Stakeholder Engagement Process to support the development of a new InterPride Strategic Plan

Summary of Findings

Robyn Kennedy
Julian Sanjivan
Peter Irungu

December 2021
Introduction

InterPride’s mission is to empower Pride organizations worldwide. The goal of InterPride is to bring together Pride organizations as well as regional, national, and local Pride networks to support global coordination of Pride efforts.

InterPride was founded in 1982 in Boston USA with an initial membership of six USA Pride organizers. While initially focused on the USA, over time InterPride has grown to include Pride organizers around the world. In 2021, membership totaled over 300 organizations from over 60 countries. This growth has been matched by increasing diversity of membership. Since 2015, the proportion of non-North American members has grown from 21% to 49%. This trend primarily reflects increased participation from the Global South including Asia, South America, Oceania, and Africa.

The following table illustrates trends in growth in relation to membership, regional representation within InterPride and the number of regional Pride platforms (such as EPOA, USAP etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth indicator</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>300+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership outside North America*</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regions with representation**</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Pride platforms</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In 2020  
** From 20 regions

The figure below shows trends in participation across InterPride’s 20 regions in 2015 compared to 2020. Appendix 2 provides a list of regions and the constituent countries in each region.
InterPride recognizes that to remain relevant and responsive, the organisation needs to ensure:

• its objectives, structure and operations are aligned with the evolving global Pride movement
• culture and engagement reflect global trends and discourse
• barriers to inclusion including those relating to language, culture, and organisation structure are minimized

To address these issues InterPride is developing a new Strategic Plan. To inform the development of the Strategic Plan an in-depth stakeholder consultation process was undertaken in 2021. This approach aimed to ensure that future directions for InterPride are developed in an informed, collaborative, and participatory process from the bottom-up. The Strategic Plan will aim to support the implementation of future directions with the intention that these directions:

• are inclusive of diversity including gender, ethnicity, geographic, cultural and languages
• provide individual Prides, especially smaller organizations, with mechanisms to ensure their voices are heard
• provide accessible ways for diverse individuals to fully participate in the operations and activities of InterPride and the Pride movement

A presentation on key findings from the consultation was made by the Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chairs at the InterPride General Meetings and World Conference in November 2021. This report summarizes the findings of the consultation process in more detail.
Methodology

The project commenced in November 2020 with the engagement of a Stakeholder Engagement Consultant who undertook interviews of stakeholders as well as designing surveys and aggregating data. A Consultation Paper, available in four languages, was developed and circulated to all consultation participants. The Consultation Paper posed a series of questions for consideration by participants including:

Regions:
- Is the current definition of regions still relevant and appropriate?
- Does the current definition of regions result in under or over representation on the Global Advisory Council?
- Would it be more appropriate for regions to self-define based on commonalities such as size, language, culture, and religion?
- What is the most desirable model for ensuring that a diversity of voices is heard?

Governance
- Given the growth in self-governing Pride platforms is the governance structure for InterPride still appropriate?
- Could regional Pride platforms form the membership of InterPride rather than individual Pride organizers?
- What support would be needed for the development of Pride platforms in under-represented areas where it is difficult for grassroots movements to build momentum?

Role of InterPride
- Could InterPride play a stronger advocacy role?
- Could InterPride focus more on special projects or global initiatives such as Global Pride?
- Could InterPride become a recognised stakeholder in global conversations about LGBTQIA+ issues and human rights violations?
- What other roles could InterPride play if global Pride platforms were the members of the organisation?
A stakeholder mapping exercise clustered stakeholders into categories and identified the methodology to be used for each category, as shown in the following table. The table also shows the number of sessions conducted with each group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InterPride Board</td>
<td>Individual interviews</td>
<td>12 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees Co-Chairs</td>
<td>Interviews of Co-Chairs</td>
<td>12 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of Committees</td>
<td>Survey questionnaire</td>
<td>30 responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAC Representatives</td>
<td>Group or individual consultation</td>
<td>13 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Survey questionnaire</td>
<td>54 responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner organisations</td>
<td>Individual consultation</td>
<td>2 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Pride Platforms</td>
<td>Group consultations</td>
<td>3 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Board members</td>
<td>Individual interviews</td>
<td>2 interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A detailed description of the methodology is contained in Appendix 1.

The next sections describe the findings of the consultation.
Feedback on strengths is summarized under the following headings:

*Fostering growth of the Pride movement, community building and identity*
Consultation participants felt InterPride has come a long way and that it has made major strides especially in attracting a more diverse membership. InterPride is viewed as the global platform for Pride organizers, with no other body serving this purpose. Pride events offer visibility, community, and collective identity and these objectives continue to be a critical component of the ongoing struggle for LGBTQIA+ rights. InterPride continues to be relevant in the context of global coordination, connection and fostering solidarity in the growth of Pride around the world.

As a global platform InterPride was seen as a vehicle for linking Pride protest, supporting Pride organizers to connect and bring about LGBTQIA+ rights, visibility, and attitudinal change in relation to LGBTQIA+ populations.

InterPride was considered to have untapped potential to promote Pride globally through allyship and partnerships and provide contextually relevant education and support for growing Pride movements around the world. There is an expressed need for continued education, outreach and engagement in a way that creates opportunities for Pride organizers around the world to learn from each. Education could take the form of cross-learning, exchange visits, providing Pride organizers toolboxes and mentorship.

*Global reach*
While acknowledging that challenges still exist, InterPride was seen as providing opportunities for connection between grassroots and international levels
Initiatives and programs
The Solidarity and Scholarship programs have provided opportunities for Pride growth and connection that would otherwise be unavailable. Visibility and solidarity have been strengthened through WorldPride, Global Pride and Pride Radar. Appointment of a fund manager to grow income is a positive step as a means of addressing past lack of resources.

Brand
With continual improvement in external communication, InterPride has an increasingly visible brand which could be leveraged to advocate, influence and forge partnerships that would be beneficial to the membership and the Pride movement in general.

Despite these strengths, consultation participants identified issues and challenges including those relating to:

- purpose
- structure of InterPride
- governance
- inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility
- regional boundaries
- respective roles of InterPride and regional Pride platforms
**Purpose**

To be effective, InterPride needs to be cognizant of global trends, discourse, and narratives and how these are reflected in its operations, culture, and engagement. In the evolving global context, the unique mission of InterPride has become unclear as have the benefits of membership.

Consultation participants considered that InterPride is not fully leveraging its global presence. While InterPride’s profile is rising, the organization remains unknown in many parts of the world. There is a need to focus on global advocacy strategy, policy development, and capacity building. InterPride can better leverage the knowledge of Pride platforms to advance LGBTQIA+ rights, noting that Pride platforms are best placed to understand the local context.
Structure of InterPride

The structure of InterPride has evolved over time in response to growth. Currently, the structure includes:

- A Board of twelve elected officers and six members appointed from the Global Advisory Council
- Global Advisory Council (GAC) representing each of InterPride’s 20 regions
- Fourteen Committees serving various institutional and member-related functions, each with Co-Chairs
- Caucuses with a focus on specific population groups such as women, trans and gender non-conforming

InterPride also has formal partnerships with three regional Pride platforms – EPOA (European Pride Organizers Association), Fierté Canada and USAP (United States Association of Prides). While not formally linked to InterPride, collaboration between Prides at the national and multi-country regional level continues to grow and evolve. Existing self-governing Pride platforms include UKPON (United Kingdom), CSD Deutschland (Germany) Svenska Pride (Sweden) and Pride Netwerk Nederland (Netherlands). Developing Pride platforms include Orgullo Latin America, Oceania Pride, Asia Pride Network, and Ireland Pride Network.

The operation and management of InterPride is entirely voluntary apart from the occasional engagement of consultants to provide specific services. Consultation participants considered that the reliance on volunteers impacted organizational capacity as the skills, interests and knowledge of volunteers does not always match the operational needs of the organization. For an organization of the size of InterPride reliance on volunteers was seen to affect efficiency and effectiveness. It was also considered that there needs to be improved support of volunteers including mentorship and more in-depth induction and orientation including an awareness of cultural nuances.
Many consultation participants noted that for an organization with a global mandate, InterPride funding and resources are comparatively low, although recent success in attracting partners has increased financial resources. Lack of funding has constrained the extent to which InterPride can support operational and administrative functions through staff. Lack of resources has also affected uptake and utilization of technology that would otherwise increase efficiency and engagement including language translation services.

The overall findings of the consultation were:

- The structure has not kept pace with growth and the changing nature of the Pride movement.
- The structure is complex and difficult to understand.
- Multiple layers (Board, GAC, Committees, Caucuses, Partners) cause confusion as to roles and responsibilities.
- There is lack of clarity on how the GAC fits within the overall structure.
- Inaccessibility of the current structure raises issues of meaningful engagement and efficiency.
- As a volunteer organisation, there is a heavy workload on the leadership team.
- Overstretched volunteers (as a substitute for employees) leads to attrition and burnout.
- The volunteer model leads to long turnaround times and gaps in implementation.
- The volunteer model makes it difficult to enforce accountability.
- The Committee model was felt to be overly internally focused with overlaps in functions.
Governance

Governance encompasses the system by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it is held to account. Policy setting, strategy, ethics, risk management, compliance, and financial management are all elements of governance. Governance also includes management of relationships with members and stakeholders; and the framework through which the objectives of the organisation are set, as well as the means of achieving those objectives. Monitoring performance also forms part of governance. A Board or Management Committee is responsible for governance.

The roles of the GAC and Committees were frequently raised during the consultations. The overall aim of establishing the GAC was to provide a mechanism for regional representation within InterPride governance following discontinuation of the previous Board model. Consultation participants agreed that currently, the role of the GAC lacks clarity and participation in GAC meetings is uneven. The GAC structure also does not necessarily provide a means for the ideas and opinions of members to be shared within the organisation. Better processes for engagement are needed to provide opportunities for all voices to be heard particularly Indigenous peoples and the most marginalized groups.

InterPride’s Committees perform various administrative functions. Consultation participants agreed that while these committees are generally doing good work, there are too many Committees and roles, and responsibilities are unclear, as are accountability mechanisms. Feedback indicates that there is little inter-committee collaboration, potentially leading to duplication of effort.

---

1 Under the previous Board model, representatives of each region acted as Board directors. This model was changed at the 2018 General Meeting and World Conference.
Overall findings from the consultation were:

- In the context of an evolving global Pride movement, governance processes need to better reflect changing needs and demands.
- There is a lack of clarity on the respective roles and responsibilities of Board, Global Advisory Council and Committees.
- There is no delineation between strategic and policy level decision making and day-to-day operational functions.
- Due to lack of administrative staff, too many issues are channeled through the Co-Presidents. Board members can feel disempowered through this process.
- The Board is too focused on day-to-day operations rather than governance. There is a need to shift operations from the Board to staff to allow the Board to focus on policy, strategy, and global issues affecting Pride.
- Decision making processes are unclear, which undermines accountability and the ability to achieve strategic goals.
- Multiple committees compound bureaucracy – there is a perception that there is a lot of talk but less action.
- Committees are primarily focused on administrative processes – global relevance is unclear.
- For improved efficiency and effectiveness, there is a need to rationalize the number of committees and review roles and responsibilities.
- Cultural change is needed to increase participation by younger and emerging leaders.
- There is a need to ensure that policy, funding and governance decisions are not delegated to Committees.
- The name of the Governance Committee needs to be changed to remove confusion with the role of the Board.
- Some of the challenges in governance stem from how InterPride is registered and the need for compliance with this system, which imposes various restrictions.
Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility

InterPride brings together individuals and communities from across the world, with different cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, lived experiences, language, and other distinguishing characteristics. These differences are layered by varying gender and sexual identities. This diversity poses challenges in ensuring access, inclusion and representation.

Barriers to participation and lack of incentives for membership were frequently raised in the consultation. While diversity in membership and representation has increased, under-representation of the global south remains an issue. Key issues included:

• There is no uniform understanding of the role of InterPride.
• InterPride has not fully communicated the ‘value-package’ to membership. The benefits of membership are not felt/seen (quantifiable), resulting in high turnover of members.
• The inaccessibility of the current structure raises perceptions of power contestation rather than a focus on accountability, meaningful engagement, and efficiency.
• There are ongoing barriers to inclusion. Primary among these is the exclusion of communications in languages other than the four official languages and the conduct of all meetings in English. There is a need to prioritize language translations and interpretations.
• Lack of inter-generational participation was also noted as a dimension of diversity.
• The large size of some regions poses time zone challenges.
• The scheduling of meetings can act to exclude involvement due to time zone differences.
• Perceptions of US-centrism stemming from InterPride’s historical base undermines global outreach and engagement.
• There is insufficient recognition of gender and cultural sensitivities and nuances, particularly that Pride does not always conform to the western model.
• These combined barriers discourage the global south from becoming members.
• There is a need for greater inclusion of emerging Prides and Pride platforms.
• There is a need for cultural humility as well as cultural competency.
Regional Boundaries

Initially focused on the USA, over time InterPride expanded to include worldwide membership. There are 20 defined regions within InterPride with each region represented in the Global Advisory Council by at least 2 representatives. The objective of the regional model is to provide a framework for networking, communication, representation, and services to members. The regions are based on geographic boundaries and do not necessarily share commonalities.

The major findings in relation to the current regional structure were:

- Regional boundaries have not adapted to the evolving Pride movement and reflect a colonizer or white-focused framework, for example, the multi-country continents of Asia, Africa and South America are each classified as one region while the continent of Europe is divided into 6 regions. For historical reasons, the USA remains divided into 6 regions.

- Regional distribution is inequitable in relation to the relative size of populations, resulting in some regions being over-represented and others under-represented on the Global Advisory Council.

- Under-represented regions are too large (see Appendix 2) and diverse in terms of language, culture, religion, ethnicity. There is a need for regions to be established through self-defined commonalities.

- The existing regional distribution results in lack of diversity and equity in participation.

- Regional distribution does not correlate with how Prides are organized region by region and country by country.

- As a global organization we should not be defined by geographic borders.
Respective Roles of Interpride and Regional Pride Platforms

As noted in section 4, over the past 5-6 years there has been significant growth in the number and distribution of independent regional Pride platforms. This trend has resulted in increasing overlap between the role and operations of InterPride and regional platforms, including duplication of administrative functions. This trend also raises the question for potential members of the benefits of joining InterPride compared to regional Pride platforms. Overall, consultation participants considered that regional Pride platforms (where they exist) are best placed to:

- address regional issues
- support the contribution of regional perspectives
- reflect cultural and language diversity
- generate regional engagement
- ensure issues are relevant to regional Pride organizers

Regional Pride platforms also provide a means to achieve the strategic goals outlined in section 1, which are to ensure that future directions:

- are inclusive of diversity including gender, ethnicity, geographic, cultural and languages
- provide individual Prides, especially smaller organizations, with mechanisms to ensure their voices are heard
- provide accessible ways for diverse individuals to fully participate in the operations and activities of InterPride and the Pride movement

Many participants proposed restructuring InterPride so that Pride platforms became the members rather than individual Pride organizations. Under this model, Pride organizers would join their Pride platform with InterPride acting as the umbrella coordinating body. Regional Pride platforms would be self-governing as is currently the case.

Under this model, InterPride would work collaboratively with existing Pride platforms as well as support under-represented regions to establish and build their own regional platforms.
Proposed Future Directions

Based on the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement project, the proposed future directions for InterPride are:

**Growing and resourcing Pride**
- define complementary role to established Pride platforms
- support growth of Pride platforms in underrepresented regions
- support regional self-definition to address current inequities
- increase focus on member benefits such as capacity building and engagement with underrepresented regions to create change
- grow fund development to support grant programs and membership fee waiver
- enhance support to local/grassroots Pride organizers through education, cross-learning opportunities, mentorship, resource sharing

**International role of InterPride**
- partner on global Pride issues especially on issues that affect freedom of assembly and expression
- lead change through evidence-based advocacy and policy development
- create impactful change by influencing global leaders
- build and strengthen existing allies and partnerships within the human rights sector to enhance global positioning, international solidarity, and the voice of Pride organizers
- act as a global resource on LGBTQIA+ rights, cultural sensitivities, LGBTQIA+ spectrum, anti-racism, decolonization, and gender dialogues

**Restructuring**
- restructure InterPride to become the umbrella body for Pride platforms
- Pride platforms to be self-managing and grow Pride in their regions
- where Pride platforms are still evolving, InterPride to support growth

These objectives will be implemented through:
- developing agreements on complementary roles with partners – EPOA, USAP, FCP
- supporting self-definition of regions
- restructuring the GAC to align membership with established and developing Pride platforms
- targeting resources to under-represented and emerging regions/Pride platforms
**Governance**

- establishing a second registered location to support fundraising and tax benefits
- transition the role of the Board to governance rather than operations
- hire staff to perform operational functions and program implementation
- review the role of a restructured GAC
- reconfigure the membership of the Board to align with the proposed new structure
- evaluate the need for Committees and review the functions of those that are retained
- improve volunteer management - induction and orientation, appreciation, mentorship
- ensure governance includes a diversity of voices. For example, by including the caucuses within the structure
- develop a succession plan for new leadership
Benefits of the Proposed Model

- Ensuring InterPride evolves with the ever-growing Pride movement - acknowledging that regional platforms are generally better placed to respond to local issues and perspectives
- Efficiently and effectively managing operational demands including reducing administrative duplication between InterPride and regional Pride platforms
- Better managing expectations of InterPride’s global role
- Changing the membership base to Pride platforms would make InterPride more equitable and geographically diverse
- Self-defined Pride regions/platforms could reduce language barriers
- The ability for regional platforms to set their own membership rules and fees allows for greater flexibility, improved accountability, and responsibility.
- Increased focus on under-represented/emerging regions will better support local/grassroots organizations to enact or influence change through education, cross-learning opportunities, and mentorship
Next Steps

• Early 2022 - Conduct workshops on stakeholder engagement outcomes with the Board and GAC
• March 2022 - Develop and distribute Strategic Plan
• March 2022 - Develop an Implementation Plan
• Post March 2022 - Carry out and regularly review the Implementation Plan
APPENDIX 1 – METHODOLOGY

The tasks of the Stakeholder Engagement Consultant were to conduct consultations and surveys, collect, aggregate, and analyze data and present progress reports to the Strategic Planning Committee. The work of the consultant was supervised by the Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chairs through regular meetings.

The project was undertaken in in 3 phases:

Phase 1: Preparation
This stage included meetings with the Strategic Planning Committee and board members to support understanding of the context of the project and establish buy-in from stakeholders. It included the announcement of the stakeholder engagement project to the InterPride community including distribution of a consultation paper detailing the process, which was translated into the four official InterPride languages.

Briefing of the consultant by the Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chairs included provision of a range of materials previously developed covering the rationale for the project and the exploration of potential structural and operational models.

Phase 2: Data collection
This phase encapsulated the design and development of data collection tools for each category of stakeholders identified through a stakeholder mapping exercise. For each of the stakeholder categories a specific engagement tool was developed. These tools included interview questions and surveys targeted to specific stakeholder categories. The Stakeholder Engagement Consultant was responsible for reaching out to stakeholders to invite participation. Interviews were conducted via Zoom interviews.

Most stakeholders were reached through email and reminders during committee and board meetings. Reminders were sent to those that had not responded to the request for a meeting. Each of the stakeholder categories was represented in the consultation process with only one refusal to participate in the process. The table below represents the numbers reached for each stakeholder category in the consultation process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Target Number</th>
<th>Number Reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td>12 individuals</td>
<td>12 interviews held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees Co-Chairs</td>
<td>13 committees (multiple Co-Chairs)</td>
<td>12 Co-Chairs sessions held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members Committees</td>
<td>13 committees with approx. 10 members each</td>
<td>Survey questionnaire distributed - 30 responses received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAC Representatives</td>
<td>20 regions (approx. 40 representatives)</td>
<td>13 sessions held for 13 regions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Total membership</td>
<td>Survey questionnaire developed and distributed – 54 responses received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride Partner orgs</td>
<td>3 partners</td>
<td>2 partners sessions held.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Platforms</td>
<td>9 Platforms</td>
<td>3 Pride platform sessions held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other stakeholders</td>
<td>Past Board members</td>
<td>2 interviews held</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unfortunately, there were some challenges in attracting engagement with the project. The response rate from the membership and from members of the various committees was low despite numerous promptings.

**Phase 3: Data aggregation and analysis**

Based on consultations held, there was more than 50 hours of recorded audio that required transcription. Transcription was undertaken through the transcription software ([www.rev.com](http://www.rev.com)) providing approximately 250 pages of text. Data cleaning was performed manually.

Data analysis was undertaken using NVIVO software. This required the development of specific “tags” and “cases”, understanding of key terms, nuances, and contexts of the respondents. The Committee Member survey was generated and distributed using Survey Monkey and analysis undertaken within that program. The survey to members was developed and distributed using the Qualtrics software because this software allowed for real-time translation of the questionnaire and responses received. This software also allows for data curation, collation, and analysis. All the data was triangulated, and, in some cases, Ms. Excel was utilized.

The methodology and findings at each stage of the project were presented to the Strategic Planning Committee for input.
APPENDIX 2: INTERPRIDE REGIONS