



## **LGBTIQ Inclusion in the Roadmap for Eradicating Poverty Beyond Growth**

*Submission to the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights*

March 29, 2025

Outright International works with partners around the globe to strengthen the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) human rights movement, document and amplify human rights violations against LGBTIQ people, and advocate for inclusion and equality. Founded in 1990, Outright works with civil society organizations, the United Nations, regional human rights monitoring bodies, governments, humanitarian and development institutions, and philanthropic and corporate partners to create lasting change. With staff in twenty countries, Outright holds consultative status at the United Nations, where it serves as the secretariat of the UN LGBTI Core Group.

This submission is a response to the call for inputs from the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (hereinafter "SR Poverty") for the mandate's project to develop a "Roadmap for eradicating poverty beyond growth" to be presented to the 62nd session of the UN Human Rights Council in June/July 2026.

Based on Outright International's primary and secondary research, this submission shows how multidimensional poverty disproportionately impacts LGBTIQ persons. It demonstrates specific challenges they face in enjoying the rights to education, housing, and other services and the barriers they experience in the world of work based on their diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). It offers relevant policy recommendations for local and national governments as well as regional and international bodies.

### **Overview: Multidimensional poverty and LGBTIQ people**

LGBTIQ persons are disproportionately affected by multidimensional poverty. Eradicating poverty among LGBTIQ people will require an intentional focus on



eliminating the compounded and intersecting forms of discrimination that they experience throughout the life cycle.<sup>1</sup>

Criminalization, stigma, and discrimination have a cascading effect on LGBTIQ lives—starting with access to education and a safe home environment and ending with access to employment and safety in the world of work. LGBTIQ people run the risk of family rejection—from birth, in the case of some intersex children, and from an early age for many who demonstrate non-normative gender identities or expressions—curtailing their life chances. Discrimination in educational institutions is routinized in the lives of LGBTIQ people, sometimes resulting in disciplinary measures based on bias, including expulsion, and contributing to high dropout rates. As a direct result of inequitable access to education, compounded by additional discrimination based on SOGIESC in the world of work, LGBTIQ people’s employment options are often limited, and employment can be contingent on remaining fully

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<sup>1</sup> Several publications trace, in detail, the cycles and layers of poverty that shape LGBTIQ people’s lives and the challenges escaping poverty in context of entrenched discrimination. See, for instance: Outright International, *Golden Rainbow: Stories Of Pain, Grit, Duty And Love Of Filipino Older LGBT People*, December 2023, <https://outrightinternational.org/our-work/human-rights-research/golden-rainbow-stories-pain-grit-duty-and-love-filipino-older-lgbt>; GATE, *Report on Poverty*, 2020, [https://gate.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GATE\\_Report-on-Poverty\\_2020.pdf](https://gate.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GATE_Report-on-Poverty_2020.pdf); Human Rights Watch, “Don’t Punish Me for Who I Am” – Systemic Discrimination Against Transgender Women in Lebanon, September 3, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/09/03/dont-punish-me-who-i-am/systemic-discrimination-against-transgender-women-lebanon#:~:text=Some%20trans%20women%20told%20Human,face%20in%20exercising%20basic%20rights%2C>; Center for American Progress, “Key Issues Facing People With Intersex Traits,” October 26, 2021, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/key-issues-facing-people-intersex-traits/>; World Bank Group, “How LGBTI Exclusion is Hindering Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,” June 13, 2017, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/06/13/como-la-exclusion-lgbti-obstaculiza-el-desarrollo-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe>; World Bank Group, “To Fight Poverty, We Need to Fight Homophobia and Transphobia,” May 17, 2016, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/05/17/to-fight-poverty-we-need-to-fight-homophobia-and-transphobia>; Bianca D.M. Wilson et al., *Pathways into Poverty: Lived Experiences Among LGBTQ People* (UCLA School of Law, Williams Institute, September 2020), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Pathways-Overview-Sep-2020.pdf>; Hannah Kia et al., “Poverty in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirit, and Other Sexual and Gender Minority (LGBTQ2S+) Communities in Canada: Implications for Social Work Practice,” *Research on Social Work Practice* 31, no. 6 (2021): 584–598, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8404727/>.



closeted, contributing to minority stress. Inequitable access to employment reduces LGBTIQ people's access to housing, health care, and pensions; at the same time, they also face direct discrimination in accessing these goods and services.

LGBTIQ people's socio-economic precarity directly contributes to vulnerability to violence. It also affects personal and social dynamics, constraining LGBTIQ people's ability to form romantic relationships and live independently. Many are forced to cohabit with family members who may not be supportive, maintaining economic dependence and limiting autonomy.<sup>2</sup>

This submission focuses primarily on how discrimination in **access to education, housing, and employment** contributes to and is reinforced by poverty. However, Outright also recognizes discrimination and poverty are mutually reinforcing in other sectors. LGBTIQ **health disparities** are well-documented.<sup>3</sup> These include gender-based violence, mental health disorders, substance abuse, eating disorders, and food insecurity.<sup>4</sup> Discrimination, violence, and marginalization contribute to minority stress<sup>5</sup> and higher levels of malnutrition.<sup>6</sup> Transgender and intersex persons

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<sup>2</sup> Clarisse Cavalcante Kalume, Lucas Paoli Itaborahy, and Julio Cesar Carneiro Moreira, "Vulnerabilidades socioeconômicas de pessoas LGBT no Rio de Janeiro," *MicroRainbow Foundation*, 2017, <https://mrifoundation.global/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Vulnerabilidades-socioeconômicas-de-pessoas-LGBT-no-Rio-de-Janeiro-artigo-completo.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization, "Improving LGBTIQ+ health and well-being with consideration for SOGIESC," accessed March 27, 2025, <https://www.who.int/activities/improving-lgbtqi-health-and-well-being-with-consideration-for-sogiesc>.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Park and Lucas Ramon Mendos, *FOR ALL: The Sustainable Development Goals and LGBTI People*, 2019, [https://www.rfsl.se/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FINAL\\_FORALL\\_RFSL\\_2019.pdf](https://www.rfsl.se/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FINAL_FORALL_RFSL_2019.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Adedotun Ogunbajo et al., "Experiences of minority stress among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) in Nigeria, Africa: The intersection of mental health, substance use, and HIV sexual risk behavior," *Global Public Health* 16, no. 11 (2021): <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17441692.2020.1834598>; Patricia Moreland et al., "Experiences of minority stress among lesbian and bisexual women in Rwanda," *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation* 8, no. 4 (2019): 166–211, <https://doi.org/10.1037/ipp0000114>.

<sup>6</sup> Elisabetta M. Ferrero et al., "Nutrition and Health in the LGBTQ+ Community: A Narrative Review," *Advances in Nutrition* 14, no. 6 (2023): <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.advnut.2023.07.009>.



face multiple forms of harassment and violence in accessing public toilets and water sources, compromising their access to **safe drinking water and sanitation**.<sup>7</sup>

Multidimensional poverty cannot be fully understood without gendering and *queering* its framework, challenging the cisheteronormative assumptions embedded in traditional poverty measures. Policy interventions must address compounded vulnerabilities based on SOGIESC and the structural and systemic barriers that perpetuate the socioeconomic exclusion of LGBTIQ persons.

## **LGBTIQ inclusion in social protection and services**

### **Obstacles to the right to education**

Bullying, violence, and discrimination in school settings disproportionately harm LGBTIQ persons, especially transgender students.<sup>8</sup> Long-term effects of educational deprivation include difficulties in accessing the formal job market and entrepreneurial opportunities and the tendency to engage in precarious informal work, including sex work.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to water and sanitation on human rights to water and sanitation in spheres of life beyond the household with an emphasis on public spaces, A/HRC/42/47, July 10, 2019, <https://docs.un.org/fr/A/HRC/42/47>, par. 44; Human Rights Watch, *Submission on Gender Equality to the Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation*, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/02/14/human-rights-watch-submission-gender-equality-special-rapporteur-human-right-safe>; Durba Biswas, "Access to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene for All: Focusing on Transgender Experiences in India," in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Water Governance*, eds. Tatiana Acevedo-Guerrero et al. (Routledge, 2024), 240–252.

<sup>8</sup> Kerith J. Conron, Kathryn K. O'Neill, and Luis A. Vasquez, *Educational Experiences of Transgender People*, (UCLA Williams Institute, April 2022), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Trans-Higher-Ed-Apr-2022.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Global Network of Sex Work Projects, *The Needs and Rights of Trans Sex Workers*, 2014, <https://www.nswp.org/sites/default/files/Trans%20SWs.pdf>.



Widespread school violence based on SOGIESC has been documented in countries including **Burundi, Kenya, Jamaica, Iran, Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, Mongolia, India, China, Benin, Malaysia, and Mozambique.**<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Global Philanthropy Project, *Une Analyse de Paysage des Droits Humains des Communautés des Professionnels du Sexe et LGBT au Burundi*, 2016, [https://globalphilanthropyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Burundi-Baseline\\_FRE.pdf](https://globalphilanthropyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Burundi-Baseline_FRE.pdf); Christine Kahura, "Retreating on the Right to Basic Education: A Slippery Slope into Criminalising LGBT Students," *Oxford Human Rights Hub*, February 28, 2022, <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/retreating-on-the-right-to-basic-education-a-slippery-slope-into-criminalising-lgbt-students/>; Carlene Davis, "J-FLAG: Schools Not Taking Bullying of LGBT Students Seriously," *The Jamaica Gleaner*, May 6, 2019, <https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20190506/editors-forum-j-flag-schools-not-taking-bullying-lgbt-students>; 6RANG (Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network), *Cultural Dimension of the Right to Education in Iran – Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education*, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Education/CulturalDimension/Civil-society/23-Rang.pdf>; Human Rights Watch, "Vietnam: LGBT Youth Unprotected – Myths About Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity Undermine Rights," February 12, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/12/vietnam-lgbt-youth-unprotected>; Human Rights Watch, 'Just Let Us Be': *Discrimination Against LGBT Students in the Philippines*, June 22, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/06/22/just-let-us-be/discrimination-against-lgbt-students-philippines>; Kaung Zaw Htet and Theo Maung, "At an Impasse: How Decade-Long Dictatorship, Systemic Oppression and Social Conservatism Empowered (or Fueled) Discrimination and Stigma Towards LGBTI People in Myanmar," *ILGA Asia*, 2021, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a84777f64b05fa9644483fe/t/60fe31ceb6530a7c4753932d/1627271651728/ILGA+Asia+Country+Report+Myanmar+2021.pdf>; Dorjantsan Ganbaatar, Enkhmaa Enkhbold and Oulen Munkhbat, "Being Trans\* Students at School in Mongolia: Collectie Case Studies," *Ulaanbaatar*, 2023, [https://www.uih.mn/upload/sudalgaa/files/276\\_1337540.pdf](https://www.uih.mn/upload/sudalgaa/files/276_1337540.pdf); Kyle Knight, "Section 377 is History but Young LGBT Indians Need Concrete Policies to Protect them from Bullying," *Human Rights Watch*, June 24, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/24/section-377-history-young-lgbt-indians-need-concrete-policies-protect-them-bullying>; Vincent Ni & Helen Davidson, "Chinese University Appears to Ask for Lists of LGBTQ+ Students for 'Investigation'," *The Guardian*, August 29, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/29/chinese-university-appears-to-ask-for-lists-of-lgbtq-students-for-investigation>; Educ'Action, "Homosexuality in Schools and Universities: Gay and Lesbian Dropouts Open Up," March 22, 2021, <https://eduactions.org/homosexualite-en-milieu-scolaire-et-universitaire-des-descolarises-gays-et-esbiennes-souvrent/>; Human Rights Watch, 'I Don't Want to Change Myself': *Anti-LGBT Conversion Practices, Discrimination, and Violence in Malaysia*, August 10, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/08/10/i-dont-want-change-myself/anti-lgbt-conversion-practices-discrimination-and>; Club of Mozambique, "Mozambique: Two-thirds of Young Homosexuals Suffer Some Form of Discrimination in Education Environment – Lambda," May 20, 2021, <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-two-thirds-of-young-homosexuals-suffer-some-form-of-discrimination-in-education-environment-lambda-192653/>.



**Burundi** provides by law for the exclusion of “homosexuals” in educational institutions, contributing to heightened LGBTIQ poverty in one of the world’s poorest countries.<sup>11</sup> Outright’s research exposed that in **Hungary**, LGBTQ students face bullying and isolation, with Roma Hungarian students facing intersecting forms of discrimination due to class- and ethnicity-based distinctions.<sup>12</sup>

In **Jamaica**, one woman described how the discrimination meted against her at school because she was a lesbian and lived in an orphanage made her feel “double oppressed.”<sup>13</sup> In **Kenya**, Outright identified cases in which LGBTIQ students’ parents withdrew financial support and expelled them from family homes, leading to drop-outs and homelessness.<sup>14</sup>

## Obstacles to the right to housing

Forced evictions and homelessness disproportionately impact LGBTIQ people.<sup>15</sup> Without stable lodging, LGBTIQ people struggle to buy consumption assets, goods, and services.<sup>16</sup>

Harsh criminal laws like **Uganda’s** Anti-Homosexuality Act propel landlords to evict LGBTIQ tenants while shelters are raided and shut down.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, “Burundi: Treatment of Sexual Minorities, Including Legislation, State Protection and Support Services (2009–February 2013),” *UNHCR*, February 18, 2013, <https://web.archive.archive.unhcr.org/20230519123457/https://www.refworld.org/docid/530372134.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Outright interviews with 22 LGBTIQ individuals, teachers, activists, and parents conducted in June to July 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Outright interview with Kaliesha W. (pseudonym), a 24-year-old lesbian cisgender woman, as part 32 interviews held from September to October 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Outright interviews in Kenya of 52 LGBTIQ individuals and human rights experts from November to December 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Bianca D.M. Wilson et al., *Pathways into Poverty: Lived Experiences Among LGBTQ People* (UCLA School of Law, Williams Institute, September 2020), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Pathways-Overview-Sep-2020.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> M.V. Lee Badgett, *The Economic Case for LGBT Equality: Why Fair and Equal Treatment Benefits Us All* (Beacon Press, 2020).

<sup>17</sup> Patience Atuhaire, “Gay Ugandan asks ‘Where will I go?’ as secret shelters under threat,” *BBC*, March 28, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-65087562>.



In **Canada**, nearly 40 percent of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTIQ, while only 10 percent of Canadian youth identify as LGBTIQ.<sup>18</sup> LGBTIQ people also experience discrimination and exclusion within shelter systems.<sup>19</sup>

Outright has interviewed LGBTIQ people in **Jamaica, Kenya, and Trinidad and Tobago** who faced homelessness due to their sexuality or identity. A transgender man in rural **Kenya** was pulled out of secondary school because of his gender identity and became homeless.<sup>20</sup> A **Jamaican** nonbinary person who slept in an informal trans-led shelter told Outright, “Now and then, I get cash and go to hotels, but it’s hard to [get help].”<sup>21</sup>

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, a CAISO<sup>22</sup>–representative told Outright:

[LGBTIQ] people come to us very, very often, asking for housing support, and there’s only so much we can do around that because, of course, we don’t have spaces [due to limited resources]. When people’s basic needs aren’t being met, people are hungry, people are unemployed, and people are facing different forms of discrimination ... we also find that there are a lot of mental health issues and psychological distress that people are experiencing because of discrimination and harassment. And so when those things are happening, it’s very difficult for folks to be engaged in the schooling system.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> GBV Learning Network, “2SLGBTQ+ Youth, Violence, and Homelessness,” *Center for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children*, April 2024, [https://www.gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased\\_newsletters/issue-24/index.html#:~:text=There%20is%20an%20SLGBTQ%2B%20youth,youth%20who%20identify%20as%20SLGBTQ%2B](https://www.gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-24/index.html#:~:text=There%20is%20an%20SLGBTQ%2B%20youth,youth%20who%20identify%20as%20SLGBTQ%2B).

<sup>19</sup> Alex Nelson et al, “Housing Need & Homelessness Amongst Gender-Diverse People in Canada: A Preliminary Portrait,” *The Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, Canadian Human Rights Commission*, January 2023, <https://womenshomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/Lit-Practice-Scan-on-Housing-Need-Homelessness-amongst-Gender-Diverse-Persons.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> While homeless, Mugo W. (pseudonym), experienced sexual harassment and severe food insecurity. Outright interview with Mugo W., Kenya, November 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Outright interview with English B. (pseudonym), Jamaica, October 2024.

<sup>22</sup> CAISO is an organization working on access to justice, legal, psychological, and housing access services in Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>23</sup> Outright interview with Chinyere Brown, Research & Programme Associate, CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice, Trinidad, October 2024. Interview held as part of Outright’s research in Trinidad and Tobago, October 2024.

## Policy Recommendations

- **Local and national governments**, in cooperation with LGBTIQ civil society, should prohibit discrimination in access to social protection, education, and housing and enact affirmative measures to end inequalities in these areas.
- The **European Commission** and the **European Parliament's** Special Committee on the Housing Crisis in the EU should ensure that the [coordinated EU approach to housing](#) is responsive to intersectional vulnerabilities based on SOGIESC, economic status, race, and citizenship or immigration status.
- As part of its 11th consultation on the implementation of the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education, **UNESCO** should issue recommendations in its reports and mappings that address the interaction between poverty, education, and SOGIESC-based discrimination.
- In its strategic plan for 2026–2029, **UN-Habitat** should comprehensively address the specific vulnerabilities faced by LGBTIQ persons, especially those living in extreme poverty, that prevent their full enjoyment of the right to housing and ensure that the Advisory Group on Gender Issues is empowered to work on SOGIESC issues.

## LGBTIQ inclusion in the world of work

### Anti-LGBTIQ discrimination and harassment in “formal” work

Anti-LGBTIQ discrimination in the workplace includes violence, demotion, and being overlooked for opportunities. LGBTIQ people are often forced to hide their personal lives to protect their livelihoods. This lack of psychological safety threatens productivity and causes chronic stress, undermining professional success and well-being. Employers who **dismiss** LGBTIQ issues often fail to recognize LGBTIQ employees because they **stay hidden** to protect themselves from discrimination.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Badgett, *The Economic Case for LGBT Equality*.





Seventy-seven UN member states ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, and 46 prohibit discrimination based on gender identity.<sup>25</sup> Despite these laws, discrimination persists, suggesting insufficient preventive measures and weak enforcement. Although many national human rights institutions articulate non-discrimination standards, they commonly lack the powers to enforce remedies. Where non-discrimination provisions are embedded in criminal codes, LGBTIQ people must rely on state prosecutors who may be biased.<sup>26</sup> Ministerial-level policies may not provide a victim with the ability to initiate court action.<sup>27</sup>

Protections fall short in **Georgia**, where 93 percent of LGBTQ+ people surveyed agreed that “LGBTQ+ people have less access to employment than others.”<sup>28</sup> In a study in **Honduras**, one in five LGBT+ people reported that they had lost their job or had been rejected from an employment opportunity due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>29</sup> In **Liberia**, employment discrimination is pervasive, and employers often treat LGBTIQ people with contempt.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Only 18 countries ban workplace discrimination based on sex characteristics. See: “Area 1: Legal Frameworks | Protection against discrimination in employment,” ILGA World Database, ILGA World, accessed March 27, 2025, <https://database.ilga.org/discrimination-employment-lgbti>.

<sup>26</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Every Day I Live in Fear” – Violence and Discrimination against LGBT People in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, and Obstacles to Asylum in the United States, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/10/07/every-day-i-live-fear/violence-and-discrimination-against-lgbt-people-el-salvador>.

<sup>27</sup> Outright International, *Respecting the rights of LGBTI people in the context of business activities – Submission to the Working Group on Business and Human Rights*, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/business/cfis/lgbti/submissions/subm-wgs-resecting-cso-outright-international.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Lika Jalagania, *The Rights of LGBT+ People in Georgia*, 2021, <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/LGBT2-eng.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Asociación Kukulkáne et al., “Los efectos de la discriminación en la salud mental de la población LGTB+ de Honduras,” *Revista Población y Desarrollo: Argonautas y Caminantes* 18 (2022): <https://www.camjol.info/index.php/PDAC/article/view/15040/17744>.

<sup>30</sup> UNDP and OHCHR, *Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Rights in Africa: Liberia Country Report*, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/LR/OHCHR-UNDP-SOGIR-Report-Liberia.pdf>.



Globally, an increased reliance on contractualization within the formal sector may heighten discrimination and exploitation. In **India**, “international financial institutions, corporations, and states have increasingly promoted labor flexibility and fostered the proliferation of short-contract, part-time, and subcontracted employment,” and trans and *kothi* people are “recruited into call centers in India as a cheap and often sexually abused, labor pool.”<sup>31</sup> Trans workers in **Sri Lanka** hired by unregulated third-party agencies to work in garment factories in Free Trade Zones reported that they received unequal compensation.<sup>32</sup> They were even subjected by employers to forced stripping to “determine their sexual orientation before hiring them.”<sup>33</sup>

## Precarious work, low wages, and LGBTIQ people’s vulnerabilities in “informal” work

Compounded violence and discrimination render many LGBTIQ people unable to access formal employment, instead working in the more precarious informal sector.

Outright’s research on the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that in many countries, LGBTIQ people had to “choose between risking infection to earn enough money to pay for food and shelter or adhering to lockdown requirements and risk going without basic necessities.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Aniruddha Dutta, “On queerly hidden lives: Precarity and (In) visibility between formal and informal economies in India,” *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 5, no. 3 (2018): 61-75, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/643cdb80e402cd24d01a75fa/t/6443d97f160c525824594c14/1682168191311/Dutta%2C+Queerly+Hidden+Lives.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Kurulu Koojana Kariyakarawana, “Free Trade Zones exploit our labour and pay for weaker sex: LGBTIQ+ community,” *Daily Mirror – Sri Lanka*, October 22, 2024, <https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking-news/Free-Trade-Zones-exploit-our-labour-and-pay-for-weaker-sex-LGBTIQ-community/108-294299#>.

<sup>33</sup> Aruna Fernando, “‘We Are Stripped Naked to Determine Our Sex Before Being Given a Job’: A Tearful Story from the Garment Industry,” *The Colombo Post*, October 23, 2024, <https://www.thecolombopost.org/2024/10/we-are-stripped-naked-to-determine-our-sex-before-being-given-a-job-a-tearful-story-from-the-garment-industry/>.

<sup>34</sup> Outright International, *Vulnerability Amplified: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on LGBTIQ People*, 2020, [https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/COVIDReportMay\\_Revised\\_OutrightInternational\\_V2\\_3.pdf](https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/COVIDReportMay_Revised_OutrightInternational_V2_3.pdf).



A gay man from **Singapore** told Outright, “Everyone has been affected by the virus regardless of whether they are straight or LGBTIQ, but I think LGBTIQ people are more likely to be in jobs that are now unavailable. Bars and clubs are closed until at least the end of April; many of my drag queen friends had their gigs canceled.”<sup>35</sup>

A queer sex worker from **South Africa** said the pandemic “affected my work quite heavily... Many low-income, street-based sex workers and queer sex workers of color have already contacted me requesting food and help with rent.”

In **Brazil**, six in ten LGBTI+ people experienced a reduction or complete loss of income during the pandemic, with prolonged unemployment affecting the same proportion of those already jobless. Food insecurity affected 40 percent of LGBTI+ Brazilians and 60 percent of trans Brazilians during the pandemic.<sup>36</sup> In **India**, the feminization of labor and its interaction with trans-misogyny creates a new class of precarious laborers from trans and queer communities.<sup>37</sup>

LGBTIQ people’s reliance on precarious work makes them more vulnerable to trafficking.<sup>38</sup> The increasing backlash against and criminalization of LGBTIQ people in the Global South produces increased flows of queer migrants and asylum seekers to the Global North, resulting in newer forms of precarity and labor exploitation.<sup>39</sup> The intersection of queer-transphobia with stigma and criminalization makes sex

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>36</sup> Caio Cesar, “6 em cada 10 pessoas LGBT+ ficaram mais pobres durante a pandemia, mostra estudo,” *CartaCapital*, June 28, 2021, <https://www.cartacapital.com.br/diversidade/6-em-cada-10-pessoas-lgbt-ficaram-mais-pobres-durante-a-pandemia/>.

<sup>37</sup> Aniruddha Dutta, “On queerly hidden lives: Precarity and (in) visibility between formal and informal economies in India,” *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 5, no. 3 (2018): 61–75, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/643cdb80e402cd24d01a75fa/t/6443d97f160c525824594c14/1682168191311/Dutta%2C+Queerly+Hidden+Lives.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> Mark Kavenagh, Mackenzie Stoeltje, and Meredith Dank, “Practitioner Reflection: Reliance on Informal and Gig Economies Leaves LGBTQ+ Populations with Fewer Economic Choices and Greater Vulnerability to Trafficking,” *Journal of Human Trafficking* 10, no. 2 (2024): 346–355.

<sup>39</sup> Tytti Suominen et al., “Vulnerabilities in care work: perspectives of migrant and LGBT care workers in Finland,” in *Vulnerabilities in Paid Care Work*, eds. Sophie Bowlby et al. (Policy Press, 2025), 108–138.



workers who belong to sexual and gender minorities particularly vulnerable to violence.<sup>40</sup>

At present, there is no comprehensive global review of the precarity of LGBTIQ lives in the informal economy, and given the lack of SOGIESC-disaggregated data in official censuses and other sources, much of LGBTIQ people's struggle for decent work and wages remains invisibilized.

## LGBTIQ people in the care economy

In the **United States**, LGBTIQ people are overrepresented among caregivers and are over three times more likely than the general population to provide care for friends and chosen family.<sup>41</sup> Several factors contribute to this overrepresentation. Many LGBTIQ people grow up seeking acceptance, especially from family, their expected strongest advocates. Their personal lives are often dismissed, with assumptions that they lack children, regular jobs, or traditional lifestyles. LGBTIQ people may pursue jobs that allow them to work independently, minimizing the chances that they may experience discrimination from their colleagues. Jobs in the care economy requiring less formal education requirements present an opportunity for LGBTIQ people who have experienced challenges obtaining formal education due to bullying and violence.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE), *Underserved. Over Policed. Invisibilised. LGBT Sex Workers Do Matter*, 2015.  
<https://www.nswp.org/sites/default/files/Underserved.%20Overpoliced.%20Invisibilised.%20LGBT%20Sex%20Workers%20Do%20Matter%2C%20ICRSE%20-%202015.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, *Caregiving in the U.S.*, 2020,  
<https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2020/05/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00103.001.pdf>; AARP New York, AARP Foundation, and SAGE, *Disrupting Disparities: Solutions for LGBTQ New Yorkers 50+*, 2021,  
<https://www.sageusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/disrupting-disparities-lgbtq-new-yorkers.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Badgett, *The Economic Case for LGBT Equality*.



In certain cultures, individuals of diverse SOGIESC, including **two-spirit people in North America**, have been expected to devote themselves to the caretaking of others, such as grandparents or siblings' children.<sup>43</sup>

## Policy Recommendations

- **Local and national governments** should enact comprehensive anti-discrimination laws that prohibit SOGIESC-based discrimination in formal and informal employment and all other areas.
- **Governments** should expand the economic opportunities of LGBTIQ persons through positive action in education, social protection, health care, skills and training, and housing to prevent overreliance on informal and gig economies while ensuring that LGBTIQ informal and gig workers are sufficiently recognized and protected.
- **Governments, academic institutions, and civil society organizations** should collect data on LGBTIQ persons' formal and informal labor market participation, including in the care economy and precarious, informal, and gig work; the barriers preventing their equal enjoyment of the right to decent work; and their participation in efforts to collectivize and unionize LGBTIQ workers.
- **ILO Member States** should include language on protection from SOGIESC-based discrimination in resolutions proposed in future International Labor Conferences, especially those addressing decent work, the informal and gig economies, and the care economy.
- The **ILO** should ensure that the review and implementation of resolutions, such as ILO C190 or the Violence and Harassment Convention of 2019, are LGBTIQ-inclusive and incorporate SOGIESC language in efforts to update resolutions.

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<sup>43</sup> National American Indian and Alaska Native Addiction Technology Transfer Center, University of Iowa, "Newsletter: Summer 2016 / Special Issue," 2016, <https://pttcnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/N-AI-AN-ATTC-Newsletter-Vol-3-Special-LGBTQ-Issue-Summer-2016.pdf>.

## Annex

Table 1: Matrix of policy recommendations

Policy actions	Time horizon			
	Level of governance	Short-term (2–3 years)	Medium-term (5 years)	Long-term (10 years)
	Local	-Ensure that local and national action plans, policies, and strategies recognize and address the barriers faced by LGBTIQ people in their access to social protection, education, housing, and social services.		
	National	-Enact comprehensive anti-discrimination laws that prohibit SOGIESC-based discrimination in formal and informal employment and all other areas.  -Collect SOGIESC-disaggregated data on LGBTIQ people's participation in precarious, informal, and gig economies, including the care economy.	-Develop and implement plans that promote affirmative measures to end discrimination and inequalities based on SOGIESC and address root causes.  -Proactively address LGBTIQ persons' disproportionate representation among unemployed, underemployed, and precarious workers through comprehensive positive measures in education, social protection, health care, skills and training, and housing	
	Regional	<b>EU:</b> Ensure a SOGIESC-responsive coordinated approach to housing.		
	Global	<b>UNESCO:</b> Address LGBTIQ issues in the 11th consultation on the implementation of the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education	<b>ILO:</b> Ensure the LGBTIQ-inclusive review and implementation of resolutions, such as ILO C190 or the Violence and Harassment Convention of 2019, and incorporate SOGIESC language in efforts to update resolutions.	

**UN-Habitat:** Comprehensively address LGBTIQ vulnerabilities in access to housing in the Strategic Plan for 2026–2029 and empower the Advisory Group on Gender Issues to work on SOGIESC issues.

**ILO Member States:** In resolutions proposed for future International Labor Conferences, include language on protection from SOGIESC-based discrimination.