

Trans Live on 3 Talk

Transgender Life Stories From South Africa is generating a lot of interest, especially in the media – visual, audio and print.

Tebogo Nkoana, outreach officer at Gender Dynamix and also one of the participants of the book, together with Simone Herandien and Vanya Maseko, participants of TRANS – Transgender Life Stories From South Africa and co editor, Ruth Morgan, were invited to talk about the experience of being part of the book. The book was a project between Gender Dynamix and Gay & Lesbia Memory in Action (GALA) on the national TV program, 3 talk, with Noeleen Maholwana-Sangqu. The interview covered questions such as: “How did we discover our gender identity and how did that affect our family and friends?” “How far is each of us in our transitioning?” and “Why do we think a book like this is important?”

Tebogo highlighted that many transgender people suffer because of living in their false image in order to retain the good relationships with their families and friends because families, especially mothers often have expectations for their kids. Coming out as trans can ruin everything hence most of the transgender community only come out of the closet in their later years after realising they cannot continue living a lie. “I, however, never denied my true gender identity,” Tebogo said.

Vanya emphasised that her family, including the extended family, support her and see her as woman. She also stressed that it has been difficult for her to form a relationship with heterosexual men because of body politics.

Simone pointed out that she had been engaged to be married and was respected as a female in the relationship. However, her fiancé died before they could get married. She also spoke about how she and two other gender activists fought for Act 49, regarding the gender rectification in the identity document, to be implemented in our constitution.

Ruth spoke generally about how the book came about and also about the partnership between Gender Dynamix and GALA.

In general the interview went very well, and as for awareness I think it reached the broader community judging from our Face Book response and calls to our office line. The Gender Dynamix website hits increased from ±800 per week to ±1000.

The live interview took place in the Urban Brew studio in Johannesburg on 25 January 2010.