

ISDAO

Together

Learning, Resisting, and
Imagining our Movement



Insights and strategies from
ISDAO's 2025 Regional Partners Forum



Written by: Boluwatife Akindele

Edited by: The ISDAO Team

Translated by: Akey Fabrice Looky

Report illustrations and

graphic design by: Studio We Are Stories

Table of Contents

01.	List of Abbreviations	04	07.	Resources and Accountability	26
02.	Scope of the report	05	08.	Parallel Workshops	27
03.	About the ISDAO Regional Partners Forum	06	09.	Regional Mapping: <i>Needs, Partners, and Strategic Directions</i>	28
04.	Structure of the forum	12	10.	Art, Joy, and the Work of Liberation: <i>Creative Expressions as Tools for Movement-Building</i>	31
05.	What Does It Mean to Build a Regional Movement?	13	11.	Beyond the Forum: <i>Building a Sustained Regional Movement</i>	32
06.	The State of the Movement	15	12.	Conclusion	33

List of Abbreviations

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights	NACP	The National AIDS Control Program
CANARID	CANARID Association - Cercle d'Action Nationales des Associations et Réseaux Identitaires pour l'Inclusion et la Diversité (National Action Circle of Identity-Based Associations and Networks for Inclusion and Diversity)	SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
COBIS	COBIS Network - Collectif des Organisations Béninoises d'Inclusion Sociale (Collective of Beninese Organizations for Social Inclusion)	SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics
GBV	Gender Based Violence	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus	SSMPA	Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act
ISDAO	Initiative Sankofa D'Afrique de l'Ouest	UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex	UPR	Universal Periodic Review
		#JusticeForHilary	#JusticeForHilary was a hashtag used to advocate for justice in the case of Hilary Ikechukwu Emereole, a 23-year-old Nigerian who died in October 2025, following a homophobic attack in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.



Scope of the report

ISDAO convened partners, activists, staff, and resource persons from across its nine focal countries—Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo—together in Lagos, Nigeria, for its inaugural Regional Partners Forum in November 2025. The forum themed **Solidarity in the Storm: Learning, Resisting, and Imagining Our Movement** unfolded over three days of listening, analysis, co-learning, and collective planning.

This report offers a detailed account of the daily sessions, collaborative activities, workshops, shared reflections, and the strategic visioning processes that shaped and emerged from the forum.

The report is both a summarised transcript and a curated narrative of the forum's political, emotional, and strategic journey. Designed as both an archival document and a strategic tool, it captures what happened in the room, why it mattered, and how it contributes to LGBTQI+ organising across the region.

It honours the voices, experiences, challenges, and aspirations of the activists, organisations, and communities present, and serves as a roadmap for ongoing regional collective organising, capturing what was learned, what was envisioned, and what the participants committed to building together after leaving Lagos.



About the ISDAO Regional Partners Forum

The 2025 ISDAO Regional Partners Forum marked a historic moment: the first-ever regional gathering of some of the partners, activists, and organisations that ISDAO has funded over the last six years across its nine focal countries. Designed as a space where ISDAO could connect directly with these activists and organisations while also creating space for the partners to learn from each other, the forum reflected the fund's longstanding commitment to creating movement-centred spaces for reflection, dialogue, and collective strengthening.

As an activist-led fund, ISDAO has always understood convening as political work: an opportunity for movements to pause, take stock, and build shared understanding across borders, identities, and traditions. The Regional Partners Forum was conceived in this spirit.

The forum offered participants space to reflect on the essence of their struggles, interrogate the moment, redefine a common vision, and strengthen alliances across the region. It also served as a platform to highlight the innovations emerging from communities and to collectively build responses that speak directly to the issues movements and communities are facing today.

In its design and intentions, the Regional Partners Forum was an act of movement-building: a reminder that when we gather, we make it possible to imagine and shape the futures we need.

What We Convened For :

INTENTIONS AND GUIDING PURPOSES

Since its creation in 2015 and establishing grantmaking in 2019, ISDAO, an activist-led fund, has made over 600 grants in the nine focal countries. This includes core and project funding for community organisations, groups, consortia and networks, as well as support for individual activists, specific initiatives that advance capacities, and supporting participation in regional and international spaces.

The ISDAO Regional Partners Forum was a convening for listening, analysis, co-learning, and planning. It was designed to be a time to return to the essence of the collective struggle, redefine a common vision, strengthen alliances,

highlight innovations, and build responses that spoke to issues around the region.

This forum was also designed to serve as an opportunity to gather structural elements that can also contribute to ISDAO future thinking and the roles it can play in the region, based on the realities and priorities expressed by the partners.

Why Now:

THE CONTEXT AND URGENCY FOR CONVENING AT THIS MOMENT

Over the past two years, West Africa has undergone profound political and social shifts that have directly shaped the lives, safety, and organising capacity of LGBTQI, human rights, and intersectional movements across the region. The rise of repressive laws and policies, the intensification of anti-gender and LGBTQI-phobic rhetoric, and a growing wave of political instability have created an environment where gains once considered secure are now under threat.

These shifts have not occurred in isolation; they form part of a broader global conservative



backlash that is reshaping civic space, restricting bodily autonomy, and undermining LGBTQI rights movements worldwide.

Across the region, community members are facing increased surveillance, criminalisation, violence, censorship, and social hostility. Organisers are navigating shrinking civic space, reduced funding, fragmented coalitions, and heightened security risks. At the same time, anti-rights actors have become more coordinated, better resourced, and more entrenched within state and religious institutions.

In this climate, the work has become heavier, the stakes higher, and the urgency to act collectively more pressing. This moment demanded that we pause to gather strength. It required creating a space where partners could speak honestly about their realities, analyse what has shifted, recognise emerging patterns, and rebuild strategies that respond to the depth of the challenges ahead.

The Regional Partners Forum was convened precisely because of this urgency: to allow movements to reconnect, to hold one another through uncertainty, to share tools of resistance, and to imagine together what the next years of organising must look like. It is a response to a moment defined by pressure and by possibility, a moment that calls us back to solidarity, clarity, and collective planning.

ISDAO's philosophy of collective organising and participatory spaces

ISDAO's philosophy of collective organising centres around the idea that no single organisation, identity, or strategy can hold the complexity of our struggles. Instead, change emerges through participatory processes and spaces where people speak from their lived realities, engage each other across differences, and co-create solutions that reflect the richness of movements across the region. These spaces are not designed to dictate direction, but to surface wisdom, strengthen solidarities, and ensure that strategies are grounded in the experiences of those most affected.

ISDAO's organising philosophy affirms the importance of care, joy, creativity, and wellbeing as essential components of movement-building and as practices that sustain resistance. It prioritises community-led analysis, co-learning, and shared ownership, recognising that movements grow through honest dialogue, accountability, and the collective refining of vision and practice. The fund recognises that activists carry immense emotional and political labour, and that liberation work requires spaces where people can breathe, feel held, and reconnect to one another.

In this way, the Regional Partners Forum is an extension of ISDAO's core values: a living, breathing example of what it means to convene with intention, to honour community knowledge, and to build movements through collective power rather than individual effort. It is a reminder that our struggles are shared, our victories interconnected, and our liberation bound to the strengths we cultivate together.

Participants & Stakeholders

The forum brought together:

- **59 ISDAO partners** across 7 grant cycles, including activists supported under ISDAO's Asanka creative initiatives fund.
- **7 ISDAO staff** who provided technical, administrative, and logistical support.
- **9 resource persons** (4 interpreters, 2 technicians supporting the interpretation equipment, 2 logistics persons, and 1 writer).

Key Goals of the Forum

- To gain a collective understanding of the state of the movement and emerging issues across the region.
- Create a space for cross-movement learning and knowledge exchange that advances movement collaboration and action.
- To identify the priorities and strategic focus of organisations in the region.

Methodology

The forum was designed and facilitated using a participatory and community-driven approach, emphasising dialogue, co-creation, and collective reflection. The facilitation methodology intentionally moved away from top-down presentation models, instead creating structured spaces where every participant's experience was treated as expertise.

In countries with fewer partners (Mali, Senegal, Togo, Burkina Faso and Liberia), all partners were invited in order to ensure balanced representation across the region. For the other countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Ghana), the selection of partners was carried out across the 7 grants cycles, while ensuring respect for the agreed approaches (diversity, equity, regional balance).

Sessions were co-facilitated by partners and staff, with strategic support from external consultants where needed. To centre well-being as integral to movement work, the agenda deliberately wove in creative and care spaces for restoration and reflection.

The approach used in facilitating the forum was built around several key interactive formats. Open discussions were utilised to surface regional trends and shared challenges, fostering a collective analysis of the movement's landscape. Breakout sessions were organised by affinity, grouping participants geographically, thematically, and linguistically, to enable focused and relevant exploration of issues. Structured, interactive conversations allowed for deeper exchange on thematic priorities and strategic dilemmas, moving beyond surface-level debate.

Additionally, dedicated knowledge exchange sessions provided a platform for participants to share practical tactics, valuable resources, and hard-won lessons drawn from their respective contexts.

Inclusion

To ensure meaningful and equitable participation, the forum was deliberately designed around key inclusion practices.

The commitment to linguistic justice was foundational: full simultaneous French-English interpretation was provided throughout, actively breaking down colonial language barriers and enabling authentic, cross-regional dialogue. Dedicated English and French logistics personnel were also available to assist participants with navigation, materials, and personal needs, ensuring everyone could fully engage without any logistical barriers.

Beyond language, the design of sessions intentionally fostered integration and diversity. With the exception of specific country-level deep dives, working groups and discussion circles were consciously mixed across linguistic and national lines. This intentional grouping ensured that perspectives were not siloed, that learning flowed across borders, and that the regional nature of the movement was embodied in the room's daily interactions.

To maintain a responsive and participant-led space, structured participant feedback loops were integrated. Pre- and post-forum questionnaires were administered to capture expectations, assess the convening's impact, and identify concrete next steps for collective action, ensuring the process remained anchored in the community's expressed needs.



Structure of the forum

Daily meditative practices

On the second and third days of the forum, participants began each morning with a 30-minute mindfulness session led by Dr Toyin Ajao, affectionately known as Moon Goddess, a Holistic Wellbeing Consultant & Practitioner. Through breathwork and guided meditation, she created personal and communal grounding rituals that allowed participants to arrive fully in their bodies before entering the day's intense conversations.

Beyond the morning meditative practices, she remained present throughout the forum to offer one-on-one psychosocial support, ensuring that participants had space to process, restore, and care for themselves. Her presence became especially important as some of the discussions touched on experiences that were deeply personal, triggering, or emotionally heavy. This intentional holding of emotional and spiritual wellbeing strengthened the forum's commitment to holistic and sustainable organising.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

"Rested."

"Connected with a lot of missing pieces."

"Happy to have shared about my country's experiences with others."

"I feel seen."

"I feel very good."

"I don't know how I feel; probably sick."

"Not stressed."

"Relieved"

"Energetic."

Day 1

Understanding the Present

The first day grounded participants in the political and social realities shaping LGBTQI movements across the region. After introductions and an overview of the agenda, the forum opened with reflections on why this gathering mattered now, setting the tone for deep collective inquiry. Country panels unpacked the rise of LGBTQI-phobic laws, political instability, and the funding crisis, while delegations added lived detail about the pressures shaping their contexts. Participants then moved into one of the forum's central activities: creating national murals that illustrated the origins of their movements, the struggles that shaped them, and the realities their communities face today. In the afternoon, working groups examined the current state of national movements, tracing shifts, tensions, and emerging dynamics across the region.



Day 2

Learning and Inspiration

The second day deepened the forum's collective analysis by turning toward the struggles, strategies, and practices that sustain movements across the region. The day opened with learning circles that invited participants to reflect on the previous day and connect their experiences to wider regional trends. Parallel workshops led by partners highlighted locally rooted initiatives, from community wellbeing and joy-centred organising to security planning, family alliances, and navigating militarisation, instability, and criminalisation. These sessions created space for rich exchanges on resource mobilisation, sustainability, and national strategies for long-term movement-building. The afternoon brought the groups together for a collective mapping of struggles and resistance, visually tracing the pressures communities face and the ways they continue to resist, adapt, and imagine new possibilities.



Day 3

Shaping the Future : FROM NATIONAL REALITIES TO REGIONAL VISIONS

The third day centred on shaping a shared vision for the future of regional organising. The day opened with a collective conversation on what it means to build a regional movement and whether there is appetite for one, an essential grounding for the work ahead. Participants then moved into a collective mapping of needs, identifying the priorities that cut across national contexts. These insights guided working groups focused on defining strategic directions for the region, including funding, movement-building, advocacy, wellbeing, and the partnerships required to strengthen these areas. The forum concluded with a mapping of technical and financial partners, reflecting on the roles they currently play and the roles they could take on to support a more connected, resourced, and sustainable regional movement.





What Does It Mean to Build a Regional Movement?

On the third day of the forum, **Dr Rita Nketiah, a researcher and activist, facilitated a critical conversation on what it truly means to build a regional movement and whether there is appetite for such a collective endeavour.** This conversation was essential groundwork for the day's focus on shaping the future, because regional priorities cannot be articulated without first understanding whether participants see value in organising beyond national borders, and what that might require of us.

Participants reflected that creating a regional movement begins with recognising ourselves as a collective: understanding that while our contexts differ, many of our struggles cut across borders. A regional movement, many noted, is rooted in the belief that our work does not stop at the boundaries of our countries. It requires thinking about how our movements can influence, strengthen, and learn from one another; how we can share ideas, strategies, and resources;

and how collective action can reinforce local capacity in ways that no organisation or country could achieve alone.

Several participants spoke to the emotional and political power of knowing that they are not alone, that there are many others standing with them in their struggle. This sense of being backed by a broader community provides comfort, strengthens commitment, and builds resilience.

“When you’re alone, it’s easy to knock you down”, one participant noted, “but with the backing of so many people, we become harder to break. We are stronger in numbers.”

Regional organising was also framed as a practical necessity given the escalating repression across West Africa. Anti-rights

actors are increasingly coordinated and well-resourced, and participants recognised that movements must respond with the same level of strategic connectivity. A regional movement, they observed, enables countries to consolidate their resources, strengthen their ‘blind spots’, and build shared mechanisms for legislative advocacy, protection, arts and culture work, and rapid response. It allows movements to benefit from each other’s successes, replicate effective strategies, and avoid starting from scratch each time a new challenge emerges.

Participants also discussed the need to break down linguistic and historical barriers that fragment the region, emphasising the importance of building a sense of unity across Francophone and Anglophone contexts. A regional movement, in their view, should serve as a union of communities connected through shared cause, shared struggle, and shared ambition.

The conversation closed with a shared reflection on the regional dimension of the movement and how collective action across countries can make it more visible and effective. The reflections shared throughout the

What emerged was a collective understanding that regional organising is not about creating new structures, but about strengthening collaboration, consultation, and shared action across borders, because working regionally is not simply desirable, it is essential.



The State of the Movement

To ground the conversations that followed, Dr. Rita opened this session by inviting participants to reflect on what we mean when we speak about 'the movement' within the region. She introduced several foundational definitions that helped frame our collective understanding. Drawing on Srilatha Batliwala, she reminded us that a movement is not just a collection of organisations, but a set of people with a shared experience of injustice who organise to build collective power, develop a shared agenda for change, and pursue it through sustained collective action. The Everyday Activism Network echoes this by describing social movements as spaces where people come together to solve problems no individual or institution can solve alone and spaces that help us imagine the world not as it is, but as it could be. Building on this, Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow define movements as sustained campaigns of claim-making, rooted in networks, traditions, and solidarities that make continued action possible. These definitions helped anchor our discussions, offering a shared lens through which to examine the current state, strengths, and future direction of queer and intersectional organising across the region.

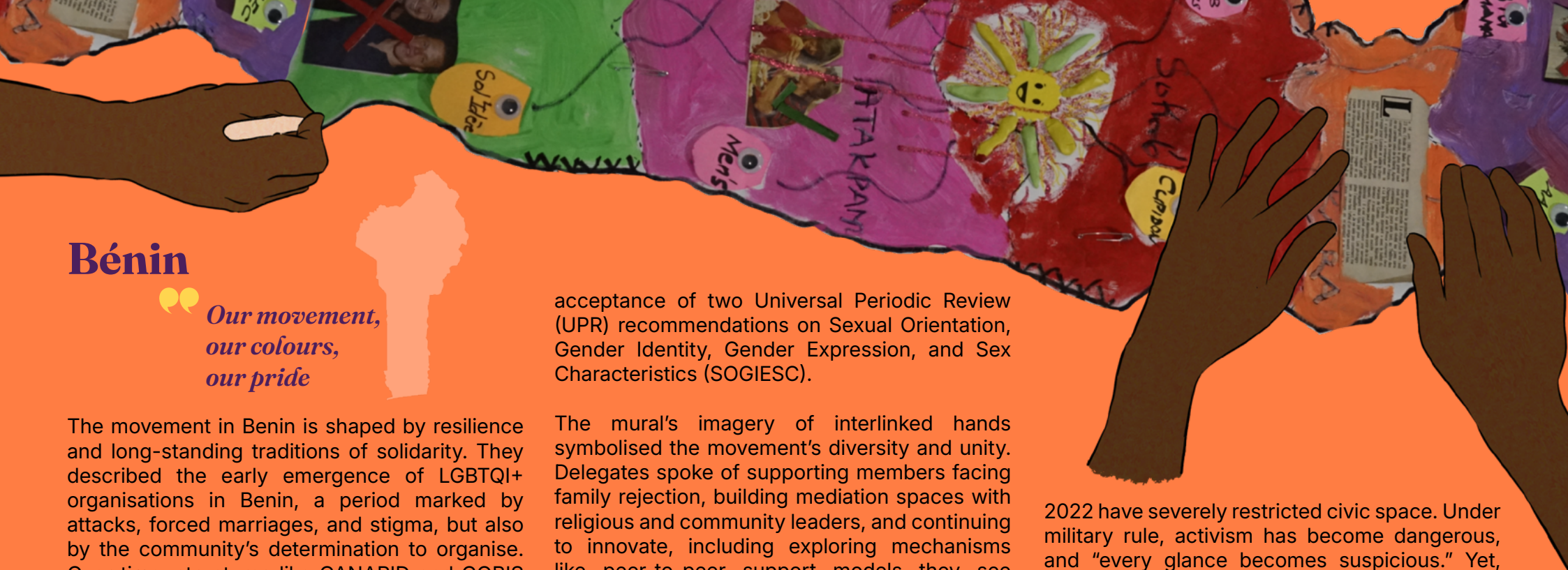
Country Profiles

On the first day of the forum, delegates from each of ISDAO's nine focal countries were grouped to create a collective mural illustrating the state of their national movements. Each mural was to capture a country's unique constellation of communities, political conditions, struggles, and emerging issues, offering a vivid visual snapshot of the realities shaping queer, human rights, and intersectional organising. The profiles that follow present a country-by-country breakdown of the political, social, and organising environments using the murals activity, grounding this report in the voices and lived experiences of activists across the region.

As delegations created their murals, they were guided by a set of reflective prompts designed to help them capture the full depth of their national realities.

Each group was asked to consider the following:

1. A title or central idea for the mural.
2. What your movement and community look like today: realities, dynamics, context, etc.
3. What you experience: your challenges, struggles, but also your hopes, solidarities, and small victories.
4. What makes you proud and your strengths: resilience, creativity, mutual support, achievements, etc.
5. Your dreams and aspirations: your vision for the future, what you wish to change or achieve, etc.
6. Key symbols, images, and meanings: colours, objects, metaphors, striking scenes.
7. Shared emotions when realising your mural.
8. Key messages or memorable quotes of your group.
9. What you want the movement to keep about you.



Bénin

“Our movement,
our colours,
our pride

The movement in Benin is shaped by resilience and long-standing traditions of solidarity. They described the early emergence of LGBTQI+ organisations in Benin, a period marked by attacks, forced marriages, and stigma, but also by the community's determination to organise. Over time, structures like CANARID and COBIS have helped strengthen collaboration, enabling organisations to respond collectively and gain visibility.

Despite a crowded organising landscape, delegates noted internal tensions and leadership struggles that have sometimes slowed collective work. These challenges, however, pushed groups to form new networks that bring organisations together and create common political spaces. Through these alliances, activists have strengthened relationships with institutions such as the Ministry of Justice and the national police, allowing them to file complaints, pursue cases of violence, and secure protection. They also highlighted concrete advocacy gains, including increased participation in national health and human rights programmes and the government's

acceptance of two Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC).

The mural's imagery of interlinked hands symbolised the movement's diversity and unity. Delegates spoke of supporting members facing family rejection, building mediation spaces with religious and community leaders, and continuing to innovate, including exploring mechanisms like peer-to-peer support models they see as regional inspiration. Their vision is a Benin free from violence, where sexual and gender minorities are included and safe.

Burkina Faso

“We tremble,
but we stand firm

The movement in Burkina Faso is shaped by fear, instability, and extraordinary resilience. Their delegates described a country of immense diversity, with over 60 tribes, where LGBTQI+ organising once had room to grow because of a legal vacuum, but where successive coups since

2022 have severely restricted civic space. Under military rule, activism has become dangerous, and “every glance becomes suspicious.” Yet, even in this environment, the community continues to hold its ground.

Delegates recalled how activists once convened a national forum and built a network to counter a 2015 anti-LGBT bill, an early sign of collective strength. Today, organising happens more discreetly and individually, but this has also revealed the deep resilience of the community. Despite arbitrary arrests, rising anti-gender movements, and shrinking space for expression, new alliances and coordinated actions are still emerging.

Their mural depicted a heart of hope held by chained hands resting above red and black waves representing political, social, and religious hostility. Yet a bright sky hovered above, pointing to the possibility of renewal.

Delegates shared key messages from their mural:

“We are still here, and our hearts beat for a future”; “One day, loving will no longer be a crime”; “On that day, our voices will no longer tremble”.

They spoke with pride about their self-determination, adaptability, and ability to create programmes that build confidence and offer protection. Their vision for the next 5–10 years is an inclusive Burkina Faso where sexual and gender minority communities can live openly and safely, supported by a strong national and sub-regional movement.

Above all, they want the wider movement to remember one thing:

“We will survive”.

Côte d’Ivoire



The Côte d'Ivoire delegation shared the complexity and interconnectedness of their movement. They described a context shaped by visible progress and deep contradictions. Côte d'Ivoire is often perceived as a more “comfortable” place for LGBTIQ people, yet this comfort exists alongside active persecution,

rising homophobia, and what participants called the “hypocrisy” of society: tolerant as long as LGBTIQ+ people remain invisible. Increased visibility, particularly through community organising and advocacy, has been met with heightened hostility, including the Woubi crisis and anti-LGBT sentiment following the Family Convening.

Delegates shared that 2024 brought both breakthroughs and backlash. It was the first year LGBTIQ+ organisations introduced support packages in hospital settings, despite challenges such as medication reactions among trans women accessing PrEP. The first Ivorian LGBTIQ+ magazine was launched, marking a milestone in representation. At the same time, anti-LGBTIQ actors leveraged public anxiety, conflating sexual orientation with pedophilia and fuelling fear. Activists noted that anti-rights groups infiltrated events to monitor activities, reflecting the growing tension around LGBTIQ visibility.

Movement dynamics are also shaped by internal challenges, including leadership conflicts, information hoarding, and the exclusion of LBQ women from decision-making spaces. Yet the delegation highlighted the emergence of coalitions, increased coordination among organisations, and the creation of safe community spaces as signs of collective strength. Legislative conditions remain contradictory: while some protections exist—particularly around employment and housing—there are still penal provisions regarding same-sex acts, and some MPs have called for further

reformulation. Activists have responded by setting up monitoring committees and security plans to better protect the community.

Their mural captured both grief and hope through photographs of victories and losses framed by rainbow colours. Delegates named resilience, consortium-based organising, and growing solidarity networks as their core strengths. Their vision is a movement united in diversity, grounded in inclusion, and capable of overcoming fragmentation. Their message:

“United in diversity, we will conquer”

reflects their belief that collective action will carry them toward a safer, more just Côte d'Ivoire.

Ghana



*Journey to Fawohodie
(Freedom)*

The Ghanaian delegation depicted their movement as a butterfly in motion—past, present, and future intertwined. They described a community standing at a critical crossroads: facing escalating hostility driven by religious influence, political opportunism, and media-fuelled moral panic, while simultaneously becoming more visible, organised, and interconnected than ever before. The looming Anti-LGBTQ+ Bill has created a climate of fear, but it has also deepened solidarity, especially

among youth activists, feminist groups, parents of LGBTIQ persons, and artists who have helped expand the movement's public presence.

Delegates noted the contradiction between Ghana's secular status and the overwhelming power of Abrahamic faiths, which shape public discourse and fuel anti-gender rhetoric. Politicians, they argued, have exploited this climate rather than improving citizens' lives. Each time the bill resurfaces in Parliament, there is a spike in anti-LGBT violence. The bill remains in limbo, passed by Parliament but unsigned, leaving the community in a state of uncertainty. Participants also described the regional impact of anti-LGBT sentiment, including how the Woubi crisis forced many LGBTIQ Ghanaians living in Côte d'Ivoire to return home and seek refuge in unsafe spaces.

Despite this environment, the movement continues to grow through joy, creativity, and mutual care. Delegates celebrated small but powerful victories—such as parental acceptance and expanding networks of psychosocial and wellness support. They emphasised that increased visibility has helped shift public narratives, even when it has provoked backlash. The mural incorporated Adinkra symbols—Fawohodie for freedom and Sankofa for returning to ancestral wisdom—reflecting a desire to reclaim indigenous ways of understanding

identity in the face of claims that queerness is “foreign”.

Participants spoke with humour and defiance about the movement's confidence, resilience, and refusal to be diminished—

“We are sexier and hotter than our oppressors”,

one joked, emphasising joy as resistance. Their messages—

“We exist, we matter, we belong”, “Love is not a crime”, and “Our joy is our resistance”

captured the spirit of a movement that refuses to disappear.

Looking ahead, the delegation dreams of a Ghana where LGBTIQ people can live openly and safely, and where alliances with civil society, feminist movements, and faith leaders help shift public consciousness. They want the wider movement to remember them as a community that never gave up, a movement strengthened by struggle, grounded in joy, and committed to collective freedom.

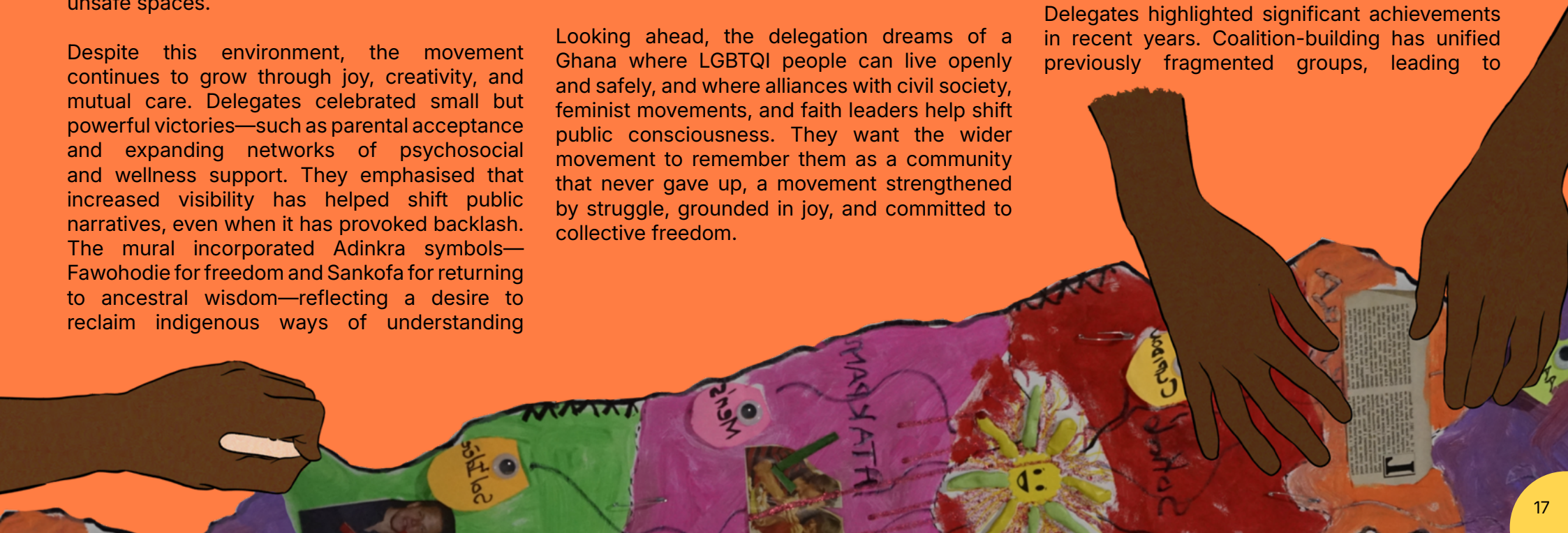
Liberia



Stronger together

The Liberian delegation described a movement grounded in resilience, memory, and collective transformation. Their mural reflected a community that has endured patriarchy, stigma, criminalisation, and religious hostility, yet continues to rise with courage and unity. The movement today is anchored by a strong coalition of 17 LGBTIQ organisations and 7 allies working closely with international NGOs and national institutions to advance equality, visibility, and rights.

Delegates highlighted significant achievements in recent years. Coalition-building has unified previously fragmented groups, leading to



coordinated national advocacy and the creation of committees focused on safety and security, health, legal response, rapid response, resilience, and wellbeing. Partnerships with the National AIDS Commission, the Ministry of Health and the National AIDS Control Program (NACP), and other agencies have strengthened access to HIV, PrEP, and SRHR services for key populations. Leadership development, particularly among LBQ women, trans persons, and young activists, continues to expand through mentorship, training, and community support. Creative initiatives such as sports inclusion, arts-based advocacy, and livelihood programmes have helped broaden visibility and representation.

A major priority for the delegation is mental health, which they described as “everyone’s concern”. Peer counselling has become a central community tool, offered in two forms: bi-monthly peer-to-peer counselling, and individual sessions with a trained ally counsellor who provides specialised psychosocial support. These systems help ensure no one is left behind.

Yet, delegates also described persistent challenges: criminalisation, strong religious influence in public life, Parliament’s repeated rejection of equality-focused agendas, limited funding, and pervasive stigma. A newly recrafted bill proposing harsher punishments has added to community fears, even as activists continue pushing for protection and recognition. Despite these pressures, the movement remains determined, coordinated, and forward-looking.

The mural’s symbols—rainbow for unity, joined hands for collaboration, and a clenched fist for

resistance—embodied the spirit of Liberian organising. Their key messages, including “Stronger together”, “Liberia for all”, and “Our rising in unity” captured their collective hope. Above all, they want the movement to remember that their struggle is rooted in care, visibility, and an unwavering commitment to equal rights for all.

Mali



Unity is strength

The Mali delegation described their movement as courageous, creative, and deeply supportive, a community that does not seek special status, only respect and safety. Their mural reflected a discreet but determined movement rooted in lived experience, wellbeing, and collective care. Although LGBTQI+ organising in Mali began during a period of legal ambiguity, the environment has become significantly more hostile following the adoption of a new penal code in December 2024 that criminalises same-sex relationships and even the “promotion” of LGBTQI+ lives.

Delegates described a difficult reality marked by arbitrary arrests, police harassment, infiltration of dating apps, and a broader climate of insecurity under military rule. Mali’s governance by armed forces has made advocacy extremely difficult, especially after 2020 protests that led to arrests, imprisonment, and profound feelings of isolation

among activists. Social, economic, and security crises further compound these pressures, yet the movement continues to organise with remarkable resolve.

Despite these conditions, the delegation highlighted the strength of their organisational ecosystem. Like the fingers of a hand, one hurting when another is harmed, identity-based organisations support each other through community care, legal accompaniment, medical referrals, and wellbeing spaces. A federation now brings together several groups, offering structure and coordination. Art also plays a significant role in their activism, with artists using imagery and performance to sensitise the public and reclaim space. Ongoing trainings support community members to gather their aspirations and develop theories of change that reflect their vision for a more inclusive Mali.

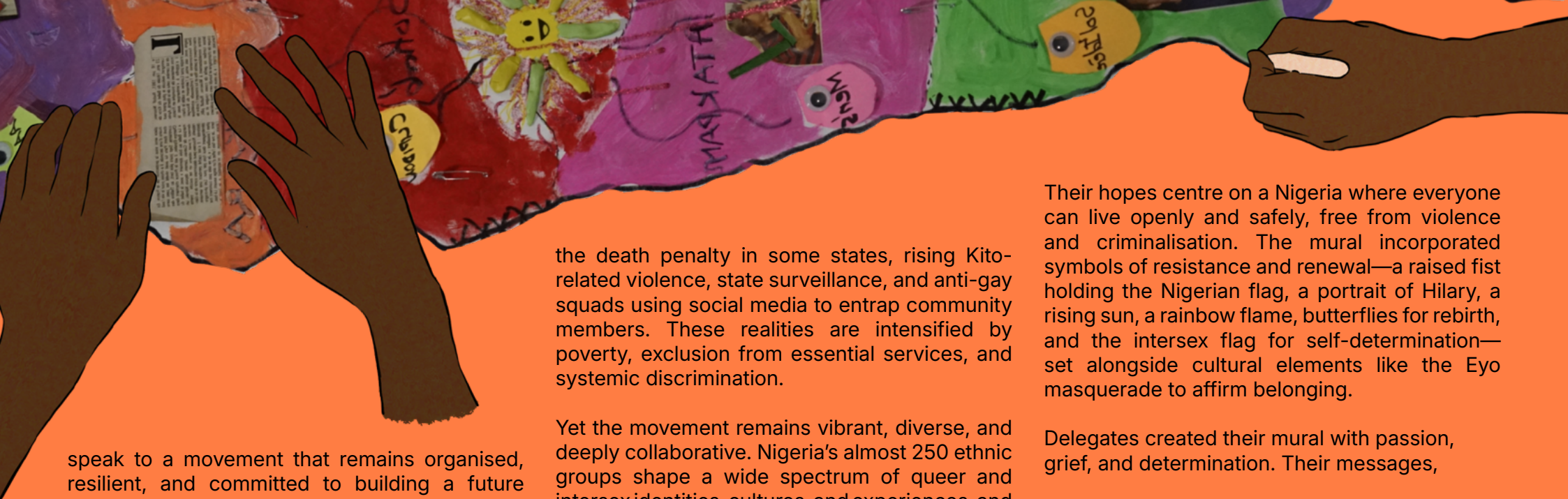
Their mural’s symbols captured this spirit: a rainbow-coloured hand representing collective energy and interdependence, a baobab symbolising their roots and the strength of African identity, and a flame for courage and perseverance. Delegates emphasised that

“between ourselves, we support each other”

—a reminder that unity is their strongest protection.

Their messages,

“Unity is strength”, “Despite the context, we exist and evolve”, and “Hope, creativity, and determination guide us forward”,



speak to a movement that remains organised, resilient, and committed to building a future where everyone can live with dignity. Above all, they want the wider movement to remember Mali as a community defined by authenticity, solidarity, and unwavering hope.

Nigeria



*Our Realities,
Our Voices,
Our Future*

The Nigerian delegation titled their mural “Our Realities, Our Voices, Our Future”, mapping the entire country in rainbow colours to affirm that queer people have always existed in Nigeria and form part of its cultural and historical foundation. They described a movement navigating some of the harshest conditions in the region: severe criminalisation under the SSMPA, the threat of

the death penalty in some states, rising Kito-related violence, state surveillance, and anti-gay squads using social media to entrap community members. These realities are intensified by poverty, exclusion from essential services, and systemic discrimination.

Yet the movement remains vibrant, diverse, and deeply collaborative. Nigeria’s almost 250 ethnic groups shape a wide spectrum of queer and intersex identities, cultures, and experiences, and activists have built cross-regional partnerships, including work in northern states governed by Sharia law. Delegates highlighted the rise of creative and media communities where queer people are increasingly claiming space, challenging perception, and telling accurate historical stories that counter the narrative that queerness is “un-African”. Institutional partnerships and strategic alliances are also emerging, strengthening advocacy across health, SRHR, legal reform, and community wellbeing.

Despite escalating violence and shrinking civic space, the movement continues to build strong support systems: safe houses, rapid response networks, trauma-informed care, and intersex-led advocacy for bodily autonomy. Delegates noted incremental successes in challenging aspects of the law and shifting public perception through storytelling and visibility campaigns, including #JusticeForHilary.

Their hopes centre on a Nigeria where everyone can live openly and safely, free from violence and criminalisation. The mural incorporated symbols of resistance and renewal—a raised fist holding the Nigerian flag, a portrait of Hilary, a rising sun, a rainbow flame, butterflies for rebirth, and the intersex flag for self-determination—set alongside cultural elements like the Eyo masquerade to affirm belonging.

Delegates created their mural with passion, grief, and determination. Their messages,

“We are Hillary”, “End Kito”, “Trans Nigerians Exist”, “End the SSMPA”, and “We exist. We create. We matter”,

captured both the urgency of their struggle and the strength of their resolve. Above all, they want the movement to remember Nigeria as bold, resilient, intersectional, and committed to collective care and justice.

Senegal



*Dare to be a good
companion to yourself*

The Senegalese delegation described a movement navigating one of the most hostile environments in the region, marked by intense social intolerance, homophobic media

narratives, and the growing power of anti-LGBTQI movements. Their mural captured the realities of a country where LGBTQI+ people face discrimination in every sector—education, health, family, sports, work—and even in death, with cases of refusal of burial and exhumation such as the well-known incident in Kaolack.¹ Although Article 319 of the penal code does not explicitly target LGBTQI+ identities, it is routinely used to punish and intimidate the community, and a new bill proposes to make it even harsher. Many leaders have been forced into exile, and homophobic influencers have grown increasingly vocal online.

Despite this pressure, the movement continues to organise through strong networks of associations dedicated to fighting violence, supporting victims, and promoting community health. Between the late 2000s and the early 2010s, organisations have come together to unify their efforts across human rights, social justice, and HIV/AIDS sectors. They have formed alert and response committees, developed strategies to participate in regional mechanisms such as the ACHPR and UPR, and built working groups to produce alternative reports and strengthen visibility at national and regional levels.

Delegates highlighted shared challenges including limited funding, especially beyond HIV, and fragmented action among organisations. Yet they emphasised growing solidarity, mutual support, and an emerging vision of equitable networking as a foundation for collective liberation. Their hopes centre on a future where

LGBTQI+ people can live openly, safely, and without persecution, with strengthened legal recourse and broader human rights protections.

Creating the mural surfaced emotions of fear, but also renewed self-determination, echoed in the song that grounded them during the process. Their key message,

“*Dare to be a good companion to yourself*”,

underscored the importance of inner resilience amid constant hostility. They want the movement to remember Senegal through the mantra: BE—DO—HAVE, a reminder that identity shapes action, and action shapes the future.



The Togo delegation portrayed a movement that continues to organise despite criminalisation, rising homophobia, and shrinking resources. Crosses appeared throughout the mural to symbolise the many barriers the community faces, including legal, social, economic, and political. Delegates described a resilient organising landscape shaped by strong associative activism, creative use of digital tools

for awareness, and the emergence of informal youth groups carving out spaces for connection and joy.

The delegation highlighted the profound impact of the “Trump effect”, which led to major funding losses, scarcity of prevention commodities, and job losses among community members previously working on USAID-supported programmes. Despite these setbacks, organisations have continued to build structures of solidarity. A key milestone has been the creation of Solidaire, a national movement bringing together all identity-based organisations in Togo. Through this platform, groups have jointly implemented projects, strengthened advocacy, and collaborated on mechanisms such as the ACHPR and regional human rights platforms. Their successful push for a national study on the mapping and prevalence of transgender persons reflects the growing sophistication of their collective organising.

Delegates also emphasised the importance of inclusive paralegal training across the country, which has improved the documentation of gender-based violence and strengthened community support for survivors. They acknowledged that most groups are visible except intersex people, who remain insufficiently protected under the current legal framework. Criminalisation, particularly under Article 392, continues to shape their daily realities, and shifts in political leadership have had little effect on the environment.

Looking forward, the movement’s aspirations centre on mental health programmes, economic

¹ https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2023/10/31/au-senegal-l-exhumation-du-corps-d-un-homme-suppose-homosexuel-fait-polemique_6197561_3212.html

empowerment, expanded HIV and SRHR awareness, stronger protection mechanisms, and long-term advocacy for decriminalisation and social inclusion. They stressed the need for allies and the importance of sustaining unity across emerging and established organisations.

Their messages—

*“We exist. We resist. We advance”,
“Nothing for us without us”, and
“Together for dignity and equality”*

capture their collective courage and vision. Delegates shared a sense of joy while creating their mural, affirming that resilience, love, and solidarity are the symbols that define them. Above all, they want the wider movement to remember Togo as diverse, determined, and unwavering in its pursuit of dignity and justice.

Emerging Themes Across the Region

Across West Africa, the struggles are immense, but so are the strategies, solidarities, and hopes. The regional patterns reveal movements that are:

- Under attack, yet organised;
- Isolated in moments, yet deeply connected;
- Cautious, yet courageous;
- Grieving, yet relentlessly imagining new futures.

These shared themes not only reflect the state of queer, trans, and intersex organising across the region, they also point toward the foundations of a truly regional movement: one built from lived realities, collective resilience, and the unwavering belief that another world is possible.



The Chair of Possibilities

The Chair of Possibilities was a dedicated plenary space where each country shared concrete solutions, practices, and innovations that have already been tested in their national contexts and proven effective. This exercise shifted the room toward what is working, spotlighting strategies that could be adapted or replicated across the region.

One or two representatives from each country sat in the 'chair' to present achievements, protective mechanisms, successful advocacy approaches, strengthened alliances, and community-led initiatives that had helped their movements respond to the issues mapped on Day 1 and Day 2. The Chair therefore functioned as a collective repository of regional wisdom, offering practical examples of resilience, creativity, and problem-solving from movements operating in vastly different political and social environments.

The contributions ranged from security innovations and emergency response systems to coalition-building, intergenerational organising, strategic partnerships with state institutions, and community wellbeing practices. The goal was not only to celebrate what has worked, but to equip activists across the region with tools they could adapt within their own contexts.

Below is a distilled summary of the practices shared through the Chair of Possibilities:

MALI

- Leveraging relationships with sympathetic police actors to intervene in cases of arbitrary arrest
- Working under HIV structures while maintaining clear movement objectives.

SENEGAL

- A WhatsApp alert system to rapidly flag homophobic incidents; mental-health support spaces
- Documentation of GBV cases as an advocacy tool.

TOGO

- Intergenerational programming to engage "mature" LGBTQI people and reduce isolation
- Creation of Solidaire, a unified collaborative platform for timely information-sharing and joint action.

BURKINA FASO

- Formation of a consortium to respond to hostile legislation through coordinated advocacy and an action plan that mitigated risks despite not stopping the bill.

GHANA

- Establishing a community-led system to document SGBV and human-rights violations as a basis for advocacy
- Sharing security practices and framing safety as a collective responsibility.

NIGERIA

- Strengthened collaboration between community organisations and individual activists
- Direct engagement with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to document and act on violations.

BENIN

- Building alliances with religious and cultural leaders who publicly challenge stereotypes
- Forming mediation committees and mobilisation of affirming parents during cases of family rejection.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

- Establishing a community solidarity fund for emergency support, livelihood activities, and bereavement needs
- Capacity-building with police leading to GBV focal points who serve as allies.

LIBERIA

- Collaboration with the press union to promote accurate reporting
- Growing public awareness of LGBTQI rights, as seen in the removal of the anti-LGBTQI bill sponsor from Parliament.

Taken together, these contributions reveal a region rich with innovation despite adversity. The Chair of Possibilities served as a reminder that even in moments of crisis, powerful solutions already exist within the region's collective experience.

Collective Mapping of Needs and Priorities

Ahead of the forum, participants completed a pre-forum survey that revealed the following top five strategic priorities:

01

Strengthen community movements and organisations

04

Ensuring sustainable, flexible, and inclusive funding

02

Protect the mental health, well-being, and safety of activists and the community

05

Creating strong and supportive regional alliances

03

Advocating for legal and policy reforms

06

Community awareness

Young people are not treated as a separate strategic priority; rather, adolescents and youth are intentionally integrated across all six strategic priorities, ensuring their needs, leadership, and perspectives are embedded throughout the regional vision.

Resources and Accountability

As conversations throughout the forum highlighted shrinking funding, sustainability challenges, and the need to reimagine resourcing beyond traditional aid, participants also reflected on the importance of accountability and transparency. Strengthening trust between organisations, donors, and the communities they serve was recognised as essential not only for mobilising new resources, but for stewarding existing ones responsibly. This session created space to share practical approaches to ethical resource management grounded in integrity, participation, and collective responsibility.

Reimagining the Movement Beyond Foreign Aid

With donor funding declining across the region, participants reflected on what financial sustainability could look like beyond traditional aid. The discussion highlighted a growing shift toward community-led, locally rooted models of resourcing that draw on solidarity, skills, and entrepreneurship.

Across several countries—including Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Burkina Faso—member contributions and community solidarity funds have become essential for covering core costs and responding to emergencies. Others are developing income-generating activities, such as small-scale farming, product transformation, artistic production, or selling livestock, as seen in Senegal, Mali, and Nigeria. Liberia shared its experience launching micro-businesses and bidding for government procurement contracts, turning entrepreneurship into a means of autonomy.

A number of movements, such as those in Togo and Liberia, are increasingly monetising community expertise, offering consultancy, design, facilitation, or media services to generate flexible revenue. Côte d'Ivoire and Benin also highlighted creative approaches like advocacy dinners, in-kind donations, and the mobilisation of regional councils for small grants.

Across these examples, a common thread emerged: sustainability is being reimaged from within, grounded in mutual aid, community capacity, and innovative local strategies. While foreign aid remains important, movements are actively building the foundations for financial

independence, one contribution, collaboration, and creative solution at a time.

Accountability and Transparency

Participants reflected on how movements can manage resources with integrity and remain accountable both to donors and to the communities they serve. Across countries, several simple, practical mechanisms emerged: clear communication, regular sharing of financial and narrative reports, and the use of internal and external audits to build trust. Many groups, such as those in Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Ghana, emphasised grounding projects in real community needs and involving community members throughout the project cycle. Others, like Liberia and Mali, highlighted coalition structures, general assemblies, and oversight committees as tools for collective monitoring. Together, these approaches reinforced a common message: transparency is sustained through clarity, participation, and consistent communication, and is essential for strengthening autonomy and trust across the region.

Parallel Workshops

As part of the learning and co-creation focus of Day 2, participants joined one of three parallel workshops, each dedicated to a key area shaping national and regional organising:

1. **Resource Mobilisation and Sustainability;**
2. **Family, Joy, and Community Wellbeing; and**
3. **Security, Militarisation, Criminalisation, and Instability.**

These sessions allowed partners to engage deeply with shared challenges and promising practices rooted in community experience, generating insights that could be replicated across the region.

01 | Resource Mobilisation and Sustainability

This workshop explored how organisations can strengthen sustainability in contexts of shrinking funding and rising operational demands. Participants mapped local and international donors, technical assistance providers, and community expertise. They highlighted practices such as pooling resources across organisations, conducting audits of community

skills, and expanding into emerging thematic areas like climate change and peacebuilding to diversify funding opportunities. Domestic resource mobilisation, through private sector engagement, community contributions, and local sponsorship, was identified as an increasingly important strategy.

Success depended on engaging competent individuals, valuing intellectual and community expertise, and building alliances with feminist groups and other LGBTQI organisations. Participants emphasised that while strategies differ by context, sustainability requires intentional collaboration and strengthening of internal organisational capacities.

02 | Family, Joy, and Community Wellbeing

This workshop centred joy, family support, and psychosocial wellbeing as core elements of movement-building. Participants reflected on existing practices across the region: Togo's community pageants, Mali's GBV focal points, Liberia's wellbeing committee within its coalition of 17 organisations, and Ghana's multi-day programme engaging supportive parents. These examples demonstrated how alternative family structures, chosen families, and parental allies can become powerful sources of resilience.

What worked were intentional organising, cross-learning, therapeutic support, storytelling, and the visibility of supportive parents and queer families. The workshop also stressed the need for continuous mental-health services, safe spaces, and the active validation of diverse family structures. Participants identified a wide array of replicable practices, from wellness circles, festivals, and sports events to parent dialogue groups, open-air cinema nights, and local-language awareness campaigns.

One key insight: joy is infrastructure. It supports healing, counters burnout, and strengthens long-term organising.

03 | Security, Militarisation, Criminalisation, and Instability

This workshop examined the growing pressures created by criminalisation, rising militarisation, political instability, and shrinking civic space. Participants mapped experiences such as harassment by police, informal authorisation of violence by political and religious leaders, and community efforts to respond through rapid alert systems and litigation strategies.

Emerging successful practices included long-term strategic litigation, integrating legal and psychosocial support, training for health workers and law enforcement, building networks of lawyers and paralegals, and strengthening rapid response systems. Delegates also noted the value of awareness campaigns in local languages and cross-country solidarity efforts. A key lesson came from Ghana: engagement with police requires sustained effort and strategic clarity, as not all approaches yield the desired impact.





Regional Mapping: Needs, Partners, and Strategic Directions

Struggles & Challenges Mapping

As part of the first day's reflection on the state of the movement, participants were divided into three groups to collectively map the struggles and challenges shaping their work. The activity invited them to look closely at what they were experiencing within their organisations and communities, as well as what had been shared earlier in the country frescoes.

Before moving into breakout rooms, it was important to establish shared language around the task. A struggle was defined as "a concrete action, fight, or issue that our communities/movements are engaged in to bring about change". An example of a struggle is: Protecting members of queer communities from arbitrary arrests. A challenge was defined as a real, structural, or internal obstacle that hinders or makes these struggles difficult. An example of a challenge is: a lack of resources or alliances to respond to arrests.

With these definitions in mind, participants were encouraged to write one struggle or challenge per post-it note, providing as much detail as possible. They were reminded to avoid broad generalisations and instead speak to concrete realities grounded in their national contexts. The exercise culminated in a colourful and textured wall map, where struggles and challenges were organised by theme. This visual representation made visible both the weight we collectively carry and the shared contours of resistance across the region.



Group 1

STRUGGLES:

- Advocacy and protection from violence and arrests
- Mental-health support
- Creating safe spaces
- Closing knowledge gaps on rights
- Promoting queer arts and indigenous understandings.

CHALLENGES:

- Weak organisational structures
- Limited resources
- Hostile laws and criminalisation
- Social and family rejection
- Misinformation and poor representation

Group 2

STRUGGLES:

- Human-rights protection
- Safety from homophobia and violence
- Advocacy and awareness
- Countering disinformation
- Strengthening organisations and safe spaces

CHALLENGES:

- Lack of sustainable funding
- Organisational competition
- Security threats
- Social, cultural, and religious pressures
- Limited access to health, housing, jobs, and justice

Group 3

STRUGGLES:

- Training and capacity-building (digital security, leadership, succession)
- Engaging religious and cultural leaders
- Strengthening safety and wellbeing
- Improving access to health

CHALLENGES:

- Lack of accurate information
- Media misinformation
- Exclusion in feminist spaces
- Restrictive laws
- Religious/traditional stigma
- Family rejection

Overall, the mapping revealed movements that are heavily burdened by structural oppression yet remain resourceful and determined. Despite limited means, activists continue to create protection systems, build alliances, strengthen leadership, and imagine new futures. The struggles and challenges shared across the groups underscore both the weight the movements carry and the resilience that sustains them.

Needs & Priorities Mapping

Participants spent a focused session reflecting on the forum's strategic priorities and identifying, for each one, what felt urgent (6–12 months), what strengths could be built on, and what long-term investments were required. The exercise produced a compact set of regional priorities grouped into three working clusters.

Group 1 | Movement Strength and Activist Wellbeing

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Strengthening community movements and organisations
- Protecting activists' mental health, wellbeing, and safety

URGENT NEEDS

- Policies and funding that centre rest, recovery, and rehabilitation
- Immediate psychosocial support for activists facing burnout and trauma
- Stronger rapid-response links with security and protection allies

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHS

- Growing recognition of wellbeing as core to movement sustainability
- Existing collaborations that can support collective mental-health funding
- Successful wellbeing events and peer-support practices that can be scaled

LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

- Sustained core funding for care and wellbeing
- Long-term investment in digital and physical security infrastructure
- Institutionalising wellbeing and safety within movement structures

Group 2 | Advocacy and Sustainable Funding

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Advocating for legal and policy reform
- Ensuring sustainable, flexible, and inclusive funding

URGENT NEEDS

- Systematic documentation of human-rights violations
- Mapping of advocacy stakeholders and decision-makers
- Training for media actors and lawmakers
- Monitoring mechanisms for funding opportunities

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHS

- Existing allies within health, human-rights, and civil-society spaces
- Community expertise and lived experience as advocacy assets
- Increased openness to flexible and locally grounded funding approaches

LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

- Regional advocacy strategies and coordinated policy engagement
- Capacity-building in financial management and accountability
- Development of social enterprises and domestic resource-mobilisation models

Group 3 | Regional Alliances and Narrative Change

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Building strong and supportive regional alliances
- Creating awareness, changing narratives, and shifting social perceptions

URGENT NEEDS

- Resources for cross-border coordination and communication
- Legal protection and rapid regional response mechanisms
- Immediate support for organisations facing acute backlash

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHS

- Existing regional relationships and shared struggles
- Paired learning and peer exchange across countries
- Media mobilisation and storytelling practices already in use

LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

- Regional legal taskforces and collective protection mechanisms
- A shared regional advocacy calendar
- Collective fundraising strategies
- A centralised digital platform for documentation, learning, and collaboration

Together, these maps made clear the forum's shared logic: urgent investments must shore up protection, wellbeing, and basic organisational capacity; short-term gains will come from consolidating local funding, documenting harms, and sharing practical security and family-support practices; and long-term impact depends on sustained regional legal, financial, and media structures that can be stewarded jointly across countries.





Art, Joy, and the Work of Liberation: Creative Expressions as Tools for Movement-Building

Throughout the forum, ISDAO intentionally centred art and joy as essential elements of political work. Activists and organisations across queer, human rights, and intersectional movements often carry the emotional weight of both their own struggles and those of the communities they serve; the Forum sought to disrupt this pattern by creating space for release, creativity, and collective delight.

The gathering opened with the “Battle of the Vibes”, where each country delegation offered a dance, song, or rhythm that captured the spirit of their home. The room quickly transformed into a shared dance floor, and the delegation that moved the most people won, though, in truth, the real victory was the reminder that joy is one of our strongest strategies of resilience. Alongside these moments of play, participants engaged in collective art practices such as mural-making, using colour, symbols, and shared imagery to express the realities and aspirations of their movements. These joyful, creative rituals became their own form of liberation, affirming that even in the midst of struggle, there is room for pleasure, imagination, and the reaffirmation of life.

Beyond the Forum:

Building a Sustained Regional Movement

As the forum drew to a close, participants turned their attention to what comes next: how to carry the energy of the gathering forward, how to remain connected across borders, and how to ensure that the insights, relationships, and strategies generated in Lagos continue to shape the region's organising ecosystem. The goal being to continue building a regional movement, not just a collection of national movements.

This reflection began with two guiding questions:

1. **How can we maintain collaboration after the forum?**
2. **How do we share what we have experienced here with those who could not attend?**

Working in groups, participants were invited to propose one collaborative activity and one post-forum feedback activity that could be adopted as collective commitments. The emphasis was on practicality and sustainability: ideas had to be low-cost, accessible to all, and capable of strengthening regional ties. Using a live online voting tool, the room selected two actions to carry forward.

01 | Collaborative initiative:

The creation of a WhatsApp or Signal communication platform connecting forum participants, with the possibility of adding other organisations across the region. This space will function as a living network, facilitating information exchange, sharing opportunities, coordinating mutual support, and sustaining the sense of solidarity built during the forum.

02 | Post-forum feedback mechanism:

A regional webinar where participants can regroup, reflect on progress, share updates, and refine areas of collaboration. This virtual gathering will serve as an accessible way to maintain momentum, ensure accountability, and continue the collective learning process begun in Lagos.

While these commitments were intentionally designed to be cost-free and easy to implement, ISDAO will provide technical support where needed, particularly in monitoring progress and supporting the continuity of these spaces. Participants also surfaced additional ideas, such as online campaigns, collaborative mini-documentary projects, biannual peer-review check-ins, and regional newsletters, which may be explored as complementary efforts as the movement strengthens its regional infrastructure.

Together, these commitments signal a shared desire to move beyond a one-time convening and toward an ongoing regional movement: connected, communicative, and committed to learning from one another.

Conclusion

The Regional Partners Forum closed with a renewed sense of clarity and collective purpose. Across three days, participants named the challenges confronting the movement, shared strategies that are working, and shaped a set of regional priorities to guide the next phase of organising.

The commitments made to stay connected, to deepen collaboration, to strengthen accountability, and to build a movement that extends beyond borders signal the beginning of a more intentional regional ecosystem. ISDAO will continue to accompany partners in transforming these commitments into action.

The road ahead is complex, but the forum affirmed a simple truth: our power grows when we build together.



