



International
Family
Equality
Day

2018

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS MATTER

IFED 2018, Norway





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IFED 2018 Costa Rica

Foreword

While violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender diversity exist in all corners of the world, very significant progress is being made to address them and, ultimately, eradicate them. States that acknowledge the existence of this scourge, its dimension and the challenges connected to it are to be commended and supported; those that deny it must be confronted with undeniable evidence of the damage that derives from social exclusion.

Invisibility and negation have enabled the disregard for the rights of LGBT persons everywhere, and the work of creating or enhancing the visibility of all types of families and promoting respect for their rights is, in this context, of paramount importance. It underlines that lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender non-conforming persons exist in all regions of the world and are not “others”: they are each other’s parent, sibling, child or relative. As I have recently conveyed to the United Nations Human Rights Council, we live all together in our communities, and together we all thread the fabric of our societies.

The International Family Equality Day, and the activities depicted in this publication, is a remarkable example of how individual actions come together in a community and in a country, and then globally, to create a strong, vigorous message: diversity is to be respected and cherished. I commend all involved for this luminous contribution to social inclusion for all.

Victor Madrigal-Borloz

UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity





IFED 2018 Switzerland

Foreword

As an out gay Muslim dad and humbled by my role as Co-President of IFED, I have been fighting for my son since the day he was born.

Fighting to be accepted first and foremost in Fiji, a society where LGBTI people are vehemently disrespected; fighting for my voice to be heard as a dad and, even more so, finding self-acceptance – all these challenges are part and parcel of the challenge to ensure that my sons individuality and his right to be born to me are heard. Thank you, APRFF, for this year's motto, which is most fitting; we must always be reminded that "Children's Rights Matter". The various voices that we collectively need to raise across Asia to ensure that all kids, including those who are born to rainbow families, are heard and that we listen, and listen well. What we are doing here as a newly formed NGO is empowering all of you to take a stand. This unprecedented international exchange and cooperation was made possible by the formation of many new LGBT family organizations just like yours around the world in recent years. And we need more voices. We need to tell our stories, authentically. Connecting personally. Collaborate. Unite.

**We need to tell our
stories, authentically.
Connecting personally.
Collaborate. Unite.**

We need to remain united as rainbow families, embrace this year and look forward to the next, with our motto being "Families – United We Stand". I invite you all to join in for next year's IFED. This is an opportunity for all kinds of families to stand up, stand tall – and jointly fight this fight for a simple message of UNITY. Let's gather together, with grateful hearts, to leave a legacy for the next generation by showing them that love – simply is love.

Maivon Wahid

IFED Co-president



Do children of rainbow families have and enjoy the same rights as children of heterosexual families?

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted almost 30 years ago, includes two principles that constitute the foundations for the rights of all children, including those of rainbow families.

The first principle is the one on non-discrimination, included in article 2, which reads: *1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.*

Non-discrimination is one of the core principles of human rights – and it establishes obligations for states as it recognizes that all persons are equal before the law and must be able to enjoy their rights without discrimination.

The CRC – drafted during the 1980s – did not include among its grounds of discrimination “sexual orientation” or “gender identity.” But does that mean that it excludes them? The answer is no.

Both the European and the Inter-American Courts of Human Rights have found a violation of the principle of equality when a gay father in Portugal and a lesbian mother in Chile were denied custody rights on the grounds of their sexual orientations. “Other status” indicates that the list is open-ended.

States must guarantee that all the rights included in the CRC are equally applicable to children of rainbow families; they cannot be denied access to a name, identity, nationality, family life, to be cared for by their parents, to know their parents, to be protected from violence, to health care and education, etc.

The second principle is about the best interests of the child, included in article 3. It reads: *1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.*

This is a principle and a right that provides real meaning to the notion of “children as subject of rights.” The drafters of the CRC, with an unprecedented forward-looking attitude, established that children are not the property of their

parents or other adults; they have interests as individuals, and those have to be taken into account. This principle is closely linked to the right to be heard, spelled out in article 12 of the Convention.

How have the best interests of the child worked in practice for children of rainbow families?

In a December 2015 landmark judgment, the Tribunal for Minors of Rome, Italy recognized the adoption of a child by the female partner of the biological mother solely on the basis of the best interest of the child.

The tribunal asked the social services to conduct a thorough review on the conditions of the partners, their relationship with the child, the other reference adults and all other information helpful to evaluate whether the adoption was in the best interest of the child.

The report stated that the child was living in a stable and affectively reassuring environment suitable to guarantee a harmonious development fit for his age; the child was also in contact with other family members and friends of the couple.



IFED 2018 Switzerland



The court recognized that the stepchild adoption was in the best interest of the child; despite the fact that the law forbade – and still forbids – stepchild adoption.

Today, it is clear that the parents' sexual orientation alone is not relevant in determining the best interest of the child in custody cases.

Families, as the fundamental units of society, have evolved and will continue to evolve with the dynamics of our societies.

We seem sometimes to be stuck on the composition of a family, rather than being concerned with what families are to children.

When I worked for Save the Children, I loved the understanding of families that was used:

“Social groups connected by kinship, marriage, adoption or choice.

“Family members have clearly defined relationships, long-term commitments, mutual obligations and responsibilities, and a shared sense of togetherness.

“Families are the primary providers of protection, support and socialization for children and youth.”

States have to respect and support families – all of them, in all their forms – and through such support ensure that children within their borders are able to develop, grow and thrive.

Families should not be romanticized. They provide very often a protecting environment for the development of children; unfortunately, they can also be the place where children are abused and silenced behind closed doors.

By recognizing the roles and responsibilities of all types of families, states assume the obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish all acts of violence against children, including in the families – in all of them without discrimination.

Promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of children of rainbow families is an obligation of all states and a responsibility for us all. It is a continuous, difficult and at times dangerous exercise.

Extending the enjoyment of those rights to all the children – no matter who their parents and families are – will, in the long run, also build societies that guarantee respect and justice for all.

Roberta Cecchetti

Independent expert on children's rights



Roberta Cecchetti has over 20 years of professional experience in children's rights and child protection. She currently works as independent consultant and expert on children's rights. She has worked with NGOs active in the protection of children from violence and in the promotion of the rights of unaccompanied migrant and refugee children. She has also worked with UNICEF and the Human Rights Office of the UN supporting mapping and assessment of programmes for the protection of children from violence and the promotion of a rights-based approach in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals related to child protection.



IFED 2018 Greece

“Today, 27 of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe provide for legal recognition of same-sex relationships. This is essential to tackle daily-life concerns faced by couples, such as health insurance cover, residence permits, or entitlement to a survivor’s pension. During my mandate as Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, I hope to see further rapid progress towards equal protection of rainbow families and their children. I also call on states to combat intolerance. The diversity of our societies, which are made of very many types of individuals and families, is a value in itself.”

Ms. Dunja Mijatović
Council of Europe Commissioner for
Human Rights



Dunja Mijatović

Over 700 people celebrated IFED at our Family Pridel picnic in Sydney Park. This was the first IFED since Australia achieved marriage equality, and we celebrated the role our children had played in the campaign. Our theme was "Kids Rights Are Human Rights."

We were supported by the City of Sydney, Commonwealth Bank and ACON as well as community organizations like Proud 2 Play, NSW SES, NSW Police, Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, Dowson Turco, Double Roasters, Reverse Garbage and Early Childhood Social Justice.

Kids enjoyed jumping castles, BBQ, rock climbing, rainbow book swap, cake stall, face painting, arts and children's petition projects, sports and live entertainment.

We welcomed legislators such as Penny Sharpe MLC, Jenny Leong, Independent Member for Sydney Alex Greenwich and city councillors including Deputy Lord Mayor Jess Miller.



Sydney - Australia



Vienna - Austria

In 2018, the Rainbow Families Association of Austria (FamOS) and the Rainbow Family Center Vienna (RBFZ) again organized the traditional picnic in Willi-Frank Park near the Rainbow Family Center in the 5th district of Vienna, to celebrate IFED. The park was decorated with rainbow flags, and many families helped create a colorful and diverse picture.

The association Wiener Kinderfreunde organized an upcycling workshop, where all visitors could show their talent in creating new objects out of used packaging materials, for example wallets made from juice cartons. On a warm and sunny Sunday, families with children and friends celebrated in the park, enjoying the good weather, the many possibilities to play, meeting friends and new rainbow families in the heart of Vienna.

Forty parents and kids came together at the museum park Middelheim and the playground to celebrate International Family Equality Day.

WIJ, an organization for women who love women, and 't Kwadraat, an organization for LGBTQ+ families and friends, worked together for the third year in a row.

The kids (and their parents) enjoyed the quest at the museum park, had fun and discovered some art history.

After this adventure, we all enjoyed our picnic near the playground, where the kids played and the parents took time to get to know each other.

It was a sunny day in Belgium, we got out and did what we do best: enjoy the time with our families and show everybody that we are just the same as any other family!



Antwerp - Belgium

The Iris Festival is the major event in Brussels, where the Capital Region celebrates itself with free concerts and a large variety of street activities. The associations of Brussels present their work in the Royal Park, among them: NELFA (the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations) and its Belgian member organization Homoparentalités.

As they had in 2016, both organizations had once again a common stand in a special section of the Park, the so-called OUT Village. One main aim was to celebrate International Family Equality Day 2018 and to inform a wider public about the lives of LGBTIQ* parents and their children.

To that end, NELFA and Homoparentalités offered a range of children's books, a Rainbow Families quiz game, crayons and – of course – some sweets.



Brussels - Belgium



Aeroe - Denmark

On Sunday, May 6, 2018, Aeroe Rainbow Family Festival marked IFED 2018 for the first time on the island of Aeroe. With a short talk on the work that has resulted in much social and judicial equality, discussions focused on the situation of trans parents in Denmark today, and the work LGBT Denmark is doing in this area. The festival and LGBT Denmark will work together so that next year many more rainbow families and allies can mark the date in Copenhagen.



Düsseldorf - Germany

Puppet theatre, workshop, games: Fuerstenplatz was full of rainbows! Duesseldorf celebrated the International Family Day (IFED) again this year, but for the first time Fuerstenplatz was the venue. Approximately 60 families from the entire NRW region gathered to celebrate with the motto: 'Children's Rights Matter'.

The families and their friends were able to enjoy many different activities, including a puppet show presented by the 'Puppentheater Duesseldorf'. Information on all topics relevant for Rainbow Families was also available, along with a wide selection of cakes! An empowerment theatre workshop was also held for the older children (7+) by the drama teacher Tobias Reichelt.

IFED Duesseldorf was organized by vielfaeltig e.V, supported by the 'Regenbogenfamilien Fachstellen' Köln and Düsseldorf.



Torino - Italy

This year Famiglie Arcobaleno has participated to the International Family Equality Day with events in 9 different cities, Venezia, Torino, Napoli, Firenze, Milano, Molfetta, Perugia and Roma. The celebrations have focused on the theme "All children are equal. Equal rights for all", with picnics, activities for children and debates. Members of the association have gathered with friends, activists and partner associations to celebrate the beauty of family diversity and stand up against discrimination.



Tokyo - Japan

We had our 7th annual Japan IFED picnic at Yoyogi Park in Tokyo, on May 6, along with Tokyo Rainbow Pride events. We had a booth set up as a resting area for families to mingle, relax and nurse their babies. We also exhibited rainbow family photos. Many people stopped by and looked at the photos. Some couples who wanted to start a family asked for our advice. Rainbow families in Japan are steadily growing in number, and this picnic is a great opportunity for the rainbow parents and their children to get together once a year to share their stories.

Some members are coming out at their children's schools and local communities. Although it is challenging and difficult, we have been trying to live happily in a society that is still conservative and discriminatory.

Rainbow Family Japan is currently a part of a project to help with the publication of a children's book called In Our Mothers' House, which is about a lesbian couple and their three adopted children. It will become the first children's book in Japan with lesbian parents.



Oslo - Norway

The celebration of IFED in Oslo took place on Sunday, June 24, in the famous sculpture park "Vigelandsparken." We celebrated IFED at the start of the annual Pride week. We were approximately 40 people. 20 grown-ups and 20 children. The grown-ups were a good mix of all genders. All brought food to the common table, and we enjoyed a nice meal together. We played different games on the grass and had good fun. We had some newcomers to this year's IFED, and new children and parents got to know each other. It was a great celebration of IFED.



Geneva - Switzerland

On Sunday, May 6, 2018, 150 kids, (grand)parents, extended family and friends gathered in Geneva to celebrate IFED.

2018 was a particularly important year for Switzerland: on January 1, a new law entered into force, allowing the non-legal parent in a same-sex couple to adopt their children. The adoption process includes a social investigation; thus was born the idea to set up a creative and fun day with activities that allowed kids and their parents to strengthen themselves and to share their experiences about the adoption process.

The day was organized by the Swiss Rainbow Families Association and Association 360 - Groupe Homoparents and supported by the City of Geneva, in partnership with l'Association des Familles Monoparentales de Genève, l'Ecole des Parents, Espace A, Pré en Bulle and Pro Juventute Genève.



USA

From Somerville, MA, to Dallas, TX, to Seattle, WA, International Family Equality Day was celebrated across the United States. From city museums to children's museums, camps and parks to zoos and community centers and everything in between, the pervasive theme of love and family was felt by all. Children, parents and grandparents alike came together for this annual tradition.

IFED GROWS!

May 6th, 2012: 15 cities in 9 countries

May 5th, 2013: 44 cities in 17 countries

May 4th, 2014: 48 cities in 22 countries

May 3rd, 2015: 67 cities in 32 countries

May 1st, 2016: 74 cities in 36 countries

May 7th, 2017: 102 cities in 44 countries

May 6th, 2018: 111 cities in 48 countries

**INTERNATIONAL
FAMILY EQUALITY
DAY 2019 #IFED2019**

*Families:
United
We Stand*

May 5th, 2019: "Families: United We Stand"
Join us and organize your own IFED local event

Community organizations wishing to participate please contact IFED at info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org

We love rainbow families!

In August 2017 we left Paris to start what would become the trip of a lifetime: a round-the-world trip with the wish of meeting with rainbow families in every country we visited.

In 11 months, we met rainbow families in China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Australia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Chile, Bolivia, Peru and Brazil, and we can confirm one thing: despite the respective laws of their countries, it is really love that makes a family. We would like to thank the IFED network who helped us meet some of these families.

We came back from this trip really hopeful for the future of the rainbow families of the world.

First of all, rainbow families are everywhere. Even in countries where the laws do not protect LGBTQ people and do not recognize the existence of rainbow families, lesbian or gay couples are still raising children. Some of these families become activists and fight against the legal system to get their families equal rights. Some of these families are giving visibility to LGBTQ families in their neighborhood and showing that children raised by same-sex parents are doing as well as their peers. Just by being open, out and visible with our families, schools, doctors or neighbors, we are fighting for a better acceptance of rainbow families.

We met so many families, and each of them had a different story, a different family structure, a different way to create their family.

In mainland China, we discovered that the choice of donor was an important topic. Almost half the families we met chose a white donor to have a mixed-race baby. A mixed-race baby would help these lesbian couples explain that the dad is leaving abroad and would ensure a better future for the child (access to international schools).

In New Caledonia, we met two dads who had their daughter thanks to the sister of one of them who offered to be a surrogate mother. They were from Tahiti, and they explained to us that this was part of their culture. In Australia, we also met a family with two lesbian moms who used the brother of the one not carrying the baby as a donor so that the kids would have genes from both



Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Chengdu, China

moms. We were amazed by lesbian moms who were both breastfeeding their newborn in New Zealand.

We were impressed by the energy, the motivation and the rallying of LGBTQ families' associations all over the world. In mainland China, rainbow babies developed a large virtual network on WeChat. Local associations organized conferences so that we could share our story, and attendees and organizers realized that it was great to meet in person to discuss families. In Australia, we were inspired by all the different resources developed by associations to guide future parents, schools, etc.

All these meetings with rainbow families were wonderful moments. We shared a lot, we were very inspired and we really felt part of a huge rainbow family community. We will always remember these loving, generous, open-minded and tolerant families. We love you!

Natacha and Sara Bécard (France)

www.lovemakesafamily.fr

Facebook: [@lovemakesafamily.worldtour](https://www.facebook.com/lovemakesafamily.worldtour)



Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia

Aeroe Rainbow Family Festival - excerpt from a diary

New Years '16 - My kids are settled in their new home on Aeroe, and I realize that we are as safe, accepted and happy as I had hoped. It's like all the pieces have fallen into place on this tourist island for me to dig out my old dream of creating a holiday spot for LGBTQIA families to feel normal and have fun together.

Spring '17 - I have been doing research into where families like mine holiday, and I can't find much LGBTQ+ specific outside of the US. My idea doesn't seem to exist - am I the only person that wants to meet other diverse parents and families?

Summer '17 - People have been so friendly and forthcoming with contacts, ideas and support. That has convinced me that there is a need for and interest in what I want to create, and that just by gathering we can demonstrate to the world that we do exist. It gives me drive.

Late summer '17 - The local tourist office just called. A journalist from Out Magazine is coming to visit the island. "Is the festival starting in 2018?" I said, "Yes!" Yikes, am I ready?

New Years '17 - The festival now has a board, some money from the municipality to get it up and running, and a website and an email address. Lots of people on the island have understood the concept quickly, and local business organizations have been very supportive.

Spring '18 - Tickets are on sale, and I can totally see it would be easier with a marketing budget. Maybe in the future! Even though it's a lot to expect people to understand a completely new concept that includes so many different ideas, we have had many responses - unfortunately most write that it is too late for their holiday plans. We have also had our first hate-share on FB - this renews my energy and conviction.

Summer 2018 - We have passed the date for being able to play it cool with ticket sales. We just have not been able to share the idea early enough, so we have cancelled the 2018 festival. We have been honest and open to all those that have bought tickets, and all agree that we should renew our efforts for 2019.

We aren't giving up! We still believe that the festival can be a success, and we have been encouraged by strangers from all over the world that the festival will



The first annual Aeroe Rainbow Family Festival will take place from July 26 – August 2, 2019
An LGBTQ+ family holiday that celebrates our families' diversity

have worth for LGBTQ+ families who need close ties in a world that is less than accepting. We are so close to reaching our dream, and this coming year we can go so much farther.

Aeroe sees this festival as something to be proud of, so we can move the dates to high season.

We can make sure that families can stay close to one another when they are not participating in activities.

We can get the program into place and start ticket sales much earlier.

We can apply for more diverse funding.

We can communicate wider and broader about details and points of interest.

We hope and pray that from the 26th of July to the 2nd of August 2019 there will be enough people willing to take a leap of faith and join our brand new space where we can be safe, together and celebrate our families!

See more about the festival and its content on www.rainbowfamilyfestival.com or on Facebook and Instagram.

Lorraine Hayles

Organizer of the Aeroe Rainbow Family Festival



**Promote your rainbow families festival
with the International Family Equality Day!**

info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org

Family Week 2019 in Provincetown

Family Week is the largest annual gathering of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer-identified families in the world. The 2019 fun-filled Family Week will include more opportunities than ever to build community and to get empowered on today's issues. Join us for daily events or relax on the beach with other LGBTQ families. Family Equality Council and COLAGE will partner once again to create another amazing Week full of fun in the sun with the LGBTQ parents, their children, extended families, and friends, who will join us from across the globe!

From sunrise to sunset, Family Week offers activities and events for your entire family. Each day will be filled with programming options for individual age groups, including many signature Family Week events and activities that are designed for everyone.

Date: July 27, 2019 - August 3, 2019

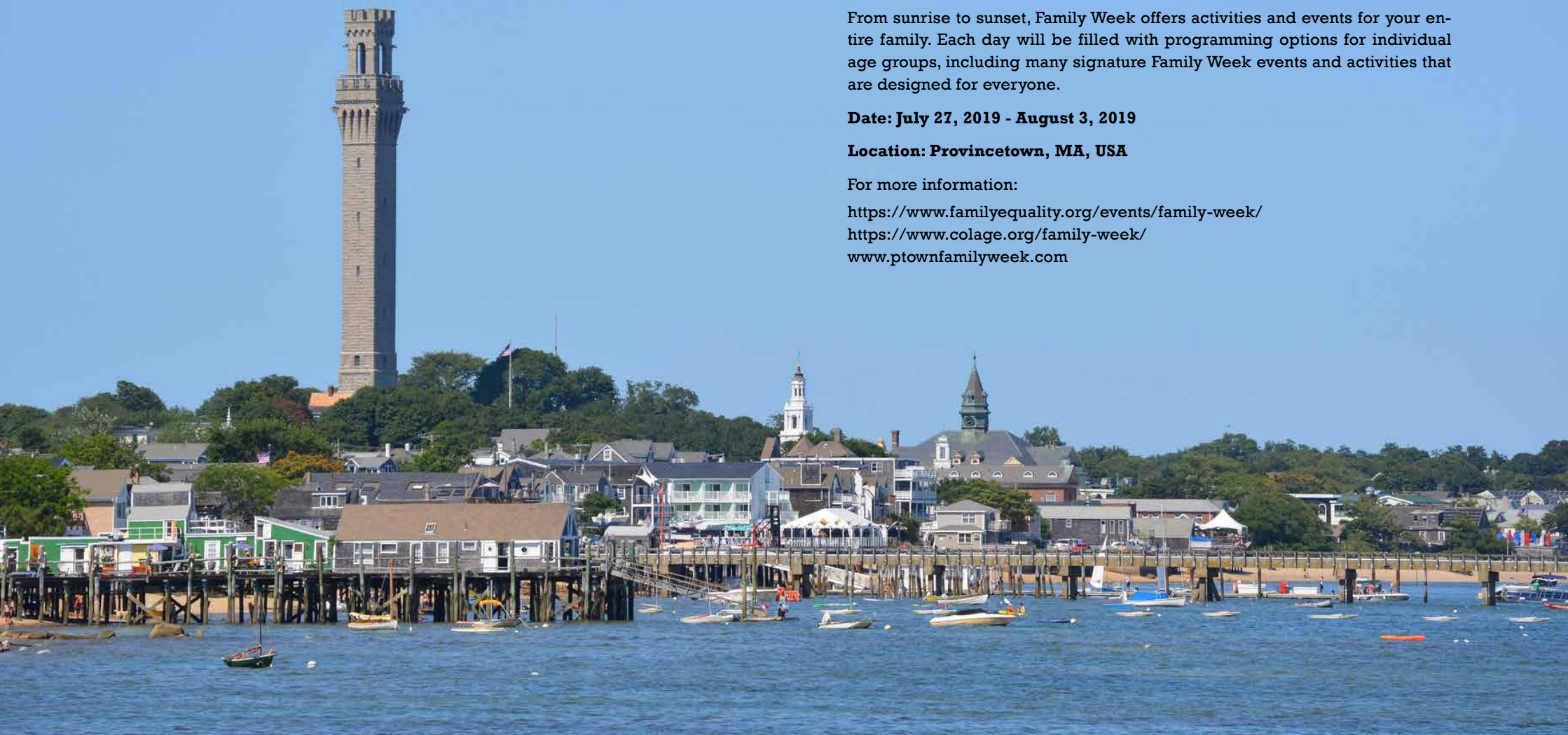
Location: Provincetown, MA, USA

For more information:

<https://www.familyequality.org/events/family-week/>

<https://www.colage.org/family-week/>

www.ptownfamilyweek.com



2nd Asia Pacific Rainbow Family Forum, Hong Kong

An expanding contingent of parents, intended parents and experts gathered from around Asia, the Pacific and beyond to engage in courageous conversations during the recent Asia-Pacific Rainbow Families Forum. The event centered around engaging dialogue, learning and listening from personal stories, extensive networking and the placement of a deliberate spotlight on the need for visibility for Rainbow Families in regional dialogues focused on SOGIESC issues.

Rainbow Families, those headed by SOGIESC adults, exist all around the world including all parts of the Asia-Pacific. But the support, acceptance and visibility of these families has been ignored in the region for far too long. Proof of this was seen the incredible growth seen from the inaugural Forum in 2017 which hosted 10 countries, compared to 26 countries represented in 2018, nearly tripling participation. Our goal is to raise awareness of the existence of Rainbow Families in the Asia-Pacific region and highlight the important ways families headed by sexual-minorities require and seek support. By raising awareness we hope to achieve recognition, protection and equal treatment of Rainbow Families and LGBTQI+ people inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. (SOGIESC).



Some of the key highlights of this year's forum were our collaborations with the Global Interfaith Network, media advocacy training day with Sparking Change, considerably more Pacific Island representation, more transgender/ third gender parent participation, and a focus on issues including the collection of data, intersex awareness and faith and spirituality.

This year not only did we show 2 documentaries and not only were they both award-winning and Hong Kong Premieres, but this time our own country delegates were the stars of the show! Rainbow Mum and filmmaker Cha Roque premiered 'What I Would Have Told My Daughter If I Knew What To Say Back Then,' which included a touching Q&A with Cha and her daughter Kelsey. We also previewed 'Leitis in Waiting,' featuring Rainbow Mum and Tonga Leitis Association Founder Joey Mataele. This was also used as a fundraiser to raise funds for the TLA after a wrath of cyclones left the centre and safe space in ruins.

The Forum was an unbelievable opportunity to dive deeply into the unique lived experiences of LGBTIQ people who are parents, and those that support them, from across some of the many cultures and traditions that make up the mosaic of cultural identities and cultural practices of parenting across the Asia-Pacific region. On behalf of our organising team, may I say we are profoundly moved and humbled to be part of nurturing this ever-expanding and progressive movement. We look forward to sharing more and invite you and your families to join us for this historic and joyous occasion in 2020 in the Kingdom of Tonga!

Finally, let us never forget friends all around the world who may never create their family due to barriers, barriers that may be economic, geographical, political, social, cultural, let's never forget all our friends around the world who long to have a family and are not able, because they are part of this movement and they always will be!

Bess Hepworth

Co-Founder, Asia-Pacific Family Forum and Network,
Executive Director, Planet Ally
IFED Board member



SEED Nobody Gets Left Behind, Malaysia

I was invited to attend the 2nd Asia Pacific Rainbow Family Forum (APRFF) in Hong Kong, May 11–13, 2018, which coincided with International Family Equality Day (IFED) and International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT), and it was certainly a refreshing new experience.

Let's face it, most of us who are activists or advocates are oriented to action, with the usual focus on "what's out there," and we usually put aside our own personal challenges, thinking that the cause is bigger than "me," thus sacrificing the need for happiness and accepting burnout and anger as part of our lived reality as an activist/advocate.

Coming from Malaysia, a South East Asian country where emotions are not usually uttered in ways that would be beneficial or emotionally supportive for an individual, to be included in forums and conversations that incorporate the most pertinent situation in one's life into the greater cause can be confusing and welcome at the same time.

Confusing because there are so many emotions being shared freely among participants, and welcome because it's warm and uplifting. The most apt description I can think of is similar to a mother's warm embrace.

When I was asked to write a few words, I was torn between writing a report that's filled with text or a personal feedback of my experience throughout the forum, and I decided that I wouldn't do the APRFF 2018 justice unless I was completely honest in my feedback.

In any type of forum, workshop or event, there will be speakers and topics that have been set according to the theme, but what makes APRFF different is that the forum is not just talk...it's about living the experience, the close relationships and hospitality – you immediately feel a sense of belonging.

One of the most emotional and meaningful sessions for me was during the breakout of Global Interfaith Discussion, when we were encouraged to continue our sharing and conversations with any of the faith leaders and speakers. We spoke about our deeply personal issues, and for me to be able to share my concern about being a transgender parent with a child who has ADHD and is dyslexic, knowing that I can share my deepest fears with people who understand and are in the same boat...it was freedom.

The Asia Pacific Rainbow Family Forum creates a platform like no other, especially for LGBTIQ parents, a platform that's solid and supportive, for creating a better and brighter future filled with love and hope for our children.

For more information: <http://seedfoundation.com.my/>

Video: https://youtu.be/Bec_vLLGaQ8

Mitch Yumar Yusof

Co-Chairperson

ASIA PACIFIC TRANSGENDER NETWORK



Quotes from the activists participating to the Asia-Pacific Rainbow Families Forum

"My kids now know you can create change. My kids now know you can change a law! That's one of the positive legacies that came out of this."

Jacqui Tomlins
Founder, OUTspoken Families

"In the Pacific it's culturally taboo to be gay especially in Fiji, and it's still an evolving country we still have not accepted the fact that there's gay men and women so having someone that has a son and is gay, you know it's still new to them and so the discrimination is very evident."

Maivon Wahid Cpp (CIPD)
Co-President, IFED, Founder, Vanua Taqomak

"A year ago they even burned the surroundings of my house 5 times in 10 days. They really wanted to scare us and they wanted to keep me, my family and my organization out of this area."

Matcha Phorn-in
Director, Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Development Project, Thailand and IFED board member

"Now with climate change happening, with rising sea levels more and more and more you hear every single day it's LGBT people that cause this, "it's just like in the Bible, it's just like with Noah," and so yes there is space, yes there's space in the Pacific as a whole but in some contexts things are getting worse."

Lana Woolf
Founder and Director, Sparking Change, Committee Member, APRFF2018

"As a parent, I look forward to that day when I don't have to mention the word Rainbow. It's just family. And, family is family, and it is all about love."

Ging Cristobal,
Project Coordinator for Asia, OutRight International, Board Member, IFED, Philippines



"Whereas before it was just lobbying the legislators, now it's lobbying the whole country. I love Taiwan and I feel like the people of Taiwan have perhaps not been getting all the proper messages through media or through their neighbors, maybe because there's just so few of us who are willing to actually speak up. I think we need to fill that void."

Jay Lin
Founder, Portico Media, /taiwan

"As a rainbow families movement there is so much that you can do in raising our issues in the context of IVF clinics, challenging quality of life assessments challenging the way that intersex variations are disordered by IVF clinics and by medicine more genuinely, that is a phenomenal contribution that you can make to our movement."

Morgan Carpenter
Sydney Health Ethics/GATE/IHRA

"I know of a same-sex couple, two women that are working at the same workplace and they have a child, and they have to use different roads every morning to go to work so nobody will notice they're a couple and their child has to pretend that she doesn't know one of her Mums."

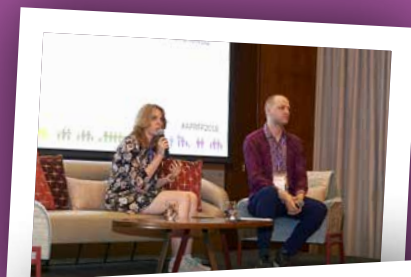
Dania Buss
Russian LGBT Network, Vladivostok, Russia

"I don't need a vagina to be a mother. I'm a mother and father to my children. On the birth certificate of all my children, I am listed as a father, BUT I have only ever heard them call me their Mother."

Afatia Tiara Tulaimalo Aisaka Tuulua
Registered Nurse and Midwife, Founder, Samoa Rainbow Families, Samoa

"Most of lesbian activists in Indonesia are facing a forced marriage from their family so the threats come from family first and then second come from the society within the Islamic majority society and then the other threats also come from online and digital threats."

Lini Zuria
Advocacy Officer, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, Indonesia



"Forced marriage in Iran is a big issue for lesbians. And, so it brings us to another level of discussion around the stigma of whether you are "pure lesbian" or not a pure lesbian when you have a child, so the concept of Rainbow Family has a lot of levels and aspects and we need to look at that."

Shadi Amin
Founder, GRang, Iran



"Samoa is 99% Christian, so is Tonga, so are most of the Pacific Islands. We weren't just colonised by the Commonwealth, our minds were colonised through religion. Religion in the context of the Pacific, it is very exclusionary, and they have chosen to fixate on certain aspects of the bible to exclude us. They are using the bible to do that and it's time for us to fight back against that."

Ymania Brown
Co-Chair GIN-SOGIE / Executive Director Pacific Human Rights Initiative



"It's about security and we have to be safe and she [her daughter] has to be safe. It's not an ideal situation when you have to make up stories, but it's about prioritising her safety."

A lesbian mother, (whose name for security reasons, we can't disclose) lives with her daughter in Pakistan where she is completely closeted about her sexuality.

"I think as a filmmaker, I've learned how powerful film is in sending a message and in helping you get your advocacy across. Film is not only a tool for me to do that, but is also a tool for me to reclaim something that was stolen from me."

Cha Rocque
Filmmaker, Communications Director, DAKILA Philippine Collective for Modern Heroism, Philippines



"I'm with you with every step of the fight and I promise to not stop fighting and educating people that love is what makes a family."

Kelsey Hadjirul
LGBTI and Women's Rights Activist (daughter of Cha Rocque)

Shiriko Watsumoto, Japan

MatchaPhorn-in
Director, @SangsanAnahat Yawachon Development Project



Best Practice Institution - City of Buenos Aires, Argentina

The Undersecretary for Human Rights and Pluralism of the City of Buenos Aires is committed to developing public policies to promote the rights of sexual diversity.

In that sense, Asociación de Familias Diversas de Argentina (AFDA) saw it as an opportunity to promote development of a public policy that increases the visibility of family diversity and their rights within the City of Buenos Aires.

The IFED celebration was key to this end. Thus, AFDA proposed to Pamela Malewicz, Undersecretary for Human Rights and Pluralism of the City of Buenos Aires, if they could support the celebration of this date, and the response was more than satisfactory: they gave their full support for the celebration and invited other government departments and secretaries to join the celebration in an official manner.

The celebration of IFED 2018 under the motto “Children’s Rights Matter” didn’t take place until Sunday, May 20, due to the weather. It was a public event in Parque Las Heras that was organized by AFDA with government endorsement. Thanks to the support of Pamela Malewicz, the following areas of the government joined the event: General Directorate of Social Sports and Sport Development, Family Development, Ministry of Urban Development and Transportation with a program for children to learn to ride bicycles and the Council of Children and Adolescents of the City of Buenos Aires. The following LGBT organizations were also present: Gaper Argentina, ALBA, Eva Tiene Dos Mamás and the Secretariat of Trans Children and Teens of the FALBT and the organization Libres Diversos.

“We thank all the institutions and organizations that have joined this international celebration that gives visibility to family diversity and shows their commitment to improving the quality of life of LGBTQIA+ families, especially for the fulfillment of the fundamental rights of our children. Today we face the challenge of achieving real equality for our families and we feel that actions like these bring us closer to eliminating the barriers of inequality that still exist,” said Andrea Rivas, President of the Asociación de Familias Diversas de Argentina.

The City of Buenos Aires is part of the Latin American Network of Rainbow Cities – RLCA – which is a regional system of local governments and metropolises that seeks to harmonize the manifestation of identity, quality of life and



empowerment of LGBTI people through the exchange of experiences, policies and inclusive programs, as well as consulting and taking position in situations that threaten or endanger the human rights of people with different sexual orientations or gender identities. The purpose of the Network is to position itself as a reference in Latin America in the search for recognition of the human rights of LGBTI persons.

At the RLCA meeting held on June 8, 2018, in the City of Buenos Aires with the members of the different Latin American cities that make up the Network, the IFED celebration was presented by Pamela Malewicz as a policy to promote the rights of family diversity. Representatives of different cities present, such as São Paulo, Brazil, were informed about this policy and showed great interest. AFDA was invited to participate in the meeting and tell about their experience as an NGO promoting the celebration of this date in the region.

Andrea Rivas

AFDA - Asociación Familias Diversas de Argentina



Best Practice Policy - Alliance of Diverse Families, Finland

Finland has paid major political attention to family diversity in recent years. Much of it is thanks to the alliance and mutual advocacy work of 10 associations representing family diversity. Finnish Rainbow Families Association has been very active in the network that gathers rainbow families, adoptive families, foster families, recomposed families, one-parent families and multicultural families.

The network was formed 10 years ago as an unofficial peer support group for the directors of small family associations, but it quickly grew to be an alliance for mutual advocacy and lobbying. In 2013 the network got funding for an ongoing joint advocacy project, which Rainbow Families has been administering ever since.

Because of the alliance's lobbying work, even the current right-wing government has family diversity as one of the main principles of its agenda! Family diversity has also been set as a starting point of the large-scale reform of

all the welfare services for families and children. Almost every politician makes a point of mentioning family diversity when talking about family policy. Rainbow families are seen to be at the heart of this diversity. This kind of political consensus couldn't have been reached if the associations of the network had been working alone.

Support from the other members of the network has also helped raise issues specific to rainbow families on the agenda. These include issues of parental benefits, surrogacy and automatic recognition of both mothers.

Working with the Network of Diverse Families has been the primary political strategy for Rainbow Families Finland for years. The other major strategic stance has been to identify as a child protection association. The association's entire agenda is about the rights of the children living in various kinds of rainbow families. Active membership in the national child protection umbrella organization has helped get prominence in the field of child protection and the rights of the child.

The maternity act, which allows for lesbian couples using ART (artificial reproductive technologies) to be recognized as parents without second-parent adoption, was passed by Parliament in the spring of 2018. The proposed law did not come from the reluctant right-wing government, so the act was finally accepted on the basis of a citizens' initiative. Virtually every single family and child protection association supported it, as did many governmental institutions and the ombudsman for children. All this made it very easy for the politicians to see the act as the children's rights case that it is. The act was approved in Parliament with a landslide three-quarter majority.

Juha Jämsä

Executive Director
Finnish Rainbow Families Association
www.sateenkaariperheet.fi

On the left is the picture we posted after the vote. It says "children won by 122-42", the figures being the voting result in the parliament



Best Practice Policy - Greece

This year's IFED celebration in Greece was the most successful so far. It was the sixth time that Rainbow Families Greece (Oikogeneies Ouranio Tokso) held an open-air, all-day party at Akadimia Platonos Park, which was also attended by members of such sister associations as Rainbow School, the Greek Transgender Support Association, PRAKSIS, Proud Seniors Greece, Proud Parents, Sunday School for Immigrants and Expel Racism. A large group of adults and children of all ages (from 42 days old to adolescence) enjoyed themselves with activities such as face-painting, football, hide-and-seek, etc. Our performers/rainbow parents made sure that everybody, children and parents, had a great time.

Yet this crowd was a very interesting one for another reason as well: representatives of the Greek Public Administration and of political parties were also there, more in number than ever before.

Only a few days earlier, representatives of Rainbow Families Greece participated in a discussion in the Greek Parliament regarding a new bill on foster care and adoption. Article 8 of this new bill, which grants couples in a civil union (regardless of gender) the right to become foster parents (but not adoptive parents) became a hot topic both in politics and in everyday discussions in the Greek media, and it resulted in a huge controversy. The fact that same-sex couples were to be allowed to become foster parents for the first time in this country triggered emotional reactions, both in favor and in opposition.

At the kickoff of our celebration, we held a roundtable discussion with members of Rainbow Families Greece and the politicians who were present. Among us were deputy ministers, secretaries-general, special secretaries, advisors to the prime minister and MPs from government and opposition parties. It was an interesting exchange of opinions for over an hour about issues relevant to the rainbow agenda and particularly issues pertaining to same-sex parenting, which was the hot issue anyway. Of course, everybody present was in favor of the changes brought by the infamous Article 8, and the same feeling prevailed when our representatives presented our agenda in the Greek Parliament.

We are happy to let you know that finally the bill passed with a substantial majority, just a couple of days after our celebration. One must underline the fact that votes for (and against!) came from almost all parties, which illustrates the controversy.

This was a big success. One big step forward for the legal status of our families, and a big reward for us in the fight for total equality for all families (including civil marriage for all and second-parent adoption).

Greek family law is to become updated soon – this is the time for the mother of all battles for us. Wish us luck!

www.rainbowfamiliesgreece.com



Best Practice NGO - ABRAFH, Brazil

The Brazilian Association of LGBT Families (ABRAFH) once again celebrated International Family Equality Day. This year the celebration took place in seven cities spread across four states of the Brazilian federation. In each city, at least ten families joined in. The highlights were the cities of São José do Rio Preto with 37 people, and Rio de Janeiro with 79 people, adults as well as children.

In all the cities, families were invited to discuss the importance of children's rights. Topics such as food, education, family and social life, basic care and affective bonds were addressed. In some cities, other legal issues were also raised, such as the right to have a family through adoption, the right to live with one's parents, the fight against intolerance and parental alienation.

Cultural, artistic (singing, dancing, theater, etc.) and sports activities were developed to enhance the experience of the theme.

In most cities the event took place in open spaces and public parks, where families could enjoy contact with nature, play, talk and socialize. Some venues hired photographers, in others the teens themselves took on the task. In Rio de Janeiro, we were fortunate to have a group of 9 adolescents who also took responsibility for helping the adults take the children for a ride in the forest of Tijuca.

In 2018, ABRAFH strengthened partnerships with the LGBTI parenting groups Mães Pela Diversidade (Mothers for Diversity) in São Paulo, Família Uai in Belo Horizonte, the Brazilian Bar Association in Uberaba, the "Homo Country" blog in São José do Rio Preto as well as other support groups in Rio de Janeiro. Also this year, the Social Service of Commerce (SESC) provided the infrastructure for activities in the cities in the interior of the state of São Paulo. The Instituto Semear Diversidade and the group Famílias e Tribos, both in the city of Camboriú, and the LGBTI group Prisma – Dandara Dos Santos in the City of Santo André also joined us.

The Association remains committed to protecting the interests and rights of its members and the positive visibility of LGBTI+ families. In its fifth year of existence, ABRAFH has grown exponentially and already includes more than one 1,500 Brazilian families throughout Brazil and abroad. Brazilian families



living abroad maintain ties with or join ABRAFH to help consolidate the dream of having an international representation of Brazilian rainbow families.

ABRAFH has established itself as a benchmark institution in the fight for protections and rights for Brazilian LGBTI+ families. Increasingly recognized, it has become an essential institution.

In consolidating its objectives for the new year, many local and regional co-operations were implemented. Associate members have taken specific responsibility to advance ABRAFH's agenda in cities and states. Thus, ABRAFH is moving further toward the interior of the country in addition to the larger cities where we are already active. United through a love network within the country and abroad, we are becoming stronger and are very proud of it.

Saulo Amorim

www.abrafh.org.br

Saulo Amorim has been the president of ABRAFH since 2017. He is a lawyer, has a master's degree in development, is a gay cis-gender man, married and the father of a beautiful 1.5-year-old. For the protection of his family, Saulo engaged in LGBTI+ activism during the process of adopting his son, which has taken almost 3 years and is not yet finalized.



Best Practice NGO - NELFA, Europe

Rainbow families from across Europe celebrated this year's International Family Equality Day in Berlin a week before the official date. NELFA, the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations, and its national member LSVD (Lesben- und Schwulenverband in Deutschland) organized a cozy weekend, including a welcome party at the Rainbow Family Center in Schöneberg and a boat tour on the river Spree. The families and allies (in total around 90 people) came from Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Croatia, Denmark, Poland, Luxembourg and Germany and enjoyed the time spent together. The children played a lot on the nearby meadow while the parents shared their experiences and specific circumstances in their home countries. It was a little European Rainbow Families Meeting in sunny Berlin! Some of the participants stayed one more week in Germany's capital city. NELFA and its Dutch partner organization In Dialogue finalized their second Erasmus+ project "Chances and Challenges for Rainbow Families" with a training course entitled "Inspiring facilitation, teaching and training for LGBT."

Special guest at the weekend in Berlin was the new co-chair of the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBTI Rights, Terry Reintke (Greens/EFA), who highlighted the common goal to better the situation for thousands of rainbow families within the EU, who often suffer from discrimination.

Stephanie Wolfram, the new director of the LSVD Rainbow Family Center said, "We wanted to show that rainbow families are everywhere, and we are proud to live as rainbow families. The meeting was a clear signal: We are standing up together for our rights and the rights of our children. Rainbow families still get unequal treatment in many ways, they are excluded or ignored at times – in some places even hated and persecuted. It's time for a change. Stop the exclusion of LGBTIQ* parents and their children from benefits other families already enjoy!"

You can find a range of pictures of the event in Berlin on NELFA's Facebook page: <https://tinyurl.com/ybntftma>



Best Practice NGO - Global Interfaith Network

The Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions (GIN-SSOGIE) organized its first regional seminar (of a series of five in the next two years) on “Family and Traditional Values” in Johannesburg, South Africa, in February 2018. The gathering was convened as a response to the religious right’s propagation of the so-called natural family as the only divinely sanctioned model of family in local, regional and international human rights spaces, which appears to be nothing more than a capitalistic nuclear family based on an acontextual and patriarchal reading of sacred texts. Moving beyond a critique of such conservative discourse, the gathering also sought to reclaim and affirm the diversity of “natural” families in Africa, which also include LGBTIQ families, to promote and defend them locally, regionally and internationally.

GIN members, partners and allies gathered for the organization’s first seminar on “Family and Traditional Values” February 19–21, 2018, at the Auckland Lodge. Participants included human rights defenders from LGBTIQ movements, scholars, researchers and religious leaders from diverse family backgrounds and traditions. They were drawn from traditional African religions, Islam and Christianity. What came out of the three-day meeting was a series of counter-messages on the topics of “Protecting our Families,” “Celebrating our Sexuality, Reclaiming Our Culture,” “Interrogating Sovereignty” and “Reclaiming Faith” as well as multiple strategies for communicating and advocating these messages in regional and international human rights spaces. The meeting was followed by the drafting of the Johannesburg Declaration, including the messages and recommendations given by the group: <http://www.gin-ssogie.org/johannesburg-declaration/>

GIN-SSOGIE will organize its second regional seminar on “Family and Traditional Values” in South East Asia later this year. IFED has been a very strong partner in this endeavor, connecting us with activists and faith leaders from Asia and the world! During the 2nd Asia Pacific Rainbow Family Forum, GIN-SSOGIE was able to present its project to participants and build key relationships with partners in the region. Our aim is to bring activists and faith leaders from the diverse regional religious and faith traditions to the table.



Best Practice NGO - LesMamas e.V., Germany

In 2018, we celebrated International Family Equality Day for the sixth time: It has become a fixed date in Munich's LGBTIQ calendar, ushering in the season that culminates in Pride. For several years we gathered at Munich's zoo; this year we joined forces with the Munich Rainbow Family Center (which we helped initiate) and celebrated in a local park with speeches, a puppet show, picnic for the families and games for the kids. Every year, we've had a city councillor representing Munich's Lord Mayor express the city's support for rainbow families and our association's work – an important political sign in the conservative state of Bavaria.

LesMamas started in 2002 with a handful of lesbian mothers wanting to network and has since grown to an association of well over 200 women with more than 200 children. We have two different formats for monthly meetings: an evening in a pub/restaurant (usually for the adults, though it's also often where new babies are proudly presented), and a Sunday brunch for the whole family. Four times a year we organize an all-day family outing with seasonal activities. Also four times a year we offer an informational get-together where women interested in creating a family or wanting to connect with us can ask us questions or join. This format has been very successful and has contributed to our constant growth. In 2014, we turned the loose network into a registered association that is an active part of Munich's LGBTIQ community. We get asked to educate students of the local School of Social Work, and we introduce our group to young Ukrainian activists every year as part of a Munich-Kiev community partnership. We try to raise awareness of legal shortcomings and send out press releases about our work. We are also a local chapter of LSVD's (Lesben- und Schwulenverband in Deutschland) parenting network ILSE (Initiative lesbisch-schwuler Eltern).

When we started in 2002, we had just obtained registered partnerships in Germany the year before, but they did not include parenting rights. Now we have marriage equality, but same-sex partners still have to go through second-parent adoption for both spouses to be on the birth certificate of a child born to the couple. The Department of Justice just announced that they will draw up legislation by 2019 to rectify that and other legal incongruities. We will have to keep up the pressure so that this piece of legislation will actually pass.



We can pride ourselves on helping to inspire a more welcoming social climate for LGBTIQ families, but the most important and satisfying aspect of our work is the network that we've created among ourselves: the exchange and the fun that we and our kids share is truly invaluable.

www.lesmamas.de

Best Practice NGO - Resource LGBTQIA Moscow, Russia

Resource LGBTQIA Moscow has been providing psychological support to the LGBT+ community of Moscow for over six years. One of our main priorities is the work we do with LGBT+ families. We regularly hold support groups for the community, training sessions, seminars and peer exchange groups for psychologists. We offer psychological counseling, consultations on assisted reproductive technologies and a variety of cultural projects. We hold around 40 events every month. All of these events and spheres of activity create a space of acceptance and respect for the LGBT+ community of Moscow, allowing them to assert their rights.

Resource LGBTQIA Moscow has conducted three psychological art projects, which culminated in photography exhibitions in Moscow. Two of those projects were devoted to LGBT+ families.

We have organized four LGBTQIAPP+ Family Conferences in the years from 2014 to 2017, with over 400 people participating in the latest conference.

In May 2017 we held our first Family Equality Festival. It was followed by the Second Family Festival May 6–16, 2018. The festival brought together over 400 participants over the course of 10 days. We held 17 different events at six venues in Moscow, all of which went off safely. Donations made by members of the community allowed us to hire professional security guards for our big weekend events. The number of participants at the festival has grown, which shows their trust. People trust our reputation and professionalism, they trust the team and facilitators at Resource. We have received a great number of positive comments and warm wishes. This energizes us and motivates us to carry on with our work.

This year's Festival was as diverse and rich in its format and content as it was last year. The workshop on the culture of violence and consent in family relationships sparked particular interest. The LGBT+ Living Library brought together nine "books" – families who shared their stories and their experience. The festival closed with a touching Family Recognition Ceremony, where we awarded LGBT+ couples and families with certificates on behalf of our organization and recognized their unions before our community.

The idea of the festival is to unite different families, unions and partnerships and help them get to know each other, accept one another and start interacting in order to learn about their rights and resources, to figure themselves out, to find out ways in which LGBT+ families are vulnerable and how these challenges can be overcome.

We are certain that the festival will become an annual May celebration for all those who share our values of partnership, love and mutual support!

For more information: <http://mcclgbt.com/en/mcc/>



The International Family Equality Day (IFED)

The first International Family Equality Day took place on May 6th 2012. Fifteen organizations from nine countries participated then and numbers have been increasing ever since! A few snapshots and short reports of the latest events can be found throughout this brochure; additional information and impressions (videos, personal reports of the events) can be found on the IFED website.

In a successful event hosted by the City of Geneva, the new NGO “International Family Equality Day” was officially launched at the beginning of May, 2018.



IFED 2018 Belgium

Chronicle of the International Family Equality Day

In terms of legal, political and social equality, rainbow families face very different standards depending on where in the world they live. In many countries these families have no protection at all, a fact which entails massive social, financial and legal uncertainty.

In July 2011, LGBTQ family activists from around the world gathered for the first ever International Symposium of LGBTQ parenting organizations. The symposium provided an opportunity to establish ongoing international cooperation in areas such as research, visibility and advocacy, and the development of resources and programs for LGBTQ families worldwide. The goal of the symposium was to help foster a sense of global community among the families, to increase the visibility and raise awareness about the challenges that rainbow families must overcome for social and legal acceptance.

As a key outcome of the symposium the involved family organizations from the U.S. (Family Equality Council), Canada (LGBTQ Parenting Network) and Europe (NELFA) took the opportunity to launch an official day for equality and recognition of all types of family: the International Family Equality Day, an official LGBT awareness day, which takes place every year on the first Sunday in May.

IFED aims to highlight the diversity of family structures and to strengthen solidarity among families. At the same time it calls on administrative, institutional and political representatives to support equality and recognition for all families.



Celebrating the Rainbow of Families in our World!

www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org

Promoters of the International Family Equality Day

As a sign of solidarity and strength and to promote equality for all type of families, the LGBTQ family organizations LGBTQ Parenting Network, Family Equality Council, NELFA and Coalition des familles homoparentales took the opportunity to establish ongoing international cooperation in areas such as research, visibility and advocacy, and the development of resources and programs for LGBTQ families worldwide.

Are you interested to join as promoter of IFED?
Feel free to contact us: info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org

Family Equality Council

For nearly 40 years, Family Equality Council has been a leading advocate in the United States for our now more than three million parents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) and their six million children. We do our work by fostering supportive communities, educating the public and pursuing policy change, all to advance both legal and lived equality for LGBTQ families, and those who wish to form them, across the U.S.



Family Equality Council creates lasting change for our families at the policy level by organizing our work into campaigns, which are executed at the federal, regional and state levels. We target areas where we are needed most, and we maintain a focus on three pillars of work that we believe are critical to truly changing lives and laws in the U.S. today:

1. **LGBTQ Parent Networks:** With the evolution of social media, online LGBTQ family networks have sprung up across our nation. Family Equality Council serves as the coordinating body, supporting these networks, sharing curricula and best practices, and further empowering them at the local level through the National Network of LGBTQ Family Groups.
2. **Storytelling:** Family Equality Council recognizes that public opinion (and indeed the policy formation that follows) can be dramatically impacted by emotional appeals, sometimes even more deeply than by facts and statistics. Family



Equality Council strives to raise the visibility of LGBTQ families within mainstream America, using the power of family narratives to combat efforts to roll back or block LGBTQ equality.

3. **Family Formation:** Family Equality Council is committed to making family building as accessible for women of color in the south as it is for white men in urban areas. We are working to ensure that family-building organizations (like fertility clinics, pharmaceutical companies, cryobanks, family law practitioners, adoption and foster care agencies) are prepared to respond sensitively and appropriately to our families. We are connecting with employers to help them offer LGBTQ-family-friendly policies, benefits and education. And we are, of course, working with our community to make sure they have the information and support they need to access whatever path to parenthood feels like the best fit for them.

While we recently celebrated the three-year anniversary of marriage equality in the United States, we still have much work to do on behalf of our families. The political landscape has shifted dramatically under the new administration. We are seeing an increase in the number of bills targeting LGBTQ individuals and families, nominations of anti-LGBTQ persons to the executive branches of government and key decision-making positions across the administration. We know there is no “finish line” in this work – Family Equality Council represents LGBTQ families and their needs, which continue to evolve. But one thing has and will remain the same: love makes a family. Collectively, we are a community of parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, that reaches across the globe. By standing together, we continue to change attitudes and policies, and better ensure a world where all families are respected for their commitment to one another, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

www.familyequality.org



LGBT Family Coalition

With over 1,500 families, the LGBT Family Coalition (Coalition des familles LGBT) is the largest LGBT organization in Quebec in terms of membership. We offer services and resources in both English and French. The LGBT Family Coalition is the only advocacy group for families with LGBT parents in Quebec. The media has become increasingly focused on alternative families, as adoption, surrogacy and assisted procreation have become “hot” issues. But even as we have gained increased legal recognition, public institutions still have much to learn about our families and our particular needs. In collaboration with government bodies and the media, the Coalition works for the legal and social recognition of our families. We work to increase our visibility and raise public awareness about our diverse realities. Another mandate of the LGBT Family Coalition is to create new resources that can be used in primary and secondary schools, day care centers, doctors’ offices, community organizations and social services to raise the public’s awareness of the diversity of family structures and the impact of homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism, cis-centrism and gender-based harassment. Our training sessions have reached over 24,000 professionals across Quebec.



www.famillesLGBT.org

LGBTQ Parenting Network

The LGBTQ Parenting Network is a program of Sherbourne Health Centre, an innovative health care center in Toronto, Canada.

The LGBTQ Parenting Network promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer parents, prospective parents, children and their families through systems analysis, resource development, community education, professional training and advocacy.

We provide access to information and resources on our website, through workshops for parents and prospective parents, and with training opportunities for health, education and social service professionals who work in our communities.

One of the themes of our work is celebrating LGBTQ families. We have a set of resources and a workshop available to help agencies and individuals celebrate gender, sexual orientation and kinship diversity in families, which are all available on our website.



www.lgbtqparentingnetwork.ca

NELFA

The Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations (NELFA) was created in May 2009 to unite European associations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) parents and their children under one umbrella organization. Since then, NELFA added “intersex” and “queer” to illustrate the diversity of the rainbow family movement in Europe. The asterisk reinforces NELFA’s openness to all constellations beyond LGBTIQ. With 31 associations representing 19 European countries (as of July 2018) and thousands of rainbow families, NELFA promotes the exchange of information among its members and assists in creating and developing LGBTIQ* family associations in Europe. NELFA works to ensure that children raised in rainbow families are granted the same rights as others. It calls on European governments to adopt legal systems and equal opportunity policies that do not discriminate against LGBTIQ* families, whether it be legally, financially, educationally or socially. And NELFA insists on the freedom of movement of LGBTIQ* parents and their children within the European Union without their family life being compromised by entering, or settling in, another Member State.

NELFA was incorporated under Belgian law as an international non-profit association (aisbl) in March 2012. Its official headquarters are located in the Rainbow House in Brussels. Since then, NELFA has become a member of ILGA-Europe, Transgender Europe (TGEU) and – most recently – of COFACE Families Europe (2017). In 2016, NELFA has been granted participatory status with the Council of Europe. This means an opportunity to contribute to moving civil institutions toward full equality and reinforcing participation in decision-making processes as well as building a society based on equality, justice and human rights.

Currently, NELFA has 13 board members from all over Europe. They are volunteers and bear a large part of their costs for travel expenses, event fees, etc., on their own. NELFA’s budget derives from two sources: membership fees and donations. Besides its support for IFED, NELFA also works on other major events and projects, i.e., European Rainbow Families Meetings (in Berlin in 2018), its own conferences (Naples 2017, Lisbon 2018, Zagreb 2019) as well as workshops and speeches for other organizations (i.e., for the IDAHOT event 2018 at the Council



of the European Union). Since 2016, NELFA has been taking part in the European Union’s Erasmus+ program. Two projects were already successful: More than 40 rainbow family activists improved their skills by means of professional training courses (partner organization: In Dialogue) and job shadowing. The third project began in June 2018 and is entitled “Joining forces for the well-being of rainbow families.”

in the picture below, NELFA board members in Lisbon, March 2018



www.nelfa.org

The month of May marked this year's IFED festivities, but also the official launch of the new NGO "International Family Equality Day".

The new IFED NGO's goals & mission are:

- * Raise awareness, provide advocacy, empower, demand social and legal acceptance for our families, and celebrate family diversity worldwide;
- * Ensure that IFED remains a neutral, unbranded event open to everybody;
- * Highlight the scope and diversity of IFED mobilization (so that this visibility impacts global public opinion and decision makers) via our global website, Facebook page and Twitter account, and the IFED Annual Report.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far and look forward to all the positive change and progress that we will be able to contribute towards!

Get involved too!

By joining IFED you can:

- * **support** global advocacy to empower rainbow families across the world to be out, proud and progress social change
- * become part of a **global community** of people committed to creating a more open and diverse society worldwide
- * join a **global network** of activists, institutions, associations and organizations exchanging ideas, information and best practices to promote equal rights for all families

Membership is open to everyone: individuals, associations, cities, institutions and companies. With flexible annual membership fees, you can choose how much to contribute.

Becoming a member is easy, join us online at:
internationalfamilyequalityday.org/become-a-member/

The IFED NGO welcomes new members!



Get Involved

ADVOCACY

EMPOWERMENT

SOCIAL AND LEGAL ACCEPTANCE

International Family Equality Day - the NGO

The current Board of the International Family Day NGO has been elected on 1st May 2018 and comprises eight members from different regions.

Co-Presidents: Maivon Wahid (Fiji) and Derricia Castillo-Salazar (Belize);

Secretary: Amanda Hopping-Winn (USA)

Treasurer: Maria von Känel (Switzerland);

Board members: Ging Cristobal (Philippines), Polina Gamburg (Russia), Bess Hepworth (Hong Kong), Matcha Phorn-In (Thailand).

Steering Committee: Gurchaten Sandhu, Switzerland, Roberta Cecchetti, Switzerland, Anja McConnachie, United Kingdom, Nadia Ayem, United Kingdom

IFED Team: Markus Stehle, IFED Media, Switzerland, Francesca Silvestri, IFED Report design, France, Virginie Broer, IFED Logo design, France, Mark Frederik Chapman, IFED Banners design, Miriam Förster, IFED website, Germany

“

While the legal recognition of Rainbow Families was bolstered with the passage of Marriage Equality in 2013 in the United States, we are still seeing daily attempts to strip away our families' rights. License to Discriminate laws are popping up around the country allowing foster and adoption agencies to discriminate against prospective LGBTQ parents. We know that the majority of the over 6 million LGBTQ 18-35 years old in America are considering starting families in the coming years. We must do better for them! We are working to create systems that remove barriers to family building regardless of how our community chooses to add children to their homes so that America becomes a truly safe and welcoming place for Rainbow Families.”

Amanda Hopping-Winn

Chief Program Officer, Family Equality Council
Secretary, IFED



Amanda Hopping-Winn

“

With more than 70 countries around the world criminalising same-sex love, that means more than 70 criminalise also criminalise rainbow families, which is why the work of IFED is so important in helping stimulate and promote an alternative global narrative for family diversity.

We know that rainbow families have become a battleground, low hanging fruit that seems easy to target. Equally I believe that rainbow families have the power to change hearts and minds. Rainbow families can be a source of strength and a powerful tool for advocacy.”

Bess Hepworth

Co-Founder, Asia-Pacific Family Forum and Network,
Executive Director, Planet Ally



Bess Hepworth

“

The legal recognition and protection of rainbow and diverse families must extend beyond their home, including the workplace. LGBTI parents are not just parents but are also part of the workforce. National employment laws, policies and programmes as well as workplace structures, procedures and culture must reflect the needs related to rainbow and diverse families. We must work together with workers' and employers organizations and governments to break down employment barriers related to family status for rainbow families.”

Gurchaten Sandhu

IFED Steering Committee



Gurchaten Sandhu

Cooperating Partners

ILGA-Europe

ILGA-Europe is a driving force for political, legal and social change in Europe and Central Asia. It is an independent, international non-government umbrella organization bringing together more than 500 member organizations from 45 European and 5 Central Asian countries, and it is part of the wider International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA).

www.ilga-europe.org



European Parliament Intergroup on LGBTI Rights

The LGBTI Intergroup gathers 150 elected Members of the European Parliament from 23 EU Member States and 7 political groups. They are committed to upholding the fundamental rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

www.lgbt-ep.eu



ECSOL

The European Commission on Sexual Orientation Law (ECSOL) is a non-governmental and non-political network of legal experts. Its origins lie in the European Group of Experts on Combating Sexual Orientation Discrimination which appointed by the Commission of the European Communities operated between 2002 and 2004.

www.sexualorientationlaw.eu



TGEU

TGEU is a European umbrella organization working to advance the equality and human rights of all transgender people through advocacy, collaboration, empowerment and research. Founded in 2005, today, the organization counts over 80 member organisations and over 80 individual members in 42 countries.

www.tgeu.org



In the photo on the right, Ilga-Europe meeting with NELFA, OII, TGEU, ENP, IGLYO, European Lesbian* Conference, EuroBiNet, Afro Rainbow Austria and the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups

European Green Party

The European Green Party (EGP) is a European political party whose members include the 44 national Green parties from all across Europe, both within the EU and beyond. Human rights are the core of our beliefs and work. Through structures such as European Queer Greens, we work with all European Greens, civil society and other stakeholders to develop and enhance human rights on the national and European levels.

www.europeangreens.eu



Rainbow Rose

Rainbow Rose, the LGBT network within the PES (Party of European Socialist), works to promote LGBT rights, equality and diversity throughout Europe. It is an umbrella organization relaunched in 2013, gathering 30 social-democrat structures. It works at local, national and European levels with politicians and political parties member of the PES.

www.rainbowrose.eu



Interested in becoming a cooperating partner for IFED? Contact us!

info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org

ILGA World

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) is a worldwide federation of organisations committed to equal human rights for LGBTI people. Founded in 1978, it enjoys consultative status at the United Nations, where it speaks and advocates on behalf of more than 1,300 member organisations from 141 countries.

www.ilga.org



GIN-SSOGIE

The Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions (GIN-SSOGIE) is an organization headquartered in South Africa that comprises more than 250 individuals and organizations engaged in faith and spirituality. We are committed to using our beliefs and traditions to ensure that the views, values and rights of people of all sexes, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions are recognized, respected and valued.

www.gin-ssogie.org/



IFED 2018 Germany

“The good thing about IFED is that everyone can be part of it: just continue to celebrate diversity every day and join us in the next IFED celebrations, because everyone can be safer and happier in a more open and equal society!

A special thought to those who can't celebrate IFED with us and have to remain hidden to protect themselves and their families' security. IFED is there for you!”

Maria von Känel
IFED Founder and Treasurer



Maria von Känel

Participating Associations



IFED 2018 Brazil

Special Country Feature - Australia

We in the LGBTIQ+ community know better than most that it takes a village to raise a family.

Our families are formed in many different ways, and they don't always follow traditional paths; today is about recognizing the fundamental truth that it's love that makes a family.

International Family Equality Day is being marked in cities all over the world, and this year, here in Australia, we have so much to celebrate.

We fought a hard battle to have our relationships recognized by law. I'm so proud of our community – and particularly our kids – for our persistence, compassion and resilience throughout what was a bruising campaign.

But we know we have so much more work to do, and for all our celebration today, we must remember that we have a long way to go before everyone in our village has full equality.

The theme of this year's events is the rights of the child, and there is so much more we can do in New South Wales to ensure the rights of children are recognized and realized:

All you children here today have the right to be loved and to live with a family that loves you. But LGBTIQ+ foster parents can be denied by not-for-profit organizations who discriminate on the basis of sexuality or gender; adoption laws are restrictive and make it hard for fostered children to find forever homes.

All children have the right to have their family recognized by law. But transgender and gender-diverse parents and carers can still be forced to divorce; children born through surrogacy can still be denied parentage orders, with their fathers considered to be criminals.

You have the right to a safe home. But the Australian Human Rights Commission estimates that a quarter of all homeless young people in the State identify as LGBTIQ+.

You have the right to be safe. But the LGBTIQ+ community still has among the highest rates of suicide and violence.



All children have the right to an education that helps them reach their full potential. But still, the kids of LGBTIQ+ parents can face discrimination and stigma in school settings; LGBTIQ+ kids face higher levels of bullying in schools and deserve to learn in safe environments.

Today is a call to action. Each of us can work toward making a better world for LGBTIQ+ kids and our kids.

Mat Howard

Rainbow Families Co-Chair



Special Country Feature - Cambodia

During Pride 2018 Celebrations in Cambodia, same-sex couples publicly celebrated their love by signing the Declaration of Family Relationship (DoFR). Based on contract law, the DoFR has been developed by Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK), the leading LGBTIQ NGO in Cambodia, along with their members, the local authorities and a local lawyer. It has currently been introduced to 50 communes over 15 Cambodian Provinces.

The Declaration of Family Relationship is a civil contract in which two persons state they are willing to be together, to share responsibility of taking care of their family, including their children, and to distribute their joint asset. It is filling the gap in the law by providing a similar legal protection as legal spouses do in the institution of marriage.

Since 2015, 21 couples have signed the Declaration of Family Relationship in front their families and commune officials.

The family is one of the most fundamental institutions of Cambodian life. However, a 2017 report by the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) on Cambodia's Rainbow Families shows that the ability of LGBTIQ Cambodians to form families of their own is severely hindered by a legal framework and social structure which denies basic equality.

This report reveals that – despite the fact that legal recognition of same-sex partnerships is not possible under the current Cambodian legal system – many currently cohabiting rainbow couples across Cambodia already live as spouses, some conduct unofficial wedding ceremonies, and many (21.50%) have received important legal recognition in the form of family books issued by Commune authorities. In order to navigate legal restrictions, these family books predominantly classify the couples as husband and wife (39.13%) or siblings (21.74%), or simply list one individual as the head of the family (13.04%). Among rainbow couples who have adopted a child, a significant proportion (45.71%) had a family book, compared to couples who have not adopted a child (9.71%). Furthermore, there are significant disparities between different provinces regarding the availability of family books for rainbow couples. In some provinces, the vast majority of rainbow couples receive family books; in others, the practice is non-existent.



On 31 May 2018, several CSOs, including RoCK, CCHR and Destination Justice (DJ), organised with the support of the UN (UN Women-Cambodia, UNAIDS-Cambodia, OHCHR-Cambodia and UN Volunteer-Cambodia), the first Dialogue on Public Policies to Promote LGBTIQ's Rights in Cambodia in an effort to engage with government representatives from various ministries. The top issues discussed focussed on:

- Legal issues including same-sex marriage, adoption, and the possibility of changing gender based on one's own determination in legal documents (identification card, family book and passport); and
- Discrimination and exclusion from families and schools.

Follow-up with each ministries and advocacy activities are currently being carried on by RoCK, CCHR and DJ to better promote and protect the rights of the Cambodian Rainbow Families.

Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK), <http://www.rockcambodia.org/>
Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR), <https://cchrcambodia.org/>
Destination Justice (DJ), <http://www.destinationjustice.org/>

Special Country Feature - Costa Rica

The IFED celebration was held in Costa Rica for the first time, on May 6, 2018, in the country's capital, San José. The event, which was organized by the Asociación de Familias Homoparentales y Diversas de Costa Rica (Association of LGBT Parents and Diverse Families of Costa Rica), was a family picnic. Approximately 50 guests, including children, enjoyed pool time at a private location. The animated event included music and snacks as well as a magician who entertained kids and adults alike.

The main goal of the activity was to bring awareness to the plight of LGBT families seeking legal recognition and protection in a country where same-sex marriage is not recognized by law. Local Congressman Enrique Sánchez from the ruling party PAC (Partido Acción Ciudadana) was present to support the cause, and he has committed to promote and defend human rights for the LGBT population.

The event got underway with a speech by Nisa Sanz, the president of the association, who underlined the importance of the plight to dignify and recognize LGBT families and their rights. Congressman Sánchez followed, explaining his

party's position and commitment to support the journey of these families toward social and legal recognition.

Our demands can be summarized in the following two areas:

1. To the Constitutional Court, to accept Advisory Opinion 24/17 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights declaring unconstitutional the article 14.6 of the Family Code, which prevents marriage for same-sex couples.
2. To the government, to translate the commitment toward the LGTB community into tangible actions so that our families and children are protected against any type of discrimination in all public institutions, including but not limited to the adoption institute (PANI), the immigration office and the educational system.

In the days following the event, a press release was sent to the most important media outlets in Costa Rica. The Pride Parade in San José was held a few weeks after the IFED celebration, on July 1, and its message was again highlighted. The activity served as platform for additional media interviews that were used to urge the Constitutional Court to adopt Advisory Opinion 24/17. The court announced recently that it will resolve the pending equal marriage demands that have been awaiting resolution since 2013.



Special Country Feature - Israel

Jewish tradition emphasizes the centrality of family over the individual. The origin of this is the book of Genesis, chapter 9 verse 7: "As for you, be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth". Therefore, Israel is a family-oriented society. A popular Israeli song reflecting upon its culture claims, "Children are a joy, children are a blessing." Many Israelis would say they feel pressure from their families to get married and to have children. This is also true for LGBTQ individuals and gay couples in Israel, who tend to have more children than their respective LGBTQ peers in the west. It is estimated that there are 35,000 LGBTQ families in Israel, out of two million families in the country. Due to this pro-children social atmosphere, there is a wider acceptance for a greater variety of families.

Common family structures in Israel are: co-parenting – in which two members of the opposite sex, at least one of whom is usually gay, decide to start a family together – mom and dad, raising a child, without romantic involvement. Merkaz Horut Aheret (Alternative Parenting Center) may be the only organization in the world focusing exclusively on co-parenting. The organization offers group counseling, where attendees learn about the benefits and challenges of this unique family structure. Inevitably, the center also serves as a matchmaking service for those seeking a co-parent. Many lesbians become mothers (some as a single parent, some as a family with a female partner) by receiving a sperm donation (from Israel or from abroad). If it is medically necessary, IVF procedures are free under national health care insurance. More and more single gay men or couples use surrogacy procedures abroad in order to have children. Thus, hundreds of Israeli babies were born in India, Thailand or Nepal, others in the U.S. or Canada. Due to the IVF procedure in surrogacy, many gay parents have twin babies, and some even have triplets. Adopting a child from specific countries abroad used to be an option for single gay men or couples up to ten years ago. Adopting an Israeli child is theoretically possible, but rarely happens in practice, because normative-structure families receive higher priority.

Surrogacy is legal in Israel only for heterosexual couples, as defined by the 22-year-old law: "Intended parents are a man and a woman who are a couple." There has been serious debate about the law recently, as the Supreme Court has stated that discrimination against single people and same-sex couples is



unacceptable and has asked the government to correct the existing law. The Association of Israeli Gay Fathers is part of this appeal. Unfortunately, the proposed change will exclude single men and gay male couples. Although the Israeli Ministry of Welfare declared that LGBTQ families are perfectly fit to raise families, the political constellation, based on conservative and ultra-orthodox parties, is not willing to include and recognize such families.

Israeli LGBTQ visibility and acceptance are growing. Hoshen - The LGBTQ Organization for Education, lectures about the rainbow community to increase acceptance in schools and government institutions. Pride parades are on the rise. In addition to the huge parade in Tel Aviv, and the substantial parades in Jerusalem and Haifa, this year Pride marches were held in June and July in many suburban communities: Hadera, Ashdod, Rishon Le-Zion and more.

Tel Aviv's 2018 Pride events were historic due to a few special milestones. We celebrated 10 years since the foundation of the Tel Aviv Gay Center, 20 years since the first Gay Pride march in Tel Aviv, 30 years since the Israeli penal code dropped sodomy as a crime, and 70 years since the independence of the State of Israel. The Tel Aviv Pride parade was the largest ever, with more than 250,000 participants, many of them from Europe and the U.S. In Tel Aviv, the Pride events are no longer solely for the LGBTQ community but rather an event celebrating international acceptance and pride for all.

LGBTQ families also get their well-deserved attention. For example, there was a decorated family truck among the others in Tel Aviv's Pride events last year. Family-friendly zones accommodated the participants both at the entrance and

at the end of the march. The IFED annual picnic has become a tradition. We've been participating since its very first year in 2012, and attendance has grown every year since.

This year's Tel Aviv IFED event took place for the sixth time. Some 700 people (about 200 families!) gathered for a huge Pride picnic in central the Tel Aviv park Gan Meir, adjacent to the Tel Aviv Gay Center. Parents and their children enjoyed many free activities such as homemade food at a shared table, live performance and music, makeup and temporary tattoo stations, kite building, arts and crafts tables and a family photo station, to name just a few. This year, for the first time, we allowed a community supplier to have a sales stall for various rainbow items. It included a large collection of children's books dealing with non-traditional families. Parents loved the mat with book examples we had arranged. Some of them sat down with their children and read the stories aloud.

We are very proud of the unique collaboration model we have established. Until last year, the picnic was organized by activists from LGBTQ family organizations: the Association of Israeli Gay Fathers, which is the main active group, as well as Keshet (Rainbow) Families. Facebook groups like Mamadyke (lesbian mothers) also play an important role in advertising and operating the event. Last year we joined The Aguda, Israel's LGBTQ task force, which is the biggest LGBTQ organization, and the Tel Aviv Gay Center, which is fully funded by the Tel Aviv Municipality. This step has led to even more valuable collaboration with Tehila – The Israeli P-FLAG groups and IGY – the Israeli Gay Youth organization, which helped us set up the park before and after the picnic and ran a scavenger hunt for the kids. The producer of the picnic was an employee of the Gay Center. Her help was paramount in coordinating the different groups and suppliers. The picnic's budget grew this year, 80% of which was sponsored by the Tel Aviv Gay Center, and the remaining 20% by LGBT organizations.

We invite you to join us in the Tel Aviv IFED annual picnic and all other Israeli LGBTQ Pride events in 2019, as well as in the great production of the Eurovision Song Contest 2019! See you next year in Israel!

Doron & Meir Eliel-Rabinowich – Rainbow Families

Amit Rov-Shaanan – The Association of Israeli Gay Fathers



Special Country Feature - Berlin, Germany

More than 30 rainbow families from Berlin and Brandenburg celebrated International Family Equality Day (IFED) on May 6, 2018, in the Family Center of Campus Kiezspindel in Berlin Köpenick.

The artist Jutta Poppe, Karin Kant of Campus Kiezspindel and Constanze Körner of the Lesben Leben Familie (LesLeFam – Lesbians Life Family) association initiated the art project Goldener Regenbogenstuhl (Golden Rainbow Chair) and invited the children of rainbow families to paint their chairs in bright colors. The children covered their chairs, stools and benches with rainbows, hearts and faces with great enthusiasm and creativity.

The beautiful, colorful art objects were then signed by the children in gold writing before they returned home with their new cheerful designs. Following the event, T-shirts featuring the self-painted chairs were printed as gifts. But most importantly, during the campaign, families had a fantastic time in great weather to exchange ideas, play together and have a barbecue. The event was a fun celebration for IFED 2018 and created many lasting memories.

For further information, visit LesLeFam.de



Overview of research on trans parent families (non-exhaustive)

Susie Bower-Brown, Centre for Family Research, University of Cambridge

Although there is now a considerable amount of research on same-sex parent families, the same cannot be said about trans parent families. Whilst other LGBT+ parents also still face considerable stigma, it is clear that trans acceptance lags behind that of same-sex parents. As Ryan and Martin (2000) suggest, “even those people who have become completely comfortable with the idea that gays and lesbians can parent as well as heterosexuals can find the notion of a parent who has crossed gender lines deeply distressing”. Trans parents are often grouped with same-sex parents, under the “LGBT+ parent” umbrella. This is partially useful, as they may have similar experiences related to coming out, disclosure and stigma (Hines, 2006). However, most LGBT+ family research focuses solely on same-sex parents. Being trans is not a sexual orientation, so there may be a number of unique factors within trans parent families, such as high levels of transphobic stigma and the transition process. Equally, trans parent families exist in a number of different forms: they may have children before coming out as trans and they may have children after or even during their transition. Trans parents may parent alone, in a same-sex relationship or in a heterosexual relationship. These family forms should therefore be examined separately from same-sex parent families, to see trans parents’ “struggles, strategies and strengths” (Pyne, 2012).

Trans is an umbrella term that refers to “people who do not embrace traditional binary gender norms of masculine and feminine and/or whose gender identity or expression does not fit with the one they were assigned at birth” (James-Abra et al., 2015). “Cisgender” (or “cis”) means someone “whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth; someone who is not trans” (James-Abra et al., 2015). Trans can refer to those who identify as transsexual, transgender, non-binary, genderqueer or many other diverse and complex identities that people experience (Dargie, Blair, Pukall, & Coyle, 2014). It is recognized that not all gender-diverse people use the word trans, but it will be used here as it is widely accepted as the most inclusive term (Downing,



2013; Sanger, 2008). It is also important to note that not all trans people “transition”: being trans simply means that someone does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth (Vincent, 2018).

Although TIME magazine named 2014 as the “Transgender Tipping Point”, trans people and their families have existed cross-culturally and throughout history (Burns, 2018; Stryker, 2008). However, research on trans people within the family context is sparse. Trans people are not traditionally viewed as “family” people, particularly by the media (von Doussa, Power, & Riggs, 2017). As Tornello and Bos (2017) suggest, “being transgender and being a parent are sometimes seen as contradictory.” However, it is estimated that 25%–49% of trans people are parents (Dierckx, Motmans, Mortelmans, & Tsjoen, 2016). The lack of empirical research on trans parents, coupled with negative preconceptions about their ability to parent effectively, means that trans parents have consistently been denied the same rights as cis parents (Biblarz & Savci, 2010). For example, in 2007, a Washington court did not grant primary custody to a trans



IFED 2018 USA

parent because “the impact of [the parent’s planned] gender reassignment surgery on the children is unknown” (Cooper, 2013). Equally, in a UK survey, 45% of 188 trans parents saw their children less or lost contact with them after their gender transition (McNeil, Bailey, Ellis, Morton, & Regan, 2013). This shows the stigma and discrimination trans parents face when attempting to raise a family.

An online survey of 50 trans parents in the U.S. found that they face unique challenges: parents worried about the impact of their gender identity on their children and had to balance their transition alongside parenting, meaning their children “transitioned” as well (Haines, Ajayi, & Boyd, 2014). Therefore, it is important to look at the small amount of research on trans parents who transition before, during or after having children.

Transitioning before/whilst becoming a parent

The number of people identifying as trans at a young age is rapidly increasing – referrals to the U.K.’s Gender Identity and Development Service (GIDS) for children have increased from 97 in 2009/10 to 2,016 in 2016/17 (GIDS, 2017). Therefore, more and more trans people are becoming parents after they begin their transition. There are a number of paths to parenthood for trans people, such as adoption or use of assisted reproductive technology, but also a number of biological and social barriers. Adoption agencies lack experiences with

trans adopters, and many prospective parents do not pursue adoption due to expectations of transphobia within the system (Pyne, 2012; Stotzer, Herman, & Hasenbush, 2014). There are no studies that look at children who have been adopted by trans parents.

Trans people can use a number of types of assisted reproduction to become parents, including fertility preservation, donor insemination, male pregnancy and surrogacy (De Wert et al., 2014). One qualitative Canadian study of trans parents and their partners found that most participants reported negative experiences with assisted reproduction, including problems with paperwork, inappropriate pronoun use and cisnormative assumptions about bodies (James-Abra et al., 2015). Pyne (2012), in a Canadian focus group study, also found that trans parents felt they lacked support from fertility clinics and suffered difficulties in becoming legal parents to their children. For example, U.K. law currently prohibits trans men who give birth from being recognized as the father, and being labeled a mother can conflict with some trans men’s gender identity (F. R. White, 2018).

There has been much debate within academia about whether trans people should even receive the same reproductive rights as cis people – a debate that has been labelled as highly transphobic (Pyne, 2012). Some ethical considerations include whether the perceived pathological nature of being trans makes someone unfit to parent and whether children will experience atypical gender development or adjustment problems (Baetens et al., 2003; De Wert et al., 2014). There is only one study to date that has followed up children conceived by trans parents using assisted reproduction. For 12 years, Chiland et al. (2013) followed a French trial cohort of 42 children who were born to trans men and their female partners through donor insemination. They reported that the children were developing well and therefore recommended that trans people should be afforded the same reproductive rights as cis people. However, the study was purely observational and reported that the children “look like ordinary little boys and girls, not young androgynes or transgenders” (Chiland et al., 2013). This study therefore upholds cisnormativity and perpetuates transphobia by portraying trans people as “other” and second rate to “ordinary” cis people (McGuire, Kuvalanka, Catalpa, & Toomey, 2016). Considering that over 90% of trans people surveyed in the U.K. have been told that trans people are not normal (McNeil et al., 2013) there is an urgent need for rigorous, empirical



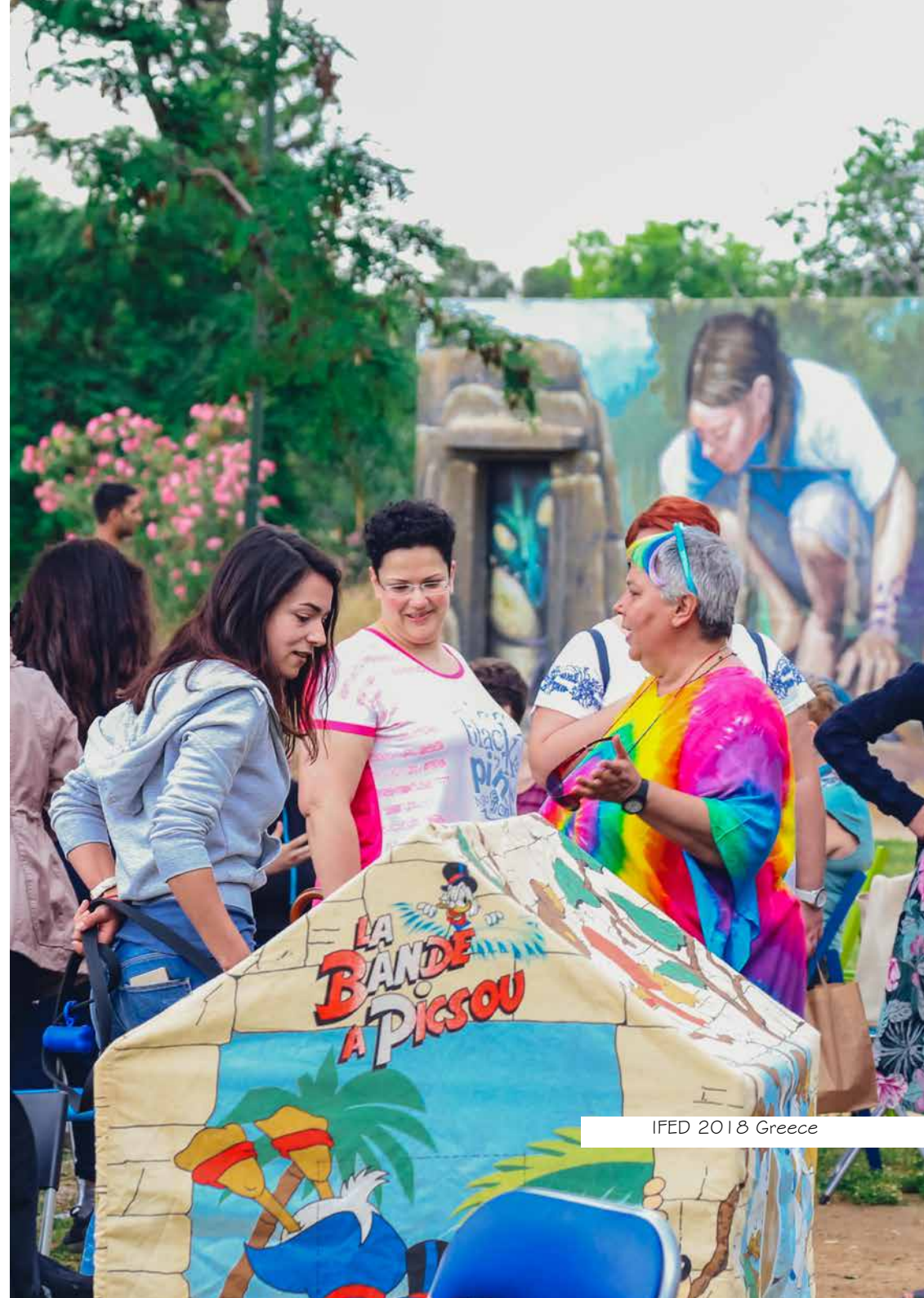
IFED 2018 Japan

research that does not further pathologize trans identities. There is also a need for research on children conceived with other types of assisted reproduction, such as through transmasculine pregnancy and surrogacy, as these technologies are becoming more widely available.

Transitioning after becoming a parent

Although more and more trans people are transitioning before becoming parents, in 2009 the median age for presenting for referral to a gender identity clinic was 42 years (Reed, Rhodes, Schofield, & Wylie, 2009). As those who transition later in life are more likely to be parents (Grant et al., 2011), many people have children before they realize they are trans or begin their transition. Parents who transition after having children have consistently been discriminated against in custody battles, under the assumption that their children will be negatively affected by their transition (Chang, 2003; Pyne, 2012). A book written by two prominent sexologists in the 1960s suggested that young children of trans women should be told “that daddy will be living far away and probably unable to see them” (Green & Money, 1969).

There is little evidence to support the idea that children will be negatively affected by a parent’s gender transition, although there is also little evidence to refute it. A considerable proportion of the research on children with trans parents has been concerned with their gender development and sexual orientation – suggesting that non-heterosexuality or atypical gender development is in itself a negative outcome, further eliciting stigma against the LGBT+ population (Herek, 2010; T. White & Ettner, 2007). For example, Green (1978) studied transsexual parents in the post-divorce context and found that all children demonstrated typical gender development and heterosexuality. Although this study was limited in sample size (16 children came from 7 families with a transsexual parent) and scope, Green concluded that children raised by transsexual parents do not differ in sexual identity from children raised in more “conventional family settings.” These results have since been replicated: 17 out of 18 children referred to the GIDS because they had a trans parent had no concerns with gender identity, with only one child having transient concerns (Freedman, Tasker, & di Ceglie, 2002). The children were more likely to have experienced marital conflict than children referred to the GIDS for their own gender identity concerns, pointing to greater marital conflict in trans parent families, which is a risk factor for child adjustment (Haines et al., 2014).



IFED 2018 Greece

Two U.S. studies (T. White & Ettner, 2004, 2007) have looked beyond gender development in children with trans parents. Ten therapists who had worked with trans parents completed questionnaires, reporting that young children were able to adapt well to a parent's transition, as were older children if parental conflict was low (T. White & Ettner, 2004). White and Ettner (2007) also interviewed 27 trans parents, reporting again that a younger age at transition and a positive parent-child relationship predicted better child outcomes post-transition. Children who perceived higher stigma around their parent's transition experienced a decline in academic performance, suggesting that stigma can negatively influence children. This has also been found in the research on same-sex parents (Bos & Gartrell, 2010; Golombok, 2017). Veldorale-Griffin (2014) carried out an online study in the U.S. of 48 trans parents and 9 adult children, asking them about their experiences of a parental gender transition. Ninety-two percent of parents experienced stress surrounding disclosure and transition, most commonly familial rejection, job discrimination and fear of transphobia and violence. Adult children reported that family reactions to their parent's transition were mostly negative or mixed. The adult children also reported stress around bullying at school and having to alter how they view their trans parent. However, most parents and children experienced positive or no changes in their relationship after the transition – suggesting that a gender transition can have a positive impact within the family. The author suggested that this was

due to the parents' greater feelings of comfort in themselves and the children feeling they had been brought closer by the experience. Therefore, the limited research suggests that a parental gender transition is not necessarily a negative experience for children and can have benefits. However, the associated stigma, stress and parental conflict can be problematic for family functioning and child adjustment.

Future research

As demonstrated in this short review, there is some notable research on trans parent families. However, all studies so far on trans parents suffer from small sizes and are cross-sectional. There is a need for mixed-method research that includes multiple informants: school-aged children's experiences and perspectives should be included in particular. Trans-parent families themselves are also a diverse and heterogeneous group and, as in most family research, there is a lack of research on trans people of color and those in low-income situations. Using an intersectional framework, multiple oppressions incur further stigma, and so research should focus on the experiences of these families (De Vries, 2012). Trans people should also be included at all stages of the research, in order to move from research on trans people to research with trans people, parting ways from the history of problematic, and even traumatic, research by cis researchers on trans people (Vincent, 2018).



IFED 2018 Greece



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Overview of research on same-sex-parent families (2017-2018)

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The purpose of the current report is to review (non-exhaustively) the most recent research (i.e., studies published between 2017 and 2018) on same-sex-parent families and extend the comprehensive overview of the research area by Martine Gross in the 2017 IFED network annual report (Gross, 2017).

There is considerable evidence on families headed by lesbian mothers – and growing evidence on those headed by gay fathers – showing more similarities than differences to families headed by heterosexual parents (Anderssen, Amlie, & Ytterøy, 2002; Averett, Nalavany, & Ryan, 2009; Carneiro, Tasker, Salinas-Quiroz, Leal, & Costa, 2017; Goldberg, Gartrell, & Gates, 2014; Tasker, 2005). Specifically, children in same-sex-parent families have been shown to be just as well-adjusted and to have equally high-quality relationships with their parents as their peers in heterosexual-parent families (Fedewa, Black, & Ahn, 2014).

Same-sex-parent families with young children

Bos, Kuyper, & Gartrell (2017) added further support to the notion that there are few differences between same-sex-parent families and different-sex-parent families. Their Dutch population-based comparison comprised 190 households, including 43 female same-sex-parent households, 52 male same-sex-parent households and 95 different-sex-parent households. They compared females in the same-sex-parent group to females in the different-sex-parent group; doing the same for males in the sample. The only significant differences were that mothers in the different-sex-parent families felt less competent in parenting than mothers in same-sex-parent households. This may be related to the division of labor within these family types. There is evidence to suggest that lesbian-mother families have more egalitarian division of labor compared to heterosexual-parent families (Farr & Patterson, 2013). As such, mothers in different-sex-parent households may be burdened with a greater share of household responsibilities, thus allowing them less time to spend on competent parenting. Conversely, fathers in same-sex-parent families felt less competence than fathers in different-sex-parent families. This may reflect the “relatively new phenomenon” the authors refer to as the “gay baby boom.” Perhaps such



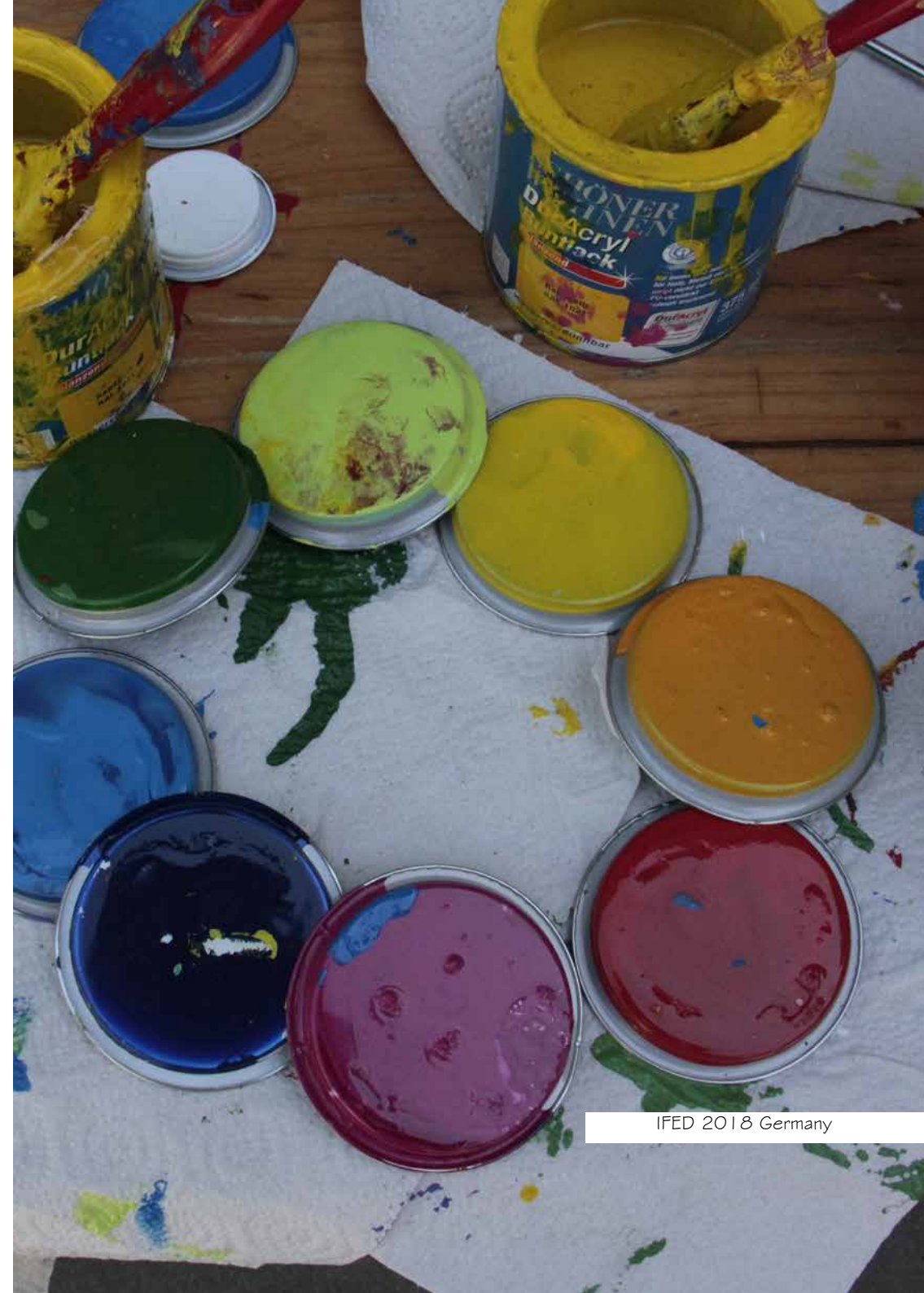
recent family forms lead to reduced perceived competencies, as it is seen to be uncharted territory. Further, it may reflect the wider socio-political context, with many gay fathers still facing barriers and challenges to becoming parents (Arieke & Liefbroer, 2011). Apart from these findings, there were no significant differences in regard to parent-child relationship, parental worries about child rearing or parents' use of informal and formal support.

Adding further to the evidence indicating few differences between same-sex parents and heterosexual parents, Rubio et al. (2017) investigated the transition to parenthood among gay, lesbian and heterosexual couples who conceived through assisted reproduction technologies (ARTs). The gay fathers (n=38) conceived using surrogacy, while lesbian mothers (n=61) used insemination by sperm donation and heterosexual parents (n=41) used IVF (without sperm

or egg donation). The research was a multi-center collaboration between researchers in France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The only differences identified between groups were those relating to parental feelings during pregnancy. First, at the beginning of the pregnancy, lesbian couples reported greater positive feelings compared to heterosexual couples. This may be attributed to the fact that many of the heterosexual-parent-families had experienced infertility and gone through “stressful,” “exhausting” experiences associated with IVF. Second, at the end of the pregnancy, lesbian mothers reported more positive feelings than both heterosexual couples and gay couples. This may be due to gay fathers experiencing the pregnancy more remotely, which can be anxiety inducing at times. For example, some fathers reported fears surrounding missing the baby’s birth. These concerns were exacerbated by legal barriers, which could have delayed the arrival of the baby into the gay-father family. Despite these differences in parental feelings during pregnancy, family type did not appear to be important in regard to perceived competence, enjoyment of parenthood, warmth or involvement.

Children’s gender development in same-sex-parent families

The research focusing on the gender development of children in same-sex-parent families has yielded inconsistent findings. While some studies have indicated that children in lesbian-mother-families may display somewhat greater gender flexibility (Goldberg & Garcia, 2016; Goldberg, Kashy, & Smith, 2012; MacCallum & Golombok, 2004), other studies have found that gender-role behavior is not contingent upon parent sexual orientation (Anderssen et al., 2002; Golombok et al., 2014). Farr, Bruun, Doss, and Patterson’s (2017) study of children’s gender-typed behavior from early to middle childhood in adoptive gay-, lesbian- and heterosexual-parent families helps address the lack of longitudinal research in this area. The authors investigated gender-conforming and non-conforming behaviors in a sample of 106 adoptive U.S. families at two times: wave 1 when the children were of preschool age, and wave 2 when the children were of school age. At wave 1, observational and parent-report measures of children’s gender-typed toy play and behavior were utilized. At wave 2, children reported on their own gendered behavior. Observations of children’s gender-conforming toy play at wave 1 were associated with children’s gender nonconformity five years later. Parent reports of children’s gender nonconformity at wave 1 were also associated with children’s gender nonconformity



IFED 2018 Germany

at wave 2. The strongest predictor of gender nonconformity at wave 2 was children's gender-conforming toy play at wave 1. Importantly, there were no significant differences in children's gendered behavior as a function of parent sexual orientation across time. The findings suggest that, regardless of parent sexual orientation, child gender development appears to be similar and mostly gender conforming from early to middle childhood.

Research indicates that children of lesbian and gay parents may have more liberal beliefs about gender compared to their peers with heterosexual parents, yet the cause of this difference is not understood. Sumontha, Farr, and Patterson (2017) examined children's gender development and its associations with parents' beliefs about gender and parental division of childcare labor. The sample comprised 172 parents (44 lesbian, 52 gay and 76 heterosexual) and their children who were on average eight years old. The results revealed that parents'

sexual orientation was not related to children's sex-typed behavior (i.e., the jobs or activities children wanted to do, or their personalities). However, parents' sexual orientation was associated with children's gender attitudes. Daughters of same-sex couples reported more flexible gender attitudes than daughters of heterosexual couples, yet sons' gender attitudes did not differ by family type. It was also found that parents' division of childcare was more strongly associated with children's gender attitudes than were parents' attitudes. The results indicate that children in gay-father, lesbian-mother and heterosexual-parent families are generally similar in their gender development; where differences are identified these tend to occur primarily in their gender beliefs rather than their gender expression.

Adult children of same-sex parents

Early research on adult children of same-sex parents is indicative of positive psychological well-being (Gartrell & Bos, 2010; Lick, Patterson, & Schmidt, 2013; Tasker & Golombok, 1997) but is limited by convenience sampling methods, and it is possible that only well-adjusted families participated. The first study of adult children of same-sex parents to use population-based data was conducted by Richards, Rothblum, Beauchaine, and Balsam (2017). Data was obtained from 306 adult children (134 with same-sex female parents, 25 with same-sex male parents and 147 with heterosexual parents) with a mean age of 33 years. The sample included children conceived in a variety of ways, but children in same-sex-parent families were more likely to be conceived via methods other than sex with a partner (e.g., adoption, donor insemination, etc.). Notably, only 12% and 1% of same-sex male and same-sex female couples, respectively, had conceived their child in the context of their current relationship, meaning that the majority of children in same-sex-parent families had endured family breakdown – an established risk factor for maladjustment (Amato & Fowler, 2002).

Richards et al. (2017) utilized measures designed to tap into indicators of demographic “thriving” such as employment, education, religion and family status. In line with the research on young children, the findings indicated similar outcomes for adult children of same-sex parents and adult children of heterosexual parents. The similarity in outcomes may point toward the resilience of children raised in same-sex-parent families, considering the high proportion of children to have gone through family breakdown. However, some important differences between the children of same-sex and heterosexual couples were



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identified. Firstly, children of same-sex parents were more likely to engage in non-traditional spiritual practices rather than traditional religions. Secondly, same-sex parents reported less frequent contact with their adult children than did heterosexual parents. Research is required to understand this difference, but it is possible that the lack of contact could be explained by the fact that the majority of children were conceived in the context of a previous relationship. It is conceivable that some of the children may have reacted negatively to their parents no longer being part of their past relationship. It is important to note that adult children in this sample were born at a time when attitudes were considerably more hostile and restrictive toward same-sex parents and therefore their “thriving” is especially noteworthy.

Another recent study (Tornello & Patterson, 2018) on the adult children of same-sex parents contributes to the limited body of work on adult children with gay fathers (for exceptions, see Gianino, Goldberg, & Lewis, 2009; Goldberg, 2007; Lick et al., 2013; Sasnett, 2015). Tornello and Patterson (2018) investigated associations between parental disclosure (of sexual orientation), parent-child relationships and psychological well-being among 84 adult children of gay fathers. The adult children of gay fathers reported levels of depression consistent with the general population. When fathers disclosed their sexual orientation early on in their child’s life, participants reported feeling closer to their fathers in adulthood. Additionally, adult children who reported closer relationships with their fathers reported greater well-being.

Same-sex parenting in the wider context

Farr, Salomon, Brown-Iannuzzi, & Brown (2018) have explored elementary-school-age children’s attitudes toward children in same-sex-parent families. Researchers presented 131 children (61 girls and 67 boys with a mean age of 7.79 years) with six family vignettes comprising female same-sex, male same-sex and different-sex couples with an adopted son or daughter. Questions were then asked to identify the children’s positive and negative affect, desire for proximity and family liking in reference to these family types. Children felt more negative affect toward the adopted children of two mothers and two fathers, compared to the different-sex-parent families. In addition, children felt more positive affect toward adopted children in different-sex-parent families compared to the two-mother and two-father families. Further, children reported higher rates of family liking for the different-sex-parent families compared to

families with two mothers or two fathers. However, there were no significant differences in desire for proximity between family types. These findings are aligned with developmental inter-group theory, which proposes that children are likely to hold prejudices toward individuals from perceptually distinct or particularly salient groups; in this case, same-sex-parent families. The findings also provide support for in-group positivity bias (treating out-groups with less positivity) and outgroup derogation (directing more negativity toward out-groups), which may be exacerbated by existing negative cultural stereotypes about sexual minorities (Cameron et al. 2001; Herek, 2016).

A recent study by Goldberg et al. (2018) explores school-related decision making among gay, lesbian and heterosexual parents with adopted children. It appears that the decision-making process involves consideration of 1) practical resources, such as financial resources and geographical location, 2) children’s and family’s intersecting identity, such as children of color, sexual-minority parents, special needs, and 3) school-quality factors such as educational philosophy, curriculum, academic rigor and reputation. Further, the study highlights how intersectionality theory provides insight, by helping to explain certain decisions through the interaction of multiple privileges. For example, gay men in the sample tended to opt for more competitive/private schools. This reflects their use of financial leverage; as the men in this sample were significantly wealthier than the lesbian mothers. In doing so, the salience of both racial and sexual-orientation consciousness was reduced, in favor of focusing on competitive academic environments. However, lesbian mothers appeared to prioritize more socio-emotional aspects, such as building rapport with schools and the experiential aspect of schools. Further, among lesbian mothers who had children of color, emphasis was placed on selecting a school that would enhance their child’s racial identity and self-esteem. These differences in decision-making indicate a slightly different process among gay fathers compared to lesbian mothers. However, given how homogenous this sample was – mainly white middle-class and well-educated parents – it is difficult to fully appreciate the scale of intersectionality.





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