a reminder of the practical aspects that contribute to the overall success of the Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda, reinforcing a sense of community and shared responsibility.



# PANEL

## *Panelists/Interviewees:*

- Dr. Stella Nyanzi (Writer, Scholar, Feminist, Academic, and Exiled Human Rights Advocate)
- John Bunjo (Medical Technologist, Medical Practitioner, LGBTQ Ally)
- Winfred Mugambwa (Feminist, Climate Justice Activist, Executive Director of Rights4Her)



**Host/Interviewer:**



- **Eric Ndawula** (*Petitioner, Activist, Media Figure, Executive Director of LifeLine Youth Empowerment Center*)

**Topic:** Best Approaches to Create Fundamental Community Changes in Uganda for the Next 15 Years

**Introduction:** The Day 2 Panel Discussion of the Convening For Re-Imagining Uganda featured a diverse group of panelists, each bringing their unique perspectives and expertise to the table. The topic centered around identifying the best approaches to create fundamental community changes in Uganda for the next 15 years.

### Questions

**Dr. Nyanzi,** considering your advocacy for social change, what key strategies do you think will be most effective in challenging deep-rooted cultural and societal norms that perpetuate discrimination against the LGBTQIA community?

**Dr. Bunjo,** from a medical perspective, how can healthcare professionals contribute to creating a more inclusive and accepting environment for LGBTQIA individuals, and what changes do you envision in the healthcare system?

**Winfred**, as someone with a background in community development, what role do you see community-led initiatives playing in achieving sustainable and resilient change for the LGBTQIA community in Uganda?

### **Dr. Stella Nyanzi's Insights:**



Dr. Stella Nyanzi began by emphasizing the need to challenge societal norms related to gender and sexuality. Drawing on her background in anthropology, she advocated for an in-depth study to understand the roots of these norms and how they can be effectively challenged. Furthermore, Dr. Nyanzi underscored the importance of forming alliances with professionals to advocate for LGBTQ rights. In the context of media and advocacy, she stressed the necessity of establishing and owning Queer media in Uganda to counter misinformation and false narratives, particularly in the face of repressive laws like the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023.

**Challenging Norms through Anthropological Study:** Dr. Stella Nyanzi's contribution to the panel discussion was marked by a deep commitment to challenging societal norms related to gender and sexuality. Drawing on her expertise as a scholar and anthropologist, she advocated for an in-depth anthropological study to understand the roots of these norms. By delving into the cultural and historical aspects that underpin these norms, she suggested that a more nuanced and informed approach could be developed to challenge and reshape them.

**Allying with Professionals for LGBTQ Rights:** Dr. Nyanzi emphasized the importance of forming alliances with professionals in advocating for LGBTQ rights in Uganda. Recognizing the power dynamics at play, she suggested that collaboration with experts from various fields, including medicine, law, and academia, could lend credibility and strength to the advocacy efforts. By aligning with professionals, the LGBTQ community can leverage their expertise to counter misinformation, dispel stereotypes, and promote a more accurate understanding of LGBTQ issues.

**Queer Media Ownership and Advocacy:** A key aspect of Dr. Nyanzi's submission centered around media and advocacy. She underscored the urgent need for the LGBTQ community in Uganda to establish and own their own Queer media. This, she argued, would serve as a powerful tool to counter misinformation and false narratives perpetuated by repressive laws such as the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023. By controlling their narrative, the LGBTQ community could challenge stigmas, share authentic stories, and foster a more inclusive and understanding society.

**Inclusive Movement and Intersectional Allies:** Dr. Nyanzi made a strong plea for inclusivity within the LGBTQ movement, specifically highlighting the importance of not leaving Intersex persons behind. She stressed that everyone, irrespective of gender or sexuality, should be involved in this movement. To strengthen the cause, she called for the collaboration of intersectional allies from various disciplines and sectors. These allies could include feminists, advocates for children's rights, workers and economic rights activists, as well as political actors. By building a diverse coalition, Dr. Nyanzi argued, the LGBTQ community can address issues holistically and effect systemic change.

**Producing Queer-Centric Research:** Highlighting the importance of research, Dr. Nyanzi urged the LGBTQ community to produce their own research that challenges norms and thinks beyond traditional binaries. By generating knowledge from within the community, she argued, there is an opportunity to reshape narratives, influence policies, and create a more informed and accepting society.

### **John Bunjo's Perspectives:**



Dr. John Bunjo, a medical technologist and practitioner, brought a healthcare perspective to the discussion. He highlighted the need for intentional efforts from both LGBTQ communities and their allies to promote acceptance. Bunjo argued that the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023 has not only hindered proper healthcare provision for queer individuals but also violated patient confidentiality as outlined in the Patient's Charter. He shed light on the victimization of both healthcare workers and LGBTQ individuals under this law, emphasizing the urgent need for its reconsideration.

**Promoting Acceptability and Allyship:** John Bunjo, bringing a healthcare perspective to the discussion, underscored the need for both LGBTQ communities and their allies to be intentional in promoting acceptability. His emphasis on intentionality speaks to the proactive role that individuals and groups can play in fostering understanding, empathy, and acceptance within society. By encouraging allies to actively engage in advocacy and support, Bunjo highlighted the potential for positive change in societal attitudes towards the LGBTQ community.

**Impact of Anti Homosexuality Act 2023 on Health Provision:** One of the key points raised by Bunjo was the adverse impact of the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023 on the provision of health services for queer persons in Uganda. He pointed out that the restrictive legal framework not only hinders proper healthcare provision but also violates patient confidentiality outlined in the Patient's Charter. This dual challenge, according to Bunjo, victimizes both healthcare workers and LGBTQ individuals, creating barriers to accessing essential health services.

**Advocacy through Education and Publication:** To address the barriers in healthcare provision, Bunjo stressed the importance of attitudinal change and education among health practitioners regarding LGBTQ persons and issues. He suggested that healthcare professionals can contribute significantly by writing articles, conducting research, and publishing evidence-based papers and strategy documents. This approach serves a dual purpose – it educates fellow practitioners and the wider public while also providing a foundation for evidence-based policymaking and advocacy.

**Coexistence and Community Building:** Bunjo extended the conversation beyond the healthcare sector by emphasizing the importance of coexistence, particularly in rural communities. He advocated for active participation in community building activities such as clean-up exercises, fundraising drives, burials, and other functions. By engaging in these activities, LGBTQ individuals can foster a sense of community and contribute positively to the areas they reside in. This approach not only breaks down stereotypes but also builds bridges between the LGBTQ community and wider society.

**Practical Steps for Inclusivity:** In highlighting the need for an attitude change among healthcare practitioners and society at large, Bunjo offered practical steps for creating inclusivity. Through education, research, and community engagement, he painted a picture of a more understanding and supportive environment for LGBTQ individuals, both within the healthcare system and society as a whole.

## Winfred Mugambwa on the Human Rights-Based Approach:



**Winfred Mugambwa**, a feminist and climate justice activist, emphasized the importance of a human rights-based approach to instigate fundamental change within Ugandan society. She encouraged leveraging crosscutting issues such as climate justice, regressive laws, economic injustices, and political injustices to address the broader spectrum of challenges. Mugambwa stressed the interconnectedness of these issues and the potential for a holistic approach to drive meaningful change.

**Human Rights-Based Approach:** Winfred Mugambwa brought a comprehensive human rights-based approach to the panel discussion, emphasizing the need for fundamental change within society and communities. Rooted in her roles as a feminist, climate justice activist, and Executive Director of Rights4Her, Mugambwa's perspective was grounded in the principles of justice, equity, and inclusivity. She argued that adopting a human rights-based approach is crucial for creating lasting change, particularly in the context of LGBTQ rights in Uganda.

**Crosscutting Issues and Intersectionality:** Mugambwa highlighted the interconnectedness of issues affecting society, advocating for an approach that takes advantage of crosscutting issues. By recognizing the links between climate justice, regressive laws, economic injustices, and political injustices, she proposed a strategy that addresses the root causes of discrimination and marginalization. This intersectional approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community and opens avenues for collaborative solutions.

**Human Rights-Based Approaches in Action:** Mugambwa outlined specific human rights-based approaches that can contribute to meaningful change. Support groups emerged as a key strategy, providing a space for individuals within the LGBTQ community to share experiences, seek guidance, and build a sense of solidarity. Collaborative and inclusive advocacy campaigns were highlighted as a means to bring together diverse voices, fostering a united front for LGBTQ rights.

**Tech and Digital Inclusion:** Recognizing the transformative power of technology, Mugambwa stressed the importance of tech and digital inclusion. By leveraging digital platforms, the LGBTQ community can amplify its message, counteract misinformation, and connect with a global network of supporters. Embracing technology, according to Mugambwa, is not just about visibility but also about using digital tools to advance advocacy and inclusivity.

**Human Rights-Based Health Solutions:** In the realm of healthcare, Mugambwa emphasized the importance of human rights-based health solutions. This involves ensuring that healthcare services are not only accessible but also respectful of the rights and dignity of LGBTQ individuals. Such an approach requires addressing systemic barriers and discriminatory practices within the healthcare system.

**Equitable Economic Empowerment/Support:** Economic empowerment and support were identified as critical components of the human rights-based approach. Mugambwa argued for equitable economic opportunities that uplift LGBTQ individuals, recognizing that economic empowerment is intricately tied to broader societal acceptance and inclusion.

**Meaningful Accountability and Leadership Development:** Mugambwa advocated for meaningful accountability of LGBTQ leaders, stressing the importance of holding leaders responsible for their actions and decisions. Simultaneously, she highlighted the need to celebrate and foster successful leaders within the LGBTQ community, creating a positive cycle of growth and emulation.





## GROUP WORK: Who We Are

### GROUP 1

#### Who we are!

The Reimagining Uganda Initiative embarks on a 15-year journey from 2024 to 2039 dedicated to advancing LGBTQ+ rights and fostering acceptance within Uganda. Departing from traditional reactive responses, the program strategically tackles the challenges confronting the communities. It harnesses community strengths, collaborations with diverse organizations and allies, and creates A comprehensive path towards affirming the LGBT community in Uganda as its primary stakeholders.



## Values:

The stated values provide a guiding framework for the work of Group One and the overall initiative:

- Service above self (Accountability): This value underscores a commitment to the community's well-being and the importance of being accountable for their actions and impact.
- Inclusivity (Leave no one behind): The commitment to inclusivity reflects the understanding that the success of the initiative depends on the active participation and representation of all members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Teamwork (We thrive together): Collaboration is highlighted as a key value, emphasizing the collective effort needed to bring about positive change.
- Excellence (We ride on quality and equity): The pursuit of excellence implies a commitment to high standards and fairness, ensuring that the initiative is both effective and just.
- Fun: Including "Fun" as a value suggests a recognition of the importance of joy and well-being within the LGBTQ+ community, promoting a positive and affirming atmosphere.

## Mission:

The mission of the initiative, as articulated by Group One, is to promote acceptance and create supportive spaces that empower LGBTQ+ individuals to thrive in Uganda. This goes beyond legal rights and emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive societal environment.





## GROUP 2

Group Two at The Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda has focused its "Who We Are" group work on shaping the narrative and goals of the Reimagining Uganda Initiative. Here's an expansion on the key components:

### **Who We Are:**

Group Two sees itself as a program with a 15-year commitment to guiding and involving sexual and gender minority communities in Uganda. The aim is to facilitate the evolution of these communities into an inclusive, proactive, and ambitious collective that embraces diversity.

### **Vision:**

The vision of Group Two aligns with the broader initiative, aspiring to create a transformed society and community where the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals are fully respected and treated with dignity under the law. This vision reflects a commitment to systemic change and societal transformation.

### **Mission:**

The mission of Group Two centers on creating a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment for LGBTQIA+ individuals. The emphasis is on ensuring that all human rights are enjoyed without discrimination, reinforcing the importance of equal treatment and inclusivity.



### Values:

The values articulated by Group Two provide a foundation for their work and the overall Reimagining Uganda Initiative:

- **Unity in Diversity (Leaving no queer behind):** This value underscores the commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that all individuals within the LGBTQIA+ community are considered and included in the initiative's efforts.
- **Responsible Accountability:** Accountability is highlighted as a responsibility, indicating a commitment to transparent and ethical conduct in all endeavors.
- **Inclusivity:** This value reinforces the importance of creating spaces and initiatives that are open and welcoming to all members of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- **Proactivity:** The emphasis on proactivity suggests a forward-thinking approach, advocating for solutions and strategies that are proactive rather than reactive.

- **Meaningful, Organic Response:** This value likely emphasizes the importance of responses and actions that are thoughtful, genuine, and tailored to the specific needs of the LGBTQIA+ community in Uganda.
- **Affirmation/Gratitude:** Recognition and appreciation are essential, highlighting the importance of acknowledging positive contributions and progress within the initiative.
- **Ambition to Grow or Improve Ourselves/Self-Empowerment:** This value indicates a commitment to continuous improvement and personal growth, emphasizing empowerment as a means to drive positive change.

## GROUP WORK: Theory Of Change and Implementation RoadMap

Thematic area objective	Intervention	Pathways	Expected Outcomes
<b>Thematic area: Movement building</b>			
To Establish a sustainable, diverse, and United Movement that Drives Change	Build a database of actors and beneficiaries.	Communication strategy	
	Develop the communication plan for awareness raising.	Curriculum development	<b>Impact: A strong Intersectional Movement An Informed Movement</b>
	Dissemination of information about the existing organisations, allies and community groups.	Lobbying	
	Capacity building of the community organization strengthening of their internal systems such as governance management, M&E, finance, and HR.	Technology and innovative solutions	<b>Outcome: Solidarity for LGBTQ individuals Unity and Inclusivity Establishment of a security risks database Working across diversities</b>
	Carry out research on the available resources.	Advocacy	

Thematic area objective	Intervention	Pathways	Expected Outcomes
	Form linkages (consortiums, alliances) and inter-movement dialogues –at national, regional, and global level.		<b>Outputs: Collaborations and partnerships</b> <b>Awareness Creation</b> New skill sets imparted/ Capacity built Joint interventions in the form of Consortiums and Networks. / Establishment of MOUs A movement building curriculum for learning engagement and sharing.
			<b>Assumptions:</b> No Unity/ Weakened Unity within the movement Inadequate mobilisation of stakeholders and allies Resources are available but untapped Limited knowledge of existing resources, opportunities and information.
Thematic area objective	Intervention	Pathways	Expected Outcomes
Thematic area: Social inclusion and community support			
	Mapping the available community support systems and their capacities		<b>Impact:</b>
			<b>Outcome:</b>
			<b>Outputs:</b>
			<b>Assumptions:</b>
Thematic area objective	Intervention	Pathways	Expected Outcomes
Thematic area: Safety and security			
	Engaging with local government leaders and law enforcers  Engage with immediate family and friends of LGBTQ persons on their lived realities		<b>Impact: LGBTQ persons are treated with dignity by local government leaders and law enforcement</b> <b>Family, friends and LGBTQ people live harmoniously together.</b>

Thematic area: Safety and security

			Outcome: A more professional approach when handling cases of LGBTQ persons by law enforcement Family and friends consciously do not discriminate against their LGBTQ plus loved ones.
			Outputs: An Understanding (by law enforcement) of the lived realities and various persecutions faced by LGBTQ+ Individuals Family and friends of LGBTQ persons understand their lived realities
			Assumptions:

Thematic area objective	Intervention	Pathways	Expected Outcomes
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Thematic area: Spiritual, and cultural affirmation

	Interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Produce IEC materials demystifying negative notions on Sexuality, religion, and culture.		Impact: Religious and cultural leaders create safe spaces where freedom of worship, belief and expression prevail without discrimination. A more inclusive culture and religious environment without discrimination and prejudice for LGBTQ plus persons.
			Outcome: The LGBTQ community and religious and cultural leaders harmoniously working together and understanding each other for change. More empathetic attitudes from religious and cultural leaders towards LGBTQ persons.
			Outputs: A Better understanding of LGBTQ plus lived Realities. Built trust Between LGBTQ community and religious plus cultural leaders.
			Assumptions: Religious and cultural leaders are highly homophobic and cannot be engaged.

Thematic area objective	Intervention	Pathways	Expected Outcomes
Thematic area: Litigation and political legal transformation			
<p>To enhance political, legal transformation through strategic litigation, resulting into improved legal frameworks and accountability for a resilient LGBTQ community by 2039.</p>	<p>Placement of LGBTQI legal practitioners in reputable legal institutions for mentorship and capacity building. Monitoring and documenting of human rights violations against community members. Assessing legal merit and evidence on the effect of laws against the LGBTQ community. Build political capacity of community members and supporting them to develop political capital and acquire leadership positions to influence decision making.</p>	<p>Research and documentation of community voices. Evidence based advocacy. Capacity building of community in legal response. IE paralegals, training lawyers, training lawyers in community tailored legal groups. Intentionally scaling up of legal response within the community. Strategic collaboration and partnerships.</p>	<p>Impact: A protected and empowered community capable of defending and influencing laws and policies.</p>
			<p>Outcomes: Improved access to justice. Targeted advocacy and strategic litigation. Influence community friendly policies.</p>
			<p>Outputs: Trained and mentored community legal practitioners. Data and evidence on community violations that can be used for advocacy and strategic litigation. Identified meritorious legal actions. Having more community members in positions of political power.</p>
			<p>Assumptions: Availability of skilled, efficient legal professionals. A reliable and unbiased efficient court system. Political will, where decision makers are willing to learn and unlearn for purposes of adjusting their stance to work on legal reforms. I need to shut it all down. Showtime.</p>

Thematic area objective	Intervention	Pathways	Expected Outcomes
<b>Thematic area: Economic independence and sustainability</b>			
To promote economic empowerment for LGBTQ people to actively contribute to the national and economic goal	Fiscal inclusion of minority groups.	Engagement of stakeholders Research and feasibility study. Linkages to external markets ie COMESA	<b>Impact:</b> Improved economic environment for the LGBTQ Individuals.
	Capacity strengthening for Small Micro Enterprises (SMEs)	Strategic partnerships from inception and research	
	Provide market access		<b>Outcome:</b> Improved Livelihoods Real time data on LGBTQ contribution to the economy
			<b>Outputs:</b> Validations of research findings from the community about what works. Inclusive trade policy Trade agreements (Bi-lateral)
			<b>Assumptions:</b> Support from state and non state actors . Collective ownership from the LGBTQ Community. Improve purchase capability.
Thematic area objective	Intervention	Pathways	Expected Outcomes
<b>Thematic area: Education and research</b>			
<b>To promote education and awareness about LGBTQ issues in Uganda.</b>	Develop content and curriculum in collaboration with the education curriculum development institute	Advocacy with the key stakeholders	<b>Impact:</b> Educated, informed, inclusive societies that demonstrates awareness about LGBTQ issues
		Strategic partnerships from inception and research	

Thematic area objective	Intervention	Pathways	Expected Outcomes
Thematic area: Education and research			
			<b>Outcome:</b> Increased awareness on inclusion from key stakeholders. Data driven education policies on inclusion.
			<b>Outputs:</b> Content and curriculum developed Research reports, i.e. in education. Increased access to accurate information on LGBTQ issues
			<b>Assumptions</b> Stakeholders buy in time. External factors affecting the project.

# DAY 3

## Report on Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda - Day 3

**Date:** 30th November 2023

**Venue:** Ibis Styles Hotel

**Time:** 9:00am - 5:00pm



## PANEL

### Panelists/Interviewees:

- Dr. Stella Nyanzi (Writer, Scholar, Feminist, Academic, Exiled Human Rights Advocate)
- Ayesiga Herbert Elvis (Data Enthusiast, Program Officer at UHAI-EASHRI)
- Mutebi Edward (Activist, Co-Founder of Let's Walk Uganda, an LGBTQ rights organization in Uganda)
- Aliganyira Brian (Executive Director of Ark Wellness Hub, a clinic catering to the health needs of LGBTQ persons in Uganda)

### Host/Interviewer:

Monalisa Akintole (Programs Manager, Transgender Equality Uganda, a transgender women's rights organization based in Uganda)

### Topic:

Data Driven Project Implementation Approach, Fundraising Ways, and Cohesion of the East African Movement for collective advocacy.



## Questions

**Herbert Elvis**, how can a data-driven approach enhance project implementation in addressing the root causes identified for the LGBTQIA community in Uganda, and what challenges do you foresee in collecting accurate and meaningful data?

**Brian**, as someone involved in fundraising, what innovative fundraising strategies can be employed to ensure the sustained success of projects aimed at supporting LGBTQIA rights in Uganda?

**Edward**, considering the East African context, how can regional cohesion be strengthened to create a unified front for LGBTQIA advocacy, and what potential challenges need to be addressed for collective advocacy?

**Dr. Nyanzi**, building on your previous experiences, how can academia contribute to the East African Movement's goals, particularly in terms of research, education, and fostering a more informed and supportive community?

### Introduction:

The third day of the Convening For Re-Imagining Uganda featured a panel discussion led by Monalisa Akintole, addressing critical aspects of LGBTQ advocacy in Uganda. The panelists, each representing diverse backgrounds and expertise, delved into topics ranging from data-driven advocacy to innovative fundraising strategies and the cohesion of the East African Movement for collective advocacy.

### Ayesiga Herbert Elvis on Data-Driven Advocacy:

Ayesiga Herbert Elvis, a Data Enthusiast and Program Officer at UHAI-EASHRI, provided valuable insights into the challenges and significance of community data in the context of LGBTQ advocacy in Uganda. His submission emphasized the inadequacy of traditional numerical data in conveying the nuanced and often complex stories of the LGBTQ community. Elvis argued that community data, as it stands, is often rendered unusable because it lacks the narrative depth required to communicate the unique experiences of queer individuals.

### Key Points

#### Usability of Community Data:

Elvis began by pointing out a critical flaw in the current state of community data. He noted that the prevalent approach tends to be overly numbers-driven, focusing on quantitative metrics rather than the qualitative aspects of the LGBTQ experience. This, he argued, leads to a lack of context and understanding, rendering the data less effective for advocacy purposes.

### **Data-Driven Approach to Telling Queer Stories:**

The core of Elvis's argument centered around the necessity for a data-driven approach to telling queer stories. He proposed that the LGBTQ community should adopt a methodology that not only quantifies data but also weaves a narrative around it. By incorporating personal stories and experiences, data becomes a powerful advocacy tool that can evoke empathy and understanding.

### **Government Planning and Resource Mobilization Challenges:**

Elvis highlighted the broader implications of unreliable LGBTQ data, particularly in the context of government planning and resource mobilization. He noted that due to the perceived unreliability of such data, compounded by deep-seated homophobia and negative societal attitudes, LGBTQ issues are often sidelined in government initiatives related to health sectors, economic programs, and other critical areas.

### **The Need for Up-to-Date, Targeted, and Meaningful Data:**

To address the shortcomings in current data practices, Elvis suggested a threefold approach. First, the data collected should be up-to-date, reflecting the current realities of the LGBTQ community. Second, it should be targeted, focusing on specific aspects that are relevant to advocacy efforts. Lastly, the data must be meaningful, capturing the qualitative dimensions that give depth to the statistical information.

### **Implications and Call to Action: 8**

Elvis's submission carried significant implications for both LGBTQ advocacy groups and policymakers. By highlighting the neglect of LGBTQ data in government planning and resource allocation, he called for a paradigm shift in the way data is collected, analyzed, and presented. The call to step up the data game emphasized the urgency of adopting more nuanced and contextually relevant methodologies to ensure that the LGBTQ community's needs are accurately represented in decision-making processes.

### **Mutebi Edward on Public Awareness and Visibility:**



Mutebi Edward, an activist and Co-Founder of Let's Walk Uganda—an LGBTQ rights organization—made a compelling case for a multi-faceted approach to LGBTQ advocacy in Uganda, addressing both the immediate challenges and the broader societal influences that contribute to discrimination and misinformation.

### **Mutebi Edward on Public Awareness and Visibility:**

Edward stressed the urgent need for public awareness on LGBTQ issues and the visibility of queer individuals and bodies. He recognized that a lack of understanding and awareness often contributes to misinformation and prejudice. By advocating for increased visibility, he aimed to counter stereotypes and challenge the misinformation that perpetuates discrimination against the LGBTQ community.

### **Addressing Misinformation as a Prerequisite to Data Challenges:**

Edward acknowledged the seemingly insurmountable data problem faced by the LGBTQ community. However, he argued that addressing this challenge requires a prior focus on countering misinformation. Without dispelling myths and promoting accurate information about LGBTQ individuals, any data-driven advocacy efforts may face resistance and skepticism.

### **Collaboration Across East Africa and the Continent:**

One of the noteworthy aspects of Edward's submission was the emphasis on collaboration not only within Uganda but also across the East African region and the continent as a whole. Recognizing the shared challenges of queering religion and culture, he highlighted the importance of a united front in challenging misinformation and regressive laws that often find support in cultural and religious narratives.

### **Engaging with Religious and Cultural Influencers:**

Edward suggested a proactive approach to fostering acceptance and challenging misinformation by initiating dialogues with religious and cultural influencers. He recognized that these influencers hold significant sway in shaping public opinion and that engaging with them is a crucial first step in breaking down barriers and promoting understanding.

### **Support for Research on Queer Studies:**

In alignment with a previous speaker's point, Edward reiterated the immense need for research in the field of queer studies. He recognized that a robust understanding of the LGBTQ experience, backed by rigorous research, is essential for challenging misconceptions, informing policy decisions, and fostering broader societal acceptance.

### **Implications and Call to Action:**

Mutebi Edward's submission underscored the interconnected nature of LGBTQ advocacy, recognizing that addressing challenges goes beyond data-driven strategies alone. By prioritizing public awareness, visibility, collaboration across regions, and engagement with cultural and religious influencers, he outlined a comprehensive approach to dismantling the societal barriers faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda.

## **Aliganyira Brian on Fundraising Strategies:**



Aliganyira Brian, the Executive Director of Ark Wellness Hub, provided valuable perspectives on the crucial aspect of fundraising for organizations catering to the health needs of LGBTQ persons in Uganda. His submission emphasized the need for innovative fundraising strategies tailored to the specific needs of grassroots communities, a nuanced understanding of donor expectations, and a professional, goal-oriented approach to organizational leadership.

### **Innovative Fundraising Strategies:**

Brian highlighted the importance of moving beyond conventional fundraising approaches and emphasized the need for innovation. Recognizing that the needs of grassroots communities are diverse, he stressed the importance of developing strategies that resonate with the unique challenges and aspirations of the LGBTQ community. This could involve creative initiatives that not only raise funds but also engage the community and create a sense of ownership.

### **Tailoring Solutions to Donor Expectations:**

A key aspect of Brian's submission was the recognition that fundraising strategies should be aligned with the expectations of donors and resource providers. By tailoring solutions to meet the specific needs of funders, organizations can enhance their chances of securing support. This requires a deep understanding of the priorities and preferences of donors, whether they involve technical expertise, technological resources, or financial contributions.

### **Beyond Monetary Requests:**

Brian emphasized the need to go beyond simple requests for money and consider a broader spectrum of resources. This could include seeking technical expertise, access to technology, or other forms of support that contribute to the overall capacity and sustainability of the organization. By diversifying the types of resources sought, LGBTQ organizations can strengthen their operational foundations.

### **Relationship Building in Fundraising:**

Brian highlighted the significance of building relationships in the fundraising process, emphasizing that "friend-raising" is as important as fundraising itself. Developing strong connections with potential donors and supporters creates a sense of trust and commitment that goes beyond financial transactions. Building genuine relationships can lead to long-term partnerships and sustained support for the organization's mission.

### **Professional and Goal-Oriented Leadership:**

In his final point, Brian called for LGBTQ leaders to run their organizations with a professional and goal-oriented mindset. This involves adopting business-like practices that ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability. By demonstrating a commitment to professionalism, LGBTQ organizations can enhance their credibility and attract the support of donors who value effective management.

### **Implications and Call to Action:**

Aliganyira Brian's insights provide a roadmap for LGBTQ organizations in Uganda to navigate the complex landscape of fundraising. By incorporating innovation, tailoring solutions to donor expectations, broadening the scope of resource requests, and prioritizing relationship building and professional leadership, organizations can enhance their ability to secure sustainable support.

### **Dr. Stella Nyanzi on Academia's Role:**

Aliganyira Brian's insights provide a roadmap for LGBTQ organizations in Uganda to navigate the complex landscape of fundraising. By incorporating innovation, tailoring solutions to donor expectations, broadening the scope of resource requests, and prioritizing relationship building and professional leadership, organizations can enhance their ability to secure sustainable support.



### **Penetrating Academia for Queer Representation:**

Dr. Nyanzi highlighted the imperative for queer individuals to actively engage with academia. This involvement is not merely to occupy academic spaces but to contribute meaningfully through constant critiquing, questioning, and rethinking existing data and information about LGBTQ persons in Uganda. By becoming part of the academic discourse, queer scholars can influence the narrative surrounding LGBTQ issues and ensure a more accurate representation.

### **Penetrating Academia for Queer Representation:**

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### **Renewed Call for Funding Queer Academics:**

A significant aspect of Dr. Nyanzi's submission was her call for funding to support queer academics in their respective disciplines. Financial support is crucial for research, publication, and other academic pursuits that contribute to the advancement of knowledge about LGBTQ issues. This funding is essential for fostering a vibrant and diverse academic community that addresses the unique challenges faced by queer individuals.

### **Challenging Propaganda with Evidence and Lived Experiences:**

Dr. Nyanzi emphasized the need to counter propaganda with evidence and lived experiences. By engaging in rigorous research and presenting compelling narratives based on real-life experiences, queer academics can challenge misconceptions and misinformation. This approach is essential for fostering a more informed and empathetic understanding of LGBTQ issues within broader society.

### **Engaging in the Public Sphere:**

Acknowledging the influence of ideas in the public square, Dr. Nyanzi encouraged queer academics to actively engage with the public. By participating in public discussions, sharing research findings, and countering ignorance, scholars can contribute to changing societal perceptions and dismantling stereotypes surrounding LGBTQ individuals.

### **Humanizing Queer Academics:**

Dr. Nyanzi highlighted the importance of humanizing queer academics. Beyond their scholarly contributions, acknowledging the humanity of LGBTQ scholars helps break down prejudices and fosters acceptance. Humanizing the academic experience of queer individuals contributes to a more inclusive academic environment.

## Mentorship for Queer Academics:

Dr. Nyanzi underscored the need for mentorship programs for queer academics. Mentorship provides guidance, support, and a sense of community, especially in environments where queer individuals may face unique challenges. Establishing mentorship initiatives contributes to the professional development and success of LGBTQ scholars.

## Implications and Call to Action:

Dr. Stella Nyanzi's insights call for tangible actions to address the underrepresentation of queer individuals in academia. Her emphasis on funding, challenging propaganda, public engagement, humanization, and mentorship serves as a roadmap for creating a more inclusive and supportive academic environment.

## Q&A Session:

The panel discussion was followed by an engaging Q&A session where participants posed insightful questions to the panelists. Topics ranged from the challenges of data collection in a conservative environment to strategies for fostering collaboration within the East African Movement.

## GROUP WORK: SWOT Analysis

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREATS
Internal (within our control)		External (Beyond our control)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Uganda citizens irrespective of gender identity and sexual orientation generally protected under the law</li> <li>2. Multi talented/ resourced LGBTQ individuals</li> <li>3. Resilience and some solidarity within the community</li> <li>4. Availability of financial and technical resources</li> <li>5. Availability of existing Organization structures in form of organizations, support groups, alliances and businesses</li> <li>6. We know who we are/ Firm identity.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repressive legal environment</li> <li>2. Illeteracy/ high School drop out rate leading to ignorance</li> <li>3. High poverty levels</li> <li>4. Internal and external divisions</li> <li>5. Fewer and unreliable allies</li> <li>6. Unsustainable and unreliable funding</li> <li>7. Low skills in financial management</li> <li>8. Lack of overall community solidarity.</li> <li>9. High donor dependance.</li> <li>10. Lack of control of funding of community resources / Most funding goes through hoops and loops</li> <li>11. Queer data is stolen/ exploited</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Available Funds</li> <li>2. Stronger partnerships and collaborations</li> <li>3. Collective voices of organizations and community members.</li> <li>4. Queer Specific Academia and Research</li> <li>5. Vibrant young leaders</li> <li>6. Technology and Innovation to support queer causes</li> <li>7. International Support and allies from around the world</li> <li>8. The anti gay law provides opportunity for organizing, getting allies and legal reform</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internal moles/ the ex-gay movement</li> <li>2. Biased mindsets and bad manners/indiscipline</li> <li>3. The AHA and related laws</li> <li>4. Prevailing misguided Cultural and religious attitudes</li> <li>5. Strong donor dependance</li> <li>6. International support viewed with suspicion and propaganda by government actors and opposition</li> <li>7. The emerging African anti gender movement</li> </ol>

## GROUP WORK: SWOT Analysis

PERIMETER	ANALYSIS (POSITIVE & NEGATIVE)		STRATEGY
	POSITIVE FACTORS	NEGATIVE FACTORS	
POLITICAL	Politicizing of LGBTQ lives and issues is shedding light on the economy	Lack of active LGBTQ persons in political spaces	Turn negative publicity into activism Civic awareness and consciousness/ continuously supporting LGBTQ persons to participate in politics
ECONOMICAL	Availability of tappable government resources Availability of government resources we can tap into	Lack of financial discipline within the community Donor Dependency LGBTQ self-profiling	Financial literacy trainings and support LGBTQ persons supported to become more entrepreneurial
ENVIRONMENTAL	Some organizations are practicing recycling Climate justice funding	Use of Paper and plastics Internal and external migration Poor disposal of SRHR commodities i.e. condom packages and lubricant	Digitization of Work Recycling
SOCIAL FACTORS	More visibility of LGBTQ persons online Challenging of misinformation and hate speech more prevalent	Accessibility for persons living with disabilities High poverty levels within the community. Illiteracy and low education levels. Drug and alcohol abuse/dependence STIs Prevalence / Health Challenges that disproportionately affect LGBTQ persons. Societal stigma and discrimination	Inclusive Policies/ Enforcement strategies for persons living with disabilities Responsive and Effective/efficient economic empowerment Inclusive academic support Mindset change programs Mental health support Rehabilitation Information sharing

TECHNOLOGY	Increased number of platforms like various social media platforms.	<p>Increased use of inappropriate language that misrepresent the LGBTQ+ Community</p> <p>Technological gaps linked to class and education of LGBTQ persons</p> <p>Tech Misuse (Blackmail, Revenge Porn, Misinformation, Extortion)</p>	<p>Capacity building on the proper and appropriate language use</p> <p>Tech Education and Support</p> <p>Digital Security education and support</p> <p>Tech Innovations tailored to LGBTQ persons</p>
LEGAL & REGULATORY	Queer legal aid service providers, lawyers and advocates	<p>Restrictive Legal environment (NGO Registration law, Money laundering law, Name change processes, Computer Misuse act etc)</p> <p>Limited legal knowledge and precedents on queer specific legal questions.</p> <p>Weaponization of the existing legal loopholes to target the marginalized</p> <p>Corruption and Graft both within the community and general society</p>	<p>Strategic Litigation</p> <p>Engagement at local level</p> <p>Research and documentation of queer law and dynamics</p> <p>Whistleblowing mechanisms</p> <p>Establish accountability mechanisms</p> <p>Truth and reconciliation</p>

## GROUP WORK: Fundraising Strategy

Income streams	Strategies for each income stream
Government Funding (Emyooga/ SACCOs/ Money for Older persons/ Student Loans etc)	Organizing/ Developing/ Growing structures to be able to access funding
HIV Response Funding (PEPFAR, Global Fund, CDC)	Ensure Community Involvement in HIV Response Programs.
Existing Funders (UHAI, CoC, HIVOS, Amplify Change, UN, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage on successes of Projects/Programs to innovate and grow fundraising</li> <li>• Strategic partnerships and collaborations between Organizations to tap into/expand existing pools of funding.</li> <li>• Tap into Networks and Consortia (UKPC, SMUG) to do collective fundraising/ tailored fundraising for underserved program areas like climate change...</li> </ul>
Climate Change and Other SDG specific Funding	
Faith Movements Funding	
New Major Donors	
Online Fundraising & Advocacy	
Documentation, Study and Research Funding	
Fellowships and Foundations	



The conclusion of the Physical Convening of the Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda marked the crescendo of three days filled with impassioned discussions, collaborative ideation, and the forging of alliances at the Ibis Styles Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. As the event drew to a close on the 25th of November 2023, it left an indelible mark on the landscape of LGBTQ advocacy in Uganda.



# KEY OUTCOMES OF THE CONVENINGS

## **Culmination of Collective Wisdom**

The Convening brought together a diverse array of LGBTQ community thinkers, allies, and activists, fostering an environment where collective wisdom could thrive. The amalgamation of perspectives, experiences, and expertise formed a crucible of innovative ideas that promise to redefine the discourse around LGBTQ rights in Uganda.

## **Mission and Vision**

One of the key outcomes of the Convening was the crystallization of a compelling mission and vision for the Reimagining Uganda project. Delegates, through rigorous dialogue, refined their aspirations, creating a guiding beacon that encapsulates the essence of their pursuit – a Uganda where equality, acceptance, and dignity prevail for every individual, regardless of their sexual orientation.

## **Theory of Change**

Participants engaged in the meticulous construction of a Theory of Change, intricately mapping the causal pathways that will lead to transformative outcomes. This theoretical framework serves as the compass that will navigate the Reimagining Uganda project through the complex terrain of societal attitudes and institutional barriers.

## **Strategic Fundraising**

Acknowledging the financial bedrock of sustained activism, the Convening yielded a comprehensive fundraising strategy. Delegates explored innovative avenues, partnerships, and sustainable models to ensure the longevity and impact of the Reimagining Uganda project, recognizing that financial resilience is intrinsic to the pursuit of social change.

## **Problem Tree Insights**

The in-depth Problem Tree analysis provided a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in Uganda. Armed with this insight, participants devised targeted and strategic solutions, promising a comprehensive approach to dismantling barriers and fostering a more inclusive society.

## **Unity and Resilience**

Beyond strategies and roadmaps, the Convening fostered a sense of unity and resilience among participants. The connections forged during the event transcend borders and backgrounds, forming a formidable network of advocates dedicated to the common cause of LGBTQ rights in Uganda.

## **A Forward-Looking Horizon**

As delegates departed from the Ibis Styles Hotel, they carried with them not just action plans but a renewed sense of purpose and commitment. The Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda unveiled a new horizon, one where the LGBTQ community is seen, heard, and embraced with dignity and equality. The 15-year journey ahead is laden with challenges, but the collective spirit ignited at this event ensures that each hurdle will be faced with resilience and determination.

## **Community participation, engagements and project ownership**

Just like the online convenings, the in-person gathering ignited enthusiasm and a collective commitment to the project, fostering a strong spirit of engagement. Participants not only established personal connections but also embraced their roles with a heightened dedication, resulting in a tangible sense of project ownership. The meeting's success lies in its ability to transcend virtual and physical spaces, uniting the community in a shared responsibility for the project's success and generating a lasting enthusiasm that will propel the initiative forward

## Next steps.

### **1. Strategic Planning Committee Refinement.**

The Strategic Planning Committee is actively meeting to refine ideas gathered during the convening. They are working diligently to incorporate insights from the LGBTQ community, allies, and experts into a comprehensive 15-year strategic plan for reimagining Uganda.

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### **3. Documenting the Strategic Plan.**

Once the strategic plan is drafted, the committee will promptly document it. This document will serve as a detailed roadmap outlining specific goals, objectives, and actionable steps for creating a safer and more inclusive environment for LGBTQ individuals in Uganda.

### **4. Validation by Participants and Community Expert..**

To ensure the plan accurately reflects the needs and aspirations of the LGBTQ community, participants who attended the physical convening and community development experts will be invited to validate the document. Their input will be invaluable in making any final adjustments to the strategic plan.

## 5. Launch of Reimagining Uganda 2024-2039.

Following the validation process, Let's Walk Uganda will officially launch the strategic plan, titled "Reimagining Uganda 2024-2039." This launch marks the beginning of a concerted effort to implement various interventions aimed at countering systemic discrimination against LGBTQ individuals.

## 6. Guiding Tool for Implementation:

The strategic plan will serve as a guiding tool for the implementation of different interventions under the Reimagining Uganda Initiative. It will be a comprehensive blueprint that outlines specific steps, timelines, and key performance indicators for measuring success.

## 7. Fundraising Initiatives:

The plan will also be instrumental in fundraising efforts to support the initiative. It will provide potential donors and partners with a clear understanding of the goals and strategies, fostering transparency and trust in the fundraising process.

## 8. Monitoring and Periodic Reviews::

The strategic plan will undergo periodic reviews to adapt to changing times, circumstances, and advancements in technology. This dynamic approach ensures that the initiative remains responsive to the evolving needs of the LGBTQ community in their diversity.

# CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Convening for Re-Imagining Uganda stands as a beacon of hope and progress. It is a testament to the power of collaboration, the resilience of the human spirit, and the unwavering commitment to creating a more just and inclusive Uganda for all. The echoes of this transformative event will reverberate far beyond the walls of the Hotels and online platforms, shaping the future of LGBTQ advocacy in Uganda and beyond.

