



RE:TRANS

Documenting Realities of Trans Organizers



Introduction:

This Zine is a direct outcome of “RE:TRANS – Documenting Realities of Trans Organizers”, an online discussion and zine-making event open to activists and organizers who self-identify outside gender and bodily binaries. The meeting was co-organized by Qorras and AWID, and took place online on Friday July 26th 2021, bringing together by activists from across the globe to discuss matters of Representation, Resourcing and Recounting and how these issues impact trans realities.

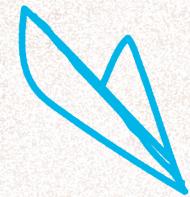
The idea for this meeting came up in a learning exchange among activists and movements as part of “Seeding Feminist Realities” - an initiative to document and amplify feminist realities, led by AWID in collaboration with Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, Global Fund for Women, FRIDA: Young Feminist Fund, and Mama Cash

This Zine presents an alternative to conventional forms of documentation and representation which are typically produced by one person who is often external to the conversation. Its contents are produced by the organizers and attendees of the event, and compiled into this archival document.

In this Zine, you will find:

- Correspondences leading up to the meeting's final form
- The call for participation and agenda
- Some of the participants
- Insights from the meeting

We wish you a pleasant read and hope that this material can inform further conversations around the realities of trans and non-binary organizing, and ultimately contribute to shaping more just futures for us all.





Deadline to register: June 30, 2021

About the event:

RE:TRANS is an online event that brings together activists and organizers who self-identify outside gender and bodily binaries to discuss and document the multiple and complex realities of trans organizing. Structured in three parallel sessions, participants will focus on one of the following topics:

- Representation: the present realities of trans issues within the wider LGB and feminist organizing,
- Resourcing: our own perception of the impact of funding on trans organizing in the past 10 years,
- Recounting: histories (events and people) that shaped our current work and experiences.

This event is organized by the Tajassod Working Group in Qorras, in collaboration with AWID, as part of the Seeding Feminist Realities Initiative. Register to attend the discussion [here](#).

Logistics:

The event will take place online on Friday July 16th 2021 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm (GMT) and is open to all registered participants.

All sessions will be held in English on Zoom and collaborative documentation will take place on Miro. If you require live translation or closed captioning, please get in touch specifying the language. We will try our best to accommodate these requests.

We will be sharing additional information about the methodology and sessions one week before the event. You will also be asked to reconfirm your participation.

Additional information:

Through this event, we aim to create a space for sharing and documenting narratives among trans organizers and activists. We look forward to re-framing trans issues within wider landscapes of community organizing, to reflect on the impact of funding and resources, and to share and document histories using accessible tools and methodologies. Using zine-making as an approach, parallel sessions will be documented collaboratively and compiled in one digital outcome.

**Please make sure to let us know about any accessibility needs for you to join the discussion*



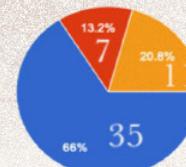
Hi Farah,

I never got back to you on this, it seems like a really nice idea. I will run it by Chris, it will depend on his availability and energy.

I also wanted to give a quick update on the sign ups, from our end we need to have a conversation on it and see how we can go with it considering these numbers.

I would like to take part in the discussion on.*

53 responses



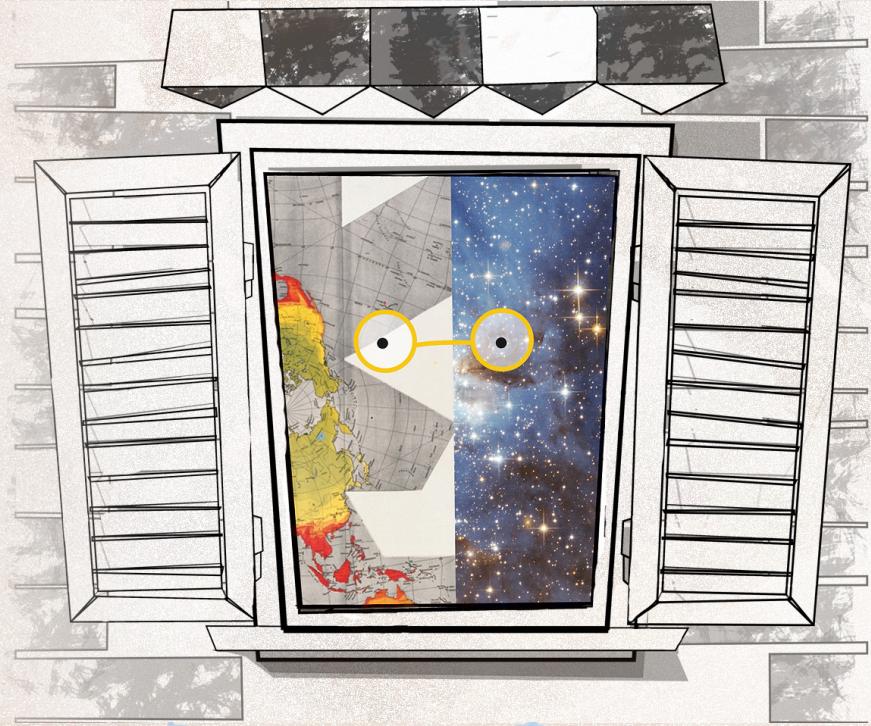
- Representation: the present realities of trans issues within the wider LGB and feminist organizing
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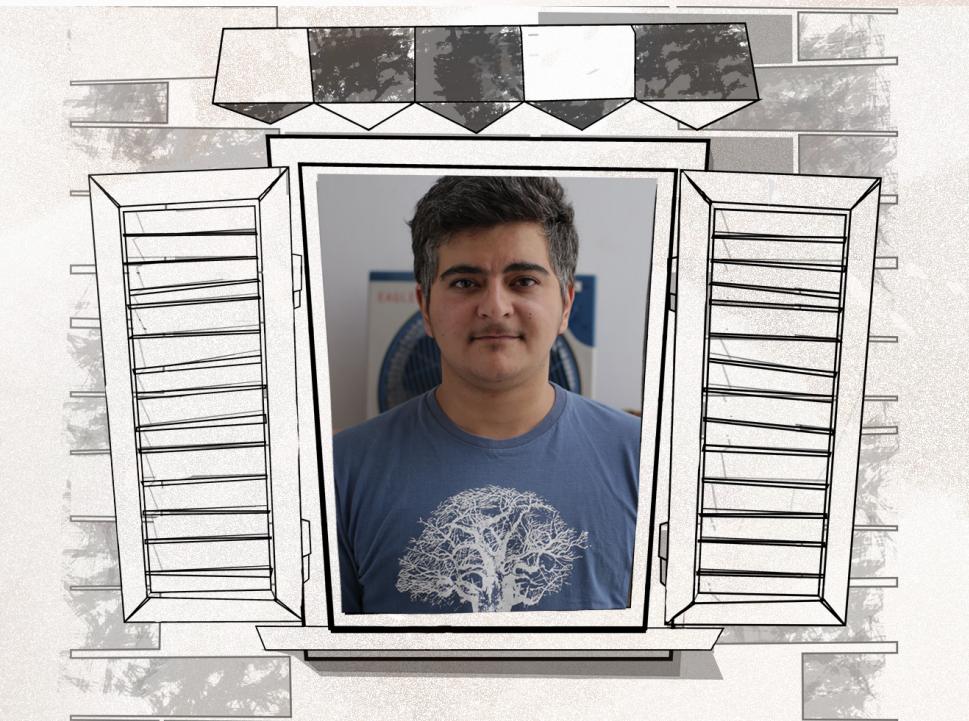
Let me know if you want to join us in the conversation.

Warm regards,
Zetra



Participants



**NAME**

Zakaraia Nasser

PRONOUN

He

LANGUAGE

ENGLISH - ARABIC

REGION/COUNTRY

Lebanon

ABOUT YOUR ACTIVISM

my activism is long and yet there is so much to learn and get exposed too. I was born, raised, worked and played in Lebanon. My work in the last years has been focused on bringing more trans visibility in Lebanon, but not just in organising but also in our daily lives, and work towards that someone's trans experience is not the reason why they are leaving their homes and countries.

I strongly believe that getting exposed to different strategies and different thinking and politics contributes to my personal and political growth.

and same as Monica been organising through Qorras since 2017.

**NAME**

Wissam SH

PRONOUN

He

LANGUAGE

ENGLISH - ARABIC

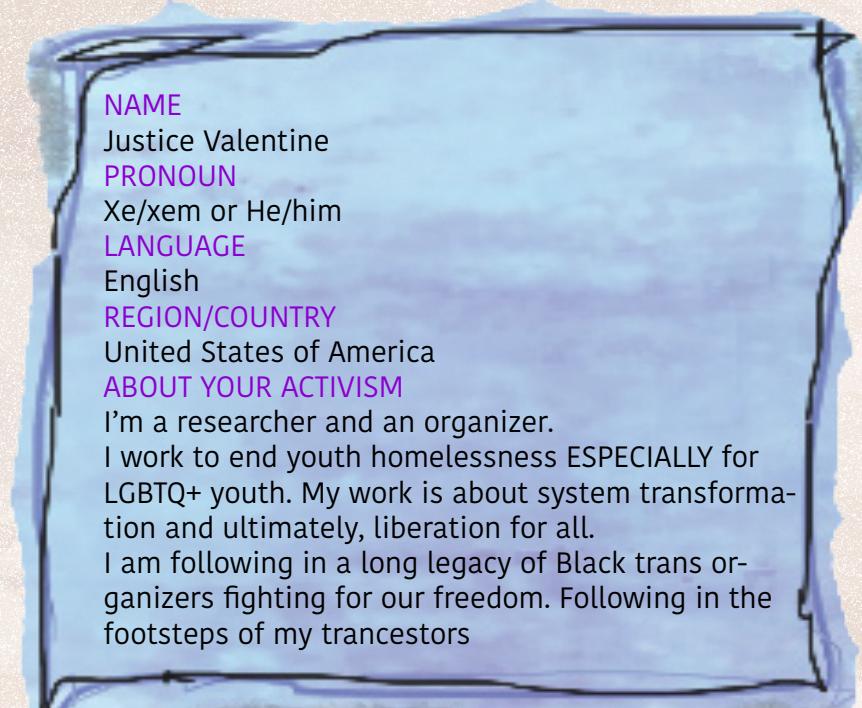
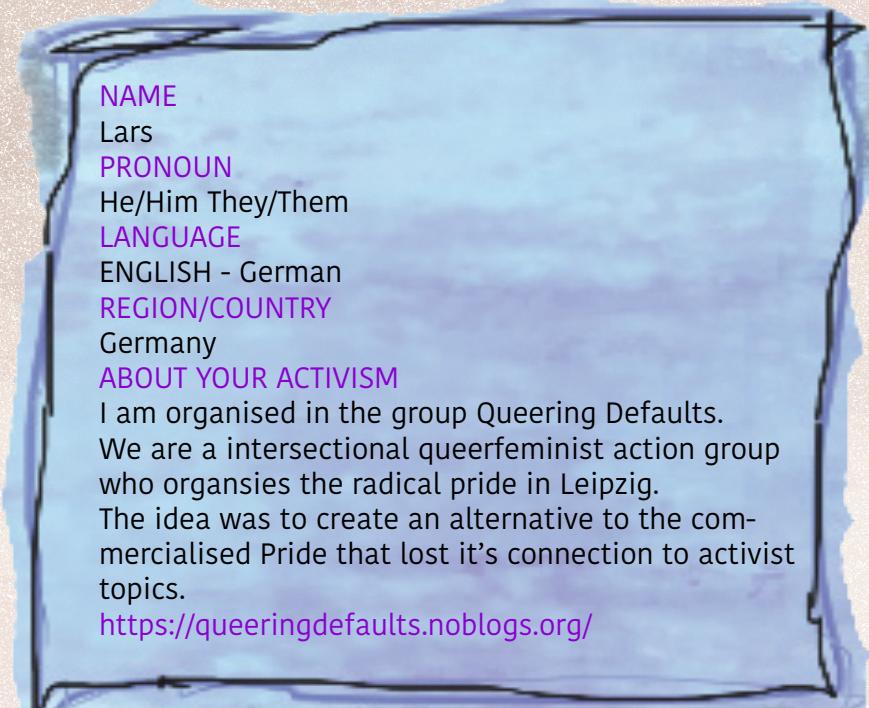
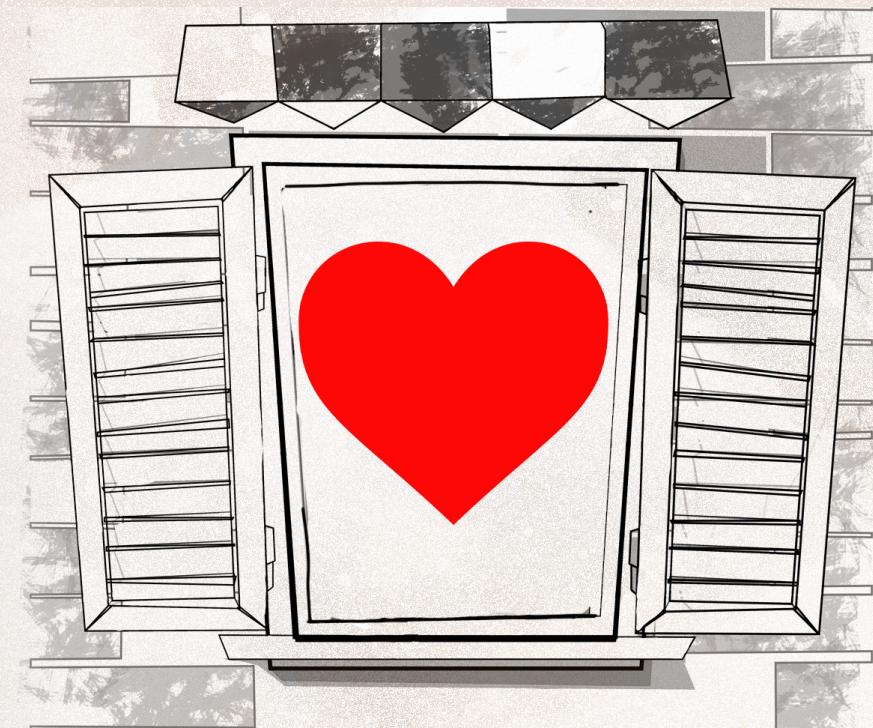
REGION/COUNTRY

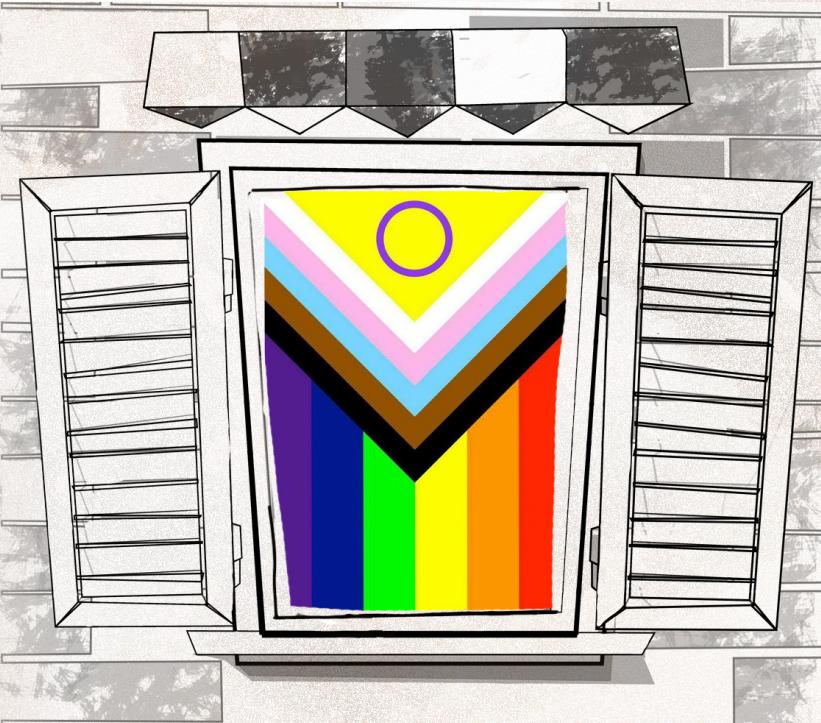
Lebanon

ABOUT YOUR ACTIVISM

I have been working with Qorras's Tajassod since 2019 as part of bringing forward tools and practical info that can benefit the trans community.

I strongly believe in the agency and ownership of individuals while leaning on each other's experiences to push forward for justice and access.



**NAME**

Yexuan

PRONOUN

She/Her

LANGUAGE

English, Chinese (native), basic Shanghainese

REGION/COUNTRY

Singapore - naturalized citizen from China

ABOUT YOUR ACTIVISM

Imagining a mutually inclusive trans and intersex queer scene as a openly trans and intersex person in Singapore, a country with a vibrant trans community but lack a visible intersex community.

Fellow associate (Singapore) of Intersex Asia

Interests - trans-mental health intersection, mental wellness, intersectional experiences and identities, promoting local inter-community conversations

**NAME**

Cianán Russell

PRONOUN

they/them

LANGUAGE

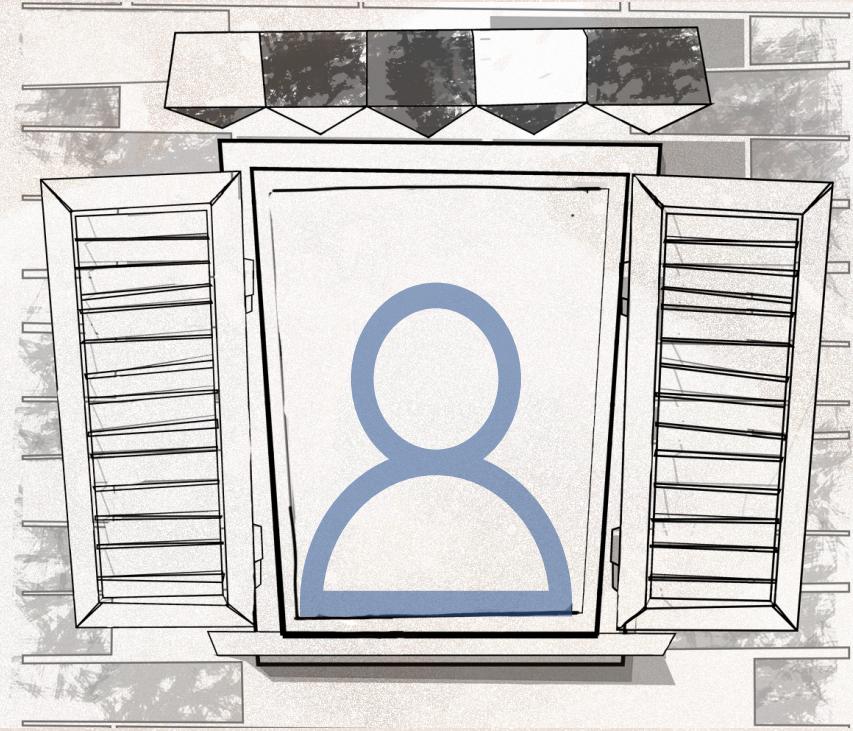
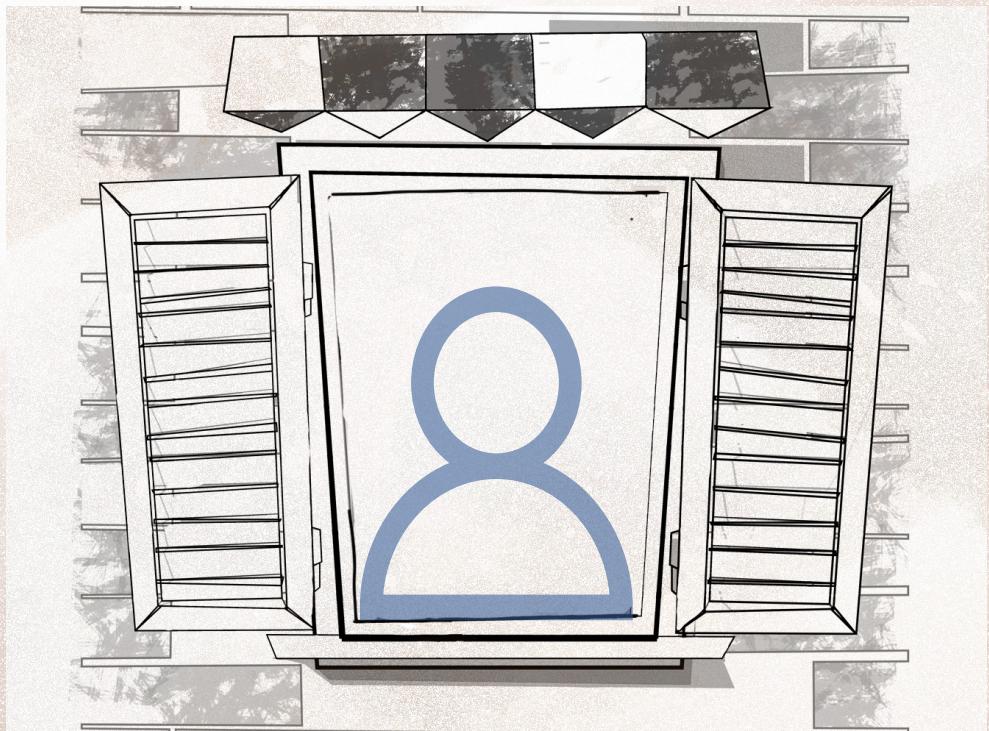
English (native) & Spanish; basic French and Thai

REGION/COUNTRY

Belgium (current); originally from the US

ABOUT YOUR ACTIVISM

My fulltime job is in LGBTI policy advocacy in Europe and Central Asia, and I also work on issues pertaining to trans people exposed to sexual violence (Trans Survivors Network) and on trans masculine exposure to HIV/AIDS and inclusion in the global response. I started trans activism in 2001, and am also involved in EPATH, WPATH, and a few local organisations in Europe.



NAME
Ash

PRONOUN
they/he

LANGUAGE
English, conversational Cantonese + basic Mandarin (Chinese diaspora)

REGION/COUNTRY
London, UK. Sometimes Hong Kong

ABOUT YOUR ACTIVISM
Trans & nonbinary & queer, gender & sexuality. Youth and elders and all ages. Diaspora, POC in the west, solidarity with other E/SE Asians and intracommunity struggles. Disability and neurodiversity. Youth member of GI, member of Youth Board. Much to learn!! Not much experience yet with organising work but long been active online in political convos with peers and encouraging those around me to become more aware and informed. Interested in activism in psychology and creative arts.

NAME
Milo

PRONOUN
He/him

LANGUAGE
English, conversational Mandarin

REGION/COUNTRY
South West UK

ABOUT YOUR ACTIVISM
I'm very new to activism/organising due to disability but I'm interested in and dedicated to improving and expanding this.
I'm deeply passionate about work around trans rights, disability justice, anti-imperialism, and more..

Insights from the meeting



Coming out at an early age, and not being exposed to extreme homophobia as a person with female passing. Being exposed to homophobia later on prompt the involvement with feminist movements. As individuals we are able to pave the path for those after us.

Ethics of representation and what it means for our movement and not having any accountability to the movement. The "professional representation" have the access and the capacity to use different platform to overtake this representation

Addressing trans issues and intersex issues and how they intersect. Singapore health institution and how they deal with trans individuals, what to expect... The concept of protection of trans people imposed by the state, often times leads to isolation and lack of willingness from health care providers to take liability. It is easier to start working within the queer community to conceptualize what intersex community and representation means than to speak up and struggle with an authoritarian state about how to improve specific trans issues.

Seats at the table and representation. Trans and intersex fall under tokenization of identities. Lack of agency cannot be compensated by the "amount of seats". Pushing for leadership and space is ongoing, and quite recent. 10 years of transition - in between generations Lack of resources and information and accessibility when coming out in our context Language of resources, translations are not always contextualized - in terms of institutions It's important to affirm the uniqueness of trans and intersex experiences, all while being part of feminist and lgb movements

Coming out 20 years ago when leslie feinberg wrote stone butch blue. The responsibility of being associated as representative and be accountable to have the amount of information to bring forward. What it looks like to be White trans masculine, how to represent and how to conceptualize. Active political conversations on solution other than adding seats to the table Having more meaningful engagement. What operational access looks like through inclusion and diversity.

How to make decisions led by us for us
>Our communities are so harmed that there is little room for empathy and kindness, just like the world punches down at us. The violence within communities needs community care and healing.
How to set priorities?
"Trans celebrity" potential almost always results in taking from the community.
Ethics of who is representing whom?
Do they have the right information?
Accountability to the movements and the needs of the community
ex: Chaz bono - many mistakes
Access to resources and opportunities - "Professionally trans"

Can inter-community conversations help us work intersectionally?

Having to choose an aspect of one's identity
"if we are seeking representation, I want to be represented as a whole"

in Lebanon, dominance of gay issues over trans issues when trans are brought to the table in practice not intersectional yet, still in process

Build up a system of representation and not individual representation.
Representation helps in self acceptance to know others are like us.
Seeing conflict as healthy process and look at the ethics and values of a person rather than their identity.

The role of media in portraying trans individuals and Intersex individuals. The intersex protection law got included in the Trans protection law (in India) under the influence of media summing these communities together

The Harm that something like Ru Paul's Drag Race has done to the trans community.

Mechanism of accountability and empathy in the community.
Black and white sense of accountability process
"Cancel culture"
danger of creating an "all wrongs are created equal" paradigm as well, when trying to engage errors/mistakes/outright wrongs committed by celebrities

Idealization can be objectifying and can water down someone's experience to only their identity.

Main focus of activism is on representation of identities.
Activism is considered as a checklist to follow a single representation becoming generalized to apply to everyone in that community or with those identities/traits.

our community has been so scrutinized that it is difficult to hold people accountable. so we tread gently when criticizing or holding some people accountable. Fear of addressing someone from a particular group or minority, especially if they are doing that work of representation.

call out: people are excluded through discrimination and get excluded when they speak up about it - that's unfair, we shouldn't have to fear losing our social networks and safer spaces because we point out injustices -> learning you are harming others feels uncomfortable but it's a necessary and healthy process, which needs to be cherished, we should learn to love to fail our positive self image when it's about learning to be kinder to other people

Information and language activism: maybe we can collect online archives with info on trans topics to share with each other?
<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/special/index>
<https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/>
<https://archive.qzap.org/>
Home - Transgender SG
<https://interactadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Law-Trans-and-Intersex-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Ash L (they/he) to Everyone 5:36 PM
3:35pm in UK!
Cianán Russell to Everyone 5:36 PM
16:35 for me
Justice Valentine to Everyone 5:36 PM
about 10 AM in eastern USA
Ash L (they/he) to Everyone 5:36 PM
if we can continue, I would love to stay as well for a bit and join the discussion, sounds like what was discussed so far was amazing
Lars Schleifer to Everyone 5:36 PM
16:36 here
Ash L (they/he) to Everyone 5:37 PM
but probably not too long for the Qorras organisers' sake :P thanks so much for organising, what an incredible session!
monica b (they/she/he) to Everyone 5:37 PM
We can stay til 6, so another 25 minutes?
And we will keep the Miro boards open until Monday if anyone would like to pick up on something

Ash L (they/he) to Everyone 5:42 PM
like misrepresenting your realities? and a single representation becoming generalised to apply to everyone in that community or with those identities/traits

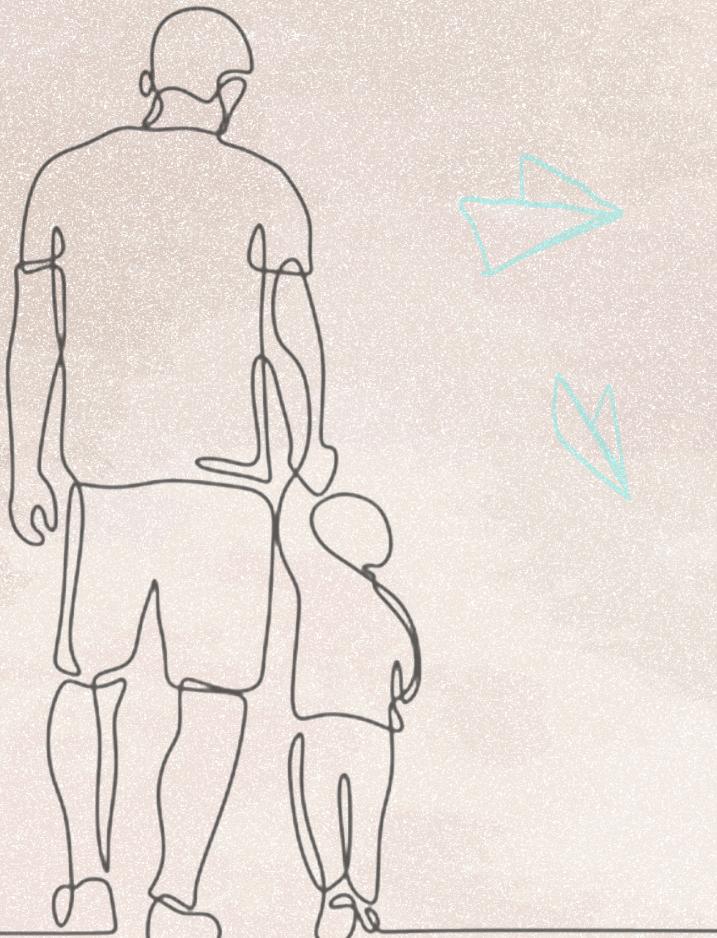
Cianán Russell to Everyone 5:58 PM
yeah indeed, there is also the danger of creating an "all wrongs are created equal" paradigm as well, when trying to engage errors/mistakes/outright wrongs committed by celebrities.
Justice Valentine to Everyone 6:00 PM
so so true

Ash L (they/he) to Everyone 5:42 PM
like misrepresenting your realities? and a single representation becoming generalised to apply to everyone in that community or with those identities/traits
Ash L (they/he) to Everyone 5:50 PM
especially up and coming actors etc compared to established celebrities it can have massive repercussions on career opportunities and their livelihoods. how do we ensure these things get talked about and get exposure and meaningful discussion, while mitigating harm and risk to those being the "faces" of these issues?
Ash L (they/he) to Everyone 5:53 PM
that makes me think about putting people on a pedestal because of so-called radical identities e.g. being a trans person of colour. sometimes trying to hold a celebrity with marginalised identities accountable to something can result in soooo many ppl defending them due to their marginalised identities, even if our attempt to hold them accountable had nothing to do w their identities and didn't even mention their identities. putting people on pedestals is very dangerous!
Me to Ash L (they/he) (Direct Message) 5:54 PM
↓ 1 New Message

<3
Ash L (they/he) to Everyone 6:03 PM
amazing discussion, thank you so so much to the Monica, Wissam, and Zakaria for organising, and to everyone else. really enjoyed connecting

To: Everyone File ...

A Letter to Your Younger Self



Dear at age 5, you will play in the streets and hurt yourself few times, it is okay you won't feel them as you grow old you and will be thankful for each fall.

Dear at age 10, I'm sorry we didn't know better the importance of our bodies, we didn't know and it is okay. Bad news though you will not be able to process until you are ready. I promise you will have the right people next to you, and oh! You are a guy.

Dear at age 13, you are a guy and you are masturbating wrong but keep at it, one day you will get there.

Dear at age 15, you might actually be bi, but you won't really figure it out, and, oh! You are a guy.

Dear at age 18, I'm not sure if the way we dressed protected us or not, but bravo for not falling into a marriage, you have no idea how great full I'm. And you are a guy

Dear at age 20, what you will do in the next 10 years will define who you are. And few things to keep in mind

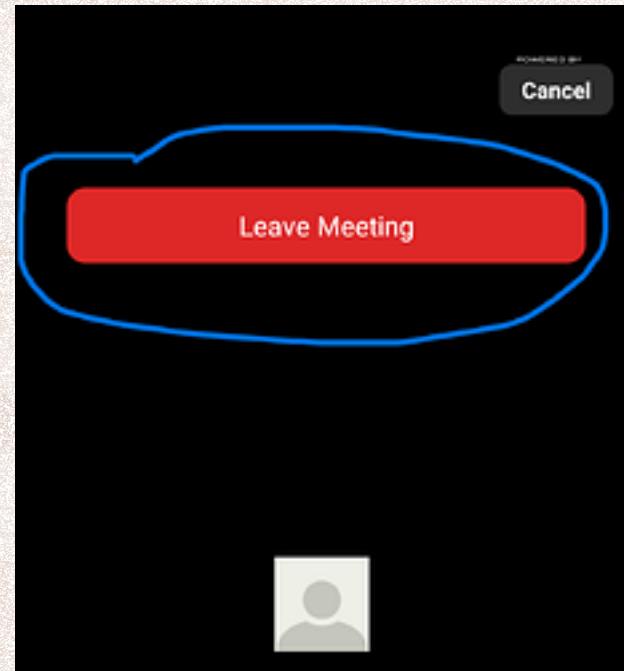
There is something called a career, you will have but I'm not sure where you will be later, but now you know what it is?

People are the best economy, invest invest invest, and you actually did. Thank you for that, I wonder if you knew deep down that love and care go a long way.

You will recognise yourself and manhood eventually.

I don't want to say don't worry, but I will say that you will meet a guy for 5 seconds and he will tell you "it's okay that someone cut you in like and you need to stay calm" not sure why? But you actually listen to him. I'm not saying you will be calm at 34, but you will be someone that listen to themselves and their bodies and you will have enough love and support to continue.

I wonder if you should listen to all of this. If anything just take care of your body you will need it.



Design by Ward Zaraa in collaboration with Qorras.
September 2021