

# DAVID KATO

## Ugandan LGBT Activist (1964-2011)



David Kato was born to the Kisule clan in its ancestral village of Nakawala. He first acknowledged his sexual orientation while teaching in Johannesburg. In 2005 he became a founding member of Integrity Uganda, a faith-based LGBT organization led by Bishop Christopher Senyonjo to provide support and counseling for LGBT persons who were increasingly falling victim to anti-gay hatred. In 2007 Kato joined Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), the nation's first and only umbrella group by and for LGBT people. In 2009, several well-funded Evangelical Christians from the United States and Canada traveled to Uganda. The rallies and workshops they staged exacerbated existing anti-gay hysteria. In response, Ugandan MP David Bahati introduced the "Anti-Homosexuality Bill" in 2009, which came to be known as the "Kill the Gays" bill because of its call for the execution of homosexuals. To put a human face on the impending genocide, Kato became the first person to speak openly with the Ugandan media about being a gay man – an act of unprecedented courage for which he was beaten and jailed. He addressed the hostile anti-LGBT climate in his country at the 2010 United Nations Conference on Human Rights, while Uganda's Human Rights Commission "openly joked and snickered." Later that year he was among those whose names, addresses, and photos were published on the front page of the Ugandan tabloid *Rolling Stone* under the banner "Hang Them!" Kato and two others listed in the article sued the newspaper. In January 2011 the Ugandan High Court Justice ruled against the *Rolling Stone*'s incitement to violence; but it was too late to save him. Days later he was found bludgeoned to death in his home. At Kato's funeral family, friends, and fellow activists wore t-shirts with his photo on the front and the phrase "Aluta continua" (the struggle continues) on the back. In spite of worldwide condemnation, a slightly modified version of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill became law in 2014, plunging LGBT people in Uganda into a living hell – only to be nullified 5 months later on a technicality, which triggered renewed vigilante violence. While politicians continue to wrangle with the consequences of the humanitarian crisis they have created, the martyrdom of David Kato remains an inspiration for LGBT activists everywhere.

### Lesson Plan

#### LEVEL 1: CONTRIBUTIONS APPROACH

1. Activate prior experience: How has David Kato (Kisule) earned the title of "Father of Uganda's Gay Rights Movement"?
2. Read the biographical information found at this link: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Kato](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Kato)
3. Group Discussion: Describe the social and political environment regarding gay rights in Uganda.

#### LEVEL 2: ADDITIVE APPROACH

1. In viewing the role of social justice and civil rights in Uganda, how had David Kato exhibited courage and resilience in his own country? Read the following article: [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/28/world/africa/28uganda.html?\\_r=2&](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/28/world/africa/28uganda.html?_r=2&)
2. Describe the myths and perceptions regarding homosexuality in Uganda. How did these views impact Kato's life? View the link at <http://download.thelancet.com/mmc/s/journals/lancet/PIIS0140673612611933/mmc1.mp4>
3. Website Investigation: How did other gay activists stand up for their civil rights in their own countries? Choose one activist from any of these nations: [http://www.legacyprojectchicago.org/National\\_Affiliation\\_Portal.html](http://www.legacyprojectchicago.org/National_Affiliation_Portal.html) and describe any similarities that you see with David Kato.

#### LEVEL 3: TRANSFORMATIONAL APPROACH

1. What were the key events that provided the foundation for Kato's activism in Uganda? View the article from Huff Post World at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/27/david-kato-uganda-gay-act\\_n\\_814775.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/27/david-kato-uganda-gay-act_n_814775.html)
2. Listen to Kato's message the struggle for Ugandan gay rights at this link: [http://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/cghr/events\\_2010\\_catouganda.html](http://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/cghr/events_2010_catouganda.html) and at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12299786>
3. Describe one characteristic that exemplifies Kato's spirit for change in his country and explain how he demonstrated his passion.

#### LEVEL 4: SOCIAL ACTION APPROACH

1. Examine the website of SMUG (Sexual Minorities Uganda) at <http://www.smug.4t.com/index.html>
2. Explain the role of the Ugandan tabloid newspaper *Rolling Stone* on Kato's life. View the article at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/27/ugandan-gay-rights-activist-murdered>
3. What other forums or organization for social change have you seen in other countries? Describe other organizations or creators who are a role model for social justice and LGBT rights today.