



FREE & EQUAL  
UNITED NATIONS

# UN FREE & EQUAL CAMPAIGN 2017



# INTRODUCTION

UN Free & Equal is a global United Nations campaign for equal rights and the fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people everywhere. The campaign, launched in July 2013 and led by the UN Human Rights Office, aims to raise awareness of sexual, gender and bodily diversity and challenge negative stereotypes of LGBTI people. Campaign materials – including videos, factsheets and infographic materials – have been viewed and shared hundreds of millions of times on social media and

generated widespread coverage in print and broadcast media. Celebrities have been engaged to help carry campaign messages to the widest possible audience, and the campaign has provided a platform for high-profile events at UNHQ and on the ground in almost 30 countries around the world. Today, UN Free & Equal stands as one of the UN's most popular global campaigns, helping provoke and sustain the kinds of conversations needed if social attitudes towards LGBTI people are to evolve.

## UN Free & Equal

**Launched:** 26 July 2013

**Overall aim:** To raise awareness of sexual, gender and bodily diversity, and promote equal rights and fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex people everywhere.

### Objectives:

- › To project United Nations' messages of LGBTI equality and acceptance in traditional and social media.
- › To support country-level United Nations advocacy for the human rights of LGBTI people, including through distribution of public information materials and tools.
- › To lend support and legitimacy to the work carried out by civil society organizations to counter prejudice and harmful stereotypes directed at LGBTI people.

### Implementation:

Led by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with support from UN Country Teams (incl. UN Resident Coordinators, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNAIDS).

## In 2017, UN Free & Equal

- › reached 2.44 billion social media feeds around the globe.
- › launched a social media mini-campaign to help raise awareness of bullying of LGBTI youth, featuring an animated video, infographics, factsheet and a dedicated webpage with advice to parents, teachers and peers.
- › produced 14 new videos, including five videos produced for the global campaign and nine produced for national level campaigns. Campaign videos were viewed by almost 9.3 million people on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Weibo, and by an estimated 16.5 million people on television.
- › was featured in 721 news reports in newspapers, radio and television, including CNN, El Pais, The Independent, Korean Herald, Kuwait Times, NPR, ABC News, Fox News and Sky UK.
- › launched a completely revamped campaign website, [www.unfe.org](http://www.unfe.org), to increase the visibility and accessibility of campaign materials.
- › reached millions of people through national level spin-off campaigns and events in Albania, Brazil, Cambodia, Cabo Verde, Guatemala, Macedonia, Mongolia, Peru, Serbia and Ukraine.
- › launched a set of LGBTI standards of conduct for business that offers the private sector concrete guidance on how they can stand up for the rights of LGBTI people. The standards were launched in New York, Mumbai, London, Paris, Hong Kong and Melbourne in 2017, accompanied by a massive social media campaign that reached more than 183 million social media feeds during the last three months of 2017.

## 2017: YEAR IN NUMBERS



campaign reach



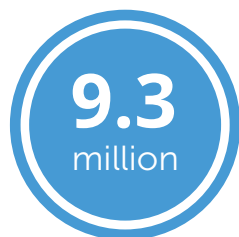
Featured in 721 news reports



new campaign videos produced



countries with ongoing national-level Free & Equal campaigns



people viewed campaign videos



## Standards of Conduct for Business

LGBTI equality cannot be achieved by governments alone; businesses can foster diversity and promote a culture of respect and equality both in the workplace and in the communities where they and their partners operate. In 2017, the UN Human Rights Office developed a global standards intended to support the private sector in fostering diversity and promoting a culture of respect and equality – and making the case that doing so brings economic benefits, by helping attract and retain talent, improving decisions and building loyalty with customers and investors alike.

The standards were rolled out at events in important business hubs around the world, including New York, Mumbai, London, Hong Kong, Paris and

Melbourne, with further launches planned in 2018 in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Press events were accompanied by a social media campaign, featuring videos, infographics and blog posts by key corporate partners such as Virgin, Godrej, Deutsche Bank, Baker Mckenzie and SAP, as well as by High Commissioner Zeid.

By the end of 2017, some 50 companies – representing more than 3.5 million employees and more than USD 1.3 trillion in yearly revenues - had signed up as early supporters of the standards and social media messaging promoting the standards had reached more than 183 million social media feeds around the world.



J Godrej

**UN FREE & EQUAL**

**ON SOCIAL MEDIA**



**2.44 billion**

Total reach of 2.44 billion social media feeds

↑ up from 1.5 billion in 2016



**1.6 million**

Campaign content on social media was liked shared and commented almost 1,6 million times in 2017

↑ up from 222,000 in 2016



**119,000**

followers on social media

↑ up from 82,000 followers in 2016

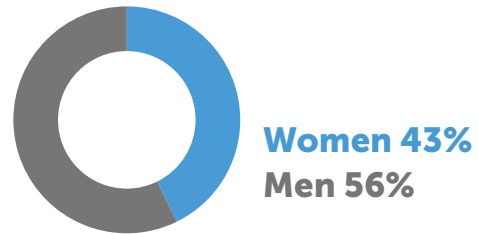


## FACEBOOK

### Top Countries

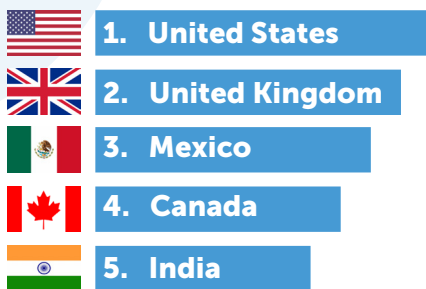


### Gender Balance

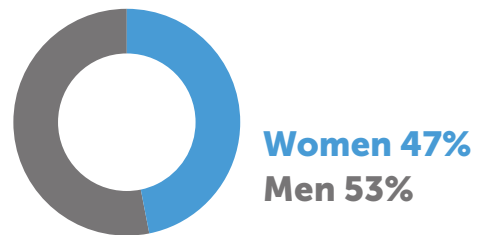


## TWITTER

### Top Countries



### Gender Balance

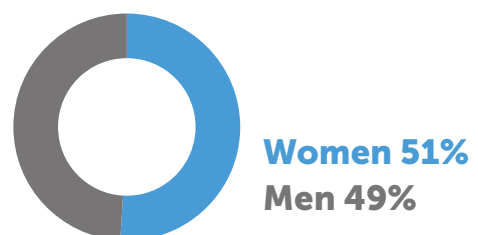


## INSTAGRAM

### Top Countries



### Gender Balance



## Videos

Short, engaging videos are perhaps the most effective communications tool used by the UN Free & Equal campaign, because they can stir empathy and emotional resonance in a more powerful way than most other social media content. UN Free & Equal videos are often accompanied by a dedicated landing page on the campaign website that offers more information about human rights obligations and advice for decision makers and the wider community of allies.

UN Free & Equal launched five short videos for global dissemination in 2017, and a further nine for country-level use as part of national campaigns. Campaign videos were seen by almost 9.3 million people on social media alone. In addition, the 2016 campaign video 'Faces' was shown on the Spanish TV program "La voz de tus derechos", reaching approximately 16 million viewers.

## #TheLesson

The mini-campaign #theLesson aimed to raise awareness of the scale and impact of anti-LGBTIQ bullying, and called on parents, teachers, schools and governments to play their part in stamping it out. The campaign features a short, animated video, created with celebrated children's author Daniel Errico and animation house Kavaleer Productions, which tells the bittersweet story of a boy whose friendship with a girl becomes problematic when his mother sees her kiss another girl.



## #ItsTime

#ItsTime celebrates the UN Free & Equal campaign's four-year anniversary and calls for equal rights and fair treatment for lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex people worldwide.



## #CultureOfLove trilogy

Launched in time to celebrate the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) on 17 May, the #CultureOfLove campaign featured three, short videos that explored what it looks like when family, culture and tradition are open to LGBTI people:



*"Tradition" - a young man in Mumbai brings his boyfriend to a family celebration of the Festival of Holi.*



*"Culture" - a genderqueer youngster in Britain joins their father at a soccer match and basks in the comradery that goes with supporting the local team.*



*"Family" - Chinese parents shake off their initial hesitation and include their daughter's same sex partner in their traditional Lunar New Year celebrations.*



## Free & Equal Albania: Being LGBTI in Albania

Free & Equal Albania created an infographic video that challenges common negative stereotypes of LGBTI people, and illustrates human rights violations against the LGBTI community in the country. Since its launch, the video has been seen by more than 4,000 people on social media across Albania.

## Free & Equal Brazil: Tackling Homophobia in Sport

Olympic diver Ian Matos and rugby player Isadora Cerullo speak out about the political impact that everyone can have simply by coming out, in two videos produced by Free & Equal Brazil.

## Free & Equal Cabo Verde: Maria Gadú Speaks Out for LGBTI Equality

Well-known Brazilian singer Maria Gadú produced a video spot for Free & Equal Cabo Verde, where she takes a strong stand for LGBTI equality. The video was launched on social media, and quickly seen by more than 100,000 people, before being aired on Cabo Verdean national television for an audience of 250,000.

## Free & Equal Cabo Verde Turns Two!

Free & Equal Cabo Verde marked two years of campaigning with a mini-documentary about the campaign, featuring interviews with influencers and activists promoting LGBTI human rights. The video was launched on December 20th and was watched by over 20,000 people on social media and some 250,000 on television.

## Free & Equal Guatemala

The Free & Equal team in Guatemala produced two videos for social media featuring a diverse group of Guatemalans speaking out for fair treatment and equal rights for LGBTI people. The two videos reached some 120,000 social media feeds

## Free & Equal Serbia: Friends Respect Diversity

Using data from a UNDP-funded research on attitudes among teachers and students in Serbian high-schools, Free & Equal Serbia created an animation video promoting tolerance and diversity published on social media as a part of a mini-campaign against bullying

## Free & Equal Serbia: What is Intersex?

Free & Equal Serbia also created an infographic video portraying the human rights challenges of intersex people.

## Memes & GIFs

Memes (branded images with text superimposed) and GIFs (a short series of looping images and text), are a useful way of creating condensed, engaging, shareable messages that are as accessible as possible to a general audience, including those who might not have much prior knowledge about the human rights concerns of LGBTI people.

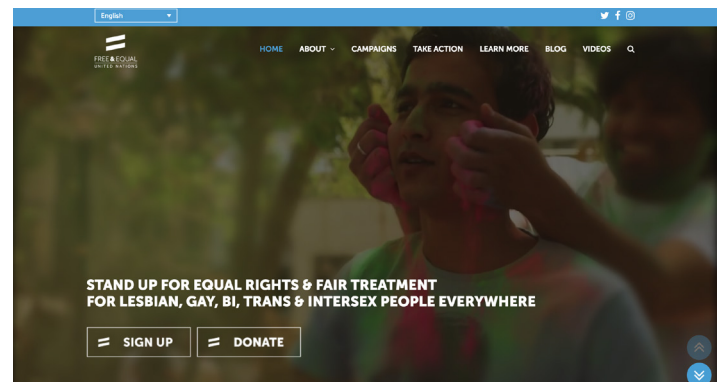
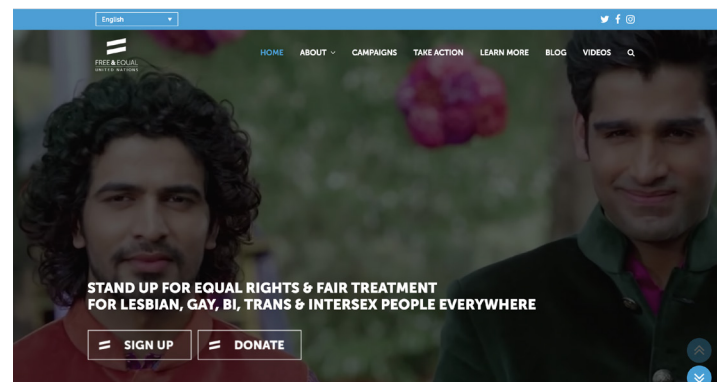
In 2017, the global UN Free & Equal campaign created 110 memes and GIFs featuring human rights messaging and statistics, statements of supports from UN high-level officials and UN Free & Equal Equality Champions.



## UN Free & Equal on the Web

The UN Free & Equal campaign website, [www.unfe.org](http://www.unfe.org), went through a complete redesign in 2017. The new and modernized website is easier to navigate and provides more in-depth information for activist and allies. It is also designed with accessibility in mind, to make sure that people with visual impairments and other disabilities can more easily interact with the site.

Since its launch in the summer of 2017, the site has been visited almost 90,000 times, with people from countries in the global south constituting approximately 50 percent of the visitors.



## Factsheets

The campaign has created a popular series of short fact sheets – most of which focus on particular types of human rights violations experienced by LGBT and intersex people. Eight factsheets have been produced to date – including on violence, criminalization, discrimination, sex characteristics, refuge and asylum, LGBT rights in international law, and frequently asked questions about sexual orientation and gender identity. All factsheets are available in all UN languages, easily accessible on the campaign website and formatted for easy printing by OHCHR and other UN field offices, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. Two new factsheets on bullying of LGBT and intersex youth and the rights of trans people were launched in early 2017 as part of planned mini campaigns.

Find all the factsheets on the campaign website: [www.unfe.org/learn-more](http://www.unfe.org/learn-more)




## BULLYING AND VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

**All forms of discrimination and violence in schools are an obstacle to children and young people's fundamental right to quality education. Violence in schools and other educational settings is a worldwide problem and students who do not conform to prevailing sexual and gender stereotypes, including lesbian, gay, bi, trans (LGBT) and intersex students, are significantly more vulnerable.**

**Bullying and violence against LGBT and intersex students has been condemned by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which have called on Governments to step up their action to tackle this harmful practice.**

**What is homophobic and transphobic violence in schools ?**

Homophobic and transphobic violence targets students who are, or are perceived as, lesbian, gay, bi or trans. It also targets other students whose gender expression does not fit into society's norms and expectations, such as boys perceived as 'feminine' and girls perceived as 'masculine'.

Homophobic and transphobic violence includes physical, sexual and psychological violence and bullying. Like other forms of school-related violence, it can occur in the classroom, playgrounds, toilets and changing rooms, on the way to and from school, and online. While this kind of violence mostly occurs among students, it can also take place between teachers and students. Such violence can sometimes target school staff.

Students and staff who conform to 'masculine' and trans students are more likely to be bullied. Transgender students, including men and boys gay or bi, and trans women are more likely to be the target of violence. Although homophobic and transphobic violence is typically perpetrated by and young men, girls and women also carry out such violence.

**What is the impact of school-related bullying and violence?**

School-related bullying and violence has a significant negative impact on students' education and employment prospects, as well as on their health and well-being.

Children and young people who study in discriminatory environments or who suffer bullying or violence because they are seen as lesbian, gay, bi, trans or intersex are more likely to feel unsafe at school, avoid school activities, miss classes, skip or drop out of school entirely and achieve lower academic results than their peers. For instance, a study from the United States found that 70 per cent of LGBT students felt unsafe at school, and a survey in China discovered that 59 per cent of LGBT respondents reported that bullying had negatively affected their academic performance.

Trans students are particularly at risk. In Argentina, a 2007 study showed that 45 per cent of trans students dropped out of school, either due to transphobic bullying by their peers or being excluded by school authorities. A 2015 Australian study found that 18 per cent of intersex people had not completed secondary education, compared to two per cent of the general population.

Students who have a lower academic achievement or leave school early have fewer qualifications, which, in turn, influences their employment prospects. Such violence can also have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health, including increased risk of anxiety, fear, stress, loss of confidence, low self-esteem, loneliness, self-harm, depression and suicide. Studies from Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland and the United States suggest that LGBT students and young people are between two and more than five times more likely to think about, or attempt, suicide than their peers.

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# UN FREE & EQUAL AROUND THE WORLD

Since the UN Free & Equal campaign launched in 2013, there have been national spin-off campaigns and free-standing campaign events in almost 30 countries. In 2017, the global campaign partnered with UN country teams in nine countries to run national Free & Equal campaigns and organize related events, including launching new national campaigns in Guatemala and Mongolia.

## UN Headquarters Events

The UN Free & Equal team helped host two high-level events with the LGBTI Core Group at UN headquarters in New York. International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia on 17 May was marked with a panel debate on how to create a safe, supportive environment for LGBTI youth at school, at home and in the community. On the panel were young activists from Australia, Kenya, Fiji, Japan and Russia. In September, a high-level discussion on how to end violence and discrimination against LGBTI people was organized in the margins of the UN General Assembly. In addition to High Commissioner Zeid, ministers from Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Iceland, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom took part in the discussion.

## Albania

Since its launch in December 2016, Free & Equal Albania has worked on reaching out to young people across the country through dialogue meetings and workshops in Elbasan, Shkoder, Korca and Tirana. Sessions were co-hosted with local LGBTI activists, youth organizations, university faculty and students, and ministry officials and UN officials took part to share the steps they are taking to promote equality. Training materials for journalists, leaflets with LGBTI human rights information in Albanian and other communications materials were distributed at all events.

Collaboration with traditional media was another key component of the campaign, with newspapers and local TV stations covering some of the events. The campaign moreover

worked with well-respected news portal Dritare.net to publish profiles of members of the LGBTI community, which reached more than 120,000 readers across Albania.

Free & Equal Albania also ran a social media campaign to promote LGBTI equality, featuring a short video, a series of infographics and a blog post, which together reached almost 80,000 people.

# 68%

### E bizneseve në Shqipëri

nuk kanë mekanizma për raportimin e diskriminimit për shkak të orientimit seksual dhe identitetit gjinor.



DOI Omar Camilleri

## Brazil

Free & Equal Brazil reached more than 600,000 people on social media in 2017. Multimedia content included two videos featuring LGBT athletes, a visual arts contest, a postcard series featuring trans activists, two Facebook Live events, and several memes and mini-campaigns marking important dates such as Intersex Awareness Day. A series of videos on trans and intersex rights that were produced towards the end of the year, will moreover be launched on social media in the first months of 2018.

The Brazil campaign also hosted LGBTI focused workshops for more than 800 people, focusing on themes such as forced displacement, work place equality and capacity building for activists.



Jorge Salhani. UNFPA Brasil

## Cabo Verde

Free & Equal Cabo Verde continued to actively promote LGBTI equality on social and traditional media in 2017. A video featuring well-known Brazilian singer Maria Gadú was seen by 115,000 people on social media and by an additional 250,000 people on national television. The team also produced a short documentary seen by 20,000 people on social media and more than 250,000 people on TV.

Free & Equal Cabo Verde also focused on building stronger ties with the local LGBTI community, through weekly meetings and capacity building workshops. The campaign has also worked closely with local decision makers, media and business community, who have used their voices to promote LGBTI equality in Cabo Verde.

On 20 December, two years of campaigning was celebrated with an event featuring music, dance, and a photo exhibit. In the audience were two government ministers, several other high-level decision makers, representatives from the UN, LGBTI community members and other human rights activists.



Jorge Freitas UN Cabo Verde

## Cambodia

Free & Equal Cambodia took part in Pride Week in May 2017 armed with Free & Equal banners and t-shirts in Khmer, which were distributed to participants. Wan-Hea Lee, the OHCHR Country Representative, delivered opening remarks at the festivities, advocating strongly for anti-discrimination legislation for LGBTI Cambodians. The Free & Equal team also hosted a photo booth at the event venues, equipped with advocacy message placards. International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia on 17 May was marked by a policy dialogue with the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Cambodian Human Rights Committee, and the National AIDS Authority on key issues faced by LGBTI people in the country.

Outside of Pride Week, Free & Equal Cambodia helped organize a workshop for 29 local LGBTI activists on international human rights law and a side-event at the ILGA's Regional Conference in collaboration with UN Development Operations Coordination Office and the rest of the UN Country Team.



Siheng Ngon UN Cambodia



## Guatemala

Free & Equal Guatemala was launched on 17 November 2017 by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. More than 200 people from the UN, the international community, the media and the government attended the launch event alongside local students and activists. The campaign has continued on social media, where two videos produced by the Free & Equal Guatemala team have reached 120,000 people so far.

The national campaign in Guatemala involves the entire UN Country Team in collaboration with 10 local civil society organizations and pro-bono work by the advertising company Leo Burnett.



OHCHR Guatemala

## Jamaica

Free & Equal Jamaica is run in collaboration with the national LGBTI organization J-Flag and focuses on promoting LGBTI equality through social media. In 2017, the team ran two social media campaigns featuring infographics and videos with a simple message; that all Jamaicans deserve love and respect. The two videos reached more than 160,000 social media feeds across Jamaica, and were liked, shared and commented on thousands of times on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



J Flag

## Mongolia

While Free & Equal Mongolia will not officially launch until 2018, the UN team started their outreach to local civil society and the general public in 2017. The country team was active participants in Mongolia's first public Pride celebration, including widespread coverage on the UN country team's social media channels, which reaches more than 460,000 people.



UN Mongolia



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## Peru

Political advocacy work, both at the national and local level, was at the center of Free & Equal Peru's work in 2017 – implemented in collaboration with the Peruvian Ombudsman's Office. Advocacy drew on a first-of-its-kind report from the national Ombudsman on the human rights situation of LGBTI people in Peru. The report's findings were presented to local authorities, the media, youth activists and other civil society representatives in Arequipa, Tarapoto and Trujillo, followed with discussions and planning sessions on needed policy changes.

The Free & Equal team also produced a brochure that challenges negative stereotypes about the LGBTI community, and a video on intersecting forms of discrimination affecting LGBTI individuals of colour or those living with disabilities, to be launched on social media in early 2018.

## Serbia

Free & Equal Serbia published a series of mini-campaigns on social media in 2017 – each highlighting specific human rights challenges facing LGBTI people in the country. An animated video on bullying of LGBTI high school students was seen by 15,000 people on UN Serbia's social media platforms. Memes with key facts about LGBTI discrimination were pushed out on social media during Pride Week in September, and in December, the campaign launched a video and a series of infographics on the human rights of intersex people. All in all, the mini-campaigns reached around 70,000 social media streams across Serbia.

The campaign team was invited to officially open Belgrade Pride Week in September and took part in several activities throughout the week, and distributed campaign messages

during Merlinka Festival of Queer Cinema and on public platforms later in the year, to raise the profile of the campaign in the LGBTI community.

## Ukraine

The UN team in Ukraine took the UN Free & Equal message to the streets, joining throngs of LGBTI people and their supporters in Kiev for the city's 2017 Pride parade. UN staff marched alongside human rights activists in a show of solidarity and support for Ukraine's LGBTI community. UN participation generated a high level of interest, including on social media.



UN Ukraine



## UN Free & Equal + GAP Inc. = #WearYourPride

To celebrate Pride 2017, the UN Human Rights Office and UN Foundation partnered with clothing giant GAP Inc., encouraging LGBTI people and allies to wear their pride with GAP Inc. produced t-shirts sold online and in stores across Canada, France, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Taipei (Province of China), the United Kingdom and the United States. A percentage of the profits was donated to support UN Free & Equal. The #WearYourPride campaign was accompanied by a massive push on social media, reaching almost 17 million social media feeds around the world.





 Nicole Bjerler OHCHR

# THANK YOU

The UN Free & Equal campaign is forever grateful for the activism of our Equality Champions; Celina Jaitly, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, Ricky Martin, Daniela Mercury and members of the band Fun. A big thank you also to our amazing volunteer translators Aleksander, Ghaith and James, our friends Daniel Errico and Shape History, and to all the activists who have provided feedback and ideas throughout the year.

UN Free & Equal would not be possible without financial contributions from the Governments of Norway and the United Kingdom, corporate supporters Gap Inc. and Spotify, and the support of the United Nations LGBTI Core Group.



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