

Aigerim Kamidola

Legal Advocacy Officer
Feminita

KAZAKHSTAN

As a Legal Advocacy Officer at Feminita, a grassroots queer feminist initiative, Aigerim has been managing Feminita's legal advocacy portfolio since 2017. She directs the organization's advocacy work at national and international (UN, OSCE, EU) levels. Her immediate responsibilities include monitoring and documenting discrimination and hate crimes against women on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity; engaging with national justice, law enforcement and judicial authorities as well as UN treaty bodies, special procedures, and Universal Periodic Review mechanisms (shadow reporting, thematic reporting, national consultations, follow ups, individual communications); drafting road maps for the implementation of UN recommendations; conducting thematic grassroots research; analyzing existing legislation and draft bills (including so-called "anti-gender" and "gay propaganda" bills and "list of banned jobs for women"); and providing legal support on LBQT women's rights, discrimination, freedom of assembly, and association cases.

Aigerim's academic background is in international human rights law. Her prior experience includes strategic litigation, direct support to human rights defenders, and capacity building in Central Asia and the wider post-Soviet region.



Ekanaem Itoro Effong

Programs Officer, Advocacy and Policy Influencing
Education as a Vaccine

NIGERIA



As a Programs Officer in Advocacy and Policy Influencing at Education as a Vaccine, Ekanem has managed and implemented advocacy and high-impact and evidence-based programs around sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV/AIDS preventions, and malaria and TB interventions. He has influenced policies and laws that facilitate and sustain social change in the areas of health, protection, and education geared towards achieving the SDGs. He developed a scorecard to monitor the implementation of the SDGs across 11 states of Nigeria, which young people rely on as evidence for their advocacy. Previously, he worked for the National Agency for the Control of AIDS on the diagnosis and treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis in HIV patients in Nigeria. He was involved in the collection of data on key selected parameters on HIV and TB from selected facilities across the country; the findings showed huge disparities in access to prompt diagnosis of treatment for HIV and TB. Currently, he is the UNAIDS Youth Leader for West and Central Africa and the Global Advocacy working group assistant lead for The PACT, a coalition of youth-led and youth serving organizations working within the sexual and reproductive health and HIV movement.

Ekanem holds a bachelor of science in biochemistry from the University of Calabar (Nigeria). He earned certificates in Leadership and Management in Global Health and Project Management in Global Health from the University of Washington. He attended a short course on Improving the Health of Women, Children, and Adolescents: From Evidence to Action at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Francis Bichnord Komla Asong

Executive Director
Voice of People with Disability Ghana (VOICE Ghana)
GHANA

Francis Bichnord Komla Asong is one of the founding members of Voice of People with Disability Ghana (VOICE Ghana). Over the past 18 years, Francis has contributed to the organization's development into one of Ghana's leading organizations dedicated to persons with disabilities. Serving all regions of Ghana, with a particular focus on the Volta and Oti regions, VOICE Ghana has been forming and training grassroots cross-disability self-help groups and building a collective voice for persons with disabilities for greater representation and participation. The organization has also been advocating for the rights and needs of persons with disabilities and engaging local government officials, traditional authorities, and private enterprises on their statutory responsibilities to persons with disabilities in view of the United Nations - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Ghana's Disability Policy and Legislative Framework. Under Francis's leadership, VOICE Ghana is transforming into a disability research, rights, and advocacy think tank with a mission to advance inclusive development and social justice for persons with disabilities in Africa, particularly Ghana, through research, policy, advocacy, and public consultations.



Francis serves on the boards of several civil society organisations including the STAR Ghana Foundation, Ghana Integrity Initiatives, and AccessAid Ghana. He serves on the Finance Committee of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations.

Francis is currently working on a PhD in Management Studies at LIGS University. He holds an MBA from the Australian Institute of Business. He earned certificates through a number of short courses including Leadership Development, Inclusive Voluntary Services, Human Rights-Based Approach to Development, CSO's Transparency Mechanism, Partnerships and Project Management, and Fundraising.

Joy Pathaw

Executive Member
Grassroot
INDIA



Joy Pathaw is a Khasi woman from the State of Meghalaya in the North Eastern Region of India. Raised by her mother, Joy is the fifth of six children. She is an executive member of Grassroot, an indigenous people's rights organization working on issues related to gender, livelihood, and entrepreneurship.

Joy also works as Meghalaya State Programme Co-ordinator with the National Mental Health Programme. In this position, Joy is making mental health care accessible to indigenous communities in all 11 districts of the state.

She also serves as a member of the Board of Studies of the Social Work Department at Martin Luther Christian University in Meghalaya where she contributes to the development of the curriculum and field activities. She is a firm believer in being self-reliant and aims to be a voice for and with her community.

Nasim Lomani

Activist and Refugee Rights Defender

GREECE

Nasim Lomani is a human rights defender and migrants' rights activist working both in the field and at the political level in Greece and the greater EU for over a decade.

Lomani arrived in Greece nearly two decades ago as a 16-year-old from Afghanistan. During the process of appealing to the court for having his rights as a refugee abused and violated, he learned about the bureaucratic difficulties that all migrants face while on the move to Europe. He joined a number of solidarity groups, such as the Network for Social Support to Immigrants and Refugees and the Migrants' Social Center in Athens and the Antiracist Festival Athens. He also engaged in solidarity work that included lawyers and human rights defenders as well as refugees and migrants.

Lomani co-founded and served as one of the key organizers of City Plaza – Refugees Accommodation Solidarity Space in Athens. City Plaza, once one of the largest solidarity migrant accommodations in Athens, was a repurposed abandoned hotel in central Athens that offered people the right to live in dignity in the urban space with access to social, economic, and political rights. Over nearly three and a half years, City Plaza served a total of 3,000 people. Lomani lived inside the now-suspended City Plaza as long as it was open, organizing to create international solidarity.

Lomani is the 2020 Oak Human Rights Fellow at Colby College where he will teach, conduct research, and raise awareness about his work.



Renae Green

Associate Director, Policy & Advocacy TransWave Jamaica

JAMAICA



Renae is the Associate Director of Policy and Advocacy at TransWave Jamaica. She is responsible for the planning, development, and implementation of the organization's advocacy strategies as they relate to key human rights, HIV, and development issues facing transgender and gender non-conforming people. TransWave Jamaica recently developed a five-year strategic plan. In accordance with the plan over the next five years, TransWave Jamaica will use social media, popular education, and training to promote visibility and the inclusion of trans persons; improve trans peoples' access to employment and essential public services (medical, public safety and education); reduce violations against trans persons by creating inclusive and affirming spaces and promoting acceptance in families, schools, and community institutions; develop an organizational infrastructure in alignment with its mission; and collaborate with stakeholders to develop legislative initiatives that support the self-determination of trans people.

Renae serves as the civil society alternate representative on the Jamaica Country Coordinating Mechanism for the Global Fund as well as a member of the Civil Society Reference Group of Jamaica's Spotlight Initiative, which is EU-funded and UN-implemented. Renae is working toward completing the bachelors of science in Gender Development Studies at the University of the West Indies.

Ruben Avila Reyna

Mexico Country Coordinator
International Youth Alliance for Family Planning
MEXICO

Ruben is the Mexico Country Coordinator for the International Youth Alliance for Family Planning (IYAFP), a global network of youth committed to family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). IYAFP was founded in 2013 at the International Conference on Family Planning in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Ruben works to open spaces for youth and adolescents in Mexico to discuss SRHR and to advocate for changes to the laws and policies that affect their sexual and reproductive life, especially for young women and LGBTQI youth. Ruben and his colleagues are aligning IYAFP-Mexico's objectives to international agendas like Agenda 2030, ICPD25 (International Conference on Population and Development), and Beijing+25 (Beijing Platform for Action) to identify specific points and actions for the Government of Mexico to take.

Ruben's advocacy portfolio has also included the co-founding Universitarios por la Equidad y una Sociedad Integra e Incluyente (UNESII), a student group working on prevention of discrimination and bullying against LGBTIQ youth, and Sin Control Parental, a Spanish-language platform developing educational digital content related to SRHR for youth and adolescents. He has advocate for SRHR for young women and LGBTIQ youth as a speaker in local, regional, and international spaces; collaborated as a regional focal point to WHO on adolescent SRHR in Latin America and the Caribbean; created and led a program to train youth counsellors on SRHR in Mexico; and participated as young leader for the SheDecides global movement.

Ruben earned a bachelor's degree in international relations from the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León. With a scholarship from the Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya and the Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, Ruben participated in a short course entitled Human Rights in the Face of Extremism and Discrimination in 2018.



Tamar Ivaniadze

Co-founder and Chairperson
Initiative for Social Changes (ISC)
GEORGIA



Tamar is a co-founder and the chairperson of Initiative for Social Changes (ISC). ISC encourages the realization of social rights by advocating for better social services and policies for children, youth, and women. Recent projects have included raising awareness about violence against children, school-related gender-based violence, gender equality in schools, and the sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and young women. She is also actively involved in providing training and professional development activities for practitioners from the field of child protection and gender equality in Georgia.

Tamar gained valuable experience in child protection, youth work, and gender equality issues while working for various international and local NGOs. As a frontline social worker, she assisted children in state care, victims of domestic violence, and conflict-affected children and their families. She earned a master's degree in social work from Tbilisi State University.

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