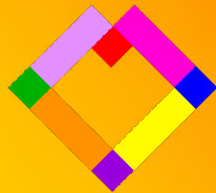




REPORT ON
**DIGNITY NETWORK
 CANADA'S**

INTERNATIONAL ROUND TABLE MEETINGS

NOVEMBER 23-24, 2022
 OTTAWA ONTARIO



**DIGNITY
 NETWORK
 CANADA**



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EQUITAS AND
 THE ACT TOGETHER FOR INCLUSION FUND.



Roundtable participants



Members of Dignity Network Canada Board of Directors and Global Advisory Board

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And most of all, thank you to all the nearly 200 participants at the roundtable from across Canada and the world, including human rights defenders, civil society organizations and government staff.

We look forward to connecting again at our next roundtable event in 2024!



Doug Kerr
Executive Director

What is Dignity Network?

Dignity Network Canada is a movement of 60 civil society organizations across the country involved in supporting the human rights of people on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). We are a federally incorporated non-profit governed by a Board of Directors, with a staffed secretariat team and several working groups and committees. Our mandate is to increase Canadian support for the global movement for human rights for people on the basis of SOGIESC.



Purpose of this report

This report is a summary of the network's roundtable meetings held in Ottawa in November 2022. The purpose of the report is to provide a summary of the meetings as well as to provide a foundation for the work of Dignity Network Canada going forward into 2023 and 2024.



Overview of Roundtable Meetings

Dignity Network Canada's roundtable meetings bring together all Canadian civil society organizations and international partners involved in advancing human rights and inclusion for people on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) around the world. This is the fourth in-person roundtable meetings, after 2016 in Ottawa, 2017 in Montreal and 2019 in Ottawa. This year's event was a partnership between Equitas and the Act Together for Inclusion Fund and Dignity Network Canada over four days in Ottawa, November 21-24. The week included a combination of workshops for ACTIF funded projects, high level political meetings, funder meetings, panel presentations from both civil society and government, roundtable discussions and receptions.

Key Roundtable Objectives:

- Convene members of the network to review Canada's progress on advancing global LGBTIQ+ human rights and developing actions for next two years.
- Review the network's progress on our strategic plan (2019-2024), and engage members in discussion on implementation.
- Engagement between civil society and Global Affairs Canada around increasing support for global LGBTIQ+ human rights, including discussion on international assistance, diplomacy, role of missions, migration issues and other topics.

The event was attended by 200 participants, including 140 representatives of Canadian civil society and 30 international human rights defenders. On the last day of the meetings on November 24 nearly 30 staff from the Government of Canada also attended. The agenda was developed in collaboration between members of Dignity Network Canada and staff at Global Affairs Canada working on SOGIESC issues abroad. Events on November 23 and 24 took place at the John F. Diefenbaker Building in Ottawa.

We welcomed LGBTQ+ human rights defenders from the following countries to the meetings: Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, St. Lucia, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, the Netherlands, Germany, Pakistan, Thailand, and Laos.



Participants from Cameroon, Peru and Canada





Elder Elaine Kicknosway opens event with ceremonial smudge

Engagement With Political Leaders – November 22

Members of Dignity Network Canada's Global Advisory Board led a series of meetings with political leaders from the Government of Canada as well as opposition party Members of Parliament. Meetings were held with Hon. Marci Len, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Rob Oliphant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as MPs Scott Aitchison and Eric Melillo from the Conservative Party of Canada, MPs Randall Garrison and Blake Desjarlais from the NDP and MP Andréanne Larouche from the Bloc Québécois.



MP Andréanne Larouche (Bloc Québécois) with DNC Global Advisory Board members Carlos Idibouo from Côte d'Ivoire and Soufianne Hennani from Morocco



Hon. Marci Len, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth with Pepe Onzeima from Sexual Minorities Uganda and DNC Advisory



Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Liberal MP Rob Oliphant with Anan Boupoua from Proud to Be Us Laos and DNC Advisory Board



Members of DNC's Global Advisory Board and DNC ED Doug Kerr with Hon. Marci Len, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth



DNC members and international advocates with Scott Aitchison, Conservative Party MP for Perry Sound-Muskoka



Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Rob Oliphant with members of DNC's Global Advisory Board and Board of Directors



NDP MPs Randall Garrison and Blake Desjarlais with members of DNC's Board and Global Advisory Board.

Opening Panel on Current Landscape for Canada and Global SOGIESC



Panelists Kimahli Powell, Debbie Owusu-Akyeeah, Steve Bastien, Michaël Arnaud, Sizwe Ishema Inkingi and Kenita Placide



“New funding from Canada has changed the landscape and Dignity Network is working hard to improve things, especially working across the siloes. Canada and Quebec should not be the lonely voices within la Francophonie on SOGIESC issues and need more support from other countries. The situation is concerning in la Francophonie for us, where activists face obstacles to mobilize, and we must ensure there is more funding to protect the communities.”

–Michaël Arnaud, Egides, l’Alliance internationale francophone pour l’égalité et les diversités

“It is so important to have everyone at the table, both domestic and international organizations together. This space gives us the ability to tell our stories ourselves. There are three times the number of people at this roundtable meeting than there were at the first one – and important to see both anglophones and francophones together. It shows the commitment and passion to get involved across the country and move what was an informal collective to a registered organization today.” **–Kenita Placide, Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality**



“Major geopolitical crises affect our communities adversely and Canada does not yet have a mechanism to respond and engage with civil society when they occur. Anti-gender movements, war and climate change, responses to Afghanistan and Ukraine – we must have the resources and the policy to match.”

–Kimahli Powell, Rainbow Railroad





“In the federal 2SLGBTIQ Action Plan there was a real oversight on international issues for our communities, including initiatives for immigrants and refugees. We have to talk about who is visible and who is invisible in these initiatives.” **–Sizwe Ishema Inkingi, DNC Board of Directors**



“The rise in hate is being transported around the world today. We’ve appealed to local Canadian organizations to start building relationships with organizations internationally, we have much more to learn from them. It is important to move away from west knows best so I am looking forward to conversations with our siblings around the world.” **–Debbie Owusu-Akyeeah, Canadian Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity**

IDEA FROM THE FLOOR:

Develop a program for temporary respite in Canada for international LGBTIQ+ human rights defenders.



International SOGIESC Human Rights Defenders and Engagement with Canada



Panel of DNC's International Advisory Board, including members from Ecuador, St Lucia, Pakistan, Laos and Morocco



"Over the past several years, we have received three CLFI grants from the Canadian embassy that have really helped our work including the first ever project on LGBTI issues in the workplace in Laos. I'm also very grateful to have been one of the Grand Marshals at the Montreal Pride parade and so I have a connection with Canada for life now!"

–Anan Bouapha, Proud to be Us Laos



"I have many deep relationships with Canada, it's almost polyamorous – from being here with Dignity Network Canada's advisory board to starting out with ARC International at the United Nations. Our organization has relations with Egale Canada, Rainbow Railroad, Pride Toronto, HIV Legal Network – and of course the Canadian High Commission in Barbados."

–Kenita Placide, Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality



"I received a bursary to participate in my first ever LGBTIQ conference in Montreal in 2017, and this led to the creation of our collective. Then I got involved in early creation of Egides and now it is one of our partners."
-Soufiane Hennani, Collectif Elille, Morocco



The Role of Canadian Government in Advancing SOGIESC Issues Globally

Moderated by Rainbow Railroad CEO, Kimahli Powell, the panel included a number of officials with Global Affairs Canada with current and past responsibilities related to SOGIESC issues.



"We are constantly improving the ways we deliver international assistance in an inclusive manner, such as the LGBTQ2I Community of Practice which meets quarterly. GAC has also broadened the interpretation of the Feminist International Assistance Policy and is increasing accessibility of training for staff on these issues."

–Patricia Atkinson, Director, Natural Resources and Governance



"The international commitments the federal 2SLGBTIQ Action Plan are a starting point for this work. It's an evergreen document and it will be important to create benchmarks and goals for the future." **–Tara Denham, Director General, Office of Human Rights, Freedom and Inclusion**



"There is real breadth to our current work on LGBTIQ rights abroad. Over 200 Canadian missions abroad are now engaged in these activities and have it in their commitments to integrate LGBTIQ issues into their human rights work."

–Mark Allen, Executive Director US Division, former Ambassador to Greece and Cyprus

IDEA FROM THE FLOOR:
Dignity Network Canada could develop
a direct partnership or MOU with
Global Affairs Canada on advancing
SOGIESC issues.



DNC Global Advisory Board member
Jannat Ali from Pakistan.



Keynote speeches



Marie Ricardo, Executive Director of COC Nederland gave a keynote talk at lunch on November 23 and spoke about the importance of building a national movement and the role that COC has played to advance international solidarity through their partnership with the Dutch government.



Anita Vandenbeld, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development gave our opening keynote address on November 24 and spoke about Canada's commitment to SOGIESC inclusion in international assistance and development.



Pepe Onzeima, Program Director, Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) and Dignity Network Canada Advisory Board, gave a moving keynote talk at lunch on November 24 on the successes and challenges of the LGBTIQ human rights movement in Uganda and the partnership with many Canadian allies.



Debbie Owusu-Akyeeah, DNC Board Member and ED of Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity with Keziah Oduro and CCGSD Program Manager Mofi Badmos



Members of Parliament with DNC ED Doug Kerr and Rainbow Railroad ED Kimahli Powell



Next Steps on Dignity Network Canada's Strategic Plan Pillars

On November 23, members of Dignity Network Canada members and international partner organizations discussed the network's main areas of work with a view to informing the next two years. The following are some highlights and themes:

Organizational Sustainability

- Focus on developing DNC secretariat staff team and a stronger organizational infrastructure to support the network.
- Develop a multi-year fundraising strategy that diversifies towards a mix of non-government and government funding for the network secretariat. The strategy should include a Case for Support that explains the rationale for DNC's current focus on policy, education, public engagement – and work with international partners to 'tell the story' to Canadians.
- Create new partnerships with interested members for projects to advance its mission, including collaborative funding proposals.

Advocacy and Government Relations

- Prioritize asking the Canadian government to appoint a lead on SOGIESC issues within Global Affairs Canada, such as an Ambassador or Special Envoy role.
- Recommit to working together to increase target of annual Canadian international assistance and humanitarian aid for global LGBTIQ communities to \$20M a year (or roughly 0.25% of total international assistance)
- Engage with GAC's Grants and Contributions Transformation initiative with a view to improving the quality and flexibility of support for grassroots LGBTIQ human rights organizations.
- Commit to looking at ways to engage around improving visa application processes and options for LGBTIQ human rights defenders coming to Canada.





Kenita Placide from ECADE and Kimahli Powell from Rainbow Railroad

Community of Practice and Learning

- Develop more intentional learning opportunities between Canadian and global south partners.
- Create partnerships with and between DNC members around learning and sharing practices.
- Possible topics for shared learning at DNC's Community of Practice could include:
 - deeper dives into intersectionality and diversity
 - global transgender realities
 - global indigenous realities
 - improving communication between north/south organizations
 - moving beyond funding to partnership
 - mental health and well-being

Communications and Public Engagement

- Create more tools to share what network members are doing and learning.
- Bring groups together that are working on similar themes or areas for joint public events or projects.
- Work together to engage the Canadian public on global SOGIESC issues and human rights through public events and partnerships.

Partnerships and Networks

- Look at ways to continue to support our members to connect to various global networks and coalitions advancing SOGIESC issues around the globe.
- Inform our members about ways they can connect to each other and to global SOGIESC movements. Uganda, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, the Netherlands, Germany, Pakistan, Thailand, and Laos.



Key Points and Potential Next Steps* for Dignity Network Canada from Roundtables

**Note, these are general recommendations and ideas. We recognize that there were many hundreds of ideas and suggestions provided, and we will be looking at how to incorporate them into the themes below.*

On November 24 there were ten breakout discussions on a range of themes of interest related to how civil society and the Canadian government can work together to improve support for the advancement of SOGIESC related human rights around the globe. Participants shared ideas, stories and perspectives. The following section outlines some of the ideas from the sessions and some possible future work for the network:

Feminist Funding Approaches and Decolonizing Funding Models

- Opportunities exist for Dignity Network Canada through its ACTIF partnership to explore ways of advocating for more feminist and decolonized funding approaches.
- Work to make international assistance funding more available for marginalized groups including trans and intersex populations.

Role of Canadian Embassies and SOGIESC Inclusion in Canadian Embassy Funding (CFLI)

- Develop resources and supports for LGBTIQ organizations outside of Canada to know more about what Canadian Embassies do to support SOGIESC issues.
- DNC could create tools for LGBTIQ organizations abroad interested in apply to the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, including timelines, resources for creating proposals and addressing reporting requirements.
- Draft a summary of CFLI projects funded recently related to SOGIESC issues, including safeguards to protect those projects who do not wish to be identified.
- Advocate that Canada increase its support to LGBTIQ organizations abroad through the CFLI.

IDEA FROM THE FLOOR:

Dignity Network Canada could develop tools and resources for civil society on engaging with Canadian missions around the world, such as how to use the Voices at Risk Guidelines or how to apply for CFLI grants.



Global Pathways for LGBTIQ Migrants and Displaced Persons

- DNC could continue work with the Borders to Belonging Coalition to amplify and advance their work around better coordination, partnerships and innovation to support LGBTIQ people around the globe to get to safety.
- Ensure that the issues of LGBTIQ migrants and refugees are considered in Canadian international assistance as part of the overall human rights portfolio.
- Encourage the Canadian government to leverage the knowledge of civil society with expertise in supporting LGBTQI+ refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons.
- Advocate for the creation of additional respite and resettlement pathways responsive to global geopolitical crises that place LGBTQI+ individuals and rights defenders at unique risk.

SOGIESC Inclusion in Democracy and Good Governance

- Research ways that SOGIESC issues can be integrated into programs related to democracy and governance.
- Support our members to engage in dialogue with LGBTIQ human rights defenders interested in engaging in democratic governance issues.

Advancing Canada's Role through Diplomacy & International Advocacy

- DNC can continue to create spaces for engagement with Global Affairs Canada on a range of international SOGIESC advocacy issues, including the biannual SOGIESC human rights standing table.
- Support and build connections amongst DNC's members who want to connect to international spaces such as ILGA, the ERC and other networks.



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Andrew L...

Economic Inclusion and SOGIESC Issues

- Work with interested DNC members to build a more coordinated approach to advancing global LGBTQ+ rights that includes economic development.
- Create more forums and spaces for discussions on the intersections between economics and SOGIESC, including CSOs, small business, labour and companies.
- Advocate with the government and other funding partners for more expansive, meaningful SOGIESC inclusive economic development programming.

Supporting Trans, Intersex and Two-Spirit Global Solidarity

- Given that consultations have indicated that trans/intersex organizations are too small to access ACTIF's main funding stream, DNC and Equitas are looking at alternatives around international assistance work between trans/non-binary/intersex communities.
- Engage in more consultation related to supporting Two Spirit and indigenous LGBTQ international solidarity.

Measuring Impact, Evaluation and Learning In SOGIESC-related Human Rights International Assistance

- As a key partner in ACTIF and the overall Canadian LGBTQ2I international assistance program, DNC has the opportunity to lead in how we do MEL in program design from a community informed lens.
- Gathering organizations through DNC to bring together everyone involved in the field to improve understanding, share best practices and learnings to funders.
- Creating more spaces for reflection on learning and ensuring diverse views and identities in the space for reflection.
- DNC should normalize having discussions at the beginning of projects to determine what the best way of reporting to be for the particular project and partners. We should be upfront early on about what is working and not working.

SOGIESC Inclusion in the Peace and Security Agenda

Given the development of Canada's new five-year Women, Peace and Security Action Plan, DNC and its members should engage with this plan and find out to what extent it will support SOGIESC efforts at GAC and beyond, including inclusion of SOGIESC and LGBTIQ issues in future funding programs related to peace and security.





IDEA FROM THE FLOOR:

Establish relationships with Canadian media and journalists interested in global SOGIESC issues and human rights. Support the development of better storytelling on these issues by engaging global south and east advocates directly.



Assessment and Next Steps

Dignity Network Canada conducted a post-event survey and asked a number of evaluation questions:

What participants liked most about the event:

- Opportunities to connect with human rights defenders from around the world
- The overall 'vibe' of the event was inclusive, energetic and positive
- Diversity of topics and issues discussed in a respectful and engaging format
- Involvement of both civil society and government colleagues

What participants wanted to be improved:

- Better quality food, in particular, a better breakfast
- Agenda perhaps too crowded with content and very long days
- More spaces to just socialize and talk, particularly over meals
- More clarity, particularly on the day dedicated to DNC network business, about the goals and structure of sessions

We also polled participants on when they would like to come together again. The next DNC roundtable meetings will be held in April or May 2024 and likely will be three days instead of two. We encourage all of you who are interested to begin thinking about attending.

DNC's staff and Board of Directors will be looking at the outcomes of this event and using it to inform our work over the coming year. DNC will be launching a new strategic planning process in the coming year and more information will be provided at the next roundtable in 2024.



Opening Reception sponsored by the Embassies of the Netherlands, Mexico and Germany



Closing Reception sponsored by Rainbow Railroad







Thank you to our member organizations



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