



# LEBMASH 2021

## ANNUAL REPORT





# About LebMASH

LebMASH is an organization of healthcare professionals that aims to achieve equity in health with a focus on sexual health and the health of marginalized groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, women/girls, people living with HIV, and refugees. Founded on Sept. 4th, 2012, LebMASH is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, registered in Lebanon, and governed by a board of directors that includes Lebanese health professionals based in Lebanon, the United States, and the UK. LebMASH aims at advancing sexual and reproductive health for all individuals in Lebanon, with a particular focus on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) and other marginalized populations in Lebanon.



# Message from LebMASH Board and team

To our friends,

Ten years ago today, we came together with a dream. A future where all of us are healthy and free. Where each of us thrives. Where everyone gets the care they deserve. For that dream, we've worked. Researched. Mobilized. Cared...and dared. For ten years, LebMASH has given everything we have to make that dream come true.

We could not have done it without your support and friendship. From breaking the silence on sexual health to making it loud and clear that homosexuality is not a mental illness, to celebrating and promoting LGBT-affirming providers.

We've been challenged, and we've been celebrated. Through it all, we grew stronger because you were standing by our side.

Here's to ten more years of changing mindsets and changing lives.

With gratitude,

LebMASH board and team



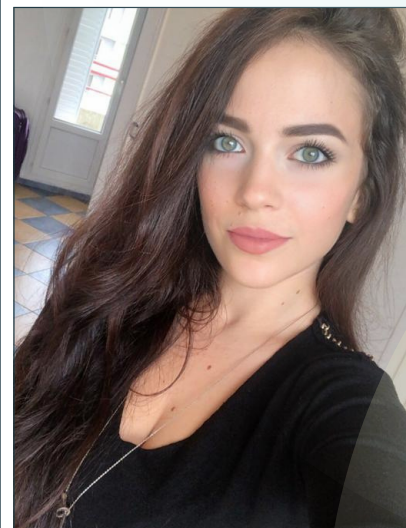
# Introducing Our Team



**Souad Al Challah,  
Executive Director**



**Ghida Ladkani,  
Administrative  
Officer**



**Rasha Amine,  
Program  
Coordinator**



**Nazih Raychouni,  
Program Officer**



**Saleem Zein, Marketing  
& Communications  
Officer**



**Rene Danouv,  
Community  
Outreach Officer**



# Meet Our Executive Board



**Suha Ballout,  
RN, PhD, LebMASH  
President**



**Omar Fattal,  
MD, MPH**



**Sarah Abboud,  
RN, PhD**



**Zavi Lakissian,  
MD, MPH, PgD**



**Antoine Beayno,  
MD**



**Claude Chidiac,  
RN, MSc, FHEA**



## Mission

The Lebanese Medical Association for Sexual Health (LebMASH) is an organization of health care professionals that aims to achieve equity in health with focus on sexual health and the health of marginalized groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, women/girls, people living with HIV, and refugees.

## Our Logo

Our vision is summarized by the three yellow dots in our logo: the first dot represents training, education, and research in the area of LGBT health and sexual health; which leads to the second dot that represents awareness and increased knowledge; on which we build the third dot, which represents the impact and change.



## Vision

We envision a society where marginalized groups thrive in an environment that embraces health equity and social justice.

## Values

LebMASH's operations are based on the following core values: Integrity, Respect, Trust, Justice, and Excellence.

## Legal Status

In April 2014, LebMASH became officially registered with the Lebanese government as not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, allowing LebMASH to operate in Lebanon in full compliance with the Lebanese law.

## Our Pillars

LebMASH works to promote equity in health through 3 main pillars:

- Research
- Education
- Policy

# Objectives



- Spreading awareness and knowledge, as well as influencing attitudes and behaviors of health care providers regarding LGBT health and sexual health in Lebanon.
- Influencing and changing policies and legislations in professional organizations including schools, hospitals and governmental agencies to protect the health rights and well-being of LGBT individuals and sexual health in Lebanon.
- Advancing research regarding LGBT health and sexual health in Lebanon. Supporting other organizations that provide healthcare for LGBT and sexual healthcare in Lebanon

## Who We Serve

- Health institutions
- Professionals and students
- Marginalized groups such as LGBTQ individuals

## Partnerships

- LebMASH strongly believes in the importance of developing and maintaining strong partnerships and other collaborative agreements with other organizations and key players that share a similar point of view regarding human rights and sexual health. We believe that such partnerships create better opportunities for serving the community and lead to better outcomes.



# Projects & Activities

LebMASH's projects and activities were planned based on four strategic goals:

## 1. Promote Research in Sexual Health and LGBT Health:

### AUB MPH Practicum

Similarly to the previous year, a Masters in Public Health student at the American University of Beirut chose LebMASH to complete her MPH Practicum requirements. Alexandra Abi Nassif joined LebMASH officially and assisted us in the preparation for and execution of our LGBT Health Week 2021.



### World AIDS Day with LeMSIC

Every year, SCORA (the Standing Committee on Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights Including HIV & AIDS) celebrates World's AIDS Day which has turned into one of LeMSIC's (Lebanese Medical Students' International Committee) most awaited events of the year! The goal of this project is to share knowledge about HIV and AIDS and break the taboos and stigma that hover around the topic. This year, LeMSIC conducted an online event with multiple training sessions and webinars during which LebMASH was represented by our board member Dr. Antoine Beayno, with the purpose of increasing the knowledge about this topic, urging students to advocate for ending AIDS' stigmatization.

## 2. Promote High Standard Education and Training:

### Violence Identification and First-Line Support

We are glad to share that LebMASH's team underwent a training on psychological first aid titled "Violence Identification and First-Line Support" with FHI360. We are excited to employ these new skills that will help us better serve the community, especially with relaunching our sexual orientation change efforts hotline, happening very soon!



# Projects & Activities

## Collaborations & Trainings with SIDC

LebMASH took part in a training initiated by SIDC and was represented by our board member Dr. Michel Nawfal. The training is given to peer educators and is a refresher training about voluntary counseling and testing services for STIs, mental health, drug use, and partly about LGBT terminology, sexual orientation and gender identity, LGBT social wellbeing, and how to appropriately approach LGBT individuals in this context.

In collaboration with SIDC, LebMASH provided workshops for nearly 300 individuals in 2021. The beneficiaries varied from social workers, journalists, healthcare providers, employees in the corporate sector about sexual orientation & gender identity, LGBTQ inclusivity in the workspace, the use of affirmative terminology, and more!



## Other Trainings

LebMASH delivered additional trainings for the staff and volunteers of Be BRave Beirut and Oum el Nour, and concluded the year with an open training session for the general public on sexual orientation and gender identity, finishing off the year with 500 trainees in total!.





# Projects & Activities

## Collaborations with LeMSIC

In February, LebMASH was part of another collaboration with the Lebanese Medical Students' International Committee. In another webinar hosted by LeMSIC, our board member Dr. Antoine Beayno gave a session on sexual health considerations in sexual and gender minorities.

## Mental Health + LGBTQ+ Talk with Be Brave Beirut

Dr. Zavi Lakissian, LebMASH board member joined Be Brave Beirut on an Instagram live talk about mental health considerations for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

**MENTAL HEALTH**  
**+ LGBTQ+**

**DEC. 05**  
**insta live**  
**19h30**  
**(BEIRUT TIME)**

Kimberly Sarkis

Zavi Lakissian

Michel Sfeir

**WITH**  
**ZAVI LAKISSIAN**

## LebMASH x AUB Outlook

LebMASH is happy to have been part of The Health and Wellness section at AUB Outlook's first event! LGBTQ+ Health: A holistic approach to general and mental health of queer people in Lebanon. LebMASH's President Dr. Suha Ballout and Board Member Dr. Antoine Beayno were the panelists for this exciting event! The event did not only talk about health exclusively, but also touched on topics such as socio-economic backgrounds and the effects of classes on accessibility to health care for LGBTQ+ individuals in Lebanon.

Outlook: Health & Wellness Presents

**LEBMASH**

**On Saturday April 10th - 5pm via Webex**

**LGBTQ+ Health: A holistic approach to general and mental health of queer people in Lebanon**

# Projects & Activities

## LGBTQ Health Week 2021

This year, LebMASH pulled off yet another successful health week!

Our 5th annual LGBT health week 2021 theme was “الصحة كيف” (How is your Health) and, due to the COVID-19 required safety measures at the time, all our activities took place virtually in the form of a series of webinars and training workshops.

### 1. "Outliving 2020 - Community Health Systems"

This webinar discussed best practices for community health systems management in 2020. The conversation is understanding the challenges faced by different countries in the MENA region, success stories and best practices to survive 2020, and how we can plan for a healthier future. Click [here](#) to watch.

### 3. "Are healthcare PROfessionals PRO in dealing with LGBTQ YOUTH and their families?"

In this webinar, we discussed LGBTQ youth health, mental wellbeing, and main issues. We also showcased the power of acceptance and family belonging. Click [here](#) to watch.

### 5. "How Was Your Sex Life During the Pandemic?"

This webinar discussed a variety of aspects of sexual health of LGBTQ individuals with focus on issues identified during the pandemic. Click [here](#) to watch.

### 2. "Widening the LGBT+ Health Agenda: Lessons Learned from the UK and Lebanon"

This webinar discussed the broader LGBTQ health issues and needs, including late-life, and end-of-life care. Insights from clinicians, researchers, and leaders from Lebanon and the UK were featured during the webinar. Click [here](#) to watch.

4. "LGBTQ Mental Health Wellbeing: WHO Strategy and Clinical Experiences". In this webinar, we spoke with a World Health Organization representative and clinical experts about strategies to advance mental health in times of crisis. Click [here](#) to watch.

**LebMASH**  
LGBTQ HEALTH WEEK 2021 WEBINAR

How was your sex life during the pandemic?  
الصحة كيف؟

**SPEAKERS**

- Sandrine Attallah**  
Consultant in Sexual Medicine and Certified Psychosexologist
- Nesrine Rizk**  
Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine and Infectious Diseases
- Diana Abou Abbas**  
Executive Director  
Marsa Sexual Health Care

**MODERATOR**  
**Dr. Sarah Abboud**  
Assistant Professor of Nursing at the University of Illinois Chicago  
LebMASH Board Member

**DESCRIPTION**  
We will discuss a variety of aspects of sexual health of LGBTQ individuals with focus on issues identified during the pandemic.

**19th MARCH**  
5 PM - 6 PM  
Beirut Time

Language:  
English w/  
Some Arabic

Visit [lebmask.org/lgbtq-health-week-2021](http://lebmask.org/lgbtq-health-week-2021) to register



# Projects & Activities

## LGBTQ Health Week 2021

### 6. "LGBTQ Mental Health Training

This training provides healthcare professionals with an overview on sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The workshop focuses on best practices to prevent, assess, and manage mental health disparities among the LGBTQ community.

### 7. "LGBTQ Health Student Workshop

This workshop provides health profession students with basic knowledge about sexual health, health concerns and disparities faced by LGBTQ communities. This workshop uses active learning strategies to provide students with opportunities to practice affirming and inclusive healthcare regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.



5th **LGBTQ HEALTH WEEK** 2021

الصحة كيف؟

MARCH 15-21



# Projects & Activities

## 3. Develop & Sustain Strong Relationships With Other Organizations and Our Community

### AMAN MENA Toolkit

LebMASH has been an active member in the USAID- supported LINKAGES project and we are proud to share that LebMASH and the other partners in this project designed an interactive toolkit to strengthen the security of HIV program implementers operating in the MENA region. Click [here](#) to view the toolkit.



### The MENA Civil Society Statement on HIV/AIDS

The MENA Civil Society Statement on HIV/AIDS for the Multi-stakeholder hearing, MENA+ and MENAHCoalition in partnership with civil society networks have prepared and endorsed this statement presented during the hearing. You can read and download the statement on [www.menaplus.org](http://www.menaplus.org).

### Leader in LGBTQ Health Equity Award

This year, LebMASH awarded our Leader in LGBT Health Equity award to 2 recipients: Sandra Melhem and Dayna Ash. Their support to the LGBTQ community in Lebanon throughout the past year has truly left a positive impact on the livelihood of many vulnerable members of our community. And while supporting the livelihoods of individuals directly affects their physical and mental health, their work this past year has been in line with LebMASH's mission! So join us in congratulating Sandra and Dayna!





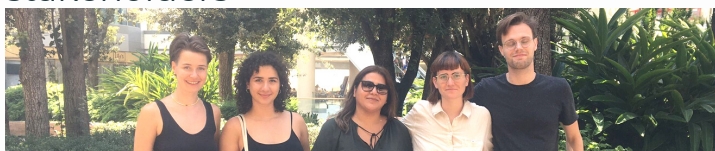
# Projects & Activities

## Halloween Party Fundraiser in New York

As you may remember, Friends of LebMASH organized a virtual fundraising gala last year in partnership with LebMASH, as Covid lockdown protocols prohibited us from hosting our annual fundraising party in person. This year, we are back! Friends of LebMASH hosted a spectacular halloween party in New York which was very well attended and had a great turnout! So join us in saying THANK YOU to Friends of LebMASH for continuously supporting us every year.

## Meeting with ChanGE Students

Our executive director Ms. Souad Al Challah met with students from the project CHAnGE, who conducted interviews with activists, organizations, campaigners, artists and others advocating for sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality. Ms. Al Challah shared LebMASH's mission and vision, our previous and upcoming works towards advancing LGBTQIA+ health and the health of marginalized groups in Lebanon. The students will be launching a campaign in Belgium based on the insights gathered from the different stakeholders



## LebMASH x OutRight Action International

LebMASH Board Member Dr. Omar Fattal spoke at an event hosted by OutRight Action International.

Broken Promises: SOGIE Change Efforts as a Hindrance to the Realisation of SDG3

"This session [focused] on:

1. Demystifying SOGIE change efforts and highlighting the negative impact on LGBTI lives. 2. Exploring how the denial of the highest attainable standard of health has serious negative impacts on quality of life and perpetuates a vicious cycle of discrimination, exclusion, poverty and stigma. 3. Recommending strategies for recourse and advocacy towards a complete ban of SOGIE change efforts in all its forms as well as strategies for change to truly leave no one behind and achieve the world envisaged by the SDGs."

### SOGIE Change Efforts as a Hindrance to the Realization of SDG 3

WEDNESDAY  
July 7, 2021  
7:30am EDT



#### MODERATOR

YVONNE WAMARI  
Africa Program Officer  
OutRight



AMIE BISHOP  
Sr. Research Advisor  
OutRight

OMAR FATTAL  
Lebanese Medical Association  
or Sexual Health (LebMASH);  
Board Member, OutRight



LINI ZURLIA  
Advocacy Officer of ASEAN  
SOGIE Caucus



STEVE LETSIKE  
Executive Director  
Access Chapter 2



#### REGISTER

<https://bit.ly/SDG3Broken>



# Projects & Activities

## Yalla Care Descriptive Report



We are pleased to share with you The Yalla Care Coalition Descriptive Report – A Study on the needs of the LGBTQIA+ community in Beirut, 2021.

The Yalla Care Coalition groups 8 NGOs (Haven for Artists, Queer Relief Fund, Marsa, LebMASH, Skoon, SIDC, AFE, joined lately by Mosaic), all of which work directly with the LGBTQIA+ community. In the past 2 years, and following the COVID pandemic and the Beirut Port blast, we came together to ensure that the needs of the community are assessed and met in a community-based approach. Subsequently, we began to first distribute hygiene kits and food boxes as a first response, while at the same time developing a multi-sectorial needs assessment to better understand and respond to the needs of the community.

This assessment - totaling 310 respondents - unveils the critical reality of the LGBTQIA+ community from the Great Beirut area. Please find attached a descriptive report of our findings, that we hope will contribute to improving the way we approach aid programs aimed at the LGBTQIA+ community in Lebanon. Click [here](#) to view the report.

## MADRE: Viva Girls

After the success of our campaign supported by Madre's initiative VIVA Girls, we are proud to have been granted the extension of this project for another year. LebMASH will extend its partnership with queer filmmaker Ghida Ladkani on another project targeting sexual orientation & gender identity change efforts (conversion therapy).





# Projects & Activities

## 4.. Influence & Contribute to Change Policies & Legislations to Protect Health Rights & Well-being of Marginalized Groups

### LebGUIDE in Arabic!

Our directory of LGBTQIA+ welcoming clinicians is now available in Arabic! Click [here](#) to view our directory in Arabic.



### Directory of LGBTQIA+ welcoming life saving and life enhancing institutions

With the support of MADRE , the Lebanese Medical Association for Sexual Health took on a project in which we mapped out different resources in the country that are welcoming to members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and show no sexual/gender-based discrimination in their workspaces and practices. Click [here](#) to view the directory



### SOCE Reporting Hotline

LebMASH will continue to examine sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) practices in Lebanon through maintaining a hotline for people to report SOCE practices. LebMASH also plans to continue to spread awareness about the harmful physical and mental health outcomes of SOCE among health care professionals and the public.



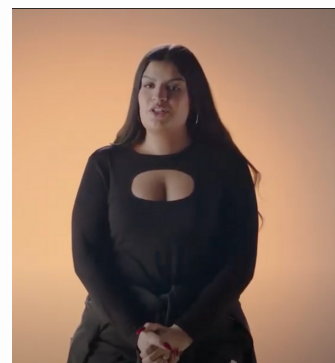
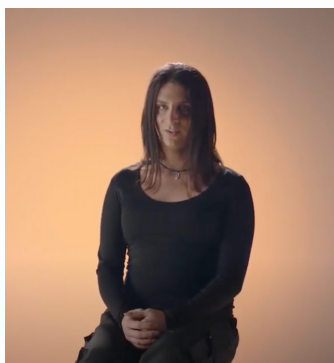
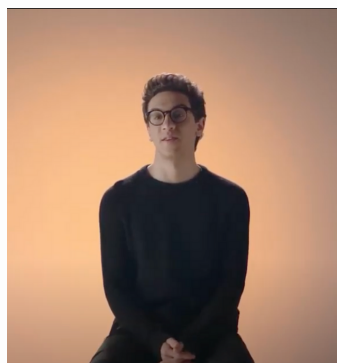


# Projects & Activities

## International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia & Transphobia

On the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOT), we spoke to local members of the LGBTQ+ community about their challenges around quarantine, health, and job security during these hard times.

With COVID-19 taking over, the Lebanese LGBTQ + community was found especially vulnerable in regards to their overall security.



Click [here](#) to watch the video in which local LGBTQ community members share their stories around the hardships they faced as queer individuals during the pandemic.

Click [here](#) to see more!



# Stay Connected



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# Consider Making a Donation



[Givingloop.org/LebMASH](https://givingloop.org/LebMASH)

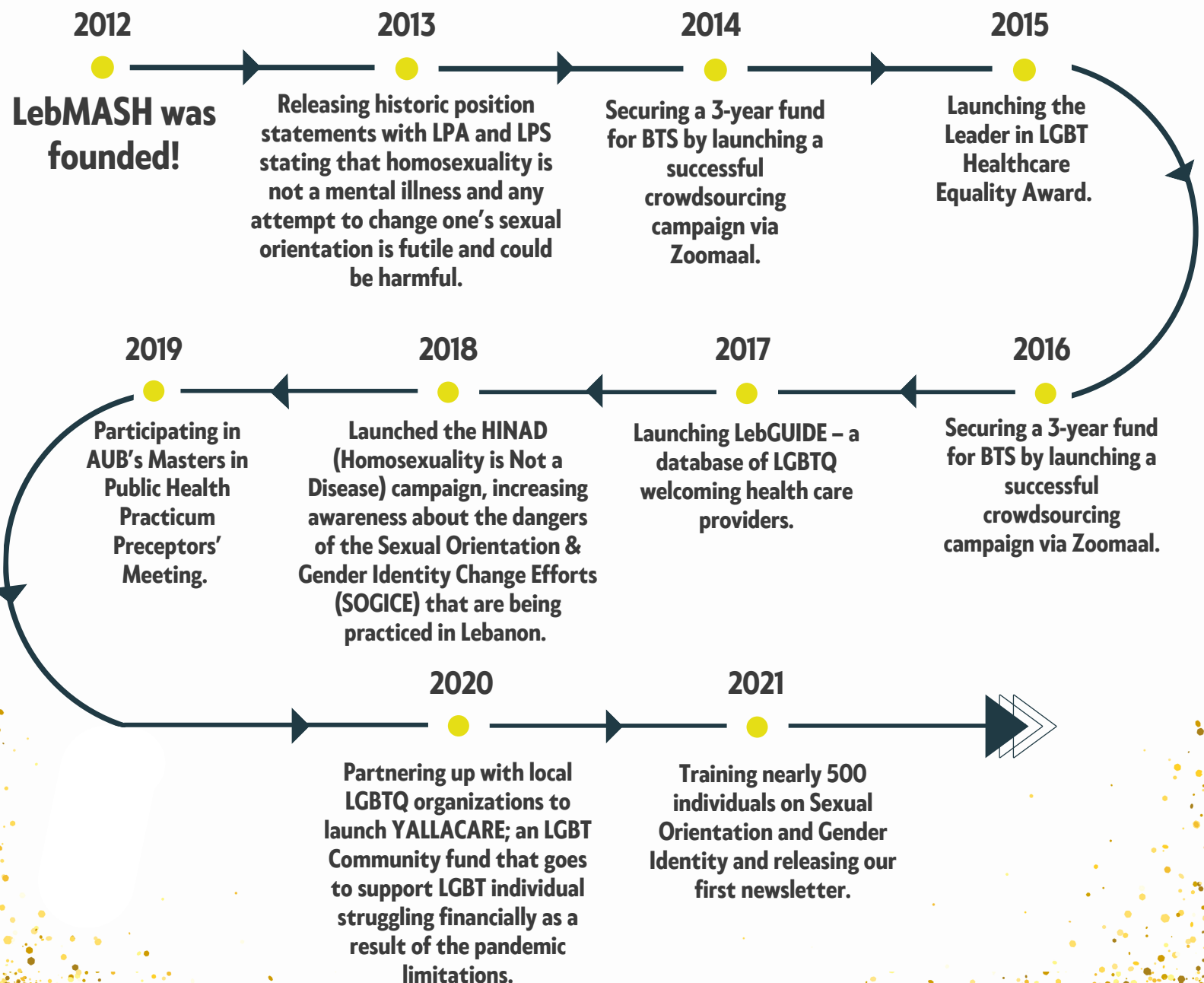


[Friendsoflebmash.org/donate-today](https://friendsoflebmash.org/donate-today)  
(for tax deductible donations in the U.S)

# LEBMASH 10

Celebrating 10 years of  
changing mindsets

10 Years in Review





# LEBMASH

# 10

Celebrating 10 years of  
changing mindsets

— Thank you to all of our supporters —  
over the years!



Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders  
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