

**Coalition of African Lesbians
(CAL)**



**CO-CREATING CONSCIOUS LEARNING CULTURES
Conversation 7 Report**

Contact

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1. Purpose

This report describes the key conversation points and lessons learned in the Co-Creating Conscious Learning Cultures workshop held in Lavumisa, in the Kingdom of eSwatini on the 28th of the 29th of August 2018. This workshop was the last conversation that forms part of a series of conversations held in 2016 and in 2017 for the 3-year Key Populations – Representation, Evidence and Advocacy for Change in Health (KP REACH) program, which aims to reduce HIV infections and HIV-related deaths among key populations in Southern Africa through improved access by KPs to HIV prevention, testing and treatment services. The workshop is part of the KP REACH Learning component of the program, which is led by CAL. This component is expected to strengthen the political work, programming and organising of the four networks in this Project – the African Sex Worker Alliance (ASWA), Southern Africa Trans Forum (SATF), African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHeR), and CAL. It will do this by exploring, analysing, and providing evidence of what works in advocating for access to health services for KPs (men who have sex with men, sex workers, transgender people, women who have sex with women and other marginalized groups) in the context of HIV and AIDS, and so shape the advocacy messaging to influence policy and other decisions makers at a local, national and sub-regional level.

The objectives of these workshops were:

- To deepen consciousness and understanding with 20 activists affiliated to the 4 networks on what works in relation to the access the right to health, including health services in the context of HIV and AIDS
- To establish a culture and politics of knowledge that names, recognizes, affirms and builds capabilities of activists for their right to fair, dignified, stable, secure and decent work as well as mental and physical wellbeing. This, invariably, will be able to inform stronger work on access to health, including health services in the context of HIV and AIDS
- To engage with existing concepts of what decent work and wellbeing entails whilst co-creating new ones in order to build consensus amongst the activists in the room in relation to organisations working towards strengthening access to health and health services for marginalized people in the context of HIV and AIDS.

2. Content and Methodology

The purpose of this particular conversation had three main functions - a) to familiarize participants with the work of the KPREACH program; b) reflect, analyze and document the impact of individual and collective advocacy campaigns towards access to health; c) to prioritize and plan for the succession and continuity beyond the KPREACH program. The expected outputs from social media participation, case studies from Voices of Our Voices, TransSwati, The Rock of Hope and LBQRS as well as a shared understanding of collective movement building beyond KPREACH.

Welcome remarks were made by the NPO and the HOOP executive director. The partnership model was explained to the participants as a means of strengthening HOOP's capacity with the long term vision of sustainability and continuity beyond KPREACH. Apologies for the

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short notice, gratitude for the attendance and enthusiasm were communicated to the participants. The ethos of meaningful and inclusive participation was emphasised during the welcome remarks and the participants then briefly introduced themselves by their name, organisation and designation.

A brief housekeeping session was held where the accommodation set up, toilets, meal times and transport arrangements were discussed. The participants were also informed of the medical kit and who to contact when in need.

We then began with walking through the programme and negotiating time with the participants as we had arrived later than expected at the venue. A few adjustments were made to the programme, shortening the review session to make up for lost time and rescheduling the wellness session to after dinner around the bonfire, to which the participants consented. Participants were issued the register and given time to fill in the consent forms.

The first session commenced using the activity of “Associated With/Not Associated” as used in previous conversations. The purpose of this session was to set the tone of the conversation and how we would like to interact with one another. Participants were asked to list two things they’d like to be associated with and two things they wouldn’t want to be associated with. The session was conducted by Sisanda Mavimbela from HOOP with Nontobeko Dlamini documenting.

Participants listed the following as what they would like/not like to be associated with:

Want to be associated with	Don’t want to be associated with
Joy	Negative energy
Love for the LGBTI community	Hatred
Activism	Disrespect
Love	Inactivity
Respect	Non-participation
Church	Heteronormative ideology
Music	Judgment
Dancing	Back biting
Kindness	Violence
Creativity	Gossip
Loyalty	Fighting
Growth	Betrayal
Empowerment	Intolerance
Information	Belittling
Solidarity	Being angered
Peace	Inactivity
Friendship	Bad blood
Feminism	
Tolerance	
Determination	
Open mindedness	
Empathy	
Selflessness	
Faith	
Knowledge	

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Participants were reminded that this is their own co-created space and that the words they had listed would be guidelines of how we would interact within the space using these words as respectful strategies for what we should and shouldn't do within the space. This session worked well as it gave participants ownership of the space and how they would like to engage with one another. With consensus and mutual understanding we then moved to the review session of KPREACH thus far.

During the review of previous KPREACH activities, the NPO reported on KPREACH Learning by discussing briefly all previous conversations and their respective themes and outcomes. The Southern Africa Regional Key Populations Health Charter, Guidelines for Key Populations Engagement in Key Populations related research in Southern Africa, Key Populations Priorities Position Paper, "What works?" Guidelines, Common position paper from KPs to influence / inform SADC policy on Key Populations were shared as handouts and participants were encouraged to read them during their time outside of the conversation and to feel free to seek clarity and make comments directly to the NPO. Due to the limited time we were unable to review the handouts collectively. This was then followed by the review of published case studies.

The HOOP executive director and the programmes officer presented their published case study to plenary projected on the screen. They talked through their case study explaining why they chose this particular activity as their case study, the process utilised whilst submitting and the highlights and challenges they faced. The executive director of Health Plus 4 Men requested the NPO to present their case study and availed himself for questions afterwards. The participants applauded both organizations for their hard work and for sharing the process with them. They revealed in the feedback and questions session afterwards their excitement and enthusiasm to finalize and complete their own respective case studies and were quite enthused by the importance of such an honest and reflective process highlighting how it would enable them to apply for funding from donors in future, to draft reports for both internal and external usage but to also share amongst other partners as a means of building each other's capacity. This take away was helpful in easing the anxiety and pressure that CBOs had in relation to their won case studies; they realized the need, multiple uses, process and submission of the case studies.

After this session we broke for lunch with was then followed by the wellness dance session by Bailamos. The Bailamos crew arrived with four instructors and started the session with the basic introductory salsa dance steps first without music and then to the beat. Once the basic steps were mastered the session progressed to a dance routine where the mastered steps were applied, sequentially. A water break was taken whilst we prepared to dance in twos with partners. The instructors keep rotating the partners to enable almost everyone to have an opportunity to interact with one another. The partner dancing compelled participants to interact with one another on an individual and personal level which was a good team building exercise and the dance routines were fairly easy with very minimal physical exertion. The various steps learnt with partners were incorporated into an entire dance routine with the lead instructor calling out for alternative dance moves intermittently. The final product of the steps achieved culminated in a beautifully choreographed routine which left the participants feeling proud of their achievements as they executed each step perfectly. The session was well received by all and left participants in high spirits. We then broke off for the day giving participants an hour to rest and recuperate before dinner.

David Maseko from HOOP facilitated the wellness session after dinner around the bonfire, in the form of the exercise "Crossing the Line". The goals of this powerful, interactive and effective activity build upon diversity awareness within a group whilst highlighting intersectionality and shared challenges. It enables participants to learn more about

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themselves and their respective work; allowing the group to appreciate its diversity, to learn from one another's experiences and to build a support network based on shared experiences and interventions/strategies utilized to overcome such. To the participants it was described as an activity where we find ways in which we are both different and similar to each other. The facilitator called out specific categories/labels/descriptions and then asked those fitting the description to walk to the other side of the bonfire. The activity asked participants to stand on the side that felt most like 'home' in response to the questions posed. The questions posed at first were light and generic but as the session progressed the questions became more personal urging participants to dig deeper. The questioning was structured to elicit and highlight common struggles and issues that activists face within their work that require a level of self-awareness and self-care to overcome and tackle these issues. The activity was designed to have room for personal experiences and vulnerabilities and proved successful as participants all collectively reflected on activism being hard and tiring, not having sufficient resources and remuneration to effectively and holistically do the work, the emotional toll and strain that activists face when dealing with emotive issues, the lack of mental health and wellness being addressed within workspaces, the agenda and lack of all-encompassing programming from donors and the inability of donors and partners to acknowledge and celebrate efforts from activists within the movement. We also reminded everyone that whatever was said within the space and that it would be a serious breach of respect to share this information outside of the space ensuring safety and confidentiality. Day two begun with a check in session where participants were asked to list how they felt, mentally, physically and emotionally. This session was conducted by the Nontobeko Dlamini of HOOP. The purpose of this session was to gauge energies and to come up with strategies to continue the momentum of the previous day whilst being cognizant of those who required particular attention or awareness of their overall state of being.

Mentally	Emotionally	Physically
Alert	Happy	Tired
Sharp	Calm	Energetic
Ok	Excited	Ok
Stable	Peaceful	Exhausted
Traumatized	Disturbed	Super
Ready	Content	Hungover
Willing	Mixed emotions	Ready
Good	Anxious	Fresh
Focused	Alright	Well rested
Right	Balanced	Healthy
Unstable		Cold
Great		Unfit

A detailed recollection of the previous day and the outcomes achieved was conducted by the NPO and the programme was revisited to remind participants of the purpose and deliverables for the day.

The session measuring outcomes towards the impact of work undertaken in terms of access to health was co-facilitated by the NPO and David Maseko from HOOP. The purpose of this session was to extract findings and improve knowledge of undertakings amongst the represented organisation in relation to advocacy for access to health. The participants were divided into four groups with the aim of having diverse representation within each group so

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that participants could learn from one another and report back to plenary on flip chart paper. The groups were given 45 minutes to answer the four questions posed but required more time and discussions ended up taking an hour and a half and 30 minutes of reporting back to the rest of the group.

Four key questions - To what extent and how have we:

1. Created space for and enabled consciousness raising amongst ourselves and those within movements and civil society formations?
2. Created space for and facilitated the generation of IDEAS and KNOWLEDGE about the problem of power and its systems and about freedom, autonomy and justice and how to move from one to the other?
3. Deliberately and strategically influenced and shaped institutions through the people, policies and practices within these institutions?
4. Worked across movements to visibilise, recognise, name and confront the political economy and the structural causes of the barriers in terms of access to health?

There was a lot of discussion and questions within each group which was seen as a constructive and necessary part of the process.

Overall, most organisations reflected that workshops, conferences, meetings and activities where they share IEC materials and information as their primary spaces for raising consciousness. They talked lengthily about their role in sensitizations of uniformed forces, health care personnel, the media, community leaders, religious leaders and the legal fraternity as the avenues utilized. They mentioned reports, donor applications, social media posts, research activities and participation manuals drafted for usage within the MoH and amongst partners/donors as how they've actively participated in the dissemination of information. All the participating organisations talked about the PRIDE event, IDAHOT events, family fun days, roadshows and focus groups as spaces where information and knowledge gets shared and safe sex commodities (condoms and lubes) are distributed as well as stickers, posters, caps, t-shirts and pamphlets are shared with beneficiaries. There was very little understanding/reflection on creating spaces for the generation of ideas and knowledge; question two showed that participants have had little to no experience actively engaging in discussions around power, autonomy and justice.

The engagements with MoH, the National AIDS Council, donors, partners and other stakeholders over the years has produced a lot of often accurate research and information which has in turn lead to deliberate shaping of programing, funding focus and strategic interventions for KP-led initiatives. The capacity building model being used by The Linkages project through FHI360 and PACT where 70% of the organisations represented are benefitting from, was highlighted as an example of the recognition of KP-led initiatives and the strength that KPs have in terms of organizing, mobilizing and reached targeted objectives.

Very little was reported back on cross-movement work with participants indicating that due to a lack of resources, the spaces they tend to penetrate are driven by donor focus. They confirmed solidarity during the Sexual and Domestic Violence Bill process with the women and children's' movements as these issues also impact on them directly.

The final session was facilitated by the NPO and looked at moving forward beyond KP REACH. This session was conducted as a needs assessment and participants were encouraged to create realistic and tangible action points moving forward. Participants listed primarily continuous and strengthened collaborations as their most pertinent need. When asked what these collaborations would look like, participants came up with the idea of a consortium. The purpose of the consortium was to strengthen collective capacities as individuals, within

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organisations and across the movement. Participants also felt a strong sense of wanting to be unified and to be 'one voice' reacting and responding to media platforms and other issues that touch upon KPs. They also saw the collaboration as an opportunity to share various opportunities, knowledge and resources, namely; research, scholarships, funding calls, programs' findings, workshops, conferences and other activities. They lastly felt committed to showing a united face to partners and donors to minimise repetition and redundancy of programs, to show how successful, professional and committed KP-led initiatives are and to be able to work together for the benefit of the movement. They also cited challenges with collaboration lamenting that sometimes too much collaboration leads to a loss of focus, that established organizations have become either too government or donor driven and that until KP-led organisations are self-sufficient and self-sustaining that programs and interventions shall continue to remain health focused. The conclusion was made that a mailing list would be created and managed initially by HOOP, participants would further engage their colleagues within their respective organisations to discuss what the consortium would be named, who would be allowed to participate, what the objectives would be and to set a date for the inaugural meeting which HP4Men graciously agreed to host in their offices mid-October. This milestone was a dramatic achievement for the attending organisations and helped solidify a healthy and united movement.

Who was in the room:

Participants' List:

1. Health Plus 4 Men (HP4Men): Sibusiso Maziya, James Ndzimandze
2. House of Our Pride (HOOP): David Maseko, Nontobeko Dlamini, Sisanda Mavimbela, Nombuso Mondlane, Ayanda Maziya
3. Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer Rights Swaziland (LBQRS): Thuthu Magagula, Chunky Gumede
4. Voices of Our Voices: Lungile Khumalo, Simangele Dlamini
5. TranSwati: Polycarp Dlamini, Ofentse Mdluli, Thulani Dlamini, Ncedo Mazibuko
6. Sibumbene: Ngety Khumalo
7. Men beyond Borders: Senzo Dlamini,

Representation from the networks was still at a low as VOOV were the only officially affiliated organization representing ASWA, respectively. The remaining participants collectively represent the various LGBTI CBOs in eSwatini, namely; five people from House of Our Pride (H.O.O.P), four people from TranSwati (eSwatini's pioneer transgender organisation), two participants from LBQRS & one person from Sibumbene (Queer women's organisations), one person from Men Without Borders and four people from HealthPlus4Men (which identify as MSM organisations) as well as the NPO.

Noteworthy, is that there currently aren't any legally registered abortion organisations in country and due to the short notice WLWHIV and the Rock of Hope were unable to attend. However, we are aware that in all CAL conversations there is always a representation of people living with HIV. The participant list also reflected the need for the four networks to further engage organisations in Swaziland to increase visibility and improve membership. Attendees boasted a 90% attendance with 27% of participants having attended a CAL conversation for the very first time.

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3. M&E:

The majority of participants found that overall, the workshop was well organized; with pertinent and relevant topics discussed from knowledgeable facilitators with responses ranging from agree and strongly agree. Only one participant was neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Participants generally felt that the materials distributed were helpful and that sufficient time for discussions was provided with most responses ranging equally between agree and strongly agree. Noteworthy is that two participants were neutral about the materials as the handouts were not read or discussed in plenary. One participant disagreed that the mode of delivery was good perhaps not being accustomed to a CAL conversation space that doesn't utilize a hierarchy of knowledge approach where the facilitator dictates the pace and information delivered but rather employs the participatory approach of co-creating amongst participants. The participants responded quite positively to efforts made towards ensuring their wellbeing and felt that the conversation was indicative of CAL's feminist mission. Only one participant felt that the conversation did not reflect CAL's feminist mission which may be as a result of having never attended a CAL conversation before or perhaps limited knowledge of feminist ideology.

The venue, food, dance session, discussions (information sharing & learning from each other) as well as the consortium building were all listed in the M&E forms at the most successful aspects of the workshop. Sharing the collaboration opportunities, uniting to work together and creating similar spaces in future was highlighted as positive take-away from the conversation. Participants shared similar excitement in the future of the movement, reflecting that the movement would be more unified moving forward and that they would share their learning through meetings, dialogues, focus groups, reports and case studies with their peers, colleagues, donors, partners and other relevant stakeholders. Other noteworthy comments include: the venue being far and too quiet but a refreshing change from the conventional workshop spaces, the CAL spaces being commended for their focus on the wellbeing of participants, the facilitation style and interesting programme as well as the empowering and uplifting approach.

CAL Conversations - Data Analysis					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Overall organization of workshop was well done			1	8	9
2. The space was valuable/meaningful				7	11

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towards further developing my participation and analysis					
3. There was adequate time provided for questions and discussion			1	5	11
4. Participation and interaction were encouraged				6	12
5. The mode of delivery and methodology was good		1		8	9
6. The presenters were knowledgeable and accessible				12	6
7. The materials distributed were pertinent and useful			2	6	9
8. The overall structure of the Conversation				8	10

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ons supported the wellbeing of the participants					
9. The workshop's structure reflected CAL's feminist mission	1			4	13

* one participant did not answer questions 3 & 7

10. What was most impactful for you, as a participant (PERSONAL level)?

The wellness discussion which talked about leadership and intersecting issues within organisations
 It was a safe space strictly for KPs which enabled good sharing of information, networking and interacting
 Advocating for KP led interventions through the consortium which will have shared objectives, sharing of resources and information, a unified response for the media and strengthening each other's capacity
 The venue, the food and the dance wellness session
 The discussion around self-wellness
 Learning about the other organizations and information sharing
 The love and respect for one another amongst participants which ensured a successful and interactive conversation

11. What is most useful to take away for your ORGANISATION?

The opportunity to talk about our organizations and to learn from other organizations
 The plans for partnership and collaboration with other CBOs
 The consortium building which brings about a consolidated way forward through capacity building, sharing opportunities & information and a singular KP voice)
 How to create similar spaces in future
 Coming together and doing the work
 The conversation methodology enables good interactions amongst participants and facilitators
 The basics of organizing and ensuring that the space was successful
 The importance of wellness

12. How will the Conversation impact/benefit the MOVEMENT in your country?

Through collaborative work brought about by the consortium; the collective voice will have an impact at all levels
 Conversations like these enable us to see how well we can work together
 Integration of sharing information, resources and empowering partners by learning from one another

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Changing the way we work as CBOs in country

How to grow/improve our respective organizations

Changing the way KPs are perceived in Eswatini; more accurate information, unified KP voice

To have concrete and specific objectives for the movement

Strengthened capacity

13. Ideas for sharing the learnings

Meetings, dialogues, workshops & group discussions

Sharing reports and case studies

Discussions with our donors and partners

Internal meetings within our organizations, with staff, peer educators and outreach workers

Creating more conversations/safe spaces for shared learning beyond KP REACH

14. Any other comments (On Process, Content, Venue, Organization etc.)

Great facilitation style

Grateful for CAL spaces as they enable us to have conversations about improving ourselves and our work

Great venue, interesting program, in depth discussions and ability for everyone's voice to be heard

CAL spaces are appreciated

Venue was calm but far

Venue and facilitation was a refreshing change from the usual conferences

Collective working relationship is exciting

15. Age disaggregation	Under 18	18-25	26-35	36-45	Over 45
		2	15	2	

4. Reflections and conclusions:

This conversation was the second one utilising another organisation, House of Our Pride (HOOP) to co-host the conversation; following the one on the 10th of June 2017 with the Rock of Hope. This model proved effective as it enabled streamlined activities and maximised the impact of the conversation. HOOP engaged and mobilised participants, facilitated the logistics process including transportation, lodging logistics, liaising with the venue staff as well as assisting in the facilitation process. The aim of this collaborative effort was to ensure continuity and sustainability of co-created safe spaces for shared learning and imparting knowledge. It also provided HOOP with the opportunity to increase their capacity and knowledge with regards to the administrative and implementation processes when implementing activities of this nature. HOOP now feel confident and empowered to apply for funding in future for similar spaces using their institutional knowledge and experience. The collaboration also positively impacted CAL financial processes as the petty cash funds were sent to HOOP's bank account which eliminated the previous difficulties of bring those funds in-country when the NPO was implementing. The collaboration also enabled the NPO to have support during implementation; HOOP staff invited participants, printed and

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disbursed M&E, registers, consent forms, distributed medication when needed, allowing the NPO to focus mostly on the content and facilitation of the conversation.

The CAL co-created methodology continues to be an effective method of imparting knowledge, sharing information and learning from one another. The focus on wellness and wellbeing, the structure and style of the facilitation process is always well received and appreciated by participants, as reflected in the M&E forms. Participants also commented on the safety of the space; being amongst fellow colleagues where the focus is mainly on activists is both refreshing and good for morale. They also commented on how the lack of partners and other influential stakeholders enables honest and transparent discussions without power dynamics being involved and that CAL spaces remain to date the only formal forums where activists and their holistic health are prioritized.

It is noteworthy that the venue was well received by participants all-round. The fact that the conversation was held over two days, during the weekend and in a secluded location enabled participants to have undivided focus during the sessions. The staff at the venue were quite receptive to the participants and the venue was strictly booked for the conversation; everyone felt safe and comfortable in the environment. The food selection was excellent, abundant and fitted excellently with the programme schedule. Participants had the opportunity to see various game such as impala, kudu, zebra, nyala, wildebeests, civets and much more with some participants commenting on how they had never seen wildlife before.

The participants also thoroughly enjoyed the two wellness activities organised. The dance session which lasted for an hour proved a hit amongst participants where the basic salsa and merengue steps were taught. Participants interacted well with each other as partnering was encouraged and frequent rotation occurred. The wellness and wellbeing as activists' session was facilitated around a bonfire after dinner, roasting marshmallows and engaging in an activity that indicated similarities, differences and intersectionality. This activity brought individual participants closer, reflected on the unity in diversity and enabled self-reflection on what we can do individually, organisationally and movement-wise to improve the wellbeing of activists for a healthier movement.

During the final session of reprogramming/priorities beyond KPREACH, the participants concluded with the decision to form a collective KP or marginalised groups' consortium. This incredible achievement is the most successful and positive outcome of the series of KPREACH conversations in Swaziland, to date. The participants pledged to sustain and build from the existing work by continuing to create safe spaces for knowledge production. The reasons for a consortium were, namely:

1. A need to share resources, educational and funding opportunities, capacity strengthening through shared experiences and information sharing
2. A need to share programmatic work in order to minimise overlaps, duplication but to collaboratively work together and consolidate work done in country. This will also ensure donor, partner and stakeholder confidence in KP-led organisations.
3. A need to have an informed, decisive and active KP-led voice that will proactively respond to media, government and donors with consensus from all parties, timeously and well-informed.

Due to the short notice (the venue was only confirmed on 4 days before the actual conversation) we were unable to reach the maximum number of participants anticipated;

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we had 18 participants instead of 20. Despite the short notice all our partner organisations were present and the general reflection was that CAL spaces are always well-received as the facilitation style and method of engagement makes for a more productive learning and sharing environment. The Rock of Hope did not attend citing limited resources and inability to take valuable staff away from existing work on such short notice. Interestingly the absence of The Rock of Hope may have been a positive factor in terms of the consortium building as participants felt that one of the main needs for a consortium is to have a unified voice that reacts to the media, the government, partners, donors and other stakeholders instead of the default organisation approached for comments being singularly, The Rock of Hope. The participants reflected how a consortium will allow for a more inclusive, multi-participatory and better informed reactionary response in KP related activities.