



Myanmar Centre for
Responsible Business

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MORE AND MORE BUSINESSES EMBRACE LGBT+ EQUALITY IN MYANMAR

As more and more businesses in Myanmar publicly demonstrate their commitment to LGBT+ equality, Colors Rainbow and MCRB today launched a new handbook: “LGBT+ EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE: A BILINGUAL RESOURCE FOR EMPLOYERS”. This guide will help employers in Myanmar avoid discrimination and navigate complex issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) – and their Myanmar vocabulary – to build an inclusive workplace.

Last week, thirty-one companies in Myanmar, both local and international – a 50% increase compared to #IDAHOTMyanmar2019 - celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia which is held annually on 17 May, together with another ten or more organisations. They all flew a rainbow flag from their buildings and/or showed their support on social media and used the #IDAHOTMyanmar2020 Facebook ‘frame’ and hashtag.

Companies who participated included Agarwin Keystone Company Ltd, Amazing Yaya Business Services Company Ltd, Baydar, Beyond Boundaries Myanmar, Capital Diamond Star Group, Clean Plumbing & Sanitary Service, First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Gekko Restaurant, Heineken, Hers Jewel and Handmade, Htoo Group of Companies, Magic Events, Motii, Metro Wholesale, Myanmar Bureau, Nestle, Myanmar Women Self Defense Center, Nexlabs, OnetoWatch, Parami Pizza, Phoenix Group of Companies, Rose Garden Hotel, Sampan Travel, SCM Legal, Shwe Taung Group of Companies, SME Business Institute, Strategy First University, Thiloyarmay, Tour Mandalay, Yever and Zinbrend.

Other organisations who showed their support included The Asia Foundation, local freedom of expression organisation Athan, Europe Aid, the RFA Burmese, the BBC Burmese Service (who did a [story](#) dedicated to the day), the British Embassy, Dana Facility, International Alert, Institut français de Birmanie, Myanmar Headline, Myanmar Ludu Media, Nordic House, Shwe Myanmar Media, United Nations Offices, US Aid, the US Embassy, We Media and the World Bank, as well as the Myanmar Business Coalition for Gender Equality (BCGE) with whom Colors Rainbow and MCRB both entered into partnership agreements earlier this year to work on all aspects of equality and inclusion in the workplace. Together with BCGE, Colors Rainbow and MCRB hosted a webinar on Wednesday 20 May, to present and discuss the contents of the Guide.






Hla Myat said *“It was inspiring to see how companies working from home in these difficult circumstances still took time to show support for LGBT+ equality, and even made it into a way to bring separated colleagues together. I really liked the way Tour Mandalay encouraged all their staff to draw rainbows and share them together in a short video.”*

Vicky Bowman added *‘When companies flying the rainbow flag to celebrate IDAHOT, they are ‘acting in the public sphere’ to promote LGBT+ equality and combat discrimination. This is one of the three types of action encouraged in the UN Standards of Conduct for Business which are supported by 277*

companies worldwide. Myanmar companies can also and sign up to support the Standards on the [Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality website](#). Who will be the first Myanmar company to do so?"

The Handbook builds on MCRB's 2017 [Briefing Paper on Discrimination by Business and in the Workplace in Myanmar](#), and Colors Rainbow's 2018 baseline assessments of the situation of LGBT+ people at workplaces in Yangon and Mandalay.

Background

1. The Handbook is available at <https://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org>
2. In [August 2019 MCRB and Colors Rainbow organised a discussion](#) of other ways that businesses could act collectively to support LGBT+ equality in Myanmar, including to change the discriminatory legal framework as has happened in India. For further information about Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business see www.mcrb.org.mm and CRB see www.colorsrainbow.org
3. In September 2017, the United Nation's Human Rights Office, in its Free and Equal campaign, published five '[STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR BUSINESS](#)' (available in [EN](#) | [MM](#)) to support the business community in tackling discrimination against lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex people. The Standards are consistent with the UN Global Compact and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, to which many Myanmar companies, and foreign companies in Myanmar are committed. Companies can register support for the Standards on the [Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality website](#).
4. These Standards encourage companies at all times to:
In the Workplace
 RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS.
 ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION.
 PROVIDE SUPPORT.
In the Marketplace
 PREVENT OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.
In the Community
 ACT IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE.
5. LGBT+ means [Lesbian](#), [Gay](#), [Bisexual](#), [Transgender/Transsexual](#) [plus](#). The "plus" is inclusive of other groups, such as asexual, intersex, queer, questioning, etc.
6. For further information contact Maya Muller maya.muller@myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org or Hla Myat Tun hlamyat.crb@gmail.com.