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Articles are evaluated based on relevance, originality, prose, and argumentation. The editor-in-chief, in consultation with the editorial board, holds final authority for accepting or refusing submissions for publication.

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*Public Diplomacy Magazine* is a publication of the Association of Public Diplomacy Scholars (APDS) at the University of Southern California, with support from the USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School, USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences School of International Relations, and the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

Its unique mission is to provide a common forum for the views of both scholars and practitioners from around the globe, in order to explore key concepts in the study and practice of public diplomacy. *Public Diplomacy Magazine* is published bi-annually, in print, and on the web at [www.publicdiplomacymagazine.org](http://www.publicdiplomacymagazine.org).

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## ABOUT THE COVER

by Danielle Saroyan

The Winter 2015 issue of *Public Diplomacy Magazine* is titled "On the Right Side of History: Public Diplomacy & LGBT Rights Today." The front cover features two images of the United States Embassy in Vienna, Austria. The historical black and white image contrasts with the colored recent image showcased in the middle. Together, these photographs highlight the progress of the LGBT rights movement by showcasing the advent of a rainbow flag, a universal symbol of LGBT rights, beside the American flag.

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Issue 13, WINTER 2015

The past decade has seen monumental improvements in recognition and acceptance of the LGBT community on the global stage. 2014 marked a year of triumphant headlines. In the United States, the US Supreme Court refused appeals seeking to preserve bans on marriages of same-sex couples. On a multilateral level, the International Olympic Committee passed an amendment to its Olympic Charter Principle 6, explicitly prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. Resounding across the world, Pope Francis continued to progress the Catholic Church's stance on LGBT rights. Still, a great deal of work and progress lies ahead. Also in 2014, African nations including Uganda and Nigeria passed antiquated laws against the livelihoods of gay people. Penalties for same-sex relations ranging from death to life imprisonment persist in several nations including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. Criminalization of same-sex partnerships emphasizes the much-needed work that lies ahead.

Continuing with its tradition of exploring topics that have been untouched, underrepresented, or narrowly discussed, *Public Diplomacy Magazine* has chosen to position itself at the forefront of this vital and growing discussion. The first public diplomacy anthology of its kind, the Winter 2015 issue begins to fill the current gap in public diplomacy literature centered on LGBT issues while acknowledging the powerful work of many institutions, organizations, and individuals who are passionately and effectively driving conversations and progress in this field.

The following pieces uncover unique perspectives, celebrate paramount achievements, and critically highlight areas that need improvement. Our **Diversity and Diplomacy** pieces delve into the life of a gay Foreign Service Officer in Japan, explore the role of diplomacy in LGBT public health, and discuss the power of traditional diplomacy methods in driving the LGBT conversation. Our **Evolving Narratives** pieces focus on the imperative role that narratives play in the global LGBT movement, ranging from an interview with journalist Jonathan Rauch to a piece on the importance of global messaging from the perspective of the It Gets Better Project, and a discussion of two award-winning works of fiction from Lambda Literary. Finally, the pieces in our **Equality Through Culture** section highlight the importance of cultural drivers in the global LGBT movement. From the music of famed Mexican recorder player Horacio Franco, to the power of sport and the arts in promoting awareness and driving conversation, cultural diplomacy plays a leading role in bringing LGBT issues to the fore. Throughout, authors highlight the numerous ways in which public diplomacy tools can contribute to the movement for equal rights for all. In its entirety, the issue resounds with a singular, positive sentiment: we are on the right side of history.

We would like to express our gratitude to the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, the USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences School of International Relations, and the USC Master of Public Diplomacy program for their continued support and shared interest in our mission. Finally, we are tremendously grateful to our authors for their contributions. It is their work that made this issue possible and meaningful. With their momentum, we hope this issue continues to drive the public diplomacy conversation surrounding the global LGBT movement.

It is our goal that today and in years to come, the Winter 2015 issue will serve as an archive of public diplomacy in LGBT history for practitioners and students alike. Please visit our website [www.publicdiplomacymagazine.com](http://www.publicdiplomacymagazine.com) to view exclusive online content and browse our past issues as well as join ongoing discussions on public diplomacy trends on our social media platforms.



Jocelyn Coffin  
Editor-in-chief



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# DIVERSITY & DIPLOMACY

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## WHAT I LEARNED IN JAPAN (ABOUT LGBT RIGHTS ADVOCACY)

By Patrick J. Linehan

The encounters would usually go like this: a middle-aged Japanese businessman would walk up to my husband and me at a public event and ask, "which one is the wife?"

I would reply, "there is no wife ... it's a gay marriage ... I'm the husband and he's the husband."

He would look puzzled, and ask again, "no wife?"

I would say, "no wife ... husband, husband ... two husbands."

He would puzzle some more, and finally say, "naru hodo" (oh, I see).

And then as he walked away we could hear him muttering, "zen, zen wakarimahen" (I have no idea what they are talking about).

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Working abroad as a diplomat is always first and foremost learning by doing. I learned how to be a press spokesman by speaking to the media, I learned how to be a Consul General by working day to day as the Consul General, and in Japan I learned how best to advocate for LGBT rights by advocating for LGBT rights.

As illustrated by the short opening story above, what my husband and I found when we arrived in Japan with regard to LGBT rights was a dearth of reliable information and, for the most part, an absence of informed, significant public discourse about LGBT rights or even the existence of LGBT people in Japan. Few public figures in any sector of Japanese society, be it

sports, politics, or even the arts, are "out" or open about their gay identities. As a consequence there are very few role models for young people who might be questioning their sexual identity. There is enormous pressure in Japanese society, in the schools, in the community, and within the family to be the same, to not be in any way "different." Any young Japanese man or woman trying to come to terms with an LGBT identity would likely have difficulty finding accurate information, counsel, role models, or emotional and social support.

It should also be noted, however, that what we did not find in Japan was any organized negative public discourse. There are no political parties that make it a point to oppose LGBT people as a way of gaining votes, nor are there religious organizations that make it part of their creed or activities to oppose LGBT people and LGBT rights. The real obstacles to the advancement of LGBT rights in Japan are lack of reliable information, lack of public awareness and discussion, social and cultural inertia, and lack of ownership of and advocacy for the issue by many LGBT Japanese people themselves.

There were exceptions. During our time in Japan we saw change beginning to happen in the political world, in Japanese society, and among Japanese LGBT people themselves. Japan is still in the era of "firsts" for LGBT visibility and human rights, so in our time there we became acquainted with Japan's first openly gay local politicians, three young city council members from Tokyo, and the first lesbian member of Japan's national legislature in Tokyo. We were there at an important time in Japan's cultural history, and we were able to observe and



play a part in the early days of a broad public discussion about LGBT existence, identity, and fundamental human rights. Here are some of the lessons we learned about the public diplomacy of LGBT rights advocacy during our three years in Osaka from 2011 to 2014.

### BE VISIBLE

From day one we knew that the most important thing we could do to advocate for LGBT equality was simply to be visible. Our presence was noted, and our difference was noticed. Our visibility led to public attention and media attention that, in turn, led to even greater visibility and public discussion about our message of equality and respect for diversity.

### MAKE IT HUMAN

In our early days there, many Japanese we met would say that they had never met an openly gay person, an openly gay professional, or an openly gay diplomat, and that they had never met a gay couple before. We would always respond, “well now you have! Nice to meet you!” We knew that this was an opportunity to make the issue human, to put a face on theoretical issues like basic identity and fundamental human rights. LGBT rights can seem like an abstraction until you actually know LGBT people. In keeping with the famous dictum of the dean of all public diplomats, Edward R. Murrow, we were conducting public diplomacy at the most human and effective level, the “last three feet.”

### KEEP IT HONEST

In public diplomacy advocacy, the integrity of the message is everything, as is the

integrity of the messenger. People took to our message of equality and respect for diversity because it was our own message and we were telling our own story. We owned our identity and we owned our message, and the lesson to us was above all to be yourself, and to live your message. Just by being who we are, we were sending a huge message that could not be missed or ignored, and that message was that LGBT people exist, we are real, we are human, we are not a threat, we are not going away, and we have rights.

### KEEP IT SIMPLE

A concept such as LGBT rights can seem complex, distant, and irrelevant to the average person. But when we framed it in terms of basic human principles like equality, mutual respect, and the value of diversity, we found that our message resonated with the Japanese public. Most people want respect and most people want equal rights, at least for themselves. By keeping our message simple and human we made it easy to understand and accept.

### DON'T ASSUME THAT PEOPLE ARE AGAINST YOU

We often found that when we first encountered people, like the businessmen who wanted to know

which of us was the wife, they did not understand us and they did not understand our message. But it would have been a mistake to assume that a lack of understanding meant that they were against us. We thought that visibility and honest discourse could lead to understanding and agreement and in our three years of advocacy in Osaka we discovered that it did.

### REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT

When my husband Emerson and I

published our book, we held book parties in Osaka and Tokyo. At a Q&A session, a young gay man asked us how we had managed to get people to accept and understand our use of the word “husband” for each other. I told him that while at first people didn’t get it, my mantra had become, “repeat, repeat, repeat.” To everyone we met, be they politicians, journalists, academics, or high school students, Emerson and I always introduced each other as our “husband,” and we found that the more we repeated it the more people accepted and used the term.

### TIMING IS EVERYTHING

A public discussion was beginning as we arrived in Japan in 2011. We did not begin it, but we were able to play a tangible role in moving it along in a positive direction. Our interviews with major Japanese media including the national dailies *Asahi*, *Yomiuri*, *Mainichi*, *Nihon Keizai*, and *Sankei*, wires such as *Kyodo*, foreign outlets such as the *BBC*, and business magazines like *Toyo Keizai* and *Daimondo* helped to advance the discussion in print and in broadcast media. The more interviews we did, the more accurate they became, and the better the Japanese media became at telling the story themselves. It was our advocacy in interviews with national papers like the *Asahi* that led to an invitation from Japan’s largest business publisher, Toyo Keizai Publishing, to publish our story, a book that they released in July 2014.

### EVERYTHING LEADS TO SOMETHING

Public diplomacy advocacy is never a pure science, and we seldom know for certain what concrete outcomes our advocacy will lead to. But what we do know is that everything leads to something. The most important point is to act and to advocate who you are and what you do. You have to start somewhere, little things lead to big things, and big things lead to even bigger things.

Early in my time in Osaka I spoke



to a gathering of 200 lawyers of the Osaka Bar Association, likely one of the more conservative groups in all of Japan. For their profession they wanted to learn more about human rights issues, including LGBT rights, and I was happy to speak to them. I frankly never expected my message to have the traction that it did, but that speech led

to in-depth reports in the Osaka media and five more speaking invitations. The Mayor of one of the Boroughs of Osaka asked me to speak to his citizens about LGBT rights, and that speech led to invitations from two other Borough Mayors. The first Mayor became so enthusiastic about the rights of LGBT citizens that in 2013 his Borough, Toyohirakawa, became the first political district in all of Japan to raise the rainbow flag over a city hall. That same Mayor was asked to speak to an Osaka-wide gathering of city officials about the rights of LGBT citizens. Those Mayors

then organized the first ever “Coming of Age Ceremony,” a type of ceremony that is held every year in January on the Japanese Adults Day holiday for all young adults who turn 20 that year, specifically for young LGBT citizens. At that ceremony 150+ young people from Osaka were able to celebrate their legal coming of age knowing that the city they lived in respected their rights and their LGBT identity. They were different, and their city and their public officials showed that they respected them as they were. For conservative and slow to change Japan, this was huge.

Another early project for us was that Emerson and I did “[It Gets Better](#)” messages in both English and Japanese, and for the next two years it was music to my ears whenever a young Japanese person would say, “I saw your ‘It Gets Better’ message.” One day a female university student told me that our message had given her the courage to come out as lesbian to her parents. Another day a young transgender man told us that our message had given him the courage to transition from female to male. When people told me that they had seen our video I never knew what was to come next, but it was always interesting and it was always positive. In much the same way, in 2013, I spoke at TEDx Kyoto and gave a talk entitled “Different.” It was a public diplomacy activity that paid dividends for a long time to come. In the days that followed, people in Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto and Tokyo would approach me to say, “I saw your TEDx Talk!” The response has always been positive. I have never had pushback from the TEDx Talk, the “It Gets Better” message, or from my LGBT human rights advocacy in an interview, speech, or discussion program.

### PEOPLE ARE MORE READY THAN THEY THINK THEY ARE.

Whenever we came to the end of a speech, symposium, discussion program, or town hall meeting, Japanese people would ask

me to tell them about themselves. They would invariably ask, “do you think we are ready for equal rights for LGBT people? Is Japan ready for same-sex marriage? Are Japanese ready to be open?” My response was always a resounding “yes! You are more ready than you think you are!” I went on to tell them that I based that on our three year experience in Osaka. Emerson and I were warmly welcomed as a couple wherever we went by Japanese in all walks of life, and they came to understand us and by extension to understand other LGBT people as well, at least a little bit, at least more than before.

I am certain that our message resonated because it was simple and direct. We stayed on message, our message was deeply personal but with enormous public relevance, we were active and aggressive in our advocacy, and we were there at the right time for Japan for that advocacy to make a difference. Japan’s understanding of LGBT people, LGBT rights, and the virtue of diversity is changing rapidly and for the better. As we survey the world in 2015 to look for evidence of the rapid change for global LGBT rights and equality, I would encourage our readers to look to Japan. Change is coming, and it is coming soon.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Patrick J. Linehan served as the US Consul General in Osaka, Japan from 2011 to 2014. In July 2014, he and his husband Emerson Kanegusuke published the book Fufuenman about their experience as a gay diplomatic couple representing the US overseas.*

## LGBT RIGHTS ADOVCACY: THE QUINTESSENTIAL US PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOL

By Sohaela Amiri

In the past four decades, since the disastrous events of the Stonewall Inn in 1969, the United States has undergone rigorous legal transformations to eliminate various discriminatory laws against its LGBT community. Many of these changes have only taken place under the Obama Administration in the past few years. The drastic policy changes do not only concern domestic affairs; advocacy for LGBT rights is now among the top priorities for the country’s foreign policy as well. The US Department of State has itself changed its stance dramatically from not allowing gay individuals to join the Foreign Service to Secretary of State John Kerry promising to “ensure that by the end of my tenure, we will have lesbian, bisexual, and transgender ambassadors in our ranks as well.”<sup>1</sup> Today, US Embassies around the world participate in “Pride Parades” on the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. Such drastic shifts in attitude and conduct by the United States government (which continues to rapidly evolve on this issue) are worth studying for a number of reasons, but mainly to identify the underlying factors as well as to assess what values this pivot brings to US Foreign Service, the country’s image abroad, its credibility, and its policies—both domestic and foreign.

In a memorandum for the head of Executive Departments and Agencies in 2011, President Obama stated the following:

The struggle to end discrimination against LGBT persons is a global challenge, and one that is central to the United States commitment to promoting human rights. I am deeply concerned by the violence and discrimination targeting LGBT persons around the world whether it is passing laws that criminalize LGBT status, beating citizens simply for joining peaceful LGBT pride celebrations, or killing men, women, and children for their perceived sexual orientation. That is why I declared before heads of state gathered at the United Nations, “no

country should deny people their rights because of who they love, which is why we must stand up for the rights of gays and lesbians everywhere.” Under my Administration, agencies engaged abroad have already begun taking action to promote the fundamental human rights of LGBT persons everywhere. Our deep commitment to advancing the human rights of all people is strengthened when we as the United States bring our tools to bear to vigorously advance this goal. By this memorandum I am directing all agencies engaged abroad to ensure that US diplomacy and foreign assistance promote and protect the human rights of LGBT persons.<sup>2</sup>

The President specifically directed the following actions: combating criminalization of LGBT status or conduct abroad; protecting vulnerable LGBT refugees and asylum seekers; foreign assistance to protect human rights and advance nondiscrimination; swift and meaningful US responses to human rights abuses of LGBT persons abroad; engaging international organizations in the fight against LGBT discrimination; and reporting on progress.

In effect, the State Department under Hillary Clinton and John Kerry has globalized the LGBT rights revolution. There are countless public diplomacy initiatives undertaken by various US Embassies in the past six years to promote LGBT rights; these range from roundtables and panel discussions to summits and national dialogue days on legal and social challenges facing LGBT people globally. Other efforts include cultural diplomacy initiatives, advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about LGBT-friendly human resource policies, and urging entities such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to examine the economic case for LGBT-inclusivity and to develop recommendations for policy makers to remove barriers to equal LGBT treatment in the workplace. Some US embassies also offer grants to advance LGBT rights.



While LGBT rights are among the State Department's top priorities, the United States still faces a lot of domestic challenges in this regard given that there are still patterns of discrimination, violence, and hate crimes toward the LGBT community in this country. In today's globalized world, domestic issues no longer end at the edge of a nation's shores; they are global, and they impact any country's foreign policy. As Kerry argues, "America cannot continue to preach equality to the world while refusing to take action at home."<sup>3</sup>

President Obama has administered many monumental policy changes including adding gender identity among the classes protected against discrimination under the authority of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and signing an Executive Order that added sexual orientation and gender identity to the categories protected against discrimination in hiring and employment on the part of federal government contractors and sub-contractors. As of late 2015, the State Department was eliminating transgender exclusions from the agency's largest health insurance program as well, and they are very likely to have a Special Envoy for LGBT rights soon.<sup>4</sup> These are all great achievements, but in order for the State Department to continue having "intelligent and really constructive" methods of advancing its foreign policy objectives, as George Kennan once suggested, "much depends on health and vigor" of the American society, "this is [the] point at which domestic and foreign policies meet. Every courageous and incisive measure to solve internal problems" of the US "is a diplomatic victory [...] worth a thousand diplomatic notes and joint communiqués."<sup>5</sup>

For the United States to thrive as a global leader and remain indispensable, it is crucial that it stays true to its responsibility of maintaining a liberal world order by promoting democratic values and the protection of human rights. Advocating LGBT rights both domestically and globally is therefore perfectly in line with American interests, purpose, and global identity. Such advocacy would not only enhance American soft power but

could improve its image abroad. That said, in the next few years, it would be interesting to study public diplomacy projects undertaken by various US Embassies to engage and educate foreign publics on LGBT issues and gauge how opinion and attitudes are swayed in support of LGBT human rights, in order to assess the impact of such activities on advancing (or hindering) US foreign policies.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Sohaela Amiri is a Master of Public Diplomacy student at USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism & School of International Relations. She is also a Research Assistant and Associate Editor for "CPD Monitor" at the [USC Center on Public Diplomacy](#).*

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## DIPLOMACY AND LGBT PUBLIC HEALTH

By Michael G. Bare

Equality for LGBT people is increasing at different paces around the world. Looking to improve the lives of LGBT people in less industrialized countries, public health provides specific mechanisms for public engagement that improve research, programs, and evidence-based policy decision-making. LGBT health is a sub-discipline of public health, focusing on the LGBT subpopulation across societies with particular interest in the study and intervention upon health disparities within this community.

How can this intersect with diplomacy? Appropriate community engagement, an understanding of LGBT public health topics, and an understanding of location and culture-specific issues can best serve diplomatic practices by engaging social change. This approach can also address how to best ensure that systems are in

place to support individuals who must emigrate to avoid abuse and death in hostile environments.

### LGBT CRIMINALIZATION AROUND THE WORLD

79 countries around the world have anti-homosexuality laws on the books, ten of which include the death penalty: Iran, Iraq, Mauritania, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, UAE, and Yemen.<sup>1</sup> There is some disagreement in the UAE whether the law is for all homosexual sex or just rape, and there are no recorded death sentences for homosexual acts.<sup>2</sup> Anti-gay laws are known to hamper, and at times criminalize, HIV prevention efforts and increase abuse of LGBT people.<sup>3</sup> The codified acceptance of anti-LGBT bigotry through such laws has resulted in an

increase of cases of individuals seeking refugee status in friendlier countries. Many countries have laws that marginalize or stigmatize LGBT people, the most recently visible cases, thanks to media coverage, being anti-gay legislations in Russia and Uganda.

In 2013, Russia passed a law banning "gay propaganda," suggesting it was to protect children.<sup>4</sup> The law has been used to persecute online community sites for LGBT teens and censor news and social media and has adversely affected NGOs and academics working on LGBT topics.<sup>5,6,7</sup> In Uganda, anti-gay legislation, which was enacted in early 2014, defined homosexual acts as a crime, punishable by up to life in prison.<sup>8</sup> This was overturned in court due to incorrect legislative

practices; yet, a new law was just introduced to parliament which makes it a crime to rent homes to LGBT people or to publish material on LGBT people (similar to Russia's anti-propaganda law).<sup>9</sup> There is concern it could be used to undermine or criminalize work being done by civil rights groups and NGOs.<sup>10</sup>

Most recently, The Gambia and Kyrgyzstan have passed anti-gay laws. The Gambia's law is written to criminalize same-sex rape, sex abuse, and HIV transmission, with up to lifetime prison sentences. The law is being used to arrest LGBT people, in some cases resulting in torture and threats of rape to get information on other LGBT people.<sup>11</sup> Kyrgyzstan's new law is a replication of Russia's anti-gay propaganda bill.<sup>12</sup> To confront this issue, people in the West have considered boycotts as a form of protest. Western governments have discussed sanctions, engaged with countries, stated negative opinions on such



legislation, and many have enacted development programs (both health and social) that focus on LGBT topics around the world.

### UNDERSTANDING LGBT HEALTH

The theory of minority stress is used to explain differences in health outcomes for members of minority groups, in this case LGBT people. Studies show a correlation between social stress (marginalization, discrimination, and internalized stigma) and poor health outcomes.<sup>13</sup> LGBT individuals with multiple oppressed identities (racial minority, disability, etc.) experience an even heavier burden of minority stressors. Social discrimination also leads to housing and employment instability. This can create situations in which individuals find resources through informal economies, which may include sex work, drug trade, or other activities that lead to interactions with the criminal justice system. In some areas of the world, including the US, criminalization or stigmatization of LGBT people leads to over-policing of these communities. LGBT people are overrepresented in the US in terms of homelessness and incarceration. These two factors are also related to each other in that the homeless are more likely to be incarcerated, and the formerly incarcerated have harder times finding work or stable housing.<sup>14</sup> Economic and security stress also impact mental health.

Minority stress has immediate mental health effects like increased rates of depression and anxiety, social isolation, and suicidal ideation. Other LGBT health disparities include substance abuse and sexual risk taking (which are seen as syndemics, or epidemics which co-occur and have a synergistic effect, each one promoting the other). These are often related and are factors in disproportionate HIV and Hepatitis C virus rates among LGBT people due to low rates of access to health care and social services due to fear of discrimination. It is important to note that studies have shown how chronic stress results in dysregulation of the endocrine system

causing increased rates of poor mental health, cardiometabolic risk, and other negative health outcomes.

In addition to the effects of minority stress (although we can never remove it from the equation), there is evidence that LGBT people have greater barriers to health care, are under-insured, and are less likely to have routine screenings and vaccines. Health disparities in LGBT communities include increased rates of HIV, HPV, smoking, alcohol use, and cancers related to these factors.<sup>15</sup> LGBT people have specific health needs, and doctors trained in LGBT health and cultural competency do a better job addressing patients' concerns and ordering appropriate screenings for patients according to their socio-demographic information. In situations where it is unsafe for an LGBT person to disclose their identity to health care providers, diagnostic tests will go unordered. This means that health problems may be found later, and be harder to treat. Additionally, LGBT people have been victims of violence, sexual violence, intimidation, and blackmail, and other abuses due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, which further proves the theory of minority stress. The theory of intersectionality works well with this model, as those LGBT people who also hold identities within other oppressed groups (racial minorities, those with a disability, an undocumented status, etc.) would bear a heavier burden of minority stress.

### PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the field of public health, community engagement is integral for conducting research and delivering programs as varied as health interventions, health education, and medical service delivery programs. It is sometimes the most complicated, if not under-addressed and sometimes under-valued, part of public health practice. But its role becomes clear when research or programs with good community engagement and communication yield better results than

those without such practices. For public health professionals, entry points into a community are key to engagement. The focus lies in identifying and engaging gatekeepers and stakeholders. Gatekeepers are individuals who are leaders (for example religious or elected officials, educators, or respected community members), while stakeholders are groups or organizations currently working with a target community's population in health or social services.

By identifying and gaining trust of gatekeepers and stakeholders, public health professionals have the advantage of being seen as "vetted," or coming with the recommendation of a locally respected individuals or organizations in the community. This allows them access to community meetings, communications platforms, and other ways to disseminate information that would not have been accessible without this gateway into the local social networks.

By working this way from the beginning of a program, public health professionals are able to get feedback from the community about what their concerns are, what they think may or may not work for them in a public health program, and solicit vital technical information about the community's culture. This also helps gain the trust, and thereby participation, of community members. Programs that are seen as being run by "outsiders," those without the appropriate local vetting, have failed over and over; being seen with ambivalence or distrust, no matter how much a community may in fact need the services being provided by the program. Furthermore, LGBT communities in hostile settings may fear accessing services run by unknown persons due to fear of stigma and recrimination. Lack of trust of outsiders seeking to implement programs in marginalized communities tends to come from historical facts and relationships that cannot

be changed overnight. Think of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, use of electroshock therapy on LGBT people, and governmental policies toward indigenous people as examples of how top-down authoritarianism in programs can be met with resistance from people who have experienced systemic, historical discrimination and marginalization.<sup>16</sup>

“LGBT PEOPLE HAVE SPECIFIC HEALTH NEEDS, AND DOCTORS TRAINED IN LGBT HEALTH AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY DO A BETTER JOB ADDRESSING PATIENTS' CONCERNS...”

When first entering a new community to implement public health programming, public health professionals rely on community needs assessments.

Existing information on a community's health, socio-demographics, and infrastructure found via federal, state, or local surveys (such as the US Census, local health department data, health registries, etc.) is evaluated to get a snapshot of existing health disparities. Socio-demographic data will influence or guide health programs (cultural diets, languages spoken, number of children or elders in a community, and religious views being just a few examples). An infrastructural assessment can give such information as accessibility to healthcare, healthy versus unhealthy foods, crime rates, safety of outdoor areas, and environmental issues such as smog, locations of dumps, or industrial activity that may contribute to a community's health. During this process, public health professionals also work in tandem with the local populations, asking them what their concerns are and what issues they see in regards to health in their community. Working with group perceptions and concerns helps open up dialogue, develops trust, and ensures the community that their interests are being taken into account. Then a public health professional incorporates the community's feedback with the gathered, existing information and conducts further research within the community to get a clear picture of the health issues facing local populations.

## CONNECTING WITH LOCALS AND STAKEHOLDERS

As we have diplomacy on one hand, and LGBT public health on the other, how do we integrate these issues? Starting with the public health approach to community engagement, it is important to build a network around countries where LGBT public health is at greatest threat, working at multiple levels of engagement to effectively make change with local organizations, foreign NGOs, and other foreign governments. This is where public diplomacy plays a role.

Starting with local organizations and researchers will aid in getting the ball rolling on community engagement. Local LGBT, HIV, and human rights organizations that champion LGBT causes exist in almost every country. These groups have knowledge of how to engage government, media, civic groups, and the public in ways that foreigners may not. They also have information on the needs and issues faced by local LGBT people, as well as insight on how to work within the political framework of a country to make the most impact. Common focus on marriage rights in western countries often trumps many more pressing concerns of the immediate LGBT community, such as safety and violence, access to non-judgmental (not to mention LGBT competent) healthcare, and housing and food security.

Established researchers within local universities or government health systems are focusing on LGBT health across many countries. A simple search of LGBT terms and countries in PubMed (The US Library of Medicine database) shows results of LGBT health studies being conducted in both countries with anti-LGBT laws and in countries where LGBT is still taboo, such as Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Vietnam, just to name a few. These researchers know the local landscape of government and institutional bureaucracy, have insights into local LGBT communities, and may be well positioned to act as advocates for change on the behalf of LGBT communities, utilizing health research to support

evidence-based policy change.

NGOs and foreign governments are also doing work with local LGBT communities. Organizations such as the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Campaign Commission (IGLHRC), the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF), and AllOut engage with local communities on a variety of topics ranging from health and social justice research, programs, and technical assistance to policy analysis and assistance in lobbying governments.

Finally, foreign governments have included LGBT topics into their development work, civil society initiatives, and health research and programs. USAID developed the document “LGBT Vision for Action: Promoting and Supporting the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Individuals” to outline LGBT-inclusive policies being made by the agency.<sup>17</sup> This document includes recommendations for making development programs more inclusive, working with local LGBT organizations, and continuing to learn how to better include LGBT people into their policies. Their website even has a page called “advancing LGBT-inclusive development” which has news, lessons learned, and other writings from the work being completed by USAID. Denmark’s international development agency DANIDA, has a variety of articles, research, and policies relating to their work and LGBT populations. Meanwhile, Sweden and Norway’s development agencies (SIDA and NORAD respectively) don’t seem to have any overarching LGBT policy but do include LGBT-specific issues in health, gender, and development themes in their work.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Based on this overview, working in a concerted effort with local and international NGOs, academics, and allies in government and civil society is the best strategy for securing LGBT health and human rights in countries

where LGBT lives are subjected to stigma and marginalization. Over and over we have heard how sanctions do not work and end up hurting the people in countries that are sanctioned rather than the government itself.<sup>18,19</sup> When western activists were calling for sanctions against Uganda in retaliation to passing anti-gay legislation, local activist Emi Koyama spoke out, stating that LGBT people could be blamed and further abused for these sanctions. In her words, “the threat of economic sanctions is effective, but very problematic: if deployed, sanctions could lead to the collapse of social order in a country like Uganda, endangering many more lives of LGBT Ugandans than the legislation itself would;” she went on to contend that western activists taking actions without consulting local populations mirrored colonizing practices and disregarded the opinion and need of locals.<sup>20</sup>

In the US, what can and should be done is to fix where the system is broken and hurts LGBT people internationally. The anti-gay law in Uganda was largely influenced by evangelical Christian groups within the US exporting their specific brand of hate to receptive countries, and we know exactly with whom and where they are working.<sup>21</sup> Scott Lively, a prominent US evangelical, was key in rallying Ugandans so anti-LGBT laws could be passed.<sup>22</sup> Sexual Minorities Uganda (SM-UG), an LGBT group working in Uganda, was able to bring Scott Lively to court via the Center for Constitutional Rights under the Alien Tort Statute, which “allows foreign victims of human rights abuse to seek civil remedies in US courts.”<sup>23, 24</sup> Although this case is not yet settled, it is the first time the statute would be used to prosecute for actions against LGBT people. If effective, it could set a valuable legal precedent for holding other US-based ideologues accountable for their actions in other countries.

The US also needs to ensure that our immigration and refugee programs are not stigmatizing LGBT people and are culturally competent in dealing with LGBT individuals.<sup>25</sup> LGBT people fleeing states where their lives

are in danger may be unwilling to disclose their sexual history, relationships, and social contacts (often needed to “prove” their LGBT status) for fears of blackmail, coercion, or abuse founded on a history of governmental distrust. LGBT individuals have lives that do not always resemble the general population: an understanding that our families may not look like heterosexual and cisgender people’s families and our medical and mental health needs may differ, in addition to economic support, should to be better available to LGBT asylees.<sup>26</sup> This will ensure that those who must flee hostile environments due to their LGBT identity do not have additional burdens to those of being a refugee such as culture and language.

As more information comes out and as programs continue to assist LGBT people in unfriendly countries, we will learn more about the issues and best practices in dealing with these situations. As we continue to realize how discriminatory laws hurt economies, while LGBT inclusive laws promote economic growth, public health, and civil society, we can use data, experiences, and practices to help local LGBT populations assert their rights and attain the equality they seek.<sup>27</sup>

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## INTERNATIONAL LGBT LEADERS TAKE THE STAGE

By Natalie Maroun and Julia Slupska

San Diego community members gathered last summer at *Pride World Forum: A Glimpse at LGBT Diplomacy*, to hear fascinating insights from human rights leaders from India, Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, and Vietnam on the civil rights movements they are building throughout the world. The local event, an embodiment of citizen diplomacy in action, was held in reflection of the broader US foreign policy shift towards the acknowledgement and inclusion of LGBT rights as human rights worldwide.

The public event, held in San Diego, California on July 1, 2014, was coordinated by the San Diego Diplomacy Council in collaboration with San Diego LGBT Pride, the San Diego LGBT Community Center, and the San Diego Human Dignity Foundation. The event was the first of its kind in the region to emphasize the voice of the global LGBT community, as international LGBT leaders took center stage. In attendance were San Diego community members, representatives from the offices of local elected officials, and DC-based US Department of State Program Officers.

The panelists openly shared their perspectives in response to a myriad of questions such as: "What role does the LGBT movement in your country take to protect LGBT youth?" "How does chauvinism and the oppression of women affect the LGBT movement?" "What role does religion play in your country with regards to the LGBT community?" and "What can we do to help your efforts?"

Although the panelists' responses largely reflected their current challenges in the fight for equality, the pervasive undertone of the evening was that of unwavering hope and positivity. As the forum came to a close, it was the panelists'

suggestions to the final question listed above that struck a chord in the room. The panelist from Nigeria, Abayomi "Yumi" Aka, spoke of a new wave of oppressors in his country, coming from the Evangelical Christian movement in the US. Losing the battle against marriage equality on American soil, these "importers of hate," as he called them, have found a new frontline to fight on in his country, one where same-sex activity is presently punishable by imprisonment and often death. Our friend from Nigeria sternly implored the audience to own the responsibility to call out these homegrown individuals, and decry their actions as discriminatory and unjust. Tung Khac

Tran, the panelist from Vietnam, encouraged the LGBT and LGBT-supportive community in San Diego to simply continue the work they were doing. "Your successes are our successes," Tran said, acknowledging the interconnectedness of the global community, and assuring the audience that US-based momentum for equality is felt worldwide.

The conversation born out of *Pride World Forum: A Glimpse at LGBT Diplomacy*, embodies the goal of citizen diplomacy, or person-to-person exchange. With the ambition to exchange ideas and expand mutual understanding, the practice of citizen diplomacy remains a convincing, viable option towards peace. The San Diego Diplomacy Council has been tasked with creating such international exchanges, founded on the principles of citizen-empowered diplomacy.

The event, *Pride World Forum: A Glimpse at LGBT Diplomacy*, was part of a multiple-city, three-week international exchange program under the auspices of the US Department of State's International Visitor Leadership





Program. This specific delegation, entitled “Human Rights & Gender Identity,” featured twelve representatives from eleven countries focused on US and international initiatives to promote and protect the human rights of the LGBT community. The delegation finished their three-week journey in San Diego, where the San Diego Diplomacy Council organized their professional meetings and cultural activities.

Jill Secard, executive director of the San Diego Diplomacy Council, expressed her excitement about being able to present this group to the community:

These human rights leaders have been selected by US Embassies around the world as influential leaders in their fields and activists for positive social change in their countries. We were honored to host this US State Department sponsored delegation in our city to be able to meet with local community leaders, share best practices, and collaborate regarding the most effective tools for advocacy being used in the world today.



Pride World Forum panelists in San Diego, California.

Throughout the week of exchange in San Diego, the delegation experienced different facets of the region's LGBT movement. The delegation discussed the history and vision of the LGBT community with San Diego LGBT Pride, considered the role of ally parents in the protection of LGBT youth with the San Diego chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), and explored

academic analysis in a half-day synthesis session with LGBT Studies and Women's Studies professors at San Diego State University.

While in San Diego, the delegation even had the chance to meet and share stories with 50 & Better Together, a LGBT senior support group in the region. Irina Segade, Training and Education Coordinator at the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), met with the delegation to discuss her organization's role in combating bullying in the local school systems. “This was one of the most heartening and inspiring experiences that I have had ... I was truly humbled by [the visitors'] bravery, energy, and dedication,” she said.

At the end of the week, two of the visitors were invited to speak on the KPBS Evening Edition program. In the interview, LGBT activist Rocio Fernanda from Mexico stated her appreciation for the potential of international diplomacy to advance LGBT rights. “By empowering leaders like us and giving us training, we can take the best things that America has to our countries and make them reach to the stars,” she said. When asked about the program, Tung Khac Tran answered, “the trip was perfectly crafted for me and my organization...we had a chance to visit different institutions and we learned so much about local efforts to teach tolerance and build an inclusive society. Those are things I want to bring back and apply in Vietnam.”

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is the US Department of State's premier professional exchange program. Launched in 1940, the IVLP seeks to build mutual understanding between the US and other countries through carefully designed short-stay visits to the US for current and emerging foreign leaders. These programs reflect the visitors' professional interests and support the foreign policy goals of the US. Before they became world leaders, Nicolas Sarkozy of France, Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, and Tony Blair of Great

Britain came to the US under the auspices of the IVLP. Before their rise to power, they had an opportunity to form their own opinions of the US firsthand.

Over 325 current and former chiefs of state or heads of government, 1,500 cabinet-level ministers, and many other distinguished world leaders in government and the private sector are also alumni of the program. In 2013, 4,854 international leaders from 190 countries came to the US through the IVLP. With over 95 community-based organizations commissioned across the US to implement the program, the San Diego Diplomacy Council is the US Department of State's exclusive partner in the San Diego region. Celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2014, the San Diego Diplomacy Council has brought over 13,000 emerging leaders from around the world to the region through this program since the organization's inception in 1979.

Although the IVLP has longevity, its programmatic focus on LGBT rights is a more recent evolution. The “Human Rights & Gender Identity” delegation in San Diego last summer was designed in conjunction with the US Department of State's new strategic focus on foreign policy initiatives in support of LGBT rights. Vice President Joe Biden, who has emerged as a leading gay rights advocate within the Obama administration has called the protection of LGBT rights “the civil rights issue of our day.”<sup>1</sup> More recently, “President Obama has specifically directed that American diplomacy and American assistance promote and protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender men and women, all around the world.”<sup>2</sup> In a recent address, White House National Security Advisor Susan Rice verified, “There are almost 80 countries in this world

where discrimination against LGBT citizens is enshrined in law, and that number threatens to grow. In seven countries — eight, if Brunei continues on its path — same-sex acts are punishable by death.”<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that American diplomatic efforts are necessary to not only immediately protect LGBT communities worldwide from anti-gay violence and discrimination, but to also

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WITH THE AMBITION TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND EXPAND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, THE PRACTICE OF CITIZEN DIPLOMACY REMAINS A CONVINCING VIABLE OPTION TOWARDS PEACE.

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propel forward the global movement of inclusion and equality. This is arguably one of the most challenging international human rights issues facing the US today. Biden boldly declared that “protecting gay rights is a defining mark of a civilized nation and must trump national cultures and social traditions. I don't care what your culture is. Inhumanity is inhumanity. Prejudice is prejudice is prejudice.”<sup>4</sup>

As Vietnamese visitor Tran stated at the *Pride World Forum*, our challenges and our successes are shared. The effects of the perpetration of abuse on one community have a spillover effect, as international borders become more porous. Congruently, Rice states:

It offends our common humanity when men or women anywhere in the world are beaten or abused, or when individuals anywhere have their rights restricted because of who they are. And, it doesn't just harm those who are targeted. It rends the bonds that knit society together. Trust recedes; suspicion spreads. Entire countries are deprived of vital contributions from citizens in minority groups.<sup>5</sup>

The need for diplomacy and shared action among citizens is clear. The San Diego Diplomacy Council is honored to be able to support said foreign policy initiatives, and is committed to the aim of creating a more peaceful and prosperous world for all.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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*Julia Slupska is a Polish-American International Relations student at the London School of Economics. She is extremely interested in civil society efforts to change the international system, and is currently doing research on LGBT activism inspired by her experiences with the "Human Rights and Gender Identity" delegation.*

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## LGBT DIPLOMACY IN THE UK

By Bernadette Greene

As a marathon runner, I know that the goal is to start with an end-game in mind, but to keep that end-game flexible and fluid enough to meet the local conditions with which you are faced and to never give up, no matter how hard things get. LGBT diplomacy is like a marathon.

In many countries, realization of human rights for all regardless of sexual orientation will take time, pace, and patience. Let me put this into historical context: 16th Century England had the Buggery Act (1533), which applied the death penalty for gay sex in England. This was not repealed until the 19th century. It took three centuries to change a mindset, culture, and values in the UK. But look at where we are now: the UK record on promoting equality and non-discrimination for LGBT citizens domestically over the previous decade has brought an end to most discrimination in the content and application of the law inside the UK, including the historic Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act of 2013.<sup>1</sup>

The UK Government has integrated LGBT acceptance as part of its commitment to human rights on the basis of equality and non-discrimination. We have also supported efforts at the EU level to ensure that all citizens of the EU enjoy equal rights. The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is clear: human rights are universal and should apply equally to all people everywhere.<sup>2</sup> It is completely incompatible with international human rights laws to make consenting same-sex relations illegal and to deny rights to people on the basis of their sexuality. So the defense of LGBT rights has to be part of our foreign policy, and at the core of

our work on human rights. How can democratic governance and sustainable development take place where people are excluded from enjoying their basic human rights?

Although there have been improvements on the global stage in recognition and acceptance of the LGBT community over the years, a few countries still have a maximum penalty of death and some have a maximum sentence of life imprisonment for consensual same-sex relations. Other nations criminalize such partnerships but with lesser penalties. These are clear signs of the tough and much needed work that lies ahead of us before full equality for all is achieved.

The two pillars of the British government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) LGBT diplomacy efforts are equality and non-discrimination. Under the former, we identify where we can add value to existing equality and non-discrimination work, for example through education and/or training programs with local NGOs who are better placed to understand the local nuances of the countries we work in and thus able to pace and target our work appropriately. Under the latter, our priority is to focus on countries where: (1) there is complete illegality; (2) there are moves to introduce decriminalization; or (3) there is a movement to impose more restrictive laws (like in Uganda) and seek ways to raise the issue and lobby, again working through non-state actors for country specific action.

In most countries, we work closely with other like-minded states, like the Netherlands and Sweden, where combining our efforts will yield better results and ensure we are not

“THE DEFENSE OF LGBT RIGHTS HAS TO BE PART OF [THE UK'S] FOREIGN POLICY, AND AT THE CORE OF OUR WORK ON HUMAN RIGHTS.”

repeating the same education or training the same civil society actors. We want to ensure that we build on what we are each doing to give a better offering to the countries in which we are posted.

The FCO's LGBT diplomacy initiatives cover a variety of areas, including:

- *The state of the criminal law:* we use our Diplomatic Posts to lobby for decriminalisation of same-sex relationships;
- *Freedom of association and assembly:* in addition to the LGBT community itself, we are aware that LGBT activists are often targets for persecution and we have worked hard to ensure that these groups are included among human rights defenders on behalf of whom the UK lobby, in conjunction with our EU counterparts;
- *Freedom of expression:* the UK recently launched the "LOVE is GREAT" campaign. This is primarily a VisitBritain public relations effort, highlighting LGBT-friendly locations in the UK like Brighton, Soho, Manchester, and others. The FCO has adopted this under our "Know Before You Go" campaign for UK citizens travelling abroad. We are working with different Diplomatic Posts to identify LGBT friendly holiday destinations where citizens can express their love freely without fear of bigotry or persecution;
- *Freedom of privacy:* this primarily relates to advocating for transsexual citizens and their right to a private life. Within countries where the European Court of Human Rights operates, this includes not just the right to appropriate medical and psychological treatment, but also the right to obtain legal recognition post-surgery for those changing gender;

- *Sexual health:* we work to ensure LGBT citizens have the right access to education and training, specifically regarding HIV and AIDS; and
- *Health education:* we promote health education through our Diplomatic Posts. This can be one of the most effective ways to address LGBT issues, as it is easier for some countries to address this as a matter of public health rather than human rights.

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IT IS SHOCKING THAT HOMOSEXUALITY IS STILL ILLEGAL IN SO MANY COMMONWEALTH MEMBER STATES, AND IT MUST BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF [THE UK'S] RELATIONS WITH THOSE COUNTRIES TO PERSUADE THEM TO DO BETTER.

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We advocate practical steps through our Diplomatic Posts, such as:

- Supporting efforts of civil society to change laws and social attitudes;
- Using international mechanisms, for example ensuring that visiting UN, EU, OSCE human rights bodies meet with local NGOs;
- Briefing visiting UK dignitaries: Ambassadors, Ministers, and the like, to encourage them to raise issues at the highest levels during their visits;
- Working with other Missions to deliver demarches on human rights abuses;
- Ensuring that information contained in EU Human Rights reports is accurate for each host nation in which we are represented, reflecting the legal and social situation and

inclusive of improvements/setbacks where required; and

- Facilitating continuous dialogue, for example the use of political dialogue to bring up issues regularly so as to remind host nations of our interest in this area.

There are a number of bodies where the FCO can help to set the agenda and influence the content of work, for example the UN, EU, OSCE, and Commonwealth. In some of these, civil society can be very influential. Use of public diplomacy tools lends credibility to local civil society in advocating non-discrimination.

The work done by our Diplomatic Posts has had a positive impact on public debate about changing laws and attitudes from the inclusion of sexual orientation in the anti-discrimination law, to dissuading governments from criminalizing consenting same sex relations in revised penal codes.

Some concrete examples of our work around the world include:

- **RUSSIA:** last year, our Embassy supported an event by the Russian LGBT Sports Federation to raise awareness of LGBT rights and funded a project to increase the capacity of LGBT civil society organizations. We regularly raise LGBT issues with the Russian authorities. Officials regularly meet activists in Russia and attend events to demonstrate our support. We also support the operation of a hotline for the LGBT community.
- **UGANDA:** we continue to support training, advocacy, and legal cases related to protection of LGBT rights. The FCO has supported a project run by the UK NGO, Kaleidoscope, to provide communications advice to Uganda's LGBT community. We are in regular dialogue with the Ugandan government and parliament and we will

continue to raise our concerns about any legislation which could lead to further persecution and discrimination against LGBT individuals and which is incompatible with Uganda's treaty obligations.

- **SERBIA:** our Embassy supported projects that facilitated the implementation of Serbia's anti-discrimination strategy, countered misconceptions of the LGBT community, and trained social workers to improve services for LGBT citizens and their families in Serbia.
- **NIGERIA:** we are in regular contact with the LGBT community and other like-minded countries to show our solidarity against a bill that will further criminalize same-sex relationships.
- **THE GAMBIA:** we are concerned about the Aggravated Homosexuality Bill and the British Embassy and EU Delegation in Banjul made presentations to the Gambian Minister of Foreign Affairs protesting about its discriminatory nature.<sup>3</sup>
- **BRAZIL, HUNGARY, CHILE, CROATIA, JAMACIA, POLAND AND SRI LANKA,** among other Diplomatic Posts, have worked with local civil society groups to run similar events and projects.
- **COUNCIL OF EUROPE:** in 2013, the UK hosted a Council of Europe conference on new EU LGBT guidelines.

One of the last acts of our former Foreign Secretary (The Right Honorable William Hague) was to write to the Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations, urging him to use his position to press member states to live up to their responsibilities to promote the rights of LGBT citizens. We welcome recent statements



by the Commonwealth Secretary General to this effect. It is shocking that homosexuality is still illegal in so many Commonwealth member states, and it must be an important part of our relations with those countries to persuade them to do better.

While the situation is bleak in many parts of the world, the UK has an extremely strong foundation for promoting LGBT rights worldwide through our global network of Embassies around the world, our leading international position, and our excellent partner organizations.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Bernadette Greene is the UK's Deputy Consul-General in Los Angeles. Her role is to enhance UK/US ties by developing, promoting and facilitating local relations across a wide spectrum of areas. Her work for the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) has taken her to countries as close to home as Switzerland, and as far apart as Africa and Iraq. Ms. Greene was co-Chair of the Foreign Office Lesbian and Gay Group (FLAGG) between 2010-2012. During that time she was successful in taking the FCO into the UK's top employer for LGBT staff through the Stonewall UK Workplace Equality Index 2010 and 2011 — reaching 17th and 16th place respectively out of 100 employers; a testament to the success of the FCO's 'Fairness for All' policy.*

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## TELLING JAPAN'S STORY TO THE WORLD

By Nancy Snow

In Japan, it's common currency to talk about the country's low fertility rate. There is a national obsession with women and men coupling in heterosexual marriage to form families. Shigeru Ishiba, the minister with the long job title (Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy) says that "Japan will die off" if the number of Japanese doesn't increase.<sup>1</sup> The country's future, perhaps its very survival, depends on a revival of that playground rhyme of named boy and girl, sitting in a tree, "Kay Eye Ess Ess Eye En Gee." The government's goal is 1.8 babies in the baby carriage from the present 1 child per couple. Japan is expected to decline in population by at least 10 million over the next decade to fewer than 120 million, which makes the coupling opportunities even scarcer, and altogether more urgent.

So imagine if you are an LGBT rights and awareness advocate living in Tokyo, as I am (I have traveled to Japan off and on since 1993 when I first arrived on an official government exchange from the United States Information Agency. Tokyo is now my second home). Put simply, promoting the rights of sexual and sexual identity minorities in healthcare, housing, or even simple awareness is "bimyo," Japanese slang for sensitive, complicated, delicate. Bimyo is the go-to answer to difficult questions that a person doesn't want to answer, and there are plenty of these situations in Japan. The LGBT rights advocacy issue stands front and center in Bimyo-land. It is not a high priority and it rocks the ship of state that wants more babies.

Rocking the boat is much more

acceptable in J-Pop or J-Fashion, which is why popular openly gay or gay-friendly characters appear readily as drag queens or cross-dressers. But this type of camp won't build a fire of social change. There is a sideshow aspect to any LGBT acceptance because Japan has always had a quiet tolerance for performance outliers who don't change the status quo. Proudly singing "We Are Family" or publicly displaying one's sexual affections, gay or straight, are not culturally appropriate. This explains why LGBT-friendly happenings in Japan draw international news coverage. They stand out in a dominant culture of individual reserve and politeness as well as social conformity and tradition.

“THERE IS A SIDESHOW ASPECT TO ANY LGBT ACCEPTANCE BECAUSE JAPAN HAS ALWAYS HAD A QUIET TOLERANCE FOR PERFORMANCE OUTLIERS WHO DON'T CHANGE THE STATUS QUO.”

In 2012, Tokyo Disney announced that it would allow same-sex couples to marry at its resort. Same-sex marriage has no legal standing in Japan, but in 2013 two women were symbolically married

there, prompting *Guardian* writer Nichi Hodgson to state, "in a country where apolitical fantasy dress-up is a national pastime, a fake wedding in an imported land of make-believe is hardly a victory for LGBT rights."<sup>2</sup> Disneyfication of same-sex marriage in Japan is, to some critics, not even a small step forward, because it's more show than go.

On April 27, 2014, global headlines lit up with pictures of a smiling and waving Akie Abe, wife of the conservative Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, at Tokyo's Pride Parade, a now two-decade old event that is not just about LGBT rights inclusion, but also diversity promotion in this very homogenous nation.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Abe seems to delight in rubbing her husband the wrong way

on issues like nuclear energy (she's against it), and her freethinking open personality has made her a media darling. In June 2014, she attended a US Embassy reception at Ambassador Caroline Kennedy's residence in support of LGBT Pride Month in the United States where "Star Trek" actor and gay rights activist, George Takei, spoke with a sense of optimism. He told *The Associated Press* that he's "optimistic" about change in Japan. "I do think that Japan will be one of the nations that has equality, and that too will serve as an example for other Asian nations."<sup>4</sup>

A prominent American celebrity like Takei speaking out in favor of LGBT rights is not surprising given the surge of acceptance for same-sex marriage

and civil rights protections in the United States. But Japan has many equality mountains to climb, which leaves any LGBT movement with a sense of waiting its turn. Japan's

equality status between men and women is wobbly at best and abysmal at worst, given its cultural and economic superpower reputation. The Global Gender Gap Report 2014 ranks Japan 104 out of 142 countries, behind Armenia, Ghana, and Tajikistan.<sup>5</sup> Abenomics is fused with Womenomics but this push for women's empowerment in Japan is a narrow focus on heterosexual married with children types or increasing the percentage of executive women in corporate suites. This narrowcasting of women's options reflects in a Japanese media system and "Cool Japan" public diplomacy campaign that promotes the "kawaii" (cute, child-like) or Lolita high school girl images that play into predominantly heterosexual male fantasies.<sup>6</sup> Japanologist Laura Miller calls this a "cute

parade and the pimping of Japan."<sup>7</sup>

Right now, it's hard to know how far Mrs. Abe might go to advocate for broader LGBT rights. She is a member of the UNAIDS committee, and combating AIDS around the world seems to have been the tipping point in her awakening to human rights inclusion. Nevertheless, her ability to soften the hard edges of her husband's conservative nationalist agenda holds promise as a role model for social change in a nation famous for the proverbial "Deru kui wa utareru" (the stake that sticks up gets hammered down).

After appearing on a "Rainbow Pride" float to the cheers of the more than 14,000 attendees, Akie Abe posted on her Facebook page:

"I want to build a society where everyone can live a happy, enriched life without discrimination."

Well said. But the rub is in the implementation

of anti-discrimination laws that protect sexual minorities. And that's where Japan is not gaining ground fast enough. In July 2014, the United Nations Human Rights Committee called on Japan to pass comprehensive political and civil rights legislation that would "prohibit discrimination on all grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity."<sup>8</sup>

The best opportunity for LGBT rights going forward is to link Japan's national and global image of a friendly, tolerant, and safe place with support for sexual minorities. Japan does not have religiously-prescribed moral objections associated with opposition to sexual minority rights. A 2013 Pew Research Center survey of global views on morality showed that less than one-third (31%) of Japanese held personal beliefs

that homosexuality was morally unacceptable while a near two-thirds majority believed homosexuality was either morally acceptable (38%) or morally neutral (25%).<sup>9</sup> As [Patrick Linehan](#), USC Public Diplomat in Residence and former US Consul General in Osaka, Japan puts it: "unlike the US and other countries, there is no religion-based discrimination or hatred of sexual minorities in Japan. However, there is insufficient knowledge and awareness."<sup>10</sup> Part of building knowledge and awareness includes making sure that government officials uphold human rights standards in public statements. A 2014 United Nations report cautioned: "while the right to freedom of expression and opinion applies to everyone, government officials can reasonably be expected to promote and uphold human rights standards through their actions and speech, and certainly have an obligation to prevent violence and discrimination. Yet, statements made by the Japanese government demonstrate a lack of regard for the discrimination of LGBT people, and may even contribute to it."<sup>11</sup> Former Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara had told one reporter in 2010: "I think homosexuals have something missing from them somehow. It may be something genetic. I feel sorry for them being a minority." This statement was a follow-up to his rationale for more regulation of manga and anime. "We have got homosexuals casually appearing even on television. Japan has become far too untamed."<sup>12</sup>

Japan has a global reputation as a country that is far more untamed in pornography and hyper-sexualized images of young women in manga and anime and far too tame about its incomplete record on human rights. The 2020 Olympics are looming and Japan has an opportunity to make a statement to the world that it welcomes all with open arms. We saw LGBT history take a giant leap backwards in Sochi, Russia. Japan may be changing that direction. The official Japan National Tourism

Organization website recently added an LGBT section, "The Gay and Lesbian Guide to Japan" ([japantravelinfo.com/lgbt](http://japantravelinfo.com/lgbt)). Even if it is just a business-as-usual sign of niche marketing, it is also a positive symbol of Japan's more open tolerance and acceptance than one would have seen a few years ago. Star Trek's George Takei believes that Japan will serve as an LGBT example to other Asian nations and I have no reason to doubt a man who once explored worlds unknown aboard the starship Enterprise. Complications aside, we all can look forward to making LGBT acceptance and inclusion, along with gender equality, bookends for the final frontier of human rights in Japan.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Dr. Nancy Snow is an Abe Fellow and Visiting Professor at Keio University where she is writing a book about Japan's nation brand image and reputation since 3/11. She first traveled to Japan in 1993 on an official government exchange from the United States Information Agency. She now makes Tokyo her second home.*

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## ON COMING OUT IN THE NAVY

An Interview with Brett Jones

Born into a military family, Brett Jones spent his early life travelling to the different duty stations around the world to which his father was assigned. After high school he enlisted in the Navy, intent on becoming a Navy SEAL, and spent almost 10 years there. As a SEAL, he was stationed at SEAL Team 8 where he did two harrowing 6-month deployments. At the end of his second deployment, he became a plank owner of SEAL Team 10. He was forced out of the closet in the SEAL community, and became the first openly gay Navy SEAL on active duty. Brett documented this experience in his newly released book *Pride: The Story of the First Openly Gay Navy Seal*. Brett received many awards and accolades during his Navy tenure. Currently, Brett focuses on Riley Security, a security firm that he and his husband Jason White, a former police sergeant, founded. Through their groundbreaking training program, rigorous hiring process, and dedication to their customers, they continually raise the bar on private security in Alabama. Brett currently resides in North Alabama with his husband and their son.

*Public Diplomacy Magazine* editor-in-chief, Jocelyn Coffin, interviewed Brett to learn more about his experience as the first openly gay Navy SEAL, his views on equality in the military, and why he thinks the Navy is an ambassador for peace around the world.

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***Public Diplomacy Magazine:*** How did you decide to become a Navy SEAL?

Brett Jones: I came to the decision to pursue a career in special operations through a lot of soul searching and prayer. I had a pretty difficult childhood and my adolescence was full of a lot of failures. I failed in school, I failed my parents,

and I failed society's expectations. I wanted to attempt the most challenging career that I could possibly dream of. The Navy SEAL community is considered one of the most competitive and elite forces in the world and I wanted to be a part of something that I was going to be proud of.

**PDM:** Once in the Navy, what was your experience? How did that change when you came out?

BJ: There's the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the psychological aspects. It was the most difficult venture I'd ever experienced and I succeeded and it felt really awesome. The success that my team and I achieved as SEALs was a source of great pride and confidence and even more so was the teamwork that was required for us to excel. My source of pride in the SEAL community and the opportunity to serve my teams didn't change when I came out and it hasn't changed today.





**PDM:** In your book, you discuss the tremendous acceptance you felt when you came out. What are your views on military inclusion, how it has been enforced in the past, and how it is transforming?

BJ: I think we've learned that "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" does not succeed in the goal of inclusion because it forces service members, both men and women, to live a lie. Presently, I am very encouraged by the support in the Administration to allow gay men and women to serve openly. As for the future, I think we still have a long way to go. Honestly, I really look forward to the day when a gay CEO, professional athlete, or politician isn't front-page news.

**PDM:** Do you think the movement towards equality in the military will or has played out differently than the LGBT rights movement on a broader scale?

BJ: The way I judge — and this is a terrible way

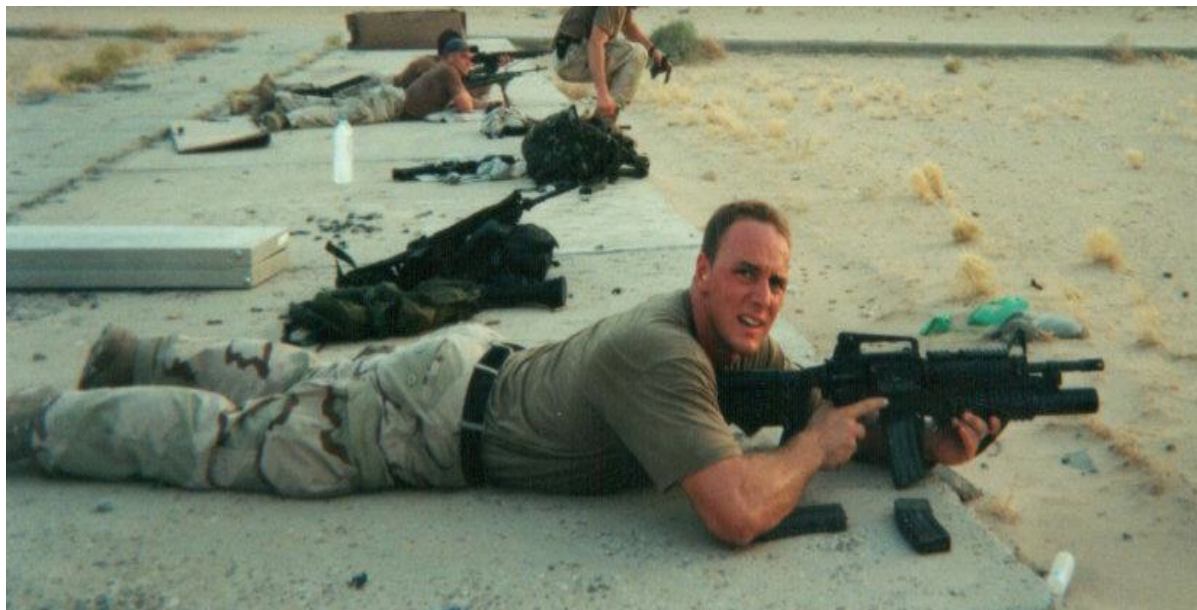
to do it — but I've got a very diverse group of friends on Facebook. I'd say about half of them are still in the military and the other half aren't. I see very polarized views on equality on both sides. I look back to when I first started in the military and how equality was viewed and it just

wasn't. I think now it is and we've made a lot of progress in the last ten years. It's moving about the same pace on both sides.

I LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN A GAY CEO, PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE, OR POLITICIAN ISN'T FRONT-PAGE NEWS.

**PDM:** Many argue that the military community is more concerned with an individual's contribution to the team and their ability to do good work rather than their sexual preference. Do you believe meritocracy influences equality in the Navy?

BJ: From my personal experience, my brothers and I were more interested in a member's competency, skill, and dedication to a team than what was really going on in their sex lives. There's a Navy saying and it goes like this, "on the strength of one link in the cable dependeth the



might of the chain." So if one person isn't pulling the strength, it's going to affect the performance of the team.

**PDM:** Do you see the Navy's views on equality impacting the places where it operates?

BJ: Every culture is different and some will admire and embrace the Navy's progress in terms of allowing gay men and women to serve openly and other cultures will find it unacceptable. I look forward to the day when an individual's sexual orientation or the military services' attitude towards it will no longer be a dividing issue, because ultimately only by embracing diversity can we be strengthened by our differences.

**PDM:** Do you think members of the Navy consider themselves advocates or diplomats abroad?

BJ: Well, I kind of look at the Navy as an ambassador of peace around the world. On a daily basis, there are hundreds of humanitarian operations underway in communities and different countries. Unfortunately, these operations don't get as much press as the wars and contingency operations, but I believe they're equally as important. I do believe.

**PDM:** Do you think the Navy plays a powerful role in the LGBT movement in terms of agenda setting and serving as a role model for other military and international entities?

ULTIMATELY ONLY BY EMBRACING DIVERSITY CAN WE BE STRENGTHENED BY OUR DIFFERENCES.

DJ: I've spoken with an organization called the American Military Partner Association (AMPA). They told me some of the issues they're still facing. Veterans feel they aren't being treated fairly. For example, if a married couple goes to a state that



doesn't allow gay marriage, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will not recognize them. When it comes to buying a house together, the VA won't issue a loan to both of them. It has to be one or the other. That's an area where we need some work. I think another area we could use some work is with the chaplains. This woman was telling me a story about this guy in Afghanistan who was contemplating killing

himself over his sexual identity and because that chaplain was a Southern Baptist, he was not allowed to offer help to that soldier because he would've lost his credentials, which is just terrible. Obviously

there's still the issue of transgendered people being able to serve openly. So there's a lot of work, but like I said, it's moving in the right direction.

**PDM:** What kind of communication tools do you use to promote awareness, tell your story, and promote equality amongst religious extremists, politicians, or other organizations that criticize equality?

**BJ:** My first attempt to promote awareness and acceptance was to tell my personal story in my book. I'd like to reach out to anyone that is struggling with their identity or orientation and let them know that there's nothing wrong with being different. Everyone has unique gifts and perspectives to offer. I've recently set up a Facebook page and written several blogs to take advantage of outreach through social media. As far as extremists and organizations that criticize equality, I honestly have to respect their opinions and their ability to express their views through the first amendment. I fought to protect those freedoms and my brother died protecting those freedoms. I'm proud to live in a country that allows expression of polarizing views.

**PDM:** You have a strong online presence. Has an audience outside of the US begun to tune into your story?

**BJ:** Yes, my Facebook has been reaching people from other countries. I get a few people coming in and liking the page and my personal page from all walks and all places. It's really amazing.

**PDM:** Can you tell us about your future plans or any projects you're currently working on?

**BJ:** Something that's really important to me and a big part of why I wrote the book is I want to reach out to people who might be struggling with who they are or who may know who they are, but are dealing with harassment and stuff like that. There's an organization called the Trevor Project that I feel very strongly for, along with the American Military Partner Association. The two organizations are doing a lot for the community,

especially the Trevor Project. They're saving people's lives. It's very important to me.

**PDM:** In a radio interview, you said "It takes time for that acceptance to become more universal in the Navy." What do you think it will take for acceptance to become universal?

**BJ:** Overall, the Navy and the military are organizations that are really deep in tradition that goes back centuries and change takes time and change is hard. I think acceptance will take time and patience, and honestly, a cultural shift in the way that the Navy embraces diversity.



# EVOLVING NARRATIVES

Global Messaging for LGBT Youth:  
A Case Study of the It Gets Better Project  
By J.W. Tindall

GLAAD & LGBT Awareness:  
Reshaping Media Awareness Narratives and Advocating for Equality & Cultural Change  
By Monica Trasandes

LGBTI Issues and Public Diplomacy Symposium Overview  
By Nicholas J. Cull

Opening the Spaces of Public Diplomacy to Alternative Narratives:  
Reviewing 2014 Lammy Award winners *Mundo Cruel: Stories and Happiness, Like Water*  
A Book Review by Anna Loup

On LGBT Journalism: The More You Write About Us, the Better  
An Interview with Jonathan Rauch

USC's Media, Diversity, & Social Change Initiative  
An Interview with Marc Choueiti



## GLOBAL MESSAGING FOR LGBT YOUTH: A CASE STUDY OF THE IT GETS BETTER PROJECT

By J.W. Tindall

In September 2010, journalist, author, and media pundit Dan Savage created a short video with his husband, Terry, and uploaded it to YouTube.<sup>1</sup> The intent of this video was simple: to inspire hope for young lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people facing harassment, and to let them know that, with time, *it gets better*. At the time, Savage and Miller were just two of many people concerned with the recent teenage suicides that had occurred across the United States that summer. Many of these deaths came after years of anti-gay harassment. For Savage and Miller, who were also victims of anti-gay bullying as teens, this news was devastating. As public figures, they wanted to share their stories of overcoming similar challenges in an effort to instill hope in LGBT teens considering suicide or suffering as a result of harassment.

While there is a broad and growing acceptance of homosexuality in North America (60% in 2013, up from 49% in 2007), more than 1/3 of American LGBT teens have attempted suicide, a rate four times higher than their straight peers.<sup>2,3</sup> Social factors that can be attributed to increased suicide attempts for LGBT youth include a lack of family and/or school connectedness, depression, peer victimization, alcohol abuse, physical abuse by an adult, and overall school safety.<sup>4</sup> Alarming, according to the 2013 National School Climate Survey from the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network,<sup>5</sup>

- 55.5% of LGBT students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and 37.8% because of their gender expression.
- 74.1% of LGBT students were verbally harassed (e.g. called names or threatened), 36.2% were physically harassed (e.g. pushed

or shoved), 16.5% were physically assaulted (e.g. punched, kicked, injured with a weapon), and 49.0% experienced electronic harassment in the past year because of their sexual orientation.

- Over 50% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks or negative remarks about gender expression from their teachers or other school staff.
- 55.5% of LGBT students reported personally experiencing any LGBT-related discriminatory policies or practices at their school.

While it's important to acknowledge that not all teens that experience these negative social conditions at school go on to attempt suicide, research indicates that suicidal behavior is more closely linked to adolescents who are unable to identify healthy and worthwhile solutions to these stressful and harmful social situations.<sup>6</sup> Solutions that help lower suicide ideation and attempts include more positive school climates, stronger familial support and acceptance, and adult support in general.<sup>7</sup> Savage and Miller's YouTube video was an effort to help teens identify or find these healthy and worthwhile solutions in their everyday lives.

Shortly after being uploaded, the video went viral (it has now been viewed over two million times). In subsequent weeks, thousands of people from around the world quickly began posting their own *it gets better* videos. "What began as an optimistic response to a horrible situation resulted in thousands of participants collectively fashioning a story of LGBT triumph despite innumerable travails."<sup>8</sup> With thousands of videos pouring in, Savage and Miller decid-

ed to start the It Gets Better Project, an online-based nonprofit organization that works to collect these stories of hope and share them on the organization's website at [itgetsbetter.org](http://itgetsbetter.org). To date, the Project has over 60,000 videos in its entirely user-created online library.

Since the Project's debut in 2010, calls to the Trevor Lifeline, a national suicide prevention hotline for LGBT youth operated by the Trevor Project, have increased by 50%, suggesting that LGBT youth are, in fact, identifying healthy and worthwhile strategies to face their challenges once they are convinced that *it gets better*.<sup>9</sup> The videos have now been collectively viewed over 50 million times worldwide. As of November 2014, the Project has an audience of over 370,000 on Facebook, a number that grows by over a thousand every week. Today, the Project's collection of *it gets better* videos is considered one of the most successful social media campaigns for social change of all time.<sup>10</sup>

For LGBT teens viewing these videos online, research affirms that hearing others' stories can have a large impact on the development of one's own affirmative identity. The results of a study recently published in *Clinical Psychological Science* suggests that convincing kids that things can change for the better helps them dodge depression, assists with aggression, and improves general health.<sup>11</sup> Online social support can be an incredibly effective means for helping teens mediate stress and find inclusivity.<sup>12</sup> Stories like those contained within *it gets better* videos have the potential to "set up possible ways of being in the world, [inviting] one to the realization of [their] possibilities."<sup>13</sup> By effectively utilizing commons-based peer production, the It Gets Better Project is helping teens identify with a greater online community, which in turn can help them combat social isolation and adversity.<sup>14</sup>

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ONLINE SOCIAL SUPPORT CAN BE INCREDIBLY EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR HELPING TEENS MEDIATE STRESS AND FIND INCULSIVITY.

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Due to the global accessibility of the internet and YouTube, *it gets better* videos have received international attention since their debut. Over 25% of the organization's followers on Facebook are from outside of the United States. Many of these people have requested that the *it gets better* message be accessible in their countries and in their languages. Noting that countless US organizations and institutions have been criticized for their neocolonial approaches to promoting social good abroad, the It Gets Better Project faces a unique challenge — answering the call of those abroad without encroaching on local cultures and customs, or introducing notions of acceptance and hope that may be unattainable.

Knowing how imperative it is for resources and messages to be tailored to local languages and cultures, the It Gets Better Project started its International Program in 2011 with the intent to provide support to individuals, groups, and organizations in spreading the *it gets better* message in countries abroad. To date, the International Program has supported and endorsed initiatives to benefit LGBT youth in over 20 countries, ranging from conferences and efforts with the foreign press, film and pride festivals, and targeted social media outreach.

In many instances, groups and organizations outside of the United States have requested more permanent and long-term programming efforts to share the *it gets better* message in their countries. In response, the It Gets Better Project has built a diverse and growing network of international affiliates. These affiliates are individual, grassroots startups — independently funded and operated groups or organizations — working to increase support for LGBT youth in their countries. Each has autonomously elected to adopt the It Gets Better Project's mission. Col-



lectively, these international affiliates communicate regularly and combine resources to tackle issues important to LGBT youth globally. Back at the It Gets Better Project's headquarters in the United States, staff members help coordinate these efforts, as well as provide them with digital resources, a broader international network, fundraising opportunities, targeted training, and more.

As of November 2014, the International Program works with a growing network of 10 active affiliate organizations in countries around the world. Because of the It Gets Better Project's insistence on all international work being true and authentic to local communities, the work being done in one affiliate country can look very different from the work being done in another. Each affiliate program — whether it's *Tudo Vai Melhorar* in Brazil, *Todo Mejora* in Chile, or *Es Wird Besser* in Switzerland — develops resources and effects change in ways that are uniquely tailored to their regional needs and local customs. While the It Gets Better Project hopes that its network of international affiliates will continue to grow, its current model has allowed for these partnerships to develop organically, and it will not abandon this approach.

For affiliate programs, online video collections and social media outreach remain at the center of their messaging to youth, but in response to local request and need, each develops original programs and digital content that expand the reach and influence of their organizations on the ground. This can include: (1) sharing safe and positive messages through television, print journalism, and radio; (2) engaging local communities through participation in pride

events, LGBT-oriented conferences, educational trainings, and a range of other activities; (3) providing mental health, legal, and other direct services in areas where resources for LGBT youth are scarce; and (4) partnering with governmental institutions and other LGBT nonprofit organizations to expand their reach and expertise.

Combined with the outreach from its international affiliates, the It Gets Better Project continues to receive videos and stories from around the world that are incredibly diverse, which constantly helps convert *it gets better* from

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KNOWING HOW IMPERTIVIE IT IS FOR RESOURCES AND MESSAGES TO BE TAILORED TO LOCAL LANGUAGES AND CULTURES, THE IT GETS BETTER PROJECT STARTED ITS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM...WITH THE INTENT TO ONLY PROVIDE SUPPORT IN SPREADING THE *IT GETS BETTER* MESSAGE WHEN ASKED TO DO SO.

”

a locally acknowledged message into a universal rallying cry. If research done in the United States is reflective of the impact that the Project and its affiliates could have on youth internationally, then there is a tremendous benefit to further spreading the *it gets*

better message abroad. As can be witnessed by the new *it gets better* videos uploaded every day, “there are important stories that remain untold, stories that could set up much more radically creative ways of being in the world.”<sup>15</sup> Through the use of a globally accessible platform, the Project and its affiliates look to continue bringing relatable and helpful stories of survival to those who need to hear them.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Justin Tindall is the International Program Coordinator at the [It Gets Better Project](#). Justin came to the It Gets Better Project in 2014 and has been working with youth since 2009. He began as an employment specialist helping young people in Nicaragua before serving as an educational specialist at the DREAM Project, a non-profit school in the Dominican Repub-*

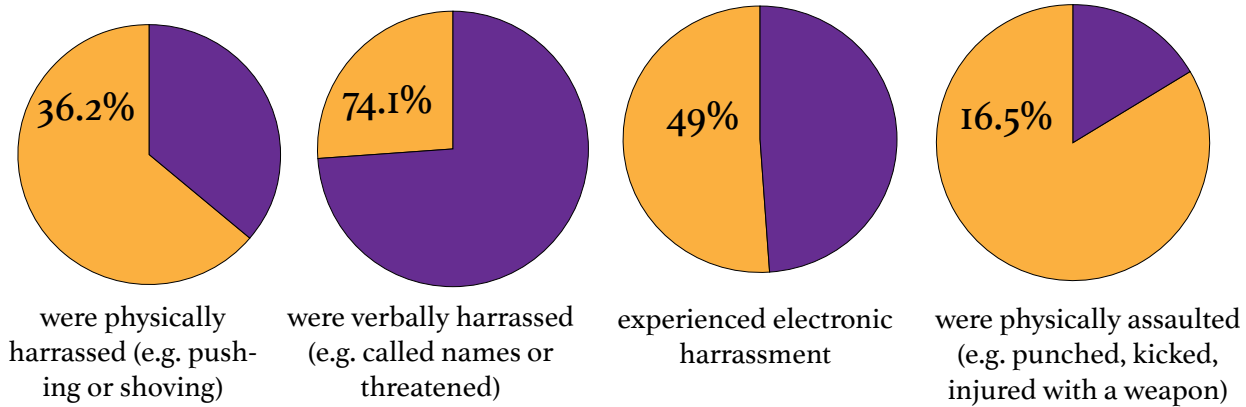
*lic. In 2012, Justin joined Teach For America (TFA) as a bilingual teacher in a low-income elementary school in San Antonio, Texas. Justin has a Bachelor's in International Area Studies (Latin America) and a Master's of Public Health (MPH) in Global Health Promotion from Brigham Young University. Both degrees had emphases on non-profit international development and policy.*

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# IT GETS BETTER PROJECT

## LGBT STUDENTS AT SCHOOL:



1 out of 4 American LGBT teens attempted **SUICIDE**

**4X** higher than straight peers

## SOCIAL FACTORS:

Safety Peer Victimization  
**School** Depression  
 Physical Abuse by an Adult  
 Alcohol Abuse Family

# LGBT YOUTH STATISTICS

Project debuted in **2010**

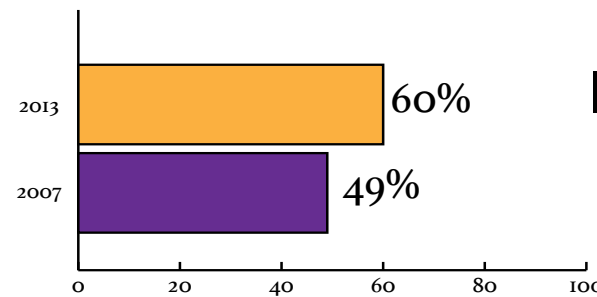
**50 million** views worldwide  
 over **60,000** videos in user-created online library  
 calls to Trevor Lifeline\* increased by **50%**  
 over **370,000** Facebook followers



**25%** followers from outside of the United States supported and endorsed initiatives to benefit LGBT Youth in over **20** countries

## GROWING

ACCEPTANCE OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN NORTH AMERICA



# GLAAD & LGBT AWARENESS: RESHAPING MEDIA AWARENESS NARRATIVES AND ADVOCATING FOR EQUALITY & CULTURAL CHANGE

By Monica Trasandes

In the last few years, there has been an alarming trend in some countries to vilify the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. From Russia and Uganda to Iran and the Dominican Republic, laws have been passed to criminalize LGBT people and campaigns launched to paint these communities as villainous, sick, or abnormal. Oftentimes, attempts by LGBT advocates to organize and demand fair treatment face ferocious backlash.

Attempts to make invisible or vilify and scapegoat LGBT people are most successful in cultures where LGBT people are either not represented in the media or are portrayed in negative or stereotypical ways. GLAAD's mission is to raise awareness of LGBT issues by reshaping media narratives and advocating for equality and cultural change around the world. GLAAD learned long ago that lack of LGBT visibility in the media helps fuel ignorance, which can foster prejudice and hate. Conversely, LGBT inclusion in all forms of media, especially entertainment media, has the power to create an understanding of, and even a bond with, LGBT characters, which then extends to the relationships media consumers have with the LGBT people around them.

Past US surveys have indicated that some of the most powerful changes in anti-LGBT attitudes come when individuals have a family member or friend come out to them. This is followed by the power of respectful

media representations. Once a person realizes that a beloved family member or friend is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, the stereotypes they may have harbored are then replaced by their warm feelings toward that friend or family member. The same happens with media representation that is fair and accurate: it replaces stereotypes and myths with the real-life stories of LGBT people.

In the United States, LGBT representation has improved, although much more slowly in Spanish-language media. We still have much more to do: a paltry percentage of the main characters in film are LGBT, and those representations are often problematic. Even so, the modest successes of increased coverage in US media are hard to replicate in countries with little or no press freedom or in countries wherein media is controlled by religious institutions or owned by conservative groups or families.

What GLAAD has encountered in many countries is that the media treats LGBT people and issues as a controversial topic that they prefer to ignore, rather than potentially insult viewers. Orientation and gender identity/expression are treated like "lifestyle" choices or actions, grouped in with topics like drug abuse, abortion, and other hot-button issues. If we cannot tell our stories in media, societies never stop pathologizing or judging orientation and gender identity/expression.

“ATTEMPTS TO MAKE INVISIBLE OR VILIFY AND SCAPEGOAT LGBT PEOPLE ARE MOST SUCCESSFUL IN CULTURES WHERE LGBT PEOPLE ARE EITHER NOT REPRESENTED IN THE MEDIA OR ARE PORTRAYED IN NEGATIVE OR STEREOTYPICAL WAYS.”

Some of the problematic media narratives GLAAD still sees around the world include:

- That being gay or transgender is something that was caused by trauma, parental disinterest, or maternal over attention;
- That being gay or transgender is a disorder to be treated, or a problematic aberration, as opposed to a characteristic that, while numerically less prevalent, exists in nature;
- That being gay or transgender is exported, brought in by outsiders;
- That LGBT people from the country itself do not exist;
- That gay and transgender people are fair game for comedy and that it's appropriate to write gay characters who are stereotypical and the object of ridicule or the butt of jokes; and
- That LGBT people are not so much individuals but a "taboo subject" about which most media consumers do not want to know, similar to controversial topics like abortion.

GLAAD counters these myths by urging media to improve their LGBT inclusion. That often means challenging the internalized homophobia of media professionals. While often a more liberal group of individuals, those working in media grew up in the very same homophobic culture where their viewers, readers, or listeners were raised, so it is to be expected that they, too, have absorbed misrepresentations and myths that cause discomfort with LGBT people. While it may not lead to creating derisive characterizations, that sort of unknown prejudice could lead to lack

“...MODEST SUCCESSES OF INCREASED COVERAGE IN US MEDIA ARE HARD TO REPLICATE IN COUNTRIES WITH LITTLE OR NO PRESS FREEDOM OR IN COUNTRIES WHEREIN MEDIA IS CONTROLLED BY RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OR OWNED BY CONSERVATIVE GROUPS OR FAMILIES.”

of inclusion. If, for example, you grew up hearing myths about LGBT people as parents, it would not occur to you to include two lesbian moms in a story about Mother's Day or to interview a gay father about the difficulty of an "empty nest."

In many countries, media professionals are open to discussions with GLAAD, often in partnership with local organizations. In the US, Mexico, Chile, and the Dominican Republic, GLAAD has met with local media in the company of local LGBT advocates who are best poised to regularly work with media professionals, offering resources and story ideas as well as feedback, both positive and negative, to the media's coverage of the LGBT community.

After educating media professionals and both challenging and motivating them to be more LGBT inclusive, it is imperative to ensure that those media professionals have access to local LGBT people who are willing to tell their stories. Having media onboard and ready to cover LGBT people and stories means we have to have LGBT people who are ready to go on camera and tell their stories. A second part of GLAAD's work is to help find LGBT people who are able to safely be out and visible to tell their stories.

Media has proven an invaluable mechanism for reaching large numbers of people in a format that is easily accessed and inviting, and so part of GLAAD's work has also been trying to provide media advocacy tools to smaller, often under or unfunded organizations. It is a challenge for us to help advocates in countries where media is either off-limits or in countries where being out can lead to murder, arrest, or even a death sentence. It is also difficult to motivate advocates to want to reach out to media whose negative coverage has stirred



more anti-LGBT bias. It can, however, be done.

In spring 2015, Ireland is likely going to conduct the first nation-wide referendum on marriage equality. GLAAD is working with LGBT advocates in Ireland on the best strategies to reach hearts and minds to not only support, but to vote in favor of marriage equality. For the last year and a half, GLAAD has been supporting LGBT advocates in Russia while the Russian government has continued to pass anti-LGBT laws and crack down on LGBT advocacy campaigns. We help garner international media attention for events like the Queer Fest, the Side by Side LGBT Film Festival, and the Russian Sports Federation Open Games. This gives voice to LGBT Russians to tell their own stories. Furthermore, GLAAD is continuing to draw media attention to the connection between US-based anti-LGBT advocates and the harsh oppression of LGBT people in Uganda. Although the law has been struck down (on a technicality), American anti-LGBT advocates continue to stoke animosity. Right now, the parliament is considering an even harsher law.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there have been some victories and some setbacks. Just as in the US, there are areas within each country with varying degrees of protection against discrimination for LGBT people and diverse families. In the Dominican Republic, although sexual orientation is not criminalized and despite the US appointment of an out gay ambassador, there has been a spate of anti-LGBT violence including at least one instance of reported police abuse of a transgender woman. Furthermore, local LGBT groups have been working for more than a quarter of a century to gain visibility, acceptance, and protections but have found high rates of discrimination in public sectors and constant raids by police. In Brazil, an increasingly large and powerful group of evangelical legislators have blocked legal advances for the LGBT community. Although marriage is legal in Mexico City and the state of

Coahuila, there are other states in the country that do not have these laws in place and the wife of the governor of Durango, for example, has felt comfortable making homophobic statements. Despite these setbacks, others are making progress. In Ecuador, a coalition of LGBT and allied groups led by the Silueta X Association were able to get TV Amazonas sanctioned for showing an episode of sketch comedy show “La Pareja Feliz” that used denigrating stereotypes of LGBT people and indigenous people.

We look forward to continuing to work with advocates all around the world to help them develop ways to reach traditional media as well as to use newer forms of media to tell their stories. For many, the simple act of storytelling can mean the difference between living an open, happy, and fruitful life and living one in perpetual hiding and fear.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Monica Trasandes is the Director of Spanish-Language Media at [GLAAD](#). She was born in Uruguay and grew up in San Diego. She studied at UC Santa Barbara and later, Emerson College. She is also a writer and her novel, Broken Like This, was published in November 2012.*

## LGBTI ISSUES & PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

By Nicholas J. Cull

The world is always changing but one of the most remarkable shifts of the past two decades is the evolution of attitudes around lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) rights and culture. This is an international phenomenon and it is only to be expected, therefore, that it has figured in foreign policy and most especially that element of foreign policy concerned with the engagement of foreign publics: public diplomacy. What might not be expected is the extent to which LGBTI issues illuminate so many aspects of public diplomacy. Listening, cultural diplomacy, online engagement, NGO diplomacy, and even place/nation branding all have a part in the story and were part of the discussion at this magazine’s one day symposium on the subject on November 27, 2014.

It is often noted that effective public diplomacy begins with listening. A fundamental way for an international actor to engage a foreign audience is to listen to that audience and to feed what is learned into its foreign policy formation process. More than this, it is essential that an actor listen to the community it represents and be prepared to reflect changes in identity and values in its international outreach. Both kinds of listening have relevance to the treatment of LGBTI issues within public diplomacy. LGBTI issues have emerged within public diplomacy over the last decade or so because those issues have achieved a greater salience worldwide. Diplomats have been listening to their own countries and to international opinion. It is important to emphasize that not everything that is heard in this listening is positive. One reason that some countries have placed especial emphasis on LGBTI rights as a dimension of human rights is be-

cause other international actors have sought to actively restrict those rights.

Public diplomacy is no longer the monopoly of the nation state and it is important to note that the original drivers of LGBTI diplomacy were not nations *per se*, but rather non-governmental organizations, the most significant being the [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association](#) (ILGA), which speaks on behalf of more than a thousand member organizations on the international stage and enjoys formal UN recognition. Its impressive global network includes regional initiatives in the global south including offices in Buenos Aires, Hong Kong and Johannesburg.<sup>1</sup> Activities range from working with the UN human rights structures to extend recognition of the rights of LGBTI people to outreach to promote the observation of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) each May 17th.<sup>2</sup> While ILGA has been deliberately addressing world opinion since 1978 the nature of our network society is such that successful domestic



*Keynote Speaker Ambassador David Huebner, former US Ambassador to New Zealand & Samoa*

campaigns can spill into international space. An excellent example of this from the LGBTI field is the international growth of “It Gets Better.” “It Gets Better” began as an American teen suicide prevention initiative in 2010 whereby LGBTI adults — beginning with writer Dan Savage and his partner Terry Miller — posted personal video testimony on YouTube to reassure teenagers experiencing social stigma as a result of their sexual identity that the pain would not last and there was much to look forward to. The “It Gets Better” videos became a meme and jumped almost immediately into multiple languages. The NGO that emerged around the initial post — the It Gets Better Project — developed an international dimension assisting the development and interconnection of international affiliate organizations. It is an excellent case of how viral communication can work and how once underway it can be effectively encouraged and sustained.<sup>3</sup>

LGBTI diplomacy has a bearing on the evolution of the place and nation brand in public diplomacy. LGBTI tolerance and notions of place have long been associated, beginning with bars, streets, and districts where LGBTI people could live and love openly. The concentrations of LGBTI friendly spaces have “scaled” to give LGBTI dimensions to entire cities beginning with San Francisco and now including Amsterdam, Berlin, and Tel Aviv. The next step was for the home nations of these cities to incorporate LGBTI values into their overall national brand. This has been done with an emphasis on both LGBTI-friendly politics and on the contributions of LGBTI people to culture including music, litera-

ture, and sports. The Netherlands has emphasized its commitment to international LGBTI rights among its highest foreign policy priorities. Britain’s British Council has long since included LGBTI culture within its exports including material destined for societies that might not be automatically sympathetic to that culture. The best-known example of this is the Council’s sponsorship of the international tour of the Volcano theatre’s play L.O.V.E. based on Shakespeare’s sonnets. The play included a same-sex kiss that outraged audiences in Orthodox Georgia, but was met with a standing ovation in Azerbaijan.<sup>4</sup> Representatives of

Finland are happy to be able to point out that the pioneering gay erotic artist known as Tom of Finland really was a Finn (Touko Laaksonen, 1920-1991) and underlined this with an exhibition at the Institut Culturel Finlandais in Paris (1999) and the release of a set of postage stamps featuring his art in September 2014.<sup>5</sup> Israeli cultural diplomats have celebrated the work of LGBTI artists like Dana International or the photographer Adi Nes, whose work has a strong homoerotic component, on the world stage.

Sometimes the foregrounding of LGBTI friendliness can seem more transparently self-interested. As when the British government’s tourist publicity agency “Visit Britain” marked the institution of same sex marriage rights in the country in 2014 by adapting the national marketing platform — the “Great” campaign — to include “Love is Great Britain” and inviting LGBTI Americans to win a holiday in the UK. The campaign was based on recognition that social openness was a positive quality sought by a majority

of consumers of all sexualities when choosing a holiday destination.<sup>6</sup> Such an approach has become more controversial in the case of Israel, which has incorporated gay Tel Aviv into its picture of the diversity of contemporary Israel. The approach challenges the association of Israel in the international imagination solely with the issue of the Israel-Palestine dispute even as it notes that Israel is better disposed towards the LGBTI community than its Arab neighbors. Some within the LGBTI community have accused Israeli agencies of a cynical “pink-washing” of the country’s image and the campaign is not helped by poll data showing that the Israeli public as a whole is not as comfortable with LGBTI rights as their European or North or South American comparators.<sup>7</sup> There are many countries that might usefully listen with humility to their own unresolved story of LGBTI rights.

The final dimension of LGBTI diplomacy to surface is explicit presence of LGBTI people within the diplomatic corps of the world. It seems incredible that a generation ago gay and lesbian diplomats were in most countries unable to declare their sexuality publically and in many bureaucracies were subject to dismissal if their sexuality became known. Progress in the US has been dramatic, including the extension of equal rights in matters of pension, spouse benefits, and so on, to the happy position in November 2009 when the US Senate confirmed its first openly gay ambassador: David Huebner, Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. The testimony of LGBTI diplomats like Ambassador Huebner and the former US Consul General to Osaka, Patrick Linehan, reveal that attitudes — including those within the Foreign Service — are still a work in progress.

Surveying any landscape in such rapid transition is an exhilarating experience and so

it is with the march of LGBTI diplomacy. It can be tempting to feel that the important battles have been won and take progress for granted. This is not the case. Scholars of public diplomacy would do well to examine the changes and see how and when official strategies and individual enterprise has made a difference, and to consider what needs to be done to keep the cause of LGBTI rights moving forward. As ever

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EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT REQUIRES A CONVERSATION RATHER THAN A MONOLOGUE.

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in public diplomacy listening remains the key. What we hear will not always be pleasant. The continued resistance of some countries — and some regions — to LGBTI rights should be treated seriously. The act of listening to what amounts to prejudice on the part of an unreceptive or intolerant society might be distasteful, and may present the risk of being perceived to affirm what one hears simply by listening; however, effective engagement requires a conversation rather than a monologue. Local partners are essential to this process. The discourse of LGBTI rights and of human rights more generally works best when it is in step with the needs and experiences of the society being engaged rather than being imposed from above by a remote country claiming a special share of insight.



Consular Panel, featuring representatives from Finland, Israel, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom



Former US Consul General to Osaka Patrick Linehan and Professor Nicholas J. Cull



## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

I am grateful to the organizers of the symposium “On the Right Side of History: Public Diplomacy and LGBT rights today,” and especially Jocelyn Coffin and Maria Portela who did the lion’s share of the work; to the USC Center for International Studies which provided a grant and Professor Jay Wang and our partners at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy for coupling the discussion to their own event; to the speakers, scholars Laura Belmonte (Oklahoma State), James Pamment (University of Texas), Robert English (USC), Jordi Diaz (Guelph), Justin Tindall (It Gets Better Project), and Andre du Plessis (ILGA), diplomats David Huebner (USA), Dana Erlich (Israel), Bernadette Greene (UK), Ilse van Overveld (Netherlands), Juha P. Markkanen (Finland), and Patrick Linehan (USA), and to all the participants. It was a wonderful day of scholarship and the sharing of experience and best practices; a fitting memorial to those who have struggled in the past and a call to action to further advance LGBTI rights and human rights as a whole. Thank you all.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Nicholas J. Cull is Professor of Public Diplomacy and Director of the Master’s Program in Public Diplomacy at USC. His research and teaching interests are inter-disciplinary, and focus on the role of public engagement in foreign policy. He is the author of The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989 (Cambridge, 2008) and The Decline and Fall of the United States Information Agency: American Public Diplomacy, 1989-2001 (Palgrave, 2012).*

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## OPENING THE SPACES OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TO ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES: REVIEWING 2014 LAMMY AWARD WINNERS *MUNDO CRUEL: STORIES AND HAPPINESS, LIKE WATER*

A book review by Anna Loup

The works reviewed here are 2014 winners of “Lammy Awards” given by [Lambda Literary](http://LambdaLiterary.org), an organization founded in 1987 by the owner of the Lambda Rising Bookstore, L. Page Maccubbin. In 1989, the first Lambda Awards were held as a way to ensure that LGBT writers and narratives were part of the literary world’s consciousness. Over the last 25 years, Lambda Literary has grown to include writer’s retreats, an online space for writers and readers, and a program that focuses on developing young LGBT writers while they are still in school.

In the following short reviews of each book, gender and sexuality are of importance to the formation of each story. However, what makes each of these works impactful is their ability to convey the power of the intersection of family, religion, work, language, national identity, and LGBT identity. Both of these works are unique, yet profound, examples of LGBT narratives that span sexualities, genders, times, and spaces. Through prose, these often silenced narratives become accessible, at times painfully so, to the reader. This is where these works become tools of public diplomacy.

*Mundo Cruel: Stories* by Luis Negrón won the Lammy Award for “Best Gay Fiction.”<sup>1</sup> Translated from Spanish by Suzanne Jill Levine, *Mun-*

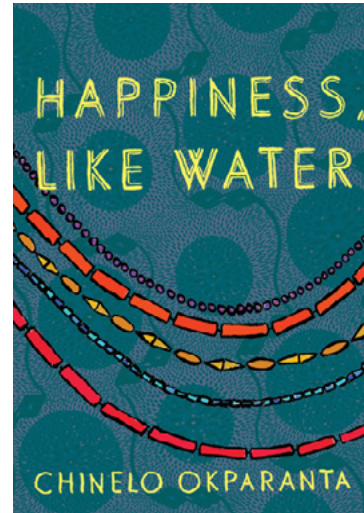
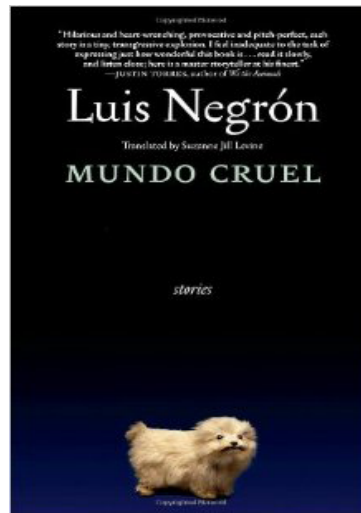
*do Cruel* looks at the gay culture of Puerto Rico. Within its pages are stories of self discovery, love, loss, AIDS, violence, religion, immigration, and what it means for gay men in Puerto Rico to live through the gay rights movement. Each story is told in a unique form, from traditional prose, to a phone call, to a conversation between two women, and also through letters that never receive responses. *Mundo Cruel* captures lives that are usually relegated to the periphery.

*Happiness, Like Water* by Chinelo Okparanta, winner of the Lammy for “Best Lesbian Fiction,” is a series of short stories that convey a narrative about much more than sexuality in Nigeria.<sup>2</sup> These are stories about mothers, daughters, house workers, and wives, all of which intersect with sexual identities. Much like the char-

acters in *Mundo Cruel*, the many intersecting identities that ebb and flow throughout the collection weave stories of women striving to live and love within their communities and families. These stories are about being heard, or not heard, by those around them. This is seen in the story “Wahala!” where neither Ezinne’s husband nor her mother can understand that her cries during sex are those of pain, not pleasure. It is







this failure to listen that is present throughout the lives of the women in these stories.

A common obstacle in public diplomacy is a failure to listen and respect the power and importance of narratives for both the speaker and the listener. *Mundo Cruel: Stories* and *Happiness, Like Water* are just two of the many collections of narratives that help underscore this important concept. This issue of *Public Diplomacy Magazine* is filled with narratives about the LGBT identity. Each is unique and important because each becomes a point where the diverse aspects of lives intersect to form the complete understanding of the being or beings behind it. Whether fiction or non-fiction, LGBT narratives need to be given thought and space within the dialogue around public diplomacy because they allow for more voices to be heard by practitioners, academics, and publics. This will allow for greater and more effective dialogues as a means to develop better public diplomacy strategies.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Anna Loup is a first year Master of Public Diplomacy student at the University of Southern California.*

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## ON LGBT JOURNALISM: THE MORE YOU WRITE ABOUT US, THE BETTER

An Interview with Jonathan Rauch

Jonathan Rauch is a journalist, author, and LGBT rights activist whose work sheds light on issues related to sexuality and gay rights. He currently serves as a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC. He is the author of six books including *Denial: My 25 Years Without a Soul* and *Gay Marriage: Why It Is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America*. He is a contributing editor of *National Journal* and *The Atlantic*, recipient of the 2005 National Magazine Award, and winner of the 2011 National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association prize for excellence in opinion writing.

*Public Diplomacy Magazine* staff editor Sohaela Amiri sat down with Jonathan to delve into some of the opportunities and challenges that contemporary international LGBT journalists face and what advocacy role they can play in advancing LGBT rights. This interview also covers topics at the intersection of US foreign policy and LGBT advocacy.

***Public Diplomacy Magazine:* How did you become interested in topics related to LGBT rights advocacy and what made you choose the medium of journalism for this purpose?**

Jonathan Rauch: In 1991, the editor of *The New Republic* magazine, Andrew Sullivan, asked me to write an article about gay rights issues. Despite the potential challenges, I decided to do it because I thought there was room to present my perspective, which was different from the dominant progressive left-wing, anti-capitalist, and anti-religion point of view. This turned out to be one of the milestones of my career. At a time when gay culture was widely associated



with parties and drugs, the gay people who were not countercultural—those who were inspired to have families and kids—were largely underrepresented.

**PDM:** How do you explain the recent revolution in attitudes towards homosexuality in the US?

JR: When I first started writing about gay issues about two decades ago, the public believed by a very large margin that homosexual relations were immoral. That has changed today. More people appreciate the resilience, love, and commitment among gay people. People showed empathy for the gay community during the AIDS panic once they saw that gay people were devoted and loving, not a threat to children or society. Over time, gay people gradually moved to the right side of public morality. It's hard to hate the people you know and love. Today, about three out of four Americans know a gay person; this ratio was reversed two decades ago. Additionally, the gay marriage movement was a helping factor because it showed that the gay community is interested in joining family, not undermining it. Writers and advocates played a role in the process as well. The emergence of human rights campaigns also allowed gay people to defend themselves.

People like Frank Kameny played a huge role.

Eventually, the gay press blossomed in the 1970s and by the 1990s, gay voices were present in mainstream media, such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist*. These voices, because of their powerful arguments for equality, were not easy to ignore. Over time, better arguments tend to prevail and that's what happened. The freedom to speak and tell our stories is gay people's best friend in the US and all over the world.

But dramatic changes, especially in US policies, have only happened in the past few years. The US government used to be a major persecutor of LGBT people: gay people were not allowed to have government jobs or obtain security clearance when eventually they could get those jobs; they were banned from serving in the military and even from having sex in the privacy of their own homes; LGBT teachers were fired. We were arrested and harassed on the street. The cops wouldn't help us. They would actually hurt us by publishing our names in the newspapers so that we would get fired from our jobs. We were regularly victims of hate crimes and terrorism, and oftentimes the government didn't help us. We were also scared to report crimes against us. It was not until 2003, after the Supreme Court overruled the laws prohibiting sodomy and the Massachusetts Supreme Court allowed for gay marriage, that things changed. Still, as recently as 2009, we could not serve in the military.

It's been really in the last five years that the US Government has actively switched sides. One major player is of course Barack Obama. Another player is Hillary Clinton who was by far, and beyond comparison, the most gay-friendly Secretary of State of the United States. She made

LGBT advocacy a part of America's message all over the world and understood that public diplomacy is inseparable from the pursuit of civil rights at home. For that, she deserves enormous credit.

**PDM: As you just mentioned, one of the recent mandates of the US Department of State is to promote LGBT rights around the world through its embassies and through public diplomacy. Have you followed US diplomats' activities in this regard?**

JR: Some US Embassies now have rainbow signs. These symbolic gestures are important, but more important than that is when diplomats, like Clinton (when she was the Secretary of State), discuss this issue in an international setting, such as the UN. I have nothing but gratitude toward her. I think she's a leader on this issue, and she has also turned around the State Department. We now have openly gay Ambassadors and Foreign Service Officers. This was unthinkable just a decade ago. Diplomats under the Obama Administration are standing up for this cause. They send the message that LGBT rights are a top priority of the US government.

**PDM: Do you follow LGBT issues globally? Do you see improvements on behalf of the US government and its policies to be impacting the rest of the world? In what ways?**

JR: Pro-gay advocacy in the US is contributing to anti-gay backlash in many foreign countries. In a lot of these countries, the main reason for anti-gay policies is domestic politics; they justify their anti-gay crackdowns as countering colonialism and foreign meddling. So yes, what America is

doing is having an impact—both positive and negative—around the world. But it is absolutely the right thing to do. Over the long run, there is no substitute for making our case in the war of ideas. I'm a realist in foreign policy; I don't believe in always putting human rights above other considerations, but I do believe in making our case. The key people to win over are moderates in the US and abroad and they will be persuaded by sound arguments. In the end, publics will be alienated and turned off by authoritarian abuses by their governments and they will come around, and that's why we should keep talking.

**PDM: With more and more journalists covering LGBT issues globally, do you think they need to be trained or educated to use proper terminology and semantics when covering sensitive topics?**

JR: I don't really think so. I know there are a lot of people who want to do sensitivity training for journalists, but I think that such efforts are counterproductive; people might become too worried about being wrong and give up writing about the topic all together. It's better if we welcome journalists to cover us. If what they write ends up being misguided, ignorant, or hateful, we can correct them. What we've learned since the 1950s is that gay people always benefit in the long run when people talk about them; it is when we're hidden and out of sight that bad things happen. I believe that for LGBT rights to advance, freedom of the press is the single most important factor. The more you write about us, the better.

**PDM: Your book, *Kindly Inquisitors*, talks about the importance of freedom of speech. You are also the vice president of the Independent Gay**

**Forum, a website which provides free access to articles and opinions penned by gay journalists. How important do you think it is for the LGBT community to tell their own stories before they are told for them?**

JR: An old philosopher says, "give me a lever and I will move the world." I say, "give me a free press and I will move the world." What I've learned in the course of my career, writing and speaking about gay issues in the past 23 years, is that it takes a long time for ideas to break through. But when ideas do break through, they do so in a very big way. It is therefore no coincidence that the countries that crack down on gay people are also countries that crack down on freedom of speech.

**PDM: How much do you think the internet has contributed to the advancement of the LGBT rights movement?**

JR: The internet is a resource for gay people in various countries to connect with other gay people all around the world and have access to Western perspectives that give them some hope of finding other voices and finding a community. However, I don't think the internet is a game changer in that it cannot really impact policies; it only reduces the isolation that gay people feel in a place like Uganda when the government is really out to get them. At a personal level,

it's important. At a socio-political level, it's just another channel among many. In the short-run, it might even make life harder for some people, when their governments are cracking down on gay movements more aggressively because such movements are now visible online.



**PDM:** What are strong key messages that activists can promulgate?

JR: The fundamental proposition is that all human beings are created equal. If we don't stand up for others' human rights, our own human rights will come into question at some point in time. Societies are better off when everyone can contribute and have a solid family life. So, equal rights for LGBT people and their social role in the community are not only good for LGBT people, but also for society as a whole. Human diversity is the greatest resource on the planet; human achievement and prosperity are dependent on that. Individuals not only do best when we can develop ourselves to our full potential as who we are, but also, societies function best and prosper the most when everyone in them has the opportunity to give what they're best at and to be themselves.

**PDM:** Do you have any advice for journalists who want to use their skills to advocate for LGBT rights?

JR: Be the best journalist you can be (gay or straight). Curiosity, empathy, and healthy skepticism

are key values of a journalist. And these are the values that have begun to defeat homophobia: curiosity about what the real truth is; empathy towards gay people who are suffering; and healthy criticism toward perceived wisdom that turns out to be wrong. We want journalists to feel very comfortable writing about us even if it's not always perfect. The world is not giving enough attention to anti-gay advocacy in many countries. I think that journalists should cover those stories.

Historically, gay people did not have help from the news media. Journalists were busy covering issues such as Watergate and were paying no attention to gay people. Over the years, the mainstream media has mostly either ignored gay people or adhered to stereotypes. Journalists can play a huge role in making sure that our issues get a fair share of attention. That doesn't mean that we should be militant in the newsroom and make everyone afraid to say something politically incorrect. I'm making a very different point, which is that we need to help people use their best judgment to go after these important stories and make sure that the stories that are really important are covered.

## USC'S MEDIA, DIVERSITY, & SOCIAL CHANGE INITIATIVE

An Interview with Marc Choueiti

The [Media, Diversity, & Social Change \(MDSC\) Initiative](#) at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism is a leading think tank dedicated to addressing issues of inequality in entertainment.<sup>1</sup> MDSC's research focuses on identifying gender and race imbalances both on-screen and behind the camera and making recommendations for improving representation across various diversity indicators. The MDSC Initiative has worked with hundreds of USC students who have served as valuable resource-adds since the Initiative began.

In November 2014, *Public Diplomacy Magazine* editors Sophia JeeYun Baik and Danielle Saroyan sat down with MDSC Project Administrator Marc Choueiti to discuss the progress of the MDSC Initiative in the five short years since its founding, in addition to how its work could expand to include the LGBT community going forward.

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***Public Diplomacy Magazine:*** Please tell us about the Media, Diversity, & Social Change Initiative: how did it start and what are its vision, values, and mission?

Marc Choueiti: The Media, Diversity, & Social Change Initiative was started five years ago by Dr. Stacy Smith at the USC Annenberg School. Her goal was to establish MDSC as a think tank that provides key research to eliminate gender, race, and ethnic inequality within the entertainment industry. Our work is particularly focused on on-screen representation of characters in top grossing movies as well as television content. This entails not only embarking on research to amass a collection of work that illuminates inequalities and imbalances; it is also about mak-

ing a case for how we can move the needle and change things for the better without affecting the story.

**PDM:** As a leading think tank dedicated to addressing issues of inequality in entertainment, how do you think your work is bringing evidence and insight to media industries on where diversity is needed, especially regarding gender?

MC: We have analyzed the top grossing 100 films of the year since 2007 hoping to see if the outreach we have done so far has made an impact. We are working with multiple organizations, such as the Sundance Institute and the Geena Davis In-





stitute on Gender in Media. We meet with organizations and individuals that are poised to work towards this issue and find ways we can increase awareness. In November 2014, we released an article on *The Wrap* where Dr. Stacy Smith proposed a solution for changing the gender imbalance on screen by working with the entertainment industry, communicating how simple it might be to increase gender balance.<sup>2</sup> We do outreach where we can shed light on this issue, in addition to working with leaders in the entertainment industry and networks within the Los Angeles area.

**PDM: What are the key companies, industries, and influencers with whom you have worked?**

MC: The Sundance Institute and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media are two of our key partners. We have been visiting the Sundance Film Festival for two years and we are going again in 2015 to release a follow-up study. Other partners include the Jacquelyn and Gregory Zehner Foundation, the Epix cable network, Women In Film Los Angeles, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Harnisch Foundation.

**PDM: Do you only focus on American films, or do you also study international films?**

MC: We have focused on the top grossing 100 films of the year domestically, but we recently finished a study looking at films from around the world, namely China, India, France, Korea, Japan, Russia, Brazil, Germany, Australia, and the UK. We examined the top ten films in each territory applying the same methodology. We found that there are some countries that do better in terms of representation on screen, but no country is at 50 percent (women to men). In

our UK independent sample, women did better on screen. When you look behind-the-camera, films in France have the highest gender inequality across the spectrum of our sample.

“ WE FOUND THAT THERE ARE SOME COUNTRIES THAT DO BETTER IN TERMS OF REPRESENTATION ON SCREEN BUT NO COUNTRY IS AT 50 PERCENT (WOMEN TO MEN). ”

**PDM: Most of your current work focuses on portrayal of women in movies and female film directors. Do you plan to focus more on LGBT portrayals and other gender-related issues in the future?**

MC: Yes, absolutely. We haven't in the past, as sexual orientation and gender identity deserve a more nuanced approach and organizations such as [GLAAD](#) have already looked at LGBT representation on television and film. Over time, we have gradually expanded our focus: we originally examined gender representation and gender equality on screen and behind-the-camera, and later we turned to racial and ethnic inequalities as well. Within the next year, we plan to launch a study looking at the portrayal and sheer number of LGBT characters in film.

**PDM: When analyzing the characters in your studies, how will you treat the LGBT characters?**

MC: When we start to analyze LGBT characters, we will implement and test certain measures to see how they will work. We will use the same methodology for gender and race demographics that we use on current studies. We don't want to just watch a film and assume that characters are all straight if the film has nothing to do with any kind of relationship or disclosure about people's orientation. There may be a character that might be gay, lesbian, or bisexual on screen, but do not communicate any information that might tell us that. Therefore, it is an issue about when char-

acters are communicating to us their particular identity and how that portrayal is packaged. There is a way that you can do this with certain amounts of distinction, and we are developing those measures now. We are going to make sure we have it right, and then proceed ahead.

**PDM: Have you met many LGBT people in the industry when discussing or promoting your research projects?**

MC: People in the industry have come to us, who have been open and said that they care about this issue. We know that there is progress to be made, and additionally our students bring up these issues as they care about this topic as well. We are making strides and hope to begin very soon.

**PDM: Your studies have been covered by various media outlets. Do you put any specific effort on media relations or community outreach?**

MC: Yes, with the expertise of Dr. Katherine Pieper, another leader of our research team, we organize media campaigns to make sure our work gets into the hands of people in the entertainment industry that can spread the word, make a decision, and help this cause. Dr. Stacy Smith's article in *The Wrap* has been just published, which is great visibility. We are also very vocal on Twitter, which we use as one outlet. We also make sure to inform our students who join the research team and will work in the industry. If the students bring this knowledge with them, it may help influence the industry for the better. We keep in touch with the students who have worked on our team, and update them on our current projects. We definitely want to maintain that network and connection.

**PDM: Did the MDSC initiative plan to engage students in its work from the beginning?**

MC: Yes, we realized early on that our research project doesn't necessarily have to involve only two people. We highly value accuracy and we need more hands on deck to analyze the contents of these films. We never trust any one individual's analysis alone. We have many cross-checks in place and can spend ten to 15 hours on one film making sure that things are accurate and valid before we publish findings. We believe that we have a family atmosphere on the team and everyone has a great understanding of how our objective and scientific approach actually works in the field of communication research. We also open our doors to anyone who wants to participate.

**PDM: MDSC's research has grown significantly over the years. What do you imagine it will look like several years from now?**

MC: I imagine and I hope that we will have seen actual change with the matrix we developed to analyze diversity. I think it is possible, and I think that it is going to take a lot of effort from not only students or industry representatives we have touched over the years, but notable individuals that are leaders who will take up this cause and make a difference. When we think about film, just one example doesn't really change the reality, unfortunately. Perhaps at some point soon there will be a shift. In the meantime, we keep striving to make sure that people are aware of this issue by doing outreach and continuing this invaluable research.

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# EQUALITY THROUGH CULTURE

A Conversation with Horacio Franco: A Crossroads for Cultural  
Diplomacy and Pro-LGBT Community Social Activism

By Jonathan Chait Auerbach

Games Change the World

By Shamey Cramer

Constructing Transgender Narratives in Art  
An Interview with Chase Joynt and Kristen Schilt

In Focus: The California LGBT Arts Alliance  
An interview with Greg Day

## A CONVERSATION WITH HORACIO FRANCO: A CROSSROADS FOR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND PRO-LGBT COMMUNITY SOCIAL ACTIVISM

By Jonathan Chait Auerbach

Horacio Franco has brought the voice of Mexico to places like Carnegie Hall in New York, Bunka Kaikan in Japan, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Birmingham Concert Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, and the Yerbabuena Center for the Arts in San Francisco. He is one of the most famous Mexican musicians in the world because of his enchanting virtue when he plays the recorder. Yet, he is equally known for his passionate pro-equality activism and support of the LGBT community. He is, undoubtedly, one of the preeminent Mexican artists of this generation, and he is also one of the pioneers of LGBT rights in Mexican society that has brought forth more openness and tolerance in 21st century Mexico.

At this moment, same-sex marriage is legal both in Mexico City, since March 2010, and the state of Coahuila, since September 2014. The country's Supreme Court has declared that these reforms are in accordance with the Constitution; therefore, all 32 states in the country are legally bound to recognize these marriages as well as those originating in other countries. Moreover, this affords these marriages the same legal access and rights as those of heterosexual couples based upon the constitutional principle of "No Discrimination" as stated in the first article of the Mexican Constitution.

I had the opportunity to interview Franco about his artistry and activism both in Mexico and the rest of the world, and how it relates to public diplomacy. What follows is a summary of the interview.

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"To be an openly gay artist, and promoter of LGBT community rights, is an enormous

responsibility," acknowledged Franco, because "as a representative, and just as other Mexican artists, I am an agent of change." There is no doubt that his international recognition has given him an opportunity to promote his own social agenda and present Mexico as a country undergoing major social transformations. This is particularly true regarding the country's perceptions and attitudes towards sexual diversity. It is through his music that he provokes an internal dialogue with each of his audiences. You might think that dancing, painting, or sculptures provide better mediums to generate awareness about sexual diversity, but for Franco, classical music has been the best vehicle. "Classical music is the most reactionary, because it is very conservative and unexpected," says Franco. "My instrument, the recorder, is one of the oldest and most forgotten."

It is even more paradoxical that he is from Mexico as traditionally the great recorder soloists came from Europe. "That I am a Mexican homosexual recorder player implies a great potential for discrimination, but by being open about my sexuality I have elicited a greater respect for both myself and my work. Everybody knows that I am gay, and that I am married to another man. Everybody knows about my fight to obtain rights for all minority groups. My work has transcended my sexuality. I can speak about minority issues because of the music I make. I am another artistic voice that raises awareness about sexual diversity just like novelists or poets, but my chosen medium is sound, not words, painting, or sculptures."

As an artist and activist, Franco has the opportunity to speak up about the progress that

has been made regarding the civil rights of the Mexican LGBT community. He adds, “we cannot stop questioning the status quo, but it is important to acknowledge that despite the current social contradictions about civil rights for the LGBT community in Mexico, we are way ahead of other countries. After the rights we have gained, we cannot give them up.” It is important to note that all the victories that have been won in regards to same-sex marriages have a strong foundation within the movement for human rights equality. The constitutional reforms in terms of human rights protection are a paradigm, since they have jump-started several changes that have led to new legal obligations in regards to fundamental human rights for everybody. This, in turn, has forced courts of law to rule in favor of respect and protection of human rights in all cases.

Franco alternates between his concerts, public appearances in events that promote human rights — such as the World OutGames in Denmark — and giving speeches in universities. In 2009, he spoke at the University of San Francisco about the recent social changes in Mexico regarding the right of same-sex couples to marry while it was still not legal in the state of California.

However, he recognizes that not all places are equally suitable for his activism. Franco has traveled to showcase Mexican culture in places like Egypt, Tanzania, and India, where sexual diversity is not tolerated. The double standard of these societies has caused him to experience a strong internal conflict in spite of the recognition he has received as a musician. Yet, he says, “I respect other people’s guiding principles, but for me it is fundamental to take a no-aggression stance. I am not a provocateur.” But, he clarifies, whenever someone asks a specific question about



*Horcio Franco conducting a young orchestra during rehearsal.*

his position on the rights of the LGBT community, he never passes on an opportunity to speak up about his ideas. For him, to be able to raise awareness in just one person yields results.

Franco has been considered one of the 300 most influential leaders in Mexico “because of his educational endeavors in favor of the less fortunate segments of society and his profound defense of sexual diversity.”<sup>1</sup> When asked what this recognition means to him, he answered: “what I have done as an artist and as a member of Mexican society has been only a coherent reflection of who I am. I do not hide behind a fake image of myself, something that, in the end, would not be beneficial for me. I have had the opportunity to work with people in very conservative areas of society — politicians, clergymen, etc. — and I have established a very respectful conversation with them. To be recognized as one of 300 Mexican leaders means a lot to me because, in the end, leadership does not mean to belong just to your own circle of influence, it also includes the ability to relate to other circles like politics and religion, and to be able to work and find common ground for the good of everyone.”

Franco believes that education should be a priority. “I give educational concerts so that students think about what they really want to do with their lives and musical abilities.” He encourages students to follow a career that fulfills them personally at all levels. “The only way to raise awareness in future generations is to practice what you preach, and to be honest with the things you say and do. My responsibility is to encourage the new generations to develop musical abilities, to make them understand the importance of discipline in creating art as well as promoting the idea of a contemporary Mexico.”

As for cultural diplomacy, Franco explains: “I think it has been mostly in Mexico that my work has helped link activism with virtuosity. Especially when I work with teenagers. With them I can stress how important it is to avoid discrimination and encourage them to know themselves. In the end, public diplomacy begins at home.”

Franco’s work can also be seen as the result of more open, inclusive and democratic cultural policies in Mexico. But, it is the artists themselves who have opened the space for these types of changes, and are the ones who bring forth this message of plurality and tolerance that policy makers should notice if they want to promote not only the country’s art and culture but also the societal changes it is undergoing. Franco explains, “it all depends on who is in charge, and what their stance is. In my opinion, we must promote those artists who are involved in social causes and who act as agents for change. This would allow for the expansion of the country’s cultural and social collective mind”.

As for representing Mexico, says Franco, “I do it with absolute certainty, and this certainty is rooted in the love I have for my country. I see all the good things, and all the bad things just as when you really love someone. Even when I express criticism I am a spokesperson for contemporary Mexico, which is a huge commitment.” Mexico, he says, “is an enormously diverse country. It is actually many countries and many nations all together under one name. But in the end we have an obligation to understand our historical origins and what the future has in store for us if we want to achieve any sort of lasting change. I am passionate about the plural and diverse contemporary Mexican culture of the 20th and 21st centuries, which is my own. The artists, who live and work for it, are citizens of the world. Being part of the LGBT community I always feel very proud to display the successes

we have achieved in terms of social justice. It is important to acknowledge that there is still a lot of work to be done. And, because it is no longer a taboo subject as in some parts of the world, we have to continue the dialogue.”

“In closing” — he adds — “I have been able to develop my career and work with several governmental administrations regardless of their ideological stance. This, in itself, speaks volumes about the degree of openness we have achieved and that moves beyond prejudices and reflects tolerance. I have always been supported by major Mexican cultural institutions. In the end, you do not need to agree 100% all the time — and that is the way things should be done in a real democratic country. The realities of life dictate that, in spite of our differences, what truly matters is to reach agreements that are good for all, and in this case, what matters is that Mexico’s cultural point of view supports all minority groups. This will ensure that as a country we remain culturally rich and diverse in the global 21st century.”

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TO BE ABLE TO RAISE  
AWARENESS IN JUST ONE  
PERSON YIELDS RESULTS.”

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Jonathan Chait Auerbach is a Mexican diplomat with experience in cultural policy making and diaspora affairs. As a Cultural Attaché, he developed an extensive program to promote the relevance of migrant artists and their contribution to the arts and culture in the United States. Currently, he is Deputy General Director for North America at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.*

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# GAMES CHANGE THE WORLD

By Shamey Cramer

For nearly three decades since its founding, the quadrennial Gay Games have used the slogan “Games Change The World.” Rarely has that slogan been more apropos than in the past year. In November 2013, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) hosted a meeting with Gay Games leadership to discuss ways to deal with homophobia and discrimination. In September of this year, the IOC announced it was strengthening its non-discrimination clause for all future host city contracts. When the IOC added language to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation to Article Six of the Olympic Charter this past November, the [Federation of Gay Games](#) (FGG), the international governing body for the Gay Games, could claim a role in helping the Olympic Movement better adhere to its own principles.

Thirty-two years ago, the relationship between our two groups was anything but supportive. The Gay Games were met with staunch resistance from both the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and the International Olympic Committee because of the initial intent to call them the Gay Olympic Games. This is the story of the spectacular arc that the Gay Games and the Olympics have traversed.

The quadrennial Gay Games were founded in 1982 by Dr. Thomas F. Waddell, MD, a US Olympic decathlete who created an event based on the Olympic model hosted by the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersexed (LGBTQI) community with open participation for everyone.

I became involved when I saw the first

“Gay Olympic Games” poster in May 1982 at a bar in West Hollywood. Having grown up in a family involved with professional sports, I was drawn to the combination of pageantry, internationalism, and sport being used to combat homophobia, sexism, racism, and other forms of discrimination on a global scale. It spoke to me in a way that reverberated to the very core of my being. In that instant, I knew my calling had found me. Two weeks later I launched “Team Los Angeles” and brought 147 of the total 1350 participants — the largest traveling contingent — to the opening ceremony held in Kezar Stadium in San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park on August 28, 1982.

But getting to opening day was a challenge. On August 9, 1982, 19 days before the opening ceremony, the USOC sued San Francisco Arts & Athletics (SFAA), the non-profit Waddell founded to produce the Gay Games, to enjoin their use of the word “Olympic.” A temporary restraining order was granted, forcing SFAA to destroy any materials using the word

“Olympic.” In other words, every poster had to have the word blacked out, and every medal had to have the word scratched off of it. It also meant that merchandise that had been ordered could not be sold.

In my experience, this attempt by the USOC to squash the Gay Games only further emboldened the participants, volunteers, and local community. We triumphed against the institutions of oppression whose last-minute, strategic attempt to destroy Waddell’s vision backfired. According to Gay Games wrestling pioneer Gene Dermody, the first Gay Games were “run on a shoestring budget of approximately \$125,000, they took in a modest profit of \$7,000. The key to the success was the incredibly generous spirit of the volunteers from the community.”<sup>1</sup> The Gay Games have been going strong ever since.

The lawsuit ended up at the Supreme Court as San Francisco Arts & Athletics v. USOC.<sup>2</sup> When the decision came down on June 25, 1987 in favor of the USOC, they aggressively



Olympic Decathlete Dr. Thomas F. Waddell, founder of the Gay Games



FGG with IOC President Thomas Bach on Nov. 30, 2013

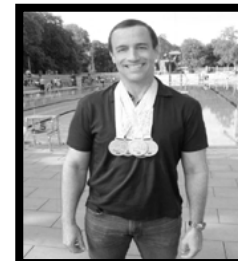


Openly gay New Zealand Olympic athlete and FGG Ambassador Blake Skjellerup



1982

2014



American Olympic and Gay Games Gold Medalist Bruce Hayes



(Left to right) Australian Olympic Silver Medalist Ji Wallace, former FGG Co-President Emy Ritt, South African Olympic Athlete Karen Hultzer, and FGG Officer of Ceremonies Shamey Cramer

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INTERNATIONAL SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS AND UMBRELLA STRUCTURES LIKE THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE NEED TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE WHEN FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION OF ALL SORTS INCLUDING DISCRIMINATION AS A RESULT OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION

LEIGH ANN NAIDOO, GAY GAMES AMBASSADOR

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pursued legal fees by attaching a \$97,000 lien to Tom Waddell's home. Waddell passed away on July 12, 17 days after the Supreme Court decision. Fortunately, the Olympic Movement has come a long way since the 1980s, and the impact of sports diplomacy is finally being felt.

It wasn't until October 2000 that the Olympics officially stopped pursuing legal remedies against the Gay Games. At the FGG Annual Meeting in Sydney, Australia that year, Co-President Bill Wassmer read a letter from the USOC and IOC dropping all charges of trademark infringement against the Gay Games (as well as the Audi auto manufacturer, among others) for using logos with interlocking rings. They also formally ceased any pending legal actions against the estate of Waddell, 14 years after his death. For those of us in the room who had been there in the beginning, it was a bittersweet moment.

The relationship between the Gay Games and the Olympics remained neutral during the next decade. As more societies began recognizing the rights of LGBTQI people, a shift in attitudes on the subject of gays in sports also occurred. In the past decade, we have seen the shift go from one of tolerance to a conscious effort to embrace and accept the gay athlete. The FGG began engaging with the Olympic Movement around this time as well. Martha Ehrenfeld, the FGG's Vice President of Sports, and I attended the IOC's 2012 Women in Sport Conference as official delegates. One session where we were able to add critical input was the session on "Medical Matters," which focused on gender and gender determination. The IOC

and the FGG have both been criticized for our respective gender policies, so it was nice to find common ground with those who understand the challenges, and strive to evolve the approach.

FGG representatives were also in London during the 2012 Olympics working on Pride House, a venue produced by a consortium of LGBTQI and human rights organizations led by Pride House International that provides a welcoming space for gay athletes and fans at international sporting events. The first Pride House was done at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, where New Zealand speed skater Blake Skjellerup chose to come out. Karen Hultzer of South Africa came out during the London Olympics and became a welcomed visitor. In her first interview, Hultzer immediately used the occasion to address issues of discrimination by stating:

I am an archer, middle aged, and a lesbian. I am also cranky before my first cup of coffee. None of these aspects define who I am, they are simply part of me. I am fortunate that my sexual identity is not an issue, and I don't suffer the level of discrimination and violence that black lesbians in South Africa do. I look forward to the day when this is a non-issue and as relevant as my eye color or favorite sushi.<sup>3</sup>

But things did not go well for LGBTQI athletes and the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics. In late 2013, the IOC flew Russian LGBT Sport Federation Co-Presidents Konstantin Yablotskiye and Elvina Yuvakaeva to Paris to meet with the newly elected IOC President Thomas Bach. The new anti-gay laws in Russia were in conflict with the ideals of Olympism and Russia forbid the

existence of Pride House. The IOC needed to be seen addressing the issue.

Others attending included Emy Ritt and Marc Naimark from the FGG, and Joquen Faerber, President Bach's Chief of Staff. Faerber had been a volunteer at Gay Games VIII: Cologne 2010, and was instrumental in making the meeting happen. The fact the IOC had flown Yablotskiye and Yuvakaeva to Paris for the meeting was another major step forward in repairing our relationship. Stated Hultzer: "this is great progress and renews my faith in the hope that the IOC is sincere about addressing human rights transgressions in participating as well as hosting countries."<sup>4</sup> Hultzer's fellow South African Olympian, beach volleyball player and Gay Games Ambassador Leigh Ann Naidoo, expressed the importance of this meeting for athletes: "international sports organizations and umbrella structures like the IOC need to lead by example when fighting discrimination of all sorts including discrimination as a result of sexual orientation."<sup>5</sup> Sadly, the IOC was unable to make an impact in time for the Sochi Olympics, despite a very public social media campaign that featured Yuvakaeva. Things got even worse for the Russian LGBT Sport Federation when it produced the Open Games, the first LGBTQI sport festival held in Russia.

Produced in Moscow between the Sochi Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Open Games organizers and athletes dealt with last-minute venue cancellations due to government pressure, bomb threats, police harassment, and a smoke bomb attack. With all the progress the Gay Games had made over the past three decades, it seemed as if our pioneering history was repeating itself. Thanks to the support they received from thousands of allies around the world, our Russian friends persevered and again proved that institutional oppression may slow, but can never stop, the progression of LGBTQI rights.

Thus, the news from the IOC in September about the strengthened non-

discrimination clause was proof our hard work and determination are paying off. The FGG looks forward to our Olympic Pride House partnerships in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, Pyeong Chang in 2018, and Tokyo in 2020 — markets where LGBTQI sports are still in fledgling stages — and we are enthused by the possibilities that will occur in 2022 in either Oslo, Beijing, or Almaty, Kazakhstan.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Shamey Cramer founded Team Los Angeles for the inaugural Gay Games in 1982, served as President of Los Angeles 2006, Inc., a Gay Games VII bidding finalist, and was elected Officer of Ceremonies to the FGG Board in October 2011. He captured a Bronze Medal in Water Polo at Gay Games VIII - Cologne 2010 and has worked on four Summer Olympics. He is obtaining his BA in Film at Woodbury University and resides in Glendale California.*

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## CONSTRUCTING TRANSGENDER NARRATIVES IN ART

An Interview with Chase Joynt and Kristen Schilt

Chase Joynt is a Toronto-based multimedia artist and Kristen Schilt is a Chicago-based sociologist. In 2013-14 the two were selected for Mellon Fellowships for Arts Practice and Scholarship. They teamed up to explore the construction of public gender narratives through a project entitled “Tell Me the Truth,” in which they curated screenings, multi-media exhibits, and readings on gender identity. Both have travelled internationally with their work.

Last fall, Walter Quintanilla and Andres Guarnizo-Ospina from the *Public Diplomacy Magazine* team sat down with Chase and Kristen to discuss gender identity in the international context and the nuance of gender interpretation across time and space. Their insights highlight the importance of applying cultural context and practicing active listening, core tenets of public diplomacy, when engaging in sensitive conversations at home and abroad.

**Public Diplomacy Magazine:** Kristen, how did you embark on your mission to find new ways to make cultural assumptions about gender and sexuality visible?

Kristen Schilt: I am somebody who has always been in sociology, so I was a “sosc” undergrad, grad student, PhD. I have always been interested in gender inequality. Sociology gave me a language to think through social inequality more broadly and to try to understand why gender inequality persists. Why is it that we can change laws, but it seems harder to change people’s ideas about what men can do, what women can do, and that there are only men and women. This idea of the gender binary and the assumptions that people have about male and female and have been much slower to change than laws against sexual harassment or gender discrimination.

**PDM:** Chase, how did you come to use multimedia to explore transgender identities?

Chase Joynt: In terms of professional training, my art career started at UCLA when I went to study theater as an undergrad. While there, I noticed that my interests were more politically oriented than the program, but I didn’t really know how to effectively negotiate those tensions as an undergraduate. When I started transitioning after graduation, I quickly understood that the narratives about trans(gender) people in the public and in the media were not satisfactory. They were not reflecting the nuance and the breadth of experience that I was encountering personally and through members of my community. My work was initially compelled by a desire to populate the field with different kinds of stories and my love of moving image and of installation seemed like a natural fit because it allowed me to position ideas in different ways.

**PDM:** How has your experience contrasted when you bring your work abroad?

CJ: I think that the first and most important thing to state about work travelling internationally is that the definition of what being a “trans person” or “in a transitioning body” means is often geographically specific. There are political contexts and ramifications to certain ways of identifying. People identify in different ways based on where they are from, and often for reasons of safety. I have come to realize that my work may travel in the form of a screening, but the reactions to the work may often come in private after the fact. In certain locations, there is less engagement in public and more via e-mail or phone. When I am physically in public with the work, the content of the questions is always really interesting to me because it reflects the climate of

trans politics in that time and space. So, whether the conversation becomes about trans rights and health care or about trans artistic production really speaks to where it is in the world at that time, and who is in the room.

**PDM:** How would you talk to someone if you wanted to enlighten them on the definition of “transgender?”

CJ: When that question is asked of me and my work, I say that my working definition of trans is “people moving between or beyond the gender binary.” Often, this applies to individuals who are challenging rigid definitions of masculinity and femininity and positioning themselves somewhere that doesn’t fit in normatively pre-determined categories.

KS: In the social sciences, we tend to think that it is an umbrella term for a large group of different kinds of gender identities. People use the term widely to mean many different things for people who are thinking, as Chase said, within a binary. But what if there were different kind of options, what if it wasn’t just that you were born some way and that determines the rest of your life? So, we are thinking through different kinds of options.

**PDM:** What do you think of the current media’s portrayal of transgender people?

CJ: I think we’re in a really incredible moment for trans representation in public. I think that the presence of people like Laverne Cox and Janet Mock, specifically trans women of color, who are speaking in public arenas about trans issues is really important. These are voices that have been virtually invisible in the media up until this point. I think the politics of representation

is a conversation in and of itself. The fact that there are now starting to be multiple kinds of trans representation in the mainstream is a really important step, so that there is not just one trans character on television and we’re not trafficking in the same kinds of representation over and over again. That kind of variation will open up new pathways for conversation about identity.



**PDM:** Do you think the US media is leading the way in these conversations or is there another country that is doing better in terms of the media landscape and talking about transgender issues?

KS: It’s an interesting question because, again, what transgender means is going to vary across countries. There are examples of a

well-known transgender person in Mexico who is on TV shows, but it tends to be a one-character representation. Another example might be the very famous Korean pop-star who everyone knows is transgender, but those tend to be individual cases. Hollywood is here and we output an enormous amount of media to the rest of the world. I think those representations get more widely spread than other things, for better or worse.

**PDM:** What goes into the construction of public narratives about transgender identities?

CJ: Well, I think an important distinction to make in our conversation is between fiction and non-fiction representations. In the case of “Transparent” or “Orange is the New Black,” these are fictional mainstream representations of trans people. Non-fiction representations — in the media and otherwise — of living trans bodies in space, in prisons, in hospitals, and in other contexts often sit at odds with those mainstream



representations. This is one of the interesting conversations happening about Laverne Cox right now, because she is simultaneously performing trans-visibility in fictional contexts, while also remaining visible as a living trans subject and trying to illuminate the realities of lived experience for trans people. This often sits at odds with her presentation in the fictional context. My work traffics in non-fiction and in autobiographical content as a way in which to push back against the fiction of the dominant trans narrative. One strategy taken up by many is for trans people to create narratives about trans experience, rather than cisgender identified people creating narratives about, or on behalf of trans people.



**PDM: Is it possible to also build public narratives in places where the conversation remains suppressed?**

CJ: I don't think public is always the goal. I was on tour with a recent film and it was the same circuit that Roger Ross Williams was on when his film, *God Loves Uganda*, came out. The film is about the context of LGBT rights and advocacy in Uganda, and Roger Ross Williams is an American documentary filmmaker who is negotiating what it is like to be shooting in both locations and presenting the work in an international context with an international community and then bringing it back to the States. One of the things that he continues to assert in public is that we cannot map our western expectations of the film — or of these conversations — onto international audiences. The conversations require close and critical attention to context at all times.

KS: I think one of the things that's interesting about thinking about public representations is that you can never guarantee how anybody is going to take it up, even in the US. For example, Chase's work "Resisterectomy" puts his experiences of sex reassignment surgeries in conversation with the experiences of someone who had those same surgeries while battling cancer. I've seen Chase present that work to a PFLAG Group, to medical providers, and to college students and people take up the same content very differently, both in good and bad ways. That's the interesting thing about representations.

You can have all the intentionality about what you want to do with them, but people take them up in really complex ways.

**PDM: How and where do you feel people will communicate about these issues in years to come?**

CJ: I'm listening to activists working in prisons and hospitals right now, as they continue to lead important debates within our communities. There's a lot happening on social media, yes. And we can look to the mainstream. But, the politics of what bodies matter, and what bodies are given access to security and safety, are of utmost importance, in my opinion.

KS: That's the exciting thing. I mean platforms always change, right? This is an issue where even the language you use to talk about these issues changes radically year to year. I think that's exciting. Where do you see that much movement in social activism? I'm very open to how that might play out.

## IN FOCUS: CALIFORNIA LGBT ARTS ALLIANCE

An Interview with Greg Day

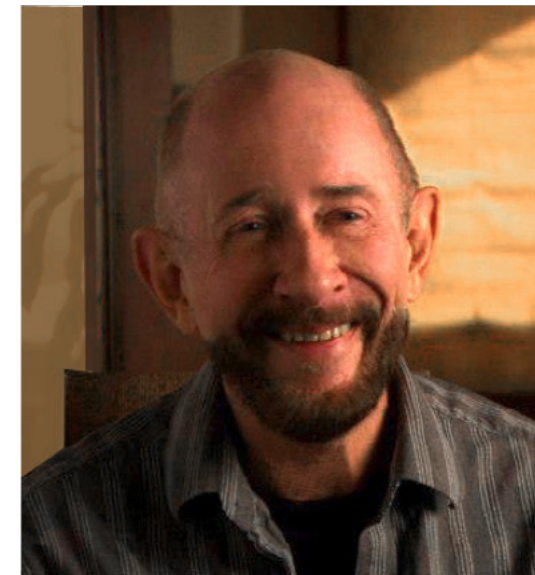
Greg Day is a Los Angeles-based photographer, curator, and social justice advocate. He was one of the founders of the Queer Cultural Center in San Francisco. In 2009, he became the [LGBT Arts Alliance's](#) Southern California Coordinator and in 2014 its Executive Director. The California LGBT Arts Alliance is a non-profit organization with a membership of over 70 arts organizations and 2,000 artists in California. It is funded by the California Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the City of West Hollywood Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission.

Day's photographs document over 40 years of LGBT life in California, New York, and the American South. His images have been exhibited and published widely in Europe and the US. His portrait of John Waters was published in 2011 on the cover of "John Waters Interviews." Day's photographic series "African American Life on the Gullah/Geechee Coast" was exhibited at the UCLA Fowler Museum in 2009 and at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in 2012.

Last fall, we sat down with Day to discuss the organization's efforts to promote cultural diversity, artistic collaborations, and financial partnerships that strengthen California's LGBT arts organizations and individual artists. In a conversation with *Public Diplomacy Magazine* editors Walter Quintanilla and Sarah Salceda, Day emphasized the importance of coalition building and highlighted the arts as a means for communicating and discussing minority issues on a global scale.

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***Public Diplomacy Magazine:* Why is it important to bring LGBT artists and LGBT groups together?**



Greg Day: The LGBT Community is a microcosm of society. We come from every community, culture, and gender. Diversity is our strength but it also requires commitment to bridging our cultural differences. Art practice has been a driving force in building our community and movement. The arts have provided inspiration and refuge to those facing the adversity of discrimination and disasters, like the AIDS epidemic. Participating in the arts helps the individual person-artist to build self-esteem, to express their feelings, to create community, and to foster collegiality with others.

**PDM: Are there any specific examples you can share with us of art influencing a significant event of the LGBT movement?**

GD: Art has been an essential part of our activism. In 1978, a collective of LGBT artists in San Francisco created the first rainbow flags for the annual "Pride" celebration. The flags were dyed

and sewn by hand and included many strips of different colors representing our cultural and gender diversity. Over time, the rainbow flag became the symbol of our community's diversity and our movement for equality worldwide. Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," David Weisman's "We Were Here," and the works of Catherine Opie, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and Keith Haring have addressed aspects of the AIDS epidemic. The works of Alice Walker, James Baldwin, Bill T. Jones, Sean Dorsey, and a myriad of other artists have inspired and shaped our identity and movement. In the 1990s, the Queer Cultural Center and its flagship program, the National Queer Arts Festival, were created in San Francisco to address the lack of mainstream financial support for LGBT artists, women artists, and artists of color to celebrate the cultural and gender diversity of our community. The National Queer Arts Festival has been a model of collaboration and community building for other festivals throughout the country. The California LGBT Arts Alliance was a program of the Queer Cultural Center for nine years until our incorporation as an independent non-profit in 2014.

**PDM: Where has the California LGBT Arts Alliance toured? What is the process when choosing which cities to visit?**

GD: The Alliance has sponsored statewide tours by Radar Productions and the Fresh Meat (Transgender) Festival. Many of these performances were in small towns and college campuses throughout California. We have also supported the exchange of artists between Southern and Northern California. We recently collaborated with the Latino Arts Network of California in a proposal to bring queer Latino/a arts programming to inland communities that are

underserved. In Los Angeles and San Francisco, we have presented Asian Pacific Islander, African American, and Latino/a artists and programs. We have also brought Queer art theorists and historians to California from New York and Montreal. Our online network, newsletter, and social media platforms promote touring LGBT exhibits and performances statewide. Our mission is to make our members aware of what they can do collectively and to get them to work together in sharing artists, financial resources, and venues. We also produce several events a year where we present new artistic work by emerging and under represented artists.

**PDM: Does the LGBT Arts Alliance have an education objective for the general public?**

GD: The California Assembly recently passed legislation requiring education on LGBT history in public schools. Several Alliance members are working on films and webisodes about LGBT history for school curriculum. We recently presented films about LGBT history to diverse audiences including "On These Shoulders We Stand" (a Feminist perspective on the diversity of the early LGBT movement in Los Angeles) by Glenna McElhinney and "Transvisible: The Bamby Salcedo Story" (a documentary about the life of a Latina transgender activist in California) by Dante Alencastre.

Our organization seeks to educate through the arts not only in the context of LGBT issues but also for women and communities of color. As the demographics of the United States change, cultural communities emerge that don't participate in mainstream European based art forms. In order to reach these communities and younger generations, we have to encourage art educa-

tion and expand our definition of the arts. This requires understanding and supporting the arts within the context of minority communities and in existing community service programs. For example, el Día de los Muertos is very important in the Latino community, it happens throughout the country, and many artists participate; similarly, LGBT Pride Festivals also include many artists and until recently art funding sources didn't consider events like these eligible. There is a change in attitude about funding arts within community settings, especially in California. The California Arts Council, the Irvine Foundation, the LA County Arts Commission, and Arts for LA have all targeted arts education and the celebration of art in the context of community service organizations as priorities.

When I became the Southern California Coordinator of the LGBT Arts Alliance five years ago, I expanded our membership eligibility to include arts programs in community educational and service organizations. Today our membership includes the Being Alive Ceramics Studio (An HIV+ service organization), REACH LA Studios (a health and social services program for inner-city at-risk youth) and the Los Angeles LGBT Center's arts programs. We also include LGBT arts programming at mainstream arts organizations. The Hammer Museum, the UCLA Fowler Museum, the Autry National Center, and the City of West Hollywood are Alliance members with LGBT programming.

The California LGBT Arts Alliance and the Latino Arts Network of California share a common mission and history. We are working together to do joint outreach and programming and to promote the work of artists in the Latino/a LGBT cultural setting. I believe that this is where the

arts need to go in general. That is, back to the grassroots of the community.

**PDM: Does the LGBT Arts Alliance do any international tours or any work with international organizations to include other global communities?**

GD: Our primary mission is to serve arts programs and artists in California. However, in our online platforms we are a global community of artists. We actively use our social media channels to share events happening in the Americas, Europe, and Asia. We also have a commitment to immigrant populations in California. We have presented El Fuego Dentro (featuring the transgender community in Lima, Peru) by Peruvian American filmmaker Dante Alencastre.

We have membership inquiries from around the world, including the Americas, China, and even the Middle East. You can be a member and live anywhere and we will include you as a supporting member. Membership is free. LGBT artists and programs in California receive a listing on the website and our monthly newsletter is available to all members.

*You can learn more about the Alliance at [www.cal-gbtartsalliance.com](http://www.cal-gbtartsalliance.com). Furthermore, interested artists can reach Greg Day at [calgbtarts@gmail.com](mailto:calgbtarts@gmail.com).*

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# ENDNOTE

Our Summer 2015 issue

Credibility Matters:  
Revisiting Hard Power, Soft Power, and Smart Power

By Robert Morgus



HARD POWER

SMART  
POWER

SOFT POWER



## CREDIBILITY MATTERS: REVISITING HARD POWER, SOFT POWER, AND SMART POWER

By Robert Morgus

The Summer 2015 issue of *Public Diplomacy Magazine* will revisit the concept of "smart power," coined by international relations scholar and professor at the Harvard Kennedy School, Joseph S. Nye, in his 2011 book, *The Future of Power*. According to Nye, smart power is the conscious coupling of hard and soft power resources to achieve desired outcomes on the world stage. In practice, however, the two concepts are commonly understood as mutually exclusive. This is especially true in the US, where policymakers have historically tended to favor hard power resources as the primary means of gaining influence abroad. Our upcoming issue will explore what is required for soft power to be fully accepted in the US, how to dismantle the barriers between hard and soft power, and what best practices and lessons can be gleaned from other countries. To begin the discussion, we have invited Robert Morgus, a Research Associate at the New America Foundation, to frame the issue in terms of the US experience and open the door for other authors to meaningfully contribute to the smart power debate.

In December 2014, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence released a report providing the gruesome details of a CIA interrogation program.<sup>1</sup> The report details yet another item on a growing list of indiscretions committed by the United States government in the last decade. From the Iraq War to the Snowden disclosures, the US's moral high ground has eroded significantly since 2001. For some, like former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who professed to not understand soft power, these indiscretions are nothing more than blips on the radar and should not affect the

ability of the United States to achieve its strategic goals.<sup>2</sup> While it is true that the United States is still a dominant hard power actor, with a strong military and economy, its ability to credibly attract people to its side without coercion is dwindling. Along with it, the United States' ability to exercise smart power in the face of difficult global challenges is dissipating.

At its core, smart power is contextual intelligence. It is the strategy of using the right combination of both soft and hard power depending on the context. The concept of smart power was developed to "counter the misperception that soft power alone can produce effective foreign policy."<sup>3</sup> To borrow the words of Joseph Nye and Richard Armitage, "smart power is neither hard nor soft—it is the skillful combination of both."<sup>4</sup> But what are hard and soft power, where do they come from, and how are they used?

Power has long been at the center of international relations theory. At a basic level, power is the ability of one actor to affect the behavior of others to get what they want. Theory dictates three tenets of power: coercion, payment, and attraction.

For a protracted period of history, the discipline's infatuation with war meant that what we now describe as "hard power" dominated discussions of strategy. In the international system, actors exercise hard power by wielding sticks, like the threat of the use of force or sanctions, or offering carrots, like the promise of military protection or the reduction of trade barriers. But the fall of the Berlin Wall and the "defeat" of the Soviet Union's brand of socialism highlighted the attractive power of culture, ideas, and values, or soft power.

In 2003, General Wesley Clark noted

that the attraction of American culture, ideas, and values gave the United States "influence far beyond the hard edge of traditional balance-of-power politics."<sup>5</sup> The ability to attract, set an agenda, and persuade others comes from a resource scarcer than the oil that makes both our economy and military tick: credibility.<sup>6</sup> In an ungoverned global system where leaders are not elected, the credibility of an actor cannot be

inherited or derived from laws like in many political systems. Rather, it stems from either performance or, at least in the past, charisma. But in a global society with increasingly immediate access to knowledge and information, charismatic leaders that do not deliver on promises lose credibility rapidly. Thus, in the information age, credibility stems primarily from being or doing what the world perceives as "good" more often than not.

Public diplomacy, the act of engaging publics abroad with the intent to inform and influence, is on the front line of any exercise of soft power. But it is less effective without legitimacy and credibility. In 2004, some noted that United States soft power was declining in the wake of morally questionable wars and tactics and continued to wane on the heels of the Snowden disclosures.<sup>7,8</sup> Is the United States' credibility reaching a tipping point? Hindsight will, as always, be 20/20. But this is not the first time that the United States' foreign policy displayed a protracted lapse in moral judgment.

Over the course of the Cold War, the United States deposed several popularly elected leaders, fought secretive wars against Marxist movements around the world, sacrificed an unknown number of lives, and confusingly supported some "authoritarian" regimes while opposing "totalitarian" ones, an arbitrary distinction lost on this author. What may

differentiate the modern cycle of moral erosion from the previous one exhibited during the Cold War is the content of the United States' misdeeds. The United States still clings, at least rhetorically, to powerful ideals: freedom, liberty, and justice for all. However, as the recent torture report and the Snowden revelations most starkly illustrate, the United States is letting itself down.

The revelations that the NSA is spying on American citizens and that the FBI is authorized to collect phone and communication records en masse severely hinder the United States' ability to credibly promote freedom and liberty

for all. Programs like the NSA's PRISM and the FBI's Data Intercept Technology Unit are likely to cause a chilling-effect, wherein people, assuming they are being monitored, self-censor. Self-censorship of speech and communication eventually leads to self-censorship of thought, the most basic freedom. Critical thinkers around the world have taken note of the United States' hypocritical promotion of freedom for all abroad while limiting it at home.<sup>9</sup>

On December 2, 2014, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced in no uncertain terms that the United States' and United Kingdom's treatment of detainees captured in Iraq and Afghanistan was under examination, an indication that the rest of the world is aware of and actively questioning US actions.<sup>10</sup> Then, just a week later, on December 9, the Senate released a report detailing the wrongful detention of nearly 25% of the inmates held in the CIA's secret prisons, many of whom were subject to questionable interrogation tactics that many around the world are calling torture.

But those in charge of the programs deny that the treatment of detainees constitutes torture, and one of the architects of the

“SMART POWER IS CONTEXTUAL INTELLIGENCE. IT IS THE STRATEGY OF USING THE RIGHT COMBINATION OF BOTH SOFT AND HARD POWER DEPENDING ON THE CONTEXT.”

program, former Vice President Dick Cheney, has gone so far as to say that anything less than flying airplanes into buildings and killing three thousand Americans does not meet the definition of torture.<sup>11</sup> How is that for a moral high ground?

Further unpopular programs, like the drone program, which has seen a marked uptick in usage in the past five years, and the Guantánamo Bay detention camp, which has not been closed despite a promise to do so, further sully the United States' reputation, and with it the United States' credibility.<sup>12</sup>

American values are the root of US soft power. But the United States cannot credibly continue to trumpet freedom, liberty, and justice for all without acknowledging and somehow rectifying the actions of the past fifteen years as they begin to come to light. Without privacy, there is no freedom. Without a state that grants, guards, and guarantees freedom, there is no liberty. Without acknowledgement of and restitution for crimes committed, whether legal or moral, there is no justice. As American policymakers and leaders turn a blind eye to the wrongdoings that they and their predecessors have committed or allowed, the rest of the world has noticed.

As Martha Finnemore and Henry Farrell pointed out in *Foreign Affairs* in 2014, “the United States is far from the only hypocrite in international politics. But the United States' hypocrisy matters more than that of other countries... because most of the world today lives within an order that the United States built, one that is both underwritten by US power and legitimated by liberal ideas.”<sup>13</sup> US ability to exercise soft power is experiencing

a slow atrophy—limiting the ways in which it can exercise smart power. Perhaps the Senate's report is a step in the right direction. Though the contents of the report are troubling, the report itself is an acknowledgement of mistakes. How the current American powers that be react to the report will prove crucial.

“PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, THE ACT OF ENGAGING PUBLICS ABROAD WITH THE INTENT TO INFORM AND INFLUENCE, IS ON THE FRONT LINE OF ANY EXERCISE OF SOFT POWER. BUT IT IS LESS EFFECTIVE WITHOUT LEGITIMACY AND CREDIBILITY.”

None of this is to say that the United States is no longer a powerful global actor. Hard power is still useful to defend territory and maintain security, but it is a

poor device to fight ideas. The delicate balance between hard and soft power has been upset, and right now, it is evident that the US power scale is tipped heavily towards hard power. Leaders in the United States government continue to avoid the difficult moral questions that can make or break soft power rather than acknowledging them. This underinvestment in soft power contributes to its continued erosion and risks further degenerating the values that underlie it.

Above all, the United States is currently experiencing a deficit of soft power and its ability to utilize power in a smart way is waning. The upcoming issue of *Public Diplomacy Magazine* will examine the various facets of power by discussing questions of how soft power can complement hard power and how the United States and others can (re)build their global credibility to utilize smart power more effectively.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Robert Morgus is a Research Associate at the New America Foundation's Open Technology Institute, where he combines his technical knowledge with a background in international relations to provide*

*policy relevant research and writing at the intersection of cyber space and international affairs. He focuses specifically on issues pertaining to cyber-security, cyber conflict, internet governance, surveillance, and freedom online. His work has been showcased in The New York Times, TIME, Slate, and others.*

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