



## Beyond the Master's Tools - Radical Resistance at ILGA World 2024

The local organising collective was initiated by Triangle Project, JASS Southern Africa and includes Imbawula Queer Podcast, FreeGender, Queer Food Growing Collective, Queer Feminist Film Festival, SWEAT, ASIWIKI, Rainbow Archives Narrative Project and the Gender Equity Unit (UWC).

### Our why

“Kwa Umoja We Rise! / In Unity, We Rise!” serves as a powerful rallying cry, grounding the ILGA World Conference as it returns to Africa. This theme resonates deeply with us, as it calls for Black solidarity and underscores the vital role of African LGBTQI+ communities in shaping their narratives on national, continental, and international stages. In a world where challenges persist, we recognise this moment as an opportunity to reimagine a gathering that centres African LGBTQI+ experiences, with the aim of creating a space that catalyses lasting, radical change.

We are witnessing a pivotal moment. The surge of anti-gender movements and increased oppression demand a response that goes beyond traditional platforms. While conferences like ILGA World hold significance, they must evolve. Too often, these spaces privilege the voices of the Global North, whether intentionally or not, excluding those who face the harshest realities. We must actively work to dismantle systems that favour elites, tokenism and overlook the most marginalised. Suppose we are truly committed to this year's theme. In that case, our collective efforts must focus on opening these spaces, ensuring that those who are often silenced have the chance to speak and be heard, while also confronting and disrupting the global capitalist and neo-colonial forces perpetuating exclusion.

We acknowledge the strides made to improve access, but inclusion is only the beginning. The City of Cape Town repeatedly fails to address the experiences of black people, while selling land to the private sector and offering empty promises

on housing for the poor near economic hubs like Century City. Public transport options in Cape Town are limited, often unreliable and costly, particularly for those coming from townships or outlying suburbs. The inaccessibility of the location, along with the high registration and attendance costs limit local participation, especially for those central to ILGA's advocacy efforts.

Hard lessons around accessibility for local activists from the 2019 LBQ Conference – logistically coordinated on behalf of the Global Working Group by the Local Working, led by Triangle Project in collaboration with GDX and other partners – should have served as a call for deep introspection, urging us not to repeat the same mistakes. Now, the Pavement Special stands as a direct response to these lessons—an intentional, alternative space designed to elevate the voices that are too often sidelined and silenced.

### Political framing: reading the ‘Pavement Special’ naming as an act of resistance

In the act of naming the Pavement Special, we assert a radical politics of visibility and resistance, reclaiming power from the margin and challenging systemic erasure. The term “Pavement Special” speaks to the dispossessed, those historically excluded from dominant narratives, particularly within spaces that should be inclusive but often



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reflect privilege. Naming is not a neutral act' it is political. It's a reclamation of identity and space; an assertion of agency, and a rejection of imposed hierarchies. This naming reflects our refusal to be confined by institutional boundaries or defined by external power structures.

Instead, it signals a movement grounded in solidarity, where those on the periphery come together to build alternative spaces of resistance, healing and justice. By claiming this title, we confront both the physical and ideological violence of exclusion and re-affirm our right to define the terms of our existence. The Pavement Special is a declaration of collective defiance, and a celebration of the radical potential found in community and collective action from the margin.

## Our Four Political Commitments for Collective Action and Movement Building

1. *We claim the right to create, organise for and sustain alternative spaces that serve movements.*

We believe in the importance of organising spaces that truly serve grassroots movements. These spaces are essential for amplifying marginalised voices and creating strategies outside the dominant restrictive structures.

2. *We critically engage with ILGA World's organising*

*practices*

While we engage with ILGA World, we remain critical of how it organises, especially when it comes to issues of accessibility, inclusion, and maintaining systemic hierarchies. We believe in pushing for reforms that better reflect the needs and realities of global LGBTQI+ communities.

3. *We see Inside-Outside Strategies as necessary and complimentary*

We understand the need to work both inside and outside traditional spaces of power. These strategies are not in opposition to but work together, allowing us to hold the complexities of 'belonging' to multiple organising spaces that makes it possible to influence change from within while holding systems accountable from the outside.

4. *We focus our efforts on power holders and expect better from social justice spaces*

Our energy is directed toward those who hold real power over our issues, while also pushing social justice spaces to live up to their promises. We believe in holding these spaces accountable and challenging them and us to do better for marginalised communities.

## Principles for the Space:

In this moment, in us envisioning an alternative space, these are some of the key principles that we have highlighted. These principles serve as the foundation upon which we build our vision and



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shape our actions. Our principles are grounded in integrity, equity, and purpose. Embracing these principles enables us to connect and create a more inclusive, regenerative, and collaborative environment for all.

- 1. Inclusive Engagement:** This space is not an anti-ILGA space, however we maintain a critical stance regarding the absence of consultation with national organisations, high participation fees, unaddressed conference themes, venue selection concerns, and the neglect of national realities and specific politics in connecting with the global context.
- 2. Internationalist Perspective:** Systems of oppression operate globally, impacting individuals regardless of their location. The space transcends national boundaries, aiming to forge connections and solidarity among diverse struggles across different geographies
- 3. Solidarity with Global Liberation Struggles:** We denounce the genocide perpetrated against the Palestinian people and those impacted by the current crises in Africa - Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan in particular - and other regions.
- 4. Feminist Collaboration, Collective Care and Solidarity:** The space embodies a feminist movement logic within itself, emphasising the potential for ongoing collaboration beyond singular events.
- 5. Embracing Diversity through an intersectional lens:** The space honours and values the diverse and complex ways in which individuals exist and engage with the world. Through an intersectional

lens, we recognise and respect the unique intersections of identities, experiences, and perspectives that each person brings to the collective space.

- 6. Striving for inclusivity despite limited resources:** We acknowledge that our space may fall short of the inclusivity we aspire to achieve.
- 7. An environment free from violence and other forms of harm:** We intend for the space to be free of all forms of violence. Principles of engagement will be prioritised to inform inclusion, engagement and intersectional acknowledgement.
- 8. Emergency responses and LGBTQI+ lives:** The critical gaps in the global and Africa-wide LGBTQI+ Movement lie in its failure to integrate climate justice, food security, and emergency responses into its broader agenda, often prioritizing identity politics without addressing the socio-economic and environmental realities LGBTQI+ communities and families face. This space will foreground an intersectional approach.
- 9. Envisioning alternative economic frameworks:** Within this alternative space, discussions on alternative economic frameworks will be prioritised - organising our thoughts and efforts are critical as we explore possibilities of an economic model that extends beyond reliance on funders.