

# The How and Why of an Asexual Association in Denmark

Astrid H. Eriksen, Hanne Petersen



Asexual Association Denmark, [info@aseksuelle.dk](mailto:info@aseksuelle.dk)

International Asexuality Conference, 14 August 2021  
(World Pride 2021 in Copenhagen)

[astrid](mailto:astrid@aseksuelle.dk), [hanne](mailto:hanne@aseksuelle.dk)@aseksuelle.dk

# Agenda

- Who are the Asexual Association Denmark (AAD)?
- What's an association?
- Benefits in community-aimed activities
- Benefits in society-aimed activities
- Relationship to the LGBT+ community

# It's an association

# Why?

“The purpose of the association is to benefit persons on the asexual spectrum, e.g. by disseminating information on asexuality, including the asexual spectrum, and strengthening the asexual community in Denmark.”

*-- from the articles of AAD*

# Background: Who are we?

- Founded 2 April 2016
- All based on volunteer work
- ~ 50 members (annual fee 16 €)
- Board: 3 members (1-year term), chair, cashier;  
~ monthly meetings
- Working groups and committees
- Workshops for member involvement approximately once per year  
(various topics)
- Two-way focus: inward and outward



# AAD as a formal association

- An association acts as a legal person
  - bank account, CVR number (Central Business Register), etc.
- We have official articles, which outline the formal "laws" of the association
- Ace-related work delegated to working groups, members can participate and have influence
- The board serves the overall interests of the association (coordination and infrastructure)
  - acting for the association, not just for individual interest
  - the board is responsible to the annual general assembly





# Benefits in community-aimed activities

## —

### Our own world

# Community-aimed (inward-facing) activities

- Meeting place for new members of the community
  - information about asexuality and the ace community (but there's also a facebook group + Scandinavian AVEN forum)
  - introductory social activities
  - "how to get started"-guide



# Community-benefits II

- Financial support for social activities, e.g. pizza, entry fees, travel between cities
  - coordinated applications for external funding



# Working groups and committees

- Visibility and education
- World Pride 2021
- Annual Copenhagen Pride Human Rights Programme
- Pride parades
- (Press register, list of presenters)



# Community-aimed challenges

- Geographical imbalance – most activities in and around the capital area (inclusion?)
- Effect of the association on social activities?
  - Before AAD: Coordinated through AVEN – initiatives by various individuals
  - After AAD: Fewer social events – fewer organisers



# Benefits in society-aimed activities

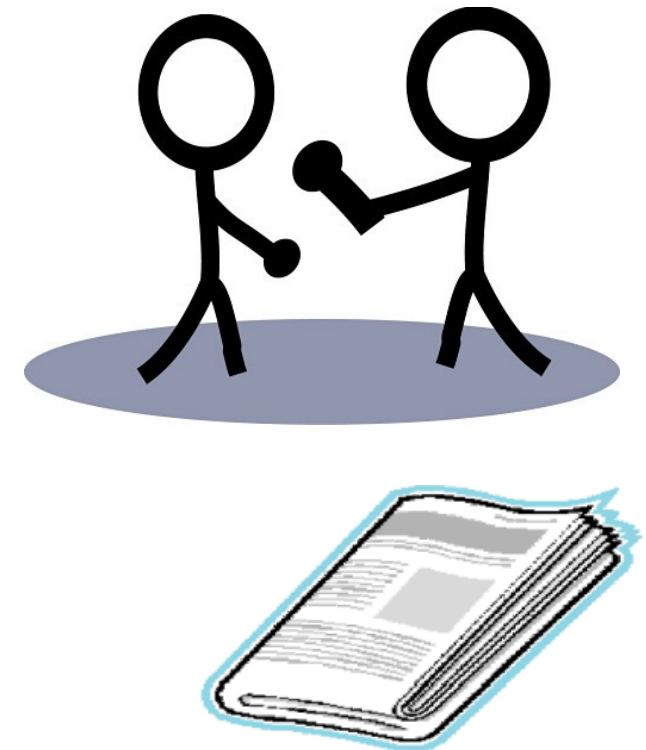
—

## The rest of the world

# Society-aimed (outward-facing) activities

- Online (and offline) presence:
  - website, emails, facebook
  - search results, references in media...
  - Pride participation
- Point of contact for others to reach us:
  - journalists (and students)
  - invitations to give talks
- Platform/channel for us to contact others:
  - corrections to online resources about asexuality
  - the minister ("congratulations on the election")

[info@aseksuelle.dk](mailto:info@aseksuelle.dk)



# Authority

- Volume/critical mass: We (claim to) represent more than just a few individuals
  - ... they rarely ask how many members we have ...
  - a name to put on a flyer
  - we collect and coordinate info and observations from many
  - more experience, more polished presentations



# Relationship to the LGBT+ community

—

## The rainbow

# Early thoughts on the format

	Pros	Cons
Continue as unorganised group of like-minded individuals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked pretty well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of 'weight' as a platform</li> </ul>
Become part/subgroup of LGBT+ Denmark?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to the experience and infrastructure of LGBT+ Denmark</li> <li>• Lean on their authority/credibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all aces consider themselves LGBT+ (alienation/exclusion)</li> <li>• Invisibility</li> <li>• Lack of independence</li> </ul>
Independent organisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become a legal person</li> <li>• Financial options: make money, spend money</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More work</li> <li>• Build from scratch</li> <li>• No visibility/recognition to tap into</li> </ul>

# The LGBT+ community – are we included?

- Immediately recognised as a relevant partner by LGBT+ organisations
- Cooperation with large organisations
  - initiated shortly after the formation of AAD
  - Copenhagen Pride: participation, use of meeting rooms
  - LGBT+ Denmark: meeting rooms, invitation to become a 'member association'
- Invitations to hearings, courses, network for volunteer organisations, ...



# LGBT+ II

- Continuous discussion: AAD as part of the LGBT+ community
  - How do we best fight for and represent our members?
  - Ideologically vs. practically
- Slido poll:  
How should the collaboration be between the ace community and the LGBT+ community?
- AAD members:  
Strong: 70 %, moderate 22 %, limited 7 %, minimal 0 %, none 0 %



# One member's answer

- “As long as the knowledge of asexuality in the wider society is as limited as it is, it makes no sense to try to call out on our own. Personally, I have met way more immediate understanding from people in the LGBT+ community than from the majority population in Denmark – to a degree that I consider my self an LGBT+ person even though I may look like an ally from the outside – I feel we belong in the LGBT+ family.”

# Another member's answer

- “There is a fundamental difference between the LGBT+ organisations and AAD: The former work toward the possibility and right to actively live their sexualities with others, while the latter works for the possibility and right to do the exact opposite: to be free *not* to live out sexuality with others. AAD and its members must ask themselves the question: Why are asexuals part of a community that wants the opposite? [...] The involvement in and cooperation of AAD with LGBT+ may confuse others to think that asexuals are actually sexually active persons that have not yet come out of the closet. But as asexuals, we want to be and STAY asexual. [...] Were it up to me, then: Thanks to LGBT+ for the good cooperation. [...] But AAD choose to stand alone and continue alone. Only like that may the message of AAD shine clear and unambiguous.”

# Wrap-up

# Summary

- The Asexual Association Denmark was founded in April 2016
- It allows us to have an infrastructure that coordinates social and visibility activities
- We have money
- Central contact point for both aces and media
- Did we kill the social grassroots?

# Our activities during World Pride 2021

Asexual Association Denmark:  
World Pride August 2021

(all times are in CEST)

**Saturday 14th - Sunday 15th**  
International Asexuality Conference 2021

**Wednesday 18th**  
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
Life as an Asexual (panel discussion)


**Thursday 19th**  
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM  
Introduction to  
Asexual Association Denmark

**Friday 20th**  
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM  
Panel discussion about  
bisexuality and -romanticism

**Saturday 21st**  
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM  
Aromanticism: What does it mean?  
(panel discussion)

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM  
Social event (with cake)

(afternoon)  
Pride March

See  for details about locations and links to virtual events

<https://copenhagen2021.com/#YouAreIncluded>

<http://www.aseksuelle.dk/worldpride2021-english/>

# Questions?