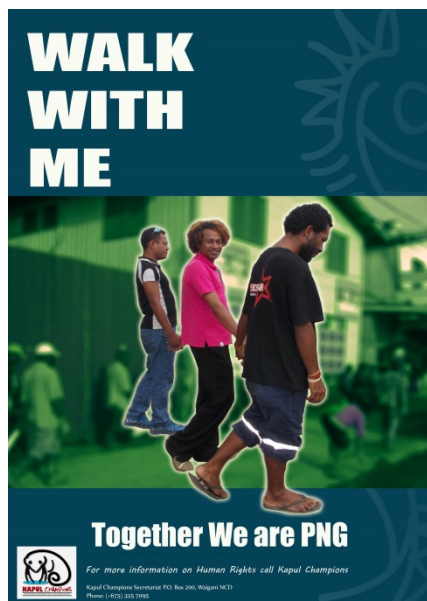




11 June 2014

Kapul Champions launches **‘Walk With Me – Together We Are PNG’** Campaign to promote acceptance of Men of Diverse Sexualities and Transgender People in PNG



The world's largest LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex) solidarity moment took place on Saturday, May 17 2014 – the 10th annual International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT). The Day Against Homophobia Organisation have reported that actions took place in over 120 countries, with hundreds of millions of people reached by online and offline information.

In Papua New Guinea, men of diverse sexualities are currently criminalised, as well as being stigmatized due to cultural and religious beliefs and societal norms. The national network for men of diverse sexualities (including men who identify as gay and other men who have sex with men) and transgender people, Kapul Champions, is working to change this - advocating for law reform, supporting community mobilization and promoting increased access to health and

HIV services, with funding from the Australian aid program, and technical support from the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO).

Manu Peni, President of Kapul Champions commented, 'Kapul Champions is proud to be representing Papua New Guinea in the global IDAHOT conversation promoting human rights, social inclusion and the freedom from discrimination and stigma, as well as raising awareness about repression and violence toward men of diverse sexualities and transgender people.'

Kapul Champions contribution was to launch a campaign titled 'Walk With Me – Together We Are PNG' in the weeks leading up to IDAHOT to promote acceptance and celebration of the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity in PNG.

As Nick Morea-Evera, Senior Program Officer from Kapul Champions explains, 'The campaign centers around the Walk With Me poster, featuring one of the Kapul Champions Board members happily walking hand in hand with other fellow Papua New Guineans to illustrate the message that all PNG citizens deserve a place in PNG society and community.'

For information on #WalkWithMePNG or to join
or support Kapul Champions
contact Nick Morea- Evera : nick_morea@hotmail.com.



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The poster was distributed at community meeting spots, sports clubs, police stations, non-government organisations' and government agencies' offices, clinics and hospitals across PNG, with the invitation to post a photo with the poster to the #WalkWithMePNG Facebook site along with a personal message to support the campaign.

The result was that by May 17, the Facebook site had 130 members, and photos had been posted from high level government officials, community leaders and members, police officers, regular working people who interact with Kapul Champions, UN and development partners staff, and even regional and international supporters. Messages of support included: 'We are walking with you'; 'We don't hate, We Love'; 'I do not discriminate'; and 'A great initiative from Kapul Champions, I support #WalkWithMePNG'.

Chris Connelly, AFAO International Program Manager, commented 'This is the first time Kapul Champions has done a public campaign, as conversations on sexual orientation and gender identity can be challenging in PNG. With the campaign Kapul Champions has found many willing supporters for the principles of 'Walk With Me – Together We Are PNG'.



Left to Right: Margaret Munji from the National AIDS Commission Secretariat (NACs), Michael Kunjil, Deputy Director, Committee from the National Parliament and Guim kagl, Deputy Chair of NACs; Special Parliament Committee on HIV/AIDS in PNG supports the campaign Walk With Me- Together We Are PNG; Air-Conditioning Technicians supporting the Campaign.

Nick Morea-Evera, expressed his sense of achievement in launching the campaign: '2014 is the first year PNG joined the global IDAHOT activities, and it is great for PNG to be among the other 120 countries marking this important day!'.

So come and join the campaign – search and 'like' the page '[Together We Are PNG – Walk With Me PNG](#)' on Facebook, follow us on Twitter [@KapulChampions](#) and add your comments #WalkWithMePNG to support and celebrate diversity in PNG!

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