



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

UN Free & Equal
Campaign



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



FREE & EQUAL
UNITED NATIONS FOR LGBTQ+ EQUALITY

INTRODUCTION

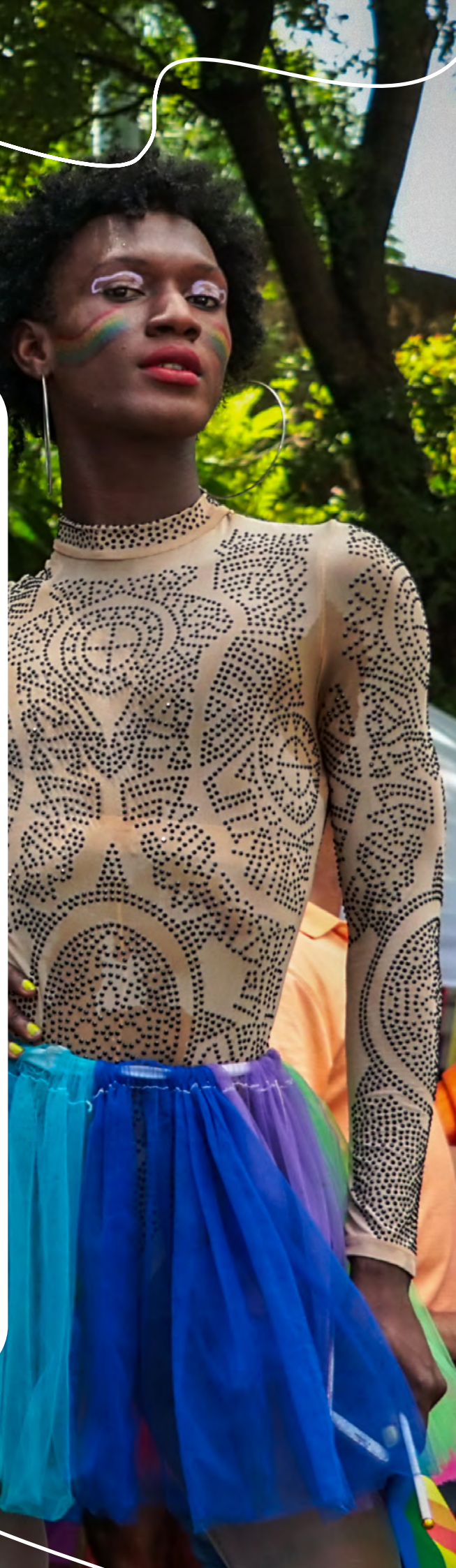
Since our launch in Cape Town, South Africa, in July 2013, the UN Free & Equal campaign has increased awareness of and advocated for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) people. At the global level, we have produced hundreds of videos, factsheets, stories and shareable images that have reached hundreds of millions of people through social and traditional media, solidifying our position as a leading resource on the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people. In 2024, we expanded with new national campaigns in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean and Bhutan, bringing our total to over 40 national campaigns worldwide to date.

On the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, we partnered with singer Mayra Andrade, influencer Connor Franta, actress Celina Jaitly and singer Daniela Mercury to launch our new social media campaign #AlliesInAction. Through their personal stories, the campaign showcased what it means to be an ally to LGBTIQ+ family members, friends or colleagues and how to support them through everyday challenges. We maintained a consistent social media presence throughout the year, producing a steady flow of content advocating for the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people, generating over 50 million views, likes, shares and other interactions. On Human Rights Day, we amplified the voices of LGBTIQ+ activists from all over the world who shared messages of hope for our collective future.



While our global campaigns spread messages of equality to audiences across the globe, our national campaigns take action on the ground through localised initiatives tailored to each country's unique context. In 2024, we implemented 16 national campaigns, including in Albania, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Bhutan, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Liberia, Mongolia, Nepal, Panama, Peru, Serbia, Timor-Leste, Venezuela and Viet Nam. These campaigns were implemented in close collaboration with local decision-makers, civil society and community representatives, ensuring that they aligned with national discussions and contexts. We advocated for workplace inclusion in the Dominican Republic, Peru, Serbia and Venezuela. Together with partners, we built the capacity of civil servants, journalists and educators in Albania, Barbados, Liberia, Nepal and Timor-Leste. In Brazil, Panama and Viet Nam, we stood shoulder to shoulder with local communities to advocate and strengthen institutional support for trans equality.

The UN Free & Equal campaign is led by the United Nations Human Rights Office with support from UN partners, including UN Resident Coordinators, UN country teams, national and municipal governments and civil society organisations. Key UN collaborators in 2024 include the UN Department for Global Communications, FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, UNDRR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNIC, UNICEF, UNLIREC, UNOPS, UNV, UN Women, UNAIDS, WFP, WHO and others, ensuring comprehensive support for our initiatives at the national and global levels.



WHAT WE DO

- Support UN-system public advocacy on the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people at the national and global level.
- Contribute to increasing public support for diverse societies that are inclusive of LGBTIQ+ people, and for stronger legal protections against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and sex characteristics.

IN 2024 WE:

- Implemented national-level campaigns advocating for LGBTIQ+ equality in Albania, Barbados, Bhutan, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Democratic Republic of the Congo, The Dominican Republic, Liberia, Mongolia, Nepal, Panama, Peru, Serbia, Timor-Leste, Venezuela and Viet Nam.
- Celebrated the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia with the [#AlliesInAction](#) campaign featuring singers, actors and influencers from around the world. The campaign gathered 22 million video views and 20.5 million shares, likes, views and other post engagements.
- Maintained a consistent social media presence throughout the year by producing a steady flow of content advocating for the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people, generating 49.8 million video views and over 50 million shares, likes, views and other post engagements.
- Marked Human Rights Day together with activists from around the world with messages of hope for the future.
- Published new web content such as stories from our national campaigns and a factsheet about intersex people with recommendations for governments and allies.



UN FREE & EQUAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA



231K+
followers



420M+
impressions



49.8M+
video views



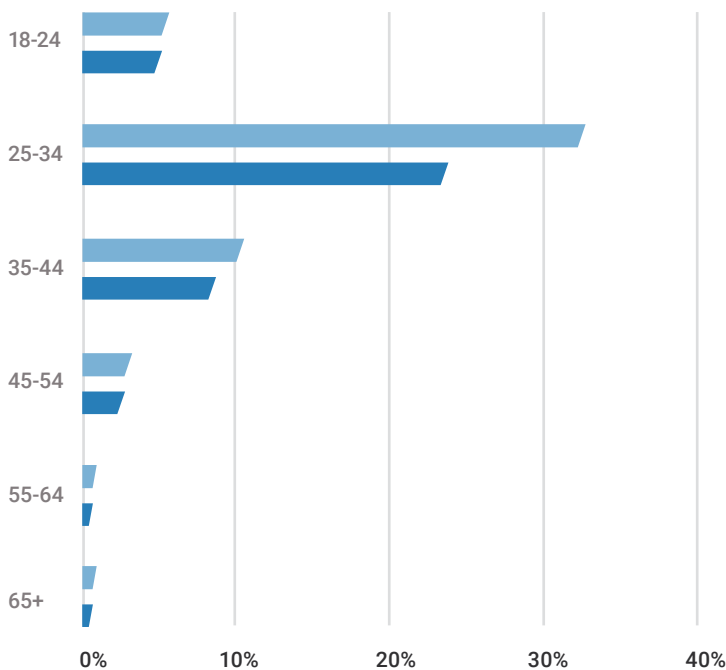
50.1M+
engagements



FACEBOOK

 **122.5K+**
followers

Age & Gender



Top countries:

India	12.3%
Nepal	9%
United States	6.2%
Cambodia	6.1%
Indonesia	5.9%

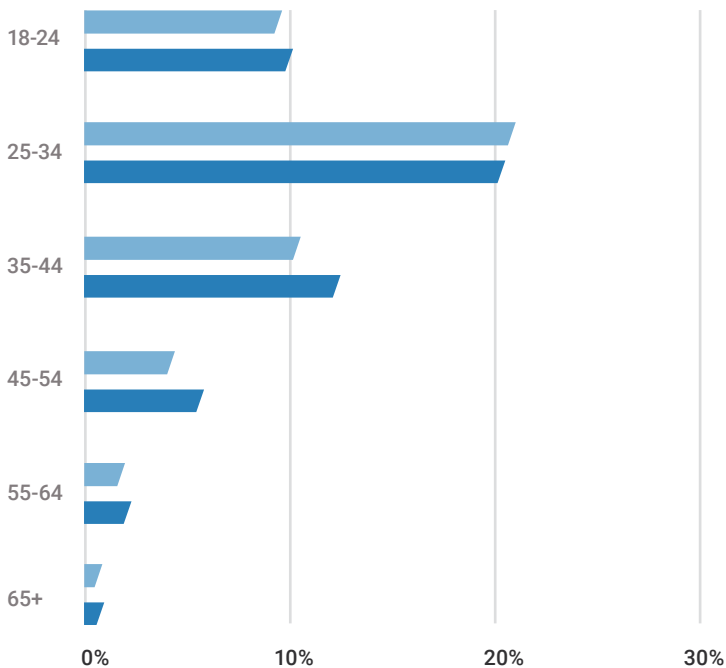
 **43.6%**
Women

 **56.4%**
Men

INSTAGRAM

 **40.1K+**
followers

Age & Gender



Top countries:

India	12.4%
United States	12.1%
Brazil	8.2%
United Kingdom	2.8%
Venezuela	2.8%

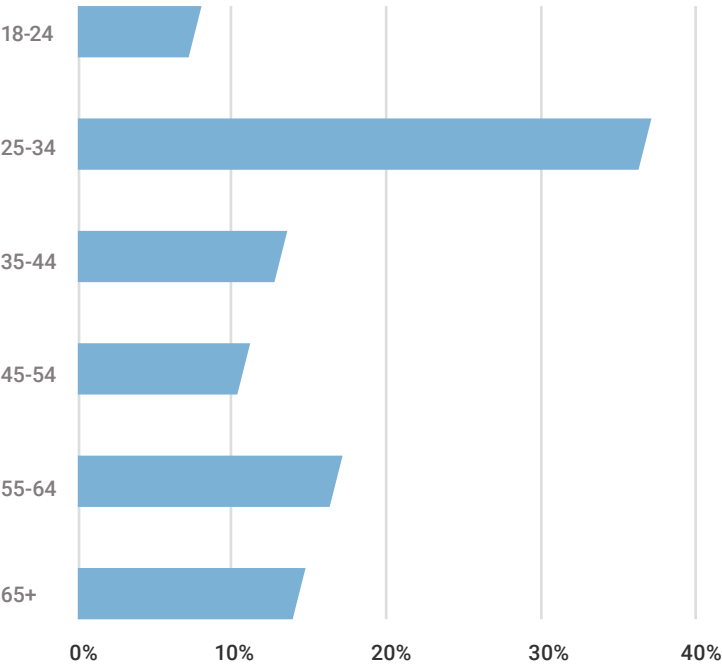
 **52.1%**
Women

 **47.9%**
Men

X


 **68.4K+**
followers


Age & Gender



Top countries:

India	1.96k
United Kingdom	1.88k
United States	1.84k
Canada	666
Argentina	333

 **36.2%**
Women 7.85k

 **63.8%**
Men 13.8k

TOP USERS

WHO SHARED OUR CONTENT:

Followers:

1.		@un	16.5M
2.		@connorfranta	8.33M
3.		@unhumanrights	4.15M
4.		@moria_casan	3.19M
5.		@refugees	2.85M
6.		@un_women	2.29M
7.		@onu_es	2.09M

The background is a vibrant collage of various colors and textures. It includes a blue textured area at the top left, a red dotted area at the top right, a yellow area with white wavy lines on the middle left, a solid green area in the middle right, a yellow grid pattern at the bottom middle, and a green textured area at the bottom right. White wavy lines are also present, separating some of the colored sections.

GLOBAL CAMPAIGNS



IDAHOBIT: #ALLIESINACTION

To celebrate International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) and Pride, UN Free & Equal launched a new social media campaign under the hashtag **#AlliesInAction**. The campaign featured three of our most beloved celebrity partners and explored what LGBTIQ+ allyship is, why it is important, and what allies can do to support LGBTIQ+ people in their lives.

The campaign featured three headline videos, each featuring personal stories of how people can act as allies — within their families, among friends and in their local communities. From Brazil, Márcia Verçosa Mercury shared how love motivated her to support her lesbian mothers, Daniela and Malu. Indian actress and former Miss India, Celina Jaitly, spoke about the challenges and rewards of standing up for her LGBTIQ+ friends Ashish and Inder to whom her friendship and advocacy meant the world. Cabo Verdean singer Mayra Andrade highlighted the powerful role allies play in building more inclusive communities where everyone, including LGBTIQ+ people with disabilities, can just be themselves, in her video with Patricia Soares, a deaf trans woman and activist.

Results:



22M+
video views



20.5M+
engagements



87M+
impressions

#ALLIESINACTION

INTERVIEWS

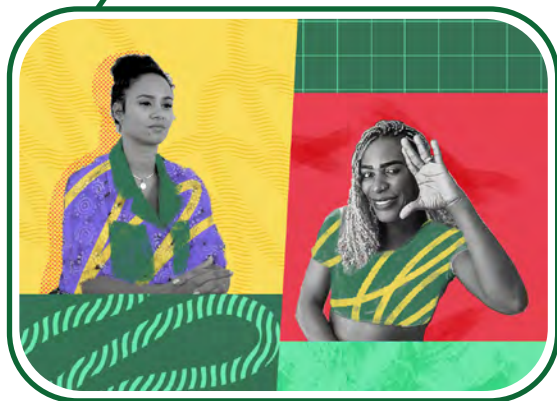


Celina Jaitly: “Each ally for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people can positively impact someone’s entire life. Wouldn’t you want to be that person?”

Indian actress and activist Celina Jaitly shared her experiences of standing up for her LGBTIQ+ friends and the importance of allies in the march for an equal world. In this piece, she emphasised how even one supportive person could create a meaningful and lasting impact on someone’s life.

“We are a Rainbow Family” — pop icon Daniela Mercury and her daughter Márcia Verçosa Mercury talk about the love, strength, and support it takes to be an ally

In this inspiring story, Márcia Verçosa Mercury from Brazil opened up about her journey of supporting her lesbian mothers, Daniela and Malu. Márcia reflected on how love and acceptance shaped her family and strengthened their bonds, offering a powerful message about the importance of standing by loved ones.



Mayra Andrade: “Being an ally is demonstrated through the choices we make daily”

Cabo Verdean singer Mayra Andrade discussed how being an ally was not about grand gestures but about the everyday choices we make to stand up against discrimination. In this story, she emphasised the importance of building bridges between people to strengthen communities and create lasting change.

The campaign also featured other social media content with LGBTQ+ human rights messages including short videos, interviews and a landing page with advice for potential allies.

The assets were published in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. During the Pride season in June, popular influencer Connor Franta joined the campaign with a heartfelt video describing his own coming out experience and how important allyship was to him during that period.

The campaign achieved great results, gathering **87 million impressions, 22 million video views and 20.5 million post engagements, such as shares, likes and views**. Campaign assets were widely shared on other United Nations social media channels.

The main campaign was accompanied by an additional set of social media assets with human rights messaging created in partnership with the UN Department for Global Communications, which were widely shared on social media across the UN system on the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia and during Pride month.





HUMAN RIGHTS DAY CELEBRATION

“Our Rights, Our Future. Right Now,” was the theme for this year’s Human Rights Day campaign from UN Human Rights, raising awareness of how human rights impact everyone daily, challenging negative stereotypes and encouraging people to act in support of human rights.

UN Free & Equal contributed to the campaign by highlighting the voices of LGBTIQ+ activists with 10 quote cards and an Instagram story featuring video interviews published around Human Rights Day. LGBTIQ+ human rights defenders from different parts of the world shared their visions of change over the next five years. The campaign aimed to inspire allies to act for LGBTIQ+ equality while highlighting the ongoing challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ communities in different parts of the world. Activists spoke about a future where young people could live openly and safely, where education helped promote understanding and equality, where laws protected everyone and where online hate speech and so-called conversion therapies are a thing of the past.



UN FREE & EQUAL STORIES AND FACTSHEETS

Marching Towards Equality in Mongolia

In Mongolia, LGBTIQ+ activists are making strides towards greater equality despite ongoing challenges. We highlight the growing visibility of the LGBTIQ+ community and the determination of local activists working to create a more inclusive society. Their efforts are paving the way for lasting change and inspiring others to join the human rights movement.



Learn the Facts About Intersex People

Intersex people face unique challenges, including discrimination, stigma and harmful medical practices. The new UN Free & Equal factsheet sheds light on the human rights issues affecting the lives of intersex people and recommends solutions to these challenges.

A close-up photograph of a man with dreadlocks, a pink bandana, and a nose ring, smiling and holding a microphone. A rainbow flag is draped over his shoulder. The background is blurred, showing a red car. The text "NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS" is overlaid on a white rounded rectangle in the lower-left corner.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

ALBANIA

Through a strategic blend of social media outreach, training sessions and partnerships with key stakeholders, the UN Free & Equal campaign in Albania made real strides towards advancing LGBTIQ+ equality, successfully raising awareness and fostering institutional support in the justice sector.

A highlight of the year was a social media campaign featuring influencer and journalist Aulona Musta that reached more than 250,000 people, with messaging challenging societal prejudices and promoting social inclusion. It was shared across UNDP Albania's social media platforms, including X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

In parallel, the campaign prioritised education and capacity building by conducting training sessions for 150 lawyers, prosecutors, judges, social service staff and other professionals from the justice sector. These sessions provided participants with essential knowledge on inclusive practices and correct terminology, reinforcing institutional support for the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people. Notably, a specialised training session with a bank was added to the programme, expanding outreach to the private sector.

The impact of these trainings was measurable, as post-workshop survey findings revealed that 68 percent of participants demonstrated an improved understanding of key equality concepts, ethical practices for working with LGBTIQ+ people and a heightened interest in continued training on these topics.



Arta Mandro, a Member of the High Prosecutorial Council and staff at the School of Magistrates, said:

"Trainings like these not only provide essential knowledge but also contribute to shifting attitudes and eliminating discriminatory behaviours, an imperative for all legal practitioners committed to justice and equality."

The campaign also supported artistic initiatives like the Queer Film Festival to boost awareness of and engagement with LGBTIQ+ issues. With 200 attendees at in-person screenings and an additional 150,000 people attending via social media, the festival provided a powerful platform for fostering empathy and broadening perspectives. Audience feedback underscored the festival's impact, with one mother sharing: *"As someone who didn't know much about the LGBTIQ+ community, this event was eye-opening. I walked away with greater understanding and respect."*

Through these efforts, the campaign has laid a strong foundation for continued progress, creating meaningful dialogue, and advancing the equal rights of LGBTIQ+ people in Albania.

"As someone who didn't know much about the LGBTIQ+ community, this event was eye-opening. I walked away with greater understanding and respect."

A mother attending the Queer Film Festival in Tirana



BARBADOS AND THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

The UN Free & Equal campaign in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean successfully engaged journalists and media management from across the subregion to deepen their understanding of the challenges lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people face, their histories and the use of respectful language.

A key objective was not only to sensitise media professionals to these issues but also to learn from them about the challenges they themselves face and areas where future UN support might be needed.

This goal was achieved through a high-level dialogue, “The Power of Media in Promoting Fairer Societies”. The event brought together 41 participants, including representatives from 10 UN agencies, 10 media professionals from Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Commissioner of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Roberta Clarke, the Media Institute of the Caribbean, academia, civil society organisations and the UN Youth Advisory Group.

The dialogue, conducted under Chatham House Rules – which allow information to be shared without revealing who said it – facilitated candid and open discussions and allowed participants to contribute without fear of potential backlash.

The event’s impact was evident through positive feedback from participants, effective networking and engagement among media professionals, UN agencies and civil society.



BHUTAN

The UN Free & Equal campaign in Bhutan focused on advancing support for LGBTIQ+ equality among policymakers, parliamentarians and key institutions such as the Royal Court of Justice, the Office of the Attorney General and the Cabinet Secretariat during 2024. Through targeted advocacy, training sessions and workshops, the campaign contributed to policy discussions, raised awareness and fostered a more inclusive environment for LGBTIQ+ people in the country. The campaign succeeded in securing direct dialogue between the LGBTIQ+ community and parliamentarians for the first time in Bhutan's history. This milestone strengthened future advocacy efforts and paved the way for more inclusive policies.

The first of two workshops organised by the campaign brought together LGBTIQ+ community members, representatives from the UN and from the National Commission for Women and Children. The second consultation brought together LGBTIQ+ members, parliamentarians and government officials, including representatives from the Royal Court of Justice, the Office of the Attorney General and the Cabinet Secretariat. Discussions focused on policy reforms and solutions outlined in the revised National Gender Equality Policy, with parliamentarians committing to supporting LGBTIQ+ equality through legislative measures.

The conversation between members of parliament about the National Gender Equality Policy and the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people had a significant impact, with 81.3 percent of participating parliamentarians expressing strong support for LGBTIQ+ equality, demonstrating a major shift in political discourse. The understanding of human rights of LGBTIQ+ people among policymakers also increased by an average of 60 percent, signalling growing support for equality.



Social stigma, discrimination, healthcare access and legal inequalities were also issues discussed with policymakers. As a result of the awareness and support raising efforts, survey data showed a 12.5 percent increase in policymakers recognising social stigma as a serious issue and a 19 percent rise in awareness of systemic discrimination. Awareness of healthcare disparities affecting transgender people increased from 37.5 percent to 68.8 percent, while recognition of legal inequalities rose from 25 percent to 56.3 percent. While there was some acknowledgment of policy progress, 37.5 percent of policymakers still felt that existing laws do not adequately protect the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people, indicating the need for stronger legal frameworks. Policymakers also demonstrated improved comfort levels in discussing LGBTIQ+ issues in professional settings, with those feeling “very comfortable” increasing from 56.3 percent to 75 percent. Similarly, those who were “not comfortable at all” dropped from 12.4 percent to 0 percent, marking an important shift within political and institutional spaces.

The UN Free & Equal campaign in Bhutan also fostered a notable shift in attitudes towards transgender people. Support for equal opportunities in education, healthcare and employment remained high, with 87.5 percent of policymakers strongly agreeing. Resistance to transgender individuals working with children diminished and negative perceptions of transgender people saw a significant decrease from 62.5 percent to 31.3 percent post-training.

Beyond shifting perceptions, the campaign also worked to amplify transgender voices and experiences. This included producing and publishing a personal story about the life journey of Ugyen, a Bhutanese transgender woman and human rights defender, contributing to increased transgender visibility in the country. As she said: “My country is small, but it has big dreams and ambitions. One day, everyone will be equal and happy.”

“My country is small,
but it has big dreams
and ambitions. One
day, everyone will be
equal and happy.”

*Ugyen, transgender woman
and human rights defender*

BRAZIL

The UN Free & Equal team in Brazil made important strides in 2024, fostering partnerships with civil society and advocating for LGBTIQ+ equality through strategic social media campaigns and advocacy efforts.

A major achievement was the strengthening of the campaign's social media presence, leading to a 30 percent increase in visibility compared to the previous year, reaching 430,000 Instagram feeds through UN Brazil's Instagram channel. This success was driven by content marking key LGBTIQ+ national and international dates, translated speeches from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and original features such as personal stories featuring intersex and Afro-Brazilian activists.

During the floods in southern Brazil, the campaign collaborated with the Brazilian government and civil society organisations in Porto Alegre to support LGBTIQ+ people displaced by the crisis. The Free & Equal team helped make sure that community members were not excluded from essential services and recovery efforts by advocating for the development of referral pathways for services such as healthcare and mental health support. The team also visited shelters to assess the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ people, identified human rights violations and pushed for stronger protections in shelter management, such as inclusive registration processes and equal access to shelter facilities. These efforts aimed to ensure LGBTIQ+ people impacted by the floods were treated with dignity and appropriately included in the humanitarian response.

Collaboration with civil society was central to the campaign's success. The Free & Equal campaign in Brazil engaged with the Brazilian bisexual, transgender and intersex communities and organised two training sessions for activists, focusing on improving their human rights advocacy skills. In May 2024, the campaign also hosted an event in Rio de Janeiro that brought together 10 civil society organisations, UN agencies, the World Bank and the Ministry of Human Rights to build a strategy for data collection on LGBTIQ+ population in Brazil, enhancing capacities for a human rights-based approach to data.



CABO VERDE

The UN Free & Equal campaign in Cabo Verde kept LGBTIQ+ equality on the political agenda through raising awareness efforts, advocacy and building partnerships throughout 2024.

A major achievement was the establishment of partnerships with journalists and the Sotavento Chamber of Commerce, encouraging responsible reporting and inclusive hiring practices. These partnerships laid the foundation for more accurate media representation and better workplace opportunities for LGBTIQ+ people. Notably, an LGBTIQ+ category was introduced in the National Journalism Prize, marking an important step towards improving media coverage of these issues.

Community events also played a central role in the 2024 campaign. During Pride season, the UN Free & Equal team helped organise an art exhibition titled “Free to Be Who I Am”, which showcased LGBTIQ+ artists through music, poetry and photography throughout June. It provided a platform for self-expression and open dialogue, bringing together 100 attendees, including the Minister of Family and Social Inclusion, the UN Resident Coordinator and representatives from the UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA Joint Office.

In December, Free & Equal in Cabo Verde organised the yearly Human Rights Concert, featuring renowned artists such as Katty Dias, Fattu Djakité, Djam Negin and Trakinuz, who amplified messages of solidarity and equality, drawing a diverse audience of more than 1,000 people. This included government representatives such as the Minister of Family, Inclusion, and Social Development, members of the national parliament and representatives from the Institute for Gender Equality and the National Human Rights Commission.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The UN Free & Equal campaign in the Democratic Republic of the Congo played an important role in advocating for LGBTIQ+ equality in 2024, despite a challenging political and social landscape. Through a combination of awareness campaigns, training programmes and advocacy efforts, the campaign strengthened visibility, legal support and human rights protections for LGBTIQ+ people.

The campaign reached 110,000 people on TikTok, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, online media and SMS platforms, with articles, videos and social media posts increasing awareness about equal rights, social inclusion and fair treatment of LGBTIQ+ people in Kinshasa and Kongo Central.

The team organised a training programme for 12 investigative journalists in North Kivu which advanced ethical reporting on LGBTIQ+ issues. Journalists were equipped with tools to document discrimination, analyse real-life impacts and produce inclusive storytelling. Some media outlets, such as *Congo Croissance*, committed to countering negative stereotypes and advocating for LGBTIQ+ equality through responsible journalism.

The campaign also built the capacity of human rights defenders, training 53 activists in Kinshasa on social inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people. These sessions, supported by UNDP, the Ministry of Human Rights and the National Human Rights Commission, empowered defenders to integrate LGBTIQ+ issues into their advocacy work. Following the training, a series of articles about LGBTIQ+ equality were published on major platforms such as *Akwikam*, a network of 216 scholars from various universities, and the Association of Scientific Trade Unionists of the University of Kinshasa (*Association des Syndicalistes Scientifiques de l'Université de Kinshasa*). The articles sparked debate among students, researchers and legal scholars and helped foster a more evidence-based understanding of diversity and equality.



Another key achievement was a capacity building event for 35 government officials from the Ministry of Human Rights and the National Human Rights Commission on the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people and access to public services. By the end of the training, there was a notable shift towards inclusive language and a commitment to upholding human rights within government policies and services. Notably, the participants expressed a clearer distinction between their personal values and beliefs and the protection of LGBTIQ+ people, recognising it as a matter of human rights.

The campaign also provided critical legal and psychological support for victims of violence and discrimination. Fifteen LGBTIQ+ individuals received assistance, including legal and psychosocial aid and access to justice.

The campaign also laid the foundation for future coordinated efforts, including the development of a national advocacy plan for 2025. Discussions with human rights and health organisations helped create strategies to deconstruct harmful narratives, advocate inclusivity and advance legal protections for LGBTIQ+ people.

The campaign provided critical legal and psychological support for victims of violence and discrimination. Fifteen LGBTIQ+ individuals received assistance, including legal and psychosocial aid and access to justice.



THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

In 2024, the UN Free & Equal campaign in the Dominican Republic reached more people than expected with its advocacy efforts, increasing awareness and support for LGBTIQ+ equality and inclusion. Through social media campaigns, public events and trainings, the campaign was able to connect with a wide audience and encourage meaningful discussions.

The campaign recorded an increase in public support for LGBTIQ+ equality through social media with engagement growing far beyond expectations. Campaign content garnered 90,000 views in 2024 — nearly tripling its views from the previous year. This success was attributed to a shift towards video content featuring personal stories, which resonated more deeply with audiences. Additionally, collaborations with influencers from the LGBTIQ+ community, civil society organisations, the private sector and UN agencies, amplified the campaign's reach and engagement.

Beyond digital outreach, the campaign participated in and showed support for key community events, including the Santo Domingo Pride Parade. Pride brought together members of the LGBTIQ+ community, university students and allied organisations, with strong support from UNDP, UNAIDS and corporate sponsors. The campaign also supported a photo exhibition on the International Transgender Day of Remembrance in November. The initiative included a community-led exhibition featuring powerful visual narratives of transgender lives. The event, part of the regional “Being LGBTI in the Caribbean” project, was supported by UNDP and civil society organisations.



The reach of these events was further extended thanks to dedicated videos disseminated on social media, with extensive press coverage in major news outlets including *Diario Libre*, *Hoy*, *Acento*, *Proceso*, *El Testigo* and *El Nuevo Diario*, further enhancing their impact.

The campaign also prioritised building awareness and capacity among journalists, opinion leaders and influencers to prevent misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, and improve coverage of LGBTIQ+-related issues.

Three specialised workshops were organised with support from the Dominican College of Journalists: first for LGBTIQ+ spokespeople during Pride Month, another for advertisers and a third for social media influencers. In all, 70 participants took part in the three workshops. Additionally, four more workshops on the same topic were organised by the United Nations interagency communication group targeting journalists, UN staff and civil society, expanding the reach to over 200 participants. These workshops also included findings from social media listening studies from previous years that analysed hate speech, including against LGBTIQ+ people, and its impact.

Building on this experience, UN agencies, funds and programmes will launch a human rights-focused communication diploma course in partnership with the Ibero-American University in the fall of 2025.

The campaign prioritised building awareness and capacity among journalists, opinion leaders and influencers to prevent misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, and improve coverage of LGBTIQ+-related issues.

LIBERIA

The UN Free & Equal campaign in Liberia has continued to make meaningful progress in advocating for LGBTIQ+ equality through targeted engagement, training and capacity-building initiatives. These efforts have strengthened community awareness, enhanced institutional support and provided safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people.

A key initiative was the joint training with the Ministry of Justice, the National AIDS Commission of Liberia and civil society organisations. This effort sought to raise awareness about LGBTIQ+ human rights concerns among influential community members, including 35 community leaders, police officers, teachers, medical practitioners and religious leaders. It contributed to creating safe spaces for the community, including in Monrovia. The initiative highlighted a growing willingness to support LGBTIQ+ equality, with calls for further advocacy and training. Participants expressed gratitude for the insights shared and emphasised the need for broader outreach. They encouraged expanding the initiative to include training sessions across multiple communities, believing that increased awareness and education would play a crucial role in reducing violence against LGBTIQ+ people in Liberia.

Training participants expressed gratitude for the insights shared and emphasised the need for broader outreach.



The national campaign also facilitated a training workshop for the National AIDS Commission. The session, which brought together 34 commission staff members, commissioners and civil society representatives, enhanced participants' understanding of human rights-based approaches in addressing HIV/AIDS. The training provided tools to mitigate stigma and discrimination against population groups that are particularly vulnerable to HIV, including gay and bisexual men and transgender people. Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to expand their knowledge and strengthen collaborative efforts in advancing human rights and diversity.

In addition, the campaign supported a two-day capacity-building and advocacy dialogue in Ganta Nimba County, which brought together 26 key stakeholders, including civil society representatives and state actors.

The sessions focused on strategic review and analysis of a proposed anti-LGBTIQ+ bill, as well as broader efforts to advocate for human rights. Participants reviewed and adopted a roadmap for sustained engagement to counter discrimination and uphold human rights protections, which includes a plan for engaging government officials, donors, diplomatic missions, religious and traditional leaders and civil society, while also securing legal support for frontline activists.

The campaign also supported civil society in providing psychosocial support to 18 members of the LGBTIQ+ community from four counties. The two-day retreat provided a safe space for participants to process the psychological and social challenges they face daily. Participants highlighted the need for such supportive environments to help them navigate these pressures and build resilience.



MONGOLIA

Stigma, discrimination and social isolation impact the lives of LGBTIQ+ people in Mongolia. In 2024, the UN Free & Equal team in the country supported activists who are working to create change and foster a sense of belonging and worked with journalists to ensure fair reporting on LGBTIQ+ issues.

"One of our proudest achievements is the progress made in building visibility and fostering a sense of community through our Pride marches and Equality Week," said Enkhmaa Enkhbold, Executive Director of the LGBT Centre – Mongolia's first LGBTIQ+ equality group. *"Our activism has inspired a new generation of young LGBTIQ+ activists, who are now equipped to carry forward, ensuring the movement's continued progress."*

Recognising the media's role in shaping public attitudes, the UN Free & Equal campaign in Mongolia organised a special training session for journalists on responsible and sensitive reporting on LGBTIQ+ issues. The training focused on avoiding harmful stereotypes, promoting accurate representation and ensuring comprehensive coverage of LGBTIQ+ topics and events.

After the session, activists shared positive stories about their work and lived experiences with the journalists.

"One of our proudest achievements is the progress made in building visibility and fostering a sense of community through our Pride marches and Equality Week."

*Enkhmaa Enkhbold, Executive
Director of the LGBT Centre*

"Drawing from the international experiences and lessons shared during the training, we strive to illuminate the path towards equality and understanding," said D. Davaadulam, Coordinator of Mongolia's Journalists for Sustainable Development Goals Club.

The campaign also hosted its first-ever event at the UN House focusing on the situation of LGBTIQ+ people in the country. The gathering brought together representatives from LGBTIQ+ civil society organisations, government officials, international organisations, national human rights commissioners and UN staff.

Opened by remarks from the UN Resident Coordinator, the event provided a valuable space for stakeholders to connect, share insights and discuss opportunities for collaboration. It marked a significant step for the UN in strengthening dialogue and coordination around LGBTIQ+ inclusion in Mongolia.



NEPAL

The national UN Free & Equal campaign in Nepal successfully organised two workshops sensitising journalists and building the skills of young LGBTIQ+ aspiring writers in 2024.

The “Shifting Perspectives” workshop brought together 12 journalists, aiming to enhance their knowledge about the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people and ultimately contributing to fair media representation of the community in Nepal. While the country’s constitution provides comprehensive protection against discrimination and allows for recognition of gender identity based on self-determination, LGBTIQ+ people still face exclusion and discrimination, making media sensitisation essential. Niranjana, an educator and community member, led the workshop with interactive discussions that challenged harmful preconceptions and myths. A key outcome was the publication of a post-workshop article on LGBTIQ+ experiences, expanding public discourse beyond the session. Participants expressed interest in further engagement, with suggestions to involve policymakers and support investigative journalism on LGBTIQ+ topics.



The creative writing workshop “A Room of One’s Own” brought together 16 young LGBTIQ+ people for a day of introspection and storytelling. Inspired by a previous writing residency, the workshop encouraged participants to explore personal narratives. This supportive environment fostered self-expression, with participants emphasising the importance of such spaces for queer youth. Testimonials highlighted the workshop’s transformative impact, reinforcing confidence in their creative abilities and a sense of belonging. One of the participants shared her enthusiasm saying: *“I thought the workshop was great in terms of being able to connect with writers. Often writing can feel like a solitary process and lonely. I loved hearing from others and sharing my work.”*

The event received extensive media coverage, further amplifying its significance within the community and helping the voices of young LGBTIQ+ Nepalis reach a wider public, increasing awareness about the importance of fair treatment of LGBTIQ+ people.

“I thought the workshop was great in terms of being able to connect with writers. I loved hearing from others and sharing my work.”

*Participant of workshop
“A Room of One’s Own”*

PANAMA

In 2024, the UN Free & Equal campaign in Panama focused on social media outreach, expanding cooperation with stakeholders, supporting the local transgender community and the Pride march.

Launched in 2020 with Free & Equal's support, the "Sí, Acepto" campaign continued its advocacy efforts for social acceptance of marriage equality in 2024. With 12 reels and other digital assets disseminated on social media between March 2024 and January 2025, the campaign reached more than 150,000 people and generated over 5,000 interactions. The UN Free & Equal campaign also supported the Pride Parade in Panama City, donating 150 t-shirts with LGBTIQ+ equality messaging.

Another key activity was the development of a handbook to assist transgender people in navigating and obtaining legal recognition of their gender identity — including changing their name and gender marker in official identity documents. This resource provides clear, step-by-step instructions and was created in collaboration with civil society organisations advocating for equal rights for the transgender community. The guide and an accompanying campaign video were formally introduced at a capacity-building workshop during the Regional Forum of *Fundación Iguales: Building Freedom*, aimed at advancing transgender people's human rights and access to legal recognition of their gender identity. This initiative also strengthened advocacy for inclusion of transgender people in legislation and public policies, driving systemic change towards greater equality.

In collaboration with UNAIDS and UNDP, the UN Free & Equal campaign in Panama worked with the Ombudsman's Office to bring together civil society organisations forming the National Observatory of LGBTIQ+ People — a network of experts to address key priorities of the LGBTIQ+ community.

With 12 reels and other digital assets, the campaign reached more than 150,000 people and generated over 5,000 interactions.

Through six Observatory meetings and a strategic planning workshop, an informative brochure of priority areas was developed, outlining ten legislative and policy priorities for equal rights for LGBTIQ+ people in Panama. The priorities were formally presented at the National Public Forum where more than 50 stakeholders including public authorities, duty bearers and civil society organisations came together and committed to implementing an inclusive work plan in the coming years. These efforts have laid the groundwork for ongoing advocacy, with a follow-up survey planned in 2025 to assess changes in public opinion on marriage equality and transgender people's human rights.



PERU

Led by the UN Human Rights Technical Mission in the country, the UN Free & Equal campaign in Peru focused on advancing respect for the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people through strategic awareness-raising efforts and advocacy for more inclusive workplaces. By engaging key stakeholders and building partnerships, the campaign contributed to a broader movement for equality and fair treatment of LGBTIQ+ people in Peru.

To mark the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) on 17 May, the campaign organised an event in collaboration with the international cooperation working group for gender equality, comprised of 16 UN agencies, 12 Member States and seven international organisations. Hosted by the Embassy of the Netherlands, the event brought together over 60 representatives from UN agencies, civil society organisations, embassies, the corporate sector and the Peruvian Congress. Discussions focused on challenges and opportunities for advancing LGBTIQ+ people's human rights and laying the groundwork for deeper engagement with the corporate sector.

The campaign also led the UN Country Team's engagement with the LGBTIQ+ Pride March in Lima, mobilising more than 200 staff members from 20 different agencies to take part.

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The march attracted more than 300,000 attendees in a powerful demonstration of solidarity. UN Human Rights' Head of Mission in Peru, Jane Anttila, addressed the crowd, emphasising the importance of human rights protections and inclusion. The campaign's visibility was further amplified through social media engagement, with content related to IDAHOBIT and the Pride March reaching thousands of views and interactions.

The campaign also worked on advancing workplace inclusion for LGBTIQ+ people and developed a draft toolkit designed to help companies create safe and inclusive workplace environments.

This initiative involved extensive research and hosting three working group sessions with over 40 participants from government entities, civil society and the corporate sector.

As a result of these efforts, the campaign in Peru expanded its network of ally organisations, engaging eight government institutions, nine civil society groups and 14 companies advocating for workplace inclusion.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion expressed interest in further collaboration, requesting technical assistance to integrate human rights protections for LGBTIQ+ people into national labour policies. Furthermore, UN Human Rights was invited to join Pride Connection Peru, a network of more than 40 organisations committed to fostering equality and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in the workplace.



SERBIA

In 2024, the UN Free & Equal campaign in Serbia focused on advocating for inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in the workplace and strengthening regional cooperation. The campaign engaged businesses, civil society and international organisations to increase support for equal rights and fair treatment of LGBTIQ+ people in the country.

Building on several years of advocacy efforts for workplace inclusion, the campaign contributed expert advice to a collaborative research effort supported by four major companies, with a particular focus on applying the [UN Standards of Conduct for Business](#) in addressing discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. The resulting research paper highlights the economic benefits of LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace. Drawing from stakeholder surveys and interviews with business leaders, multilateral agencies and civil society representatives, the study provides both qualitative and quantitative data on the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ people in the country. It examines the economic impact of exclusion and employment disparities, while also offering concrete recommendations for companies seeking to foster a more inclusive work environment.

Amid growing resistance to equal rights and gender diversity in the Western Balkans, regional collaboration was an important focus area for Free & Equal in Serbia. The campaign helped organise a conference aimed at strengthening cooperation among LGBTIQ+ women human rights defenders. The event brought together over 50 regional experts on gender equality and the rights of LGBTIQ+ people, leading to the development of a strategy for collective action. As part of the conference, an exhibition showcasing nearly 30 years of powerful moments from LGBTIQ+ women's gatherings across the region was also held, attracting over 450 visitors.

The campaign engaged businesses, civil society and international organisations to increase support for equal rights and fair treatment of LGBTIQ+ people in the country.

As in previous years, the campaign also supported the Pride March in Belgrade. Led by the Human Rights Adviser, the UN country team facilitated coordination meetings with international organisations, donors and partners to ensure a well-organised and impactful event.

Thousands of Pride-goers marched through central Belgrade and took part in a variety of activities, including live theatre performances and panels, celebrating diversity and advocating for LGBTIQ+ equality. The campaign also helped organise the Human Rights Talks, an innovative event within Belgrade Pride Week, featuring discussions with prominent human rights defenders, activists and representatives of groups who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in the region. The team also distributed promotional materials for other Pride Week activities.

The UN Free & Equal campaign in Serbia also advocated for LGBTIQ+ equality on social media throughout the year, with four targeted social media campaigns reaching over 45,000 people with human rights messaging.



TIMOR-LESTE

The UN Free & Equal campaign in Timor-Leste advocated for equality and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people throughout 2024, implementing awareness campaigns, trainings and public events to foster greater acceptance and respect.

From May to November, the campaign organised a series of one-day workshops on “Inclusive Schools – Raising Awareness on the Rights of LGBTIQ+ Students in Timor-Leste”. The workshops engaged students and educators from various institutions, including General High Schools in Dili, Bobonaro, and Liquica, as well as university students from the Institute of Business (IOB) in Dili. Local authorities, youth organisations and LGBTIQ+ community members also participated, making it a diverse and far-reaching initiative.

The sessions provided an overview of human rights principles and sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. Participants also explored findings from recent research on discrimination in education and heard firsthand experiences from LGBTIQ+ students about challenges they face at school and in their communities. A moving testimony came from one student who decided to stand up for his bullied friends:

“Sometimes people bullied my friends by calling them names. I didn’t know what to do, so I just smiled. But then this session taught us many things about human rights and LGBTIQ+ people. Now I would like to ask my friends to respect every student. Wearing the uniform of this school means they belong in this school and that they have the same rights as the rest of us. Stop bullying them!”

This participant’s experience highlights the importance of such initiatives in changing minds and gaining new allies.

Recognising the need for institutional change, the campaign also facilitated a one-day training session for 20 high school teachers in Bobonaro municipality. Conducted in collaboration with the National Human Rights Institution and the civil society organisation Arco-Iris, the session emphasised the role of educators in creating safe learning environments for all students.

“Wearing the uniform of this school means [LGBTIQ+ students] belong in this school and that they have the same rights as the rest of us. Stop bullying them!”

Student and workshop participant

Discussions focused on complaint mechanisms, human rights protections and legal frameworks that protect LGBTIQ+ people. The training encouraged teachers to take an active role in promoting equality and inclusion within their institutions.

On 17 May, the campaign marked the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia by organising a diversity and inclusion march, accompanied by poetry, drama and dance performances. The event brought together students, civil society organisations, teachers and government officials, including the president of the municipality.

The UN Free & Equal campaign in Timor-Leste also supported the sixth Pride Parade in the capital Dili. Despite heavy rain, approximately 1,000 participants, including LGBTIQ+ community members, allies and high-level representatives, took to the streets in a vibrant display of solidarity. The President of Timor Leste, José Ramos-Horta, was present at the event which underscored the government's commitment to upholding human rights and moving towards LGBTIQ+ equality. The march became a defining moment for the LGBTIQ+ community and those who marched with them.

In partnership with civil society organisation Acuiris, the campaign team organised a workshop in Aileu to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. It focused on raising awareness about the human rights of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and girls.

Speakers included representatives from the municipality, the Secretary of State for Promotion of Equality and the village chief, bringing together 145 participants.



VENEZUELA

In 2024, the UN Free & Equal campaign in Venezuela focused on tackling discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people in workplaces by engaging private companies, civil servants and the broader public.

The campaign organised workshops aimed at increasing awareness of and support for diversity and inclusion in workplaces. These face-to-face workshops engaged 18 professionals, including managers and human resource representatives from nine major private companies. Participants strategised on implementation of the [UN Standards of Conduct for Business](#) on tackling discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people and developed 24 indicators tailored to Venezuela's socio-economic context. Additionally, these companies committed to implementing follow-up measures to ensure a more inclusive work environment.

A manager from one of the participating companies shared that *"This workshop provided us with the tools and understanding needed to create a more diverse and accepting workplace. The development of measurable indicators has given us a clear path forward in promoting inclusivity within our company."*

Another major component of the campaign was disseminating [Fobiómetro](#) – an educational tool designed to identify, categorise and address various forms of violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people in Venezuela. The tool helps promote actions people can take to prevent prejudice and exclusion and sheds light on the impact discrimination can have – especially in the workplace – and promotes more inclusive environments.



The campaign organised two workshops about the *Fobiómetro* tool for public officials, reaching 154 civil servants from 20 regions and 13 different institutions, including the Ombudsman's Office, the Health Ministry, and local government bodies. Participants analysed the discrimination LGBTIQ+ people are facing in the country and discussed ways they can prevent violence and promote equality. A representative from the Ombudsman's Office noted: *"Fobiómetro has opened my eyes to the many forms of discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals. This tool is crucial in shaping policies and practices that protect and uphold human rights."*

UN Free & Equal in Venezuela also ran a social media campaign to amplify its message on workplace inclusion and ending discrimination. Eight digital assets were disseminated across platforms including Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter), engaging both businesses and the public in discussions about equality and the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people. In total, these posts reached approximately 40,000 users and generated thousands of engagements. One campaign asset was specifically designed to be accessible to people with hearing impairments, emphasising inclusion in communication.

"Fobiómetro has opened my eyes to the many forms of discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals. This tool is crucial in shaping policies and practices that protect and uphold human rights."

Workshop participant



VIET NAM

In 2024, the UN Free & Equal campaign in Viet Nam continued its advocacy efforts by engaging media and the public in meaningful conversations about transgender equality. Building on its 2023 success, the campaign collaborated with media outlets to publish opinion pieces and articles that reached over 20 million readers. These stories explored diverse transgender experiences and debunked widespread myths. They were developed in partnership with experts, ensuring high-quality, well-informed content.

As part of the campaign, two special feature reports were developed in collaboration with National Assembly TV and aired during the prime-time news slot. These broadcasts significantly expanded the campaign's reach and influence in discussions on equality and the human rights of transgender people at the national level. By amplifying personal stories and expert insights, the campaign effectively broadened its audience and deepened public understanding of the challenges transgender people face in their lives.

Another key highlight was the campaign's emphasis on allyship. The interactive space "OTHER: This Gender is Ours" became a powerful platform for solidarity, with more than 30 percent of visitors identifying as allies. This demonstrated a growing interest and support for transgender equality among the public, reinforcing the importance of collective advocacy. One visitor shared their appreciation, stating: *"Thank you for this very powerful exhibition and your strong advocacy and actions to address discrimination and fulfil everyone's human rights."*

The UN Free & Equal campaign in Viet Nam also continued its engagement relating to the draft law on legal recognition of gender identity, adapting its strategies and maintaining its advocacy momentum amidst changes in the national context. By prioritising visibility, media engagement and allyship, it strengthened public discourse and support for transgender equality in Viet Nam.



"Thank you for this very powerful exhibition and your strong advocacy and actions to address discrimination and fulfil everyone's human rights."

Participant in interactive space

THANK YOU!

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Together, we're building a more inclusive and just future for everyone, regardless of who they are or whom they love.



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