

OUT & EQUAL

# 2023 LGBTQI+ APAC Forum: A Day of Transformation

## AGENDA

Tuesday, July 11th 2023  
Bangalore, India



In partnership with  
Pride Circle

[outandequal.org](https://outandequal.org)



**9:00-9:45**

## Light Breakfast and Networking

Room: Pre-function Area

**9:00-9:45**

## Registration Open

Room: Pre-function Area

**9:45-10:00**

## Opening Remarks

Room: Ballroom

Speakers:

**Deena Fidas** (She/Her), Managing Director & Chief Programs and Partnerships Officer, Out & Equal  
**Ramkrishna Sinha** (He/Him), Co-Founder, Pride Circle & Rainbow Bazaar

**10:00-10:30**

## Keynote Remarks

Room: Ballroom

Speakers:

**Zainab Patel** (She/Her), Petitioner for the Indian Supreme Court NALSA Case on Transgender Rights and for the Indian Supreme Court Marriage Equality Case  
**Utkarsh Saxena** (He/Him), Petitioner & Lawyer for the Indian Supreme Court Marriage Equality Case

### Session Abstract:

More than a dozen couples have petitioned the Supreme Court to recognize marriage equality in India, the world's second most populous nation. These petitions seeking right to legalize marriage equality also open the door to other rights, privileges and obligations that are bestowed and protected by the law, such as adoption, inheritance, divorce, custody of children, protection from domestic violence, immigration rights and nominating one another as a surrogate decision maker in a medical emergency. LGBTQI+ rights advocates in India and globally, are hoping for a positive outcome, as the overturn of Section 377 in 2018 has paved the way for a judgement in favor of equality. A positive outcome in India could influence legislative trends elsewhere in the region. In this inspirational session, you will meet Zainab Patel and Utkarsh Saxena, who are one of the two petitioners seeking legal recognition for marriage equality from the Supreme Court, the verdict of which is expected to be announced by July or August of 2023.



10:30-11:45

## Opening Plenary

### Glocalizing LGBTQI+ Inclusion: An APAC Case Study

Room: Ballroom

Speakers:

**Mukesh Batra** (He/Him), Senior Vice President, Bank of America

**Erik Day** (He/Him), Senior Vice President, Global Small Business, Dell

**Zahara Fernandes** (She/Her), Managing Director Global Delivery & India Pride Sponsor, Accenture

**Jeiz Robbles** (She/Her), Asia Pacific Marketplace Diversity Leader, IBM

#### Session Abstract:

We all know that “one size fits all” approach does not work in business nor in DEIB. A “glocalized” (“global” + “local”) framework ensures that companies can hold true to their DEIB vision and strategy by defining broad areas of focus while also allowing flexibility for local adaptation across countries and regions. While there is no one “APAC” identity, we know that businesses do coalesce around regional strategies and understanding that the path to LGBTQI+ inclusion requires a multidimensional approach that infuses both global and local perspectives is imperative. In this session, we will bring together LGBTQI+ and ally executives to share best practices around how glocalized efforts offer businesses competitive edge by building agile, outcome-oriented solutions.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Understanding that navigating flexible paths for LGBTQI+ inclusion requires a multidimensional “glocalized” approach.
- Explore how LGBTQI+ inclusion can be understood with local and global considerations.
- Developing a strategic plan for LGBTQI+ inclusion that optimizes impact across geographies without sacrificing results.

**12:00-13:00****Storytelling Series****Trans & Nonbinary Inclusion**

Room: Ballroom

Speaker:

**Weena Ekid** (He/Him), Vice President, Corporate & Investment Bank, JPMorgan Chase & Co.**Session Abstract:**

As awareness and efforts from employers to create inclusive workplaces for transgender, third gender, and nonbinary individuals have steadily strengthened, many businesses are still grappling with how to incorporate the full spectrum of gender diversity into their LGBTQI+ inclusion initiatives. From inclusive healthcare, hiring and retention, to establishing name and pronoun best practices, building and scaling inclusive policies, practices, and programs can sometimes face resistance. Often times, the best solution is to cultivate empathy and understanding – and the most effective way to do this is to personalize the issue by feeling the power of someone’s story. In this session, Weena Ekid of JPMorgan will share his personal story and offer guidance on building actionable steps toward full inclusion.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Learn more about the power of storytelling to influence greater trans and nonbinary inclusion.
- Gain practical guidance on building and scaling policies and programs that garner greater trans and nonbinary workplace inclusion.
- Understanding different components that must work in together to create safe spaces at workplace for trans and nonbinary employees.

**Your Story. Your Truth. Your Power.**

Room: Ballroom

Speaker:

**Jon Tilli** (He/Him), Director | Commercial Real Estate & Chair | dbPride, Deutsche Bank Securities Inc.**Session Abstract:**

The power of every LGBTQI+ individual to share their story is at the heart of the sweeping changes we see across workplaces and communities. Sharing our stories helps us heal, but it is also an opportunity to tell people that they are not alone. Research and data are both critical elements of presenting a case, but this session will remind us to also humanize our projects and goals. By sharing our story, we can inspire our teams and change



hearts and minds. Attendees will learn how storytelling can help drive change and achieve impact, as well as reduce resistance and opposition. This session will also explore how our stories show up at work, understand the impact different stories may have, and how to chart strategies to maximize impact.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the importance and impact of storytelling and its role in the workplace.
- Learn how to identify pieces of information that are critical to telling your story at your work in order to map your strategy accordingly.
- Gain practical guidance on refining and adjusting your narrative depending on the context and your specific goals.

## LBTQ+ Women in Leadership

Room: Ballroom

Speaker:

**Charlene Liu** (She/Her), Co-Founder, Diversity & Inclusion Consulting (DNIC)

### Session Abstract:

Countries around the world have made significant advancements toward reducing gender and LGBTQ+ inequalities in recent decades. While women, including LBTQ+ women, have achieved greater participation in the labor market and political participation, a wide gap remains. During this storytelling session, attendees will gain valuable insight into the experiences of LBTQ+ women in leadership. The speaker, Charlene Liu, will discuss ways in which she has faced adversity as an LBTQ+ woman in the workplace, and how she converted these challenges into building successful innovative initiatives to promote women's leadership.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the unique lived experiences and challenges faced by LBTQ+ women in leadership.
- Explore ways to build effective, inclusive cultures that prioritize the inclusion of all.
- Learn about specific tools and strategies for the advancement of LBTQ+ women in the workplace.



**13:00-14:15**

## Lunch and Networking

Room: Pre-function Area

**14:15-15:15**

## Simultaneous Session (3)

### From Inception to Change Agents: ERG Phases of Development

Room: Breakout Session Room 1

Speakers:

**Preksha Bothra** (She/Her), Sr. Program Manager – DEI, Pride Circle

**Curtis Baker** (He/Him), Regional Inclusion & Diversity and Employee Experience Lead, Asia, Dow Chemical International Pvt Ltd

**Jeiz Robbles** (She/Her), Asia Pacific Marketplace Diversity Leader, IBM

**Arunabh Singh** (He/Him), Chief Compliance Officer | Citi India GCC & Co-Chair of Citi India Pride Inclusion Network, Citi

#### Session Abstract:

The creation of a new Employee Resource Group (ERG) Does not come without its challenges. From building a business case to attain buy-in, cultivating active participation, and formalizing a budget, the initial phases of creation can be a whirlwind. However, once the ERG is in a stable place, where does it go from there? What initiatives are best suited to achieve the mission? When are the most effective opportunities to collaborate with other ERGs? When is it time to scale geographically? In this interactive workshop, speakers will explore how to develop and refine your ERG's vision, mission, actions, and relationship with key stakeholders to drive maximum impact and position the ERG as not only a valuable DEIB resource, but as a critical business asset.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Explore ways to boost impact through strategic and innovative action through stakeholder mapping and internal and external action.
- Understand the different phases of ERG development with the goal of establishing ERGs that foster company-wide DEIB, offer spaces of belonging, and function as a competitive business advantage.
- Navigate different factors that cultivate leadership to run a successful ERG.



## Building Bridges: Corporate-Community Partnerships

Room: Breakout Session Room 2

Speakers:

**Zainab Patel** (She/Her), Petitioner for the Indian Supreme Court NALSA Case on Transgender Rights and for the Indian Supreme Court Marriage Equality Case

**Ramkrishna Sinha** (He/Him), Co-Founder, Pride Circle & Rainbow Bazaar

### Session Abstract:

Community organizations are important sources of information on the lived realities of LGBTQI+ people. These organizations have their fingers on the pulse of evolving workplace needs and a country or region's broader social backdrop. Many of them also provide services to consult, measure and/or certify companies as inclusive workplaces for LGBTQI+ employees, as well as offer cutting-edge content and direction for local workplace inclusion efforts. Building bridges between marginalized communities and businesses is a vital best practice for holistic DEIB strategies. Join us for a thought-provoking dialogue with committed workforce inclusion advocate(s) from APAC who will share their knowledge and insights on the key elements and goals that community partnerships should embrace.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of building authentic and productive relationships with community organizations.
- Learn best practices on leveraging corporate and community partnerships to improve LGBTQI+ inclusion not only in companies but in communities as well.
- Build skills to ensure that partnerships are mutually beneficial and achieving common goals.

## Diversifying the Supply Chain: Strengthening Your Commitment to LGBTQI+ Inclusion

Room: Breakout Session Room 3

Speakers:

**Kanishka Chaudhry** (He/Him), Co-Founder, Samavesh Chamber of Commerce

**Jayant Parte** (He/Him), Lead – Logistics Procurement (Indian Subcontinent), Dow Chemical International Pvt Ltd

**Priyanka Shetty** (She/Her), Associate Director - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Pride Circle

**Priyank Asha Sukanand** (He/Him), LGBTQI+ Rights Activists & Entrepreneur, Bangalore Connection 1888



## Session Abstract:

Establishing an inclusive procurement initiative will create opportunities and demand for minority-owned businesses within corporate supply chains. For instance, partnering with organizations that support LGBTQI+ entrepreneurs and businesses or collaborating with certifying bodies such as Chambers of Commerce could facilitate access to LGBTQI+-owned businesses. In addition to the economic benefit of creating greater competition among suppliers, engaging with a more diverse supply chain also aligns with an organization's DEIB mission and directly contributes to boarder social and economic inclusion. In this session, participants will learn how to harness their existing business network to transform their supply chain needs to take socially responsible actions toward widening the lens of potential business partners.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Understanding the value proposition of establishing a supplier diversity program, as a workplace inclusion policy tool.
- Learn the opportunities and unique challenges that corporations are facing to establish supplier diversity initiatives.
- Learn how to navigate the process and procedures to connect with corporate supplier diversity initiatives to diversify your business portfolio.





15:30-16:30

## Simultaneous Session (3)

### Leveraging Your Brand: The Power of Visibility

Room: Breakout Session Room 1

Speakers:

- Anubhuti Banerjee** (She/Her), Sr. Manager IT C&I, Tata Steel Ltd.
- Srini Ramaswamy** (He/Him), Co-Founder, Pride Circle & Rainbow Bazaar
- Sahil Sethi** (He/Him), Category Leader, Personal Healthcare, P&G India
- Sneha Suresh** (She/Her), Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Leader | India and Philippines, Wells Fargo

#### Session Abstract:

Throughout recent years, we have witnessed more and more brands demonstrating support for the LGBTQI+ community through the power of brand visibility, especially during Pride month. While inclusive representation is critical, an authentic commitment is more than a rainbow-colored logo – it is backed by a steadfast mission and meaningful, continual action. The widespread visibility and influence that brands hold in today's world are powerful enough to spark new bold dialogues and inspire changes in heart and mind. Not to mention, now more than ever consumers have become highly socially conscious of how they spend their money, holding companies accountable for their actions. In this session, participants will learn how to leverage brand visibility to create change and advance LGBTQI+ inclusion.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the power of representative and inclusive brand visibility, and how it aligns with business goals and DEIB goals.
- Develop strategies for using brand visibility and influence to advance LGBTQI+ inclusion.
- Effectively engage with community partners to identify ways to build authentic and respectful representations of LGBTQI+ people.

### A Measure for Inclusion: The India Workplace Equality Index

Room: Breakout Session Room 2

Speakers:

- Dhritisha Bhagawati** (She/Her), Senior Program Manager, Pride Circle
- Sanjay Paramesh** (He/Him), Vice President – Business Management & Pride Co-chair – GSC
- Zoya** (They/Them), Manager – D&I, Employer Branding, Godrej Properties



## Session Abstract:

The India Workplace Equality Index (IWEI) is India's first comprehensive benchmarking tool for companies to measure their progress on LGBTQI+ Inclusion. First launched in 2020 by Keshav Suri Foundation (KSF), Pride Circle, and Stonewall, the 2022 index measured 105 organizations and for the first time recognized outstanding individuals and companies through Ally Trailblazer, LGBT+ Trailblazer, and Employee Resource Group of the Year awards. During this session, representatives from Pride Circle will provide invaluable history and insight on this program. They will also be joined by companies who have participated in the index, who will speak to ways in which the index has helped them along their LGBTQI+ inclusion journeys.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Gain important knowledge on the development of this benchmarking tool.
- Identify ways in which organizations work together to localize and adapt programs from other regions.
- Learn what participation in India Workplace Equality Index (IWEI) entails and how it can assist organizations to build a unique blueprint for their DEIB efforts.

## Leading with Authenticity

Breakout Session Room 3

Speakers:

**Gaurav Sharma** (He/Him), Vice President, IBM Software (India Software Labs, Partnerships, IBM Cloud Paks)

## Session Abstract:

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- Learn what participation in India Workplace Equality Index (IWEI) entails and how it can assist organizations to build a unique blueprint for their DEIB efforts.

16:45-17:05

## Closing Remarks

Room: Pre-function Area

Speakers:

- **Deena Fidas** (She/Her), Managing Director & Chief Programs and Partnerships Officer, Out & Equal
- **Ramkrishna Sinha** (He/Him), Co-Founder, Pride Circle & Rainbow Bazaar

17:05-17:45

## High Tea

Room: Pre-function Area