INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES DECLARATION ON LGBTQI+ AND SEX-AFFECTIVE AND GENDER DIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND ARCHIVISTS

We, the **Sex-Affective and Gender Diversity Archives and Archivists Working Group (ICA-SAGDAA-WG)** of the **International Council on Archives (ICA),** wish to submit the following statement, the purpose of which is to **promote the recognition, protection, and dissemination of archives relating to Sex-Affective and Gender Diversity (SAGD)** and **to showcase and show due appreciation for the contributions of people from these communities** to archiving across the world.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this statement is to **promote the recognition, preservation and dissemination of archives relating to Sex-Affective and Gender Diversity (SAGD) worldwide, and to recognise the efforts of the members of these communities** in creating inclusive and representative archival memories.

This initiative is rooted in the **principle of the diversity of archives in recording every area of human activity as established in the Universal Declaration on Archives (UDA)** of the ICA.

What is Sex-Affective and Gender Diversity (SAGD)?
We use the term **Sex-Affective and Gender Diversity (SAGD)** to refer to all those communities, individuals and organisations that identify with **Sex-Affective and Gender identities, expressions and practices that do not correspond to cis-heteronormative standards.**

This description may be assimilated with the widely used acronym **LGBTQI+,** in which:

- **L** stands for lesbian women,
- **G** for gay men,
- **B** for bisexuals,
- **T** for transgender individuals (those who do not identify with their sex assigned at birth),
- **Q** for queer people (those who challenge norms that reinforce inequality based on categories such as gender, sexual orientation, social class, or race),
- **I** for intersex people
- and the **+ sign** represents **all other non-cis-heteronormative expressions or identities,** such as asexual, non-binary, two-spirit, gender-fluid, and other identities.

PRINCIPLES

As stated in the Adelaide / Tandanya Declaration in 2019, the International Council on Archives (ICA) recognises its responsibility to re-imagine the meaning of archives as an engaging model of social memory, a process that should culminate in a new model of public archives as an ethical space of encounter, respect, negotiation and collaboration.

1. Against this backdrop, this Declaration acknowledges the long history of oppression and stigmatization that LGBTQI+ people have suffered, as reflected in the archives through two types of practice:

1.1 The traditional representation of this group in documents preserved in public archives, which is biased, negative, criminalizing, stigmatizing, humiliating, and pathologizing.

1.2 The symbolic annihilation of LGBTQI+ individuals through the cognitive and representational erasure of their identities in public records.

2. This is why we assert that LGBTQI+ people have the right to be recognized as such in archival description and representation systems, through their identification and inclusion in ontologies and vocabularies used to describe documents related to the LGBTQI+ community. LGBTQI+ individuals and organizations should participate as members of the archival profession and co-authors in the archival description of such documents.

3. Public archive acquisition programmes bear responsibility for ensuring that historical records are kept of the general and systemic oppression suffered by the LGBTQI+ community as a result of practices rooted in homophobia and discrimination, which have resulted in the creation of archives antagonistic to this community. Public archives must incorporate documentation related to LGBTQI+ individuals and organizations in their acquisition programmes, particularly materials produced by these individuals and organizations themselves.

4. This last point is particularly important given the lack of documentation on this topic. LGBTQI+ people represent between 10% and 20% of the global population, but this figure could be even higher. Estimating the size of this community worldwide is a difficult task, as in most countries, discrimination has led people to conceal their sexual orientation and gender identity. This explains the general absence of documentation produced by LGBTQI+ individuals, as such documents could be used against them by law enforcement officers, the courts, or medical professionals.

5. Therefore, the recovery, preservation, and dissemination of archival materials produced by LGBTQI+ individuals and organizations by public archives is a fundamental step towards the normalization of this community within the archival sector, especially considering the high risk of loss and destruction of this type of documentation.

6. This protection also extends to ensuring that LGBTQI+ individuals and organizations can interact with public archives in normal fashion, whether as users, donors or staff members.

7. This Declaration explicitly recognizes the vital role played by LGBTQI+ archives, which are independently organized by members of the LGBTQI+ community and operate outside traditional institutional archives. These latter have, historically and until recently, been neglectful, hostile and homophobic in their treatment of documents produced by LGBTQ+ individuals . Without the work of these social and community-based LGBTQI+ archives, much of the history and personal stories of LGBTQI+ people would remain undocumented.

ACTIONS

1. Consideration and inclusion of the specific characteristics of LGBTQI+ individuals and communities in archival descriptions.
2. Preservation and transmission of knowledge about the traditions and history of LGBTQI+ individuals and communities via oral history projects.
3. Research into the principles and methodologies used by LGBTQI+ communities for the creation, sharing, use and protection of their cultural expressions.
4. Development of guidelines and protocols that facilitate the systematic retrieval and archival processing of documents, collections, and data related to LGBTQI+ individuals and organizations worldwide.
5. Creation and maintenance of a digital platform for communication and resource sharing, aimed at LGBTQI+ archives and individuals interested in or related to archives (professionals, users, and the general public).
6. Awareness within the archival community about the importance of the challenges, responsibilities and opportunities inherent in managing LGBTQI+ records and collections, as well as the high risk of loss and destruction of these materials due to their subject matter and the long history of marginalization and stigmatization faced by the LGBTQI+ community worldwide.
7. Promotion of communication and collaboration between the LGBTQI+ community and its social archives, on the one hand and institutional archives, on the other, through interdisciplinary dialogue with other groups working on issues of gender, women's rights, social class, migrants, racialized people, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, children, older adults, and any other group that has been historically marginalized by institutional archives and the archival profession.

APPENDIX 1.

STATEMENT OF THE ICA PRESIDENT,

28 JUNE 2024

Today, as we celebrate Pride Month, we should like to pay tribute to the leaders, allies and organizations that tirelessly defend, advocate for, and promote the rights and causes of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and other diverse communities. Our global archival community encompasses archives of all types, and today, we wish to turn the spotlight on the initiatives and organizations dedicated to collecting, safeguarding, digitizing, and making accessible historical records related to the LGBTQI+ rights, especially in light of increasing anti-LGBTQI+ legislation and criminalization of LGBTQI+ individuals.

Many archives have created special collections that document the rich history of the LGBTQI+ community, preserving stories from the past several decades. These stories are not just memories; they are vital narratives that help us to understand our past and prepare for our future. Archives play a crucial role in defending rights and preserving society's collective memory, ensuring that significant moments and voices are not erased.
We are also proud to see our new professionals actively engaging with these important topics. For example, in the recent NPP/FAN Virtual Seminar Series on Archives and Social Justice, emerging archivists explored issues related to social justice and the critical role that archives play in this area.

In support of these ongoing efforts, we are pleased to introduce the new Working Group on Sex-Affective and Gender Diversity Archives & Archivists (SAGDAA-WG). This group is dedicated to addressing the archival needs and challenges faced by individuals who do not conform to dominant heteronormativity and gender norms. We invite you to learn more about SAGDAA-WG and consider joining us in this important work. Together, we can ensure these stories are preserved and shared.

Valuing all types of archives and stories, preserving diverse histories, and ensuring that everyone feels included in the narratives we share is essential to our mission. Let us come together to celebrate and advocate for the importance of archives worldwide, ensuring that every voice is heard, and every story is preserved.

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