



A WORLD FOR ALL

*Working globally with sexual orientation,
gender identity, gender expression
& sex characteristics*

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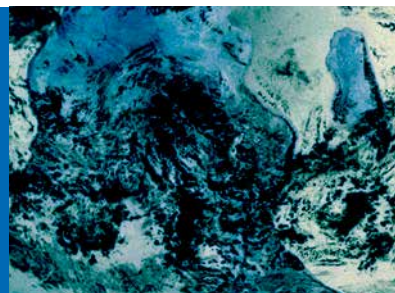
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WHAT IS SOGIESC?

There is a global tendency of supplementing the LGBTIQ term with Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics, SOGIESC.

The term encompasses more interpretations of the lifestyles and identities highlighted by the term, LGBTIQ. It is also a legally useful term that describes the grounds that can be used in anti-discrimination efforts, without limiting it to a certain category of people to protect from discrimination.

In Swedish, we talk about sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, but as there is no established Swedish abbreviation for these terms, we will use the English abbreviation SOGIESC in this document. Sex Characteristics refer to intersex people.

Local contexts, with specific cultural codes and practices, vary. Same-sex relationships may be accepted but lack official terms. Transgender people are frequently stigmatised, but may also be part of traditional belief systems that may allow more than two gender expressions. Identities and terms also change over time and in different contexts.

Introduction

Over the past 50 years, the situation for LGBTIQ people globally has improved in many regions and countries. Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is protected in the legislation of more and more countries; hate crime legislation has been added in some places, as well as same-sex partnership and marriage. The trans movement has won legal battles and LGBTIQ people have been mobilised and the organisation has been strengthened. Issues linked to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are frequently discussed more openly.

At the same time, the situation is still very concerning in a large number of countries. Same-sex relationships are still criminalised in more than 70 countries and regions and in eight countries and regions, such relationships may even be punishable by death. People are met with discrimination and violence in all countries, and the gains that have been made are now threatened in many places.

This document has been drawn up by RFSL and is aimed at organisations and people working with international development cooperation or other global projects. It is based on RFSL's experience from working for many years in Sweden and within international development cooperation for the rights of LGBTIQ people.

We want to provide a better understanding of people's challenges and their organisation globally. We are hoping that this book will be able to highlight how issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are linked to human rights and the global development goals.

Everyone working for sustainable development should consider whether their efforts maintain, or even reinforce, current normative notions of gender and sexual orientation. Likewise, everyone needs to ask themselves whether LGBTIQ people are included in those efforts. If you want to fight poverty and contribute to sustainable development, the long-term gains are greater if everyone is included – both for the individual and for society as a whole.



Marie Månson
International Director, RFSL

For definitions of the terms used in the book, we refer you to the last chapter.



FREE WITH
EQUAL
RIGHTS
— EVERY—
WHERE

A matter of human rights

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights opens with the words: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. These rights apply to all people without distinction and everyone should therefore have the same access to, and protection by, human rights. In spite of this, human rights are violated on a daily basis because of SOGIESC.

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

The basic rights include the freedom of opinion and expression. This is intended to ensure the freedom to form or join an organisation or to organise meetings. In countries where sexual acts between same-sex individuals are banned, it is of course risky to organise openly, or even to express who you love. Human rights also provide protection from abuse, for example the right not to be arbitrarily arrested or subjected to torture. The rights include the right to bodily integrity and freedom from enforced interventions such as “normalising” surgery and hormone treatment of intersex people, and the forced sterilisation

OBJECTIVES FOR RFSL'S INTERNATIONAL WORK

LGBTIQ rights being respected globally.

LGBTIQ organisations are strong and well organised.

of transgender people. People also testify about unlawful processes that involve torture and, in worst case, the death penalty for real or alleged sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

The rights also include the provision of basic needs, such as the right to satisfactory living standards, healthcare and education. Unfortunately, no country in the world is able to provide complete human rights protection. Discrimination is widespread in the workplace as well as in schools. Healthcare is often structured around strong norms that exclude people due to SOGIESC, a contributing factor to LGBTIQ people's health being worse in general than that of the majority population. Harassment happens at all levels of society and a legal acknowledgement of gender is often a prerequisite for other basic rights.

“The rights also include the provision of basic needs, such as the right to satisfactory living standards, healthcare and education.”

RFSL USES A **RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH**, THAT FOCUSES ON **THE PRIORITIES** OF THE RIGHTS HOLDERS.

From RFSL's international strategy

The Yogyakarta Principles

The International Commission of Jurists and the International Service for Human Rights has jointly run a project to develop a set of legal principles concerning how international law can be applied to violations against human rights, based on SOGIESC. A group of experts on human rights from 25 different countries compiled those principles, and at a meeting in 2006 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, the so-called Yogyakarta principles were adopted.

The principles were updated in 2017.

They take existing rules concerning human rights and show how to apply them to issues concerning SOGIESC. Each principle contains detailed recommendations for states, the UN, national institutions, the media, NGOs and donor organisations. The principles may be of great help if you feel uncertain about how human rights can be applied to these issues.



yogyakartaprinciples.org

The Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs also known as Global Goals) were adopted by world leaders in September 2015, and should be fulfilled by 2030. There are 17 goals overall, with 169 targets. The work on the drafting of them is based on the most comprehensive consultations ever undertaken by the UN. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

One principle of the SDGs is that no one shall be left behind. This means, even though no wording that included SOGIESC made it all the way into the final document, that all

people, including LGBTIQ people, will be part of the positive consequences of the goals.

The countries of the world, if the goals are to be fulfilled, must consider the structural and social barriers that exclude LGBTIQ people from society and that prevent people from participating with their full potential.

The 2030 Agenda is about issues that impact the lives of LGBTIQ people in every country and region. It is important to understand that the context needs to be considered, particularly if the group is subjected to unique structural and legally extensive discrimination and is also subjected to violence.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. *End poverty in all its forms everywhere.*
2. *End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.*
3. *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for everyone at all ages.*
4. *Ensure inclusive and good quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.*
5. *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*
6. *Ensure access to water and sanitation for all.*
7. *Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.*
8. *Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.*
9. *Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.*
10. *Reduce inequality within and among countries.*
11. *Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.*
12. *Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.*
13. *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.*
14. *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.*
15. *Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.*
16. *Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, inclusive institutions with accountability at all levels.*
17. *Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.*

International Advocacy

Organisations that work within the SOGIESC field currently cooperate globally, regionally and locally to influence the UN and other high-level institutions. Some of the contexts that are of particular importance is the UN Human Rights Council, the Commission on the Status of Women and the processes pertaining to the Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs)

The UN bodies that work specifically with issues concerning equality (UN Women), development (the UN Development Programme, UNDP) and human rights (the High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR) are of strategic interest as they naturally provide opportunities for discussing matters that pertain to SOGIESC.

Some of the issues that have been brought up in global advocacy include:

- Legal recognition of gender
- Abolition of normalising, non-essential, surgical interventions and hormone treatments without consent on intersex children and adolescents
- Stopping violence and discrimination
- Right to gender confirming treatments
- Inclusion of SOGIESC issues and LGBTIQ people as a group in the work on the Global Sustainable Development Goals
- Improved mental and physical health, as well as the right to healthcare

There are many ways to support global advocacy. Since 2007, RFSL has consultative status within the UN, so-called ECOSOC status, which has been an important instrument for making the different UN bodies available to activists from the Global South and East that have been invited by RFSL.

RFSL supports and funds the participation of relevant stakeholders' from the Global South and East at strategic meetings in order to promote human rights and to strengthen their capacity and networks.

From RFSL's international strategy



WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

Remember to always plan your advocacy and development cooperation efforts with the local movements in order to do no harm.

Awareness of structures within the movement is important to promote inclusion, recognition and participation of under-represented groups.

Equality defined

All over the world, people who identify as women and girls have less social, political and economic power than cisgender men. This lack of equality is a barrier to development and the fight against poverty.

“Stereotypical notions about female and male behaviour constitute a barrier to equality.”

Gender is normally described as the social construction of the biological sex. Integrated into this construct are norms of what cisgender women and men are expected to be like, what is normal and acceptable behaviour for women and men respectively, but also notions of the relationship between the two sexes.

Gender is an established term in global cooperation for development and human rights. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that has been adopted for example by the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995. Issues that pertain to SOGIESC can be brought up within the scope of gender mainstreaming. Gender-related violence, for exam-

ple, is a term that may include men's violence against women as well as the violence directed towards people because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. This is an example of how a gender perspective can capture not only discrimination that arises due to gender, but also sexual orientation.

But it is far from always the case that gender and gender mainstreaming include issues pertaining to SOGIESC. Equality can even act as a term that obfuscates important issues or groups of people, as it in some cases assumes heterosexual relationships and two separate sexes.

The silence, taboos and social expectations that surround SOGIESC issues unfortunately often create and cement gender stereotypes. Stereotypical notions about female and male behaviour constitute a barrier to equality. Likewise, heteronormativity is a barrier to people enjoying

their rights and having the opportunity to live their lives free from discrimination and violence.

The processes that shape the notion that heterosexuality is more normal and natural than other sexual orientations are intimately linked to the processes that shape our concepts of sex and gender. The same structures that create inequality between men and women also give rise to discrimination against individuals because of their sexual orientation. When you work with equality and gender perspectives, you should always consider how a broader perspective can be integrated.

Questions that pertain to SOGIESC are directly linked to all the work on gender, and the outcomes of the efforts spent on issues that concern SOGIESC are important to all people around the world. No doubt the outcomes lead to greater freedom for all people, irrespective of gender, as it is about renegotiating limitations linked to gender.

Gender equality is an important aspect as lesbian and bisexual women as well as transgender people in many countries and in a global context face double discrimination.

From RFSL's international strategy

IT IS ONLY THROUGH THE
ACTIVE AND MEANINGFUL
PARTICIPATION OF
LGBTIQ PEOPLE
THAT **RELEVANT**
& **STRATEGIC**
CHANGE CAN
BE SUSTAINABLE.

From RFSL's international strategy



WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

Pay particular attention to issues that concern equality, so that you do not assume it is solely about heterosexual relationships between cisgendered women and men. Relevant questions might be: How can we avoid consolidating the two-sex norm? How can we acknowledge transgender people? How can we avoid ignoring same-sex relationships when we talk about equality in families? How can equality apply between all people, and not only heterosexual cisgender men and women?

A global movement

Local LGBTIQ or SOGIESC organisations work with everything from advocacy, locally and nationally, to providing support for individuals, HIV prevention, education, social meeting places, campaigns, pride festivals and much more. Organisations can be openly active and registered with the authorities or merely exist as informal groups in secret networks, depending on the situation in different countries.

Globally, these organisations and groups mainly fall under the following umbrella organisations:

ILGA – International lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex association

Founded in 1978 and comprises more than 1,200 member organisations from 132 countries. ILGA regularly organises conferences and meetings, both regionally and globally.

TGEU – Transgender Europe

Working for transgender people's rights in Europe since 2005, and comprises 105 member organisations from 42 countries.

GATE – Global Action for Trans Equality

Working internationally since 2009 with gender identity, gender expres-

sion and body issues. Particular focus areas include depathologization, trans-inclusive HIV prevention and strengthening trans movements in different countries and internationally.

OII Intersex Network

Founded in 2003. An international network that includes intersex organisations from around the world. Working in particular with bodily integrity and self-determination for intersex children and adolescents.

Through migration flows, the internet and friendships, LGBTIQ communities across the world have interconnected in a unique way.

Activists work across national borders and often across disciplines. People move, start relationships, flee for their lives, return and create new alliances. Organisations and groups influence each other in a constant state of flux. You will often be able to find a connection to other movements and groups in the places where you operate, and can use existing resources and know-how. The diaspora community from Uganda, for example, is extensive in both the US and Sweden.

I am a man who has sex with men.

This may happen to me.

Some of my friends were assaulted last night.

I don't want to be arrested, so I cannot ask my doctor about things that concern sex.

My wife does not know that I have sex with men, so we don't use a condom.

If my family finds out that I am a homosexual, they will disown me.

My boss and my colleagues make fun of homosexuals.

If I test positive for HIV, people around me will reject me.

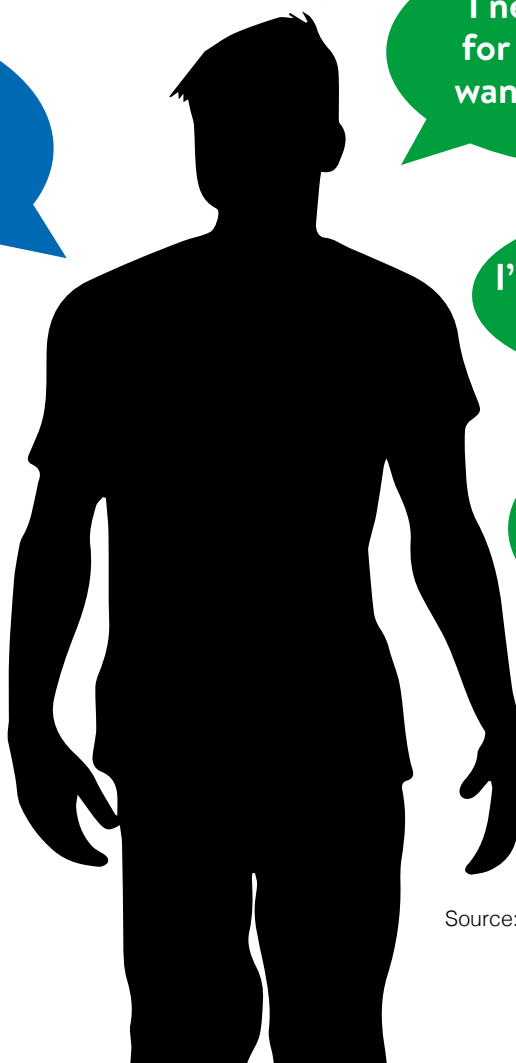
I need treatment for HIV, but don't want to be judged.

I'm not homosexual and do not want to go to a clinic for homosexual men.

I'm being bullied at school.

I cannot find the right condom lubricant.

The friends who accept me are my family.



Source: UNAIDS

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

To ensure relevance, any measures will be based on the agenda and identified needs of the organisations and stakeholders themselves. Involve the stakeholders early in the process of developing programmes and projects in order to strengthen ownership.

Many LGBTIQ organisations operate in contexts that may be volatile and for that reason, the forms of financing and modes of implementation should be flexible.

Focus on promoting a long-term perspective in financing and on supporting the sustainable development of organisations and enabling different forms of organising. Support should also be provided to internal sustainable structures, including stable financial systems within the organisations.

Keep in mind the importance of enabling long-term and trusting relationships.

In contexts where LGBTIQ organisations are marginalised, the possibility of building alliances/support networks should be reviewed.

Consider the importance of self-identification.

RFSL funds the participation of partner organisations in ILGA's world conferences.

From RFSL's international strategy



THE LAW,
THE
WEAPON
OF THE
OPPO-
SITION

A western concept?

Sexual orientation

Social identities are created through opposites. A person is a woman because she is not a man. To construct your own identity, “the other” must be defined first. Colonisation has, for example, been about the definition of the other. Likewise, the patriarchy is structured around the differences between men and women, and the notion of a normative heterosexuality cannot exist without also defining homosexuality. The social and economic systems of our society are organised around these opposites.

“There are stories about same-sex lifestyles and a range of gender expressions and identities on all continents.”

Historic documents show that same-sex sexual practices and different forms of gender identity and expression existed in pre-colonial societies. Many of the laws that currently criminalise same-sex acts in Africa and Asia originated from the legal systems of the European colonial powers. Christianity introduced new family structures, sexual patterns, and legislation was adopted that banned same-sex lifestyles, and monogamous marriage between a man and a woman became the norm in many colonised countries. The colonial laws are primarily found in former British colonies, but also in the former Portuguese and French territories. Ironically, the criminalisation of homosexuality came from Europe and not the other way around, as is often claimed. Questions about “deviant” sex and sexual orientation is a useful weapon for fomenting hatred towards an external enemy. In several countries, public officials and religious representatives state that there are no LGBTIQ people in their countries. Queer lifestyles are said to have

emanated in the west, or to represent secular interests. The aim is to strengthen nationalism and obfuscate corruption or other problems that politicians want to distract people's attention from. In many countries, organisations that work with SOGIESC are accused of acting like former colonial powers.

The LGBTIQ term is a western construct, but same-sex acts and varied gender expressions and identities are not western constructs. They can be found all over the world and are visible throughout history. They have different names, but calling them a western import is an argument that does not stand up, neither historically nor currently. There are

“Ironically, the criminalisation of homosexuality came from Europe and not the other way around as is often claimed.”

stories about same-sex lifestyles and a range of gender expressions and identities on all continents.

Transgressing gender expectations

In the West, the struggle for transgender people's rights has been fought in the shadow of the more established struggle for the rights of homosexuals. One of the reasons for this may be the strong two-sex model that predominates in large parts of the West.

In many countries in Asia and South America, besides men and women, there is a range of gender expressions and identities that may be accepted through a joint notion about which gender expressions are possible and understandable. In parts of Asia, *hijras*, people who

were assigned the male gender at birth but who have a female identity, have long had cultural commitments, such as giving blessings at weddings. But it should be added that instead of being considered equal before the law, hijras have been seen as exotic and their existence was characterised by restrictions rather than by rights.

The gender expressions and identities often have a historical and cultural basis that can frequently be traced back to pre-colonial times. Many argue that gender lost its scope and its depth during colonialism.

SELF-DETERMINATION
MEANS THAT LOCAL
**ACTIVISTS SET
THE AGENDA,**
CHOOSE THEIR
OWN TERMINOLOGY
AND THE **IDENTITIES**
TO INCLUDE
IN THEIR WORK.

From RFSL's international strategy

Criminalisation of same-sex sexual acts

72 states and territories around the world criminalise same-sex sexual acts. Penalties range from imprisonment, flogging and, in worst case, death. In 45 countries where same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults are criminalised, criminalisation applies to both men and women. In other countries, the law only applies to men.

Criminalising legislation only consider men and women in the legal sense, so it is often unclear how the law would apply to consenting adults where one or more people are transgender.

Eight countries apply the death penalty for same-sex sexual acts. Four countries practise sharia law on a national level: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Sudan. Two countries practice the death penalty according to sharia law on a provincial level, Somalia and Nigeria, and

“The death penalty is practised in eight countries.”

in two countries, the death penalty is practised on a local level by non-state stakeholders, Iraq and in IS-controlled areas in northern Iraq and Syria. There is no coherent and comprehensive reporting on how the death penalty for same-sex sexual acts is practised.

There are five countries where the interpretation of sharia law, or “black letter law” allows for the death penalty, but where there are no reports on it being practised: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Mauritania.

Morality & propaganda laws

Several countries have so-called moral laws or propaganda laws that limit freedom of speech, in particular as it pertains to sexual orientation. Countries in Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania and Tunisia. Nine in Asia: Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Ara-

bia and Syria. Countries in Europe: Lithuania and Russia.

Moral laws that control the public debate have long been in place in several Arab states, but there is a new trend where information that is aimed at children has been criminalised under the term propaganda.

EFFECTS OF RESTRICTIVE LEGISLATION

The laws are frequently used by the authorities to harass people, deny them the right to custody of their children and the right to organise. They also impede access to HIV prevention as well as the opportunity for redress if you have been subjected to a crime as a result of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

PROTECTIVE & CONSOLIDATING LEGISLATION

- *Nine countries have protective legislation at the constitutional level against discrimination due to sexual orientation.*
- *72 countries have protective legislation at the constitutional level against discrimination in the labour market on the grounds of sexual orientation.*
- *Hate crime legislation is in place in 39 countries. A ban on “conversion therapy” exists in three countries.*
- *Legal marriage for same-sex couples is available in 22 countries.*
- *Civil partnership for same-sex couples is available in 28 countries.*
- *Joint adoption available for same-sex couples (joint adoption) exists in 26 countries.*
- *Common-law adoption available for same-sex couples (second parent adoption) exists in 27 countries.*

Barriers to forming, operating or registering organisations

By organising, people are able to pursue issues and let themselves be represented alongside the state in civil society. In many places, there is increased resistance against organisations in civil society in general, and in particular against those organisations that pursue issues that are perceived as a threat to the regime or traditional values.

Organisations that promote human rights and hold the state accountable for violations of human rights are particularly vulnerable, like those who challenge norms and traditional values. Organisations that pursue SOGIESC issues frequently fall into both categories and are therefore particularly vulnerable.

Laws are used to stop them organising and to impede the work of

the organisation within civil society. These laws can be arbitrarily interpreted and human rights organisations, including SOGIESC organisations, have been disproportionately targeted.

The laws, that often refer to the safeguarding of national security, aim to criminalise a certain type of work or a certain type of financing, making it difficult for these organisations to act within the confines of the law. Many countries have introduced restrictions to, or even prohibition against, accepting funding from abroad. Likewise, it is common to try to restrict the possibility of registering organisations that undertake certain types of activities or have a certain type of financing, as well as introducing administrative

barriers to a certain types of organisations. One example is that Bangladesh in 2016 adopted a law that allows the authorities to close down an organisation if it is involved in so-called “anti-state activities”.

A very worrying trend is that the number of murders of human rights activists is increasing globally. In Latin America the situation is particularly serious with a large number of murders each year. Impunity for those responsible is more or less guaranteed in many countries. At the same time,

the authorities in many countries have limited the freedom of movement for the most critical activists by increasingly introducing so-called travel bans or simply by merely stopping them on their way to the airport when they are leaving the country.

All in all, this means that many human rights activists and LGBTIQ activists are silenced or that organisations “go underground”. “Going underground” involves great risks for those who continue to engage in these organisations or networks.

“Some countries completely lack access to gender affirming care and treatment, which leads to extensive mental ill health.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGAL RECOGNITION

The lack of legal recognition of gender means that people have to suffer violence and humiliation on a daily basis when ID documentation is required.

Laws concerning gender identity & gender expression

“Transgender people does not report crimes.”

Many countries, such as Malaysia, Kuwait and Nigeria, prohibit people from “portraying themselves as the opposite sex”. In other countries, transgender people are being arrested under the same laws that criminalise same-sex sexual acts or laws that regulate begging or breach of the peace.

Argentina broke new ground in 2012 when they allowed everyone over 18 to choose their own gender identity, to undergo gender affirming treatment and to change official documents without legal or medical approval.

Since then, Colombia, Denmark, Ireland, Norway and Malta have also introduced measures to improve the legal handling of processes that are crucial to the circumstances under which transgender people live. These countries are different from all other countries which either do not permit people to change their legal gender at all, or which force people to

undergo surgery, psychiatric evaluation, long waiting times or divorce in order to change their legal gender. Some countries completely lack access to gender affirming care and treatment, which leads to extensive mental ill health.

The struggle for a third legal gender is important to many transgender and intersex activists, while others would prefer an abolition of legal genders. In Nepal, the Supreme Court ruled in 2007 on the introduction of a third gender, based on an individual's self-definition. This enabled people to choose a third category on the ballot paper in 2010, on ID documents in 2013 and passports in 2015.

In similar circumstances, the Supreme Court in Pakistan ruled in 2009 that a third gender should be recognised. In Bangladesh, the decision was made to recognise hijras as a distinct gender in 2013, and in 2014 India's Supreme Court ruled that people can decide on their own legal gender, and that transgender people would be included in welfare programmes. Germany's constitutional court decided, as the first country in Europe in 2017, that the Bundestag must make it possible to register children with a third gender

from birth.

Acknowledging people's self-defined gender is about human dignity. But the opportunity to have your gender identity legally recognised is not a guarantee against transgender people being subjected to other forms of discrimination, harassment and violence. Neither do the laws regulate the lives of transgender people in an altogether positive way.

Transgender people in Ukraine for example, must participate in a compulsory psychiatric evaluation that may last up to 45 days before being able to change legal documents. Ukraine also practises forced sterilisation and a range of medical tests, which require time and money and also violate human dignity.

To gain access to rights, many countries require that you are unmarried and, if you are married, that you divorce your spouse, to avoid same-sex marriages. Another common requirement is that you do not have any dependent children. Both these requirements violate people's right to privacy and their right to

form a family. Almost all countries, even those with no strict medical requirements, require you to be over a certain age.

The right and the opportunity to change your name is particularly relevant for those countries where it is not possible to change your legal gender.

In addition to the violation that is involved in not legally recognising people's gender or being denied access to gender affirming care, transgender people often have no access to the protection afforded by the authorities. In many places in the world, transgender people do not dare to report the crimes they are subjected to, as they risk being subjected to even more violations by the police and the authorities. In most countries, transgender people who are sentenced to prison are put in prisons with inmates of the same legal gender, and not with people with the corresponding gender identity, which increases the risk of them being exposed to assault and sexual violence.



FOR UPDATED INFORMATION & STATISTICS:

ilga.org

ILGA conducts comprehensive research on the legislation in the world's countries. You can find the latest reports here.

tgeu.org

More information on working with gender identity and gender expression.

“In addition to the violation inherent in not legally recognising people’s gender or denying them access to gender affirming care, transgender people often have no access to the protection afforded by the authorities.”

SODOMY LAWS

Sodomy is an old term for what was considered deviant sexuality, such as homosexuality. Most things apart from vaginal intercourse have been included in this.

The word is from the biblical story about Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis, chapter 19. Those practising sodomy were called sodomites.

In some countries, sodomy is a criminal charge, commonly referring to same-sex sexual intercourse. So called sodomy laws in the Global South frequently originate from the colonial powers.

SODOMY ALLEGATIONS AS A POLITICAL WEAPON

Globally, sodomy laws are used to stop criticism or opposition – irrespective of whether the person concerned is an LGBTIQ person or not. Sodomy allegations are a simple way for a corrupt or oppressive regime to get rid of inconvenient people.

Anwar Ibrahim – opposition leader and deputy prime minister in Malaysia from 1993-1998 – was sentenced in 2000 to imprisonment for same-sex sexual acts. The trial was strenuously called into question by independent commentators. Amnesty International designated Anwar a prisoner of conscience and was of the opinion that he was imprisoned for political reasons. In 2004, Malaysia's Supreme Court rescinded the conviction of Anwar and he was released. In July 2008, he was arrested once again and charged with having had sex with a male colleague. Sodomy is described in Malaysian law as “carnal intercourse against the order of nature” and is punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

In Zimbabwe, the authorities have run campaigns against homosexuality since 1995. The country also has a sodomy law that regulates sexual acts between men, and a law that criminalises acts that can be perceived as being homosexual. In Zimbabwe, the law has also been used as a political tool. Accusing a political opponent of sodomy may be an effective weapon, regardless of whether there is any basis for the allegations or not. These types of smear campaigns are not avoided by pronounced heterosexuality, but by renouncing the oppositional voice.

A similar example can be seen in the satirical images that are spread around the world of Russia's president Vladimir Putin and the president of the US, Donald Trump, by political opponents. We cannot be certain that the reason people disseminate these images is due to a conscious transphobia, but by putting make-up on men in order to smear them politically, you are still affirming that femininity and certain forms of gender expressions are embarrassing or something to be ashamed of.

Naturally, the methods also scare parts of the movement for human rights into silence.



PARTICULAR CHALL- ENGES

Poverty

“Poverty deprives people of their ability to make decisions about their own lives.”

Poverty in our world is profound and extensive. It is constantly changing and is expressed in different ways, encompassing anything from illness and starvation to discrimination and harassment.

Poverty deprives people of their ability to make decisions about their own lives. Poverty means lack of freedom – in many situations where vital conditions are at stake, there are no options. The quintessential nature of poverty is a lack of material assets and a lack of power. It leads to hunger, ill health, low levels of education and major exposure/vulnerability to violence and abuse. Interaction between several of these negative factors may aggravate poverty and make it permanent. Material poverty and lack of respect for human rights in a society are closely interlinked.

Different groups suffer in different ways from poverty, but those who

transgress general norms relating to gender and sexual orientation run a greater risk of suffering from poverty. Human rights are limited and violated by heteronormativity, and these violations impact health, labour market participation, educational opportunities, participation in political life and access to social networks.

Discrimination contributes to, and creates, poverty. Poverty and exclusion can in turn lead to a democratic deficit, because poverty in itself is an actual barrier to political participation; working to earn a living takes time from involvement in activities outside work, and low literacy and limited access to radio, television and newspapers make it difficult to participate in the public debate.

Overall, it leads to the belief that there is less of an opportunity to influence political discourse. Furthermore, for minority groups, it may involve withholding information from them about the democratic process, but it is also about a lack of interest as a result of difficulties identifying with and engaging with the majority of the population.

Below are some areas where LG-BTIQ people are particularly vulnerable and which are also directly linked to the fight against poverty and issues related to democracy.

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

Corruption inflicts the greatest toll on poor countries and contributes to aggravating poverty, and is also a serious barrier to development. Since many organisations that work with SOGIESC in the Global South and East, are young and are run by people who themselves live in, or close to, poverty, it is important to consider early on how to manage issues concerning corruption and vulnerability. Creating a structure for finances and accounting is an important step in preventing risks, but also in ensuring the safety of those involved. In a community that is severely affected by poverty and ill health, donors should be aware of the fact that local management of resources may expose those responsible to pressure as well as to real risks.

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

Everyone working to fight poverty should consider whether their efforts maintain, or even reinforce, current normative notions of gender and sexual orientation. If you want to combat poverty, the long-term gains will be greater if these norms are challenged.

Violence, threats & harassment

People are subjected to violence and threats of violence because they transgress norms. They are abused, raped and murdered because of their supposed or actual sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression. In many countries, this violence is also sanctioned or even exercised by the state.

As an example, from 2008-2016, 2,343 murders were reported in 69 different countries of people transgressing norms relating to gender identity and gender expression. 1,834 of these murders occurred in Central and South America and 64 percent of all of the people murdered had sex in exchange for money.

The reporting mainly comes from

countries where the movement is strong and where there are systems in place for documentation: Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Honduras, USA, North America, Turkey, Italy, India, Philippines and Pakistan.

As there is a link between a high level of reporting and a high murder rate, one can assume that the level of under-reporting is considerable. In most countries, there is no reporting or documentation whatsoever.

In addition to the daily violence people are being subjected to, there are recurring reports of murders and sexual violence perpetrated against activists who engage in SOGIESC issues. There are also daily honour-related assaults within families and networks, as well as bullying and abuse in schools and workplace.

Violence creates fear and causes organisations to lose important resources and know-how as committed individuals are silenced or even murdered.

“Think about how
to communicate
with activists.”

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY: **SECURITY & THE MEDIA**

Organisations and people working with SOGIESC in many parts of the world are under pressure from a security perspective. In some countries, such as Russia, it may also involve dealing with legislation that limits freedom of expression. The state can pose the biggest threat and sometimes uses digital surveillance and persecution to silence activists.

For the individual, the family and the people around them can be a real threat. People cannot always be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. A great deal of communication today takes place on social media and outing someone there can have devastating consequences. People are subjected to family-related honour violence and to lynch mobs. Therefore, always let the individual decide how open he/she wants to be and preferably help with a risk assessment in cases where you suspect it may be necessary. This is particularly relevant when it comes to young people and people who are new to the movement. Think about how to communicate with activists. An individual's identity may need to be concealed even to employees and our allies. Also consider whether it is safe to use social media as a communication channel. Consider encryption and other security measures. Do not force people's "coming-out" process.

Digital platforms can also offer an opportunity for activists to communicate without having to meet and risk having to expose themselves to one another. In very repressive environments, such as Iran, this form of organisation has had considerable significance for the movement. Digital platforms also enable people to communicate globally and, for example, report human rights violations as they occur.

YOUTUBE FILMS OF TORTURE

Sometimes films are disseminated where Russian neo-Nazis have contacted gay people via fake personal ads. Teenagers who respond to the ad are tortured and filmed, and the films are disseminated online via youtube and other forms of social media where they can be seen by the victim's school, family and friends. Sometimes films are posted that allegedly depict homosexuals being lynched in specific African countries.

These films are then spread by well-meaning people who want to show the oppression people face because of their sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity.

But spreading these films has terrible consequences. In relation to the films from Russia, the Russian police have done nothing to put an end to the attacks and in many cases the victims have been driven to suicide. The proliferation of these films has consequences for the victims who continue to be exposed and are forced to relive the torture to which they were subjected. The films are also disseminated by neo-Nazis with the intention of outing the victims to their family and friends. When you share these films, you are promoting the views of neo-Nazis.

As for the lynchings that allegedly were perpetrated against homosexuals in Africa, it turned out that the films actually portrayed completely different events, maybe even in a different country than was originally stated. Terrible scenes take place in the films and they obviously frighten members of the movement in the country from which they claim to come. For example, if a film of an alleged lynching from Uganda is shared, it has the effect of mobilizing the LGBTIQ Movement in Uganda to help the victim and report the incident completely unnecessarily.

The most problematic aspect of the films is that they are distressing for individuals who identify with the victim. It is a form of terrorism that frightens an entire group of people into silence.

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

As organising around LGBTIQ issues in many contexts entails a threat to the safety of the individual with burnout, stress and high staff turnover being the consequences, funding for operations and organisations should incorporate support for safety, including personal well-being, to enable sustainable and resilient work to be carried out.

Enabling participation in regional and international forums is a way to counteract the ever more restricted freedom of movement experienced by stakeholders from civil society, including many LGBTIQ organisations and activists.



“People may be subjected to harassment, torture, assault and even execution because of their actual or alleged sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.”

Health

“People who transgress gender norms are often the most vulnerable.”

People may be subjected to harassment, torture, assault and even execution because of their actual or alleged sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression. Both the experience of violence and the fear of being subjected to violence and harassment lead to ill health. People also risk developing mental disorders such as depression and stress when they are forced to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity from the people around them.

People who transgress gender norms are among the most vulnerable. Transgender people around the world are subjected to terrible abuse and brutal violence that may have fatal consequences. Sex workers and those who are forced into sexual exploitation are particularly vulnerable. Transgender people who do not have ID documentation that matches their gender identity or gender expression are often subjected to offensive questioning and degrading treatment by the healthcare sector. In countries where transgender

identities are criminalised or where ID documentation does not match the gender expression or identity of the individual, access to healthcare is restricted. For example, in Kuwait, doctors have reported transgender people to the police after discovering that the gender stated on their ID documentation did not match their gender expression.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture condemns non-consensual medical treatment of individuals with intersexual variations. Medical interventions on infants and young children to “normalize” genitalia are common the world over. But these interventions are permanent and are carried out without consent. Furthermore, they are usually not medically necessary and create lifelong damage and contribute to stigma.

A lack of information about safer sex for men who have sex with men make them more susceptible to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. The health of women who have sex with women is an area overlooked in research and medical practice. As women, lesbians and bisexuals also have less access to healthcare services compared to men. Ill health is both a consequence of, and a strong contributing factor to, material poverty as well as lack of power, influence and choice.

I am a transgender person.

This could happen to me.

My family has disowned me.

I have sex in exchange for money, both clients and the police have raped me.

I have been assaulted.

My doctor ridicules me.

My ID documentation does not reflect who I am.

People make jokes about me

There are no transgender-friendly clinics near me.

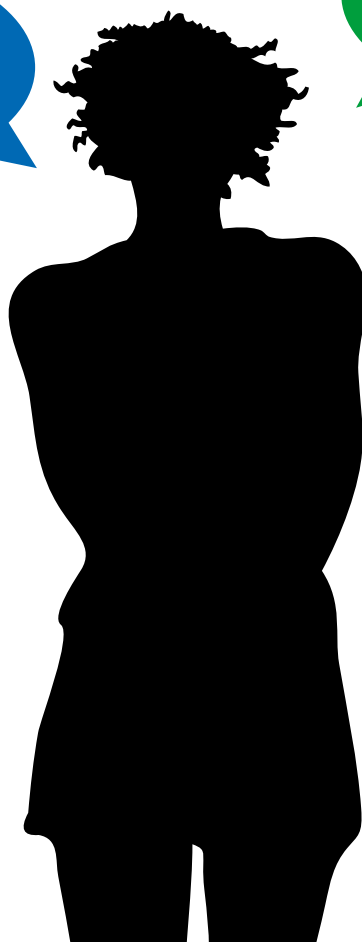
I have lost jobs because of who I am.

I reuse needles to inject hormones.

I want to be respected.

I have no health insurance.

I was evicted by my landlord.



Source: UNAIDS

Gender-affirming care

Transgender people face particular difficulties when it comes to medical care. This is partly due to discrimination, but also because the healthcare system rarely meets the prevailing needs.

There is often a lack of resources and expertise for providing gender-affirming care. Other barriers to gender-affirming care are legal and financial in nature. The general marginalisation of transgender people is also a barrier. It is harder for those who are poor, or who lack education, employment, a home and so on, to seek professional care.

If medical care is available, it is often not accessible until after the

age of 18, when puberty has already induced many gender-specific characteristics that are not in line with the person's identity. Many of these are permanent and require major medical interventions later in life.

Many transgender people travel long distances to access medical care, if medical care is available at all. This means that transgender people may live without any medical care, which in turn results in people buying hormones and other means of transition (for example, silicone for injection) on the black market. They are left to resort to self-medication and its consequences.

GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE & TREATMENT

The medical, social and legal process transgender people can go through. For example, changing their body using hormones and/or through surgery.

YOUR OWN BODY

One issue that pertains to both transgender people and people with intersexual variations is the right not to have to go through surgery if they do not want to and to make decisions about their own body.

FORCED STERILISATION & PSYCHIATRIC DIAGNOSES

It is still common to forcibly sterilize transgender people in order for them to obtain legal recognition of their gender. Many countries also require a psychiatric diagnosis before legal recognition is granted.

Minority stress & substance abuse

Because of SOGIESC, people from the minority community are more likely to be subjected to different stress factors, such as discrimination, stigmatisation and negative treatment.

Mental and physical ill health, hazardous or harmful alcohol consumption or addiction to alcohol and drugs, as well as anxiety disorders and depression are more common among people who transgress norms related to sexuality, gender identity, and gender expression than in the general population. It can be seen as a sign of stress-related ill health in the group, so-called minority stress.

Alcohol and drug abuse can be a way of managing minority stress, that is, a kind of self-medication.

“Alcohol and drug abuse can be a way of handling the stress felt by the minority community.”

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

It is important to raise awareness of the circumstances and situations in which LGBTIQ people find themselves, and to reduce the discrepancies in health.



HIV

The desire to reduce the incidence of HIV and AIDS has led to essential discussions on sexual orientation in relation to global cooperation. Financial means for HIV prevention have traditionally funded many SOGIESC activities, particularly efforts focused on men who have sex with men. To a great extent, there is still a lack of resources for prevention aimed at transgender people.

HIV among men who have sex with men is increasing in many countries, while many measures and programmes for HIV prevention fail to meet the needs of the target group. For example, HIV prevalence among

men who have sex with men is 19 percent in West and Central Africa and 13 percent in Eastern and Southern Africa. From a global perspective, it is 19 times more likely that a man who has sex with men lives with HIV than is the case for other people.

Generally, transmission figures are not available, but globally 19 percent of transgender women live with HIV, and transgender women run a risk of HIV that is 49 times higher than that of other people. Many national HIV and AIDS prevention programmes do not mention people who transgress current norms relating to sexuality, gender identity, and gender expression. 61 percent of countries working with national HIV/AIDS strategies stated that these strategies do not include transgender people.

When medical and healthcare personnel do not possess the specific know-how, you are exposed to a greater risk by telling them about yourself. All too often people are denied medical care.

“HIV among men who have sex with men is increasing world wide.”



WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

Unfortunately, research into SOGIESC and HIV/AIDS in many countries is extremely inadequate. However, in general, specialist competence should be part of all healthcare provision in order to reach all target groups for prevention and in order for all target groups to feel safe and to receive the proper care.

Stigma and violence is increasing susceptibility to HIV

Unprotected anal intercourse entails a considerable risk of transmitting HIV when medication is not available, but the violation of human rights is the main social risk factor. Social vulnerability to HIV is a result of legal, political and financial inequalities that result in an inability to protect oneself from HIV or an inability to control the impact of the virus on one's life and access to medical care and effective treatment.

The conditions that lead to increased susceptibility to HIV are often the result of marginalisation, including access to information and education. There is also a link between low self-esteem and risk-taking behaviour. Stigma, discrimination, exclusion and criminalisation make people more susceptible to HIV. Stigmatisation impacts different groups in different ways.

In Latin America, it is estimated that 44-70 percent of all transgender women are forced to leave their homes, often at a young age. It is reported that 21 percent of women in Thailand and 40 percent of transgender women from the Philippines were disowned by their parents when gender-affirming care commenced. Transphobia is a health risk that can result in depression and suicidal thoughts, which in turn increases the risk of HIV.

“There is a connection between low self-esteem and risk behaviour.”

The prevalence may also be higher among people who transgress heterosexual and gender norms, partly because of the sexual violence to which they are subjected.

Many transgender women sell sex, often because of social exclusion, poverty and difficulty finding work. In El Salvador, almost 47 percent of transgender women report that their main income comes from selling sex. Selling sex often coincides with low levels of education, homelessness, drug abuse and poor social networks.

Nearly one million women contract HIV every year and only half of all the women who live with HIV have access to medication. It makes AIDS the leading cause of death in women between the ages of 30 and 49.

In order to understand and combat the spread of HIV/AIDS among women, efforts must be directed towards the prevention of

violations of women's rights. The ability of women to control their lives and their health, such as controlling matters relating to marriage, is often negligible.

Men often make the decisions about condom use and reproduction and often women cannot protect themselves against HIV/AIDS. Women who have sex with women are also subjected to sexual violence in heterosexual marriages and are exposed to violence in order to “convert” alleged or openly lesbian or bisexual women.

There is very little research on the transmission of HIV between women who have sex with women, but factors that increase the risk of HIV are alcohol, drugs and poverty. The combination of belonging to a sexual minority and drug use increases the risk of HIV significantly. Another factor that can increase the risk of women contracting HIV is the desire to have children. This means that HIV/AIDS is also an issue for women who have sex with women. Working to prevent HIV/AIDS means strengthening the position of women.

THE FOUR MAIN REASONS ACCORDING TO UNAIDS FOR SUSCEPTIBILITY TO HIV

1. *Violence*
2. *Criminalisation, stigma, discrimination and social exclusion*
3. *Poor access to HIV care and healthcare*
4. *Lack of investment in information and testing*

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY: **UNAIDS** **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS** **TRANS & HIV**

1. *Allow and encourage leadership on the issue from the trans community*
2. *Recognition of rights and freedom from violence*
3. *Good health services and the opportunity to work*
4. *More research*



Labour market & education

In the labour market, norms have an impact on a person's ability to obtain and maintain a job. People are forced to conceal their sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace and at school because SOGIESC is widely regarded as a legitimate reason for dismissal. In most countries, there is also no protective legislation.

Access to work is particularly limited for transgender people. Many are forced into sexual exploitation or insecure jobs in the service sector without the insurance cover and benefits enjoyed by workers in other professions. This leads to insecure employment and a limited ability to make demands and influence their work.

In many parts of the world there is a link between organized sex workers and organisations that work with SOGIESC. Sometimes it is not possible to clearly distinguish between the organisations.

For many people, especially transgender women, sex work is the only way to earn a living. This is due to extensive discrimination and a lack of networks that provide social

“School is an environment that can be very violent.”

and financial protection.

People who sell sex or are subjected to sexual coercion and exploitation are often in a vulnerable position and have a need to make their voices heard in a non-judgemental environment.

Norms relating to SOGIESC also lead to unequal access to education. People who come out or who are outed as LGBTIQ can lose the support of their family and thus the opportunity to pursue academic studies, especially if the opportunity to study is linked to the family's provision of food and board during the period of study. A hostile home environment can also adversely affect academic results.

School is an environment that can be very violent for students who

deviate from accepted norms. Going to school at all may be impossible for children and adolescents who are subjected to harassment because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Young transgender people are also forced to participate in gender-segregated education and to wear uniforms based on the gender that was assigned to them at birth. This can lead to poor mental health.

A lack of rights and the existence of discrimination and oppression leads to poverty in groups and individuals. But it also has consequences at a socio-economic level. Discrimination and ill health have a negative impact on the economy at large, not least because of the loss of skills.

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

The organisations and stakeholders who work directly with SOGIESC issues should strive to find out what the situation is like in a specific country.

Real change occurs from within.

From RFSL's international strategy

Social networks

People who transgress norms related to SOGIESC often end up in a situation where the social networks that can make the difference between a decent standard of living and poverty are suddenly snatched away.

Even people who come from families who are not considered poor can, if their families choose to turn their back on them, end up in poverty. For example, they can be disinherited or denied the right to the joint residence if their partner dies.

The family can be the single biggest threat to human health and safety. Honour-related violence can lead to stigmatisation, exclusion and, in a worst case scenario, the death of those who have been subjected to it.

Rapes perpetrated with the aim of “conversion” that lesbian and bisexual women are subjected to may be sanctioned or even carried out by the woman’s family.

Physical and psychological violence and the threat of violence within the family can also limit the individual's freedom. Not having access to the security that a social network entails, which can support and share resources, albeit scarce ones, can make people particularly vulnerable.

Some people are forced into marriage, while women who do not marry can end up in a position of

“The family can be the single biggest threat to human health and safety”.

dependency vis à vis their original family and may be forced to shoulder the burden of caring for old and sick family members without having the opportunity to influence their own lives.

How people organize their households, who lives with who and who looks after the children and see themselves as parents can be very different. Social norms about what constitutes and is accepted as a family also vary depending on the time and place. Family formation is influenced by structures and legislation, and in general, same-sex couples acquire legal recognition in only a small number of countries.

Lack of protection under the law does not just mean that people lose the social status afforded by marriage, for example. The lack of legal frameworks also create insecurity for children living in families that deviate from the norm.

Religion

Religion affects people's lives to a great extent in many countries. People generally prefer to abide by both positive and negative religious dictates rather than to abandon their religion entirely.

One of the greatest dangers for people who transgress SOGIESC norms is that religion is used as a pretext for discrimination, threats and hatred.

Religiously sanctioned hatred can destroy lives. Not only by breaking down an individual's self-esteem but also by supporting and encouraging lynch mobs, with the aim of outing and punishing people. This happens by publicly imposing shame or beatings that sometimes result in death. In certain regions that adhere to sharia law, people can be hanged or pushed from tall buildings because of their actual or alleged identity. Religiously sanctioned phobia can be brutal.

But religion can also be a progres-

sive force. It can be a powerful tool that can be used to support human rights and SOGIESC issues. If you can work with religious leaders in order to create respect for human rights, it will provide great benefits in many instances. Today, there are a number of organisations that work specifically with religion connected to SOGIESC. Some examples are the South African organisation, *The Inner Circle*, founded by Imam Muh-sin Hendricks, who supports queer Muslims; the *Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies* – an international network for an affirmative view of sexual and bodily rights in Muslim communities; *The World Congress of GLBT Jews – Keshet Ga'avah*, a global organization for GLBT Jews; as well as *The Global Interfaith Network*, a global network that brings together several religions. *The Reformation Project* and *Gay Christian Network* are corresponding Christian organisations.

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

As a stakeholder from a secular country, it is important to understand the religious aspects that affect all people's lives. It is also important to understand that approaches to sexual orientation and gender expression may differ depending on the environment. Organisations adapt their strategies based on the religious context in which they operate.

Intersecting oppression

Different types of oppression intersect with each other and therefore it is important to consider every individual from the perspective of all kinds of identities and expressions. For example, a person is never just gay. They may also be a woman, a mother, black, a business leader, religious and transgender. These different identities can place the person in different power structures where she can sometimes enjoy more rights

and sometimes fewer rights. As a homosexual, she can be discriminated against from a family perspective while at the same time, as a business leader, she can enjoy privileges in her professional life.

By taking into account a person's many different identities and expressions and seeing how they interact, one can also identify several different power structures.

WHEN YOU WORK INTERNATIONALLY

Sometimes it can be difficult to clearly define what is causing an unfair power structure, and it is important to consider that identities and expressions can be one of several reasons for oppressive actions.

A PROGRAMME BASED ON
**LOCAL OWNERSHIP
& PARTNERSHIP**
IS **MORE EFFECTIVE**

From RFSL's international strategy

Glossary

Cisgender person

A person whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth. *Cis* is Latin for “on this side of”.

LGBTQI

An umbrella term for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (or questioning), and people with queer expressions and identities. The L, G, B are about sexual orientation, i.e., who you have the ability to fall in love with or are attracted to. The T is about how you define and express your gender. The I is about variations of sex characteristics.

Queer can involve both sexual orientation, gender identity, relationships and sexual practice, but can also be an expression of a critical attitude to the prevailing norms.

Heteronormativity

The system of norms that affect our understanding of gender and sexuality. According to the heteronorm, people are either girl/woman or boy/man and nothing else. Girls/women are expected to be feminine and boys/men are expected to be masculine. Everyone is expected to be heterosexual. Everyone is affected by the norms, regardless of whether they adhere to them or not. Adhering to or fitting within the norm provides financial, political and social benefits. Transgressing

the heteronorm can result in punishment in the form of anything from silence to violence.

Homophobia

An ideology, perception or attitude that expresses a strong negative view of homosexuality or homosexuals and bisexuals. Homophobia often overlaps with transphobia.

Intersectionality

A perspective that is used to study how different power structures interact and how different identities are created as a result of, for example, religiosity, gender, sexuality, class and age. How the different aspects are interlinked varies depending on the person, group and context.

Intersex/intersexual variations and sex characteristics

A number of different variations, states and diagnoses are included in this term. Natural variations in which sex chromosomes, sex glands (testicles or ovaries), hormone levels or stage of genital development transgress the norm. Some conditions are determined at birth, other conditions later in life, while some people live their entire life without knowing about it. “Inter” means “between” in Latin and “sexus” means “sex”. Therefore, intersex means “between (the biological)

genders”. Intersex does not say anything about a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sex characteristics are what distinguish the sex of bodies within the field of medicine. Primary sex characteristics are the ovaries and the testicles with associated hormones and chromosomes. The secondary sex characteristics are those that are not directly associated with reproduction.

Intersex people are born with a body to which it is difficult to fully assign a gender according to societal and scientific gender norms. Having an intersexual variation is not the same as being a transgender person. Being a transgender person is about gender identity and/or gender expression, while intersex is about natural, congenital bodily variations of gender.

Gender

The term gender is a system that is used in most contexts to distinguish people by dividing them into two groups – women and men. However, gender is much more complex than that and can be broken down into four components:

- *Body* – is defined based on internal and external genitalia, sex chromosomes and hormone levels. From a physical perspective, there are not

just two genders, but rather gender can be seen as a scale.

- *Legal gender* – the gender that is registered in the register of births, deaths and marriages, in a person's passport or on ID documentation.
- *Gender identity* – the gender a person experiences, i.e., the gender one feels one is.
- *Gender expression* – how a person expresses their gender through attributes such as clothes, body language, hairstyle and voice.

Sexual orientation

May be about who turns you on or you want to have sex with, who you fall in love with and how you personally identify. This can be fluid and may change over time.

The term sexual orientation captures identities and expressions, but sexual practice is not always reflected in the identity. Men who have sex with men and women who have sex with women do not always identify as homosexual or bisexual. Therefore, the term men who have sex with men, MSM, or women who have sex with women, WSW, is sometimes used.

SOGIESC

From the English: *Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics*.

Transgender

Is an abbreviation for the umbrella term, transgender person. A common denominator for transgender people is that their gender identity and/or gender expression is not consistent with the legal gender they were assigned at birth.

The term includes people who have many diverse experiences of transgressing gender norms. It includes people who are neither women nor men, people who want to change their body to better match their gender identity, people who want to change their legal gender, people who use clothes and other attributes that are usually considered typical of a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth, and people who do not want to, cannot or do not think it is important to define themselves in terms of gender.

Transgender is about gender identity and/or gender expression. Being a transgender person is not a sexual orientation. The term transgender is not an established one in all parts of the world, and what is interpreted as transgressing a norm varies depending on the location.

Transphobia

An ideology, perception or attitude that expresses a strong negative view of transgender people or people whose gender expression transgresses the norm. Transphobia often overlaps with homophobia.

Queer

The term queer can mean different things. It is based on a criticism of ideas of normality concerning the issue of gender and sexuality, a questioning of prevailing ideas about how people should act in sexual as well as other relationships, how we should form a family, how we should express gender and so forth.

There is queer theory in the academic world, queer activism with people who want to organize to change current norms and structures, and people who call themselves queer. Queer as an identity can mean the desire not to define one's gender or sexual orientation, while some people use queer as a way to describe their gender identity or sexuality.

This is a document that aims to provide a better understanding of LGBTIQ people's circumstances, challenges and organisations globally. It highlights how issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics are linked to human rights and the sustainable development goals (the SDGs also known as Global Goals).

Everyone working for sustainable development should consider whether their efforts maintain, or even reinforce, current normative notions of gender and sexual orientation. Likewise, everyone needs to ask themselves whether LGBTIQ people are included in those efforts. If you want to fight poverty and contribute to sustainable development, the long-term gains are greater if everyone is included – both for the individual and for society as a whole.