

THE NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION

UPINDE AWARDS

2022



NGLHRC
NATIONAL
GAY & LESBIAN
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

A WORD FROM OUR ED

NJERI GATERU

Friends, siblings, partners; beloveds. Karibuni Upinde Awards 2022. As you know, this is our 10th iteration, of what has become known over the years as the 'IT' queer calendar event!!! It certainly is the one that all of us at NGLHRC look forward to the most in the year! Today we get to celebrate and shine a light on the incredible courage and work of 18 different nominees, ranging from individuals, organisations, small businesses and collectives. The collection of nominees cuts across age and gap divides, from South B to Kilifi, Eldoret to Uganda, those who are on their fourth year of activism to a category that boast a total of 80 years of experience total. Every single nominee made the list because something they did, said, made, gave, who they are and how they show up has walked us a step closer to our shared dream of a universe of equals. Nominees, you are seen, your work is acknowledged, and from the bottoms of our hearts, WE ARE GRATEFUL!

Allow me give special flowers to the incredible, formidable team at NGLHRC, the members of our board, and you all to our guests, for loving us and showing up, consistently through the year!! To the event sponsors, Open Society Foundations, American Jewish World Service, Right Here Right Now and CREA, we are eternally grateful for your belief in our work and your support!!! Continue walking with us and see how this version of the world becomes the one we desire!!



THE ROAD TO UPINDE AWARDS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF UPINDE AWARDS & OPENING NOMINATIONS

NGLHRC announces the opening of the nomination process on it's social media pages with a link to the nomination form. A person may nominate as many people as they wish as many times as they want. However, this is not a voting process and the number of nominations has no bearing on whether a person is shortlisted or not.

NOMINATIONS CLOSE

The nominations platform is closed after a month of being open

SHORTLISTING & SELECTION OF NOMINEES

NGLHRC staff look through the nominations and carry out a rigorous verification process to produce a shortlist of nominees for each category

NOTIFICATION OF NOMINEES

Emails are sent out to nominees notifying them of their nomination and requesting their prescence at the awards

SELECTION OF WINNERS

The Gala Awards Committee made up of five people drawn from past winners, allies, & partners meets on the morning of the awards and selects the winners in each category

UPINDE AWARDS!

The Awards are held and the winners in each category are announced and awarded



THE AWARDS



CHANZO AWARD- AWARD RECOGNIZING AND APPRECIATING THE HUMAN RIGHTS WORK OF YOUNG AND UPCOMING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND INITIATIVES, WHO ARE UNAFRAID TO STAND UP AND SPEAK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



UTUMISHI AWARD – AWARD HONOURS INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN SERVICE DELIVERY AND ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE LGBTIQ+ RIGHTS MOVEMENT



SHUJAA AWARD – AWARD PRESENTED TO INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS DEMONSTRATED IMMENSE ACTS OF COURAGE IN THEIR PROTECTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBTIQ+ PERSONS



UBUNIFU AWARD – AWARD PRESENTED TO A PERSON, ORGANIZATION, OR PLATFORM THAT USES CREATIVITY AS A SITE OF ACTIVISM WHETHER THROUGH VISUAL ARTS, STORYTELLING, PODCASTING, BLOGGING OR OTHER FORMS OF MEDIA ARTS OR COMMUNICATION



NGUZO AWARD – AWARD RECOGNIZES FUNDING PARTNERS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES/DEPARTMENTS, ALLIES, FAMILY MEMBERS, MEDIA, LGBTIQ+ INDIVIDUALS, AND INSTITUTIONS WHOSE FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL, AND IN-KIND SUPPORT HAS HELPED MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HEALTH, RIGHTS, AND WELL-BEING OF LGBTIQ+ INDIVIDUALS IN KENYA



FAHARI AWARD – THE AWARD HONOURS INDIVIDUALS IN THE LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITY WHO HAVE SHOWN LONG-LASTING OUTSTANDING SERVITUDE AND DEDICATION TO THE COMMUNITY.



THE NOMINEES

Our Event Sponsors:





Q Initiative

Q-Initiative is a queer-led and queer-serving organization that was formed in 2011. We are registered as a community-based organization in Eldoret and work in the areas of health, human rights promotion, safety and security, capacity building and economic empowerment for LGBTIQ+ persons in Baringo, Bungoma, Elgeyo Marakwet, Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu and West Pokot counties. We are a member organization of galck+, GHPN Ke and National Transgender Advocacy Network.



Queering The Ballot

Sexual and Gender Minorities have always been at the front line of protests and marches demanding better living conditions and dignity but from the research conducted by INEND, there were barriers to them participating in public and political forums. While talking about why they had little interest, the Queer persons were anxious about the potential homo-bi-transphobia in the Public participation process. They mentioned the existing fears of being outed and experiencing physical, verbal, and digital Violence. From these bases, INEND chose to engage with queer persons on matters of voting, strategically choosing to engage LBQ women and GNC persons as minorities within minorities to take part in the general elections held in August 2022 by Registering to vote.; Showing up to vote; Monitoring & observing the elections in their individual citizen capacities ; Having conversations on leadership and governance.



Team No Sleep

Team No Sleep (TNS) Community Based Organization (CBO) – started in 2015 as a craft workshop to improve the economic livelihoods of refugees fleeing persecution based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression (SOGIE). Over time, their mission has expanded to health advocacy, economic empowerment, psychosocial support and social justice for the Lesbian Gay, Bisexual Transgender, Intersex and, Queer (LGBTIQ+) refugee community to better meet the needs of our members on a holistic level. They achieve this by providing community engagement, mental and sexual health rights training, economic empowerment training and skills to better challenge the human rights violations often experienced by such a stigmatized and discriminated group. TNS also offer shelter at its safe house. We envision vibrant, resourceful and self-sustaining LGBTIQ+ refugee communities.



THE CHANNEL

The Channel Ke

TheChannelKE is a digital media organization that uses audio-visual art and storytelling as a form of advocacy. It leverages on technology to change the societal ideologies in Kenya on matters such as: SOGIESE matters, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Mental Health, Disability, protection and freedom around womxn and Trans bodies. Their work aims to affirm and amplify the voices of the LGBTIA+ community as an advocacy strategy in addressing injustices, prejudice and harmful social norms using the creative space.



Ruele Okeyo

Alvin "Ruele" Okeyo is a gay man openly living with HIV. Ruele is the Director at Kenneth and Jacob's House, a transitional shelter for homeless and runaway LGBTIQ+ youth where they offer safety and protection, shelter and care and advocacy to the youth. He is a sexual reproductive health and rights advocate working with Y+ Kenya an umbrella network of Youth Led Organizations working in support of the acceleration of the HIV response for Adolescents and young people living with HIV. Ruele curates a podcast called Sex-Ed by Ruele-ations that deals with matters HIV, sexual health, mental health and human rights to the community in all their diversity, Ruele also partners with Love matters Kenya to curate their podcast Love Matters Podcast that dives into the sexual and social lives of young people and a U=U ambassador in Africa for Kenya under the Prevention Access Campaign.

THE
WHINE
DOWN

The Whinedown

The Whine Down is a space for women, agender, non-binary people. Specially curated for networking, creating memorable experiences and most of all fun



Provisions

Provisions was founded by sisters Nancy and Susie Kinyanjui, who are based in Nairobi and share a passion for natural and useful finds.

The team at Provisions is excited to offer artisan products sourced and created in Kenya. With a focus on family and building community, we believe that the best products are home grown. Provisions hosts LGBTIQ+ inclusive events and spaces in addition to offering a special edition of Pride Plant friends, with black wraps printed on pure Kenyan cotton. In collaboration with Nzilani Simu.



Usikimye

Usikimye is a survivor center and trauma-informed organization based in Nairobi and Kiambu counties that is dedicated to preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence for all. Usikimye's has a queer-led and centered SOGIE department. Usikimye has an LGBTQIA+ safe house (Pride House) with a capacity of 10 people. Usikimye has a 24-hour emergency response hotline at 0800 - 000 - 999. Usikimye has a toll-free number for sexual minorities - 0800 - 000 - 900 - that responds to and supports SGBV survivors. Usikimye has worked with a number of LGBTQIA+ organizations to respond, support, and stand in solidarity. We were honored to be a part of Kenya's first Pride Fest with LGBTQIA+ organizations.



Wama Africa

WAMA is a social enterprise boutique hotel, spa and restaurant that trains young adults living with special needs.

Wama has been a safe and affirming space for LGBTIQ+ Kenyans and has been identified as a location where queer humans and allies come together in a space where they can truly be themselves.



Billy Hani

Billy Hani is a queer trans artist and activist based in Eldoret, Kenya. Their writing and photography explores African queerness, sexuality, gender identity and expression, and bodies. Billy's activism and feminism is grounded on Queer Joy and Rest. They currently co-curate HeART Out Kenya - an art therapy initiative for queer folks and activists, and feminists. Billy recently won the 'Upcoming Human Rights Defender' of the year, awarded by Defenders Coalition



Kwamboka Kibagendi

Kwamboka Kibagendi is an intersex person, a Human rights defender, and the Intersex Programs lead in jinsiangu. Kwamboka is the first Intersex person in Kenya to vie for a competitive seat of Member of County Assembly in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Nairobi County. Being Intersex, their daily work is to ensure that Intersex children/ people live with dignity by ensuring each and every person has a little knowledge on Intersex existence through advocacy and creating awareness in all levels. Kwamboka Works with government Institutions, CSOs and stakeholders to ensure that there is recognition and inclusion of intersex people in Kenya.



Fahe Kerubo

Fahe Kerubo, Youth Advocate for LGBTIQ+ & Women and Girls Rights. In their years of interaction in the field of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights field, they have raised SRHR and mental awareness amongst key populations and created psychosocial support for 100+ Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Queer women living with and affected by HIV in informal and grassroots communities. Currently, they volunteer as the LBQGNC Team Lead at Positive Young Women Voices in Dandora, it is a youth-led community-based organization that Empowers and advocates for women and girls in all their diversity to advance their lives through mentorship, dissemination of information on Sexual Reproductive Health and HIV, linkages and referrals to Health services and economic growth



Nguru Karugu

Nguru is a Public Health and Human Rights Consultant/Activist who has over 25 combined years' experience in public health and rights-based organizing within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) communities in Africa, the U.S., and internationally. He is currently the Executive Director of Public Health Innovations (PHI), an LGBTIQ+/Key Population-led Consulting firm focusing on research and capacity support to LGBTIQ+ and KP movements across East Africa. Nguru has been a key pillar in the growth of the PLHIV, LGBTIQ, sex worker and KP movements in Kenya, East Africa, across Africa and the USA. Nguru has previously worked with New York State Black Gay Network, the Audre Lorde Project in New York, the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice based in New York City. He would later serve as an International Advisory member for the same organization, the Open Society Foundation (OSF) LGBTI Rights Initiative Advisory Committee among others. He is presently an Advisor to the Key Populations Coalition, a Board Member of Team No Sleep and an Advisor to the Tanzania Transgender Initiative.



Essy Adhiambo

Esther Adhiambo is the founder and Executive Director of Initiative for Equality and Non-Discrimination (INEND), an organisation that promotes the human rights of sexual and gender minorities in Kenya. Previously, she worked at PEMA Kenya where she led the development of a training programme and blueprint for sensitizing religious leaders on compassion and love – a project that saw the most homophobic religious leaders in Mombasa turning to work with sexual and gender minorities. Essy has engaged with the Judiciary, law enforcement officers, the media, and well-known perpetrators of violence towards sexual and gender minorities like motorcycle operators and public transport touts in norm shift and change. Essy is a fellow of the Human Rights Advocates Program at Columbia University (2014). She was featured in the HIVOS Bold and powerful women for change: East Africa's campaign (2017); was an Upinde Awards Shujaa nominee (2017); a Human Rights defender of the year nominee (2017); and was shortlisted for the 2019 Accountability International Leadership Award. Essy's mantra is; Eradicate Hate; Educate!



Jeffrey Walimbwa

Jeffrey Walimbwa Wambaya: Program Manager Ishtar and SOGIE Research Kenya coordinator. Community led programs offering HIV services and research work to GBMSM and LGBT communities in Kenya. Jeffrey has taken part in various activities on advocacy, policy and strategy formulation, and analysis. He is experienced in evidence based HIV and sexual health programming and has sat on a variety of technical working groups at the National and Regional level. Jeffrey has experience in research and has been a Principal Investigator and Co- Principal Investigator in different studies for Key populations. He has published in Journals and submitted manuscripts that have guided conversations around key populations programming. He is a member of the CQUIN Network on Differentiated care model. His vast experience in HIV programming and research will be key in guiding this assignment. Mr Walimbwa is an alumnus of the Human Rights Advocates Program at Columbia University in New York.



Kevin Mwachiro

Kevin Mwachiro has been an active member of the queer community for close to 15 years. Working in collaboration with the Gay Kenya Trust and the Goethe Institut – Nairobi, Kevin is a co-founder of the Out Film Festival, the first LGBTQI film festival in East Africa. Kevin's first book is, *Invisible – Stories from Kenya's Queer Community*. He was part of the editorial team for *Boldly Queer – African Perspectives on Same-sex sexuality and gender diversity*. Kevin is a full-time writer, podcaster and journalist. He also writes articles and opinion pieces on LGBTQI+ issues for several media platforms and is published in cultural journals. He currently serves on the boards of PEMA Kenya (a grassroots LGBTQI organisation) and Amnesty International – Kenya.



Marylize Biubwa

Marylize Biubwa is a 32 year old black queer radical angry intersectional feminist and activist. Their activism is on social justice with a deliberate gender bias. Their feminism, as indicated above, is intersectional and radical in nature to allow for championing the rights of all humans. Their activism and feminism is inspired by life experiences and day-to-day events that make life. As a rape survivor, their motivation to activism and feminism is to see a world where women, transgender, intersex and non binary persons are free to express and explore their sexuality and identity without being sexually objectified, for women to have a voice and choice over their bodies(bodily autonomy), and for consent to be a bare minimum when it comes to these people interactions with cis heterosexual men. Their ideal world is a world where a level ground is maintained for all genders, sexual orientations and identities to ever exist under the sun.



Yvee Oduor

Yvonne (Yvee) Oduor is a gender non-conforming feminist who's focused their work advocating for the human rights of LGBTQ+ people in Kenya, regionally, and globally. Yvee wears many hats and is currently the Operations Manager at the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya now galck+ and for about a decade has volunteered and worked with several LGBTQ+-focused organizations and movements in different capacities. When they are not trolling on Twitter, they can be found giving excellent TV reviews and serving looks on Instagram.



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