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Violence Against Women & Girls

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BRIEF ON VIOLENCE AGAINST SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITY WOMEN

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The Global Women's Institute
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



“Around the world, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people and others with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities are targets of brutal physical and psychological violence. We are subject to harassment, assault and other violence; often under the guise of so-called ‘honor’, ‘tradition’, ‘nations’ and ‘families’.”

Source: Nabulivou, N. (2013). [Statement on Behalf of the Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Caucus](#). Commission on the Status of Women. United Nations Economic and Social Council.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- The term “sexual minorities” refers to individuals whose sexual orientation is outside the heterosexual mainstream. “Sexual minority women” refers to women who identify as lesbian or bisexual. Yet it also encompasses those who participate in an array of non-heterosexual acts, also called “same-sex loving women”.
- “Gender minorities” are individuals whose gender identity/expression does not fit into the distinct categories of male or female, or “cisgender”.¹ This encompasses transgender identities, as well as those exhibiting a non-conforming expression of gender. This term includes “third gender” individuals because their identity does not fit into the gender binary.
- This brief uses the term “LBT women” to refer to lesbians, bisexual women, and transgender women. A sub-category of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) population, “LBT” focuses on homosexual and bisexual women as well as transgender individuals with a female gender identity and expression.²

KEY POINTS

- Across the globe, sexism, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia lead to violence against LBT women, ranging from bullying, harassment and violence in families and communities to sexual assault and brutal extrajudicial killings.³
- However, the bulk of discourse and action surrounding gender equality and women’s empowerment in the development community has assumed a normative notion of “woman” as heterosexual and cisgender. This means LBT women are largely excluded from the critical dialogue that informs development programs and investments and the benefits that are derived from them. This includes actions aimed at reducing violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- A gender equality agenda within the larger global goals of advancing economic development, eliminating extreme poverty, and boosting shared prosperity must address the root causes of inequalities as well as their consequences for women of all gender and sexual identities and men who do not conform to entrenched societal norms of masculinity.⁴

- Through numerous pathways, women and their sexuality are subject to strict control. In societies where men dominate political, economic, and social realms (patriarchy), LBT women have the double burden of being women in a patriarchal society and being of a different sexual orientation/gender identity.⁵
- Some quantitative evidence suggests that the more patriarchal a society, the more homophobic it tends to be.⁶ “Hegemonic masculinity”, i.e., the dominant social position of heterosexual men, is especially problematic for gender non-conforming people.⁷ In many countries, this means LBT women experience discrimination that stems from both strict gender norms (discrimination as women) and stigma against them as LGBT persons. This creates a specific type of vulnerability to violence driven by sexism as well as homophobia/transphobia.
- Like all individuals, sexual and gender minorities are simultaneously members of different groups in society. In addition to one’s gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity, one is also a member of a specific race, ethnicity, age group, religion, employment category, as well as other groups. These various identities intersect and thus influence one’s experiences, social expectations and societal roles.⁸ Intersectionality is specific to each context; however, in many societies this intersection can create layered disadvantages and vulnerability to violence for LBT women.
- Overt, widespread, and frequently hostile discrimination and social exclusion are forms of violence. Particularly in tandem, discrimination and social exclusion limit the ability of LBT women to meet their basic needs, which additionally may place them at risk for more severe acts of violence. Recent evidence also suggests that in situations of displacement these risks are heightened as social protection is further eroded.^{9,10}

CAUSES, TYPES, AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST LBT WOMEN

Violence against LBT women stems largely from social stigma, which is manifest through systemic denial of resources, services, and opportunities, strict standards within the family and community, and punitive or discriminatory laws. This section examines these root causes and the many types of violence that LBT women experience, as well as the consequences of such violence on individuals’ lives and on development outcomes for families, communities, and societies.

Social Norms

- Social stigma and antipathy toward LGBT people are severe in some contexts.¹¹ Recent global surveys show homophobic sentiments to be especially high in some countries in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, particularly in countries that are more religious and/or theocratic.¹² A strong correlation exists between homophobia and traditionalism,¹³ as does a strong correlation between homophobia and gender inequality.¹⁴

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- Stigma¹⁵ against sexual minorities can increase their risk of experiencing violent attacks from members of the community.
- Evidence from Austria, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, and other contexts show the link between antipathy toward LGBT individuals and the desire to see them punished can be strong.¹⁶ Social stigma and antipathy are linked to sexual assault, rape, and murder of LBT women.¹⁷ Such stigma has fueled attacks against public LGBT pride parades, and has cultivated a sense of vigilantism that, in its most severe manifestation, has resulted in hate groups capturing and torturing LGBT individuals.^{18,19}



Denial of Resources, Services, and Opportunities

There is growing evidence of the many ways LGBT people are denied equal access to resources, services, and opportunities that are essential to development. These include health care, education, housing, employment, and legal redress. The denial of such access can perpetuate a cycle by which LBT women stay vulnerable to further violence. Overall, all of this creates a disincentive for LBT women to seek healthcare.

- In some contexts, doctors and nurses are permitted to refuse treatment if they disapprove of non-normative sexual orientations or expressions of gender.²⁰ But even in contexts where providers are

legally required to treat sexual and gender minorities, hostility and antipathy can affect the quality of care received.²¹

- For transgender individuals, the hormones that facilitate gender reassignment are not widely available, which can lead some to self-medicate with non-prescribed hormones, or to self-inject with potentially unsafe soft tissue fillers.
- Discrimination leaves little space for transgender individuals to work in the formal sector. As a result, some turn to sex work as a form of employment. In other cases, some transgender individuals resort to begging. In fact, as high as 83% of third gender *Hijra* individuals in India reported engaging in sex work or begging as their primary job.²² In some cases, groups and communities of sex workers have demanded rights available to them as laborers.²³ But in other cases, a lack of legal protections for sex workers and sexual/gender minorities allows violence to run rampant.²⁴
- LBT women can experience great difficulty in accessing justice or legal redress.²⁵ Even in contexts where there is a supportive legal framework, many fear their report will not be taken seriously or the police will further abuse them.²⁶ Due to a lack of anonymity, reporting a crime can lead to increased social stigma and public discrimination.²⁷

Interpersonal Violence

Beyond the experiences of severe discrimination discussed above, LBT women are also at high risk for multiple forms of interpersonal violence committed against them by colleagues, family members, neighbors, or intimate partners.

- ***Within the natal family***, children who portray non-normative sexualities or expressions of gender are more vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse than their heterosexual siblings.²⁸ Using a heterosexual sibling as a control, researchers in the United States found that sexual orientation was the major factor in the prevalence of childhood psychological, physical, and sexual abuse committed by family members in childhood. These data do not suggest participants “became gay” due to abuse in childhood, but rather they were specifically targeted due to their non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality.²⁹
- The same study also shows that sexual minorities were more likely to experience intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual assault in adulthood than their heterosexual siblings. However, other research notes that individuals within same-sex relationships are at similar risk of emotional, physical, and sexual violence as those in heterosexual couples.³⁰ In contexts where social stigma is high and the legal framework is unsupportive, LBT women who experience IPV have even less access to support services than cisgender heterosexual women.³¹
 - At the family level, discrimination and violence against LBT women likely derive from three inter-related sources: an intense pressure to marry and lead a heterosexual life, a vulnerability to abuse and exploitation from family members, and a vulnerability to a forcible eviction and disconnect from family resources.³²

- The pressure to marry a man and live a heterosexual lifestyle is immense and has detrimental impacts. In many contexts laws do not exist to support a wife's right to refuse sex, and thus "marital rape" does not exist as a legal concept. This then allows space for the husband to exert force and reinforce strict gender roles in which women are not in control of their sexuality. Research from South Asia found that a higher proportion of lesbians in heterosexual marriages faced more physical violence than lesbians who were not married.³³
- **Bullying in schools.** Children with same-sex attractions and non-normative gender identities and expressions are particularly vulnerable to bullying. Some school environments can be hostile to sexual and gender minorities due to rampant verbal abuse from teachers and peers.³⁴ A large proportion of sexual and gender minorities also experience sexual abuse, physical abuse, and cyber-bullying from peers.³⁵
 - The impact of homophobic/transphobic bullying can be significant, with some students being forced to live a "double life" as cisgender, heterosexual individuals, and many dropping out of school, and experiencing serious mental health consequences.
- **"Corrective treatment" of LGBT people** is a form of conditioning by which individuals are taught to shed their homosexuality or non-conforming gender identity to become a part of the mainstream. The American Psychological Association has condemned³⁶ this practice since homosexuality and non-normative gender identities are now classified as normal and healthy. Thus, corrective treatments (or "reparative therapies") have deleterious impacts on well-being of LGBT people.
 - Specifically for women, so-called "corrective rape" is a practice that seeks to "cure" a lesbian or bisexual woman of her non-normative sexuality by forcing her to have sex with a man or many men. This practice can be seen as a communal tool to restore the dominant social position of heterosexual men.³⁷ Documented cases in South Africa, Thailand, and India are on the rise.

Structural Violence³⁸

LBT women are also at increased risk of structural violence compared to heterosexual and cisgender women. Institutions and societies may commit such violence against marginalized groups through punitive laws and discriminatory practices.

- Discriminatory laws can criminalize same-sex, gender non-conforming behavior. Prevalent laws with punishments include anti-homosexuality acts,³⁹ anti-cross dressing laws, anti-sodomy laws or acts that purportedly go against the "order of nature",⁴⁰ and anti-propaganda laws that prohibit publicly discussing sexual orientation and gender identity.⁴¹
 - The impact of these laws is wide-ranging, and may involve police extortion, abuse, rape, and other violent acts against LGBT individuals and groups.
- Other discriminatory laws that are not linked to the criminal code can still impact the well-being and integrity of sexual and gender minorities. This includes the state's definition of family and marriage, as well as the ability to change one's sex assigned at birth on official state documents.

- Institutions can detrimentally impact the terms by which LBT women take part in society. Specifically, they can impact the ability, equality of opportunity, and dignity of LBT women in engaging in social and economic spheres.⁴² These factors then limit their capacity to meet basic needs and maintain a livelihood.
 - A school may keep a young gender-nonconforming student from attending due to strict uniform policies, which in turn limits her academic completion and earning opportunities later in life. A corporation may refuse work to a transgender woman, limiting her opportunity in the formal sector. A state-run agency can refuse same-sex partner benefits, thereby imposing higher costs on their family than on heterosexual couples.

Impacts of this Violence

The effects of these forms of discrimination and violence are far-reaching, reverberating at the individual, family, community, and national levels.

On a micro level, violence and discrimination can impact an LGBT person's socioeconomic status and limit the benefits of economic development. Recent research shows that violence and discrimination against LGBT people hinder their outcomes in education, employment, housing and health, and limit their socioeconomic status and ability to seek justice.⁴³

- Discriminatory laws, social stigma, an angry family, and abuse from a partner can lead to significant mental health issues like depression, substance abuse, and high levels of suicidal thoughts. Transgender individuals are over 25 times more likely to attempt suicide than the general population, due to intense exposure to discrimination in employment, lower income, violence, and sexual assault.⁴⁴

On a macro level, the exclusion or inclusion of LGBT people and violence against them has an impact on economic development. When examining exclusion of LGBT people in the employment and health sectors, estimates place this cost at between \$1.9 and \$30.8 billion USD lost in India alone.⁴⁵ This likely derives from lower productivity due to discrimination in employment, as well as lost output due to health disparities linked to exclusion.⁴⁶ Additionally, violence limits the aggregate value of a productive workforce.

- For example, LGBT people experience disproportionate acts of violence from police officers and the public which can consistently keep them out of their jobs. A strong correlation exists between the protection of rights and inclusion of LGBT people and per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and Human Development Index (HDI) values. Specifically, just one LGBT right enacted in a country is associated with \$1,400 more in per capita GDP and a higher HDI value.⁴⁷

ETHICAL AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VAWG INTERVENTIONS

Any intervention that aims to prevent or address VAWG should include precautions above and beyond routine risk assessment to guarantee no harm is caused. This includes following ethical guidelines related to: **respect for persons**, **non-maleficence** (minimizing harm), **beneficence** (maximizing benefits), and **justice**

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to protect the safety of both service providers and the survivors. The sensitive nature of collecting information about VAWG demands additional precautions above and beyond routine risk assessments to guarantee no harm is caused. Interventions should:

- Assess whether the intervention may increase VAWG
- Minimize harm to women and girls
- Prevent revictimization of VAWG
- Consider the implications of mandatory reporting of suspected VAW cases
- Be aware of the co-occurrence of child abuse
- Minimize harm to staff working with survivors
- Provide referrals for care and support for survivors

For interventions specifically addressing violence against LBT women, particularly in contexts where there are legal sanctions and social risks for sexual and gender minorities, it is critical to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of program participants. It is also key to engage only researchers, program staff, and service providers who are sensitized and trained to work with LBT individuals.⁴⁸

For further details on these Ethical and Safety Recommendations, visit the [Ethics](#) section of our website.

RAPID SITUATION ANALYSIS

Integrating prevention of and response to violence against LBT women into development projects requires an understanding of the legal, social, and epidemiological context of this violence as it relates to initiatives in various sectors. Teams should work with governments (including actors in the law enforcement and judicial sectors), private sector partners, non-governmental organizations, local experts (including grassroots LGBT advocacy groups and service providers), and other counterparts in the country to answer some or all of the following questions:

For general questions to undertake a Rapid Situation Analysis visit the [Integrate](#) section of our website.

Specific Questions:

- What types of violence against women are codified as crimes? Are they aligned with international or regional legal frameworks? Is any specific mention of sexual orientation or gender identity made in these legal frameworks?

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- Are there laws criminalizing same-sex or gender non-conforming identities, behaviors, or actions? Are there laws that limit the full empowerment and inclusion of LBT women?
- Are there “hate crime” laws that specifically include gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity as a special protected status?
- Are there non-discrimination laws that specifically include gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity as a special protected status?
- Is customary law present? How does customary law treat sexual and gender minorities?
- Is confidentiality ensured between LGBT complainants and civil servants, such as police officers?
- Is there a local or national action plan to protect or better serve LGBT people? Does it contain a component on prevention and response to violence?
- Is antipathy toward LGBT people salient in the general public? Are there any studies that measure (heterosexual) sentiments or attitudes toward LGBT issues, particularly LBT women?
- Is antipathy toward women salient? Are there any studies that measure male sentiments toward female empowerment or the general public’s attitudes on masculinity and gender norms?
- Are there NGOs established by LBT women to serve their needs or advance their rights? Are they allowed to publicly gather?
- Do LBT women experience barriers in accessing services or employment?
- What services are in place to ensure the well-being and dignity of LBT women who have survived sexual assault, including rape?
- Do social media, magazines, or the television and film industries contribute to the sexualization and fetishization of LBT women in society?
- Are LBT women engaged in sex work? Is sex work legal? Are female or transgender sex workers given equal access to health and other support services?

“Any research on violence against women remains inadequate if it does not take into account the causes and consequences of violence when gender identities intersect with other identities based on sexuality, visibility, or occupation. This inadequacy results in the development of poor strategies—legal or otherwise—for combating violence, as they fail to take on board the lived experiences of women who are pushed to the margins of society, as well as in our collective imagination.”

Source: Rashid, Sabina; Darumwalla, Nayreen; Puri, Mahesh; et al. (2012) [Count Me In! research report violence against disabled, lesbian, and sex-working women in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal](#), Bangladesh, India, Nepal: CREA.

KEY AREAS FOR INTEGRATING PREVENTION AND RESPONSE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST LBT WOMEN INTO DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Social structures and public institutions—family and community, social networks, education, health, or justice sectors—often fail those women who are most in need, though these are the very networks that are expected to support women at all stages of their lives.⁴⁹ In many cases, limited access to basic services can lead to increased vulnerability and further acts of violence. Development projects across a wide range of sectors need to take into account the increased risks of violence and the limited access to resources and programming that many LBT women face. This reality has implications for decisions and actions that must be taken at the policy, institutional, and community levels.

Policy Level

- Work with pertinent Ministries or policymakers to decriminalize homosexuality or non-normative gender identities and expressions. It may be useful to highlight the international agreements their governments have ratified, and their obligation to protect people no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity (for instance, the UN Declaration on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity). Some policymakers may be less receptive to human rights and public health arguments than to an economic argument, i.e., that there is a large and detrimental macroeconomic impact of allowing LGBT people to be excluded, discriminated against, and vulnerable to violence.⁵⁰
- Encourage policymakers to ensure that the legal definition of “rape” and “sexual assault” are relevant to all people—including LGBT people. Limiting the terms “rape” and “sexual assault” to refer only to forced male-female genital-to-genital penetration does not protect a large portion of the population, nor allow legal redress. For example, there have been reported cases of so-called “corrective rape” that involved only forced oral sex.⁵¹ In other cases, members of the same sex rape others as a form of dominance and “ownership”.⁵² In both examples the survivors could not prosecute to the full extent of the law due to a limited definition of rape.



- Promote the inclusion of transgender individuals in programs and funding allocations for HIV/AIDS, and include components on violence prevention especially for sex workers.⁵³ Both groups are considered key vulnerable populations in the HIV epidemic. Sometimes this funding may come from national governments in support of their own national HIV/AIDS action plans. In this case, the Ministry of Health will be a good counterpart to advance the inclusion of key vulnerable populations.⁵⁴ In other countries, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria,⁵⁵ as well as UNDP, UNAIDS, and PAHO⁵⁶ are international funders on combatting HIV that prioritize key vulnerable populations and human rights. In this case, country coordinating mechanisms are an ideal platform to discuss the inclusion of transgender individuals and sex workers.
- In collaboration with relevant ministries or policymakers, ensure confidentiality between civil servants as well as doctors and LGBT individuals. Trainings of police, healthcare providers, and other relevant actors should be institutionalized and embedded within national policies, particularly regarding the sensitization of issues surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity.⁵⁷
- Engage representatives of the LGBT community (not just the most visible) in the development of policies and structures that articulate and protect their rights. This engagement helps to ensure not only that their voices are heard but the spectrum of their specific needs and experiences can be recognized and, ideally addressed, through policy instruments and relevant policy actions. See Box 1.

Box 1. *Promising Practices...* Establishing a Participatory “Transgender Welfare Board” (TGWB) in Tamil Nadu, India

In 2014, India’s Supreme Court officially affirmed the fundamental legal rights of the “third gender” in the *National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India* decision. However, six years earlier the state of Tamil Nadu had already created a welfare board for transgender citizens in order to ensure their well-being. Recognizing that transgender citizens are discriminated against and have limited social opportunities, the state created the TGWB to ensure better access to state and central government social protection schemes. The governing body was comprised of an official panel, all of whom were governmental representatives, as well as unofficial members, the majority of whom were transgender community leaders.

The TGWB focused on improving access to employment, housing, education, and health care for transgender people. Additionally, it brought together members of the transgender community with government officials to better understand barriers to accessing social protections.

Specifically regarding violence and healthcare, the TGWB supported a shelter for transgender individuals in Chennai. The purpose of this shelter was to provide a “safe space” for those who were in a crisis. Additionally, it was a house for individuals who had undergone sex reassignment surgery.

Source:

Chakrapani, V. (2012). [*The Case of Tamil Nadu Transgender Welfare Board: Insights for Developing Practical Models of Social Protection Programmes for Transgender People in India*](#). Tamil Nadu: UNDP.

- Engage grassroots LGBT groups during monitoring and evaluation of projects to determine their ability to access the project as well as their development outcomes. Work with policymakers to strengthen data collection mechanisms that monitor VAWG, so that they can include, when safe, categories that help document the specific forms of violence LBT women face. For example, with some UN agencies the government of Colombia has created a gender-based violence information management system (GBVIMS) to track, analyze, and combat violence. The intake form disaggregates data not only by gender (with an option for “intersex”) but also by sexual orientation and gender identity. Individuals may self-identify as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or other.⁵⁸
- Support ministries to develop action plans for LGBT inclusion, defining and integrating specific actions for prevention and response to violence. Examine whether financial or technical capacity is needed to implement them or ensure sustainability. See Box 2.

Institutional/Sectoral Level

- Include data on LBT women in national and program-level data collection. The significance of research in making violence against LBT women visible cannot be underestimated, as decisions

Box 2. *Promising practices...* Putting an LGBT Action Plan into Practice in Montenegro

According to Gallup opinion polls, the majority of Montenegrins do not support LGBT rights and believe LGBT people to be morally wrong. Various attacks on LGBT individuals as well as pride parades were reported numerous times in recent years.

In 2010 the government adopted a non-discrimination law granting sexual orientation and gender identity special protected status. In 2013, the government worked with various NGOs representing the LGBT community to create the *2013 - 2018 Strategy for Improving Quality of Life of LGBT Persons Action Plan*. The strategy has nine goals to improve LGBT welfare: promote human rights, education, cultural change, law enforcement, healthcare, media, sports, economic growth, and international LGBT policy. Various elements of safety and violence are included in the plan and even include indicators of success.

Specific to lesbian and bisexual women, the action plan devoted to supporting the development of a “lesbian social network” with resources coming directly from the government. In terms of children, the plan has devoted to train social and professional workers to better understand and advance the welfare of LGBT youth.

Sources:

Carroll, A. (2014). [*Testing the Waters: LGBT People in the Europe & Eurasia Region*](#). Washington, DC: USAID.

Council of Europe. (2011). [*Honouring of obligations and commitments by Montenegro*](#). Podgorica: Council of Europe.

Government of Montenegro. (2013). [*2013 - 2018 Strategy for Improving Quality of Life of LGBT Persons 2013 Action Plan*](#). Podgorica: Government of Montenegro.

about prioritizing policies and funding are made largely based on official data and research. Although research on violence against LBT women is growing, extensive data gaps persist.⁵⁹ These data must be collected safely and ethically, as discussed above.

- Create or strengthen governmental entities with the mandate to prevent or control violence and ensure that violence against LGBT people is explicitly included in this mandate. It is critical that violence prevention bodies are aware of the (often) increased risk of violence faced by LGBT people in the community, and that relevant data be used to inform the development of programs and policies to respond appropriately to this violence. See Box 3.
- Address gender-based violence through projects involving governance, citizen security, or rule of law. Specifically, determine if sexual and gender minorities have equal access to justice institutions that do not subject them to further discrimination.⁶⁰ For example, a government or court could issue a protocol that addresses vulnerable groups and accessing justice. See Box 4.
- Ensure that social protection programs are accessible to all, including sexual and gender minorities.⁶¹ Often, heteronormative⁶² language underlying the social protection program itself forbids LGBT individuals and their families from accessing them. In other cases, the stigmatizing

attitudes of those administering the programs may serve as a barrier to access. Ensuring that underlying language and staffing are inclusive of all people can expand accessibility.

Box 3. *Promising practices...* Addressing the Safety of LGBT people through Law Enforcement in Bahia, Brazil

In the state of Bahia the number of reported murders of LGBT people is soaring. In 2014-2015 326 [LGBT murders were recorded in Brazil- a 4% increase from 2013](#). In response, through the State Secretariat of Public Security, the government established the *Superintendência de Prevenção à Violência* (SPREV) — a violence prevention superintendent—to prevent and control violence against vulnerable groups.

SPREV is divided into two departments. The first, Community Policing, provides guidance on community policing principles and ensures a strategic effort to address violence in at-risk communities. The second, Human Rights, trains security officers and coordinates interventions among other agencies. This second department has created a working group to design and implement a tailored training of officers for specific vulnerable groups, including black youth, women, LGBT individuals, and the elderly.

As of July, 2014 the World Bank had engaged the government of Bahia to deliver a development policy loan (DPL) in the amount of \$400 million USD to strengthen fiscal management and promote more inclusive service delivery. The purpose of this DPL is to promote social inclusion of historically vulnerable groups. Part of this loan will contribute to SREV's implementation.

Sources:

Grupo Gay da Bahia. (2015). Annual Report: [Murder of LGBT people in Brazil: The 2014 Report](#). Bahia: Brazil.

World Bank Group. (2014). [Brazil: Social Inclusion of Minority Groups in Bahia](#). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

- Train teachers on how to create more inclusive classrooms for sexual/gender minorities and LGBT students. The trainings can promote a more accepting environment and work toward preventing homophobic and transphobic bullying. For example, in Nepal sexual and gender minorities in school can be denied education, are socially excluded, and are sometimes victim to violent acts. To combat this, a leading LGBT organization, *The Blue Diamond Society*, received funding from the World Bank to create a toolkit and deliver numerous trainings to teachers. Ultimately, a total of 600 teachers from various regions participated in trainings that focused on increasing awareness and creating inclusive environments for sexual and gender minorities.
- Train police officers to report crimes confidentially, and without judgment based on the sexual orientation and gender identity of victims. For example, USAID partnered with the Jamaica Constabulary Force to deliver two trainings to 50 police officers, with a focus on sensitization toward women and girls, marginalized youth, people living with disabilities, and LGBT individuals.⁶³



- Train healthcare providers on effective, empathetic, and appropriate ways to support LBT survivors of rape and assault.⁶⁴ Often professionalism is the key: treating patients in a non-discriminatory and non-judgmental manner.⁶⁵ Testing for HIV and STIs during the initial treatment and requesting follow-up HIV tests, months later, is crucial to an effective treatment.

Box 4. *Promising practices...* Improving the justice sector response to violence against LGBT people

In 2014, Mexico enacted a national action plan to increase the ability of LGBT people to seek justice. The Mexican Supreme Court adopted a protocol to aid judges in deciding cases regarding violence or discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Although not binding, this offers some key guiding principles for deciding cases involving LGBT people, more in line with internationally recognized human rights standards.

In Mexico, LGBT persons face many obstacles in accessing justice. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) notes some of the larger obstacles: often a prejudice by law enforcement agents and state officials led to ill-treatment of LGBT persons. Additionally, the judicial system has not historically investigated homicides driven by homophobia/transphobia. Misconceptions and stereotypes of LGBT persons often underlie these obstacles and create disincentives for judges and state officials to properly address violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The protocol develops a more thorough understanding of the stereotypes that contribute to judicial ineffectiveness. It identifies common stereotypes and misconceptions regarding attributes or behaviors of LGBT people. It calls on judges to question the neutrality of the law when a situation of disadvantage is identified on account of sexual orientation or gender identity, and to push past stereotypes of LGBT people to better examine the evidence..

Sources:

Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación. (2014). [*Protocolo de actuación para quienes imparten justicia en casos que involucren la orientación sexual o la identidad de género*](#). Mexico City: Mexican Government.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. (2014). [*IACHR Congratulates Mexican Supreme Court for Adoption of Protocol Involving Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*](#). Washington, DC: IACHR.

- Any data collected should be used to inform decision making so policies and programs are data-driven, appropriate, and respond to the needs of LBT individuals. These data are critical to designing and providing good services based on the issues that are affecting the community.⁶⁶ When data inform state or national level violence prevention programs, the problem can be clearly articulated and addressed. Ultimately, funding that supports specific policies and programs at the sectoral level should be driven by a state's response to a clear articulation of a problem.

- Ensure country gender assessments used to plan and justify investments pay attention to the perspective and experiences of sexual and gender minority and LGBT groups. As an example from the Philippines illustrates, (see Box 5) engaging LBT women was crucial to uncovering another aspect of gender-based violence. This led to evidence-based policymaking while also broadening the institutional use of the word “gender”.

Box 5. *Promising practices...* Capturing the Experiences of LGBT People in Country Gender Assessments

In 2012 the World Bank conducted a Country Gender Assessment (CGA) to examine the state of gender equality in the Philippines, both progresses and setbacks. The purpose was also to outline an agenda for public action to increase gender equality. The CGA included a focus group discussion with LGBT individuals. Additionally, they asked questions about violence against children. In terms of violence against lesbians, the CGA found sexually-motivated violence to be prevalent. “In the case of lesbians, there are reported risks of being victims of ‘corrective’ rape, another measure to ‘discipline’ them into behaving according to the norm expected of their sex”. Utilizing secondary research, the CGA also notes the high level of murders of LGBT persons: 95 gay men, 26 transgender individuals, 16 lesbians, and 4 bisexual individuals. In terms of violence against children that experience same-sex attraction or gender non-conforming behavior, the report notes they are more vulnerable to violence from family members and peers in school.

The report also notes that LGBT people face barriers when reporting crimes. First, police officers are not aware of the issue of violence against LGBT people. Second, the police often blame LGBT victims for the crimes committed against them. Last, there can be an important gap in VAWG policy in contexts where transgender women are not considered women under the law. This means they might not have access to appropriate legal redress when they experience violence.

Source:

World Bank Group. (2012). [*Republic of the Philippines - Gender and development mainstreaming: country gender assessment*](#). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Community Level

- Involve communities, including traditional and religious leaders, to stimulate change in the social norms that perpetuate homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination against LGBT people. Such participatory, culturally-informed community empowerment has been used to successfully change attitudes and behaviors related to harmful practices that promote gender inequality. For example, the Tustin program in Senegal mobilized communities to change norms and expectations around female genital cutting, child marriage, and the value of the girl child.⁶⁷
- Consultations with stakeholders are crucial for designing effective programs. Work with LBT groups, feminist organizations, and communities of sex workers to understand the social and political ethos of violence and the interaction of community groups. Engage service providers to uncover norms and attitudes toward LBT groups and other vulnerable populations.⁶⁸ Examine how other aspects of their identities (race, occupation, age, etc.) may create layered disadvantages or vulnerabilities. Additionally, try to uncover how individuals cope, adapt to surroundings, and create

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alliances with other groups of people; i.e., try to understand the **resilience** required to live in an environment with rampant stigma to identify promising solutions.



- During project design, engage communities of LBT women, organizations, and their allies in community empowerment projects that seek to create cultural change through on-the-ground activism. See Box 6.

Box 6. *Promising practices...* Community empowerment of LBT women in South African townships

ActionAid South Africa and the Forum for the Empowerment of Women are working with 450 LBT women in 15 townships around Johannesburg to promote their empowerment, voice, and safety. In South Africa, lesbians and bisexual women are vulnerable to sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. Specifically, reported cases of so-called “corrective rape” of lesbian and bisexual women are on the rise.

A three-year project is supporting LBT women to bring their issues to a national agenda. The project aims to: 1) facilitate the empowerment of poor and vulnerable lesbian and bisexual women so they may live a safer and more equitable life within their community, with trainings and teaching skills; 2) work within communities to minimize antipathy toward LGBT people and create a cultural shift away from discrimination; and 3) work within the political, legal, and criminal justice systems to ensure better policies for LGBT people.

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- In permissive legal and funding environments, HIV/AIDS funding should be made available to all relevant LGBT organizations, though such funding typically prioritizes the needs of gay and bisexual men and men who have sex with men. Opening such funding to a broader set of implementing partners has at least two positive benefits: first, it provides flexibility for funding to organizations focused on the needs of lesbian and bisexual women who have been shown to have a higher burden of STIs than previously believed.⁶⁹ Second, funding that supports human rights and empowerment can lead to a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to combatting violence.

- Support projects that promote participation, local empowerment, demand-responsiveness, greater downward accountability, and enhanced local capacity, i.e. “community-driven development”⁷⁰ that are inclusive of LBT women. This can build the financial and social empowerment of marginalized groups. See Box 7.

Box 7. *Promising practices...* Including Transgender Voices in Community-Driven Development

To address the severe problem of poverty in Indonesia, the World Bank and several other bilateral donors worked with Indonesia’s Ministry of People’s Welfare to set up “PNPM Peduli.” This is a project based on community-driven development that sought to restore the dignity of the marginalized by providing resources for communal empowerment. Thus, the recipients were civil society organizations—including a group comprised of all transgender individuals, “SWARA”. In Indonesia, transgender people are often excluded from every aspect of society, face rampant discrimination, and have limited opportunities in life including employment. From a study in the country, it was found that over half of transgender individuals are sex workers, with the rest being performers or beauticians. Transgender individuals are especially vulnerable to violence.

In a groundbreaking partnership and with resources from PNPM Peduli, SWARA provided trainings and workshops to the transgender community. They taught them their basic human rights in addition to basic skills that are important in the formal employment sector. The partnership with SWARA showed ingenuity because it acknowledged the link between stigma (in the form of transphobia) and extreme poverty. This group was thus granted the resources to empower its members. Read the testimony of one member of SWARA and the positive impact of the program on her life [here](#).

Source: World Bank Group. (2014). [Indonesia: PNPM Peduli](#). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

- Support the ability of organizations to sustain “violence observatories” to map, catalogue, and combat violence—with an added focus on violence against LGBT people. Violence observatories are numerous in Central America, particularly Honduras,⁷¹ and specifically examine gang violence. In these cases, data collection can be disaggregated to see if LGBT people are disproportionately targeted. In Brazil, where LGBT NGOs are already gathering homicide rates based on sexual orientation and gender identity, supporting their capacity to create an LGBT-focused Violence Observatory may generate more accurate data and could contribute to national plans to combat homophobia and transphobia.

- Support the creation or strengthening of specialized services and “safe spaces” for the LGBT community, sexual minorities, and their families that cultivate education and empowerment and offer integral services for LGBT survivors of violence. See Box 8.

Box 8. *Promising practices...* Creating a District LGBT Community Center in Colombia

In December 2006, as part of a joint effort between the City of Bogotá’s District Institute of Participation and Community Action (IDPAC) and the NGO *Colombia Diversa* (a leading LGBT organization), the first LGBT community center in Colombia was opened. This is believed to be not only the first in Colombia but also in all of Latin America. The aim of this center was, first, to cultivate a safe and friendly place for the LGBT population of Bogotá, and second, to offer these populations specialized and free services under the same roof.

At the center, professionals from different areas (lawyers, psychologists, social workers, etc.) provide information, legal guidance, counseling, support groups, as well as service referrals and networks. They also offer specialized training and awareness raising, recreational and cultural activities, organizational strengthening and support for community initiatives.

In 2009, thanks to the inclusion of LGBT issues in the city’s public policies, the district administration decided to fully fund the center and designate the IDPAC as its direct operator (until then, it was being operated by *Colombia Diversa*). This was key to ensuring the services would be sustained and remain free. To date, two more centers have opened to the LGBT community, especially targeting transgender female sex workers, those that have been abandoned by their families, and youth who are survivors of sexual abuse.

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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS⁷²

Bisexual: A person who is physically, mentally, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to both men and women.

Cisgender: A gender identity that reflects the sex assigned at birth.

Corrective rape: So-called “corrective” rape is the sexual assault of a woman by a man or men, committed as an act of hatred with the additional motivation to “cure” them of their homosexuality or non-conforming expression of gender. Some highlight the punitive aspects of this violation, by which men punish sexual minority women for abstaining from men. NGOs have noted that the term is confusing and obfuscates the intersections of female empowerment and violence committed by men, and some choose not to use it.

FTM: A person who transitions “from female to male,” meaning a person who was assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as or hopes to live as a male.

Gay: Typically referring to a man who is physically, mentally, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to other men. But this may also describe lesbians (a gay woman).

Gender expression: How a person presents or expresses his or her gender identity to others, often through manner, clothing, hairstyles, and voice or body characteristics.

Gender identity: A person's internal sense of gender, which may differ from the sex assigned at birth.

Heterosexual: A person who is physically, mentally, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to the opposite sex; mainstream and predominant sexual orientation.

Intersex: A person whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and/or genitals is not consistent with the binary (male/female) categories.

LBT: An acronym to describe lesbians, bisexual women, and transgender women. Many NGOs and civil society organizations use this to specifically focus on women within the “LGBT” population. Typically used to demarcate an experience specific to lesbians, bisexual women, and transgender women but not gay and bisexual men.

Lesbian: A woman who is physically, mentally, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to other women.

MTF: A person who transitions “from male to female,” meaning a person who was assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as or hopes to live as a female.

MSM: Men who have sex with men. They may not identify as “gay,” “bisexual,” or “homosexual.” Often a clinical term used in regards to the HIV epidemic.

Sexual minorities/gender minorities: terms that refer to individuals whose sexual orientation is outside the heterosexual mainstream, or individuals whose gender identity does not fit into the distinct

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categories of male or female. This includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) identities. Yet it also encompasses those participating in an array of non-heterosexual acts and non-conforming expressions of gender.

Sexual Orientation: a person's physical, mental, romantic, and/or emotional attraction.

Sex Reassignment Surgery: A term referring to various surgical procedures that change one's body to align gender identity and presentation. There are many different types of surgeries.

SOGI: Acronym for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

Third Gender: Prevalent in South Asia especially, this identity is neither male nor female. "Hijra" is an example of the third gender in parts of India.

Transgender: An individual whose gender identity does not reflect their sex assigned at birth. They may have transitioned or plan to transition to the sex not assigned at birth.

Transgender man: A term for a transgender individual who, assigned female at birth, currently identifies as a man.

Transgender woman: A term for a transgender individual who, assigned male at birth, currently identifies as a woman.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Guidance/Tools

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