



# ALONG WITH TIME

## #41

Monthly magazine "Along with Time" contains comprehensive description of "New Generation" Humanitarian NGO's activities during the given month.

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### PROVISION OF TEMPORARY SHELTERS TO THE VULNERABLE GROUPS CONTINUES

### SUB-GRANTS PAGE 17

On May 1, 2020 New Generation Humanitarian NGO launched provision of sub-grant programs aimed at capacity building of NGOs and initiative groups engaged in promotion and protection of LGBTI rights and issues, in the fight against discrimination in Armenia within the framework of the project of Capacity Building and Empowerment for Protection of Human Rights of LGBTI people in Armenia.



The first sub-grant was provided to Center for Legal Initiatives NGO for the implementation of the project on Advocating for Prohibition of Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Criminal Executive Institutions of Armenia. The long-term goal of the project is to contribute to enforcement of the right to equality and non-discrimination of imprisoned MSM and LGBTI people.



On May 6, 2020 New Generation Humanitarian NGO provided the second sub-grant aimed at capacity building of NGOs and initiative groups engaged in promotion and protection of LGBTI rights and issues, in the fight against discrimination in Armenia within the framework of the project of Capacity Building and Empowerment for Protection of Human Rights of LGBTI people in Armenia.



On May 12, 2020 New Generation Humanitarian NGO provided the third sub-grant aimed at capacity building of NGOs and initiative groups engaged in promotion and protection of LGBTI rights and issues, in the fight against discrimination in Armenia within the framework of the project of Capacity Building and Empowerment...



# HEALTH CARE NEWS

Online round-table discussion on Responses to HIV and TB in times of COVID-19 – strengthening engagement with civil society and communities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA), organized by Developing Country NGO delegation of the Global Fund Board and the Global Fund Secretariat took place at Geneva on May 26, 2020.

## NGNGO PRESIDENT SERGEY GABRIELYAN AT GENEVA ROUND – TABLE DISCUSSION



undertaken by the organization aimed at maintaining and adapting HIV responses amid the pandemic.

Attaching great importance to the fight against COVID-19 and undertaking relevant measures, Sergey Gabrielyan mentioned that New Generation Humanitarian NGO simultaneously continued its activity aimed at HIV Prevention on a regular basis, as the fight against one pandemic shall not result in another pandemic outbreak.

Sergey Gabrielyan, President of New Generation Humanitarian NGO, HIV and AIDS Prevention Projects Manager, also took part in the discussion and introduced the activity of New Generation Humanitarian NGO within COVID-19, the measures

**“Today we all must be alert and recognize the importance of working with vulnerable groups, being by their side and fighting against the pandemic together. Protecting yourself amid COVID-19 protect the others as well.”**  
**Sergey O. GABRIELYAN**  
**NEW GENERATION Humanitarian NGO President**

### SERVICES OF NEW GENERATION HUMANITARIAN NGO ARE NOW MORE ACCESSIBLE IN LORI REGION



We are happy to inform you that New Generation Humanitarian NGO regional office is launching its activity in Vanadzor city of Armenia since May 18, 2020. The office has HIV Prevention Center where trained consultants will provide information on available services, peer to peer consultations on HIV and AIDS.

The center will also provide free and anonymous testing for HIV as well as prevention and education-information materials;

in sero-positive cases the consultants will refer the beneficiary to the National Center for AIDS Prevention for further screening.

New Generation Humanitarian NGO is one of the most active organizations operating in the field of public healthcare in Armenia and implements HIV prevention projects among MSM, CSWs, PWIDs and LGBT people in Armenia.

**You can call us at +37460478989, +37455478980 phone numbers for information on the available services, consultation and testing for HIV, or register online by the following link for our consultants to contact you.**

+374 60 378989  
 +374 60478989



HEALTH CARE NEWS

SCREENING AND TREATMENT OF STIS IS ALREADY ACCESSIBLE IN YEREVAN



New Generation Humanitarian NGO implements HIV prevention projects among vulnerable groups of society throughout the whole Armenia. Being aware that having sexually transmitted infections (STIs) makes people more vulnerable to HIV, New Generation Humanitarian NGO has established cooperation with Center Of

Medical Genetics And Primary Health Care in Yerevan.

Within the scope of the cooperation, the beneficiaries of HIV prevention among MSM, CSW and trans\* people projects will have the opportunity to get tested for STIs and in case of necessity get treatment for free.

ANOTHER TRAINING SESSION FOR NGNGO CONSULTANTS ON HIV



organized by the National Center for AIDS Prevention of Armenia.

The training is essential because the people who directly work with the target groups, in this case the outreach workers, are strengthening their knowledge of HIV and AIDS and gaining professional skills in conducting HIV tests among their beneficiaries. This makes testing more accessible for the beneficiary groups that the NGO works with.

Many still identify HIV with AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) and the diagnosis of it is considered to be a death sentence. In reality, AIDS is the last stage of HIV. Regular testing for HIV will help you detect HIV in time and control it.

“HIV testing has become more accessible as never before,” says Artyom Movsesyan, HIV prevention programs coordinator at New Generation Humanitarian NGO, who was present at the training course for the outreach workers on "HIV Infection and HIV Screening through Self-Testing"

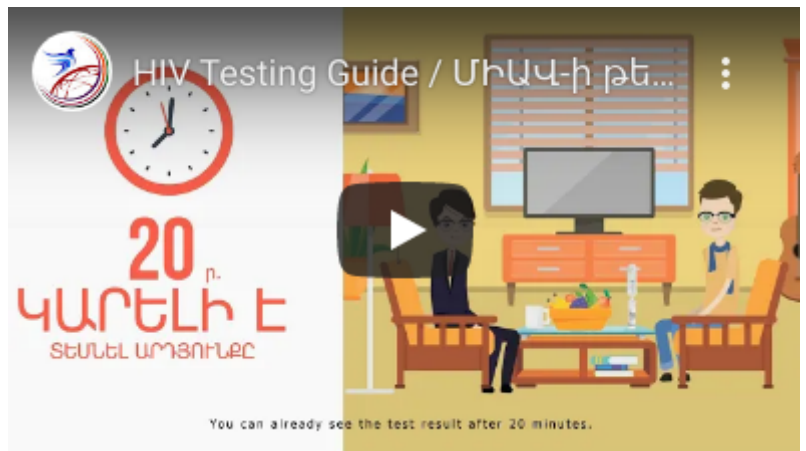
The training included theoretical and practical parts. In the first part Naira Sergeeva, the Global Fund Program Coordination Team Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, talked about the HIV and AIDS situation in Armenia, vulnerable groups affected by HIV and the importance of testing, prevention and treatment. She also spoke about treatment and screening of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

The training course was continued by Marine Asryan, employee at the National Center for AIDS Prevention, who spoke about the outreach work and the elementary principles and skills needed for HIV counseling as well as specificities of HIV counseling in different cases of test results.

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During the second part of the training the participants revealed the specificities of self-testing with NCAP doctor Susanna Muradyan, learnt the correct interpretation of test results, conducted testing in practice and were acquainted with laboratory work of HIV detection.

Reminder: “Since August 2017 the beneficiaries of NGNGO already have the opportunity to get tested for HIV free and anonymously through rapid tests using oral mucosal transudate. This means the outreach worker can conduct the HIV test both in the office of the NGO, at the beneficiary’s house , or in other places where it is possible to provide the necessary conditions for the test: temperature, lighting, privacy, etc”.



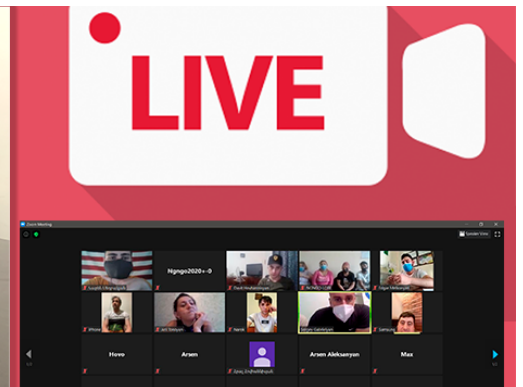
You can acquire more information from the video guide on HIV testing BY SCANNING THE QR CODE



“HIV prevention among MSM, CSWs and Trans\* people” project is implemented by New Generation Humanitarian NGO and financed by the Ministry of Health of Armenia, from the funds of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the "National Center for AIDS Prevention" CJSC of the Ministry of Health of Republic Armenia.

### SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AND THEIR PREVENTION: ONLINE TRAINING

On June 26, 2020, an online training was held with the participation of Andranik Gharibyan, a doctor-sexologist from the Center of Medical Genetics and Primary Health Care, and outreach workers of New Generation Humanitarian NGO. The purpose of the training was to provide the outreach workers basic knowledge on STIs to make their consultation more professional in providing testing and advice to beneficiaries.



During the discussion, the doctor accompanied by active introduced the types of sexually questions and transmitted infections, the ways of clarifications. Being aware that their transmission, the ways of having sexually transmitted prevention and treatment. Special infections (STIs) makes people comment was made to the methods of more vulnerable to HIV, New HIV prevention, taking into account Generation Humanitarian NGO the working specifics of the NGNGO’s has established cooperation outreach workers and the importance with the Center of Medical of their knowledge during the testing. Genetics and Primary Health Care in Yerevan. The discussion of the topic was

## NEW GENERATION HUMANITARIAN NGO EXPANDS THE SCOPE OF FREE LEGAL CONSULTATION

New Generation Humanitarian NGO provides free legal consultation and advocate support. Legal consultation is provided to those LGBTI people and commercial sex workers (CSW) who have been subjected to stigma, discrimination, violence or torture, have been left without shelter and family support, lost their jobs and don't have any financial income. To get free legal consultation, you can contact us by the [following link](#).



[To get free legal consultation](#)

## AS A RESULT OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS, AN ORDER WAS MADE UP AGAINST IZMIRLYAN MEDICAL CENTER



As a result of administrative proceedings, an order was made up against IZMIRLYAN medical center Based on the application from New Generation Humanitarian NGO, from April 29 until and including May 5, 2020, an inspection was carried out in Izmiryan Medical Center CJSC by the Health and Labor Inspectorate of the Republic of Armenia. The results showed that:

1. The company on its own initiative on March 16, 2020, at around 11 am, provided medical care in the 1st proctology department to the individual, R.Kh., who applied to the company without the compliance of the requirements for completing and maintaining documents approved under the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.
2. The medical documents that are kept, maintained and circulated in the reception lack the entries of all the necessary diagnostic examinations of the patient on suspicion of infectious disease as well as on the consultation

carried out by the doctor specialist in the isolation room.

3. The reception, registration, and examination of the patient were not carried out in the reception of the Company by the medical specialist as well as the decision to treat the patient in hospital (inpatient), the formulation of the established medical documents, which violated the requirements established by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

Based on the above-mentioned, the Health and Labor Inspection Body of the Republic of Armenia to Izmirlyan medical center CJSC, and director Armen Charchyan Ordered To take appropriate measures within 30 days from the date of receiving the order, ensuring Clause 6 of the first part of Article 19.3 of the RA Law on medical assistance and service to population, Sub-clause 1 of Clause 1 of N 02-Ն order by RA Minister of Health on the approval of the format of medical documents used in hospital medical organizations adopted on February 14, 2014, RA 1 Sub clause of the 1 Clause of the N 1752-Ն order by the RA Ministry of Health on Adult's ambulatory medical cards, medical supervision cards for children, exchange card of newborns and prenatal patronage sheet formats' approval adopted on November 26, 2007, 1 and 2 Sub Clauses of 1 Clause of N 44-Ն order on Medical care and services of Patient management practice in the organization's reception adopted on October 18, 2019.

## YOUTH NEWS



## NEW GENERATION HUMANITARIAN NGO AND BAVARIAN YOUTH COUNCIL (BJR) CONTINUE THEIR COOPERATION

The cooperation between the Bavarian Youth Council (BJR) and New Generation Humanitarian NGO is already 2 years old, and we are happy to state that the cooperation has been fruitful in the scope of regulation of youth issues.

The goals of the two organizations coincide in terms of active engagement and civic development of the youth. Within this cooperation that has started since 2018, the main projects include but are not restricted to implementation of youth workers exchange programs, in which representatives of NGOs and informal groups dealing with youth issues in Armenia and Germany are participating. We can happily note that the project for 2020 has received financial support by the Federal Ministry of International Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany and it is planned to implement an educational and empowerment exchange projects among CSOs dealing with youth issues on the topic of Democracy Education in September-December this year and small grants for projects addressing the youth issues in communities will be given to the participants of these youth exchange projects. The first video call took place at the start of the project with participation of Mathias FACK, the president of Bavarian Youth Council, Sergey GABRIELIAN, the president of New Generation Humanitarian NGO, Patrick WOLF, head of the presidential office of BJR, Arman SAHAKYAN, finance manager of NGNGO, Kateryna Kudin, BJR project coordinator.

To be continued...

## DEAR COLLEAGUES AND READERS, LUSINE GASPARYAN, LAWYER, AND NAREK DAVTYAN, PROGRAMS ASSISTANT, HAS JOINED OUR TEAM.



Narek Davtyan is studying "Linguistics and Intercultural Communication" at Brusov State University

- He received a scholarship from the US Government in 2017 and studied at an American High School for one academic year.
- He is a "FLEX" exchange program alumni He likes to do camping, photography and running.

Lusine Gasparyan is a lawyer by profession.

- She studied at Yerevan Northern University at the Law department in March-September 2014-2018.
- She worked at the Center for Legal Research and Development as an observer of the right to a fair trial in 2018.
- In January-July of 2019 she has worked as a fair trial expert in the same organization.
- She worked for "Armenian Helsinki Committee" as a legal advisor on civil issues from 2019 October to 2020 March.
- She has worked as a coordinator of "When Women Are Equal" program in the "I am the right" initiative group in February 2020
- She has started working for "New Generation" Humanitarian NGO since June 2020
- She has taken part in number of courses related to the topic of law



## ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) characterized COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic that prompted governments in almost every country in the world to take action to alleviate the impact of the epidemic. Particular attention is paid to the groups most vulnerable to this epidemic, the elderly and people with chronic diseases.

However, not all groups that are always considered vulnerable are under the care of the governments. In particular, the vulnerability and needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people have not even been discussed in many countries. In Armenia as well needs of LGBTI people have not been assessed, and it may not be possible to do so, as there is no official statistics on that community. The available unofficial data cannot be completely reliable, as it is not desirable for the vast majority of homosexuals to identify themselves as members of a permanently targeted community. However, in pandemics, LGBTI people are more vulnerable, and this vulnerability can be assessed in at least two directions: access to health care services and social security. According to the Human Rights Watch, LGBTI people are often discriminated in the field of health care. The organization has registered such a problem in a number of countries, including the

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VULNERABLE:  
THE RIGHTS OF  
LGBTI PEOPLE  
AMID COVID-19**

United States, Russia, Japan and Lebanon. In a document on human rights concerns over the pandemic, the organization said governments should provide health services without discrimination. New Generation Humanitarian NGO recorded such problems in Armenia in its 2019 national report on violations of the health rights of LGBTI people, noting that violations of health rights are mainly accompanied by violations of other rights. The organization has not received any calls these days from the LGBTI community related to discrimination in the healthcare system of Armenia. However, the organization notes that the implementation of the HIV and AIDS prevention programs among LGBTI, IDU (injecting drug user) and FCSW (female commercial sex workers) communities has not been

taken into account when declaring a state of emergency. New Generation Humanitarian NGO, however, with the involvement of its outreach workers, tries to provide the beneficiary risk groups with appropriate materials by keeping social distance and following anti-epidemic guidance. It is well known that trans people in particular have problems seeing a doctor, and many of them avoid going to medical centers to avoid unpleasant questions and discrimination. For example, in the UK healthcare system, many cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity have been reported, with one in seven LGBTI people (14%) avoiding seeking healthcare for fear of discrimination from staff (LGBT in Britain Health Report). In the United States, according to Human Rights Campaign, LGBTI people are more vulnerable to health risks, especially since 21% of them have chronic asthma and 17% lack health coverage. Two weeks ago, the Government of the Republic of Armenia approved a comprehensive program of countermeasures to combat Coronavirus and the measures to

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neutralize the economic repercussions.

One of the directions of the program is to ensure the social security of socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Although there is no exhaustive list of vulnerable groups, none of the Government assistance programs to date are intended for LGBTI people.

One of the reasons for this is the lack of large-scale and in-depth research on the LGBTI community in Armenia. The vulnerability of the community is not measured and documented, there is no data on how many LGBTI people have lost their jobs these days, how many of them have been daily wage earners without a contract and registration, and how many are short of food and basic necessities.

Many LGBTI people are discriminated in the labor market as well (20% of LGBTI people in the United States), hence job choices are much more limited for them than for non-LGBTI people. Many homosexuals work in the service sector (15% in the United States), this means that due to the state of emergency in the country, the unemployment rate among LGBTI people is higher. In the absence of a comprehensive research, it is impossible to substantiate this assertion with exact numbers, but the alarms received by the New Generation Humanitarian NGO show that the number of socially disadvantaged people in the LGBTI community is high.

The organization received 364 applications in the last 10 days, most of which are related to the lack of work and inability to pay apartment rentals. In the United States, for example, one in five LGBTI people live in poverty, and 40% of homeless young people identify themselves as LGBTI (according to Human Rights Campaign).

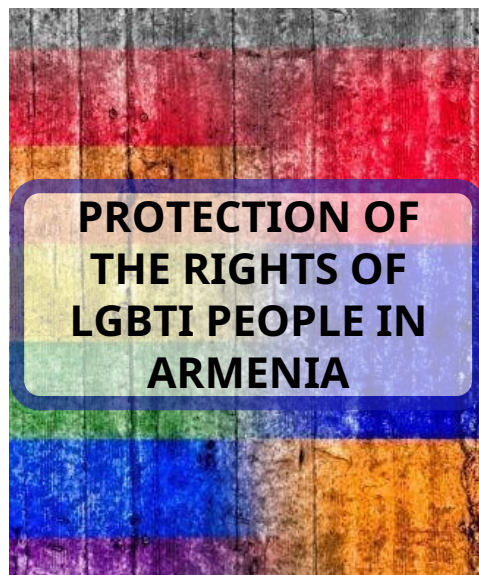
2018-2019 report by the New Generation Humanitarian NGO shows that the Armenian society is intolerant and aggressive towards LGBTI people, so even a minimum financial support from the Government to the LGBTI community may trigger another wave of anti-LGBTI campaign in the country. Especially in the context when Pashinyan's government has already been accused of sponsoring the LGBTI community for manipulative political reasons, it is difficult to expect that the Government of the Republic of Armenia will direct any of its support programs to solve the problems of the needy representatives of this community.

In such conditions, it is necessary to form mutual aid groups within the community and provide psychological, material and housing support to each other. In the context of pandemics, the formation of an atmosphere of solidarity and mutual support within the LGBTI community can be an important factor in overcoming the problems arising in the healthcare, social and legal spheres.

PS – We will cover the issues of security and housing of LGBTI people in the period of pandemic in our future publications.

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Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, different countries around the world are focusing their resources on overcoming health and social-economic problems. Armenia is not an exception. In our country also various measures are being taken to neutralize the results of the pandemic but in the current state of emergency the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups has been pushed to the background. On one hand the meaning of the word "vulnerable" has been narrowed focusing mainly on the elderly people, on the other hand everyone has become vulnerable to the pandemic. However, at the end of the tunnel there is light. According to the forecasts of the advanced research centers, the infection vaccine will be found sooner or later. And what about a vaccine against hate? Well, basically it has been around for a long time but some organisms do not accept kindness and tolerance. As a result, hatred causes complications, infects the body and spreads like an acute infectious disease. However, no emergency measures are taken at the state level and somehow hatred becomes common. For example, LGBTI people



(lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) face it at every step, from their own family to medical institutions and schools.

Nare Hovhannisyan, President of the Center for Legal Initiatives NGO, Sergey Gabrielyan, President of New Generation Humanitarian NGO, Arman Sahakyan, Alina Mirzoyan and Anahit Mkrtchyan, employees of the same organization unanimously state this. According to our interviewed human rights activists, the stigma and discrimination rooted in the Armenian society, the legislative gaps and the state's evasive policy create fertile ground for hate speech to strike roots. And not long after, the speech becomes an action, a case, sometimes a criminal one. For example, a few months ago, homophobic members of the Kamq initiative group, who

were collecting signatures against the ratification of the Istanbul Convention on the busy streets of Yerevan and the regions of Armenia, were not satisfied with extorting signatures from passers-by through manipulative tricks. A criminal case was filed against "devoted fighters" of national values for beating peasants during a petition. Of course they couldn't deviate from the traditional "Listen to the elders but also beat them" morality. Although, to be honest, they deviated a little, beating also a young boy. The "gentlemen" managed to hit and curse a girl as well.

In another case a half-naked young man, imbued with "traditional" values, poured no less traditional "Brilliant green" on one of the participants of a self-made group performing in the Republic Square, who in his opinion was a satanic lesbian. Then the young "chemist", who is also an anti-Semite, held a press conference during which he described in details the recipe of the solution with "Brilliant green", the method of preparation and the peculiarities of its use. During the same press conference, a video was mentioned, from which it can be concluded that the young man, who stands out with his exhibitionist tendencies, is a latent homosexual who tried to dispel possible doubts about his

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orientation with an unexpected green attack. However, for the same purpose, he threatened human rights activists, particularly New Generation and Pink organizations' employees, while slandering them for paedophilia and for perverting minors. Although the Velvet Revolution was a step forward in terms of human rights protection, unfortunately such disgusting things continue happening in the post-revolutionary period. Moreover, Sergey Gabrielyan, President of the New Generation Humanitarian NGO, emphasizes that the hate speech and propaganda of violence have gained new intensity after the revolution. According to Alina Mirzoyan, the project coordinator of the same organization, this is explained by the fact that the former Armenian authorities use any issue related to the LGBTI community as a manipulative tool to set the society against the current government. The mass media and online platforms ran by some opposition circles are flooded with calls for violence and threats.

And people often swallow the bait without doubting that the topic is being manipulated for purely political reasons. And because the unwritten laws of the "thieves' world" (prisons) continue remaining relevant outside of penitentiary institutions, people who have normal human contact with members of the LGBTI community, especially human rights activists, are often identified with them and treated in the same discriminatory way.

Touching upon this issue, Alina Mirzoyan refers to the developments related to the forum of LGBT Christian groups that should have taken place in Armenia in 2018. The forum was canceled due to threats, hate speech, calls for violence as well as physical manifestations of these threats and calls against LGBTI people and human rights activists dealing with their issues. One of the main targets of these calls was New Generation Humanitarian NGO as the host organization of the forum in Armenia. The beneficiary groups of the organization also did not stay free from threats. All this led to temporary suspension of the activity of New Generation Humanitarian NGO. Our interviewed human rights activists claim that the above-mentioned challenges can be overcome only with a comprehensive approach.

As homophobia often comes from misconceptions and low level of awareness, first of all it is necessary to implement educational activities in the Armenian society in order to raise public awareness on this sensitive topic. In parallel, legislative gaps need to be filled. Although the Armenian draft law on "Ensuring Equality before the law" has been in circulation since 2018, it has not been adopted yet. Human rights activists Sergey Gabrielyan and Nare Hovhannisyan consider the bill to be incomplete stating that there are no provisions prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In addition, the law enforcement system often treats violators with solidarity, especially when it comes to violating the rights of the LGBTI community: it is not for nothing that the half-naked young man mentioned earlier during the infamous press conference thanked the police for their kind treatment towards him after the incident. Lawyer Anahit Mkrtchyan notes that one of the issues that requires legal regulation is that homosexuality is considered a mental disorder in Armenia although it has long been removed from the World Health Organization classification of mental disorders. The next major lever for overcoming the challenges of the LGBTI community is state care.

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Our interlocutors share the view that state care is not currently provided to the LGBTI community at a sufficient level. The most recent example of this is related to social programs aimed at mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Arman Sahakyan, Finance Manager of New Generation Humanitarian NGO, the needs of the LGBTI community are not taken into account in any of the social programs while community members have become doubly vulnerable in this emergency situation.

Nare Hovhannisyan shares this concern. Human rights activists explain that many members of the LGBTI community are unregistered workers (waiters, bartenders, hairdressers), which significantly reduces their ability to avail of social programs. In addition, many are subjected to domestic violence for their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Therefore, in this case of emergency, the probability of physical violence and psychological pressure on them increases. If in usual situation some people were able to rent an apartment even with the income from unregistered work, these days they may even end up on the street.

At the same time, renting an apartment for community members is very difficult, even in normal conditions. The thing is that many tenants avoid renting out their apartment to LGBTI people because of their discriminatory approach towards these people.

Touching upon the issue of state support, Sergey Gabrielyan, Nare Hovhannisyan, Alina Mirzoyan and Arman Sahakyan note that the cooperation between LGBTI rights NGOs and the government does not take place at the proper level as there is not enough readiness for cooperation by the government. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation between the state and the NGOs, involving both interested NGOs and representatives of the LGBTI community in decision-making processes.

Thus, in order to solve the problems the LGBTI community faces in Armenia, it is necessary to carry out educational and legal reforms, in the meantime strengthening the state support to the LGBTI community as well as the cooperation between state and non-governmental organizations.

**Author: K.A.**



**THE LIFE OF GAY PEOPLE  
IN ARMENIA. PART 1**

We couldn't get in touch with Artak earlier: he just left the police station and is going home. It was the first day of facing the four guys, one of which stabbed Artak in the back last summer near the Republic Square and before people would gather around Artak, he ran away, as they always do. Artak tells: "I had just got back from abroad and I was meeting my friends. It was a hot day and I had a hat on but you could still see my long hair under it. My friend also had long, yellow hair. We were having a conversation when a few guys passed by us. They looked at us in a certain way and we heard them make some unpleasant comments about our hairstyles. I felt that their behavior was not adequate because even from a distance we could hear their loud, weird laugh."

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So, we replied to them with a few words and entered the VivaCell\* store to do what we were going to do. One of the guys called me out saying that he had something to tell me, I went out and they started to beat me. My friends tried to help me but they also got beaten and when people started to help us, the guys ran away. I felt a sharp pain in my shoulder and noticed that I was bleeding. And the reason for all of this is just because of a hairstyle.” This was the first time Artak experienced an incident like this, but the discrimination based on his physical appearance and sexual orientation was not new to him at all. “Wherever I wanted to get a job, they told me to get a haircut, and I was like ‘Goodbye’. At last, I got a job in the “Loft Room” cafe as a waiter but they still didn’t like my hair. They just hired me because they needed a waiter”, Artak says. After a long search, Artak decided to become self-employed and he founded a peace-building NGO, which was aimed to connect the minority groups in Armenia. In a few years, Artak sees himself as an active, successful advocate for human rights, but for this, he needs a good education, which is not easy to obtain. “I don’t know where to start. I was in my third year of study at the Yerevan Regional State College No.2, nobody would sit next to me. They would discuss my hair all the time during the classes. Even now when I study at a university, I prefer not to attend the classes, because who likes hearing mockeries?”, Artak says. He hasn’t served in the army and got a military deferment: “It was during the last medical examination. I entered the room and a high-ranking officer threw my folder of documents at my face and started cursing me and my parents. Even before entering the room, I heard him call me a ‘faggot’. The officer told me that he was sure there wouldn’t be someone like me from his city. Of course, later I contacted the police and the Attorney General’s office, and that person got fired. However, the case got terminated because of the absence of witnesses, even though there were about 15 people in the room. After that, I applied to the military police, and when I got rejected there too, to the Court of First Instance Jurisdiction and, if necessary, I am willing to go all the way to the ECHR (European Court of Human Rights).” Artak is not the only one with this kind of story. If there were to be written other stories they all would have been written having intolerance and its consequences within their cores. These stories confirm that the attitude of people towards LGBT individuals in Armenia is not always certain. It is, in fact, in most cases negative. During the last couple of years the “New Generation” Humanitarian NGO has enlisted multiple cases of discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, provided support, and contributed to raising awareness on different related issues thereby reducing the future risks.

**THE LIFE OF GAY PEOPLE IN ARMENIA. PART 2**

During the last couple of years the “New Generation” Humanitarian NGO has enlisted multiple cases of discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, provided support and contributed to raising awareness about different related issues thereby reducing the future risks.

Samvel (the name has been changed by his request) has been working as a waiter for already 5-6 years. It is hard for him to remember how many workplaces he

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had to change to get there. He has a profession as well, but since his education is vocational, he hasn't been able to find a job with his profession.

In the college, where he studied, he was known as someone who dresses differently. This by itself was already enough for getting problems and different kinds of looks from people. "I remember not wearing the standard black pants. Instead, I would wear ripped jeans with sneakers and long blouses and this was an opportunity for the guys to start fights with me", Samvel tells. Telling his family about his sexual orientation was not easy, especially when it was followed by a bunch of acts of violence: "I was about 16-17, when I told my parents about my sexual orientation. They beat me, locked me in the room and didn't let me go to work until my employer called my dad and convinced him. Even now, despite all the time that has passed, they still don't believe that I am gay. They just think that I am surrounded by bad people." To avoid constantly rising obstacles, he has the problem of having to hide his sexual orientation and even in this case, the issues somehow have the ability to find Samvel. He tells: "I participated in an LGBT event some time ago and my cousin learned about that later. He threatened me that he was going to out me. It turned out that the security worker of the event was his friend and told him he had seen me in the event. I had to threaten both of them by saying that I would file reports against them in the police just so that they would leave me alone." Samvel's personal life has been discussed and criticized a lot by his family members but he has found a way to partially avoid it: he gives them money. He pays just to be able to live his personal life. "It's not that I earn a lot, but I give them 2000, 3000 and sometimes even 5000 drams. And now (during the days of quarantine because of COVID19) that I don't work, I get financial support, a part of which I save to give to the family", he says. It is not easy for Samvel to live in Armenia, he has a problem of feeling safe. He always takes a weapon of self-defense whenever he leaves the house: you never know when and who you will come across. He tells: "A few days ago my friends and I went out to buy food. When we were crossing the street, there were two boys standing, one of which threw a used tissue on me. While I was trying to figure out why he did that, I saw him take a knife out of his pocket. I started talking more to give time to my friend to take out the electroshock out of his backpack. When they saw it, they backed off and we went away quickly." To have your family's trust and support, when you need it the most is priceless. It is possible to achieve that, but not always.

To have your family's trust and support, when you need it the most is priceless. It is possible to achieve that, but not always. "I was asleep on the day my brother secretly read conversations on my phone and told my mom, and then she told my dad. They all came and woke me, asked me questions, and then told me to sleep and that we would talk in the morning, but this made me not want to wake up in the morning", Rudolf tells.

From that day on he has always been locked in the house, by the demands of his dad he has stopped communication with his friends, has always been under control and his attempts

**THE LIFE OF GAY PEOPLE  
IN ARMENIA. PART 3**



to escape have been in vain. "I was telling them that I would escape from the house but my dad told me that wherever I went, he would come find me and my friends and when he found us it wouldn't end well for us", Rudolf says.

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There was only one way to get out of this situation: to convince the family that he has changed. It worked.

“My mom is a very religious woman. When I was asleep, she would bring her prayer books and pray that I would change, that the demons would leave my body and I pretended that it worked. At last they started believing me.

My dad even told me that he didn't imagine he would love his son again. Only my brother didn't believe me but recently he told me that it is my life and I can live however I want”, Rudolf tells. After gaining some trust from them he started a job in a warehouse but nobody knows about his sexual orientation there.

He says that the majority of workers are men, there is no need for additional conflict. Besides that job, he also practices graphic design, whenever he has free time, and since there is a lot of free time now, he constantly improves his skills.

“This is not relatively bad for me but in the future I will definitely move abroad to feel absolutely happy. I would like not to lie to my family and tell the truth but it is possible that after telling them the truth my dad will take the knife and stab me in the stomach and then hurt himself. That is why I prefer where things are now”, Rudolf concludes.

Depending on different parts of the country and even the city, the scope of people's attitudes towards this or that topic partially changes.

Karen (the name has been changed by his request) is coming to Yerevan from Gyumri on a train.

He went to visit his friend, but things took a different turn there. Karen tells about what happened:

“We were hanging out in a non-central part of the city. It was probably our clothes that were unusual for them, when a man approached us and started insulting: he was cursing and accusing us of bringing bad things to Gyumri. We decided to just leave but he kept on chasing us and threatening that he would tell everyone who we were and that if he hadn't met an acquaintance of his, he would come after us. We told my friend's parents about this so they wouldn't believe it when they heard it, but I am very worried about him now.”

As for living in Armenia in general, he feels comfortable here, even though, in his words, it may be because of living in the center of Yerevan and he does not rule out that it is not as easy for other members of the LGBT community living in more suburban areas.

“Nevertheless, I see progress: the fact that what happened in Gyumri is less likely to happen in Yerevan nowadays already shows some change”, Karen says.



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19-year-old Sargis' case can be considered unique. He is a pianist-composer, has graduated from the Musical College after Romanos Melikyan and has conducted private classes ever since being a student. To the question if his students would still take his classes if they knew he was homosexual, he, after thinking for a few seconds, replies "definitely not". Sargis never had problems because of his sexual orientation either in college or anywhere else. In his words, everyone knew him there as an amazing musician, but a less sociable person. "I did not say that I was gay in college, but I also did not hide it. In fact, people have a slightly different attitude among artists, and that is very good. But if anything, I had very good friends there who would definitely be by my side in any case, and the vast majority of them were heterosexual", he says. Before talking to the family, Sargis prepared his parents for that news for a long time and he, in his turn, prepared to be kicked out of the house, but received a shocking slap in the face instead. "I said it and I asked my mom 'are you not going to kick me out of the house now?' but my mom slapped me as if 'what are you talking about? You are our son and you should stay with us.' You can't imagine how good it feels when you have your parent's support and trust. I am sure that if my mother knew someone was kicked out of the house because of being gay, she would tell them to come and live with us", Sargis says. As for his future life, he is sure that he will never go anywhere else. His homeland is Armenia, and he urges others to stay here too, to make their voices heard and to show that they exist. "And I did not join the army just because my security could not be ensured, otherwise this is my homeland, for the protection of which I do not avoid serving in the army at all",

Sargis says. However different the presented stories may seem, their commonalities are obvious, and their demand is not to discriminate against people based on any trait, not to push anyone to isolate and feel incomplete, but to encourage each other to be free, to act courageously and to realize that no manifestation of discrimination leads to anything good, instead it divides and disintegrates the society.

In the words of Anahit Mkrtychyan, the lawyer of the New Generation Humanitarian NGO, it is noteworthy that there is no comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in Armenia yet. And although the RA Constitution and several legal acts partially prohibit discrimination, there is neither the definition of "discrimination", nor any legal mechanisms to protect against it. "In this case, those who have been discriminated against based on their sexual orientation and gender identity are left to apply to the court by the method of protection of the civil law for insult and defamation, or, if there is violence or physical injury, to the police to start a criminal case. However, in all these cases, the existence of discrimination will not be addressed, as there are no legal regulations that will be referred to by law enforcement authorities", Anahit Mkrtychyan says and adds that the adoption of already existing draft law on "Ensuring Equality" will provide new opportunities in the process of preventing discrimination.

**THE END**

**Author: Rima Grigoryan**

## THE LIFE OF TRANS WOMEN IN ARMENIA

In the Republic of Armenia, Man is the highest value, everyone is granted equal rights. This is mentioned in the third article of the Armenian Constitution. Vulnerable groups exist in every country, Just like in Armenia and because of their sexual orientation or gender identity their rights are frequently violated. Christina (name changed) is a 27-year-old transgender woman, her family found out about her gender identity when she was 15, “they kept me in isolation for 14 days, they hoped that I would change. Then I convinced them that their beliefs were not true so that I could escape”.

After that, Christina left her family and never returned.

Now Christina works as a sex worker. “I can’t find another job because of my gender identity, employers refuse to work with me.” According to lawyer Anahit Mkrtychyan, there is an article in the Labor Code about the prohibition of discrimination, but it doesn’t work. “We can’t hold the employer accountable, because when they know, that they are dealing with a transgender person, they put a different reason in their dismissal application.”

According to Christina, they are destined for violence, stigma, and discrimination in Armenia. “Recently, two people sexually abused me against my will, and when I reported to the police I didn’t receive a response, then I went to the police and complained about what happened, but again, as always, the case was closed and the reason was that I am a trans person.”

According to Nora, a 21-year-old transgender person, she was last abused to violence on October 31, 2019, during Halloween. “My

friends and I went outdoors to celebrate the holiday.

Several homophobes attacked us, stating that we were trans people. “According to Nora, they reported to the police, but, as usual, there was no response.

The I orientation. lawyer notes, that in such cases, when the police see a transgender person reporting to them, they don’t proceed with the case, they terminate it immediately, saying that there aren’t enough grounds to initiate the case.

In response to our inquiry sent to the Police of the Republic of Armenia, to know how many criminal cases have been initiated against transgender people over the last year and how many of them have been terminated, the Chief of the Police Headquarters of the Republic of Armenia, Police Colonel Armen Ghukasyan noted, that the RA Police doesn’t keep separate records on transgender people and their crimes. Transgender people in Armenia aren’t fully protected by law, because no separate law on discrimination prohibits discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

According to Anahit Mkrtychyan, the only legislative point that the representatives of the LGBT community can defend to some extent is the Article 29 of the RA Constitution, which also states that discrimination is prohibited based on social or other circumstances.

Transgender Nora says she had faced psychological, physical, and financial violence by her family, she ran away from home when

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she was just 18 years old. “In the past, I was upset about the fact that my society may not accept me.

It’s very difficult to adapt to the fact that you are not a full member of society because of your gender identity.” On May 25, 2019, with the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases approved by the World Health Organization, gender inconvenience was removed from the list of mental disorders and moved to the section of sexual health. According to lawyer Anahit Mkrtychyan, trans people in Armenia cannot undergo sex reassignment surgery, because there is no legal permission for that. “the another problem is with the passports, in extreme cases, they can change their names, surnamse, and pictures, but not the gender, which also becomes a reason for discrimination.”

Transgender people in Armenia remain unacceptable to the public. Target groups often have difficulties with different groups of society, which can have good and bad sides, but either way, the law should be paramount and equal for all.

### Key Words/abbreviations

- **LGBT** - Stands for Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender
- **Transgender** - denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex.
- **Heterosexual** - A person sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.
- **Homophobe** - a person with a dislike of or prejudice against homosexual people.

**SHUSHANIK MISKARYAN**

## SUB - GRANT



On May 1, 2020 New Generation Humanitarian NGO launched provision of sub-grant programs aimed at capacity building of NGOs and initiative groups engaged in promotion and protection of LGBTI rights and issues, in the fight against discrimination in Armenia within the framework of the project of Capacity Building and Empowerment for Protection of Human Rights of LGBTI people in Armenia. The first sub-grant was provided to Center for Legal Initiatives NGO for the implementation of the project on Advocating for Prohibition of Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Criminal Executive Institutions of Armenia.

The long-term goal of the project is to contribute to enforcement of the right to equality and non-discrimination of imprisoned MSM and LGBTI people. The mid-term goal of the project is to contribute to development of policy documents and procedures aimed at protection of human rights of imprisoned MSM and LGBTI people.

The short-term goal of the project is to promote sensitivity and raise the awareness of the society and decision makers on the issues of MSM and LGBTI people. We congratulate the Center for Legal Initiatives NGO with confidence for successful implementation of their project goals and productive cooperation for protection of human rights of LGBTI people and elimination of discrimination in Armenia.

SUB - GRANT



On May 6, 2020 New Generation Humanitarian NGO provided the second sub-grant aimed at capacity building of NGOs and initiative groups engaged in promotion and protection of LGBTI rights and issues, in the fight against discrimination in Armenia within the framework of the project of Capacity Building and Empowerment for Protection of Human Rights of LGBTI people in Armenia. This sub-grant was provided to Equality for All NGO to implement the project Together for the Health of Each Other.

The goal of the project is to raise awareness about sexual health and safe sexual behavior among MSM and trans communities.

The project includes online training sessions on the above mentioned topics, as a result of which the project beneficiaries will acquire knowledge on sexual health and safe sexual behavior and later will share their knowledge with other members of the community.

Information booklet published within the project will also help raise awareness on these topics and hundreds of beneficiaries will be informed about sexual health and safe sexual behavior and their solutions.

We congratulate the Equality for All NGO with confidence for successful implementation of their project goals and productive cooperation for protection of human rights of LGBTI people and elimination of discrimination in Armenia.



On May 12, 2020 New Generation Humanitarian NGO provided the third sub-grant aimed at capacity building of NGOs and initiative groups engaged in promotion and protection of LGBTI rights and issues, in the fight against discrimination in Armenia within the framework of the project of Capacity

Building and Empowerment for Protection of Human Rights of LGBTI people in Armenia. The sub-grant has been provided to Ara Gharagozyan: defense-lawyer and big advocate for implementation and restoration of LGBTI human rights, prevalence of justice and non-discrimination for initiation of a strategic litigation aimed at the protection and realization of the rights of a trans person who has been subjected to violence based on her gender identity by a customer who had used the trans persons' sex services. A criminal case has been charged against the perpetrator of the violence but it's been over 3 years the court has not taken any measures for the protection of the trans persons' rights. The hatred and discrimination against the victim solely based on the person's gender identity

is vividly manifested by the judges and the persecuting attorney who do everything to get very mild punishment for the defendant. The case is of great strategic importance as it will contribute to restoration of the person's right violated because of her gender identity and will promote achieving systematic legislative improvements in the field of punishment of SOGI-based hate crimes. We congratulate Ara Gharagozyan with confidence for successful implementation of his project goals and productive cooperation for protection of human rights of LGBTI people and elimination of discrimination in Armenia.

**HUMANITARIAN AID**

**PROVISION OF TEMPORARY SHELTERS TO THE VULNERABLE GROUPS CONTINUES**

New Generation Humanitarian NGO within the framework of Fighting Against Discrimination in Armenia project continues to provide shelters to those LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans\*) people, MSM (men who have sex with men) and CSW (commercial sex workers) who

- have been subjected to stigma, discrimination, violence or torture,
- have been left without shelter and family support,
- have lost their jobs and have no other financial income due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

To apply for the shelter you can contact us by the [following link](#).

Scan QR code



# HUMANITARIAN AID

## FOOD PACKAGES TO VULNERABLE GROUPS SUFFERING FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC

New Generation Humanitarian NGO with the financial support of the Elton John AIDS Foundation provides food packages\* for 1 month use to those MSM and LGBTI people, people who inject drugs and commercial sex workers living in Armenia who have lost their jobs, have no other financial income due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

Food packages are intended to be provided during a year. To apply for the food packages, you can contact us by the [following link](#). [Scan QR code](#)

