

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF  
SUPPORT, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY



FEBRUARY 2022

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**10TH ANNIVERSARY  
COMMEMORATIVE PUBLICATION**

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF  
**SUPPORT, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY**



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# OUR STORY

The Silver Lining Foundation (SLF) is a youth-led and youth-focused non-profit organisation (NPO) acting to serve the interests of the youths of Trinidad & Tobago and the wider Caribbean. SLF began in February of 2012 as a response to the tragic death by suicide of 16-year-old **George Kazanjian**, a high school student who found it impossible to deal with the difficulties arising from his sexuality in September of 2011.

Officially registered as a non-profit organisation with the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago on October 10th, 2013, SLF concurrently set out to deal with issues of youth sexuality, suicide and bullying prevention within the framework of sexual diversity.

SLF is guided by a three-pronged framework of support, education and advocacy:

- Through the pillar of **support**, we aim to provide young persons in need, with a friend or in more serious cases, a professional, along with the means of support that they may not have.
- Through the pillar of **education**, we move to dispel the host of myths and misconceptions that surround LGBTQ persons.
- Through the pillar of **advocacy**, we hope to contribute to the development of national policies that will protect kids from bullying and discrimination.

We believe that by acting on these three avenues, we can fully empower and encourage the youth of our nation towards a better and brighter future and hopefully, ensure them a significantly better life.

## OUR MISSION

“To mobilize youth to create and facilitate a support network for their peers who experience adversity on account of their sexual orientation, perceived or otherwise”

## OUR VISION

To create an environment conducive to respect and self acceptance, and to provide a support system for marginalized youth regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, leading to a sustainable and functional life.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**EARL A.J. EDMUND**  
*Director - Communications*



**DR. KRYSTAL GHISYAWAN**  
*Director - Research & Development*



**DR. KATIJA KHAN**  
*Director - Clinical & Social Outreach*



**JEREMY STEFFAN EDWARDS**  
*Executive Director*



**RIAN MERRICK**  
*Advisory Board Member*



**SHOBHANNA RAMSUNDAR**  
*Director - Legal Affairs*



**RENELLE WHITE**  
*Director - Gender Affairs*

## STATEMENT OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITY

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The Board provides collective leadership for the Silver Lining Foundation (SLF). They represent the interest of the organization and help it to stay focused on its mission. Their main task is to govern and oversee the operations of the organization by acting as fiduciaries.



## 10TH ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE

A “silver lining” is a sign of hope in the face of adversity. Ten years ago, SLF was that sign of hope, a figment of the imagination of a group of young people, motivated to create a better society for LGBTQIA+ young people following the tragic death by suicide of a 16-year-old secondary school student who found it impossible to deal with the difficulties arising from his sexuality. A decade later, SLF has gone from an idea to a fully realised, functional, highly recognised youth organisation whose mission remains focused on the protection and nurturing of young LGBTQI people, creating safe environments where they feel seen, valued and loved.

Our work began by building a support group for LGBTQIA+ students across the various campuses of our nation's universities and colleges through our Safe Space programme while simultaneously developing a toolkit for

parents who are facing their child opening up and coming out to them.

Utilising our three-pronged approach of support, education and advocacy, we continue to encourage people to participate in community efforts, showing others the real lived experiences and everyday life of LGBTQIA+ people, while also advocating for fair and equal treatment.

**“A decade later, SLF has gone from an idea to a fully realised, highly recognised youth organisation.”**

We continue to envision a society free from harm and discrimination, conducive to respect and self-acceptance regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, where our nation's youth not only feel safe but empowered.

Reflecting on our growth, it feels as if the decade has flown by.

With the support of our leadership team, our colleagues from other LGBTQIA+ and feminist organisations, our project partners and stakeholders, SLF has attained some great achievements through sheer hard work and collaboration.

“Our work began as a support group for LGBTQIA+ students across our nation's universities and colleges.

Through these projects and partnerships, our work has evolved into a truly intersectional model of change, taking a look at bullying from a holistic perspective – from the engagement of school administrations and student support services to the family to peers, in the hopes that these initiatives will add to the discourse around bullying, gender-based violence (GBV), comprehensive sex education (CSE) and queerphobia.

As we look toward the next decade ahead, know that none of our achievements would

have been made possible without any of you. You have believed in and supported our work for 10 years and that support does not go unnoticed. We remain incredibly appreciative, humbled and grateful for your support and we thank you, our Silver Linings - our signs of hope, for sticking with us for the past decade.



No amount of research, support or education initiative will make a difference if LGBTQIA+ persons aren't included in the conversation towards betterment. Every project, every programme and every initiative that we have undertaken has been designed and made visible with each one of you in mind.

Our resolve remains strong, undisturbed and laser-focused. We continue to work towards building a society where every LGBTQ+ person feels safe, protected and accepted in every aspect of their life.

Ten years is an incredible milestone and we hope that you will continue championing the cause with us in the next decade as we work to create safer classrooms, build stronger families and empower our nation's youth.

**Jeremy Steffan Edwards**  
Founder/Executive Director

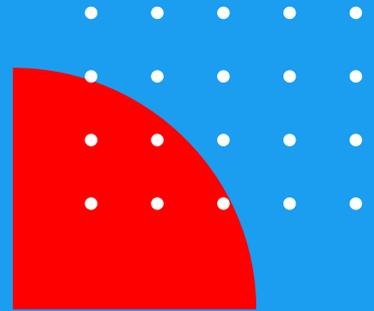




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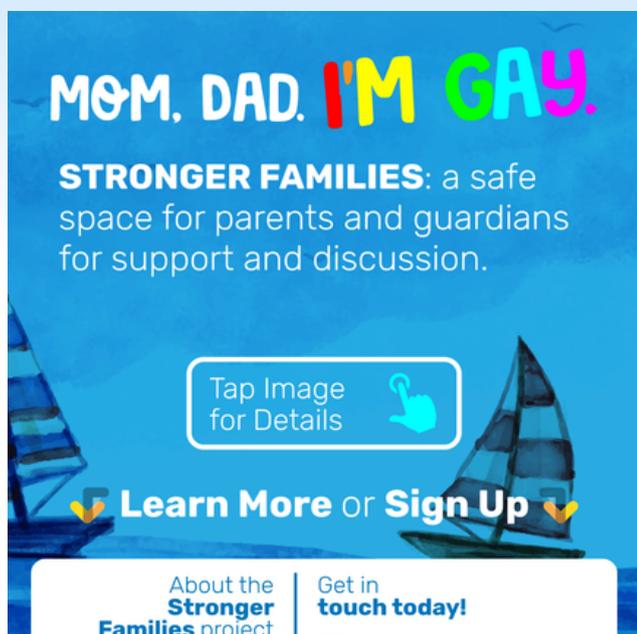
# Support



Programmes and initiatives that seek to provide persons in need, with a friend or in more serious cases, a professional, along with the means of support that they may not have.

## Safe Space

Conducted in conjunction with the **Counselling & Psychological Services (CAPS)** at the UWI St Augustine Campus, this initiative utilised trained facilitators who are knowledgeable about the difficulties LGBTQ+ youths were facing, providing support from both a therapeutic and social standpoint. It was one of the first programs of its kind hosted at the University, providing vital support and counselling to help LGBTQ+ students accept and embrace their sexuality and gender identity. Six cycles were implemented from **2014 to 2017** under the direction of SLF co-Director, **Rian Merrick** and CAPS clinical Psychologist, **Dr Sarah Chin Yuen Kee**.



## Stronger Families: Psychosocial Support Groups

In **May 2017** to commemorate the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), we launched the **Stronger Families: A Safe Space for Parents** initiative, a psychosocial peer support programme for **parents and guardians** of LGBTQIA-identified persons, designed to offer support from a therapeutic and networking viewpoint that enables group members to discuss issues related to gender, sexuality and identity. Guided by **Dr Katija Khan**, parents and guardians were equipped with various tools and resources to help navigate the challenges of caring for their queer or questioning children.

As an initiative under the **Sexual Culture of Justice** Project, the scope of delivery for Cycles 2 and 3 in **2019** and **2020** respectively was combined into an intervention model that offered **individual therapy** to LGBTQIA individuals.

## "Finding Pride in Mental Health" Live Stream

Broadcasted in **2020**, this live and interactive webcast explored the effects of one's mental health, the lived LGBTQI experience and how we are building stronger relationships between LGBTQI persons and their families.

Moderated by **Scott Marchack** (Clinical Outreach Volunteer) and featuring panellists **Dr Katija Khan** (Clinical Psychologist), **Rian Merrick** (MSc. Clinical Mental Health Counselor) **Kelly Mc Farlane** (Clinical Psychologist, Organisational Psychologist),



## "Let's Get Better Together" Live Stream

Many members of our community are experiencing increased hardships with regards to their physical and mental health, economic livelihoods and personal safety as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Streamed via Instagram Live in **2021**, 'Building Stronger Families: Let's Get Better Together!' was an opportunity to connect and discuss ways we can best support ourselves and each other.

Moderated by **Lily Kwok** (Social Media Coordinator, SLF) and featuring panellists **Jhanah Haynes-Mark** (Central Psychology Services), **Renelle White** (Director, Gender Affairs) and **Khaleem Ali** (Research & Policy Officer, SLF).

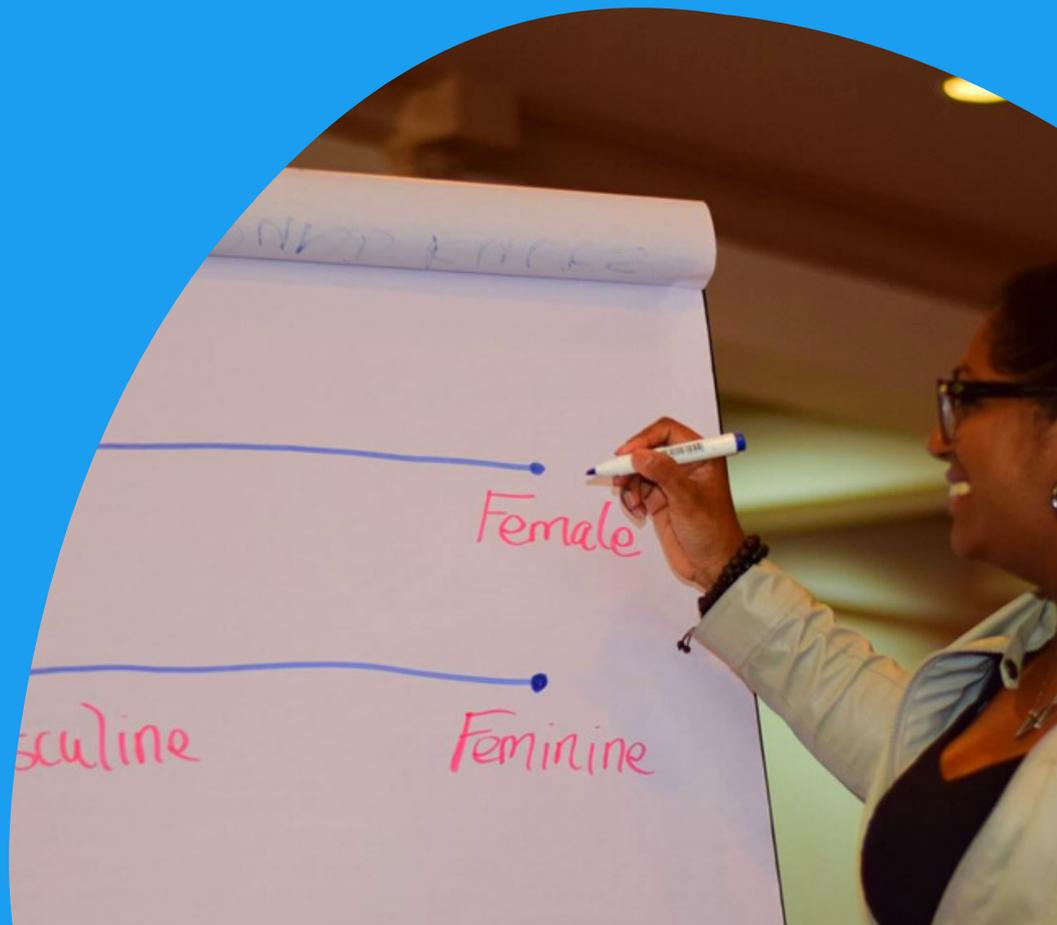
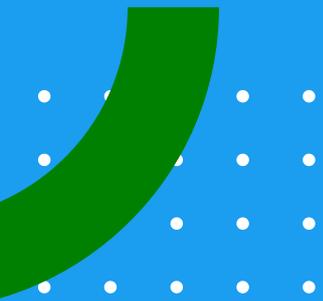
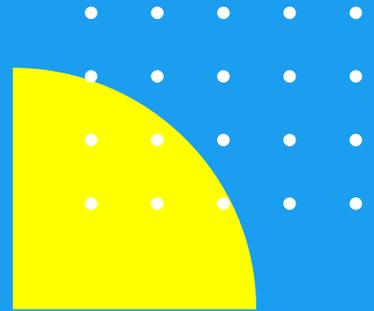




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# Educate



Programmes and initiatives to dispel the host of myths and misconceptions that surround LGBTQI+ persons.

# 2016 National School Climate Survey

In 2016, SLF, with the approval of the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with the **UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network Trinidad & Tobago (ASPnet)**, conducted a baseline survey with **651 students** across **20 secondary schools** to assess the prevalence of school violence and bullying, with particular attention to homophobic bullying.

Published in **2018**, the survey is the first of its kind in the region that provided concrete baseline data to tackle the realities of bullying with respect to how it is experienced, observed, reported, and addressed in the school context.



The findings reported in this survey demonstrate that many students engage in bullying while also being the victims or recipients of acts of bullying.

— **Dr Krystal Ghisyawan**  
Lead Researcher, *Bullying & Gender-based Violence In Secondary Schools*

The report provided key insight into:

Forms of Bullying

Acts of Violence

Intervention Strategies

Family Support

The full report is available for download on our website



# 2019 National School Climate Survey



Download your **FREE** copy  
[silverliningtt.com](http://silverliningtt.com)

The full report is available for download on our website

Logos: European Union, Human Rights Project, UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), The Silver Lining Foundation

In 2021, SLF published the **second** in a series of school climate studies to assess the realities of bullying concerning how it is experienced, observed, reported, and addressed in the school context. The study was done, once again, in collaboration with the **UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network Trinidad & Tobago (ASPnet)** as an initiative under the **Sexual Culture of Justice Project**.

Key findings from the 2019 report showed that homophobia was associated with significant perpetration of bullying.

Based on the 2019 findings, several recommendations were made including:

School Climate Reformation

Incorporating Social & Emotional Learning and Social Justice Learning into the school curriculum

Creating Stronger Support Systems

Fostering Personal Development

2,284

students surveyed

39

Secondary schools

Administrators, teachers and students have unique needs that can be addressed through a school-wide approach to social and emotional learning that extends into family and community involvement.

Dr Krystal Ghisyawan  
Lead Researcher, *Bullying & Gender-based Violence In Secondary Schools*

# Safer Schools: Teacher Training Workshop

Data from our 2016 National School Climate Study on Bullying and Gender-Based Violence in Secondary Schools survey was used to develop a series of training workshops for educators. These workshops were conceptualised to equip teachers and educators with the tools to deal with the prevalent issues that were revealed through the survey, thereby equipping them with the resources to mitigate, manage and create safe, diverse classrooms.

## The Safer School: Managing Diverse Classrooms – Teacher Training Workshop

featured a locally-relevant curriculum, designed to target specific incidents occurring in schools across Trinidad and Tobago, and was piloted in partnership with teachers and guidance counsellors drawn from schools involved in the initial 2016 School Climate Survey conducted by SLF.

**Four (4)** cycles were conducted: **two (2)** in **2018** (as an initiative under the **Sexual Culture of Justice Project**) and **two (2)** in **2019** (with support from the **British High Commission**). By the completion of the programme, over **forty (40) teachers** and **Guidance Counsellors** were exposed to gender sensitivity tools and training to effectively deal with issues related to sex, sexuality, and gender identity occurring in their classrooms.

The training was divided into five (5) modules that included:

- ✔ understanding different identities
- ✔ bullying rates and statistics
- ✔ inclusivity and empowerment in education initiatives
- ✔ building safer classrooms
- ✔ disciplining through enrichment



## Parenting Resource Manual

No matter what their age, many people are afraid their parents will reject them if they come out. Published in **2014**, our parenting resources collection provides general and specific guidelines for parents with LGBTQI+ children.

The guide is available for download on our website.

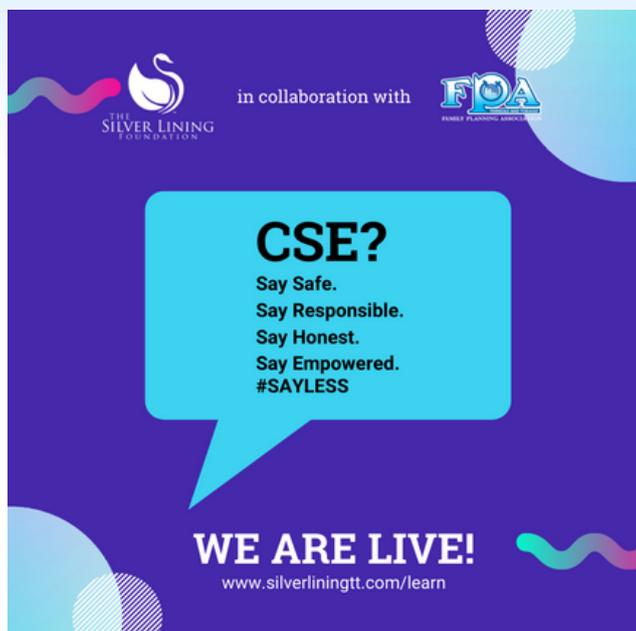


## Comprehensive Sex Education Resources

LGBTQI+ people are not getting the type of sex education that they need and deserve.

Launched in **2021** in collaboration with the **Family Planning Association of Trinidad & Tobago (FPATT)**, this project aims to provide accessible and digitised Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) resources in engaging and informative ways, in the hopes to foster various social support systems.

The PSA videos are available for viewing on our YouTube channel and the resource hub is available on our website.





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# Advocate



Programmes and initiatives that seek to contribute to the development of national policies that will protect kids from bullying and discrimination.

## "All Different, All Equal" School Competition



The competition was aimed at encouraging and working with secondary schools to develop anti-bullying policies to support students, creating greater awareness about bullying behaviours in efforts to eliminate bullying and harassment, while providing a safe learning environment for all.

With support from the **British High Commission**, two (2) cycles were successfully completed in **2019 & 2020**. Delivery in 2020 switched to individual winners.

**2019 Winning School:**  
Williamsville Secondary School

**2020 Winners:**

- 1st Place – *Nia Edwards*
- 2nd Place – *Elisha Jones*
- 3rd Place – *Jada Davidson*



“We intended to firstly help young people understand the importance of making everyone feel valued and included in schools, able to be themselves without fear of bullying.”

**Jeremy Steffan Edwards** —  
Founder & Executive Director at the "All Different, All Equal" 2019 Prize Giving Ceremony



## Generation Change

Internationally sponsored by the **Kaleidoscope Trust** and supported by the **British High Commission, SLF**, in collaboration with other Caribbean-based LGBTQ organizations, launched **Generation Change in 2014**, a movement to assemble young people to call on their regional leaders to consign to their promises of **equality** and **inclusion** of LGBTQI+ people.



Representatives from **Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica** and **Trinidad & Tobago** presented their respective country reports encased with the issues faced by LGBTQI+ citizens, calling upon all leaders of their respective countries to display real leadership on this issue. This call to action and signing of the Declaration of Intent challenged the legislative inequality, immigration laws and unconstitutional acts that defined the quality of lives for LGBTQ+ citizens.

The event was the first major regional forum that featured SLF as a main partner and voice for LGBT+ youths. At the launch, SLF Executive Director, Jeremy Steffan Edwards spoke about the long wait for change to happen in T&T. “We have heard fine words from some of our prime ministers and people with the power to make change happen but so far we see nothing being done,” said Edwards.



*Director of Research & Development, Dr Krystal Ghisyawan, giving the opening remarks at Generation Change.*

“The younger generation of LGBT people are not prepared to wait forever to be treated equally. We are not asking for any special rights, just the same rights as every other Caribbean citizen. It’s our future and it’s time for those who can make change happen to do so.”

**Jeremy Steffan Edwards** —  
Founder & Executive Director at the launch of Generation Change (2014)

## Eager for Easter

In 2017, SLF partnered with local LGBT NGO, **Friends For Life TT** on the “Redefining The Politics of Gender” (RPG) Project which was sponsored by the **European Union (EU)** through the Spanish based independent non-profit organization **Interarts**.

Led by SLF’s Chief Administrative Officer, Kennedy Everett Maraj and Gender Affairs Director, Renelle White, the project sought to initiate a series of public education awareness campaigns to increase visibility and enact social and cultural change on issues affecting the LGBTQIA+ community of Trinidad and Tobago, including gay conversion therapy, building stronger families and ending gender-based violence (GBV). SLF’s visibility campaign for this project, **#EagerForEaster**, aimed at integrating the identities of LGBTQIA+ people within a religious and cultural context and background.



Misconceptions that LGBTI people are exclusionary, radical, separate, and within the shadows of society further perpetuates intolerance, homophobia and discrimination of LGBTQIA+ people in Trinidad and Tobago. This visibility campaign sought to counteract this belief by targeting the Christian holiday of Easter to bridge existing divides caused by the religious identity and sexual/gender identity of LGBTI persons. Engaging both issues sought to claim citizenship, space and publicly display that LGBTI is not, nor will they allow a separation between themselves, their religion, their community and their Caribbean identity to divide them.





## #ConvertHurt: Ending Conversion Therapy



The **#ConvertHurt** campaign was conceptualized to increase public awareness of the harmful practice of conversion therapy, also known as reparative therapy. The campaign sought to debunk myths and misconceptions around gender and sexuality and promote agency and acceptance of an individual's sexual orientation as inherent to their personal identity and not a product or impact of external social or cultural factors.

SLF launched the campaign in **July 2019** with the film screening of the 2018 Hollywood film **Boy Erased** and the premiere of the local biographical documentary of Jessica Joseph. The documentary was produced by SLF and was funded by our partners at **Interarts Foundation, Decides TT** and the **European Union**. The documentary details Jessica's experience with this unique form of persecution having been ex-communicated from her family due to the conflict that arise from her sexual orientation and the family's religious faith.



## A Sexual Culture of Justice

The **Sexual Culture of Justice: Strengthening LGBTQI & GBV Partnerships, Capacity & Efficacy to Promote & Protect Rights in Trinidad & Tobago** project created a new community-university collaboration that provided support for transformative approaches to intimate partner violence, homophobia, bullying and policing, while building partnerships and organisational capacity.



The formal partners of this project included the six local civil society organisations known for their work in advancing LGBTQI rights and protection, as well as forging strategies to end all forms of gender-based violence. The project which ran from April 2017 to March 2021, helped SLF to carry out three major initiatives: our **Stronger Families** psychosocial peer-support group and individual therapy sessions for parents and guardians of LGBTQ children, **Safer Schools: Mitigating Classroom Violence** Teacher Training Workshops and the **2019 Bullying and Gender-Based Violence in Secondary Schools National School Climate Survey**.

Each project featured a component that helped to influence and initiate a “Sexual Culture of Justice” in Trinidad and Tobago through changes in societal thinking. Information on these projects will be presented in greater detail in this publication.

“

**I must be more considerate of the words I use to not offend LGBT people unwittingly.**

**Participant** —  
Stronger Families

“

**I agree that teachers have a role in inclusivity in the classroom. Some strategies were new and well received.**

**Participant** —  
Safer Schools



## LGBT Policy Agenda



Through its partnership with **The Alliance for Justice and Diversity (AJD)**, SLF supplied vital research, resources and input in the creation of the **LGBTI Policy Agenda 2.0** for the **2020 General Election** campaign.

This document serves as a blueprint for the policy concerns of LGBTI citizens that is meant to uphold and secure their basic human rights as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

The 2020 LGBTI Policy Agenda 2.0 includes critical areas of concern that resonate with the previous agendas, reflects updates and more

specific calls to action from the Government to address issues directly impacting LGBTQI people:



The Policy Agenda sought to provoke election-season and post-election conversation on feasible action points for the state with respect to LGBTQI issues. The policy agenda action points also guided the work of AJD member organisations' strategic plans for activism and community organising. For the period 2020-2025, the 13 concrete action steps outlined in this document will help to focus the national policy conversation on human rights concerns, especially related to sex and gender diversity. The document is vital to the recognition of the human rights of LGBTQI citizens and will require widespread public support.



## IDAHOBIT

in **2017**, SLF partnered with the **British High Commission** to create an aerial photoshoot around a massive Pride flag to show solidarity with members of the local LGBTQ+ community at Jackson Square, St Clair in commemoration of the **International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)**. A release from the British High Commission called for discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity to be addressed and to promote further diversity and tolerance in Trinidad and Tobago.



In **2014**, SLF was invited to speak at a historic meeting coordinated by local foreign missions from the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, and Canada to commemorate the local IDAHOBIT proceedings. At the event, SLF’s Executive Director, Jeremy Steffan Edwards reminded LGBTQI+ citizens to maintain hope that change will come, saying “progress will come so long as we keep asking ourselves how would it feel were it a crime to love the persons we love and how would it feel to be discriminated against for something that you cannot change.”



**It is useful to remember that the safest and most prosperous societies are those in which all citizens can live freely without fear of violence or discrimination, and where all citizens, including LGBTQ+ people, can play a full and active part in society.**

**His Excellency Tim Stew MBE** —  
Former British High Commissioner to  
The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
(2017)

## GrenCHAP's "Regional Togetherness" Live Stream



Hosted by **GrenCHAP**, this live stream was an insightful and important virtual discussion on mobilising our collective efforts to achieve the rights we deserve across the Caribbean. SLF was represented by **Communications Director, Earl AJ Edmund**.

## The Institute of Caribbean Studies' "Shaping the New Normal" Live Stream

Hosted by the **Institute of Caribbean Studies**, this insightful and important discussion on contemporary youth issues took place in observation of International Youth Day. SLF was represented on the youth mental health panel by **Clinical & Social Outreach Director, Dr Katija Khan** and **Gender Affairs Director, Renelle White**.



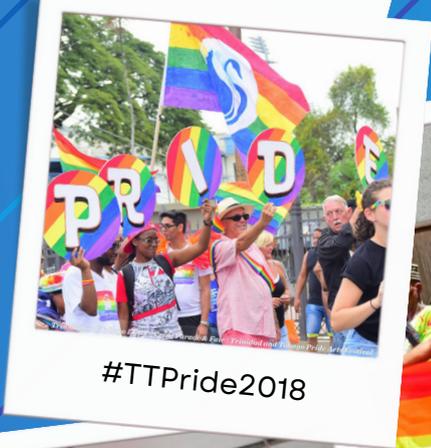
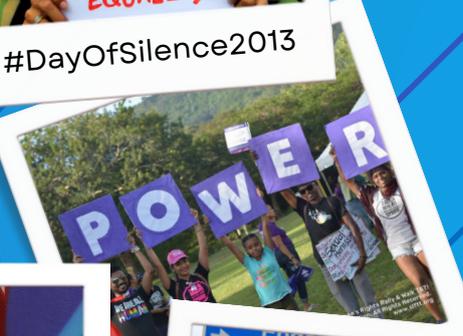


# Visibility Projects



All fundraising and flagship visibility events provide much-needed visibility to show that LGBTQI+ people are regular, everyday people who want to enjoy all the freedoms and niceties that life has to offer without fear of harm, violence, injustice or discrimination.

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF  
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## FINDING A SAFE SPACE



On **May 4 2014**, World Anti-Bullying Day, SLF officially premiered our short film “**A Safe Space**” at the Medulla Art Gallery/ Members of the U.S. Diplomatic Corp and the former Minister of Public Administration, Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan were in attendance.

Through funding received from the U.S. Embassy, SLF produced the film to chronicle the formation of the Silver Lining Foundation in response to the 2011 tragic suicide of George Kazanjian, a gay teenager. In the 13-minute short film, George’s story is told through the perspective of his mother, Katherine Kazanjian and juxtaposed with the experiences of SLF’s Executive Director, Jeremy Steffan Edward who shared his own battles with suicide, assault and depression which ultimately led to the creation of the foundation and the Safe Space initiative for at-risk LGBT youths seeking counselling and mental health support.

**A Safe Space** was among the official selection for the **2015 Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival** where it was screened twice to two sold-out audiences at Movie Towne, Port of Spain.



*SLF Members with Mrs Carolyn Seepesad-Bachan and Ms Katherine Kazanjian*

### Film Information

Director: Renaldo Matadeen

2015, Trinidad and Tobago

Language: English

Documentary short/13 minutes

## Day of Silence

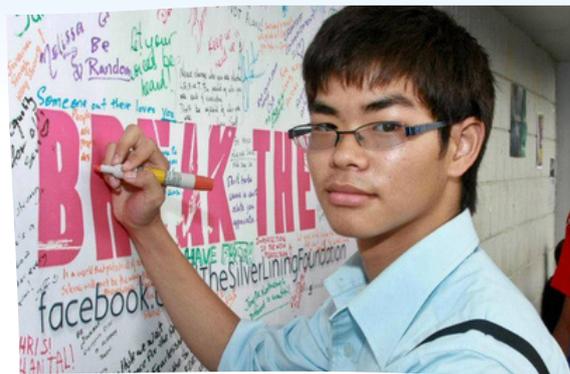


The Day of Silence event took place on the **UWI St. Augustine campus** as a launching pad for flagship events by The Silver Lining Foundation in **2012**. The event was billed as a student-led silent protest against the bullying, harassment and discrimination faced by members of the (LGBTQI community). It became one of the first student-led public demonstrations on the issue of LGBT discrimination at the University.

During the first year's event, participants wore red pieces of tape across their mouths, heads, and hearts to take the vow of silence against

the harmful and silencing effects of bullying and discrimination. Passersby were encouraged to sign the banner to break the silence, writing messages of hope and support.

Later that evening, students removed the tape to share their experiences during the protest and to bring attention to ways in which both schools, administrators and communities can lift the veil of silence on these issues and make our nation's schools safer and more inclusive for students.



## #PowerToBeTT: Queer J'ouvert

J'ouvert is historically known as a space for marginal voices to be heard, for dismantling power structures and oppressive ideas, and for nationalism. It was against this backdrop in **2018**, that the SLF team used their physical bodies to increased visibility around LGBTI discrimination and Gender-Based Violence by painting their faces and wearing clothing that was emblazoned with the insignia of the Pride colours while hoisting a Pride Flag intersected with the national colours of T&T.

Targeting this J'ouvert space for representation and visibility, SLF created the #PowerToBeTT campaign which sought to:



- ✓ **Link national identity and citizenship to LGBTI identity, calling for LGBTI persons' rights to be recognised as national citizen rights.**
- ✓ **Increase the visibility of LGBTI persons in the Carnival space, as a national space that is very public.**
- ✓ **Integrate LGBTI and women's rights/feminist activism within cultural spaces**
- ✓ **Break down barriers and divisions that invisibilize and fuel discrimination of LGBTI persons within society.**
- ✓ **Empower the LGBTI community and women by maintaining visibility and standing in solidarity.**



As a visibility event formed part of the **Redefining the Politics of Gender project**, this display bravely highlighted the rich diversity and inclusion that is inherent to Carnival. The J'ouvert event was all about standing up and standing out, claiming the power of a national space that equally belongs to LGBTQI persons just as it does to everyone else, while also seeking to empower women who are disempowered through experiences of GBV.

## Anti-bullying Walkathon



*SLF Members Vanita Benimadho, Kennedy Maraj and Poonam Singh attending the Las Lomas Government Anti-bullying Campaign*

This walkathon was hosted by the **Las Lomas Government Primary School** in 2016 geared towards raising awareness about the causes and effects of bullying and how it can be combated with a community effort.

The event was organized and spearheaded by the school's social worker, Christabel Paul, and her colleague, Rondell Bissoon. It was the culmination of a week-long anti-bullying campaign conducted by Ms Paul. Some talented youths displayed their skills through art in a competition held during the campaign.

According to the principal, Mr Krishna Soogrim Singh, Ms Paul was instrumental in reducing instances of bullying.

## Model UN 2017

In 2017, Executive Director of The Silver Lining Foundation, Jeremy Steffan Edwards was invited to be the guest speaker at the Gala Dinner hosted by the leadership of the Model United Nations and the Rotary Club of Central Port of Spain.

The theme of the 20th instalment of the MUN was **"Preventing discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation and gender identity."**



*Executive Director & Founder, Jeremy Edwards, with Model UN Coordinator, Lara Quentrall-Thomas*

The gala was held at the Hilton Trinidad Hotel and was attended by 120 students from Trinidad, Tobago, Suriname, St Lucia, Guyana and Barbados.



# ANNUAL KARAOKE LIVE

SLF's Karaoke fundraiser has become an annual event to advance the cause of building safe spaces which welcomes inclusion, tolerance, and diversity among all members of society. What began as a night to advance the community has grown in widespread appeal and has been transformed into a night of full-fledged solidarity and a beacon of hope for the local LGBTQ+ community and its many straight allies.

Coordinated annually by SLF Directors Rian Merrick and Earl AJ Edmund under targeted themes to create community support and belonging for LGBTQ+ youths, a night like this allows everyone the freedom to be themselves in a space where there is safety in numbers and where they can openly express their love in an unapologetic manner.

We would extend our greatest appreciation and gratitude to the management and staff of our venue partner, Studio Rumours, for their unwavering and loyal support throughout the years to host the annual Karaoke event. Studio was a second home to so many of us in the LGBTQI+ community and we owe a debt of gratitude to Andre Thomas and David Cogdell for their commitment and support to the work of SLF.





## Film Premieres & Screenings



### Moonlight

In 2017, SLF partnered with the local group **BelongTT** in commemoration of the 2017 IDAHOBIT theme “Love is a Family” to officially launch the Stronger Families project. At the launch, SLF screened the 2016 Best Picture Oscar-winning film: Moonlight which is based on Tarell Alvin McCraney's unpublished semi-autobiographical play “In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue”.

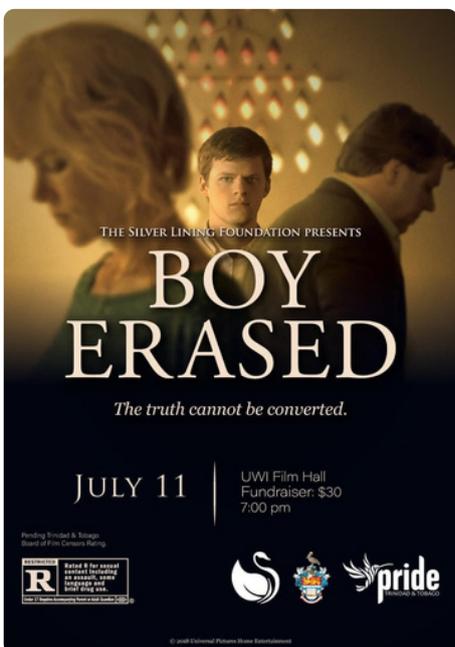
### Love, Simon

In 2018, SLF obtained the screening rights to officially premiere “Love, Simon”, a 2018 American romantic comedy-drama film based on the novel “Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda” by Becky Albertalli, in Trinidad and Tobago. The film centres on a closeted gay high school boy who struggles to balance his friends, his family, and the blackmailer threatening to “out” him to the entire school, while simultaneously attempting to discover the identity of the anonymous classmate with whom he has fallen in love online.



### Boy Erased

In 2019, SLF obtained the screening rights to officially premiere Boy Erased, a 2018 biographical drama film based on Garrard Conley's 2016 memoir of the same name. This premiere was accompanied by the premiere of the SLF produced local biographical documentary of Jessica Joseph, detailing her experiences with having been ex-communicated from her family due to the conflict that arise from her sexual orientation and the family’s religious faith.



# In Memoriam

For George



**George Kazanjian**

April 19th, 1995 - September 13th, 2011

SIDE BY SIDE



THE  
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FOUNDATION

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