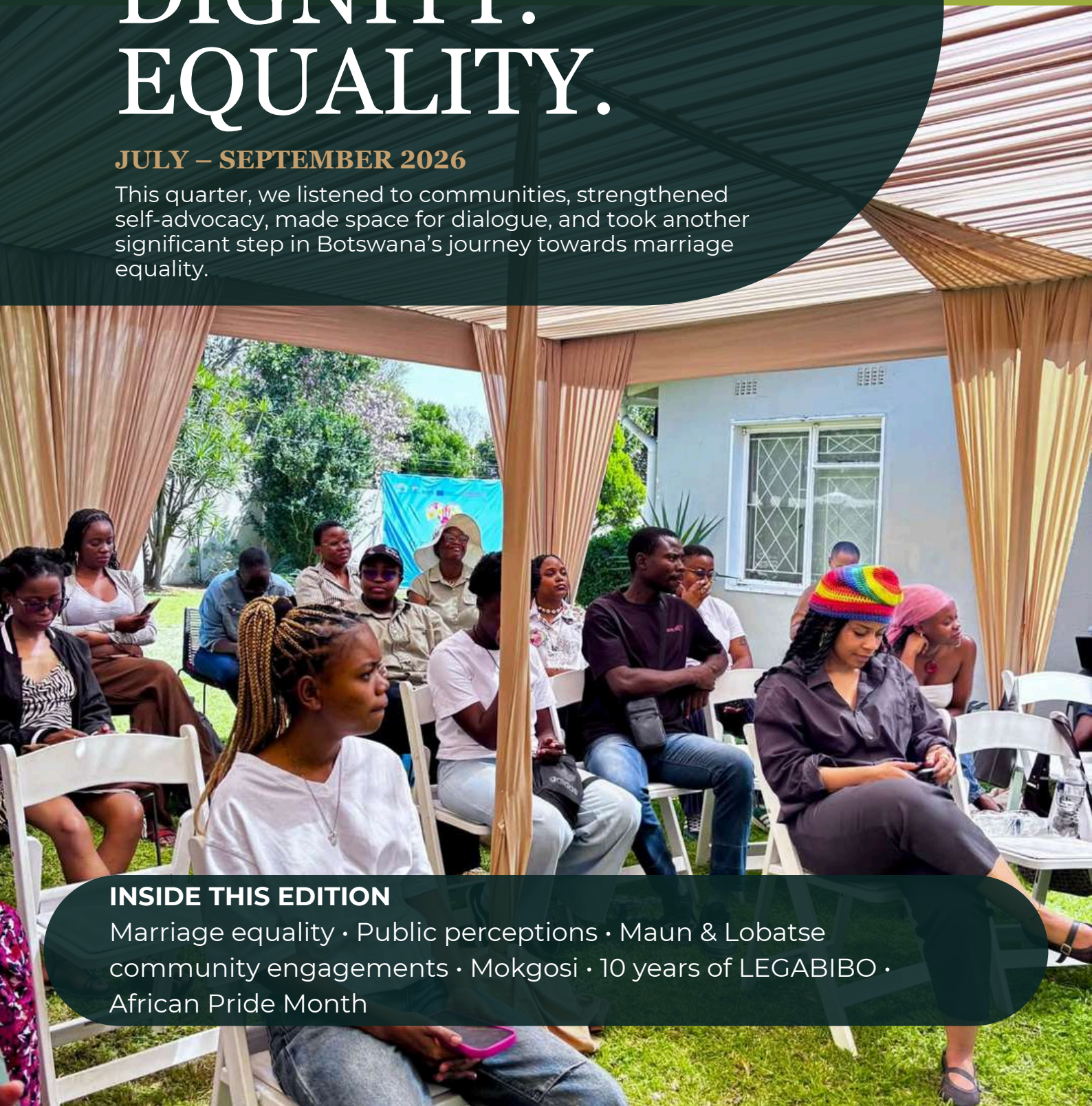
GATA LE LEGABIBO NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 5

LOVE. DIGNITY. EQUALITY.

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2026

This quarter, we listened to communities, strengthened self-advocacy, made space for dialogue, and took another significant step in Botswana's journey towards marriage equality.



INSIDE THIS EDITION

Marriage equality · Public perceptions · Maun & Lobatse community engagements · Mokgosi · 10 years of LEGABIBO · African Pride Month

NEWSLETTER

PRIDE EDITION



Tlamelo M Mothudi



A QUARTER OF VOICES, ACTION AND POSSIBILITY

The third quarter brought important developments in LEGABIBO's work for equality, dignity and belonging. From the High Court's decision to admit LEGABIBO into the ongoing marriage equality proceedings, to community-centred engagements in Maun and Lobatse, this quarter was about turning rights into lived realities.

Our ongoing public perceptions survey also offers a glimpse into how respondents understand LGBTIQ+ issues and marriage equality. The findings point to substantial familiarity and support among those surveyed, while reminding us that awareness is only a starting point. Respectful dialogue and accurate information remain essential.

As we look towards the final quarter of 2026, we are preparing to celebrate a decade since LEGABIBO's formal registration, introduce Mokgosi - our new human rights violations reporting system, and make room for the joy, creativity and connection that sustain our movement.

WELCOMING OUR NEW HEAD OF PROGRAMMES AND ADVOCACY

LEGABIBO is pleased to welcome Tlamelo M Mothudi as our new Head of Programs and Advocacy. In this role, Tlamelo will provide strategic leadership in advancing the organisation's programs and advocacy efforts, strengthening community engagement, and driving initiatives that promote the human rights, dignity and equality of LGBTI+ people in Botswana.

As we continue working towards a more inclusive and equitable society, we look forward to the leadership, experience and vision Tlamelo brings to the team.

IN THIS ISSUE

Marriage equality milestone	**What the survey says**
Maun & Lobatse: rights in action	**Mokgosi is coming**
Ten years of LEGABIBO	**African Pride Month**

LEGABIBO JOINS BOTSWANA'S MARRIAGE EQUALITY CASE



WE'VE BEEN ADMITTED AS THE 3RD APPLICANT IN THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY CASE

On 4 September 2026, the High Court admitted LEGABIBO as a party to the ongoing marriage equality case, recognising the organisation's direct and substantial interest in the outcome. This marked an important step in the continuing effort to advance the constitutional rights of LGBTIQ people in Botswana.

The case raises a fundamental question: can same-sex couples be excluded from civil marriage and the legal protections attached to it? The outcome has implications for the wider LGBTIQ community, particularly same-sex couples and their families, whose access to legal recognition, equal treatment and family protections may be affected by the Court's decision.

Marriage is more than a ceremony. Legal recognition can affect property rights, maintenance, inheritance, next-of-kin recognition, family security and decision-making. A judgment in favour of marriage equality could open the way for same-sex couples to access civil marriage and its associated legal protections. Conversely, a judgment against marriage equality could leave same-sex couples excluded from civil marriage and its associated protections, maintaining existing inequalities in legal recognition.

On 22 and 23 October 2026, the High Court heard the parties' heads of arguments, marking a significant stage in the proceedings. The judgment is scheduled to be delivered on 2 April 2027.

As the community awaits the Court's decision, this case remains a significant moment in Botswana's ongoing constitutional conversation about equality, dignity, non-discrimination and the recognition of diverse families.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

2 April, 2026: Judgement | The High Court of Botswana, Gaborone

Important: The 4 September 2026 ruling admitted LEGABIBO as a party to the marriage equality proceedings; it did not grant marriage equality. The substantive hearing took place on 22 and 23 October 2026, and the High Court is scheduled to deliver its judgment on 2 April 2027.

WHAT IS BOTSWANA SAYING ABOUT MARRIAGE EQUALITY?

LEGABIBO's ongoing Public Perceptions Survey seeks to understand how people in Botswana engage with LGBTIQ issues, their levels of familiarity with same-sex relationships and marriage equality, and the values, beliefs and experiences that shape their perspectives.

By exploring attitudes towards equality, dignity, freedom of choice and non-discrimination, the survey provides insight into how people understand and respond to conversations about the rights of LGBTIQ persons.

The responses collected so far offer a snapshot of participants' views, helping to identify areas of support, gaps in understanding and opportunities for continued public education and dialogue as we work towards a more inclusive and equal society.



75% FAMILIARITY

75 of 85 respondents supported legalisation, stating that they were familiar with LGBTIQ matters and concepts relating to same-sex marriage..

88% SUPPORT

67 out of 85 respondents strongly supported legalising same-sex marriage.

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUES SHAPING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

The survey highlights how religious beliefs, cultural understandings of marriage, traditional family values, and concerns about social division shape some participants' views on same-sex marriage. Perceptions about children and lineage, gender expectations, family and community influence also emerged.

What does this mean for advocacy? The findings highlight the importance of combining rights-based advocacy with respectful dialogue and accurate public education. Awareness of LGBTIQ issues does not always translate into a deeper understanding of equality and human rights, making continued public engagement essential.

These findings reflect the current survey sample and are not representative of the entire Botswana population.

WHAT RESPONDENTS CONNECTED WITH EQUALITY

- Equality before the law and protection from discrimination.
- Human dignity and respect for diversity.
- Freedom of choice and recognition of loving, committed relationships.
- Legal security, including family and next-of-kin protections, inheritance and social recognition.

AWARENESS IS A STARTING POINT. UNDERSTANDING TAKES CONVERSATION.

SELF-ADVOCACY TRAINING

The self-advocacy trainings held in Maun and Lobatse equipped participants with practical knowledge to understand their rights, recognise violations and identify pathways to, support and justice. Through facilitated discussions and practical exercises, participants explored how to respond to discrimination, report violations safely and advocate for themselves when engaging with service providers and other duty bearers.

The trainings emphasised that knowing your rights is only the first step; exercising them requires confidence, accessible information and supportive networks. Participants were encouraged to make informed decisions, seek legal and psychosocial support where necessary, and recognise that self-advocacy also involves knowing when and where to seek assistance.

Overall, the engagements highlighted the importance of empowering LGBTI+ people to challenge discrimination and access justice, while strengthening safe, inclusive and responsive support systems within their communities.





COMMUNITY TOWN HALL

The town hall meetings in Maun and Lobatse brought community members and key stakeholders together to discuss gender-based violence, mental health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to justice and inclusive service delivery. The engagements provided a platform for community members to raise concerns, share experiences and reflect on the barriers LGBTIQ people face when seeking support and accessing essential services.

Discussions highlighted that protecting human rights is a shared responsibility requiring collaboration between communities, civil society organisations and public service providers. Participants emphasised the importance of safe reporting mechanisms, accessible support services and respectful, non-discriminatory treatment when seeking assistance. The engagements also underscored the need to strengthen trust between communities and institutions through continued dialogue, public education and improved understanding of LGBTIQ people's lived experiences.

Overall, the town halls reinforced the value of bringing communities and stakeholders together to challenge stigma, address service delivery gaps and promote safer, more inclusive environments where everyone can access support and justice with dignity.

LESSONS FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Across Maun and Lobatse, the engagements reinforced three key lessons: rights awareness must translate into action, inclusive services must be accessible to all, and lasting change requires collective responsibility. Empowering LGBTIQ people to understand and exercise their rights must go hand in hand with strengthening support systems, improving service providers' responsiveness and addressing stigma and discrimination within communities.

Alongside the self-advocacy trainings and town hall meetings, LEGABIBO convened community caucuses and press conferences to amplify community voices, strengthen collective advocacy and create opportunities to engage stakeholders and the media on issues affecting LGBTIQ people. These platforms helped bring community concerns into broader conversations on human rights, access to justice and inclusive service delivery.

Through these engagements, LEGABIBO continues to strengthen community capacity, build partnerships and promote accountability among stakeholders. The ultimate goal is to ensure that LGBTI+ people are not only aware of their rights but are also supported to exercise them, seek redress when violations occur and access essential services without fear of stigma or discrimination.





COMMUNITY CAUCUS AND PRESS CONFERENCE

The community caucus and press conference created important spaces for community members, advocates and stakeholders to come together, share experiences and discuss issues affecting LGBTIQ+ people. These engagements strengthened collective advocacy by bringing community priorities to the forefront, encouraging dialogue on human rights and access to justice, and amplifying calls for inclusive and accountable services.

The engagements also highlighted the importance of strong media partnerships in advancing community building, advocacy and social change. Responsible and inclusive media coverage helps amplify community voices, challenge harmful narratives, raise public awareness and create opportunities for meaningful dialogue. Building relationships with media practitioners is therefore essential to ensuring that LGBTIQ+ experiences are represented accurately and that calls for equality, dignity and justice reach wider audiences.

By creating opportunities for community voices to be heard both within advocacy spaces and in the public domain, these engagements reinforced the importance of visibility, solidarity and sustained collaboration in advancing equality and protecting the rights and dignity of LGBTIQ+ people.

MOKGOSI: A NEW PATHWAY TO REPORTING VIOLATIONS

Your experience matters. Your rights matter. Your voice matters.



Accessing support after a human rights violation can be difficult. People may face stigma, fear, retaliation, or simply not know where to turn to. LEGABIBO has developed Mokgosi - a human rights violations reporting system designed to make reporting more accessible.

The platform includes an English- and Setswana-language chatbot. It is designed to allow people to submit reports anonymously or report a violation on behalf of someone else. Users can receive a reference number and upload supporting evidence.

Mokgosi is intended to support the documentation of human rights violations and strengthen LEGABIBO's broader human rights work. The system is currently being tested across the country to identify how it could be strengthened.

COMING SOON

MOKGOSI LAUNCH

A human rights reporting system - Mokgosi designed to improve access to people faced with human rights violations will be launched soon. Details to be announced on all our social media pages. Follow us to stay updated about the launch.



TEN YEARS OF COURAGE. A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITY.

In 2026 ,LEGABIBO celebrates 10 years since its formal registration in 2016 — a decade of organising, advocacy, community-building and advancing the human rights of LGBTI+ people in Botswana.

From the right to organise, through the struggle for decriminalisation, to the ongoing marriage equality proceedings, our journey reflects the determination of a community that continues to insist on dignity, equality and belonging. This milestone is not only a moment to look back. It is an opportunity to celebrate the people, relationships, courage and collective action that have brought us here — and to renew our commitment to the work ahead.







AFRICAN PRIDE MONTH: AN EXCITING MONTH INDEED!

Our lives are more than the challenges we face. They are also about friendship, music, chosen family, As we look towards African Pride Month, we are making room for the joy that sustains our movement — and the community that gives it meaning. Pride is an opportunity to celebrate the many ways LGBTI+ people build lives, create belonging and imagine better futures.











DID YOU CATCH US ON PODICAST?

As conversations around marriage equality continue in Botswana, LEGABIBO recently joined Podicast for a timely discussion on the Lorato ke Lorato campaign and the ongoing marriage equality case.

The conversation explored why marriage equality matters, what is at stake for same-sex couples and their families, and the broader fight for equality, dignity and recognition under the law. It also offered an opportunity to take the discussion beyond the courtroom, bringing the human experiences behind the campaign into a wider public conversation.

At a time when the country is reflecting on love, family, rights and equality, these platforms are important for sharing perspectives, challenging misconceptions and keeping community voices heard.

Catch the conversation: Click on the link below;
[Lorato Ke Lorato - Podicast]

THE WORK CONTINUES — AND SO DOES THE HOPE

This quarter reminded us that progress takes many forms: a court recognising the right to participate in a landmark case; a person finding confidence to advocate for themselves; a difficult conversation opening the door to understanding; or a new tool helping someone report a violation.

As we move into the final quarter of 2026, LEGABIBO remains committed to advancing equality, strengthening community voices and building a Botswana where LGBTQI+ people can live freely, safely and with dignity.

Look out for upcoming activities, community stories and opportunities to celebrate with us. More details will be shared through LEGABIBO's official channels.



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Lesbians, Gays And Bisexuals Of Botswana - LEGABIBO (OFFICIAL)