

Report from the Women's Secretariat 2008-2010

As in the first term (2006-2008) RFSL has continued to work to strengthen ILGA's capacity as we cannot expect to develop women's projects with a weak office, underfinanced and understaffed. In this report we have tried to give an overview of the major activities and results we have achieved in our second term.

International collaboration and advocacy

The Women's Secretariat has met with and attended several conferences some of which are listed below. The meetings have provided a greater visibility to lesbian and bisexual women's issues and to the work carried out by ILGA and has also contributed to ILGA's presence at the United Nations.

The UN Commission on the Status of Women

The Women's Secretariat participated with a delegation at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2009 and 2010. In 2009 RFSL organized a side event on the theme *The Rights of Invisible Women—The Human Rights of Lesbian and Bisexual Women*. The panel consisted of Juliana Cano from Human Rights Watch, Cynthia Rothschild from Center for Women's Global Leadership and RFSL's Sören Juvas. The panel presentations and the following discussions were much appreciated by the audience.

In 2010 at the 54th session of the CSW, RFSL registered and assisted in preparing the side event that ILGA organized on the topic *Homophobia within the Educational System*. RFSL also accredited the ILGA delegation on its Ecosoc status.

The International World Aids Conference (Vienna 2010)

RFSL organized an LGBT Networking Zone on behalf of ILGA and together with RFSL and Out LGBT Well-Being from South Africa in the Global Village part of the Aids 2010 conference. The Networking Zone was a platform for many interesting programs, including several on topics related to lesbian and bisexual women. The Zone was also excellent for networking, enabling many interesting meetings.

Maria Sjödin participated in a session on *Invisibilization of Lesbians & WSW in the HIV Response* organized by Women ARISE in the Human Rights Networking Zone of the Global Village.

Other Meetings

In March 2010 the Women's Secretariat was invited to make a presentation on the situation for lesbian and bisexual women and trans people to a group of funders at a funder's meeting at the Swedish Development Agency, which included both bilateral and private funders.

In May 2010 Maria Sjödin attended a seminar *From Activism to Queer Theory (Del activismo a la Teoría Queer)* in Mexico City, organized by the Spanish Presidency of the European Union and Mexican organizations. The visit also included meeting with the Swedish Ambassador to Mexico.

Internal ILGA participation

The Women's Secretariat has attended the ILGA Europe regional conferences in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

The Women's Secretariat has also participated in several planning meetings and had regular contact with the Women's Project Coordinator, Patricia Curzi, to give input to the coordinate the work

between the Women's secretariat and the Women's project of ILGA. The Women's secretariat has also attended meetings with funders Oxfam Novib and Sida.

The Women's Secretariat has been represented on ILGA's board by its Executive Director, Maria Sjödin. Maria Sjödin has also participated in recruiting ILGA's Press Officer and its new Executive Director.

Capacity building and securing of resources

RFSL has continued to work for securing a continuation of the financial support from the Swedish Development Agency Sida. At present the funding for an initial three-year project is coming to an end as of 2010 and efforts are being made for a continued Swedish support.

The Women's Secretariat has devoted part of its small budget to scholarships to the 25th ILGA World Conference.

Final note

At RFSL we are proud of the confidence entrusted in us by the 2006 World Conference in Geneva. After two terms we feel it is time to pass on the Women's Secretariat to another organization, willing to take on the challenges and potential in bringing attention to the situation for lesbian and bisexual women in the world.

RFSL is committed to continue to work with ILGA and ILGA's membership for the years to come. We are very grateful to the many people within ILGA who have generously shared invaluable suggestions, information and assistance to us. We will try to repay them by sharing our experiences as well with the new Women's Secretariat to be elected at the 25th ILGA World Conference.