



Emmanuel Odhiambo Nyambwa.
Human Rights Defender.
Co-Founder and Coordinator – YHEPP.
Soul of Stonewall Award 2017, -category of Resistance.

Emmanuel began pursuing his passion for standing up for marginalised and socially challenged people in 2009. Here, he volunteered for Nyanza Reproductive Health Society as a capacity building officer and an advocate. He built capacities of people facing stigma and other social challenges because of HIV/AIDS, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. Three years later, he moved to be a life skills coach at Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in Nairobi under a program supported by UNHCR Nairobi. He developed a training manual and used it to build capacities of LGBTIQ* refugees in Nairobi. Topics covered range from personal and social security, civic education, and life-skills to social integration and basic literacy in English and Swahili.

From 2013, he worked together with other volunteers for organizations such as the National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC) and ISHTAR MsM, where he also served as an administrator and capacity building officer. Emmanuel has been trained on many topics like Civic Education, Human rights and diversity, sexuality and gender, strategic thinking and action, project management, research, financial management, campaign strategy, security-in-a-box among others. He and a group of like-minded youth volunteers founded Youth Health and Psychosocial Program (YHEPP) in 2014. For his work, Emmanuel was selected to participate in the Global Changemates Program, organized by Partnership for Africa foundation in collaboration with BMZ in 2015. Earlier in 2017, Emmanuel was accepted to participate in “Activism in Africa” conference in Lisbon where he presented a paper on “The Challenges and Potentials of Transnational Grassroot Partnerships in the case of LGBTIQ* Activism” that he co-authored with Mr. Richard Georgi from Gothenburg University.

On Berlin Christopher Street Day (CSD) 2017, Emmanuel Odhiambo Nyambwa was honoured by Queer Amnesty Berlin with a Soul of Stonewall award in the category of Resistance.



Youth Health and Psychosocial Program (YHEPP).
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Youth Health and Psychosocial Program (YHEPP) was founded in 2014 to ensure social development of marginalised LGBTIQ* youth aged 18-24 in Nairobi. In addition to a difficult social environment with little opportunities for LGBTIQ* persons, particularly the youth faces severe challenges, because they are more prone to become target of police violence and they tend to become subject of intersectional discrimination by the elderly. Operating at grassroot level, YHEPP focusses on their mental and social wellbeing. YHEPP's activities include counselling, group therapies, life-skills training and civic education. Counsellor-led activities focus on the mental support of participants and referrals can be made upon recommendation. Life skills workshops aim at building agency of LGBTIQ* youth to help them sustain themselves and manoeuvre challenges at grassroots level. Civic education creates awareness, provides some skills of self-protection from abusive authorities and social discrimination, opens opportunities to share information to improve access social services, and, by this means, aims to help LGBTIQ* youth to claim their rights.

YHEPP has carried out several workshops on agency and civic education. Moreover, it has published an analysis of the situation of LGBTIQ* refugees in Nairobi and resource guides, such as, among others, the “Nairobi LGBT youth resource guide” on Kuchu Times website, and “What is PTSD?” on the website of the Hirschfeld Eddy Foundation. YHEPP has also been part of a comprehensive advocacy project targeting faith leaders that was organised by Church World Service's Safe Space Program in 2015 and 2016. YHEPP further became part of a research group and will be actively involved in assessing social development and self-help opportunities for the youth. Finally, YHEPP has been actively engaged with other organizations in advocating more inclusive policies for LGBTIQ* people in Kenya, and it continues to champion social development of LGBTIQ* youth in Nairobi and beyond.

Youth Health and Psychosocial Program (YHEPP) now plans a one-year project to conduct a series of capacity building workshops. The overall objective is to facilitate social development of marginalised LGBTQ youth in Nairobi through civic education with focus on building agency, improving access to social services and enhancing their self-protection.

PROJECT CONCEPT – YHEPP WORKSHOP SERIES 2017/18

Nairobi is still a largely homophobic, biphobic and transphobic place with random and sometimes organized attacks against LGBTIQ people. Stigma and discrimination are still practised and reinforced at policy and institutional levels. As a result, LGBTQ youth is often de facto denied access to basic social and health services. Besides, social exclusion leaves them with no reliable protection system or social support from the members of their communities. This marginalization prevents them from accessing education or even assuming the agency and morale to apply for scholarships they qualify for. Stigma is even greater when it comes to applying for jobs—or keeping the jobs as they can only hide their true selves for a short period of time. Often overlooked in research and policy is the fact that their age adds up to the intersectional discrimination they face. In this regard youth aged 18-24 is more prone to become target of police brutality, and is often discriminated by the elderly.

This project uses civic education to build LGBTQ youth agency, that means, it supports them to understand their position in the society and to claim their rights conventionally. The education workshops moreover shall improve access to social and health services by educating on the use of social media and special websites to share relevant information and to find alternative centres of inclusive services. The workshop series will finally also provide information and show practical approaches to achieve some level of security and self-protection from abusive authorities and social discrimination. The workshop series strives for social development which is geared towards the vision of LGBTQ youth in the long run being educated about their rights, having employment opportunities, and being socially integrated and secure.