



# REPORT

## “BENCH-MARKING QUEER PUBLIC SPACE IN HANOI”

Hanoi, March 2024

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To complete this survey, we are grateful to individuals who have submitted their photos and stories. We were also permitted to access, collect, and utilize photos and information on the Facebook accounts of many people. Without these sources of material, the survey would certainly not have been completed.

The survey team would like to thank the Goethe Institut for providing financial support for this activity. The contents of this report, including recommendations and proposals, are those of the survey team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Goethe Institut.

### **Survey team**

Nguyen Minh Huyen

Duong Minh Trang

Nguyen Ngoc Huyen

Le Quang Binh.



*The report was produced with the financial support of  
the Goethe-Institut Hanoi*

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## **I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

According to Habermas, public spaces, beyond their material, cultural, and spiritual values, are also symbolic spaces where every social subject has the right to access and participate in the decision-making process. Therefore, accessing and using public spaces are not only important for the quality of life of citizens but also reflect their voices and status in public life. However, accessing and using public spaces are not always equal among different social groups. For example, for the disabled community, they may have difficulty accessing public spaces due to physical barriers and infrastructure. As for the LGBTIQ+ community, barriers to accessing and using public spaces often stem from social prejudices and discrimination. These barriers may change over time and vary between different types of spaces, depending on social norms and development.

Therefore, studying the presence of the LGBTIQ+ community in various public spaces across different time periods will reveal changes within the LGBTIQ+ community itself, within the rights advocacy and promotion movement, and especially changes in standards as well as the level of openness, inclusivity, and humanity of Vietnamese society.

The "Livable Hanoi" network (VMHNĐS), with the support of the Goethe Institut, has carried out this activity to collect images and information about the presence of the LGBTIQ+ community in public spaces in Hanoi over the past decade.

## **II. PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVITY**

Due to resource constraints, this survey only focuses on collecting images and stories from physical spaces – where events related to the LGBTIQ+ community are organized or marked; thereby, conducting a quick analysis of the nature of events based on space and time.

Specifically, the goals of this activity are:

- Compile images and stories about public spaces where events related to the LGBTIQ+ community are organized.
- Analyze the presence of the LGBTIQ+ community in various types of public spaces across different time periods.
- Provide initial insights into ways to enhance the visibility of LGBTIQ+ individuals in public spaces and social life.
- Promote a spirit of respect for diversity and inclusivity towards differences within society, especially in public spaces.

## **III. METHOD OF COLLECTING SURVEY INFORMATION**

The survey team utilized Google and Facebook tools to search for and collect information marking the presence of the LGBTIQ+ community in public spaces in Hanoi. The team gathered data from the Facebook pages of 38 organizations, groups active in the LGBTIQ+ community and 23 community activists supporting LGBTIQ+ rights. Data collection took place from January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.

For the Fanpages of organizations and groups, the survey team will filter information by year, starting from when the organization or group began publicly sharing information on Facebook. For personal Facebook profiles, the survey team will use keywords such as "LGBT, LGBTIQ+, transgender, pride, queer" to search for information. All events related to the LGBTIQ+ community will be collected and categorized, including the source of information, event content, event images, organizers, and venue. Additionally, the survey team will search for information from media sources using keywords such as "civil law, gender affirmation law, family marriage law" to find discussions on laws and legal matters related to the LGBTIQ+ community in government agencies.

In addition, the survey team conducted the activity "Bench-marking Queer Public Space in Hanoi" on the "Livable Hanoi" fanpage from December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, to January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, to encourage people to share their images and stories about LGBTIQ+ community activities that have taken place in public spaces in Hanoi. Through the Photovoice activity, the survey team collected 40 response forms.

#### IV. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

The survey team identified several limitations as follows:

Firstly, the survey team could only collect information and images that were publicly posted on organizations and individuals' Facebook accounts or submitted through the Jotform platform. Therefore, it's certain that not all activities that have occurred in public spaces from the past until now will be fully represented.

Secondly, some activities within the scope of the survey could not be included in the database due to (i) non-existent data, (ii) inaccessible data at the time of the survey, or (iii) individuals/organizations not publicly sharing images and event locations on the Facebook.

Thirdly, activities and events of the LGBTIQ+ community in public spaces in Hanoi may serve various purposes. However, identifying the primary purpose for analysis in this survey may be influenced by the perspectives of the survey team.

#### V. SURVEY RESULTS

**Public spaces** are open areas accessible to everyone, regardless of social status, gender, ethnicity, religion, etc. Every individual has the right to access and utilize public spaces for various purposes and needs. These spaces must be "multi-functional areas for social interaction, economic exchange and cultural expression among a wide diversity of people" <sup>1</sup>.

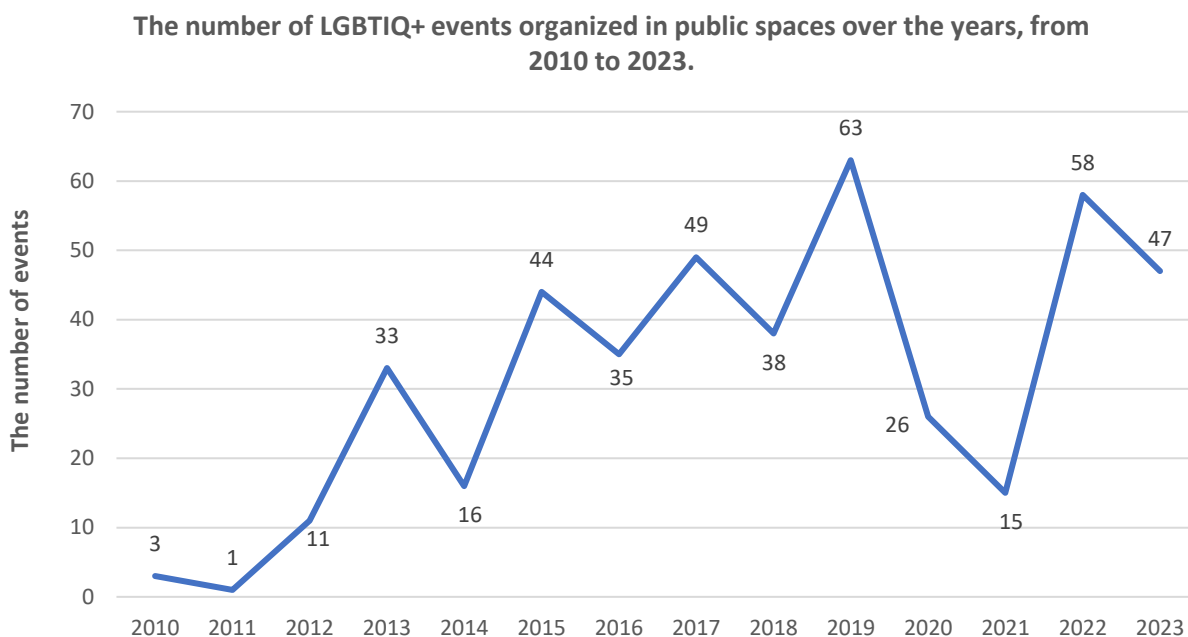
In addition to material, cultural, and spiritual values, according to Habermas, public spaces are also symbolic spaces where every social subject has the right to access and participate in the decision-making process. Therefore, accessing and using public spaces are not only important for the quality of life of citizens but also reflect their voices and status in public life.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Public Space Toolkit: From Global Principles to Local Policies and Practice. UN Habitat. Pg.4

Within the scope of the survey, the team has divided public spaces into 7 categories: (i) outdoor public spaces; (ii) educational spaces; (iii) creative/artistic spaces; (iv) government offices; (v) diplomatic offices; (vi) service-commercial spaces; and (vii) workplaces.

At the end of the data collection process, the survey team gathered information about 439 events that took place in 242 different public spaces. The frequency of events occurring in public spaces during the period from 2010 to 2023 is depicted in the chart below.



**1. FOLLOW THE TIMELINE:**

**1.1 BEFORE 2012 - LGBTIQ+ ISSUES WERE NOT DISCUSSED IN THE LAW**

According to the survey results, during the period from 2010 to 2011, when laws did not yet discuss rights and same-sex marriage, there were only 4 events held in public spaces in Hanoi focusing on promoting and raising awareness of society about the presence of the LGBTIQ+ community. This was a time when the first community events emerged, such as the "Mở" exhibition at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 "to honor the diversity of life, love, and gender, helping students in the capital city have a better understanding of the LGBT community"<sup>2</sup> (To quoc online newspaper, 2010), or the play "Stereomen" at the Youth Theater on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010, with the theme "Journey to find emotions inspired by gay and lesbian people in Vietnam"<sup>3</sup>. These events in the two years marked a positive shift in the visibility of the LGBTIQ+ community in public spaces in Hanoi, aiming to enhance the presence and awareness of society about LGBTIQ+.

<sup>2</sup> S.L. January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010. "Triển lãm 'Mở' – tôn vinh sự đa dạng của cuộc sống". *To quoc Newspaper*. <https://toquoc.vn/trien-lam-mo-ton-vinh-su-da-dang-cua-cuoc-song-99213824.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> H. Điệp, N. Hà. April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010. "Stereo man: cái nhìn gần về người đồng tính". *Tuoi Tre Online*. <https://tuoitre.vn/stereo-man-cai-nhin-gan-ve-nguoi-dong-tinh-371552.htm>.

## 1.2 THE PERIOD FROM 2012 TO 2015 - ADVOCACY FOR LAWS RELATED TO LGBTIQ+

The period from 2012 to 2015 witnessed a strong development of LGBTIQ+ community events with the goal of advocating for laws for LGBTIQ+ in Vietnam, driven by positive changes in the media, legislation, and society. In 2012, the Ministry of Justice issued a notice to consult ministries and departments on the legalization of same-sex marriage in Vietnam<sup>4</sup>.

In addition, the Viet Pride event - the annual pride celebration of the LGBTIQ+ community in Vietnam - first took place in August 2012 in Hanoi<sup>5</sup>. One of the highlights of Viet Pride 2012 was a parade of decorated rainbow-themed bicycles supporting the LGBTIQ+ community through the streets of Hanoi, including Giang Vo Lake - Kim Ma - Nguyen Thai Hoc - Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum - Hoang Dieu - Dien Bien Phu. The Viet Pride event in Hanoi continued to be held annually in August, with two main locations being the American Club and the pedestrian street around Hoan Kiem Lake.

In 2013, during the 13th National Assembly session, the Vietnamese government desired to discuss same-sex marriage issues, and the "I do" campaign was launched in October of the same year, aiming to advocate for the recognition and legalization of diverse marriages in Vietnam. According to Kenh 14 news website, an event called "Yêu là cưới" took place around mid-2013 as a collective wedding ceremony for couples expressing their love and loudly proclaiming slogans supporting same-sex marriage. According to survey data, out of 33 events, as many as 17 (51.5%) events were related to promoting same-sex marriage in 2013, such as the "Phổ Cầu vồng" campaign organized by the 6+ Group with the message "Supporting same-sex marriage." This initiative paved the way for the government to lift the ban on same-sex marriage in 2014. The Marriage and Family Law (amended) was passed by the National Assembly in 2014 and took effect from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, changing from "prohibition of marriage between persons of the same sex" to "non-recognition of marriage between persons of the same sex."<sup>6</sup> The Civil Code (amended) in 2015, effective from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, legalized the right to gender reassignment and change of citizenship for transgender individuals according to legal provisions. Also, in 2015 marked the development of unofficial and unregistered community groups (community groups), with 31 out of 44 events (70.45%) organized or co-organized by community groups. The survey team noted the society's openness to the LGBTIQ+ community as their presence increased in a variety of public spaces during the period from 2010 to 2015. The LGBTIQ+ theme is no longer a sensitive topic and is discussed more frequently in social issues, especially those related to laws and rights of LGBTIQ+ in Vietnam.

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<sup>4</sup> "Vietnam government consults on same-sex marriage", July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190730072520/https://www.gaystarnews.com/article/vietnam-government-consults-same-sex-marriage200612/#gs.iybyw7>.

<sup>5</sup> "Pride ở Việt Nam", in *Wikipedia*, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, [https://vi.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pride\\_%E1%BB%9F\\_Vi%E1%BB%87t\\_Nam&oldid=70971122](https://vi.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pride_%E1%BB%9F_Vi%E1%BB%87t_Nam&oldid=70971122).

<sup>6</sup> "Công nhận các cặp cùng giới ở Việt Nam", in *Wikipedia*, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, [https://vi.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=C%C3%B4ng\\_nh%E1%BA%ADn\\_c%C3%A1c\\_c%E1%BA%B7p\\_c%C3%B9ng\\_gi%E1%BB%9Bi\\_%E1%BB%9F\\_Vi%E1%BB%87t\\_Nam&oldid=71041419](https://vi.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=C%C3%B4ng_nh%E1%BA%ADn_c%C3%A1c_c%E1%BA%B7p_c%C3%B9ng_gi%E1%BB%9Bi_%E1%BB%9F_Vi%E1%BB%87t_Nam&oldid=71041419).

### 1.3 THE PERIOD FROM 2016 TO PRESENT - TOWARDS ADDRESSING THE DIVERSE ISSUES OF THE LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITY

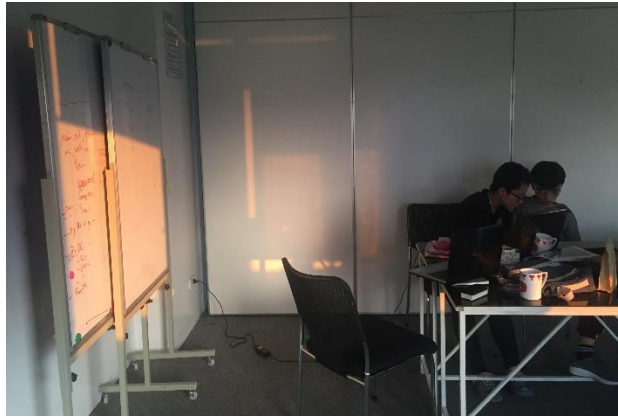
From 2016 to the present, the themes of LGBTIQ+ events have become more diverse and focus more on community capacity building, addressing specific issues for LGBTIQ+ individuals such as health, spaces, etc. Specifically, during this period, 47.43% of events aimed at communication, raising awareness, and reducing social stigma, 10.27% addressed physical and mental health issues, and 27.8% were entertainment-related events in public spaces. Also, during this period, the transgender community continued to advocate for the Gender Affirmation Law in Vietnam. In 2020, a Consultation Workshop on the Draft Gender Affirmation Law and Detailed Implementing Regulations was organized by the Ministry of Health with participation from transgender community representatives providing feedback on the draft law. In 2021, *"The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with SCDI, organized a consultation workshop on the construction of Gender Affirmation Law profiles"* (Huynh Minh Thao's Facebook, 2021). Community events held in public spaces during this period maintained a similar number and aimed at addressing specific issues for the LGBTIQ+ community, enhancing the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals, and society awareness. Only in 2020 and 2021, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of community events shifted to online platforms such as Facebook, Zoom... Therefore, the number of events held in public spaces decreased by almost half compared to other years.

The community events organized in public spaces since 2016 have seen significant changes compared to previous years. Specifically, after the formation of community groups starting from 2015, community events from 2016 onwards have tended to involve a diverse range of organizers and co-organizers, with community groups accounting for nearly half of the events in a year.

The positive changes in public spaces and locations that are LGBTIQ+-friendly over time cannot be overlooked without mentioning the efforts of projects and programs aimed at expanding and maintaining safe spaces that are inclusive of the LGBTIQ+ community in Hanoi. For instance, the "Queer Zone Project" is one of the initiatives implemented and sustained by Hà Nội Queer since 2015 with the goal of mapping out LGBTIQ+-friendly locations in the capital city of Hanoi. Queer Hub and iSEE Hub are other notable examples. These friendly spaces have provided opportunities and attracted many young people interested in the LGBTIQ+ topic to learn about and discuss this theme.

*"My first interactions (outside of the Internet) with the LGBTI community took place at iSEE Hub. It was an interview to become a member of NextGEN Hanoi - an organization of young people interested in LGBTI community issues. Since that day, I don't know how many times I've been to iSEE Hub: regular meetings, project group meetings, preparing decorations for events, chatting, joking, eating, sleeping with NextGEN at iSEE Hub. The attached photo is just one of countless times I've been here; in the photo, my friend and I are discussing our group's first research - a study about our own community. This friend is also one of my first friends in this community, and every time I think about it, I feel amazed that a group of strangers can connect, work, and care for each other. Being with NextGEN (often at iSEE Hub) is not only a process of understanding myself more but also a journey of embracing new possibilities, new concepts of family, love, friendship, connection, and living with diversity. Looking back at myself now, I see many continuities from those moments together."* Shared by Nguyen Hoang Thuy Linh via Jotform.

*"The Queer Hub community space is the first multitasking and safe space in Hanoi that opens its doors to all LGBTQ individuals and allies. It's a space for cultural activities, networking, capacity building, counseling, and useful services for the LGBTQ community. Additionally, it's also a co-working space supporting LGBTQ groups in seeking opportunities for collaboration and sustainable partnerships!" - Shared by Hà Nội Queer, 2021*



*iSEE Hub (Photo: Nguyen Hoang Thuy Linh, Jotform)*



*Queer Hub (Photo: Hà Nội Queer)*

Furthermore, the strong development of the internet and social media during this period has provided opportunities for individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions to share information about LGBTIQ+ events more widely.

## **2. FOLLOW THE NATURE OF SPACE:**

Within the scope of the survey, the group has divided public spaces into 7 categories: (i) public outdoor spaces; (ii) educational spaces; (iii) creative spaces; (iv) governmental agencies; (v) diplomatic agencies; (vi) service-commercial spaces; and (vii) workplaces. As early as 2010, the first activities of the LGBTIQ+ community shared on social media were organized in educational spaces, service-commercial spaces, and cultural exchange centers as a part of diplomatic agencies.

In terms of location, events related to LGBTIQ+ are most frequently organized in service-commercial spaces, accounting for 219 events (49.89%), followed by diplomatic agencies (17.77%) and educational spaces (14.12%). They are least organized in workplaces (2.73%) and governmental agencies (1.59%). Specifically, service-commercial spaces such as cafes, hotels, etc., are more accessible and conducive environments for organizing LGBTIQ+ community events compared to outdoor public spaces, which require permits for organization. Most events held at these venues aim to create safe and equal spaces for the LGBTIQ+ community. Additionally, events held at diplomatic agencies often coincide with IDAHOBIT in May, International Pride Month in June, and Viet Pride events in Hanoi in August every year.

Among the 242 different spaces where LGBTIQ+ communities appear in Hanoi, the Goethe Institut, American Club, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences and Humanities, and Collective Art House are the venues that host the most LGBTIQ+ related events, accounting for 5.13%, 3.35%, 2.46%, and 2.01%, respectively. Since 2013, the Goethe Institut has been the venue for annual events during Hanoi Pride Week, with 11 out of 20 events being held there. Additionally, the American Club has been hosting the Viet Pride event in Hanoi annually since 2014.

## 2.1 OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACES

Public outdoor spaces refer to outdoor areas, landscapes, and open spaces such as squares, parks, riverside promenades, outdoor playgrounds, etc.

According to the collected data, only 7.06% of events were organized in public outdoor spaces. During the initial period from 2010 to 2011, no events took place in public outdoor spaces. From 2012 to 2015, an average of about 4 events related to LGBTIQ+ occurred each year. Among them, 2012 marked the first LGBTIQ+ event organized in public outdoor spaces, notably the Bike Parade as part of the Viet Pride – First Pride starting from My Dinh Stadium and the Flashmob: LGBT - Love is Love at IPH Xuan Thuy.

The activities taking place in outdoor spaces attracted the attention of the media. For example, Vnexpress (2012) reported: *“As part of the Viet Pride festival activities - the Vietnamese version of the Pride festival (celebrating diversity in sexual orientation, held annually in many countries), this morning over 200 people gathered at My Dinh Stadium to participate in a cycling event in support of the LGBTQ+ community. Among the 200 participants, about half are members of the LGBT community (homosexual, bisexual, and transgender individuals).”*<sup>7</sup> Or Tuoi Tre Online (2012) reported: *“More than 100 young people, dressed in youthful and colorful outfits, brought spontaneous dance moves for nearly 3 hours. Set to the music of 'Hair' and 'Born This Way,' - two famous songs in the LGBT community by Lady Gaga, with the message 'I just want to be myself.' The performance quickly attracted the attention of many bystanders in the central area, with many foreign guests eagerly joining the program. Many young people came from neighboring areas such as Quang Ninh and Hai Phong.”*<sup>8</sup>



Viet Pride – First Pride 2012  
(Photo: Thang Bin)



More than 100 young people performed a collective dance titled “Love is love” at Indochina Plaza, Cau Giay, Hanoi. (Photo: Pham Nham)

In the 31 events organized in public outdoor spaces, 22.58% of the events were held in 2013. 2013 was the year with the highest number of LGBTIQ+ events in these spaces. The highlight of this year was the launch of the "I Do" Campaign - a social communication campaign initiated by the Institute for Social,

<sup>7</sup> Phan Duong. August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012. “Người đồng tính đạp xe diễu hành ở thủ đô”. *VnExpress*.

<https://vnexpress.net/nguoi-dong-tinh-dap-xe-dieu-hanh-o-thu-do-2282397.html>

<sup>8</sup> Nga Linh, Tien Thang. September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012. “Vũ điệu flashmob cho người đồng tính”. *Tuoi Tre Online*.

<https://tuoi-tre.vn/vu-dieu-flashmob-cho-nguoi-dong-tinh-512863.htm>

Economic and Environmental Research (iSEE) and the ICS Center to call for support from the Vietnamese people for same-sex marriage. The "I Do" festival was held in Thong Nhat Park on the morning of October 27, 2013, with the participation of over 2,000 people of all ages and various social groups, leaving a profound impact on the attendees, the media, and the community as a whole.

*"I Do 2013 wasn't the first LGBTIQ event I attended, but it was one of the most memorable experiences for me. At that time, I truly resonated with the message of "I Do" - aiming to recognize and legalize diverse marriages. I had friends in the community who had been in serious relationships for many years but couldn't live together legally. I participated as an ally and saw it as an opportunity to connect with people like myself. Through this event, I befriended an American to share and learn about the similarities and differences in queer culture between our two countries." - Shared by Tram Anh via Jotform.*



The 'I Do' festival at Thong Nhat Park in 2013 (Photo: Kênh 14).

In addition, in 2013, many collective same-sex weddings were organized in Vietnam, most notably the collective wedding event titled "Yêu là cưới" for same-sex couples, bisexual couples, etc. The "wedding ceremonies" were held at various locations such as Topcare Supermarket in Cau Giay, Indochina Plaza, Vincom Center, and the Octagon House by the Lake, attracting a lot of attention from passersby, the press, and the media..



The collective wedding ceremony “Yêu là cưới” at Vincom Building in 2013 (Photo: Kenh 14).

The diverse range of events, including exhibitions, collective weddings, cycling parades, and more, has attracted the attention and participation of many people, raising their awareness of LGBTIQ+ issues.

For instance, the exhibition “Một Tôi Khác” in 2013 *“was a very interesting and impressive event, not only because of the beautiful and vivid photos taken by amateur photographers, but also because the exhibition truly helped viewers understand the difficulties faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals, as well as other communities such as people with disabilities and street vendors, but through a very positive and hopeful lens. I recall my child, who was in kindergarten and couldn't read yet, so I had to explain the stories behind each photo. On the way home, my child and I exchanged many thoughts about those photos and stories. I believe this will be a memorable experience for my child and will help them understand more about diversity in life.”* Minh Hanh shared via Jotform.



The exhibition “Một tôi khác” at Ly Thai To park in 2013 (Photo: Minh Hanh).

In recent years, from 2016 to 2023, on average, only 2 events per year have taken place in public outdoor spaces, mainly at Hoan Kiem pedestrian street, with VietPride being the prominent event organized annually in August.

Regarding the purpose, events organized in public outdoor spaces often focus on (1) communication, raising awareness, reducing prejudice and supporting the LGBTIQ+ community (approximately 87.10%), entertainment (9.68%), and advocating for rights and laws for the LGBTIQ+ community (3.23%). The only event organized in a public space aimed primarily at advocating for rights and laws for the LGBTIQ+ community was the "Thank You National Assembly" activity when gender transition rights in Vietnam were officially passed in the amended Civil Code in 2015. On November 24, 2015, a group of young transgender individuals and supporters in Hanoi welcomed the convoy of National Assembly delegates outside the National Assembly building. They expressed joy and jubilation while holding banners and signs to convey messages of gratitude.

Participating in this activity, Nguyen Bang Giang shared his impressions through VMHND'S's Jotform: " At that time, the Gender Affirmation Law was presented as a draft and reviewed before the National Assembly on November 24, 2015. During that period, Giang had just come down from NextGen Thai Nguyen to Hanoi for studies and had participated in a meeting with the LGBTIQ+ community. The next morning, Giang and a friend went to iSEE to make signs in preparation for the event. Around noon, they received news that the National Assembly had passed the law, and Giang and everyone else were very happy.

*According to the plan, Giang and everyone went to the bus station opposite Lenin Park to wait for the delegation to pass by. When the delegation passed, the whole group joyfully raised banners of gratitude to show their appreciation. Many delegates on the bus also looked towards us, perhaps they were also pleased to see strangers cheering on their legal advocacy journey."*



The event "Thank You National Assembly" in front of the National Assembly building in 2015.  
(photo: NextGEN)

From the early years of 2012 to 2014, LGBTIQ+ events were mainly organized by non-governmental organizations in Vietnam such as the Institute for Social, Economic and Environmental Research (iSEE) and the ICS Center; and the LGBT 6+ Community Development Center (formerly known as the LGBT Program of ICS). In 2015, there began to be participation in organizing events in outdoor public spaces by other LGBTIQ+ community groups such as Hà Nội Queer, WeEqual, and others. Another notable point is that in 2018, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam, Oxfam Vietnam, the Swiss Embassy, and many others collaborated to organize the BridgeFest event - an annual event that celebrates diversity, and aims for a humane economy and an equal society.



BridgeFest in 2019 at Quan Ngua Sports Complex (photo: ECUE).



BridgeFest in 2020 at Hoan Kiem pedestrian street (photo: ECUE).

**2.2 EDUCATIONAL SPACES**

The educational space refers to school environments, specifically high schools, academies, and universities.

According to statistics, 14.12% of LGBTIQ+ events are organized in educational spaces. During the period 2010-2011, an average of about 1 LGBTIQ+ event occurred each year. From 2012 to 2015, there were about 2 events per year on average. Recently, more LGBTIQ+ events have been organized in educational spaces, with an average of about 7 events per year, peaking in 2022. Specifically, out of 62 events held in educational spaces, 24.19% of them took place in 2022. The most prominent event in 2022 was the "Tôi

Đồng Ý: UNI Tour" organized by iSEE Institute and ICS Center at universities to discuss gender norms in schools, marriage, family, and workplace.

Facebook Tôi Đồng Ý (2022) shared about an activity in the event series: *“On October 28th, the Unitour event titled ‘Khuôn là khổ’ was held at Hanoi Medical University, along with a seminar on ‘Khuôn mẫu giới trong y tế’. In the Q&A session about LGBT, an interesting observation was made: Not all medical students were able to answer questions about sexual diversity correctly; evidence showed that 30-50% of the students answered incorrectly for each question. This suggests that knowledge about sexual diversity may not be a separate specialized field, but rather knowledge that each of us needs to learn and exchange together.”*

The knowledge and discussions about gender stereotypes and sexual diversity have attracted attention, reflection, and deep discussions from the students. Do Thi Kim Ngan, a student from the Foreign Trade University, shared in the panel discussion *“Bàn về cái khuôn”* organized by Tôi Đồng Ý, iSEE Institute, and ICS. *‘Gender stereotypes have negative impacts on our lives and ourselves. They hinder diversity, creativity, and the colorful aspects of life. They unintentionally shape certain prejudices in individuals or groups.*

*A society with many stereotypes has never been an ideal environment for individuals to express and develop their talents to the fullest. Gender stereotypes may cause many people to overlook good and suitable opportunities in their lives, forcing them to follow a path that does not entirely align with their passions and abilities. For example, a young man dreaming of pursuing a career in cooking or baking...”*



2022 I Do – UNI Tour at Hanoi University  
(Photo: FB Tôi Đồng Ý)



2022 I Do – UNI Tour at Hanoi Medical University  
(Photo: FB Tôi Đồng Ý)



2022 I Do – UNI Tour at Foreign Trade University  
(Photo: FB Tôi Đồng Ý)



2022 I Do – UNI Tour at Academy of Journalism  
and Communication  
(Photo: FB Tôi Đồng Ý)



2022 I Do – UNI Tour at Vietnam Women's  
Institute (Photo: FB Tôi Đồng Ý)



2022 I Do – UNI Tour at Swinburne University of  
Technology (Photo: FB Tôi Đồng Ý)

In addition, events at educational spaces are mainly organized at university campuses, ranging from public universities such as Hanoi University of Science and Technology, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, National Economics University, to private universities like Vin University, and international schools such as BUW and RMIT (constituting 95.08%); and fewer events are held at high schools, specifically Viet Duc High School, Van Noi High School, and Olympia School (constituting 4.92%).

In terms of purpose, events held at schools typically focus on (1) communication, raising awareness, reducing prejudice, and supporting the LGBTIQ+ community (73.77%), (2) entertainment such as film screenings, fairs, and parties (14.75%), (3) health and mental well-being including sharing knowledge related to HIV prevention for youth and LGBTIQ+ individuals, sexual and reproductive health, or workshops on SOGIESC (8.20%), and (4) legal rights for the LGBTIQ+ community (3.28%).



“Vietnam Women and Queer Open”  
at Olympia School in 2023  
(Photo: Vietnam Women and Queer Open)



“Hai Thế giới” Exhibition at National Economic  
University in 2023  
(Photo: EEC – Economic English Club of NEU)



“STEP UP - Bắt sóng cảm xúc, Tận hưởng yêu  
thương” at National Economic University in  
2019 (Photo: FB CLB Sinh viên Tuyen truyen PC  
TNXH & HIV/AIDS)



“Meet & Mingle 2022” at British University Vietnam  
(Photo: FB BUY Pride)

Only 2 events related to the law were organized in educational spaces as found by the survey team. Specifically, these events were the Seminar named “*Người chuyển giới trong Bộ Luật Dân sự sửa đổi năm 2015*” (*Transgender Individuals in the Civil Code Amendment of 2015*) held at the Trade Union University in 2015 and the Workshop on “*Pháp luật về chuyển đổi giới tính trên thế giới và kinh nghiệm cho Việt Nam*” (*The Legal Framework on Gender Transition Worldwide and Lessons for Vietnam*) at the Law Faculty of the National University in 2016. In the following years, the research group did not find any information about events related to laws or rights for the LGBTIQ+ community being organized in educational spaces.

Another notable point is that knowledge about gender identity and sexual orientation is not included in the formal education curriculum of schools. Students can only access this knowledge through training sessions, seminars, and knowledge-sharing events at school. With the desire to raise awareness of sexual diversity among students in schools and universities in Hanoi, many programs aimed at promoting awareness of sexual diversity and non-discrimination have been organized in collaboration with school administrations and clubs within the schools.

## 2.3 CREATIVE SPACES

Creative spaces are venues for artistic performances, exhibitions, gatherings, exchanges, and information sharing. They shape and connect the creative ideas of artistic practitioners such as exhibitions, theaters, cinemas, museums...

According to statistics, 6.83% of LGBTIQ+ events are held in creative spaces. From 2010 to 2011, an average of one event per year was organized. The opening act was the play "Stereoman", sponsored by the iSEE Institute and performed at the Youth Theatre in 2010. The play addresses the issues of gay men: "Since they are not accepted by society, despite their gender struggles, despite their yearn to experience the pure feelings of love and sex, those feelings are always suppressed" (Tuoi Tre Newspaper, 2010).<sup>9</sup>



The "Stereoman" play performed at the Youth Theatre in 2010.  
(Photo: Youth Theatre of Vietnam)

The period 2012-2015 marked the highest number of events organized, with around 4 events per year, especially in 2015. The number of events held in creative spaces gradually decreased in the latter period (2016-2023), averaging about 2 events per year. It is worth noting that the survey team did not find any information on LGBTIQ+ events held in these spaces in 2022 and 2023.

In terms of purpose, events held in creative spaces focused on (1) communication, reducing societal prejudice and supporting the LGBTIQ+ community through artistic activities such as exhibitions, artistic performances, and talk shows (61.29%); (2) entertainment (e.g. film screenings, queer festivals) (25.81%); (3) community building (6.45%); and (4) health care for the LGBTIQ+ community (6.45%).

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<sup>9</sup> H.Diep, N.Ha. April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010. "Stereo man: cái nhìn gần về người đồng tính". Tuoi Tre Online. <https://tuoitre.vn/stereo-man-cai-nhin-gan-ve-nguoi-dong-tinh-371552.htm>



“Stereo woman – Aspiration to be Myself” play at the Youth Theatre in 2012  
(Photo: Youth Theatre of Vietnam)



“Right or Wrong – Same-sex Marriage” talkshow at Manzi Art Space in 2013  
(Photo: Manzi Art Space)



"heARTbreak!" exhibition at Nhà sàn Collective in 2015 (Photo: Nhà Sàn Collective)



“INVISIBLE” exhibition at The Mahogany Core Space in 2018  
(Photo: Lighthouse Social Enterprise)

## 2.4 GOVERNMENT AGENCY

Only 1.59% of LGBTIQ+ related events took place in spaces belonging to government agencies. Most events identified by the survey team occurred at the Vietnam National Assembly Building where delegates and lawmakers discuss legal issues related to the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals.

During the period 2012-2015, an average of one event per year was organized in these spaces. In the following years, activities related to LGBTIQ+ were not held in these spaces and only reappeared from 2020 onwards. This may be due to (i) government agencies only discussing LGBTIQ+ rights issues when related to laws, legislation, and/or (ii) internal events occurring within government agencies not being widely publicized on media and social networks.

Activities related to law and rights in these spaces account for 85.71% and occur at times coinciding with the legislative agenda of the National Assembly. During the period 2012-2015, the topic of same-sex marriage and gender transition were discussed in some sessions of the National Assembly. These events are closely linked to the drafting of amendments of the Marriage and Family Law (2013) and the Civil Code (2015).

For example, in 2013, the online magazine VnEconomy reported on a session discussing the draft amendments to certain provisions of the Marriage and Family Law by the National Assembly: *"Regarding the provision prohibiting marriage between individuals of the same sex, in this amendment, the state 'does not recognize marital relationships between individuals of the same sex' instead of 'prohibiting' as before, and this is indeed a legal milestone on this issue"* <sup>10</sup>.



Venerable Thich Thanh Quyet proposed that the National Assembly recognize the right to same-sex marriage during the parliamentary session in 2013 (Photo: VnEconomy).

It was not until 2021 that issues regarding the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals, specifically gender transition rights, continued to be discussed with the aim of drafting the Gender Affirmation Law. *"Discussion on the Draft Civil Code (amended) on June 10, delegates of the National Assembly expressed quite different opinions regarding the provisions on gender transition rights"*, reported by Tien Phong Online Newspaper, 2015 <sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Nghe Nhan. November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013. "Người đồng tính 'chỉ còn trông chờ vào Quốc hội'". *VnEconomy Online Magazine*.

<https://vneconomy.vn/nguoi-dong-tinh-chi-con-trong-cho-vao-quoc-hoi.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Van Kien, Dung Nguyen. June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015. "Quyền chuyển đổi giới tính: Nhiều tranh cãi". *Tien Phong Online Newspaper*. <https://tienphong.vn/quyen-chuyen-doi-gioi-tinh-nhieu-tranh-cai-post788086.tpo>



Delegate Nguyen Son (Hanoi) shared in a National Assembly session in 2015: “People who were born imperfect should be allowed to undergo gender transition; that is also an act of compassion.”  
(Photo: Nhu Y).

Most recently, in May 2023, the National Assembly Portal reported on the inclusion of the gender affirmative law project in the legislative agenda for 2024: *“During the session, representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice affirmed the government's agreement on the necessity of drafting the Gender Affirmative Law. They also supported delegate Nguyen Anh Tri's proposal to draft the law, stating that this law project would contribute to institutionalizing the provisions of the Constitution, serving an important role in protecting the rights and interests of citizens”*.<sup>12</sup>



Delegate Nguyen Anh Tri presented the proposal to draft the Gender Affirmative Law during a session in April 2023 (Photo: Lao Dong Newspaper).



The Standing Committee of National Assembly provided feedback on the proposal to draft the Gender Affirmative Law in 2023 (Photo: Viet Nam National Assembly Portal).

<sup>12</sup> Trong Quỳnh. May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023. “100% ý kiến nhất trí trình quốc hội đưa dự án luật chuyển đổi giới tính vào chương trình xây dựng luật, pháp lệnh 2024”. *Viet Nam National Assembly Portal*.  
<https://quochoi.vn/tintuc/Pages/tin-hoat-dong-cua-quoc-hoi.aspx?ItemID=75752>

The only activity aimed at communication, raising awareness, and reducing societal prejudice that took place in this space was the training session “Nâng cao kiến thức và kỹ năng cho nhân viên y tế hướng tới môi trường y tế thân thiện với cộng đồng đích” (Enhancing knowledge and skills for healthcare staff towards a community-friendly healthcare environment) organized in 2020 at the Thanh Xuan District Health Center - a public sector entity under the Department of Health. The event was organized by the Lighthouse Social Enterprise, with the participation of 36 healthcare professionals and staff working at the Thanh Xuan District Health Center. The training aimed to (i) raise awareness among healthcare professionals about the LGBTIQ+ community; (ii) provide knowledge about gender and sexuality diversity, and (iii) practice principles of behavior, counseling, and delivering quality, friendly healthcare services to the target community.



Healthcare staff of the Thanh Xuan District Health Center participated in the training in 2020  
(Photo: Lighthouse Social Enterprise).

## 2.5 DIPLOMATIC AGENCY

Diplomatic agencies also serve as spaces where events for the LGBTIQ+ community often take place. The survey team has categorized this space into 3 groups: (i) diplomatic representative agency, (ii) ambassador's residence, and (iii) cultural exchange centers.

Activities related to LGBTIQ+ were first organized in this space in 2012. During the period from 2012 to 2015, an average of about 5 events occurred each year, mainly festivals and art exhibitions. From 2016 to 2023, activities held at diplomatic agencies have become increasingly diverse in formats and more widespread, with an average of 7 events per year.

### 2.5.1. Diplomatic Representative Agency

From 2013 to 2023, the survey team collected information on 20 activities (4.56%) organized at diplomatic representative agencies. Most of these events took place at embassies, consulates of foreign countries, and the representative offices of the United Nations in Vietnam. Notably, countries known for their positive policies and attitudes towards the LGBTIQ+ community such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Sweden, Norway, etc., tend to organize and lead activities related to the community more frequently.

Events related to LGBTIQ+ organized at diplomatic representative agencies mainly focus on (1) communication and raising awareness (70%); (2) community building (15%); (3) discussions on rights and laws (10%); and (4) entertainment (5%).

For communication, raising awareness, and reducing social stigma/prejudice, these events are often organized by diplomatic representative agencies in collaboration with NGOs, organizations, and community groups in various forms: seminars, workshops, film festivals, participation in community campaigns and Pride Month, meetings with LGBTIQ+ organizations and groups, etc. A notable example is the participation of representatives from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Swedish Embassy, and the British Embassy in the "I Do" (Tôi Đồng Ý) campaign for marriage equality (2013, 2014) organized by iSEE Institute and ICS Center. Additionally, on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT) on May 17th and during the annual Pride Month, embassies of many countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, or Australia, fly the rainbow flag to show respect for diversity and openly express support for the LGBTIQ+ community.



The representatives and staff of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Swedish Embassy showed support for same-sex marriage in Vietnam in 2013 (Photo: Tôi Đồng Ý).



The Embassy of Ireland's staff celebrated Hanoi Pride 2020 (Photo: Irish Embassy in Vietnam).



The United Nations in Vietnam's staff gathered in the Green One UN House to support Hanoi Pride 2022 (Photo: United Nations Viet Nam).

Community building activities often involve intimate gatherings between diplomatic representative agencies and community organizations. For example, during the Hanoi Pride Week in 2019, the Norwegian Embassy organized an intimate meeting with representatives from various embassies, the Hanoi Pride organizing committee, and LGBTIQ+ community groups in Hanoi. This activity provided an opportunity for networking and sharing experiences among organizations and community groups advocating for the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals in Vietnam and internationally.

Two other events included the meeting with LGBTIQ+ community groups at the Green One UN House to consult on the "LGBTI Inclusion Index" and the study tour to exchange experiences in promoting gender equality in Vietnam. These activities were coordinated by UNDP in collaboration with diplomatic representative agencies and NGOs (iSEE Institute, CSAGA, UNICEF), aiming to build capacity for program officers and activists working on LGBTIQ+ rights.



The community meeting and consulting on the "LGBTI Inclusion Index" in Green One UN House in 2022 (Photo: Lighthouse Social Enterprise).



The study tour for LGBTIQ+ groups on the process of promoting gender equality in Vietnam in 2023 (Photo: Nguyen Mai).

Regarding discussions on legal issues and the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals, workshops on this topic began to emerge in this space since 2016, specifically in a meeting between representatives from the Australian Embassy and community organizations in Vietnam at the Australian Embassy to acknowledge Vietnam's progress in protecting the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals and areas where community improvements are still needed. At this time, discussions on the rights and presence of queer individuals have expanded and gained international attention.

*"We had a very lively discussion about the current situation of the LGBT community in Vietnam. Not only did we share our own stories and experiences, but also heard stories from activists in Australia. [...] Through such dialogues, we know that we are not alone. The LGBT community in Vietnam is always supported and cheered on by international friends for the progress we have made", NextGEN's Facebook, 2016.*



The meeting between Australian Embassy's representatives and Vietnam's LGBTIQ+ community groups in 2016  
(Photo: NextGEN).

At the "Consultation Workshop on Preliminary Results of the LGBTI Inclusion Index" in 2022, representatives from diplomatic representative agencies, community organizations and groups shared and engaged in lively discussions about the results achieved after many years of social advocacy and rights movements. Vietnam became the only Southeast Asian country and one of the two countries in Asia to participate in the pilot phase of this index.



The consultation workshop on Preliminary Results of the LGBTI Inclusion Index in 2022  
(Photo: Lighthouse Social Enterprise).

According to the gathered information, entertainment activities are rarely organized at diplomatic representative agencies, with only one event being a film screening as part of the "Hanoi International Queer Film Week 2019" held at the Embassy of the Czech Republic. With the theme "Let's Fall in Love,"

the film week brought 34 independent queer films from 20 countries and territories around the world to audience.



The film screening of “Hà Nội Queer Film Week” in 2019 at the Embassy of the Czech Republic (Photo: LumiQueer).

### *2.5.2. Ambassador’s Residence*

The survey team collected data on 13 activities held at the residence of ambassadors in Hanoi, accounting for 2.96% of the total events. These activities focused on (1) communication, raising awareness, and reducing social prejudice/stigma (61.54%); (2) entertainment (30.77%); and (3) community building (7.69%).

For communication and awareness-raising events, many ambassadors frequently publicly support the LGBTIQ+ community by providing venues for the activities of community organizations and groups, hosting various events, and participating in significant community commemorations at their residences. For example, on the annual IDAHOBIT day, the residences of the Ambassadors of the United Kingdom and Canada both display rainbow flags and post pictures on Facebook. In 2021, the residence of the Norwegian Ambassador, Grete Løchen, became the venue for the opening ceremony of Hanoi Pride 2021. This event marked the 10-year journey of Hanoi Pride - the largest annual event for the LGBTIQ+ community in Hanoi. In 2022, also within the framework of Hanoi Pride, the community organization IT’S T TIME hosted a discussion on “Khuôn mẫu giới và Giọng nói” (Gender Norms and Voices) at the residence of the Ambassador of Argentina to discuss issues related to gender norms and queer individuals, especially transgender people.



The opening ceremony of Hanoi Pride 2021 at the Ambassador of Norwegian's residence  
(Photo: Hanoi Pride)



Ambassador of Canada and staff raised the rainbow flag, celebrating the 2022's IDAHOBIT day  
(Photo: Đại sứ quán Canada tại Việt Nam)



The rainbow flag displayed at the Ambassador of the UK's residence on IDAHOBIT day in 2023  
(Photo: UK in Vietnam)



The Ambassador of Canada displayed the rainbow flag in celebration of Hanoi Pride 2023  
(Photo: Đại sứ quán Canada tại Việt Nam)

For entertainment purposes, events are often organized in the form of free film screenings, bringing a variety of LGBTIQ-themed movies from countries in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Europe to audience of different ages and genders. A notable example is the event "Chiếu phim điện ảnh và phim tài liệu về queer" (Screening of Queer Films and Documentaries) organized in 2022 at the residence of the Ambassador of the Netherlands by the Lighthouse Social Enterprise, LumiQueer, and Document Our History Now (DOHN).



“Chiếu phim điện ảnh và phim tài liệu về queer” film screening hosted at the residence of the Ambassador of the Netherlands in 2022

(Photo: Lighthouse Social Enterprise).

There was only one event focusing on community building held at the Ambassador's residence. It was the “Nhật thực” (Solar Eclipse) workshop on efforts to promote rights for the LGBTIQ+ community in Vietnam, especially for transgender individuals, hosted at the residence of the Ambassador of Canada. The event took place during Hanoi Pride 2023, with the participation of partners from the G4 group (Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland) and members of the LGBTIQ+ community in Hanoi.



“Nhật thực” workshop held at the residence of the Ambassador of Canada in 2023

(Photo: Norwegian Embassy in Hanoi).

### 2.5.3. Cultural Exchange Center

The survey team realized that foreign cultural exchange centers are one of the top three public spaces where the most LGBTIQ+ community activities take place, with 45 events organized, accounting for 10.39% of the total events. Specifically, the Goethe Institut and the American Club are the two venues hosting the most queer-related activities among the 242 spaces surveyed. From 2013 to 2023, the Goethe-Institut

hosted 23 events, while the American Club hosted 15 events, closely linked to the development of the LGBTIQ movement in Hanoi.

In terms of purposes, LGBTIQ+-related events organized at cultural exchange centers often focus on (1) communication and raising awareness (75.56%); entertainment (13.33%); discussions on rights and legal issues (4.44%); and (4) livelihood activities (2.22%).



Photo exhibition “Khi gia đình là điểm tựa” (When Family Becomes the Fulcrum) at American Club in 2022  
(Photo: Lighthouse Social Enterprise)



“Kịch tương tác với LGBTQ” (Interactive Theater with LGBTQ) event held at the Goethe-Institut in 2016  
(Photo: Hanoi Pride).

For communication, raising awareness and reducing societal prejudice, events are often organized in the form of exhibitions, artistic performances, panel discussions, seminars, and festivals. The Goethe Institut is the venue where many artistic events and discussions about the lives of queer people take place, such as the exhibition "Pink Choice – Love is Love" by photographer Maika Elan (2013), the exhibition “Dưới ánh mặt trời” (Under the Sun) (2014), the art festival "Queer Forever!" (2015), or the panel discussion "Con tôi đặc biệt" (My Child is Special) (2016).



“Pink Choice” photo exhibition of Maika Elan at Goethe-Institut in 2013 (Photo: ICS).



“Dưới ánh mặt trời” photo exhibition held at Goethe-Institut in 2014 (Photo: 6+).



Opening ceremony of “Queer Forever!” art festival at Goethe-Institut in 2015 (Photo: Queer Forever).



“Con tôi đặc biệt” panel discussion organized by CSAGA, PFLAG, NextGen and 6+ at Goethe-Institut in 2016 (Photo: 6+).

Annual festivals such as ASEAN Pride (2013, 2014), Viet Pride (Hanoi Pride), or BUBU Town (2015-2018) are often held at the American Club due to its advantage as an open space. These events always attract many participants of all ages and genders, featuring various engaging activities such as booths, games, and music performances. Therefore, they become safe spaces for queer individuals to be present and effectively convey messages of celebrating diversity to the community. Additionally, the American Center and L’Espace were also venues for talks and discussions on LGBTIQ+ topics. For example, events like the film screening and discussion "Gender, Identity, and LGBT Rights" (L’Espace, 2018) or the discussion "Queer Hanoi, 1990-2020: Reflections on Emerging Identities" (American Center, 2020) took place in these spaces.



“Bubu Town” held at American Club in 2016 (Photo: iSEE).



American Club is the iconic space where the largest annual LGBTIQ+ event in Hanoi took place – Hanoi Pride (Photo: Hanoi Pride).



“Pride Night” of Hanoi Pride 2023 at American Club attracted the participation of hundreds of queer people and allies (Photo: Hanoi Pride).



Talkshow “Queer Hanoi, 1990-2020: Reflections on Emerging Identities” with Dr. Frank Proschan at American Center in 2020 (Photo: Luong The Huy).

For entertainment purposes, events related to the LGBTIQ+ community are often organized in the form of community film screenings and music festivals. Through music and film, the presence of LGBTIQ+ individuals is highlighted, either placed at the center or integrated into messages about diversity and equality.



A film screening of the “Hanoi International Queer Film Week” in 2017 at Goethe-Institut (Photo: Hanoi International Queer Film Week).



Film screening “Madam Phung’s Last Journey” at L’Espace in 2015 (Photo: Pham Thi Hong Anh).

Regarding discussions on laws and legal issues, there were only two workshops held in this space, both taking place at the Goethe-Institut. These were the workshop "Presentation of the UN's 2013 National Report on LGBT" (2014) and a panel discussion addressing issues related to the Marriage and Family Law for the LGBTIQ+ community titled "Is Gay Marrying Lesbian the Perfect Solution?" (2019).



Workshop “Presentation of the UN’s 2013 National Report on LGBT” at Goethe-Institut in 2014 (Photo: Hanoi Pride).



Panel discussion “Is Gay Marrying Lesbian the Perfect Solution?” hosted by CSAGA at Goethe-Institut in 2019 (Photo: CSAGA Vietnam).

There was only one activity related to the livelihood of queer individuals held at the cultural exchange center. It was the "Workshop on Leadership and Business Skills for LGBTI Community Members", organized by the American Center in 2016. The event aimed to inspire and open opportunities for life-changing experiences for queer individuals.

## 2.6 SERVICE SPACE

Among the 7 surveyed spaces, accommodation, dining, bar/club/lounge, and co-working space businesses are the venues where most LGBTIQ+ community events take place, with a total of 218 activities and accounting for 49.89% of the total events. LGBTIQ+ related activities in service spaces emerged quite early (before 2012) and gradually became the top choice of venue. From 2012 to 2015, an average of 10 queer events were organized annually at cafes, restaurants, bars/clubs/lounges, or hotels. This number has more than doubled since 2016. Some commonly chosen venues for community activities include the iSEE Hub, Army Guest House, Hanoi Social Club café, Savage Lounge bar, and Complex 1.

At service businesses, LGBTIQ+ events focus on (1) communication and raising awareness (33.94%); (2) entertainment (33.49%); (3) community building (12.39%); (4) discussions on health and mental health (10.55%); and (5) discussions on rights/legal issues (8.72%). For communication and capacity-building activities aimed at reducing societal prejudice, restaurants and cafes are the most common venues for community events in the form of exhibitions, meetings, music parties, etc. These are small to medium-scale activities organized by various organizations and community groups for different ages, genders, and sexual orientations to raise awareness about the presence of queer individuals in society and integrate messages about gender diversity and sexual safety for queer people.

Notably, since 2013, many restaurants and cafes have participated in the "I Do" campaign (2013) and "Queer zone" (2015 - present). These are spaces that are friendly and openly supportive of the LGBTIQ+ community, hence becoming familiar meeting places for the diverse queer community in Hanoi.



“Rainbows and Buttons” exhibition organized by Youth Orientation Vietnam to raise awareness about the LGBTIQ+ community at Le Cine café in 2014 (Photo: 6+)



“Viet Nam Queer History Month” exhibition at Savage Lounge in 2018 (Photo: Hà Nội Queer).



“Out and Proud Summer Party” celebrating Pride Month and promoting safe sex at LaCa café in 2018 (Photo: Lighthouse Social Enterprise).



“Hầu đồng và Queer” exhibition at O Kìa Hà Nội in 2019 (Photo: Hà Nội Queer).



LGBTIQ+ friendly businesses have the “I Do” and “Queer Zone” stickers on their door (Photo: Tôi Đồng Ý, Hà Nội Queer).

Meeting rooms and conference halls of accommodation service businesses are venues for many workshops, panel discussions, and exhibitions related to LGBTIQ+ on both small and large scales. These events often involve various stakeholders such as government agencies, diplomatic agencies, NGOs, individuals, organizations, and community groups. Examples include the workshop "Literature - Art and LGBT" (Daewoo Hotel, 2013), the talk show "Định kiến đến từ đâu" (Where Prejudice Comes From) (Sao Mai Hotel, 2017), the seminar "Sharing about SOGIESC and UNCRC" (Ministry of National Defense Guest House, 2018), and the seminar "Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity: International and Viet Nam's experiences" (Intercontinental Hotel, 2022).



Workshop "Literature – Art and LGBT" held at Daewoo Hotel in 2013 with an aim to connect artists and queer people (Photo: CSAGA Vietnam).



Seminar "Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity: International and Viet Nam's experience" at Intercontinental Hotel in 2022 (ảnh: Lighthouse Social Enterprise).

For entertainment purposes, events held at service spaces are often organized in various forms such as community meetups, concerts, parties, and drag performances. These spaces began to be chosen as event venues by community groups starting in 2013 and have become increasingly popular in the past 7 years. Most activities take place at cafes and bars/clubs/lounges, creating safe and open spaces for queer individuals to socialize and interact. Notable examples include the "6'MAS Big Party" event (KANDY Club, 2013), the blind date "Blind date: Door of Love" (Jam Coffee, 2015), the LGBTIQ+ ball "Inqueerable Night" (O'Learys Bar, 2018), the music night "Trans Dot" (The HUT Lakeside Bar, 2022), and the drag performance "Gagapalooza" (Sidewalk Hanoi, 2019). Additionally, community groups often choose cafes as venues for regular themed gatherings and sharing sessions.



“Speed Dating” event for LGBTIQ+ community at The Nerd's Nest in 2016  
(Photo: Hà Nội Queer)



“Inqueerable Night” is the prom for LGBTIQ+ community, held at O’Learys Bar in 2018  
(Photo: Hà Nội Queer).

Community-building events organized at service businesses are often in the form of meetings, workshops, seminars, and discussions aimed at (i) enhancing knowledge and skills; (ii) identifying challenges and setting directions for activities related to LGBTIQ+; and (iii) connecting individuals, groups, and organizations working for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people. These events are typically held in meeting rooms and conference halls of hotels and co-working offices of community groups and organizations such as Queer Hub (Hà Nội Queer), iSEE Hub (iSEE Institute), or CEPEW Nest (CEPEW).



“I Heart Ha Noi” LGBTIQ+ community meeting organized by iSEE và ICS at Army Guest House in 2011 (Photo: ICS).



“QueerCine: A Single Man” film screening at iSEE Hub in 2017 (Photo: Hà Nội Queer).



“Hành trang pháp lý 2: Có lực mới vực được quyền” event at Queer Hub in 2021, focusing on the rights of transgender people (Photo: IT’S T TIME).



“Stronger Together Summit” is an annual event for organizations and community groups to discuss challenges and solutions to promote LGBTIQ+ rights. This photo was taken at Fortuna Hotel in 2022 (Photo: Lighthouse Social Enterprise).

Regarding health-related topics, since 2016, sharing sessions and workshops focusing on physical, mental, and sexual health of transgender individuals (gender transition surgery, hormone usage, psychological barriers, etc.) have been initiated by community groups and organizations at LGBTIQ+ friendly cafes and co-working spaces. On a larger scale, panel discussions and seminars on health issues for the LGBTIQ+ community take place in conference rooms of hotels and co-working offices of community organizations. For example, events like the "Exchange with doctors from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)" (iSEE Hub, 2020) and the forum "Collaboration and actions to improve mental health for the LGBTIQ+ community in Vietnam" (Sen Grand Hotel and Spa, 2022).



“Vén” workshop, held at Café Nhà Ấm in 2017, provided a safe space for LGBTIQ+ people to share about mental and sexual health (Photo: 6+)



“Bước vào trong mình” workshop, held at Moonwork Coworking Space in 2018, aimed to share and heal mental barriers of transgender people (Photo: 6+)



"Collaboration and actions to improve mental health for the LGBTQ+ community in Vietnam" forum at Sen Grand Hotel and Spa in 2022 (Photo: Lighthouse Social Enterprise).



“Trans Talk 11” workshop, organized at G.O.K Coffee in 2023, created a sharing space for medical and sexual health issues for transgender people (Photo: IT’S T TIME).

Events related to law and rights of the LGBTQ+ community held in these spaces mainly took place during the period of 2012-2015. These were workshops, panel discussions, and training sessions aimed at advocating for the rights of queer individuals, focusing on two main topics: marriage equality rights and gender affirmation bill.

*"For me, I want to transition because I am a woman, not a man. The injections of silicone into my body were not done by a doctor, but by a transgender person. The needle piercing me was very painful, tearing flesh and causing aching pain. I bit my pillow and tried to endure it, so that I could be equal, and then I felt joy and happiness because at that moment I was complete as a woman", Cathy shared at the "Aspiration to be Myself" workshop in 2012.*



“Aspiration to be Myself” workshop, held in Pullman Hotel in 2012, presented the first research on Vietnamese transgender people (Photo: ICS).



Cathy, representing the trans community, shared her opinion at the “Aspiration to be Myself” workshop in 2012 (Photo: ICS).



The first workshop organized by the Ministry of Justice on same-sex marriage at West Lake Guest House in 2012 (Photo: ICS).



For the first time, the LGBTIQ+ community and 6 other social groups participated in providing feedback on human rights. Over 2.000 opinions were collected and directly submitted to National Assembly delegates. Venue: Army Guest House, 2013 (Photo: Huỳnh Minh Thảo).



“Declaration Letter and Recommendations to the National Assembly on Legalizing Same-sex Marriage” workshop at Daewoo Hotel in 2013 (Photo: 6+).



Policy dialogue on “International Experiences and Consultation on the Draft Gender Affirmation Law” at Foreign Relations Hotel in 2022 (Photo: IT’S T TIME).

Notably, only one event related to the livelihood of LGBTQ+ individuals was organized in this space. It was the "Business Forum on LGBT" held in 2015 at the Sofitel Plaza Hanoi hotel. The event, organized by the consulting firm MB Market Makers, aimed to create a networking space between NGOs, businesses, the LGBTQ community, to foster an inclusive work environment for queer individuals and to create job opportunities for diverse groups.

## 2.7 WORKPLACE

The workplace is the working environment of an agency or organization. In the survey, the workplace includes both foreign and domestic agencies, businesses, and organizations within Vietnam.

According to the survey, there are 12 workplaces where the LGBTIQ+ community is present, accounting for 2.73% of the total events. From 2012 to 2015, 4 out of 12 events were held in these spaces to support the "I do" campaign. From 2016 onwards, 8 out of 12 events took place in workspaces, with events focusing on a more diverse range of topics through various approaches.



Meeting between resident doctors and the LGBTIQ+ community at the Centre for Supporting Community Development Initiatives (SCDI) in 2022 (Photo: SCDI)



iSEE Institute's staff celebrated Hanoi Pride 2022  
(Photo: iSEE Institute)

Regarding the event's purposes, 58.33% of activities related to LGBTIQ+ in these spaces typically aim to (1) communicate, raise awareness, and reduce societal prejudice (58.33%); discuss health issues (25%); and reduce workplace discrimination (16.7%).

During the period 2012-2015, events mainly focused on communicating and reducing societal prejudice and discrimination and to support the "I do" campaign – a communication campaign advocating for same-sex marriage in Vietnam. For example, CARE shared on Facebook in 2013: "*All employees and officials of CARE organization in Vietnam have agreed! We do. We support. We act. We care.*".



CARE in Vietnam showed support for "I Do" campaign in 2013  
(Photo: Tôi đồng ý).

Finally, according to the survey conducted in workplace environments, 50% of the spaces belong to international agencies/organizations, while the remaining 50% belong to domestic agencies/organizations. This indicates a desire to promote equality and reduce prejudice by Vietnamese businesses over more than a decade, alongside the positive presence of the LGBTIQ+ community.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The LGBTIQ+ community has witnessed significant positive changes in public spaces with the emergence of events from 2010 to the present. The "Mở" exhibition in 2010 marked the beginning of the LGBTIQ+ community's presence in public spaces because prior to 2010, the LGBTIQ+ community in Hanoi mostly appeared solely on online forums. In 2012, the explosion of the community was marked by the first appearance of Viet Pride. In the following years, Viet Pride events have been held in August due to different weather conditions, with nearly 50% of events each year organized by organizations/community groups to coincide with Pride Month in Vietnam. Legal changes regarding LGBTIQ+ issues have also occurred after the "I do" campaign (2013) and the campaign for transgender rights (2015), with over 50% of events in 2013 related to promoting same-sex marriage in Hanoi. Also, during this period, many informal and unregistered groups were formed, marking the diversity of organizations conducting LGBTIQ+ events in Vietnam.

From 2015 to present, a significant number of LGBTIQ+ events in Hanoi have been held in service spaces, accounting for 52% of total events. This period also marks the development of LGBTIQ+ events in educational spaces, taking up 15.73% of total events. Since 2010, 52.16% of total events have been focused on communication, building capacity, reducing societal prejudice, and supporting the LGBTIQ+ community. This is a milestone in the effort to develop knowledge and reduce prejudice against the queer community through community events, as sexual diversity is not formally taught in educational curriculum.

From 2016 to present, LGBTIQ+ related activities have focused on building capacity and addressing specific matters of the community. The number of events per year is relatively similar. The only exception is seen in the period 2020-2021 when Covid-19 pandemic hit. During this span of time, most community events shifted to online formats via platforms such as Facebook, Zoom, etc., resulting in nearly a 50% reduction in events held in public spaces compared to other years.

Increasing the presence and accessibility of queer individuals in public spaces is crucial in today's context. Below are some suggestions from the survey team for organizations and community groups to enhance the presence of LGBTIQ+ individuals in public spaces:

*Firstly, mainstreaming LGBTIQ+ issues into events held in public spaces, especially outdoor public spaces.* According to the survey, the number of LGBTIQ+ events held in outdoor public spaces accounts for only 7.06%, while these spaces often host many cultural-social events each year. To increase the presence and diversify LGBTIQ+ related activities in these spaces, organizations and community groups can integrate LGBTIQ+ into cultural events. A typical example of this approach is the annual “BridgeFest - Bridging the Gap” festival. With the aim to “*Bridging the gap toward human economy*”, many LGBTIQ+ organizations and community groups participated in this event to promote their activities, while conveying messages about diversity.

*Secondly, increasing the presence and rights of the LGBTIQ+ community in the workplace.* The survey team found that most activities related to LGBTIQ+ in these spaces are organized by foreign organizations and businesses in Vietnam, while there are not many Vietnamese businesses involved. In fact, diversity, equality, and inclusion (D.E.I) are becoming a trend that many businesses and organizations are particularly interested in. Therefore, organizations and community groups can collaborate with businesses to conduct training on "Diversity and Inclusion" (D.E.I) in the workplace. Furthermore, organizations and community groups can provide technical support for businesses and organizations to adjust their workplace policies to create a truly equal and inclusive environment for sexual minority groups.

*Thirdly, increasing the sharing of information, images, and messages of LGBTIQ+ events online.* Nowadays, media and social media platforms play a crucial role in communication thanks to their wide-spread effect and immense impact on the public. Actively sharing images and messages about the LGBTIQ+ community in both direct channels (specific activities) and online (press, social media, etc.) will surely help reduce prejudice, increase the presence of queer individuals, and promote a culture of respect, understanding, and humane in Vietnamese society.

*Fourthly, continuing research on the conditions for a successful event in public spaces, especially outdoor public spaces.* This survey is limited to analyzing secondary images and information on social media and online newspapers. Therefore, data on the advantages and difficulties of organizing LGBTIQ+ events in public spaces has not been obtained. Therefore, conducting an in-depth study will help the LGBTIQ+ community, government agencies, and LGBTIQ+ rights organizations overcome obstacles, so that the presence and participation of the LGBTIQ+ community in public spaces will not only contribute to increasing their voice and protecting their rights but also contribute to an understanding, respecting, and humane Vietnamese society.

## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX 1. NUMBER OF EVENTS PER YEAR CLASSIFIED BY SPACES, PERIOD 2010 – 2023.

YEAR	NUMBER OF EVENTS	SPACE								
		Outdoor spaces	Educational spaces	Service spaces	Government agencies	Diplomatic Agencies			Creative spaces	Workplace
						Diplomatic Representative Agency	Ambassador's residence	Cultural Exchange Center		
2010	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
2011	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	11	4	2	3	0	0	0	1	1	0
2013	33	7	0	15	1	1	0	2	5	2
2014	16	2	0	4	0	1	0	6	1	2
2015	44	2	6	16	3	2	0	6	9	0
2016	35	3	3	19	0	0	0	8	2	0
2017	49	2	7	29	0	2	0	6	3	0
2018	38	2	4	23	0	0	0	3	6	0
2019	63	5	8	41	0	3	0	5	1	0
2020	26	1	5	15	1	3	0	1	0	0
2021	15	0	0	9	0	1	3	1	1	0
2022	58	1	15	22	0	5	6	4	0	5
2023	47	2	11	21	2	2	4	2	0	3
<b>Tổng</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7,06%</b>	<b>14,12%</b>	<b>49,89%</b>	<b>1,59%</b>	<b>4,56%</b>	<b>2,96%</b>	<b>10,25%</b>	<b>6,83%</b>	<b>2,73%</b>

### APPENDIX 2. NUMBER OF EVENTS PER YEAR CLASSIFIED BY PURPOSE, PERIOD 2010 – 2023.

YEAR	NUMBER OF EVENTS	PURPOSE						
		Communication/ Reduce societal prejudice	Workshop on Law & Rights	Community Building	Health/ Mental health	Job/ Livelihood	Entertainment	Reduce prejudice/ discrimination at workplace
2010	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
2011	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

YEAR	NUMBER OF EVENTS	PURPOSE						
		Communication/ Reduce societal prejudice	Workshop on Law & Rights	Community Building	Health/ Mental health	Job/ Livelihood	Entertainment	Reduce prejudice/ discrimination at workplace
2012	11	8	2	0	0	0	1	0
2013	33	23	5	3	0	0	2	0
2014	16	11	2	1	0	0	2	0
2015	44	28	6	1	0	1	8	0
2016	35	11	3	7	3	1	10	0
2017	49	25	0	1	11	0	12	0
2018	38	20	0	3	7	0	8	0
2019	63	29	3	3	3	0	25	0
2020	26	14	1	4	1	0	6	0
2021	16	8	2	3	0	0	3	0
2022	57	29	3	3	3	0	17	2
2023	47	21	5	3	6	0	11	1
<b>Tổng</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>52,16%</b>	<b>7,29%</b>	<b>7,74%</b>	<b>7,74%</b>	<b>0,46%</b>	<b>23,92%</b>	<b>0,68%</b>

**APPENDIX 3. LIST OF PERSONAL FACEBOOK PROFILES AND FANPAGES SUPPORTING/ENGAGING WITH LGBTQ+ FOR DATA COLLECTION.**

#	SOURCE	LINK
<b>FANPAGE</b>		
1	CSAGA Vietnam	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/CsagaVietnam">https://www.facebook.com/CsagaVietnam</a>
2	Hanoi Pride	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/hanoipride.vn">https://www.facebook.com/hanoipride.vn</a>
3	Ha Nội Queer	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/HanoiQueer">https://www.facebook.com/HanoiQueer</a>
4	IT'T T TIME	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ITSTTIMEVN">https://www.facebook.com/ITSTTIMEVN</a>
5	LumiQueer	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/LumiQueer">https://www.facebook.com/LumiQueer</a>
6	Asexual in Vietnam	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/votinhvietnam">https://www.facebook.com/votinhvietnam</a>
7	Bisexual in Vietnam	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/bithewayvn">https://www.facebook.com/bithewayvn</a>

#	SOURCE	LINK
8	CLB Nhân văn - Bình đẳng giới	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/clbnhanvanbinhdanggioi">https://www.facebook.com/clbnhanvanbinhdanggioi</a>
9	FTM Vietnam Organization	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ftm.vietnam">https://www.facebook.com/ftm.vietnam</a>
10	Lighthouse	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/lighthousesocialenterprise">https://www.facebook.com/lighthousesocialenterprise</a>
11	NextGEN	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NextGenHN">https://www.facebook.com/NextGenHN</a>
12	iSEE	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/iseevn">https://www.facebook.com/iseevn</a>
13	Tôi đồng ý	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/toidongy.ido">https://www.facebook.com/toidongy.ido</a>
14	6+	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/sixplusvn">https://www.facebook.com/sixplusvn</a>
15	PFLAG	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pflagvn">https://www.facebook.com/pflagvn</a>
16	Trường học cầu vồng	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/truonghoccauvong">https://www.facebook.com/truonghoccauvong</a>
17	DNXH The Time	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/dnxhthetimes">https://www.facebook.com/dnxhthetimes</a>
18	G-Town	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Gtown123">https://www.facebook.com/Gtown123</a>
19	Phòng khám SHP	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/PhongKhamSHP">https://www.facebook.com/PhongKhamSHP</a>
20	Nhà sàn Collective	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NhaSanCollective">https://www.facebook.com/NhaSanCollective</a>
21	Ba-bau AIR	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/babauair">https://www.facebook.com/babauair</a>
22	Manzi Art Space	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/manzihanoi">https://www.facebook.com/manzihanoi</a>
23	Diễn đàn LGBTIQ toàn quốc - Stronger Together Summit'	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/StrongerTogetherSummit">https://www.facebook.com/StrongerTogetherSummit</a>
24	Wequal	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/wequalvn">https://www.facebook.com/wequalvn</a>
25	The Hanoi Social Club	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/TheHanoiSocialClub/photos_albums">https://www.facebook.com/TheHanoiSocialClub/photos_albums</a>
26	Hanoi International Queer Film Week	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/HIQFW">https://www.facebook.com/HIQFW</a>
27	Luật chuyển đổi giới tính - Vì người chuyển giới	<a href="https://web.facebook.com/luatchuyengioi">https://web.facebook.com/luatchuyengioi</a>
28	SCDI	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SCDIVietnam">https://www.facebook.com/SCDIVietnam</a>
29	Táo Xanh	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/taoxanhdotnet">https://www.facebook.com/taoxanhdotnet</a>
30	ICS	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/icsvn">https://www.facebook.com/icsvn</a>
31	UK in Vietnam	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ukinvietnam">https://www.facebook.com/ukinvietnam</a>
32	ĐSQ Canada tại Việt Nam	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/CanadaVietnam">https://www.facebook.com/CanadaVietnam</a>

#	SOURCE	LINK
33	Friends of Ireland in Vietnam	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofIrelandinVietnam">https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofIrelandinVietnam</a>
34	ĐSQ Thụy Sĩ tại Việt Nam	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SwitzerlandVietnam">https://www.facebook.com/SwitzerlandVietnam</a>
35	ĐSQ Thụy Điển tại Việt Nam	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SwedeninVN">https://www.facebook.com/SwedeninVN</a>
36	ĐSQ New Zealand	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/nzembassyvietnam">https://www.facebook.com/nzembassyvietnam</a>
37	ĐSQ Na-Uy	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/norwayinhanoi">https://www.facebook.com/norwayinhanoi</a>
38	ĐSQ Mỹ tại Việt Nam	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/usembassyhanoi">https://www.facebook.com/usembassyhanoi</a>