

Gender DynamiX research project: Shelters

Thursday, 12 July 2007

Gender DynamiX received a small grant, from the Ford Foundation as part of a training fellowship hosted in Nigeria by the Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre (ARSRC). This mini grant will enable Gender DynamiX to do it's first research initiative.

Research Title:

Accessibility of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender & [Un] Friendly Shelters in the Greater Cape Town Area.

When Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning teenagers face the reality of living on the street, with no specific destination and shelter for a period of time, their crises are doubled by the amount of ignorance, misunderstanding, abuse, prejudice and excommunication they are forced to deal with. Many times these teenagers find themselves in the first place in that situation because of their sexual orientation status that was revealed at home.

These difficulties are not only faced by teenagers, but any LGBTQ persons who find themselves in the need of shelter at any of the available shelters provided.

The implications of people not having shelter or a place to stay, are much more complicated than not having a "roof over your head". It is difficult for a homeless person to rebuild their lives, because they don't even have a physical address so important to beginning this process. There is no way to be contactable if a person can not even use the contact details of a shelter. This leads to difficulty during an interview; there is no way where a possible employer can contact the person after an interview. If a person has no place to sleep, there is also no place to clean yourself or the clothes you are wearing which already means first impressions in an interview will also not be good.

It is important for the research to be balanced and fair, and not only LGBT organizations who would obviously support a shelter for their community, will be interviewed but also mainstream shelters. This will be to establish the difficulties of housing LGBT people. It is usually very hard to validate such a large scale and costly project when mentioning of the need is made, only by "one sided opinions" of volunteers as it might raise questions of biased opinions.

This research will be conducted starting the later half of 2007.