

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Business as a catalyst for change

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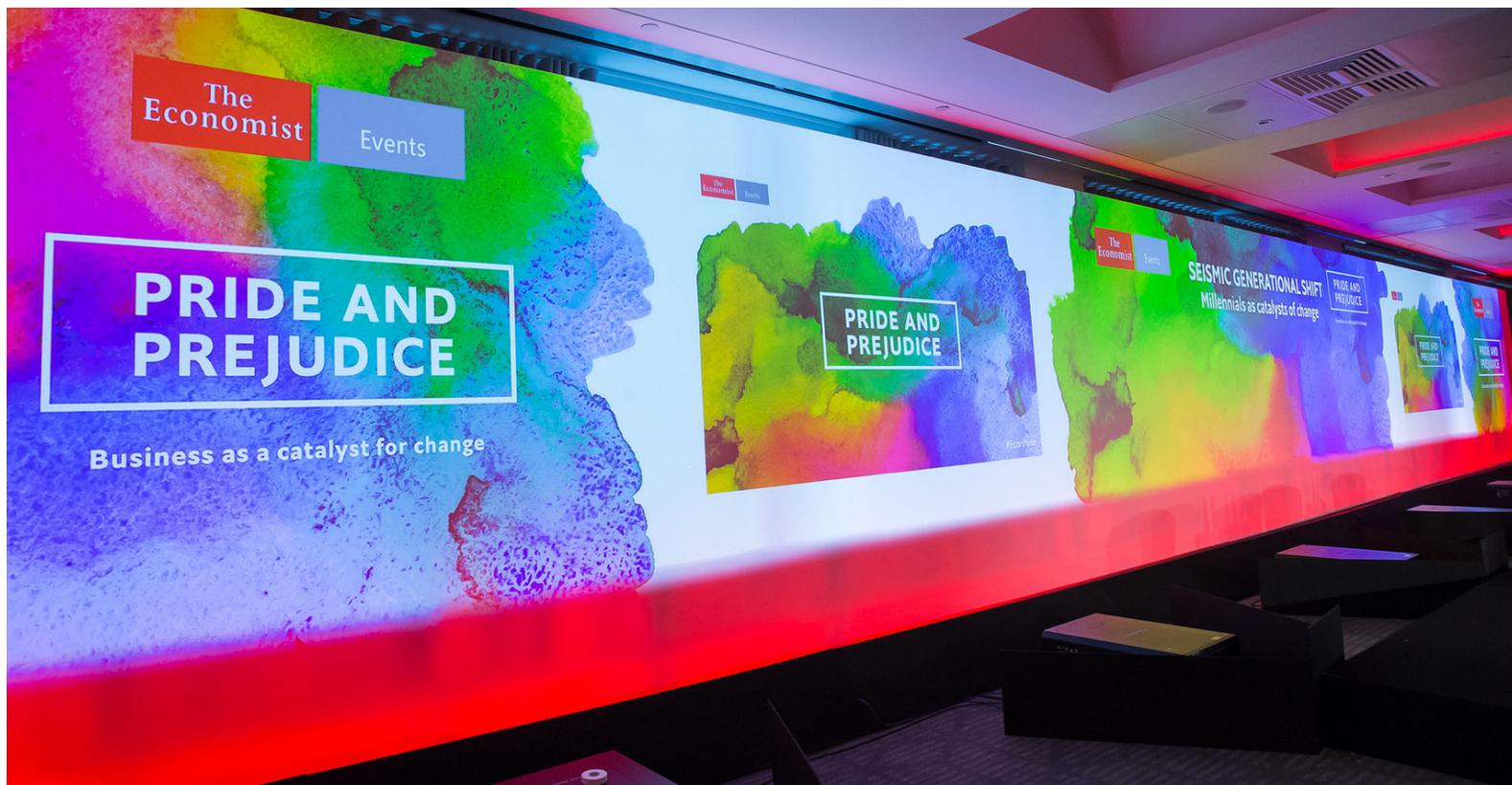


PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Great strides have been made in advancing the LGBT equality agenda around the world. Same-sex marriage is legally recognised in a number of countries, social acceptance is high and many companies have policies in place to ensure inclusion. However, there are still over 70 countries in the world where homosexuality is illegal, hostility and hate crimes targeting LGBT people are prevalent. Even in workplaces that promote diversity, discrimination still takes place — often unconsciously, sometimes overtly.

The business world is in a powerful position to move progress forward, and it is in its interest to do so. Last year's inaugural Pride and Prejudice conference looked at the business case for LGBT inclusion. This year went further, looking at how businesses can be the catalysts for change.

The 24-hour event, which took place in Hong Kong, London and New York, brought together over 600 leaders from the worlds of business, politics and civil society on how business can move the mark on LGBT rights.





HONG KONG EVENT SUMMARY

Denial is the default for many companies in Asia with many reluctant to acknowledge there is even an issue when it comes to LGBT equality. Politics, religion and conservatism all conspire to hamper progress still further.

In Hong Kong, Pride and Prejudice looked at the differing attitudes around Asia, and the imperative for businesses to do more.

While the general sentiment in Hong Kong is liberal, there is still a lack of true understanding of LGBT rights, noted Clarice Kan, regional associate compliance counsel, Asia-Pacific, Google.

Legislative councilor Nathan Law added that while homosexuality has been decriminalised, there is work to be done in terms of legislation.

Part of the problem is Hong Kong's post-colonial psyche, argued Gigi Chao, executive vice-chairman of Cheuk Nang. The government is seen as lacking legitimacy and is therefore reluctant to push through anything too controversial such as LGBT rights. Compounding the problem is that while business is thriving, living standards are falling, leaving citizens fighting among themselves for what matters most to them.



Charles Goddard, editorial director, Asia Pacific, The Economist Intelligence Unit, delivers opening remarks at Hong Kong's Pride and Prejudice Summit.



Hong Kong is bidding for the 2022 Gay Games and such events will help widen acceptance, but the business world must play a bigger part: “It is up to businesses to uphold human dignity and set a benchmark for what is acceptable in how we treat colleagues and how we can create vibrant workplaces that make Hong Kong people proud,” Ms Chao said.

In the Philippines, progress has been made, but the picture is mixed. Marianne Hontiveros, chair of Philippines AirAsia, explained that while social attitudes are liberal, it has been in a limited way with the expectation that LGBT people will only work in certain careers such as beauty salons. Same-sex marriage is not recognised and a transgender person still has to carry their designation of sex at

birth on legal documents. However, the country has made huge progress and recently elected its first transgender congresswoman.

In India, Parmesh Shahani, head of Godrej India Culture Lab, explained that while it is not criminal to be gay, same-sex acts are criminalised. Homophobic comments and discrimination are common.

Oyungerel Tsedevdamba, former minister of culture, sports and tourism of Mongolia, discussed changing attitudes in the country. In 2009, as the first human-rights advisor to the president, Ms Tsedevdamba developed an argument for LGBT equality: it was an uphill struggle at a time when even the term LGBT would not be accepted as it was made up of foreign words. Mongolia now hosts



From left to right: Jon Fasman, South-East Asia bureau chief, *The Economist*; Marianne Hontiveros, chair, Philippines, AirAsia; Michael Ebeid, chief executive and managing director, SBS



LGBT events like Pride, and Ms Tsedevdamba added that things are moving in the right direction socially, if not politically: publicly supporting LGBT issues won't get you elected, she said.

Paerin Choa, spokesperson, PinkDot SG, discussed how PinkDot was formed to "change the hearts and minds of Singaporeans" on LGBT issues. Protest

“Until a person knows someone close who is gay, it will always remain an argument in their head. But it changes everything when they see it is actually someone’s life.”

*— Pauline Ong
Executive pastor
Free Community Church*

came in the form of asking allies to wear pink and form a dot for a photo opportunity. The number of participants has grown to 28,000. The hope is that by showing society's acceptance, it will help change laws. He adds that while the government has always said it is not anti-gay, it is afraid of relaxing rules on public assembly and sees LGBT issues as one of public controversy.

Pauline Ong, executive pastor at the Free Community Church, said that in Singapore there is a vocal minority who are anti-LGBT and that gets heard loudly, while the progressive religious majority is silent. "These people are moderate and accepting but still trying to crystallise their stance and not willing to stand up in public."

Ms Ong has been criticised in that she is gay and Christian. "I used to think I was a contradiction, but what I have, this intersection, is a gift. All these things about being gay and Christian we haven't explored in a deep way." By coming out, it helps spread the message. Having a friend or relative that is LGBT can remove prejudices. "Until a person knows someone close who is gay, it will always remain an argument in their head. But it changes everything when they see it is actually someone's life."



The enablers: millennials and technology

Delegates looked at some of the drivers for change in advancing LGBT rights. One is millennials who typically have more liberal attitudes and are more likely to support the LGBT agenda. In Asia, the fact that millennials now have access to better education, have perhaps studied in countries that are more progressive on the issues and can see the wider world via social media, has led to greater awareness on what a liberal society should be.

Rica Paras, senior manager, technology at Accenture, and chairwoman of the Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines, said that access to technology was how she herself came to terms with her sexuality.

Technology is a great enabler in helping LGBT people to connect and communicate and collaborate, said Yoichiro Hirano, group chief executive of Infoteria. He argued that the use of artificial intelligence could help eliminate human prejudice: machines are not sexist, racist or otherwise discriminatory.

But Google's Ms Kan said that while technology has the power to remove biases, we need caution in how we programme the technology: an algorithm that filters CVs and looks for what has been successful in a business before, may for example, end up excluding people that don't have a certain educational background.



From left to right: Charles Goddard, editorial director, Asia-Pacific, The Economist Intelligence Unit; Nathan Law, legislative councilor, Hong Kong; Rica Paras, senior manager, technology, Accenture



Private sector support

The conference examined the role and responsibility of businesses in pushing LGBT equality. While some Asian organisations are content to stick their heads in the sand, others are leading the way.

While Godrej has been in existence for over 100 years, its attitudes are progressive. Mr Shahani said its activities include the likes of anti-harassment measures and supporting a transgender dance group. He talked of the importance of leadership in directing the issues. "In Asia it is very hierarchy oriented. Things happen more quickly if they come from top."

Philippines AirAsia has also taken a strong stance in support of LGBT issues. Ms Hontiveros said that while the company has never excluded LGBT people, it decided to actively invite LGBT people to apply. "When you are silent, people aren't sure and wonder if they will be welcome," she said. This year saw two transgender people apply as cabin crew, one of which is about to have training. She added that the airline industry is very visible and can be a powerful agent of change.

Cascading the positive message throughout the organisation is crucial. Philippines AirAsia has told staff that the new steward must be welcomed. Employees feeling uncomfortable about the issue should see their manager for access to mentoring to 'enlighten' them.

Some businesses absolutely demand that their employees take equality seriously. Wanda Tung, general counsel, Asia ex-Japan, Nomura, said the company has a global code of ethics, and every employee has to reaffirm their agreement with the code yearly. It has an active allies programme: even something as simple as a sticker on a supporter's computer gives a very clear sign of an open environment.

“The airline industry is very visible and can be a powerful agent of change.”



Multinationals to lead

Delegates spoke of the role of multinationals operating in Asia: they need to set an example to local firms and show them how policies can work in practice, said Ms Paras.

Multinational organisations can have a big influence. Louise Chamberlain, country director, Vietnam, United Nations Development Programme, said, “They have the opportunity to bring corporate policies to many different countries. This is a huge advantage in places where these things are socially difficult to address.”

Delegates heard from several multinationals that operate in Asia and how they spread the diversity message. Jeff Bullwinkel, associate general counsel and director of corporate, external and legal affairs, Asia Pacific and Japan, Microsoft, talked of the importance of storytelling. People’s personal tales can be powerful.

Bruce Larson, managing director and head of human capital management at Goldman Sachs, looked at the power of connecting ally networks within an organisation. The challenges of underrepresented groups can often overlap and working together means they can accelerate the causes. Mentoring and advocacy for an individual can also be transformative: they have someone to both confide in and speak on their behalf.

But how far businesses should use their leverage outside of the organisation to advance the cause is debated. Mr Bullwinkel explained that Microsoft expects its vendors to embrace diversity and that sort

of leverage is appropriate. But with governments it is different: this requires working with them to show that they have the same goals to drive innovation and growth.

The path ahead

When politics is moving too slowly, or even against the tide of progress, then the role of business becomes paramount. Collaboration can be effective. Mr Shahani urged companies to join forces to make their voices heard. “If you come out as a company about something you believe in you can make a difference,” he said. “You have to have allies — other business, NGOs, politicians and you need a coalition to move it forward. But if you take this leap of faith, others will take the leap with you.”

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*— Parmesh Shahani
Head of
Godrej India Culture Lab*



LONDON EVENT SUMMARY

Top of mind at London's Pride and Prejudice were the implications for LGBT rights following Britain's vote to leave the European Union. If Brexit was a result of an upswing in illiberal populism, what will it mean for progress so far, and what message does it send to other countries when the UK was arguably seen as a beacon of progress in terms of advancing LGBT equality?

Ivan Scalfarotto, under-secretary of state for Italy, talked of his disappointment at the outcome of the Brexit vote. "I respect the decision but am sorry. LGBT people see London as welcoming. The concern of Brexit and populism is that they are not inclusive messages."

Xavier Bettel, prime minister of Luxembourg, was also saddened by the decision. He said that fundamentally the European Union was a peace project, and has worked for 60 years. "We have rights and liberties: the possibility to live, work, travel, to have health, to love, to be defended. We take peace for granted. At our borders we have conflict."

Participants debated whether the UK's departure from the EU would see progress on the likes of LGBT rights regress. John Mills, founder, JML, argues not. "The way that social policy developed is so entrenched in this country that it isn't going to roll back. In fact Britain is well ahead most of Europe in terms of what we have done to reinforce rights in the workplace and elsewhere."



Left to right: John Mills, founder, JML and Liz Barker, Liberal Democrat peer, House of Lords



But if Britain is such a progressive force, then by leaving the EU it takes away a force for good in the bloc. “There are activists around the EU who see it as an abandonment and are worried we have set a bad example to those forces in their own county that don’t want to lead in the progressive way we do,” said Liz Barker, Liberal Democrat peer, House of Lords.

Mr Mills said however that leaving does not mean collaboration ceases. “There is a huge amount of common interest and you can still cooperate on a vast number of issues. In the EU, only 12 out of 28

members recognise same sex marriages and I hope we can still keep the pressure up once out.”

As to the rise of populism generally across the world, political leaders need to speak out. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, president of Chile, was asked about the role of other countries using their influence as this sort of politics spreads. “Wherever we go we will say what we think about these issues and advocate on the whole human rights agenda. As presidents, we respect what happens in other countries but we will respectfully make our voices heard.”





The role of business

Delegates looked at how businesses can help progress LGBT equality. But who in an organisation should be driving it? Leadership needs to support the agenda, but millennials are key in the equation.

A study by The Economist Intelligence Unit found, however, that leaders are either not stepping up or need to do a better job in demonstrating their stance. When asked which type of employee is most likely to support LGBT workplace diversity and inclusion, C-suite/leadership only garnered 16% of the votes.

Meanwhile, a poll at the conference found 96% of delegates agreeing that young employees are changing the way companies have to think about LGBT issues. The same question was asked via social media, with 72% of respondents thinking that this is the case. Millennials, whose lives are so transparent through social media, demand the same of the companies they work for, and so companies must be authentic in their support of LGBT issues, said Robyn Exton, founder of HER. Demonstrating their commitment with well-funded and interesting activities is needed.

Ronan Cassidy, chief corporate officer for Shell, said that the message must come from the top, although cultural change comes through all levels of the organisation. Reverse mentoring is proving a useful tool in helping to drive the necessary change. Michael Cole-Fontayn, chairman, EMEA, at BNY Mellon, described reverse mentoring as a “great privilege” that can energise an organisation and help expose vulnerabilities.

Thomas Buberl, chief executive of AXA, described how millennials, who only make up 20% of its workforce currently, are helping to shape thinking around how the business can work in partnership with its customers and create products for a more diverse population. “We should see their feedback as a gift, not a threat,” he said.

Claudia Brind-Woody, vice-president and managing director, IBM Global Intellectual Property Licensing, spoke of the importance of more junior people being involved in developing initiatives. She explained how its strategic imperatives for LGBT equality are refreshed once a year with its LGBT executives. Younger talent and out executives then partner to work on these projects.

“When asked which type of employee is most likely to support LGBT workplace diversity and inclusion, [The Economist Intelligence Unit survey found that] C-suite/leadership only garnered 16% of the votes.”



Outside the 'embassy'

Businesses can make a difference, but one of the biggest challenges is in how far they should go to make their voices heard outside of the organisation, particularly in harsh environments. There are three models that businesses often conform to according to a study by the Center for Talent Innovation: 'when in Rome', in other words conforming to the status quo of the country they are operating in, the 'embassy model', where they provide a safe environment within their own walls or the 'advocate model' where they press for change.

Mark Anderson, executive vice-president, customer, Virgin Atlantic Airways, said that employees in an international organisation should all have the same working environment around the world, but in places where it is illegal to be gay, if you get it wrong you can make it worse for employees. There is a responsibility to change societies, but it must be done diplomatically. Preaching doesn't carry much

weight. "We have had conversations in places like India and Kenya to make people understand why this is important, and it has been done in dialogue almost behind closed doors. The more public and political it is, the more some governments struggle to engage." Arguing the economic case is how to get their attention.

Micro conversations gradually change the agenda, believes Shell's Ronan Cassidy "You can have a conversation and be clear where you stand but while respecting the law. It is a nuanced and iterative. That's how change happens."

Ms Brind-Woody said that companies can use their economic power, such as demanding that their supply chain supports diversity. IBM also uses its convening power to bring businesses together in places like Russia so that they can work on changing the dialogue.



Claudia Brind-Woody, vice-president and managing director, IBM Global Intellectual Property Licensing



The power of the audience

The arts, sport and the media all have enormous power in that they have at their fingertips vast audiences. If they take a stance on LGBT equality, it makes a big statement.

Karen Blackett, chairwoman of MediaCom, talked about the role of the advertising industry in better reflecting the diversity in society. Most people buy cars, shoes and washing powder and yet brands market to the stereotypical family with 2.2 children. “People won’t buy the brand if they can’t see themselves in it and you have to create empathetic communications.” Brands are waking up to the fact that it makes business sense: better affinity results in more sales. To that end, they are demanding more diverse teams work on their communications.

“People won’t buy the brand if they can’t see themselves in it and you have to create empathetic communications.”

*— Karen Blackett
Chairwoman
MediaCom*

Lucy Kerbel, founder of Tonic Theatre, looked at how theatre should tell a wider range of stories. On stage, there has been a big push on diversity such as cross-gender casting as well as encouraging more women directors, writers and actors. But further efforts need to be made in terms of looking at diversity in the industry more broadly: those behind-the-scenes as well as who gets the biggest chunk of public money.

Given that sport usually generates a legion of fans, it has great influence. Seeing an LGBT role model inspires others and demonstrates acceptance. But it can also have the opposite effect if the support isn’t there. Martin Cremin, former international swimmer, Team Scotland, and British slalom canoeist Matt Lister said that coming out was a positive experience. Much depends on the sport: football still has a long way to go.

“A lot of football is prehistoric in its attitude. We are seeing things move forward and accepting that there are gay footballers, but it is a shame they can’t come out and talk about it,” said Mark McAdam, a presenter at Sky Sports. He added that many footballers worry about the backlash from fans – not so much their own, but possible abuse during games from fans of the opposing side.

It was noted that businesses could help with the sponsorship of LGBT sportsmen: displaying their logo on their kit symbols it is safe to come out. However, there is a chicken-and-egg situation in that there are few openly LGBT sportsmen at the very top.



NEW YORK EVENT SUMMARY

This year's Pride and Prejudice took place at a time of uncertainty for LGBT equality in the United States. The messages from President Trump have been mixed; meanwhile controversy reigns over the 'bathroom bill' with the likes of North Carolina taking an economic hit when businesses pulled investment to disassociate themselves with a state seen to promote an anti-LGBT policy.

The conference looked at the role of business in progressing LGBT equality. While inroads have been made, there is still a lot to do. Mary Beth Maxwell, senior vice-president of programs research and training at the Human Rights Campaign, said that LGBT equality is being advanced by forward-

thinking businesses. In some 15 years, the number of companies in the Fortune 500 that have policies of non-discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity has risen from 3% to 82%. They want to do the right thing and they know it is good for business.

But research from The Economist Intelligence Unit suggests organisations are not doing enough to stamp out discrimination. While 85% of respondents said they believe LGBT employees should be able to come out in the workplace without fear of discrimination, 19% of respondents were aware of hidden LGBT discrimination at their company.



Pride and Prejudice in New York



Driving change from within

Delegates looked at how businesses can create more open and inclusive environments within their own walls. Simple changes in policies and practices make a difference.

Ensuring diversity through recruitment policies is crucial, but other measures can include ensuring parental leave is available for those adopting and the wording inclusive of same-sex couples. Practical measures such as offering gender-neutral bathrooms also send a positive signal that a company is supportive. Inclusive healthcare policies should be a given: companies will struggle to secure top talent without it.

Policies also need to be measured. What doesn't get measured doesn't get managed, explained Anilu Vazquez-Ubarri, chief diversity officer and global head of talent, Goldman Sachs. But discipline is needed in how data is used and organisations must drill down into the details: a business may have increased its ethnic diversity, for example, but looking within that might reveal a lack of gender diversity or social diversity within that group. The problem is also compounded in measuring LGBT diversity as it requires individuals to self-identify, something they may not be comfortable with.

Businesses need to take an holistic view of progress. Lindsay Rae-McIntyre, vice-president for business and technical leadership, chief diversity officer, IBM, noted: "We constantly ask if we are as inclusive as we can be. We have data and analytics and employee engagement surveys but the data is only the data. It is the talent you can hire, and keep and grow and become leaders that is indicative."

Delegates discussed who in an organisation is responsible for diversity. It cannot be a bolt-on from the human resources department, but driven by the leadership. That said, the chief executive cannot be expected to solve it on their own.

Middle management is a crucial part of the equation in helping to drive LGBT inclusivity throughout an organisation. Dawn Smith, senior vice-president and chief legal officer, VMWare, discussed how accountability might be implemented. A financial incentive could be in place — having a diverse team could be among the targets to be reached in order to earn a bonus. But that risks diversity becoming a tick-box exercise with quotas to fill, and as athlete Schuyler Bailar said, while LGBT people can bring a wider perspective, no one should be hired because they are LGBT, but because they fulfill the qualifications of the job. Ms Smith also added that it is more about expectation to do the right thing than a reward: "My leadership team expects this out of me and I expect it out of them. It's the idea that you're letting down a teammate and that means more than money does."

Leadership needs to be vocal on the issues. Vazquez-Ubarria said that the firm's chief executive and leadership team speak up on the values the firm holds. This is important not only within the company, but also outside of it, as its employees need to know that they will be supported wherever they are. It may upset some clients, but others select the firm precisely because of their messaging, she said.



Going beyond the business

Delegates discussed the responsibility of businesses to stand up for LGBT diversity publicly. Supporting events such as Pride, or making a statement with adverts featuring LGBT people can be powerful. They can also withdraw their investment from places that discriminate, as in the case of North Carolina.

But this is a tough call, particularly if it brings economic hardship in an already poor country. Sandro Bassili, vice-president, Anheuser-Busch, explained how it is

working with the government of Nigeria to produce beer from cassava. "I'd prefer to be at the table with the government and try to influence the social aspect than withdraw," he said.

Ms Rae-McIntyre agreed that local allies and thoughtful, locally-led conversations are the way forward. She added: "We are active in our communities, and with our clients and partners, to change the environment around us."



Left to right: Tom Standage, deputy editor, *The Economist*; Sandro Bassili, vice-president, people, Anheuser-Busch; Lindsay Rae-McIntyre, vice-president for business and technical leadership and chief diversity officer, IBM



Breaking down barriers

Religion and politics can be the biggest barriers in preventing LGBT equality. Delegates looked at how progress might be made with some of the more challenging stakeholders.

Imam Daiyee Abdullah, founder and executive director of the MECCA Institute, talked of efforts being made to re-educate the Muslim community in the US to better understand Islamic history and how it can be interpreted, but also the rights people have living in non-Muslim states, one of which is LGBT rights.

He talked of the importance of organisations working together with common goals. After the Orlando nightclub attack, many Muslim organisations in the region joined with LGBT organisations to deal with some of the issues.

Rachel Hoff, advisor at the American Unity Fund, discussed politics in the US in terms of progress on LGBT equality. It should be a non-partisan issue, and the advances that have been made are because both conservatives and liberals have engaged. "If we as the LGBT freedom movement allow this issue to be ceded to Democrats or Republicans, we do so at our own peril in terms of future progress."

One of the biggest areas of contention is the call for religious freedom protections. Ms Hoff said that it has been perceived as a binary choice between religious freedom protections, which is perceived to equal discrimination against LGBT people, and no protection for religious freedoms at all.

Matt Patsky, chief executive, Trillium Asset Management, added that compromise is needed, and that such polarisation should be avoided. "It is not religion that is against LGBT rights. There are some in the religious community that are anti-LGBT for sure, but it is not organised religion against LGBT rights and we have to de-escalate all that."

"If we as the LGBT freedom movement allow this issue to be ceded to Democrats or Republicans, we do so at our own peril in terms of future progress."

*— Rachel Hoff
Advisor
American Unity Fund,*



Pulling together

Delegates discussed the idea of minority groups working together to make a difference. We can learn from the struggles of others, and unite to have a more powerful voice.

The hugely popular Women's March brought together people from many different groups. Tamika Mallory, national co-chair of the march, said: "People stepped out of their issue and said it is okay to be in the LGBT movement and be with racial justice and with reproductive rights. We know women aren't one-dimensional."

But there can be conflict when so many agendas collide. The march saw issues develop between the pro life vs. pro choice movements, while in the Toronto Pride parade there was conflict between the police and Black Lives Matter. But Ms Mallory said it is possible to unite on certain issues. "You don't have to give up your own values, but let them into the space and change minds. We are not enemies. [We are] just on two different sides."



From left to right: Tamika Mallory, co-chair, Women's March on Washington; Anilu Vazquez-Ubarri, chief diversity officer and global head of talent at Goldman Sachs



Art not imitating life

The Hollywood film industry wields enormous power. As a business and as a medium, it could do more to help advance LGBT equality: its films could better reflect the diversity in society, and as an employer it should take the lead in ensuring it has a diverse talent base.

The New York Pride and Prejudice event closed with an interview with actress Amber Heard, who said that she faced a huge challenge when it became widely known that she was a lesbian. The common view was that she would never be cast as a female romantic lead. But Ms Heard felt she had a responsibility to speak out and prove the doubters wrong.

She argued that Hollywood must change quickly if it is to be relevant to reflect even mainstream society. The issue the industry faces is that so much money is on the line in making a film so it sticks to a formulaic story of “guy saves the world and kisses the girl and lives happily ever after.”

Ms Heard called on gay male actors to follow her example and come out – it would soon become a non-issue. Men, with all the power and the representation they have in Hollywood, would be a powerful force.



Amber Heard, actress and activist



PRIDE AND PREJUDICE 2017: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Across the three cities that hosted this year's Pride and Prejudice, several key themes emerged.

Leadership is vital

Delegates heard from both politicians and business leaders on the importance of strong leadership in setting an example. More openly LGBT leaders are needed, but they stay in the closet because they fear stigma and also want to be known for their output and not just for being LGBT.

The input of millennials

The younger generations will drive change. They typically have liberal views and demand that their employers support diversity and inclusion. Organisations must find a way to make their voices heard.

Businesses must challenge

It is not enough to simply make a difference within an organisation but to start a dialogue outside of it to make change happen. Some believe that this should be done with diplomacy, others argue for a firmer stance.

Learn across siloes

There are common struggles between underrepresented groups. They can learn from each other, but this is not without challenges. Opposing views will collide, even within the LGBT community, which is broad and diverse in itself: but pick an area where you can work together to win. There are other issues too, why should it be just minorities that support equality when it is good for society and business as a whole? Everyone should work together: the straight white male, who holds the disproportionate influence, must play his part.



THANK YOU