

QUEER REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKERS MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP REPORT

Abstract

A lot of stories have emerged from Kenya regarding the persecution of LGBTIQ refugees. For some obvious incidents, the world has witnessed some of these acts of persecution for example the story of a 22-year-old Chriton 'Trinidad' Atuhwera a Ugandan LGBTIQ asylum seeker who was attacked by homophobic people in Kakuma camp, beaten, burnt, and died in Kenyatta National Hospital.

However, despite all the challenges these queer asylum seekers and refugees face, there has been a question of how these asylum seekers going through all these challenges handle their mental health state of mind.

On April 15th, 2020, Anest Mweru a Ugandan queer asylum seeker in Kenya was reported to have committed suicide in-front of the UNHCR offices in Kenya.

This incident among others clearly shows the mental health struggle that the queer people face while in the asylum process.

The queer refugee mental health workshop was a two-day workshop that aimed at giving an opportunity to different LGBTQI+ refugees to share their stories and challenges, learn about mental health, gather solutions together, identify challenges that lead to mental health, what to do in certain mental health situation and perhaps create a long-term solution to assist queer refugees in Kenya navigate mental health challenges. The participants of the workshop where refugees from around Africa living in Kenya. With an interactive engagement, and learning sessions, the mental health workshop identified gaps in the Kenyan refugee and asylum system and polices towards the mental health of LGBTIQ refugees and asylum seekers.