

Sri Lanka's First Ever Solidarity Gaymes

Sri Lanka's pioneer LGBTIQ organizations Companions on a Journey and Women's Support Group made a groundbreaking move on the 13th of December 2008. Just as Dr. Wickremabahu Karunaratne, the chief guest rightly said, it was indeed a great day for Sri Lanka. A community who used to meet in secret, and who for decades was forced to live the best parts of their lives in a closet, were all given the opportunity to come out & play.

It was a full fledged one day sporting event with traditional track & field events as well as local favourites such as Netball and Ellé. The point of the Gaymes was not merely to celebrate sexuality & gender expressions, but also about celebrating individuality through solidarity. The key goals of this event were participation, inclusion & the ability to deliver one's personal best. In addition, our vision was to create a wider visibility for the LGBTIQ community in Sri Lanka.

It was going to be a daunting task and during the run-up to the event, there was a doubt whether we really pull this off and provide a safe environment for the participants. But it was a well-organised event. We have to applaud the co-chairs of the event committee, SP, Director of COJ & Priya, Co-ordinator of WSG (*and incidentally a double gold medallist at the official Gay Games*).

As exhausted as we are after many months of work, we're looking forward to the next Gaymes with much anticipation, hoping that more and more people will continue to come out & play. Moreover, we hope that we can take the Solidarity Gaymes to a regional level so that the entire Asian continent can come out & play with us too someday.