



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Centre for Human Rights
Faculty of Law

PRESS STATEMENT

IDAHOBIT 2021- “ARTS, SOLIDARITY AND COMMUNITY: FROM HURT TO HEALING”

26 May 2021

In celebration of IDAHOBIT 2021, the [Flemish Representative in South Africa](#) in collaboration with the SOGIESC Unit of the [Centre for Human Rights](#), University of Pretoria and the [Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender](#), University of Pretoria, hosted a virtual webinar to explore the theme of healing after harm aimed at LGBTIQ+ people and their allies.

The webinar featured a panel discussion featuring Sivuyisiwe Mafeke, South African queer activist; C. Anzio Jacobs, Director of Scope Facilitation; David Nnanna Ikpo, Nigerian lawyer and storyteller; and Inke Gieghase, spoken word artist, journalist, public speaker, writer and activist. The panel was moderated by Rivonia Pillay and James de Villiers, founders of the LGBTI Family call which was established during lockdown as an outlet for LGBTIQ+ South Africans to gather virtually and form as a space for support. Amongst other issues, panellists shared personal reflections on hate crime, violence, and solidarity during times of difficulty for LGBTIQ+ communities in Africa, and beyond.

Speakers and participants were invited to share a form of artwork that deeply resonates with them and reflect on the meaning of this artwork. C. Anzio shared original spoken word pieces; Sivuyisiwe shared an excerpt from a book; David shared an excerpt from *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy and Inke shared a spoken word piece available for listening [here](#).

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Lauréat 2012 du Prix des droits de l'homme de l'Union Africaine • Winner of the 2012 African Union Human Rights Prize
Lauréat 2006 du Prix UNESCO de l'éducation aux droits de l'homme • Winner of the 2006 UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education

The webinar was extremely successful in creating a safe, intimate and healing space for all, breaking down some of the traditional formality of the webinar format. Not only did the panellists share deeply personal stories, but some audience members were also able to do so as well.

A number of interesting themes emerged from the event and the discussions between panellists, facilitators and the audience:

- There is power in connection, both to the self, through creative expression, and to one's community. When whole communities are subjected to marginalisation and harm, bonds of solidarity can be challenged, but they remain important and should be nurtured.
- Survival and healing after harm is a "radical" act, and there are many paths to healing. What needs to be done to help people not only survive, but also to thrive?
- Pain is an inevitable outcome of harm and cannot always be avoided – what creative expression can do is find new ways to express, and process, this pain.
- Queer people are often processing personal pain against a backdrop of collective pain: this can be overwhelming but also an important opportunity for the creation of narratives of collective survival.
- Violence and hate crime against LGBTIQ+ communities and their allies often triggers a sense of fear and shame, which can lead to mistrust for community identity. Community organising and social bonding needs to acknowledge and create space for exploring how to rebuild communal and interpersonal trust in community structures.

We believe that more opportunities to process these and other issues facing our queer communities are essential and invite all healers, activists and members of the LGBTIQ+/Queer community to open up the conversation on individual and collective healing.

The SOGIESC Unit of the [Centre for Human Rights](#), University of Pretoria and the [Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender](#), University of Pretoria call on healers, activists and members of the LGBTIQ+/queer community and allies to support and share this [online petition](#) on ending violence against LGBTIQ+ people and their allies in South Africa.

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