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### **Abbreviations**

**AIDS** acquired immune deficiency syndrome

HIV human immunodeficiency virus

LGBTI lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex

NGO nongovernmental organization

SOGI sexual orientation and gender identity

UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

**UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF

USAID U.S. Agency for International Development

WHO World Health Organization



Note: The LGBTI abbreviation is used in the report when all subcategories are represented in the referenced material or are being discussed generally. LGBT is used when intersex issues were not specifically incorporated—mostly in secondary research or in the analysis of findings. Additionally, the use of the SOGI abbreviation notes that the bulk of secondary research and analyzed data from the research focuses on sexual orientation and gender identity.

### Glossary of Terms

#### **Bisexual**

A person who is sexually or romantically attracted to or has sex with people of more than one gender.

#### **Bullying**

Repeated aggressive behavior that intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort through physical contact, verbal attacks, fighting, or psychological manipulation. Bullying involves an imbalance of power and can include teasing, taunting, and use of hurtful names, physical violence, or social exclusion. Bullying may be direct, such as one child demanding money or possessions from another, or indirect, such as a group of students spreading rumors.

#### Cisgender

A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

#### Gay

A person who is primarily sexually or romantically attracted to or has sex with someone of the same gender. Commonly used for men.

#### Gender

The social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female. It encompasses the relationships between women and men and girls and boys as well as the relations between women and those between men.

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#### Homophobia

Fear, discomfort, intolerance, or hatred of homosexuality or sexually diverse people.

#### Homophobic bullying

Bullying that is based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

#### Homophobic violence

Violence that is based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

An umbrella term for people born with sex characteristics, such as physical, hormonal, or chromosomal features that do not fit typical binary notions of male and female bodies. Intersex persons may have any sexual orientation or gender identity.

#### Lesbian

A self-identified woman who is sexually or romantically attracted to or has sex with other women.

#### **MSM**

Men who have sex with men. They may or may not identify as "gay" or "homosexual."

#### School-related gender-based violence

Acts or threats of sexual, physical, or psychological violence occurring in and around schools that are perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes and typically facilitated by an imbalance in physical strength or power.

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#### Sexual orientation gender identity (SOGI)

a person's physical, mental, romantic, or emotional attraction (sexual orientation), and a person's internal sense of gender (gender identity). A person's gender identity may differ from the sex assigned at birth.

#### Stigma

Opinions or judgments held by individuals or society that negatively reflects on a person or group. Discrimination occurs when stigma is acted on.

#### Tom

An adaptation of the English "tomboy" used in the Thai language to describe a female who may inwardly feel more like a man. Toms may appear masculine in appearance.

#### Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity or expression differs from the sex assigned at birth. Transgender identity does not depend on medical procedures. It includes, for example, people assigned female at birth but who identify as a man (female to male or transgender man) and people assigned male at birth but who identify as a woman (male to female or transgender woman).

## **Executive Summary**

Thailand is widely considered progressive among developing and middle-income countries regarding the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTI) people. Yet, a growing body of research shows they still experience discrimination, limited job and housing opportunities, and barriers to accessing many common services.

Most information on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in Thailand is qualitative in nature. A new study led by the World Bank, in partnership with Thammasat University, Love Frankie, and the Nordic Trust Fund, includes the first endeavor to gather and analyze quantitative data on economic and financial outcomes for a large, statistically significant sample of LGBTI people in Thailand. Qualitative data from in-depth "live story" interviews with 19 SOGI-diverse participants from across each of Thailand's main regions complement the online survey data and provide further insights into the lives of LGBTI respondents. For the first time in Thailand, the study also presents information on non-LGBTI people and their attitudes toward LGBTI groups, based on survey responses from a statistically representative non-LGBTI reference group.

The study focuses on how LGBTI people fare in Thai society economically and financially: their opportunities and inclusion, or discrimination and exclusion. It highlights outcomes for the LGBTI and non-LGBTI population in the labor, housing, and financial markets, along with LGBTI people's challenges in their access to education, health, and government services. Based on the study's results, international experience, and literature reviews, the report offers policy and programmatic options to widen opportunities for the LGBTI population and share prosperity among all the people in Thailand.

#### Responses from LGBTI Community

When responding to the study's online survey, 60 percent of transgender people, 30 percent of lesbians, and 20 percent of gay men report discrimination at work. More than half assert their job applications were rejected because of their LGBTI identity. An intersex person from Bangkok said:

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I applied, but they told me, 'This position is for women only, you're not a woman.' So, they couldn't hire me. 'I know that you're skilled, people praise you, but for this position, the leadership wants a real woman, you're not a woman, you have a male personal title.

Intersex individual, 27, Greater Bangkok

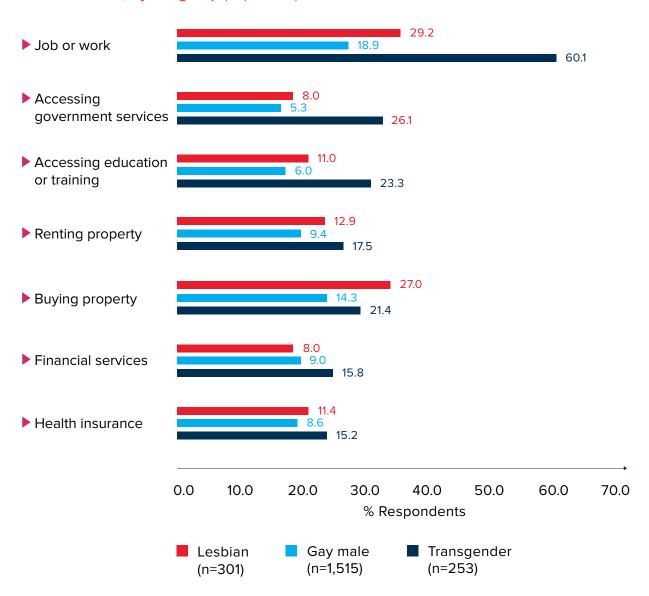
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#### **Executive Summary**

These findings are in contrast with the progress that Thailand has made in developing legislation to stop LGBTI discrimination. Thailand also is a signatory of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, which also formulates general recommendations against discrimination that includes sexual orientation and gender identity. Thailand also adopted the Gender Equality Act of 2015, which makes it illegal to discriminate against people who look different in appearance from their sex at birth.

Nonetheless, significant numbers of LGBTI participants in the survey report discrimination in accessing jobs, government services, education or training, and health services as well as buying or renting property. Figure 1 shows the responses to the online survey from 3,502 people living in Thailand: 1,200 non-LGBTI people and 2,302 LGBTI people who identify themselves as gay male, lesbian, transgender, intersex, or other in their sexual orientation and gender identity. The survey is the largest quantitative data collection effort on the economic inclusion of LGBTI people in Thailand and the Asia-Pacific region.

Figure 1. LGBTI People in Thailand Report Discrimination in All Dimensions of Economic and Social Life, by Subgroup (in percent)



#### **Key Survey Results**

Among the results, five stand out as key findings around the question of how LGBTI people are faring economically and financially in Thai society today.



Few LGBTI and non-LGBTI people surveyed are aware of laws prohibiting anti-LGBTI discrimination

Result 1: Only 7 percent of LGBTI and only 1 percent of non-LGBTI survey participants say they are aware of laws in Thailand prohibiting anti-LGBTI discrimination. More than half (51 percent) of LGBTI respondents and more than two-thirds (69 percent) of non-LGBTI respondents report they are not aware of any such laws (see figure 2). Thailand adopted specific legal protections for LGBTI people, including through the Gender Equality Act of 2015.

Figure 2. Most Respondents Are Not Aware of Laws Prohibiting Discrimination and **Exclusion** (in percent)



Result 2: LGBTI survey respondents report the most severe discrimination in the labor market, followed by the housing market when renting or buying property (see figure 1). Job discrimination of lesbian, gay, and transgender respondents takes many forms, most commonly application rejection and harassment at work (see figure 3). Transgender respondents fare the worst: 77 percent of respondents report the rejection of job applications because of gender identity; 40 percent report being harassed. About half (49 percent) of gay men and 62 percent of lesbians report application rejection because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. About one-fifth of gay men say they were overlooked for a promotion or denied certain work benefits for being LGBTI.

#### Figure 3. Discrimination in the Labor Market Is Widely Reported by LGBTI **Survey Respondents**

For all regions, discrimination in the labor market is experienced extensively by LGBTI:



77% transgender, 49% gay male and 62.5% lesbian respondents said their job applications were refused because they were LGBTI



40% of transgender respondents experienced harassment or were ridiculed at work



22.7% of gay male respondents weren't promoted because they were LGBTI



24.5% of lesbian, gay male and transgender respondents were told not to show or mention being LGBTI



23.7% of transgender respondents were told to use the toilet according to their birth sex



19% of gay men experience significant discrimination in the labor market



60% of transgender respondents face workplace discrimination

Job and work discrimination varies across occupations and sectors. The police and law enforcement, the military, and religious institutions are particularly inaccessible for LGBTI people (figure 4). By contrast, agriculture, retail, and beauty and wellness are more accessible. This finding indicates potential occupational segregation by SOGI and low mobility of LGBTI people in the labor market.

More than half (nearly 53 percent) of all LGBTI respondents report emotional problems, including depression, anxiety, and frustration because of discrimination or exclusion in the labor market.

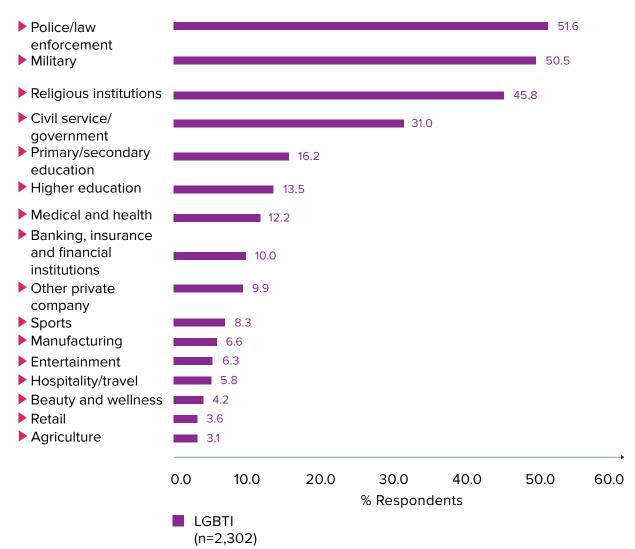
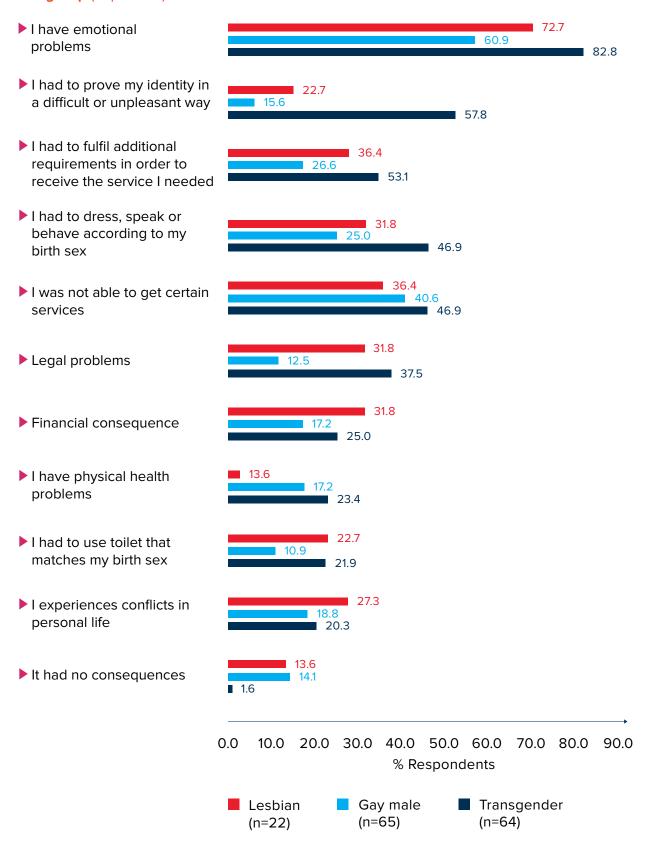


Figure 4. Sectors Where Openly LGBTI Respondents Report Finding It Hard or Impossible to Have a Job (in percent)

Result 3: LGBTI respondents face major challenges in accessing government services, such as obtaining identity cards, passports, and other personal documentation. Most important, 40.6 percent of gay men, 36.4 percent of lesbians, and 46.9 percent of transgender people participating in the survey report they could not obtain the services they sought from the government (see figure 5). Half of LGBTI respondents report being treated disrespectfully when accessing government services, and more than 30 percent say they were harassed or ridiculed and faced more requirements to gain access to the services they needed. Large groups of LGBTI respondents suffered financial, emotional, personal, or legal difficulties because of discrimination in seeking government services.

#### **Executive Summary**

Figure 5. Consequences of Discrimination When Accessing Government Services, by **Subgroup** (in percent)

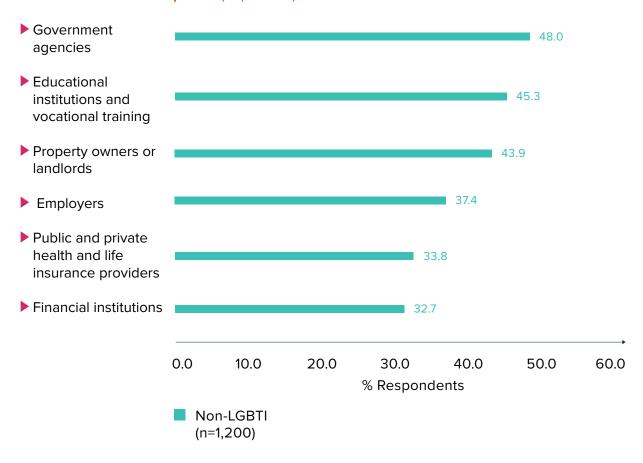


Result 4: Among LGBTI respondents, transgender people report the most frequent and severe discrimination and exclusion in society. Lesbians report worse outcomes than gay men. For example, 60 percent of transgender people report experiencing job discrimination in contrast to 29 percent of lesbians and 19 percent of gay men. The same pattern—the highest discrimination against transgender persons followed by lesbians and then gay men—also emerges across accessing government services, education and training, life or health insurance, and financial products as well as renting property. The only exception is buying real estate, where lesbians experience the most discrimination, followed by transgender persons and gay men. A transgender woman and a gay man report:

66 Transgender people are treated unequally in the community. They are looked down on as second-class citizens. Gay man, 26, South Thailand 66 99 The main problem is my personal title. When I have to deal with the bank, they usually have a problem with my ID card because it still says Mister. The photo is also an old one. They usually feel suspicious and have to investigate more. Transgender woman, 20, Central Thailand

Result 5: More than one-third (37.4 percent) of non-LGBTI survey respondents find it acceptable for employers to discriminate against LGBTI individuals. Almost half (48 percent) found it reasonable for LGBTI people to experience some form of discrimination when seeking government services (see figure 6).

Figure 6. Proportion of Non-LGBTI Respondents Who Believe Some Form of LGBTI **Discrimination Is Acceptable** (in percent)



#### Options for Improving Inclusion of LGBTI People in Thailand's Society

Thailand is well placed to become a global leader on LGBTI inclusion and a model for other countries in Asia. Moving from tolerance to full economic and social inclusion calls for more policy and programmatic action toward greater awareness and implementation and advancement of the country's legal framework. This report offers options for policy and program action that take into account international and national experience and good practice, with a view toward ending discrimination and promoting equality, fairness, and shared prosperity among all Thai citizens.

Policy and program options with specific actions in six focus areas are summarized in table 1, along with possible lead responsibilities and timing.

Table 1. LGBTI Inclusion in Thailand: Policy Options				
Recommended Policy Actions	Lead Agencies and Organizations	Timing		
Focus Area: Public Policy Awareness				
<ol> <li>Develop and implement a public campaign to promote awareness of gender equality legislation, SOGI and LGBTI rights, and SOGI nondiscrimination laws and policies across government, the private sector, civil society, media organizations, and throughout society at large. Specifically:         <ol> <li>Conduct training, raise awareness, and build capacity on gender equality, LGBTI, and SOGI issues in the labor, education, health, and other key services provided by ministries and government agencies.</li> <li>Sensitize government employees, teachers, doctors, and other education and health sector staff about SOGI nondiscrimination laws and policies.</li> </ol> </li> <li>As part of transforming Thailand and promoting the new, modern "Thailand 4.0" at home and internationally, establish a high-level government commitment to LGBTI inclusion and affirmequal rights and equal rights and opportunities for all Thais, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Consider, for example, a public statement by the head of state or government, or the assignment of nationwide responsibility for LGBTI inclusion to an "LGBTI champion." regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Consider, for example, a public statement by the head of state or government, or the assignment of nationwide responsibility for LGBTI inclusion to an "LGBTI champion." regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Consider, for example, a public statement by the head of state or government, or the assignment of nationwide responsibility for LGBTI inclusion to an "LGBTI champion."</li> </ol>	Primary:  • Ministry of Social Development and Human Security In collaboration with:  • Ministry of Justice  • Ministry of Labor  • Committee on the Determination of the Unfair Gender Discrimination  • Human Rights Commission and other line agencies  • Office of Public Servants, Prime Minister's Office  • Ministry of Information and Communication Technology  • Thai Journalists Association, Office of National Broadcast and Telecommunications, and other relevant news agencies	Short and medium term		
Focus Area: LGBTI Equality and SOGI None	discrimination in Employme	nt		
<ol> <li>Develop and implement an equality and nondiscrimination in employment and occupation law to guarantee nondiscrimination based on SOGI status.</li> <li>Establish an effective enforcement and monitoring mechanism for compliance with new legislation and provide redress in cases of discrimination, particularly for transgender people.</li> </ol>	Primary:  • Ministry of Labor In collaboration with:  • Committee on Unfair Gender Discrimination Complaints  • Ministry of Social Development and Human Security  • Private sector resource groups	Medium term		

Table 1. LGBTI Inclusion in Thailand: Policy Options				
Recommended Policy Actions	Lead Agencies and Organizations	Timing		
<ol> <li>Establish and promote the role of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as a complaint mechanism at the national level.</li> <li>Encourage social dialogue between private sector employers, employee resource groups, and LGBTI workers to protect the rights of LGBTI employees and promote SOGI nondiscrimination.</li> </ol>				
Focus Area: Equality in LGB	TI Health Care			
<ol> <li>Develop guidance and include a SOGI nondiscrimination component in health service delivery personnel training.</li> <li>Develop and implement a measure preventing private health insurers from inquiring about sexual orientation and gender identity.</li> <li>Develop and implement legal measures requiring private life insurers to issue life insurance policies that allow partners—married or unmarried—of any sex and gender identity to be beneficiaries.</li> </ol>	Primary:  • Ministry of Health In collaboration with:  • Department of Health  • Department of Mental Health  • Department of Health Services Support  • Ministry of Justice  • Office of Insurance Commission at the Ministry of Commerce  • Office of Social Security Administration  • Private sector (insurance companies)	Short and medium term		
Focus Area: Equality in LGB	TI Inclusive Education for A	II		
<ol> <li>Incorporate gender equality and SOGI nondiscrimination guidance in pre- and in-service training for current and new school administrators and teachers.</li> <li>Raise awareness of the whole school community about SOGI nondiscrimination, violence reporting, and referral mechanisms, and build its capacity to prevent and respond to violence and SOGI-based discrimination, including bullying and cyber-bullying.</li> </ol>	Primary:  • Ministry of Education In collaboration with:  • Ministry of Social Development and Human Security  • Committee on Consideration of Unfair Gender Discrimination  • Bangkok Metropolitan Administration  • Other institutions overseeing education systems including the Departments of Local Administration, which oversee local schools in some subdistricts	Short and medium term		

Table 1. LGBTI Inclusion in Thaila	and: Policy Ontions	
Recommended Policy Actions	Lead Agencies and Organizations	Timing
Focus Area: Equality of L	egal Rights	
<ol> <li>Adopt a national gender recognition law.</li> <li>Adopt a national same-sex partnerships law.         A best practice partnerships law will permit and validate stable partnerships between any two persons, on an equal basis regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.     </li> <li>Fully integrate SOGI in the Gender Equality Act of 2015 and in the promotion of gender equality in national plans and policies generally.</li> <li>Explicitly include lesbians and bisexual and transgender women in all efforts to promote gender equality, women's rights, and women's empowerment and to prevent violence against women and girls.</li> <li>Strengthen and enforce legal protection against all forms of gender-based violence, including against any LGBTI or other person of diverse SOGI status.</li> </ol>	Primary:  • Ministry of Justice In collaboration with:  • Department of Rights and Liberty  • Ministry of Justice, Human Rights commission, and other line agencies	Medium term
Focus Area: Research to Fill K	nowledge Gaps	
<ol> <li>Collect SOGI-disaggregated quantitative data among key sectors.</li> <li>Develop an integrated database that combines cases and data on LGBTI exclusion from relevant government agencies and civil society organizations.</li> <li>Add sections on SOGI to national surveys and registry data from line ministries.</li> <li>Analyze best practices in preventing and responding to violence on the basis of SOGI, particularly in Thai schools, to build an inclusive society for all.</li> <li>Evaluate various policies and programs addressing SOGI in Thailand.</li> <li>Systematically collect data on reporting of violence against LGBTI people.</li> <li>Fund research to quantify the economic and financial cost to society of exclusion and disadvantaged treatment of LGBTI people and the benefits of inclusion.</li> </ol>	Primary:  • Ministry of Social Development and Human Security In collaboration with:  • Ministry of Education  • National Statistical Office and other line agencies  • National and academic research institutions  • Nongovernmental organizations	Short and medium term

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