

Integrating Gender into
Humanitarian Action:
*Good Practices
from Asia-Pacific 6*



GENDER
IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION
Asia and the Pacific Working Group

LGBTIQ+ Rights and Inclusion in Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction



Credit: UN Women

Human rights instruments such as the Yogyakarta Principles (2007) affirm that persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions (SOGIE)—also referred to under the umbrella term LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer) persons—are equally entitled to the same human rights as all other individuals.

Humanitarian and disaster risk reduction actors across governments, UN agencies, NGOs, INGOs, CSOs, private sectors, and more are further obligated to promote gender equality in line with global commitments, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's 'Gender Equality Policy Statement' (2008), the Agenda for Humanity from the World Humanitarian Summit (2016), the Grand Bargain, the Sendai Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Agenda

2030 and its sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. While these normative and legal frameworks do not all specifically or explicitly refer to LGBTIQ+ or SOGIE, gender equality does in principle encompass looking beyond the gender binary of women, girls, boys, and men to also integrate LGBTIQ+ persons, and they further emphasize the principle of leaving no one behind. In practice, however, many states and societies continue to discriminate against and actively perpetuate violence towards LGBTIQ+ persons, resulting in structural violence and social and economic vulnerabilities that are exacerbated and compounded by crises and natural disasters.¹

Although LGBTIQ+ persons are often rendered vulnerable and further marginalized in emergencies, few guidelines exist for their inclusion in humanitarian response.² Humanitarian needs and disaster risk assessments, as well as humanitarian response monitoring, generally do not disaggregate by SOGIE, which means data is often scarce. Recent experiences of LGBTIQ+ persons in emergencies indicate that their needs, risks, voices, and capacities are not adequately accounted for and addressed in both disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action. Often, the collapse of their normal coping mechanisms, structures (such as LGBTIQ+ community centers), and loss of income from informal economies are not captured.³ As a result, humanitarian response often continues to perpetuate the exclusion and marginalization of LGBTIQ+ populations; practices such as binary gender-segregated shelter and sanitation facilities, which require

identification that legally affirms one's gender identity to access aid⁴, and narrow definitions of the 'households' that form the basis of aid distributions or needs assessments, make the process of seeking aid exclusionary, humiliating, and harmful.⁵

Despite these vulnerabilities and marginalization, evidence from recent disasters in the Asia-Pacific region also demonstrates the capabilities and leadership of LGBTIQ+ populations to cope in the aftermath of disasters, and to leverage existing social networks for the protection and recovery of their communities.⁶ In recognition of these unique needs, risks, demands, and capabilities the following pages highlight case studies, references, and input on actions that promote LGBTIQ+ rights and inclusion in humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction.



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- 1 Rumbach, J. & K. Knight (2014) *Sexual and Gender Minorities in Humanitarian Emergencies*. In *Issues of Gender and Sexual Orientation in Humanitarian Emergencies*, Springer International Publishing.
 - 2 *Aside from the IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action (2015) and the UNHCR Emergency Handbook (2015), few other humanitarian handbooks/guidance materials integrate the needs and capabilities of LGBTI populations beyond a passing mention.*
 - 3 Dominey-Howes, Dale, et al. (2014) "Queering Disasters: on the Need to Account for LGBTI Experiences in Natural Disaster Contexts." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21(3): 905-918., doi:10.1080/0966369x.2013.802673.
 - 4 According to IRIN News (2014) *Lost in the chaos: LGBTI people in emergencies, in India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Nepal, transgender communities were harassed, mocked, and ridiculed or excluded entirely from aid distribution due to lack of identification that matched their gender identity and expression.*
 - 5 See footnote 1.
 - 6 See footnote 3 for case studies of leadership of Bakla in the Philippines following flash floods, Waria in Indonesia after the eruption of Mt. Merapi in 2010, and Fa'afafine in Samoa after Cyclone Evan.

Front and back cover photo: UN Women/Felix Maia

Down by the River:

Inclusion of Persons of Diverse Gender Identities and Sexual Orientations in Fiji



Talanoa-style story-sharing sessions were held with persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations in Fiji to explore life before and after Tropical Cyclone Winston

Credit: Emily Dwyer

After Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated Fiji in February 2016, the subsequent post-disaster needs assessment made only passing reference to persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, citing inadequate data as a barrier to further assessment. A research project by Oxfam Australia called *Down by the River* used a Talanoa storytelling method to center voices of Fijian persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, and a workshop to prompt Fijian humanitarian actors to address policy and practice in priority areas identified in the stories.

Australian social enterprise Edge Effect worked closely with Fiji's Rainbow Pride Foundation and Oxfam in Fiji to collect thirty individual stories reflecting on the experiences of persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations before and after TC Winston.

The pre-TC Winston stories often featured bullying in schools that led to drop-outs or lower performance and difficulty finding or maintaining employment. "Violence and ostracization from family, community, or faith were also common," said Rainbow Pride Foundation's Isikeli Vulavou. "People live with trauma and isolation from social networks." Workshop discussions focused on measures to strengthen sustainable livelihoods for persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, such as access to microfinance, which has the potential to enhance their ability to withstanding disasters or bounce-back.

"Diversity within the stories highlighted that there is no single 'LGBTQ+' solution" noted Edge Effect's Lana Woolf. "Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender men, and transgender

women described varying shelter experiences and preferences. Some gay men felt comfortable staying in shelters with heterosexual men, others didn't, some transgender women felt comfortable amongst cisgender women, others didn't. Some wanted a queer shelter, while others felt this would draw unwanted attention." The workshop considered the possibility of providing a range of options from which persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations can select without self-identifying.

For representatives of some clusters this project was their first engagement with Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) issues. "Inclusion of persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations needs detailed discussion in WASH, Emergency Shelter, and other technical clusters, not only in Safety and Protection" said Oxfam in Fiji Country Director Jovesa Saladoka. Technical cluster representatives welcomed the story methodology as it highlighted real-

life needs, but said developing new policy and operational guidance may need additional case studies and extended engagement with local SOGIESC organizations and advisors.

Stories also included strengths, such as the role of informal networks as sources of information, solidarity and direct services. Some lesbian and transgender participants recounted use of private safe houses rather than evacuation centers. While safe houses offer flexibility and privacy, questions arose as to their durability as solutions, considering impact on persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations or allies who welcomed others into their space. Nevertheless, informal networks may provide entry points for humanitarian actors to support persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations within existing trusted mechanisms.

Emily Dwyer - Edge Effect

Elsa Carnaby - Oxfam Australia



Workshop participants discuss changes to Livelihoods and Early Recovery programs to address issues raised in the Talanoa sessions.

Credit: Amasai Antonio Jeke, Rainbow Pride Foundation

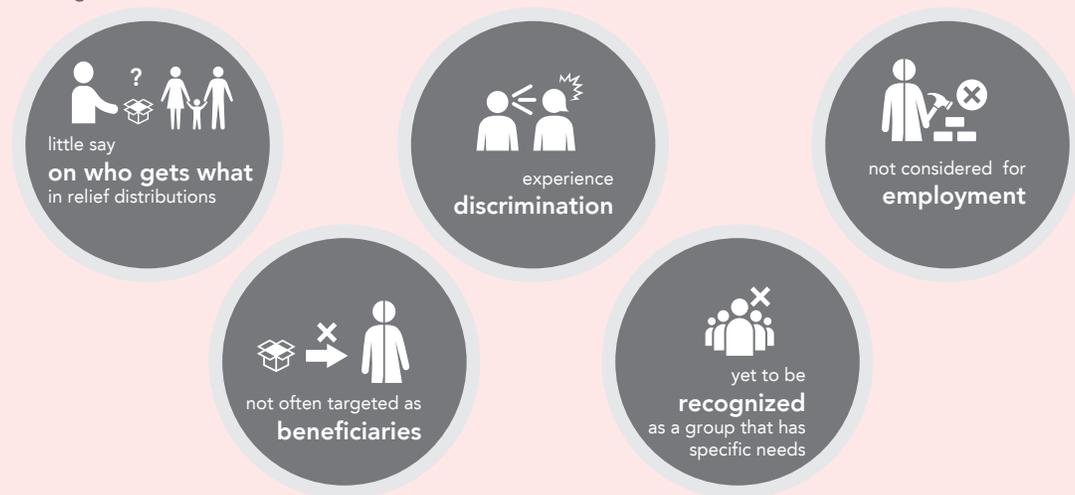
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) AWARENESS

Emergencies amplify discrimination against LGBT members, thus the need for awareness on policies governing gender and protection and the need for plans of action for LGBTs who are affected and displaced during emergencies.

LGBT persons are needed...



Challenges...



Leaving no one behind...



Best practices on outreach to LGBT persons*





Credit: Peter Caton, IPPF

Gender and Diversity in Emergencies: IPPF's Approach

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) has been working with LGBTIQ+ communities around the world for decades through their development work. The new gender and inclusion strategy was developed to guide their humanitarian efforts, as investing in gender equality and inclusion is essential in fulfilling sexual and reproductive health and rights in emergencies.

Gender and inclusion is also a priority in IPPF's overall Humanitarian Strategy and central to its humanitarian work. During an emergency, the needs and capacities of women, girls, boys, men, persons with disabilities, lesbian, gay, transgender women and men, queer, intersex and gender non-conforming persons, persons living with HIV, marginalized ethnic groups, and those living in geographically isolated locations, are different and distinct.

IPPF's humanitarian responses reach all people equally and avoid putting people at further risk.

Guiding Principles:

- Local, evidence-based solutions, using research and best practice approaches to advance gender equality and inclusion
- Partnership and collaboration, especially with women's, SOGIESC, and persons with disabilities' organizations, networks, and civil society groups that advocate for gender equality and inclusion - at all levels - to leverage action and improve impact
- Measures in place to ensure that needs of all marginalized groups are met, and that interventions are built on their capacities.

International Planned Parenthood Federation

Pakistan Red Crescent Transgender Roundtable



Credit: Muhammad Rishi, Volunteer Pakistan Red Crescent

Shilpa along with the other Trans community volunteers visited Pakistan Red Crescent National Head Quarter, Islamabad.

The transgender community in Pakistan faces significant oppression, discrimination, and disrespect from society. The country's total transgender population is approximately 10,418, as reported in the sixth Population and Housing Census. On order of the Supreme Court, separate codes for persons with disabilities and transgender persons were introduced this year by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Until recently, there had been no option available for people to identify as transgender, so many people instead previously identified themselves as a person with disabilities in the census.

In an effort to remain true to the principle of reaching out to all vulnerable communities in a non-discriminatory and equitable manner, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) Youth and Volunteer Department arranged six field visits for interns and volunteers to areas with openly transgender communities. The aim of these field visits was to broadly identify and assess the socio-economic issues faced by these sidelined individuals. A round table discussion was also arranged for the community at the PRCS National Headquarters, the purpose of which was to officially introduce transgender people to the work environment and ethic of PRCS and provide opportunities for healthy, productive, and empathetic interaction between the transgender community and program managers of PRCS.



Left and Right photos credit: Humera Jahanzeb, Pakistan Red Crescent Society

The following are a few of many issues that were identified during the field visits and round table:

- The transgender community is considered shameful and disgraced-by-right in the local culture.
- Transgender individuals are usually not encouraged to live in regular Mohallas/towns/residential areas. They are forced to establish their own communities distinctly away and out of regular areas.
- They are deprived of the basic opportunity to pray and/or practice their religion in mosques as they may face resistance or violent consequences from general mass.
- Due to deep-rooted intolerance, their basic rights to education, shelter, and decent livelihood are not respected. The lack of access to education and livelihood often forces them into begging or sex work as means to acquire income.
- They are subjected to large scale violence as a result of unequal power distribution and power dynamics.
- They are prone to blatant social and legal discrimination if they report criminal victimization or sexual harassment.
- They have no rights to property.
- Because of the stigma attached with their identity, they are often disowned by their family members at a very young age and are not accepted into social circles.

During the round table sessions, PRCS program managers discussed ways for the organization to help with many of the identified barriers to adequate support and fair treatment in society. The meeting also provided PRCS program managers with a chance to meet Ms. Ayesha Iqbal, the Managing Director of a welfare trust by the name, Faiz-e-Aam. The trust is actively engaged in supporting the transgender community. A discussion on long-term collaborations and future interventions took place, with utmost importance given immediately to organize first aid trainings for the transgender community.

The Youth and Volunteer Dept. of PRCS looks forward to improve and escalate its efforts in hearing the unheard and providing a strong platform to the transgender community to voice their concerns and right to respect.

Humera Jahanzeb, Christina Haneef, May Maloney, Kamran Kashif, and Youth and Volunteer Department - IFRC

LGBTIQ+ Groups Share Humanitarian Insight at Pacific Meeting



In the Pacific region, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people can experience daily discrimination and harassment – with homosexuality still a crime in some Pacific countries. Despite this, organizations representing persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, such as Rainbow Pride Foundation¹ and Pacific Rainbows Advocacy Network (PRAN)², are actively supporting their communities, including advocating for improved LGBTIQ+ inclusion in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian policies and programs.

This is critical since, in the Pacific, cyclones, floods, and droughts are becoming increasingly unpredictable and extreme with existing high levels of vulnerability known to worsen during disasters.

“We face violence on a daily basis and this is exacerbated during times of disaster,” said Isikeli Tumaiwakaya Vulavou, Founder and Executive Director of Rainbow Pride Foundation.

UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office’s (MCO) Gender and Protection in Humanitarian Action program is working with partners across the Pacific region to ensure people from diverse backgrounds can be actively involved in helping their communities prepare for and respond to disasters, so that the needs of all members of the community are met in times of emergency.

¹ Rainbow Pride Foundation advocates for a Fiji that respects, protects, upholds, promotes and fulfils every right and freedom including holistic development of Fijian people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and expression.

² PRAN is an organisation based in Lautoka, Western Division of Fiji for women of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expression, including transgender women and sex workers.



Credit: UN Women

Bonita Qio, Coordinator for Pacific Rainbows Advocacy Network (PRAN) and Youth Worker with the Ministry of Youth and Sports speaking at the Pacific Humanitarian Partnership Meeting in Suva.

At the Pacific Humanitarian Partnership (PHP) meeting in Fiji from 2-3 October 2017, UN Women and Diverse Voices and Action for Equality (DIVA for Equality)³ led a session on local and diverse humanitarian actors, including speakers from Rainbow Pride Foundation and PRAN, examining the specific needs of diverse groups and the benefits of inclusion.

Mx. Vulavou raised the need for gender considerations with evacuation centers, as shared living spaces and bathroom facilities can pose challenges for people with diverse sexual and gender identities. He added that livelihoods

are another major issue, as LBGTIQ+ people often face discrimination in getting decent employment, making disaster recovery a challenge and a potentially increasing vulnerability.

Bonita Qio, Coordinator of PRAN, Youth Worker with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Fiji Red Cross Volunteer confirmed that to better understand diversity within communities, “there is a need for disaggregated data - to identify different gender-related requests during a disaster, especially for evacuation spaces.”

Ms. Qio also described the difficulty for disaster responders to recognize that before going out to communities to help others, they may need to help themselves first – emphasizing that psychological first aid should be available for everyone affected by a disaster.

Mx. Vulavou said, “We want more meaningful engagement across the cluster system and for humanitarian agencies to think within the SOGIESC (sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression and sex characteristics) Framework during a disaster so persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities are not left out.”

UN Women Fiji MCO is providing leadership to the regional Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster, bringing together UN agencies, regional organizations, and non-government organizations (NGOs) to coordinate protection preparedness and response across the Pacific. This is a first for UN Women globally and an opportunity to ensure that women—as well as children, persons with disabilities, LBGTIQ+ communities and displaced people—are equal participants in planning and responding to disasters.

Terri O’Quinn – UN Women Fiji MCO

3 *DIVA for Equality Diverse Voices for Action and Equality (DIVA for Equality) concentrates its work in urban poor communities, rural and remote constituencies, and with women and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expression, as well as wider women-led social organizing in Pacific small island states. DIVA for Equality co-convenes a regional Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Coalition (PPGCCSD); We Rise Coalition (with femlinkPACIFIC, FWRM and IWDA); the Pacific Feminist SRHR Coalition; and is a founder/on the Working Group of new Pacific CSO Engagement Mechanism (PACCOM), etc. DIVA for Equality is also the Women’s Major Group PSIDS Organizing Partner (2017-2019) and the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) Liaison to the UNFCCC COP23 Presidency.*



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