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An umbrella group encompassing a growing number of LGBTIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Asexual) student solidarity organisations in South African tertiary institutions.

Press statement. For immediate release.

Kaleidoscope Youth Network's 6th Annual LGBTIA Youth Leaders' Lekgotla taken to new heights

Jan Shawn Malatjie, Kokeletso Legoete (Public Relations)



The South African Universities' LGBTIA leaders were gathered at Kwena Lodge in Potchefstroom for the Sixth Annual Kaleidoscope Youth Network National Youth Leaders Lekgotla, which took place from March 30th to April 4th 2012. LGBTIA youth in universities across South Africa were represented through campus solidarity societies. The Lekgotla took place to facilitate discussion around the progresses made by the Network, guiding documents and policy, and future projects for the next period.

National Convener and activist Anzio Cameron Jacobs said, "The delegates were indeed a true representation of the future of the LGBTIA sector. Older activists can finally relax, knowing that all their hard work has not been in vain, and that this generation will take activism in this sector to new heights."

The six-day Lekgotla focused on policy change and implementation within the network; with the drafting of the Constitution being in the forefront. Presentations on Queer history, Art in Advocacy, team building, coping in the sector, transgender and intersex issues, international and internal engagement of the network were, to name a few, activities that took place. The process was facilitated by young activists in the sector, namely, Anzio Jacobs, Ella Kotze a psychologist, Gabriel Khan from Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action, Revelation Xakoshe from TIA(Transgender Intersex Africa), Jacques Rothmann from the North West University and Jay Matlou.

"Member organizations have worked extremely hard to ensure that they are taken more seriously within the context of their respective universities. Although some progress has been made in this regard, there's still a long road ahead for these young activists." According to the network's National Convener, the youth seem prepared for the tasks ahead.

The network is part of The Joint Working Group (JWG) and it is set to become a member of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) which is a positive sign that the network is well on its way to achieving its mandate to amplify the voice of South Africa's LGBTIA youth.

One important conception that came out of Lekgotla 2012 was the initiation of mini-lekgotlas to be held on regional level. As the National Convener stated, "the mini-lekgotlas are intended to bridge the gap between KYN members and the executive, and also act to assist KYN in knowing what's happening on ground level so that we are able to voice the opinions of a wider variety of LGBTIA identified youth.

Anzio Jacobs (National Convenor), Tish White (Vice-National Convenor), Stefan van Tonder (Secretary) and Celia Engelbrecht (Logistics Manager) have been elected for a second term in office as the Executive Committee of the network; with a new member Kokeletso Legoete as the Public Relations Officer. As part of the policy change that took place during the Lekgotla, a new Auxiliary Executive Committee was elected to ensure that the transfer of skills, support and knowledge is passed on to new activists as part of a shadow committee. Mallory Perrett was elected as the Auxco-National Convenor, Thuli Mathabela as Auxco- National-Vice convenor, Brendan Roche-Kelly as Auxco- Secretary, Matthew Moto as the Auxco- Logistics Manager and Jan Shawn Malatjie as the Auxco-Public Relations Officer.

Organisations present at Lekgotla 2012 – Out and Proud (UNW Mafikeng), POUT (UNW Potchefstroom), Flamboyant (TUT), UP&OUT (UP), ACTIVATE (Wits), Liberati APK (UJ) and Liberati DFC (UJ), Out@Kovsies (UFS), MOVE (UKZN), Shadows in the Rainbow (DUT), OUTRhodes (Rhodes), UFH LGBT (UFH), Eloquor Knights (NMMU), GAYLA (UWC), LOUDEnuf (UWC) and GLOScput (CPUT).

Associate organisations present – Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action, 1in9 and Transgender Intersex Africa.

There remains a lot that still needs to be done in South Africa and the rest of the world in realizing that Gay Rights are Human Rights and that they should be respected and protected. The network, which is still in its infancy, has achieved immense progress with regard to the integration of LGBTIA youth within universities and promises to do more with the help of its member organizations.

End.