

Word from the founder

Word from the Founder and CEO of Gender DynamiX, Liesl Theron (November 2006)

Reflecting on the year that has passed, I realise how much has been done! Gender DynamiX participated at Cape Town Pride, for the first time in February 2006, by presenting the Book Fair. By doing that transgenderism was highlighted at a Pride event for the very first time in South African history. This was also a first for the continent. Shortly after that, at the end of March and beginning of April, Gender DynamiX “made history yet again” at Out In Africa film festival. And actually it was the first time in South Africa that transgender people assembled under one roof, openly discussing trans-related topics. That was previously never done in a public arena in the documented trans history in South Africa. It was the 12th annual gay and lesbian film festival and the theme for 2006 was Gender Identity. Both in Johannesburg and Cape Town Gender DynamiX facilitated the panel discussions.

In February Gender DynamiX was contacted by the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) to assist with a transgender person from Burundi who wanted to apply for refugee status in South Africa to secure her life. This process started in May 2006.

The membership of T-junction grew to be a bit more than double the amount of people when starting off. As from June 2006 Gender DynamiX has an official office, sharing with another NGO, IAM in Woodstock.

July was a month to remember: the first Management Committee (Board) meeting took place. A press release was sent out to announce this “formal opening” of the organisation as a Non-profit. Due to the press release, Gender DynamiX received quite a fair amount of media coverage. Cape Argus, Mail & Guardian and SAFM to name a few, including a few national and international websites, placed the article and linked Gender DynamiX: ILGA, IGLHRC, BTM, Gmax, and Mamba Online. Gender DynamiX were contacted by LGBT organisations from Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya to do future work together.

In August a “breakthrough” was made when Gender DynamiX was successfully assisted by First National Bank, to open a bank account for a transgender refugee who would, under the given circumstances not be able to comply with FICA standards. The press release that followed, ensured more media coverage for Gender DynamiX, including a report on GenderFM, a radio program broadcasted in the US.

The NPO registration number was allocated in September, which made Gender DynamiX a formal, legal entity. A bank account was opened with FNB.

During the course of the year Gender DynamiX did a presentation at an open day at University of Western Cape, a group discussion at University of Stellenbosch and presented a gender diversity lecture to under- and graduate education students at University of Cape Town.

The website received a serious face lift, and the implementation of phase 2 of the moderator - ship on the website will commence mid-November.

Some partnerships were formed with LGBT organisations on various levels of commitment and collaboration. OIA and Gender DynamiX collaborated in 2006 with the film festival and already decided to continue this with the 2007 festival. GALA and Gender DynamiX are working together on the oral history project. OUT Wellbeing, an organisation in Pretoria, and Gender DynamiX, entered a one year contract. Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) and Freedom and Roam in Uganda are joining forces with Gender DynamiX to do continuous training and development regarding images of transgenderism in an African context.