



ARAB NETWORK FOR KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

Défendre les droits des minorités

ACTIVITY REPORT

2018/2019

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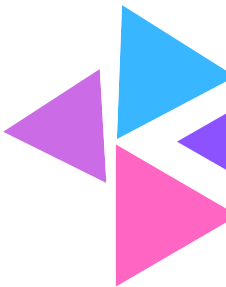
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Introduction

ANKH association (Arab Network for Knowledge about Human rights) was founded in 2018 by a group of Human Rights defenders from Egypt who have moved to France due to the difficult situation there. This is why we decided to set up ANKH association to help and support the rights of minority groups in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

We are focusing on topics like Human Rights in the Arab world and Europe, migrants, the LGBTIQ community, people living with HIV, etc. We also use art and culture to promote the concept of Human Rights through the organization of workshops, exhibitions, concerts, and meetings for independent artists.



1- 'Know More' campaign



K'now more' is a health campaign to improve awareness about sexually transmitted diseases by providing diverse information in Arabic language from reliable sources, and without stigmatizing individuals on the basis of gender, religion, ethnic background, color or sexual orientation. The 'Know more' campaign provides information on sexual health in Arabic and pieces of advice to the populations most vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases. HIV is one of the main themes of the campaign as we seek to:

- Create a guide of services provided to people living with HIV in the Arab world.
- Raise awareness on HIV prevention and how to live with HIV.
- Provide support and counseling for people living with HIV.

Launched in November 2018, the campaign has rapidly grown to reach up to 100,000 people in its first 3 months. In July 2019, the Facebook pages have now around 3,000 followers, mainly located in Egypt, but also in other Arab countries (Algeria, Morocco, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Libya, Jordan, Tunisia, Palestine, Kuwait, Sudan, UAE, Yemen, Lebanon, Qatar...), as well as in various countries from the Euro-Mediterranean region (France, Germany, Turkey) and outside the region (India, Brazil, Philippines, Pakistan...).

This success is the proof of the lack of available objective and scientific information, in Arabic language, on the different topics dealt with by the campaign.

Behind the numerous manifestations of interest shown by our audience on different topics – comments, shares and likes on social media; many people also directly reached out to us looking for information or support on subjects ranging from sexual health or sexuality in general, to gender identity, etc.

Relations of trust have thus been established with various people who now share our initiatives in their respective countries, and provide us with on-the-field feedbacks and observations, on difficult situations faced by people in their communities.

That way, in November 2018, we received several testimonies and alarm calls that the HIV treatment was no more available in Egyptian public hospitals. We set up an urgent advocacy campaign targeting Egyptian authorities, including petitions, press articles, open letters to MPs... In 15 days, the campaign succeeded into pushing the Egyptian government to give access to the treatment to the people who have been deprived of it.

It's also in the framework of the 'Know More' campaign that the idea of organizing an event in Europe on people living with HIV in Egypt arose, leading to the 'Points of Life' project.

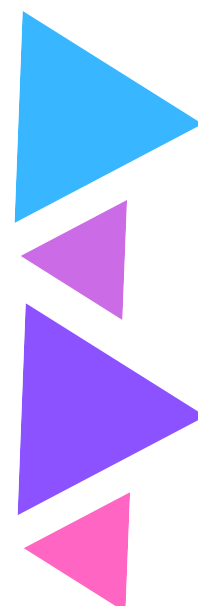
2- 'Points of Life' exhibition

Points of Life' is an exhibition project set up by the Know More Campaign team focusing on people living with HIV in Egypt and highlighting their personal experiences, joys, and challenges.

The event aims to increase awareness among the European audience about the situation of people living with HIV in Egypt, and to find new ways of cooperation and support by the campaign members. Following a call to participation that was made in April 2019, the exhibition gathers 8 stories (2 videos, 2 sound records, 4 texts and photos), exposing the testimonies of one woman and 7 men, aged 16 to 41, living in 3 different countries (Egypt, Lebanon, France).

The exhibition is a way to start a discussion between the audience and members of the 'Know More' campaign on the situation of people living with HIV in Egypt, and can also be followed by other kinds of entertainment (movie night, diner, concert...) in order to raise money for the campaign.

The first period from April to May 2019 was dedicated to the set up of the exhibition, which will be shown in various French and European cities in 2019/2020 (Grenoble, Lyon, Paris, Marseille, Brussels, Amsterdam, Berlin...).



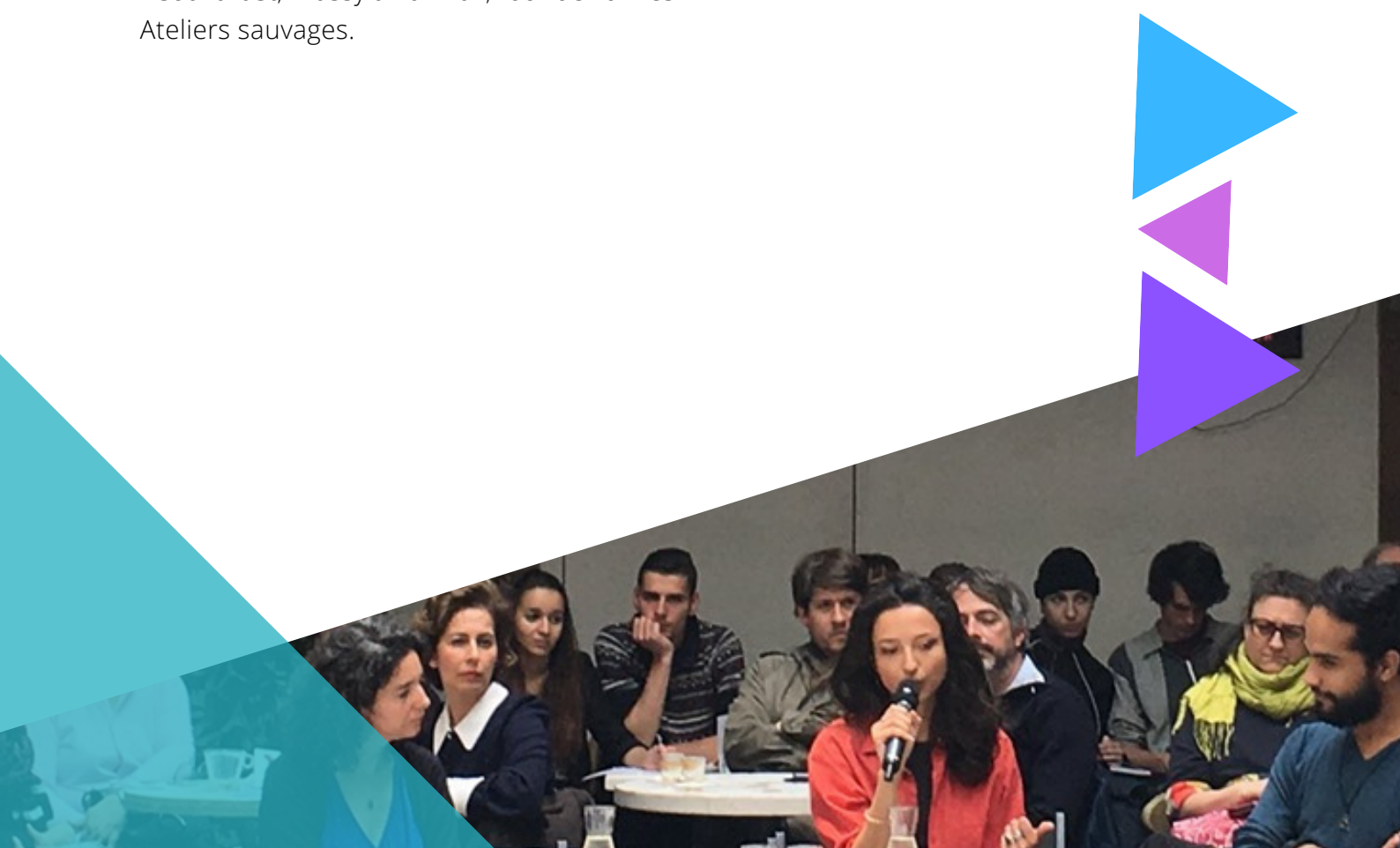
3-Round-table ‘The role of the artists in the Algerian revolution’

Keen to always connect artistic activities and community changes, ANKH works with various artists from the Euro-Mediterranean region in order to promote their work but also impulse exchanges and encounters on topics linked to our activities. This is why ANKH participated on May, 11th 2019 in the Forum of the Algerian Diaspora who took place at the Colony in Paris, a bar and cultural space founded by Algerian visual artist Kader Attia.

In the framework of this event, ANKH organized an opening round-table dedicated to “the role of the artists in the Algerian revolution”, which was attended by Lila Lakehal, geographer and artist, filmmaker and podcasts director; Sam Azzi, actor, filmmaker and script-writer; Paloma Colombe, DJ and filmmaker; Kader Attia, visual artist; Wassyla Tamzali, founder of Les Ateliers sauvages.

For one hour, the attending artists and the numerous audiences have shared anecdotes, points of view and pieces of analysis on this crucial topic of the role of art and artists in a revolution, and more globally on how the Algerian Diaspora could support the ongoing revolution.

This event was also a good opportunity to meet and develop links with public figures and organizations from the Algerian civil society.



4- SALMA program



On the first semester of 2019, following numerous testimonies, calls for support and feedback from on-the-field team members, ANKH association has decided to set up the Salma program to help and support LGBTIQ people from the MENA region facing difficulties in their country of residence due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. The word 'Salma' meaning 'Peace' in Arabic, this program also carries a message of hope and tolerance towards the societies and people living in the region.

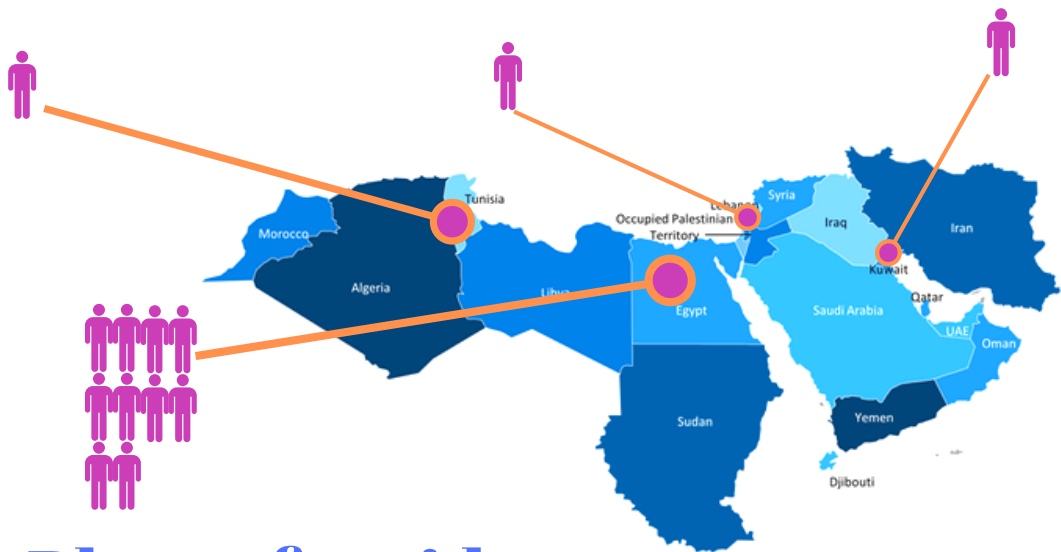
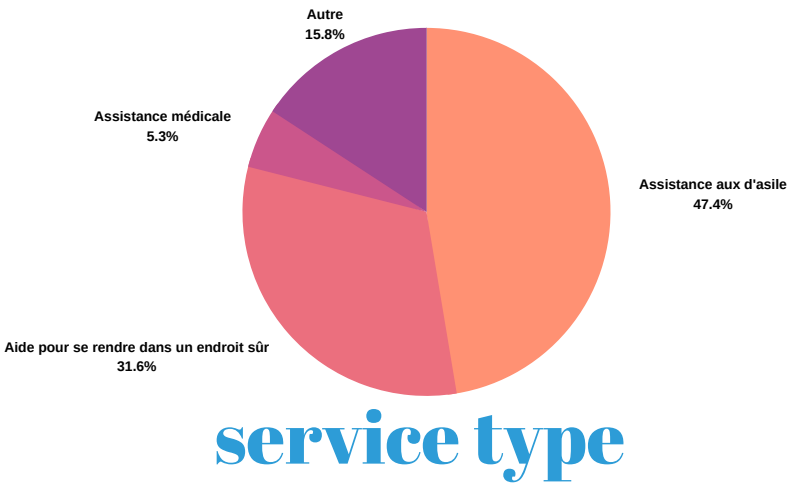
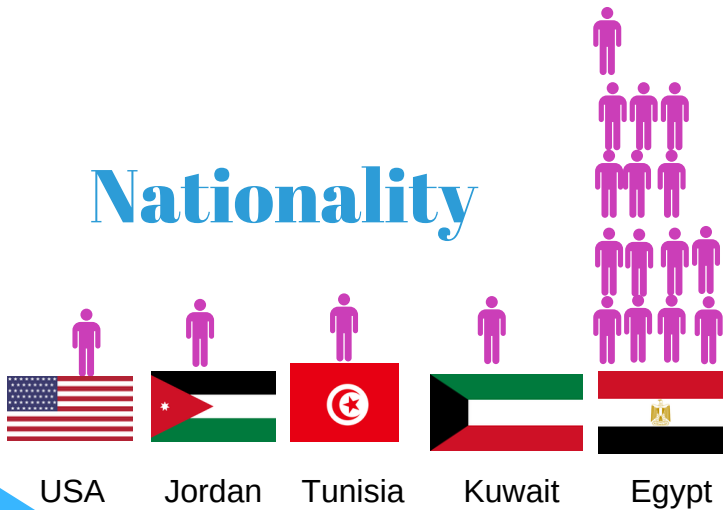
With this program, we wish to provide to LGBTIQ individuals from the MENA region:

- An online, safe and welcoming platform for advice and psychological support, available in 3 languages (Arabic, French, English);
- Legal advice and material solutions to improve the lives of LGBTIQ individuals;
- An international network of action and awareness campaigns to respond to the challenges faced by the LGBTIQ community.

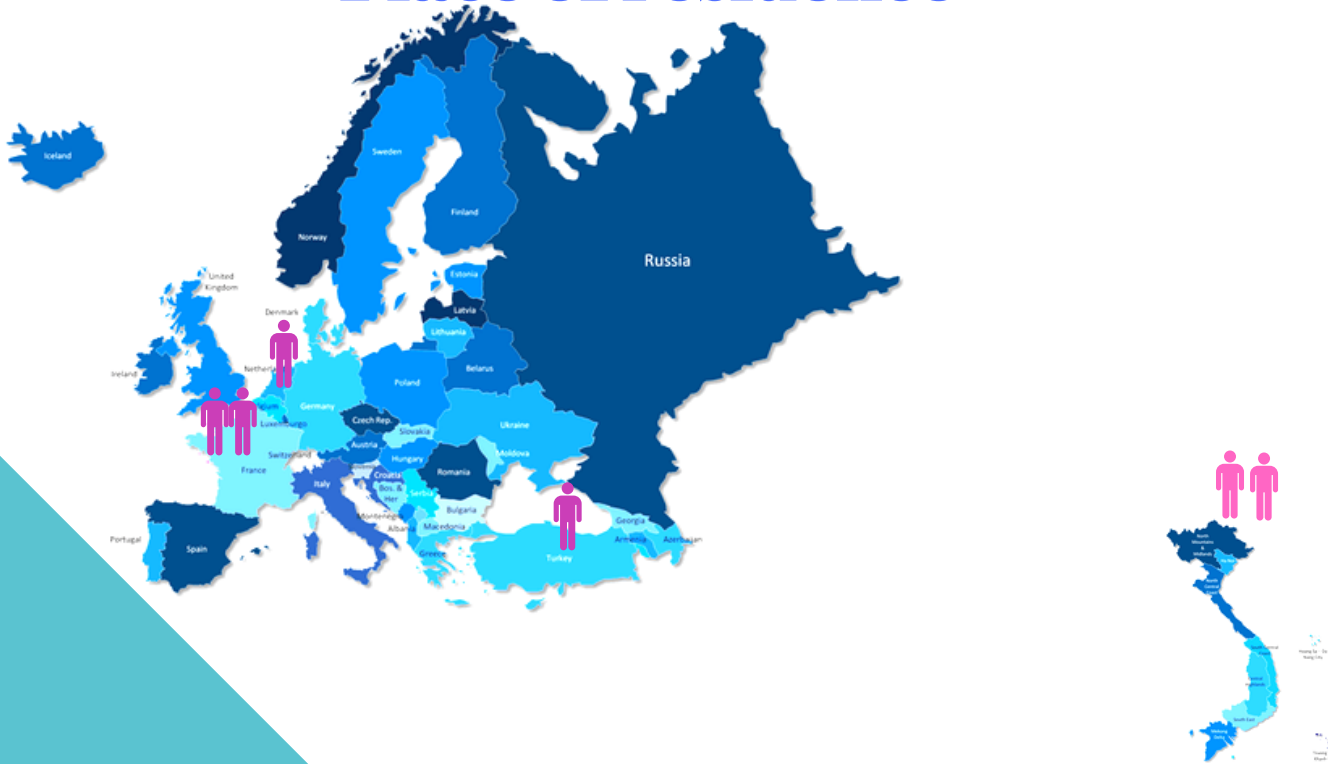
Since its implementation, this program allowed us to support 19 cases, from 4 different nationalities and residing in 8 countries (Egypt, France, Kuwait, Vietnam, Tunisia, Turkey, the Netherlands, Lebanon). The issues raised were of different kinds, from administrative support to seek asylum to logistical support for people who needed to leave their country, or material support for people looking for a safe place to stay or access to medical treatment, as well as emergency funds for people facing very precarious situations.

In the framework of this program, ANKH is working with a network of partners and allies inside the LGBTIQ community in the different countries, as well as professionals (lawyers, counselors...) and institutions.

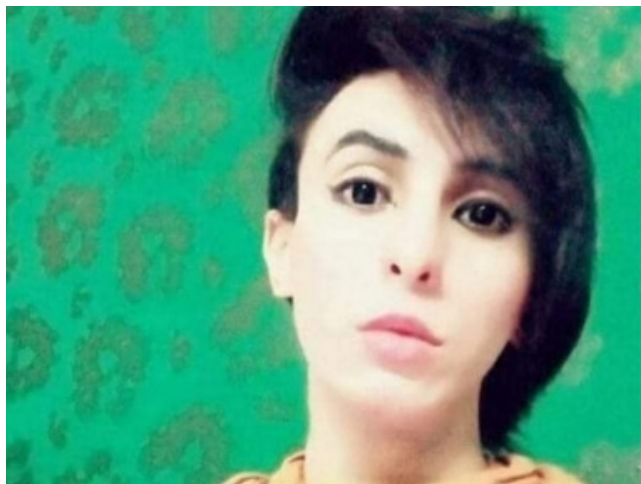
Nationality



Place of residence



5- Malak El-Kashif

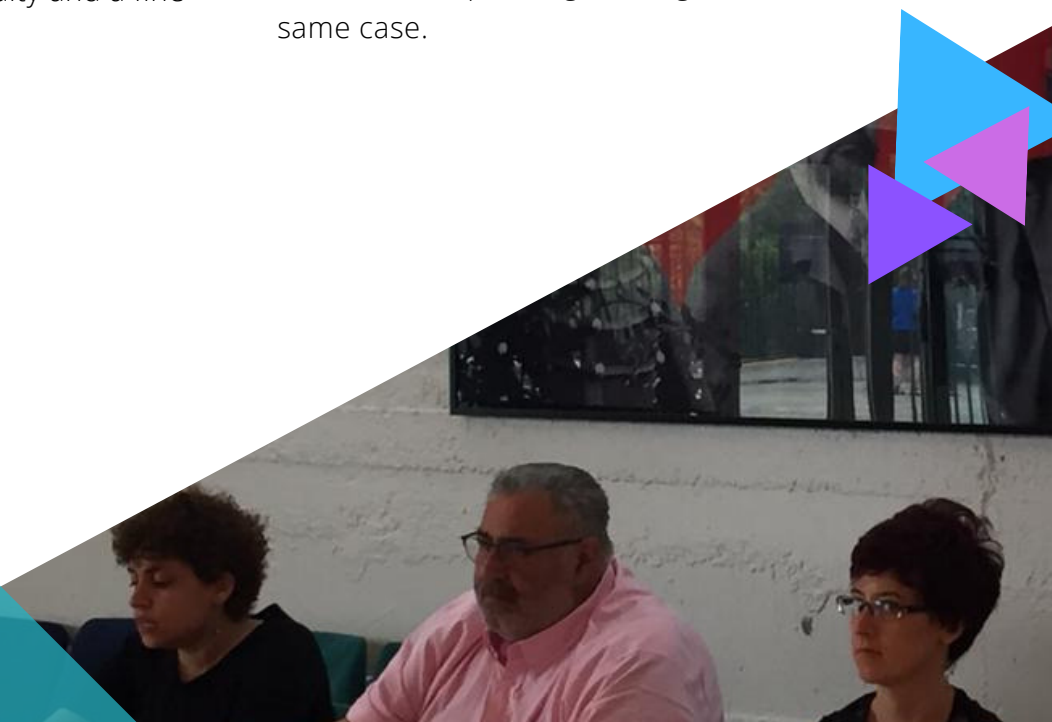


Malak El-Kashif is an Egyptian transexual activist who was jailed on March 6th, 2019 for having criticized the Egyptian regime. From that date, she had been placed in preventive detention in men facilities – while she has always claimed her woman identity – where she had to suffer from transphobia, discriminations, sexual abuses and torture. She was accused of “belonging to a terrorist organization” and “cyber-crime” for having expressed her opinions on Facebook, and was facing the maximum imprisonment penalty and a fine of up to 5,000 €!

Under the initiative of ANKH, ECRF (Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms) and CIHRS (Cairo Insitute for Human Rights Studies), an international support campaign was launched in May 2019 to demand the immediate release of Malak El-Kashif. Many organizations joined the campaign, and 33 – including Amnesty International, Ligue des Droits de l’Homme, Fédération Internationale des Droits de l’Homme, Euromed Rights... - co-signed a call to European authorities and UN Special Rapporteurs to intervene on this case.

Public events were also organized, like a public discussion in Berlin on June 28th, 2019, and a press conference in Paris on July 1st. At the same time, the call was sent to French, German, and European MPs as well as government officials in various European countries.

Following this campaign, Malak El-Kashif was finally released on July, 15th, but the case is still open and several other people are still detained and pending investigation on the same case.



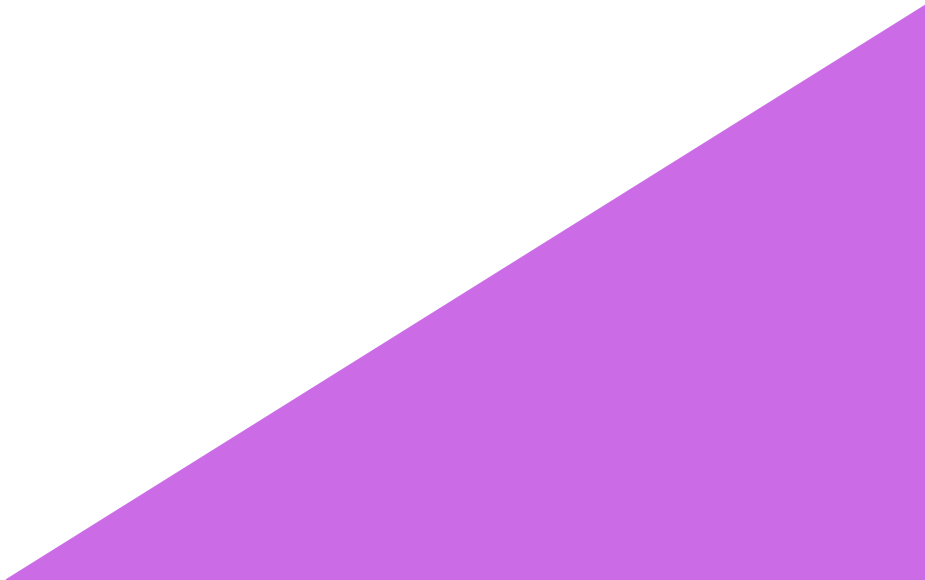
1- General organization

ANKH association (Arab Network for Knowledge about Human rights) was founded in 2018 in Vitry-sur-Seine, in the Paris area, by a group of human rights defenders from Egypt who have moved to France due to the difficult situation there.

The team is composed, in addition to the founding members, by several volunteer members who have joined us in the past year, from France, Arab or European (Sweden, the Netherlands) countries.

Besides, in order to address the spontaneous requests from people willing to join us, and to organize better the work and mission of each team member, a first call to volunteers was launched in the framework of the 'Know More' campaign in January 2019. Dozens of people have applied, with competences in translation, design, logistics... Some of them are now integral part of the campaign team, and of ANKH association.

For the coming year 2019-2020, due to the rapid growth of our activities, it will be necessary to organize a public event in Paris, where all our activities are coordinated, in order to find more people to volunteer for ANKH. We specifically need people to help us manage and develop the SALMA program, as well as the administration and fund-raising parts.



2-Communication

In less than one year, ANKH association has developed various ways of communication allowing us to be efficiently in touch with our audiences in different countries, as well as to have an international network of partners, members, and beneficiaries.

The 'Know More' campaign's Facebook page has thus reached almost 3,000 followers all over the world, and ANKH association's page has also already reached almost 1,000 followers since its launch in April 2019. Most of our followers come from Egypt, France, Arab countries (Algeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, Syria, Kuwait, Sudan, UAE, Lebanon, Yemen...) but also from the USA, Germany, Brazil, UK...

ANKH association has also launched in June 2019 a website (www.ankhfrance.org) available first in English, then Arabic. It will also be progressively translated into French in the coming months. The website lists all our activities, with a specific focus on the Free Malak El-Kashif campaign, as well as links and content on preventing STDs/STIs, and useful contacts.

At the same time, we also set up a list of email addresses through which people can contact us, either in case of emergency, or just to join our activities, volunteer or to get more information.



3-Partenaires

While developing our activities, we established trustful partnerships with various international organizations working in the same fields. In year 2018-2019, we have worked with:

- LGBTIQ organizations :



- Human Rights :



-HIV



Next year, we wish to develop this network in France and internationally, and to establish new partnerships with French and European institutions in order to guaranty the stability of our actions on the long-term.

After only one year of existence, ANKH association has developed several activities in accordance with our mission and objectives. We have worked in STDs/STIs prevention, supporting people living with HIV and LGBTIQ community, promoted the work of independent artists. On each project, we have worked along with partners and on-the-field members, in order to guarantee efficiency and coherence to the needs of the beneficiaries.

With time, a need has arisen: to work more specifically on the Arabic speaking communities living in France and Europe, especially newly resettled people – migrants, asylum seekers, etc. Indeed, these people accumulate the difficulties that made them leave their country of origin (stigmatization due to their sexual orientation or health condition, political persecutions...), and the challenges of integrating into a new society, where they need to learn a new language and apprehend the social and cultural values, administrative processes, legal aspects...

In 2019-2020, we then wish to work specifically to include these communities into our different projects, which implies having a stronger team on the field, and more resources dedicated to projects in France and Europe.

Generally speaking, we also aim to organize the association in a more efficient way, with specific teams working on each project, and referring to the board and coordination committee. Partnerships with local and international organizations also need to be developed as well as support from French and European institutions.

On the long term, we will also need to find the resources to hire employees to handle the administrative and financial aspects of the association, which are until now handled by the board.

In this way, ANKH will be able to be one of the important players in the field of the Human Rights defenders in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and our action will thus reach even more beneficiaries, which will have a positive snowball effect on the societies from both sides of the Mediterranean.







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