

## A day in the life of ... Leigh Ann (Gender DynamiX Outreach Intern)

Gender DynamiX has a large membership base with new members joining all the time. There is a great need for information about the various aspects of being a transgender, from transitioning to new ID documents. Almost the first person a constituent gets to deal with at Gender DynamiX is the Outreach Officer. Leigh Ann van der Merwe (and she assures me that she is no relation of that famously notorious guy who is the butt of so many South African jokes) is the Outreach Intern at Gender DynamiX.

There is no typical day on Leigh Ann's calendar because no day is the same as the next, except that they are all busy. Decisions have to be made, strategies have to be planned and people have to be listened to. This month we look at a day in the life of Leigh Ann.

Any day in her life is always very busy. It starts off with a stressful taxi trip to work. Once she hits the office it is all systems go, go, go! Robert Hamblin, Gender DynamiX Advocacy Manager, wants to talk to her about a report they are writing together and Charl Marais, Newsletter Editor, wants to discuss an article about a day in the life of Leigh Ann, the outreach intern at Gender DynamiX.

She has just about settled in at her desk at around 9am when her cell phone beeps with a please call back request or a text message from of the organisation's many constituents. The request is always rather urgent. While tending to that, she has to lend her ear to the organisation's office administrator about the logistical arrangements for an outreach that is happening in the Eastern Cape. This is followed by a brief session with director, Liesl Theron (Mama Trans), who wants a report back on the status of her current projects.

This is followed by a reminder of tomorrow's meeting, a workshop about human trafficking, and sex work and the links between the two, a very interesting meeting. Just before lunch a quick glance at new emails and responding to them. Many of those emails pertain to reasonably urgent matters. Some of those which are not so urgent she can flag for processing at a later stage.

After a nice meal in the canteen at lunch time and once again refreshed, it is back to work, work and more work. The second part of the day is taken up by some practical things to sort out like working on a budget for the Eastern Cape outreach effort. That is usually followed by another short meeting with Robert about current matters at the Department of Home Affairs regarding the status of applications for new ID documents. All of this is clouded with little matters like passports and a visa for the upcoming first leg of the South Africa/Uganda exchange program that will take place in Uganda during May.

A typical work day ends with a little peek of what's happening on Facebook and then making her way home for some more work followed by a well-deserved rest. It is amazing how the day just seems to have passed by so quickly. There just doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day to do everything that needs to be done. And just before succumbing to her beauty sleep, Leigh Ann is already planning the next day at the office and with a sigh, she gives a dainty little yawn, closes her eyes and joins the fairies in dreamland.