



Public Information and
Need of Knowledge

non-governmental organization

NARRATIVE AND FINANCIAL REPORT

2015



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Introduction



Dear Supporters and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that we present PINK Armenia's Annual Report for 2015 to our members, donors, funders, partners and supporters. This report offers an in-depth look at the activities of our organization organized by our staff members and Board from January to December 2015. 2015 was an important year in the development and growth of PINK Armenia. As a community-based LGBTI rights organization, there is an incredible amount of work PINK Armenia is engaged in, from education and advocacy in Armenian society, to the provision of crucial social, legal, health and psychological services to the local LGBTI community and other vulnerable populations. But even then, there still exists an insurmountable amount of work that still needs to be done to make LGBTI equality a reality in Armenia and in the region. PINK Armenia's strategic plan defines the areas that our organization concentrates its efforts on. These areas have been translated into the work and objectives, both short term and long term, of our staff and Board, which are realized through the many activities undertaken throughout the year and with the tireless support of our community in Armenia and our partners abroad.

We cannot talk about the many successes of the past year without unfortunately having to reflect on the number of worrying developments in Armenia, and our constant need to stay vigilant. However, as an organization and as a community, we refuse to allow setbacks discourage us from achieving our goals; we continue to rely on our best efforts and to allow our achievements be the light leading us into the future. PINK Armenia continued to successfully carry out its work in LGBTI rights promotion in 2015. Last year, in addition to the advocacy PINK was engaged in for the promotion of LGBTI human rights and the provision of services to the LGBTI community, special attention was paid to the visibility of the LGBT community in our society. We also organized trainings and educational workshops for young people in the capital Yerevan and in the regions of Armenia, as well as for professionals in various fields that work with LGBTI people.

We concluded 2015 by evaluating the projects we carried out throughout the year, as well as with a work and needs assessment with members of the local LGBT community, in an effort to improve our work in 2016.

We hope you enjoy our Annual Report for 2015. We look forward to 2016 and to more achievements and reasons for celebrating equality and human rights in Armenia and around the world!

PINK Armenia in Brief

It would be hard to imagine queer people in Armenia publicly expressing their existence, their needs and even their displeasures just 10 years ago. PINK Armenia was registered in 2007 as a national organization to advance equality, diversity and justice for LGBT people in Armenia. Since then, PINK has committed itself to educating the public, specifically young people, and working towards change by tackling homophobia and discrimination in Armenia, which are at the foundation of human rights abuses and violations. In just a short period of time, PINK grew from a young, community-based organization into a respected one in the sphere of human rights protection in Armenia. It not only carries out advocacy work, capacity building and public activities, but also provides a complete package of services to the local LGBT community. PINK Armenia continues to support the growing visibility of LGBT people in Armenia by mobilizing and empowering the community. 2015 was an especially notable year for LGBT visibility in Armenia, and we look forward to continuing our work into the future and creating a country where all its people can live openly as they are, free from shame, fear and discrimination.

PINK Armenia's Vision

Society, where human rights of all are protected and everybody is accepted regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

PINK Armenia's Mission

Create safe space for LGBT people by promoting legal, psychological, social protection and well-being.

Strategic objectives of PINK Armenia 2014-2016

💧 *Enabling PINK Armenia's staff and volunteers to reach their full potential*

PINK Armenia's long-term objective is to be an organization that is fully inclusive, and representative of the diversity that exists within the LGBT community, as well as the wider society, and that acts as a leader in the human rights and equality movement.

💧 *LGBT community empowerment*

PINK Armenia is working to bolster the LGBT movement in Armenia through various projects aimed at enhancing and sustaining the health and well-being of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

💧 *Advocacy for and human rights protection of LGBT people and populations most at-risk for HIV/AIDS (MARPs)*

With this objective, PINK Armenia aims to advocate for the adoption and implementation of human rights standards, legislation and policies that address stigma, discrimination and prejudice, hate crimes, health disparities, health data collection and research, bullying and violence, and the rights of LGBT people and populations most at-risk for HIV/AIDS (sex workers, people who use drugs, men who have sex with men and people living with HIV) in the workplace and other spheres of life.

PINK Armenia's Values

“Nothing about us without us,” is PINK Armenia’s perspective on the importance of meaningfully engaging the LGBT community while working on the protection of LGBT human rights and leading the movement for equality as frontline defenders.

PINK Armenia is built upon four fundamental values:

- ◆ Understanding and acceptance of diversity, equality, humanism and the priorities of social justice and universal values;
- ◆ Respect for and recognition of fundamental human rights, with particular emphasis on equality and freedom from discrimination;
- ◆ Promoting active citizenship, human rights and democratic values among the LGBT community and Armenian society in general;
- ◆ Solidarity with other vulnerable groups, civil society actors and movements who are striving to achieve full democracy in the country.

PINK Armenia Board, Members and Staff

Board

PINK Armenia's Board is the main governing body of the organization. The Board is responsible for long-term planning, adopting the organization's budget and implementing fundraising activities. PINK Armenia's Board is comprised of individuals who have contributed significantly to the operations of the organization over the years since its establishment. As of December 2015, PINK Armenia's Board members are:

Nvard Margaryan

Hovhannes Madoyan

Marine Margaryan

Lara Aharonian

Mamikon Hovsepyan

Our Members

PINK opened its doors to new members in 2015 and received applications from interested people and stakeholders who expressed their interest in the organization's General Assembly and with becoming more involved in the organization's decision-making processes. According to the PINK's membership policy, any person who has been involved in the activities of the organization for at least two years can submit an application to become a member. After applications have been received, a two-thirds vote from PINK's General Assembly is required to confirm new members. The number of members allowed is 30. Membership terms last up to two years, with the opportunity for re-election.

After the application submission period in September 2015, PINK currently has 17 members.

Core Staff in 2015

Nvard Margaryan

Nvard is the President of PINK Armenia and supervises the staff members and all the program activities of the organization. Nvard also manages the organization's external relations with various stakeholders and ensures the organization's financial sustainability.

Email: nvard.margaryan@pinkarmenia.org

Mamikon Hovsepyan

Mamikon is PINK Armenia's Executive Director and manages all of PINK's projects. He prepares documents related to projects including reports, action plans, and technical documents, ensures that projects comply with various requirements, prepares activity plans, provides feedback and reports to our donors.

Email: director@pinkarmenia.org

Nikolay Hovhannisyan

Nikolay has served as PINK's Project Coordinator since September 2015; he previously served as Project Assistant beginning in 2011. Nikolay executes and evaluates projects according to predetermined timelines, coordinates activities as designated by PINK's Board and donors, and supports the executive team in managing tasks, projects and communications.

Email: kolya.hovhannisyan@pinkarmenia.org

Rima Sardaryan

Rima joined the PINK team in September 2015 as Project Assistant. Rima is monitoring program implementation and providing technical assistance. Rima supports training processes and is responsible for arranging all of PINK's scheduled activities.

Email: rima.sardaryan@pinkarmenia.org

Heghine Babayan

Heghine is PINK Armenia's community officer. Heghine organizes various events with and for LGBT individuals, and engages LGBT community members in community empowerment activities.

Email: heghine.babayan@pinkarmenia.org

Hovhannes Ishkhanyan

Hovhannes is the editor of As You electronic magazine and is responsible for overseeing the content and quality of the e-magazine and website publications. Hovhannes ensures that features are relevant, interesting and informative. He also serves as a key person from PINK to communicate with the media.

Email: editor@pinkarmenia.org

Kamo Davtyan

As Financial Manager, Kamo ensures the organization's financial stability, manages financial plans, develops financial strategies, and drafts proposals for monetary resources and budgets. He also performs accounting, and preparation of financial statements, which he presents to the staff, Board, and donors.

Email: finmanager@pinkarmenia.org

Lusine Ghazaryan

Lusine has served as PINK's lawyer since 2011. She provides our beneficiaries with legal counseling, documents human rights violations, studies potential strategic cases and provides legal support and assistance.

Email: lawyer@pinkarmenia.org

Erna Balasanyan

Erna is PINK's social worker and provides counseling to LGBT community members. Erna coordinates the activities of the "Information, Education, Communication" center of the organization, where visitors participate in trainings, discussions, and receive counseling and other services provided by the organization.

Email: socialworker@pinkarmenia.org

Lilit Avetisyan

Lilit is PINK Armenia's psychologist. Lilit provides support to beneficiaries through psychological counseling, facilitates self-help groups and ensures the proper referral process of project beneficiaries.

Email: psychologist@pinkarmenia.org

Volunteers, Fellows and Interns

Volunteers are a major asset to PINK Armenia. By contributing their time, energy and many skills, volunteers generate enthusiasm, increase community engagement and provide vital resources to meet the needs of the organization.

In 2015, PINK hosted 9 international volunteers and fellows from the United States, Argentina, Canada and Turkey, over 15 local volunteers and 3 social work interns from Yerevan State University, who all added tremendous value to our programs, took ownership of projects and immersed themselves in their work.

2015 was a very important year of successes for PINK, which celebrated its 8th anniversary as an organization. But 2015 also emphasized the fact that there is still a long road ahead before LGBT acceptance and equality is realized in Armenia. On May 17, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, we waved the LGBT pride flag in the heart of Yerevan. On October 17-18, the first ever Armenian LGBT forum was held in Armenia to empower the LGBT community. Other events and projects were also organized throughout the year to strengthen, to mobilize and to increase the visibility of the LGBT community in our society.

From educational events to entertainment, PINK strived to offer a variety of activities to engage the LGBT community. Professional trainings with specialists in different fields were also conducted to improve their work with LGBT people. Trainings were conducted specifically for social workers and psychologists so that they can work with LGBT people in a more sensitive and informed manner. A media workshop was held for journalists on how to cover LGBT-related issues ethically and professionally.

PINK continued to offer a full-package of services to its beneficiaries throughout 2015, from psychological counseling, to social work services and legal support.

In 2015, PINK published the report, "The Impact of LGBT Emigration on Economic Indicators of Armenia," and an annual report on the status of LGBT people in the country, "The Human Rights Situation of LGBT People in Armenia." PINK's 7-year activities report was also published in 2015, which offers a comprehensive overview of the direction and activities of the organization.

Projects Implemented in 2015

Social Empowerment and Education

Annual project expenses: 25,423,809 AMD

Funder: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The “Social Empowerment and Education” project aims to develop civic activism partnerships in Armenia by empowering civic activists and community leaders with practices and approaches that emphasize non-discrimination, for the successful and realistic transition to democracy.

Within the framework of this project, PINK was able to expand its services to include a social worker and psychologist. Thus, since 2013 we have managed to provide a complete package of services to its beneficiaries.

PINK is also working with journalists and civic activists as part of this project by engaging them in issues surrounding tolerance, sexuality and gender. The organization also initiates lectures and discussions on different topics for interested people, beneficiaries, and civic activists, and regularly invites different experts as speakers.

PINK’s e-magazine As You is produced within the frames of this project, and features stories about civil society, human rights, sexual health, issues surrounding gender and sexuality, as well as history, culture and other topics that are of interest or concern to young people.

Services Provided

Psychological Service

Through broader outreach activities and services, PINK saw an increase in the number of LGBT people using its services compared to previous years.

In the psychological counseling that PINK offers its beneficiaries, the humanistic-existential approach is applied to our practice, which supposes that each client is a unique person with their own values and worldview. The classical counseling model is being used in the psychological work conducted at PINK.

Common problems revealed and addressed through interventions during

the psychological counseling process are connected with symptoms of physiological disorders, such as general anxiety, lack of behavioral self-control, and problems with sexual practices. Intrapersonal problems are also found to be common, such as low self-esteem and self-confidence in different spheres of life, identity crisis and a lack of developed adaptive mechanisms creating anxiety about the future, distress related to sexual orientation, lack of emotional control and expression mechanisms, and problems related to interpersonal relationships with family members (connected with the “coming out” process).

In 2015, PINK’s psychologist provided psychological support to 34 beneficiaries in a total of 149 individual counseling sessions. Our psychologist also carried out six group meetings on “Stress Management” with 9 LGBT individuals, and facilitated other various group activities. The aim of the “Stress Management” training course was to raise participants’ awareness about stress and its affects, in order to develop skills and abilities to manage stress in a healthy manner.

Social Worker Service

PINK’s social worker helps LGBT people cope with and problems in their everyday lives. The social worker also helps individuals and groups restore or enhance their capacity for social functioning, and works to create societal conditions that support LGBT people in need. Common problems for LGBT individuals who come to PINK’s social worker include conflicts with their families due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, the need to improve relations with their family members, classmates and others in their everyday lives, difficulties in finding employment and increasing their capacities and skills to find job, and securing temporary housing.

In 2015, our social worker conducted 68 counseling sessions with 15 LGBT individuals. As a result of those meetings, 5 LGBT individuals were able to find jobs, while several others were able to improve their relations with their families and others in their lives. Others were provided with temporary housing.

Trainings Conducted

“Social Justice Begins with You” Training Course

The goal of the “Social Justice Begins with You” training course is to unite young people using topics such as social justice, and our shared responsibility in achieving social justice. During the workshop, participants are given an overview of social justice theory, presented with research data, and asked to discuss local situations of injustice through various exercises. Using role-playing activities, groups begin discussing LGBT people, people living with HIV, sex workers, people of different ethnicities and races, and other vulnerable groups in Armenia that are often subject to discrimination and injustice.

In 2015, 16 “Social Justice Begins with You” training courses were conducted in the village of Getashen and the cities of Yerevan, Armavir, Stepanavan, Charentsavan, Hrazdan, Alaverdi, Echmiadzin, Sisian, Goris, Meghri, Kapan and Shushi. Overall, 245 people attended the trainings, 57 of whom were from Yerevan and 188 were from the regions of Armenia and Shushi, Nagorno-Karabakh.



“GATE” Annual Youth Camp

On July 6-11, 2015, PINK Armenia held its 5th annual GATE (Gender, Activism, Tolerance, Equality) youth camp. The camp has been held since 2011, and aims to empower community leaders and activists, and give them the agency and capacity to raise gender issues and other problems in civil society, to find solutions to those problems, and promote civic activism and the protection of human rights in Armenia.

Twenty-one participants of the camp came from Yerevan and different regions of Armenia in 2015, including the cities and villages of Goris,



Meghri, Sevan, Ttu Jur, Janfida, Ararat, Areni and Alaverdi. During the 5-day camp, participants shared their experiences, discussed topics such as stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination, democracy and civil society, art and activism, sexuality and gender equality, leadership, communication, project development and management. During the camp the participants had the opportunity to meet specialists engaged in the spheres of women rights, journalism, environmentalism and human rights defense, all who shared their experience, knowledge and skills, and answered the participants' questions.

Participants of the GATE youth camp prepared three mock advertisements that highlighted social issues arising from intolerance and prejudice that were of concern to them and that they studied during the camp.

Training Social Workers and Psychologists to Work with LGBT People

PINK Armenia organized a 3-day workshop for psychologists and social workers in Armenia last year. The workshop, entitled "The features of social work and applied psychology with LGBT people," aimed at developing and enhancing social workers' and applied psychologists' working

skills with LGBT people. The workshop brought together 15 practicum specialists and social workers and psychologists in their last years of university study from different institutions and agencies. Presentations about professional ethics were given during the workshop, as were resources and guidelines existing at the international and national levels. Participants also received training on sexuality, assessed different case studies, and engaged in role-play activities to enhance their professional skills. An evaluation of the workshop found that the participants were quite satisfied with the information and skills they received, and emphasized the importance of such trainings for those who may be working with and providing services to LGBT people.



We are convinced that working with future specialists will result in quality, professional work, better service provision to LGBT clients, and will thus have a positive impact on the lives and well-being of LGBT people who seek assistance from different institutions and specialists across Armenia.

Media Workshop on How to Cover LGBT-Related Issues

Journalists in Armenia have had few opportunities to receive training on sexuality and LGBT-related issues. However, it is essential for reporters to recognize and understand how journalism can directly affect LGBT people's lives, and at times promote anti-LGBT violence, which we have often seen before. To combat the hostile media environment in Armenia, PINK organized educational activities with journalists to improve their knowledge of these topics and to remind them of certain journalistic ethics, in the hopes that they will go on to report about LGBT issues in a non-biased, non-judgmental way in the future.

On December 18-20, 2015, PINK Armenia held a workshop with 16 local media representatives on sexuality and other LGBT-related issues. Both individual journalists and journalists from different media outlets took part in the workshop. Topics such as stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, homophobia and its consequences, human sexuality and common myths about LGBTI people were discussed during the workshop. After

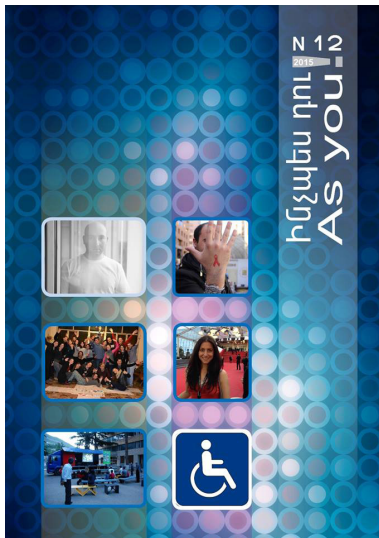
discussing the current LGBTI situation in Armenia, the workshop covered the reporting of LGBT-related issues in media, the terms currently used in media and the terms that are preferred, journalistic ethics and discrimination against LGBT people.



Journalists' role in promoting intolerance and homophobia were also highlighted during all the sessions of the workshop. As a follow up to the workshop, the journalists were asked to prepare articles on LGBT people and rights in the following six months.

“As You” Electronic Magazine

As You is PINK’s official publication that aims to uncover and present the changes taking place in civil society and topics that have been shrouded in silence for years in Armenia. The e-magazine also aims to promote citizens’ direct participation in the civic changes that are taking place in our country and in the struggle against injustice, intolerance and inequality.



The e-magazine covers information about different problems in society and the challenges vulnerable groups face. It provides information and news about organizations and individuals who are making invaluable contributions in creating and developing civil society and democracy in Armenia.

In 2015, three editions of As You were published, giving insight into civil society in Armenia, the lives of people living with HIV, LGBT people expelled from their homes, homophobia, internalized hatred, trans people who are changing the world, gender roles in Armenia, feminism and more. All of these stories

can be explored at the As You website: asyou.pinkarmenia.org

Legal Clinic for Most At-Risk Population (towards HIV)

Annual project expenses: 5,300,704 AMD

Funder: OSF-Armenia

The protection of human rights of most-at-risk population toward HIV infection (injecting drug users, sex-workers and men having sex with men), as well as those who are living with HIV, has key and strategic importance. People belonging to the above mentioned groups are generally left out of public health programs and they do not receive support and appropriate services.

Furthermore, in Armenia, these marginalized groups are subjected to discrimination and the trampling-upon of their human rights in nearly all aspects of life. There are several organizations and institutions in Armenia which try to work in the field of protecting the rights of members of these marginalized groups. Unfortunately, there is a lack of coordination in the field, as well as the services are not addressed properly and specified quite often, which would allow to solve the issues affecting these people. The stigma, the discrimination and the public's intolerant attitude towards these people not only create opportunities for the trampling of human rights, but also builds up obstacles to these people's inclusion in public health, HIV protection, support and care programs and services.

According to the project PINK Armenia and "Real World, Real People" NGOs aim to increase the involvement of most at risk population in HIV prevention programs via provision of coordinated and competent legal services. The organizations also pursue the goal to create a basis for change of policies, laws and practices through fair, public and strategic litigation.

Legal Services

PINK Armenia provides legal services that meet the unique legal needs of the local Armenian LGBT community—legal counseling, filing applications, claims and other necessary documents, visiting police stations if a beneficiary has been illegally arrested or brought to a police station, representing beneficiaries in courts for civic or criminal proceedings and providing them with information on human rights. Legal services are provided to LGBT individuals, those in need of palliative care, people living with HIV and other groups most at-risk to HIV.

Common problems people living with HIV face include refusal of medical care and services due to their HIV status, violation of their right to confidentiality (specifically of HIV status), problems arising from family relations such as the division of joint property belonging to spouses, and problems with child care, such as issues related to alimony payment. Six people living with HIV used the services of our lawyer with the aforementioned problems.

Sex workers who come to PINK for legal services say that the problems they face most often are related to the negative attitudes of police, particularly when they must deal with cases of physical and psychological abuse, and cases related to unfounded deprivation of liberty. Some sex workers reported receiving insults and degrading treatment from police themselves. Four sex workers came to PINK with these problems in 2015.

Six people in need of palliative care used the legal services of PINK because of problems with access to opioid analgesic drugs, and with doctors assigning inadequate pain relief medication.

Forty-six LGBT people used the services of a lawyer for cases of physical and psychological abuse, blackmailing and threats of disclosing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, hate speech received on social media, hate crimes based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and for ineffective action on the part of police, particularly with the denial or suspension of criminal cases.

Strategic Litigations

Annual project expenses: 1,255,378 AMD

Funder: OSF-Armenia

Within the framework of the “Legal Clinic,” PINK also implements strategic litigation for select cases, which paves the way for significantly reforming legislation, practice, or to raise public awareness on issues by filing complaints about the selected cases with the courts. Despite the fact that the primary objective of strategic cases is the presentation of a complaint brought by a particular person in the courts, it is also aimed at ensuring justice for an entire group of people, who may experience similar or comparable experiences. Moreover, strategic litigation is a legal

instrument that allows us to achieve social, legal and political change through individual litigation of human rights violations, thereby creating legal precedents.

In 2015, PINK pursued two strategic litigation cases, which concern the article “They serve the interests of international homosexual lobbying: The blacklist of enemies of state and nation” and other similar articles, published by “Iravunk” newspaper on 17.05.2014, presenting a blacklist of a group of people, who are accused in “homoaddicted lobbying” and calls everyone to express zero tolerance towards them and to restrict their opportunities in every possible field of their activity.

The strategic meaning of these cases is the fact that Armenian legislation does not regulate issues regarding discrimination and hate speech as its aggravating circumstance. So, because of the lack of effective legal remedies, the offenders were able to overcome the nature of their offence and withhold from an appropriate civil or criminal responsibility.

One of these cases has already been submitted to the European Court of Human Rights.

Preventing and Responding to Hate Crimes against LGBT People in Armenia

Annual project expenses: 582,770 AMD

Funder: ILGA-Europe

Though hate crimes committed against LGBT people remain unaddressed, unreported, uninvestigated and/or unpunished, Armenian society and many state representatives have stated on numerous occasions and in many different ways that there are no LGBT issues in Armenia and that the human rights of LGBT people are not violated. This project aims to show that LGBT issues are real, and moreover that there are criminal acts committed against LGBT people on the basis of their perceived or real sexual orientation and/or gender identity (SOGI), which in most cases remain hidden from plain sight.

The purpose of the following project is to monitor the cases of hate-motivated crimes committed against LGBT people, to show that discrimination disproportionately affects LGBT people in Armenia and to pressure Armenian authorities to fulfill their obligations in regards to the latter.

“Untold Stories: Beyond Hatred” Documentary Film

Annual project expenses: 838,614 AMD

Funder: US Department of State

“Untold Stories: Beyond Hatred” is the title of PINK’s newest project launched with the financial support of the U.S. Embassy in Armenia. Given the opportunities provided by new media, and taking into account the existing situation of LGBT people in Armenia, this project aims to increase the visibility of the LGBT community in Armenia using a documentary about the lives of LGBT people in the country. The documentary movie will present an in-depth look at individual stories in order to shed light on the prejudices LGBT people face and the lack of awareness about sexuality and gender identity in Armenia. The movie is scheduled for release in 2016 and aims to break the existing stereotypes and prejudices about LGBT people in Armenia, engage wider society in discussions about LGBT issues in the country, and motivate people to demand and enact change.

Solidarity Network for LGBTI People in Armenia and Georgia

Annual project expenses: 9,506,966 AMD

Funder: The Heinrich Boll Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office

The Heinrich Böll Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office has initiated a three-year “Solidarity Network for LGBTI people in Armenia and Georgia,” executed by a working group of NGOs—the Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG) and Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC) in Georgia, and Society Without Violence (SWV) and Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK) in Armenia. Combating discrimination against LGBTI people, enhancing their protection from all types of violence, ensuring adequate provision and protection of their human rights, and supporting their full-fledged inclusion in Georgian and Armenian societies constitute the principal objectives of the action network.

The project seeks to overcome homo-transphobia by consistently raising public awareness, ensuring accurate and positive media represen-

tations, mobilizing civil society and promoting human rights movements and agendas.

The project envisions a more comprehensive understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity in the region, the mainstreaming and internalization of LGBTI-friendly attitudes, the reduction and eventual elimination of discrimination, the guarantee of the protection of LGBTI rights, and the full inclusion of LGBTI people in both Georgian and Armenian society over a 3-year period.

Eastern Coalition for LGBTQ Equality

Annual project expenses: 1,596,459 AMD

Funder: SIDA, through RFSL

The Eastern Coalition for LGBTQ Equality is the result of several LGBTQ organizations coming together against the repressive Russian anti-gay propaganda law, and aims to counteract the adoption similar laws in other countries in the region. LGBTQ people in all of the countries in the region face discrimination; hate crimes and abuse are common, and their human rights are neither acknowledged nor recognized by authorities and civil society.

Reporting and monitoring of LGBTQ discrimination cases are crucial to raising awareness within national and international human rights institutions, and among law enforcement authorities and the public. Thus, developing a reporting and monitoring strategy is a prerequisite for effective advocacy pressuring policy makers to adopt laws and implement policies against discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes.

This project aims to improve the capacity and internal structures of member organizations of the Eastern Coalition for LGBT Equality, to create a common system for collecting, organizing, analyzing, documenting and mapping cases of human rights violations of LGBT people and discrimination in Armenia as a basis for anti-discrimination advocacy, as well as to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) regarding LGBT issues by the Government of Armenia.

HIV Prevention among MSM

Annual project expenses: 13,692,723 AMD

Funder: The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

PINK Armenia has implemented this project since 2007, aiming to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections among young people. The program includes a number of components, such as raising awareness among young people about sexual health through peer-to-peer education, trainings on sexual health, dissemination of information on sexual health and sexually transmitted infections using leaflets, posters and public events, providing anonymous and confidential counseling on sexual health and human rights protection, distribution of free condoms, lubricants and informational materials for the purpose of preventing sexually transmitted infections. Additionally, PINK provides free testing for STIs and HIV, organizes public events to raising public awareness on sexual health and human rights, and conducts outreach work to involve new people in sexual health programs.

Voluntary Counseling and Testing

In 2015, PINK Armenia continued providing anonymous and confidential counseling on sexual health and STIs, distributing free condoms, lubricants and informational materials, and offering free STI and HIV testing in order to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections.

In 2015, 25,650 condoms, 11,142 lubricants and 776 informational materials and leaflets on sexual health and sexually transmitted infection were distributed through the project. 149 people received Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) services, and testing for sexually transmitted infections. Overall, 794 beneficiaries used these services in 2015.

Core Funding

Annual project expenses: 18,633,859 AMD

Funder: Sigrid Rausing Trust

The Sigrid Rausing Trust (SRT) foundation was founded in 1995 to support human rights globally. Funding from SRT has helped PINK gain sta-

bility to develop our programs, to build other funding streams, and to work effectively by means of organizing forums, initiating research studies, and providing crucial social, legal and health services to the local LGBT community. Core funding is widely used to have the LGBT community center and many empowerment activities at the “Information, Education, and Communication” center of PINK Armenia.

The First LGBT Forum in Armenia: #RainbowArmenia

The first ever LGBT forum in Armenia, titled “Rainbow Forum,” organized by PINK Armenia, took place in the Lori region on October 17-18, 2015. The aim of the forum was to discuss the problems LGBT people face in Armenia, to develop a strategy and steps to fight homophobia, and to build upon the momentum already achieved by the growing LGBT movement in Armenia.

Building and strengthening the LGBT movement in Armenia was the topic most discussed during the forum, and participants expressed their ideas and willingness to support the development of the movement. Many participants said that the forum gave them hope for the Armenian LGBT movement, particularly because new people are joining the movement and that many of them have expressed their readiness to come out publicly. Around 40 LGBT people and allies took part in the forum.



LGBT Empowerment Activities

There is an urgent need to support the development of a strong, sustainable LGBT community, and for that reason significant emphasis has been placed on LGBT empowerment activities. Complementing the other services provided by PINK, over 30 different weekly events and series of events were carried out for the community in 2015. The events held varied from educational workshops to entertainment, including gatherings such as a literature club, a series entitled “Healthy Individual in an Unhealthy World,” movie screenings, talks such as “Sexuality and Religion,” “Colorful Conflicts,” “Conversations About Sex” for LGBTQ women, discussions on bisexuality and same-sex marriage, a Coming Out Day event, workshops on social justice and sexuality, a series of trainings on safety and security, a discussion with PINK’s lawyer and attorney, a discussion PINK’s psychologist and social worker, workshops on sexual and reproductive health with LGBTQ men, “Queer Dinners,” and many more. In total, about 500 LGBT people took part in PINK Armenia’s empowerment activities in 2015. We are happy to add that LGBT community members themselves organized many more events. Some of the events implemented in 2015 are presented below.

Literature Club

In a joint initiative with community members, PINK held a literature club in January-March 2015, which aimed at empowering the LGBTQ community through literature, storytelling, poetry and feminist writings in translation. The literature club also aimed to use peer-to-peer methods of story sharing, and writing was soon added to the agenda of the club. Eighteen LGBTQ women attended the literature club.

Conversation About Sex

A discussion for LGBTQ women was planned and implemented in June 2015 with sexologist Narine Nersisyan. Sexually transmitted infections and HIV-related issues, sexual desire and the lack of it, arousal and pleasure, orgasm, vaginism, sexual sadism, sexual masochism and fetishism, and the impact of depression on woman’s sexual desire and sexual life were discussed with 28 LGBTQ women during the meeting.

Bisexual Visibility Day

Often being placed somewhere between straight and gay, bisexuals are seen by many as a mix of the two. In reality this is untrue. Common misconceptions paint bisexual people as confused or greedy, as “fake gays,” or as trend-chasing straight people. There are a number of damaging stereotypes bisexual people face that come from these common misconceptions. Bisexual people often face these same stereotypes from within the LGBT community. In order to tackle this issue of misconception and prejudice, on September 23 PINK organized a “Live Library” event with the aim of raising awareness within the LGBT community on bisexuality, bisexual people, and biphobia. Four bisexual guest speakers were invited to listen to and respond to all the perceptions and opinions, questions and concerns LGTQ people had. This event was participated by 24 LGBTQ individuals. We believe we can counteract the lack of knowledge on bisexuality, and we need to start by doing so within the LGBT community.

English Club

PINK volunteers from Birthright Armenia held an English language club for LGBT people in September-December, 2015. The classes were held twice a week, and covered grammar, vocabulary, and conversation. With time, the language club became a platform to discuss LGBT issues and feminist literature, poems, movies and music.

Coming Out Monologues at PINK

Members of the LGBT community and their allies celebrated national Coming Out Day at PINK, an internationally observed day for LGBT people, on the eve of October 11, 2015.

More than 40 LGBT people and allies gathered to share their stories of coming out to their families and friends, and to listen to the experiences of others. Their experiences ranged from the positive and uplifting to the miserable and depressing. Coming out is never easy, but we can draw inspiration from others and their stories. “Coming out will help you escape the burden of fear, burden of stress and depression. However considering the appropriate timing, determining whether this is the right time is so im-

portant,” said someone who participated in the monologue event. The day was concluded with the sounds of live saxophone and guitar by and for the community to enjoy.

Security Workshops with LGBT Activists

Beginning in late November, PINK held security and safety workshops with the local LGBT community and its allies. The need for such workshops emerged after we bore witness to various negative developments for our community, particularly after we held the LGBT Forum in October. During the first three workshops, participants discussed strategies on how they can improve their safety and security while being engaged in LGBT human rights activism. Participants also shared their experiences and tactics for self-defense, and were presented with materials developed by Front Line Defenders, Heartland Alliance (HA) and Protection International. The next two workshops were devoted to digital security. PINK also held a 3-day Integrated Security Workshop for local LGBT activists and allies for comprehensive, all-encompassing safety and security workshops.

Integrated Security Workshop

The Integrated Security workshop covered all aspects of an activist’s work and life, from health and personal networks, to secure working spaces. The aim of the workshop was to increase knowledge about the concept of “integrated security” and build capacities for addressing security issues at both personal and organizational levels.

Two Integrated Security workshops were held in 2015. The first one was jointly organized in Bakuriani, Georgia with the Anti-Violence Network of Georgia for 18 Armenian and Georgian female human rights’ defenders involved in women’s rights and LGBTQ activism.

The second Integrated Security workshop was held in Armenia for LGBTQ activists, as a continuation of the 5-day safety and security workshop. 13 LGBTQ activists took part in the workshop, where a safe space was created for participants to discuss personal and culturally sensitive topics for maintaining personal and group health and well-being, to develop strategies for future support and to equip them with various methods and tools to address security issues at the personal and organizational level.

“Tolerance and Homophobia” Forum-Theatre in Yerevan

The “Tolerance and homophobia” forum-theatre took place on November 20, 2015 at The UN Armenia office through PINK Armenia’s initiative.

The event was organized in a performance format. It starts from a controversy between 2 Facebook users, one of them was the incarnation of Tolerance, the other one – Homophobia. The character which incarnated the “Google” search was intervening in the debate of the Facebook users, who answered the questions’ raised by debaters.

The audience had the opportunity to be involved in the discussion, to comment on it, to raise questions, and also to like or dislike the participants’ statements.

The participants left their written comments and approvals after the discussion.

#IDAHOT in Armenia

Several advocacy and public events took place in Yerevan on the occasion of International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. PINK Armenia successfully raised awareness about the day in different layers of the society.

On the eve of IDAHOT, activists made the uncompromising statement of Stonewall, “Some people are gay, get over it,” in the Armenian language in the form of street art.

To mark the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia in May, PINK Armenia addressed a letter to the President of the Republic of Armenia, some ministries and deputies of the National Assembly, with a call to provide in the Republic of Armenia legal regulations for combating discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and to monitor cases of discrimination against LGBT people.

PINK also provided state officials with informational booklets about homophobia and postcards with personal stories from LGBT people who had been subjected to violence and discrimination.

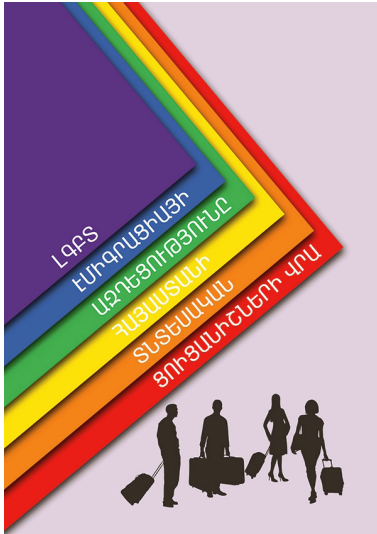
On May 17, 2015 PINK activists raised the LGBT flag on Northern Avenue,

in the heart of Yerevan. Pictures of the flash-mob style act to mark IDA-HOT caused a negative backlash online, and even hate speech and direct threats towards the activists.

To conclude IDAHOT 2015, a closed event was held and attended by more than 120 LGBT people and allies. Rarely in Armenia does the LGBT community have a safe and secure platform to gather and express itself openly; but IDAHOT was celebrated nonetheless in an open and free space.



The Impact of LGBT Emigration on Economic Indicators of Armenia



PINK Armenia and “Socioscope” Societal Research and Consultancy Center NGOs prepared a report about the LGBT emigration impact on economic indicators of Armenia. The purpose of the project was to study the impact of LGBT emigration on economic indicators of Armenia during 2011-2013 as a result of discrimination against the LGBT community and to reflect those changes in a long-term perspective.

The calculations made by this study demonstrate that, for a citizen of Armenia of average demographics who emigrated during the years 2011-2013, a minimum of the equivalent of \$3,545 was spent on

education. According to approximate estimates, 5,891 citizens of Armenia emigrated due to discrimination during the years 2011-2013, which implies that society has lost around \$21 million in one go only in terms of educational investment toward LGBT emigrants. As for income not received, the calculations reveal that, in the year following emigration during 2011-2013, Armenia did not receive \$88,365,000 across three years and for all LGBT emigrants. This is the loss following only one year after emigration, but that loss is prevalent in reality in all the years until the emigrant reaches retirement age.

Budget revenues for all three years taken together – 2011-2013 – could have been more by \$20 million had the LGBT individuals who left due to discrimination remained. As a result of the emigration of 5,891 LGBT individuals, the state budget will lose around \$2 billion in revenue, at purchasing power as of January 1, 2014, over the course of more than the following 36 years (until retirement). And as a result of LGBT emigration in the following twelve years, from 2014 to 2025, Gross domestic product (GDP) will have a loss of \$3 billion at purchasing power as of January 1,

2014, adjusted for Purchasing power parity (PPP), while the budget will lose \$370 million at purchasing power as of January 1, 2014.

The full report consists of sociological study and economic assessment.

Annual Review: The Human Rights Situation of LGBT People in Armenia



PINK Armenia released “The Human Rights Situation of LGBT People in Armenia,” in 2014. Discrimination towards the LGBT community in Armenia continues to be widespread, as the state fails to undertake any actions to reduce the negative attitude towards the LGBT community and to protect their human rights. Rather than promote equality, the leading political party representatives and media affiliated with authorities continue to spread hate speech towards LGBT people, strengthening the environment of impunity in the county. The absence of anti-discrimination legislation and accountability mechanisms for discrimination cases

greatly contributes to the violation of human rights of LGBT people; with this, the lack of implementation for the existing legislation also increases the vulnerability of LGBT people. Furthermore, the absence of legal mechanisms and any general policy to combat discrimination foster the improper investigation and failure to qualification and hold perpetrators accountable in crimes against LGBT people as hate crimes based on the sexual orientation and gender identity of a person are not prosecuted by Armenian legislation. The absence of legislation prohibiting hate speech against LGBT people has further enabled government officials, state authorities and mass media to perpetuate hate speech within the context of freedom of expression.

This report summarizes reported and documented cases of human rights violations during 2014 reported to PINK Armenia, records of interviews with LGBT people and data obtained from court cases, internet sources and studies of other reports. In 2014, 44 people reported to PINK Armenia

human rights abuses, all of which were in a way connected to their sexual orientation and/or gender orientation. The report presents human rights violations against LGBT people by the state, abuses by 3rd party persons and the state’s failure to establish equal opportunities for everyone.

The report is concluded with specific recommendations targeted at state authorities, mass media, and regional and international organizations, the implementation of which will contribute to the creation of a safer environment for LGBT people, such that LGBT people can become full members of Armenian society, able to exercise their human rights and freedoms effectively.

PINK Armenia 7 Year Narrative and Financial Report (2007-2014)



December 14, 2015 marked the 8-year anniversary of the founding of “Public Information and Need of Knowledge” NGO. On the occasion of the organization’s anniversary, we prepared an activity report for PINK Armenia covering the past seven years (2007-2014), which offers comprehensive insights into the direction and activities of the organization, as well as projects implemented and their results. The report summarizes the organization’s path, briefly presents the history of the organization and the projects implemented over the past seven years, and introduces the board and staff of PINK Armenia. We also summarize the organization’s sources of funding for the past seven years and the monetary amounts given to PINK.

Training and development

PINK Armenia's first strategic objective is enabling staff and volunteers to reach their full potential, and 2015 was a great year for achieving this objective, as both staff members and volunteers had various opportunities for their professional development. Our staff, members and volunteers were able to attend various trainings, conferences, meetings and Erasmus projects aimed at enhancing their capacities and contributing to their professional development. PINK Armenia members, staff and volunteers attended the following local and international conferences, meetings and trainings in 2015: "Rainbow Leaders," a leadership training program offered to activists and leaders in the global LGBTI movement by RFSL; "Equality for All," by Global Human Rights Defense, which aimed to increase the capacity of youth workers and leaders in developing effective rights-based advocacy strategies for their organizations; "Challenge-What Does It Take," by InsightEPD on defining what a support system for change-makers could look like and to begin building it in partnership; the 36th International Human Rights Training Program by Equitas; "Domestic Violence Service Provider," about types of abuse, affected groups, risk evaluation and other relevant issues surrounding risk organized by Women Support Center; the "International Visitor Leadership Program," by the U.S. Department of State; ILGA-Europe's Annual Conference 2015; the Eastern Coalition for LGBT Equality Community Training organized by RFSL; and several others in Armenia and abroad.

We are convinced the knowledge, skills and capacities obtained through these meetings serve the needs of the local LGBT community and will assist in further developing and organizing the movement!



PINK Armenia's Involvement in Civic Initiatives

Civic initiatives in Armenia generally address a range of issues, from socio-political to economic and environmental issues. PINK has been involved in a number of civic initiatives and movements in Armenia since 2012, when the Occupying Mashtots Park movement took shape to stop the demolition of a public park in central Yerevan. In 2015, PINK was actively involved in a number of initiatives, including the mass protests against a hike in electricity rates in Armenia, dubbed "Electric Yerevan." PINK Armenia members were involved in initiating and running the website of the Electric Yerevan movement, which assisted in disseminating neutral, credible information, counter-balancing misinformation about the movement. PINK Armenia members also played a great role in the "No" Campaign, which opposed the passage of a constitutional referendum in Armenia in December 2015. PINK Armenia members were also involved as observers during the referendum and contributed to the revealing voting violations.

Gender Justice

As a member and co-founder of the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, in frames of the Coalition, PINK Armenia strives to protect women's rights and to put an end to domestic violence, as well as advocates for the passage of the law on "Prevention of Domestic Violence" in Armenia.

The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women operates on different levels, concentrating efforts on the formation of public opinions and changing the existing sexist, patriarchal mentality.

In 2015, the Coalition worked on increasing the visibility of domestic violence, and raising awareness about the issue through public and social actions, as well as by covering the issues and domestic violence cases through media attention, trial monitoring and by working with policy makers and other relevant stakeholders on the implementation and monitoring of UPR recommendations on gender-based and domestic violence.

Through public events such as press conferences, TV program reports, articles, public marches, outdoor film screenings, and concerts, we say



no to violence and continue to raise awareness among both women and men about women’s rights. The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women will continue applying its efforts to prevent violence against women and to support victims of domestic violence in Armenia.

The Coalition organized a series of public events on October 1 in recognition of National Day to Combat Domestic Violence, as well as 16 days of activism against gender-based violence in Yerevan and in the regions of Armenia. As a result of the 16 days of activism and visits to the regions, more than 5,000 women across Armenia were informed about their rights and were able to engage directly with members of the Coalition.

PINK is engaged in the struggle for gender justice within the Coalition because gender and gender equality is deeply rooted in all PINK Armenia activities—in its trainings and camps, advocacy and public campaigns.



Thank You!

PINK Armenia is grateful for the all the time, energy and support its volunteers, staff, members and Board have dedicated to furthering PINK Armenia's aims and objectives.

We wish to express our thanks to the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, the Advocacy and Research Group on AIDS, and all the other organizations involved in our work for their cooperation, partnership and support.

PINK would also like to say thank you to ILGA Europe and its staff members for their advice, assistance and support during difficult times.

Thanks to European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC) for supporting us in processing cases to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), and to Birthright Armenia, Armenian Volunteers Corps and the Hrant Dink Foundation for always thinking of PINK Armenia as a placement for volunteers and interns.

A very special thanks you to our lovely LGBT community and allies in Armenia for always supporting PINK with their ideas and love!

And thank you to our donor organizations for their dedication, commitment and financial support.



SIGRID RAUSING TRUST

Brief statistics from 2015

- ◆ Total number of visits of www.pinkarmenia.org reached 47,075 in 2015
- ◆ 3 editions of As You e-magazine were published during 2015
- ◆ 12 issues of our LGBT newsletter were circulated online
- ◆ 149 individual psychological counseling sessions were provided to 34 beneficiaries
- ◆ 68 individual social worker meetings were conducted with 15 beneficiaries
- ◆ 46 LGBT individuals and 25 other beneficiaries of our “Legal Clinic” used the services of our lawyer
- ◆ 245 young people from 13 cities and villages of Armenia took part in our social justice trainings
- ◆ 9 projects were implemented in 2015 (including core funding projects)
- ◆ PINK paid 11,812,908 AMD in taxes to the state budget in 2015

8 things about PINK

In 2015 PINK Armenia celebrated its 8th anniversary. Below we present 8 things you should know about PINK!

💧 1. PINK is a human rights organization

PINK is dedicated to the protection of human rights and to ending human rights abuses. PINK provides direct assistance to groups vulnerable to HIV infection who become victims of human rights abuses, conducts research studies and maintains wide-ranging advocacy campaigns targeted at different community members and stakeholders.

💧 2. PINK is a community-based organization

PINK is a nonprofit organization that represents the LGBT community and is engaged in meeting the needs of the community.

💧 3. PINK Armenia's office is a safe space for all

Creating a safe space is a part of our organization's mission. PINK Armenia strives to maintain an office environment where all people can feel safe, welcomed and included. Safe spaces especially for LGBT people are important to empower community members to reach their full potential.

💧 4. PINK emphasizes the role of LGBT allies in reaching its mission

PINK appreciates and highlights the role of LGBT allies in supporting and advocating for LGBT equality. The LGBT community cannot achieve equality without support from compassionate and dedicated allies!

💧 5. PINK Armenia, its staff and members are an active social group!

PINK is involved in different civic, social, political and cultural initiatives and movements in Armenia. It addresses a range of issues important to the democratic growth of the Republic of Armenia.

💧 6. Annual funding for PINK from one source does not exceed 40% of the overall budget of the organization

According to the financial policy of the organization, in order to maintain

financial stability and independence, annual funding from one source shall not exceed 40% of the overall budget of the organization, as well as of the implementation of advocacy strategy.

- 7. PINK provides a complete package of services to the local LGBT community that in a timely and accessible manner

Since PINK's founding, we have grown significantly and now offer a full package of services to the local LGBT community, including psychological, social, legal, and sexual health support and counseling.

- 8. A decentralized power structure is used within the organization

PINK is a horizontal organization where power is shared more broadly which allows all staff members to have more control over organizational matters according to their expertise. PINK Armenia is a family, and it always welcomes new members to make the family bigger.

Public Information and Need of Knowledge NGO
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SIGRID RAUSING TRUST



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