

Inclusive Security

Applying an LGBTQ+ lens to Risk Management

In the past 12 months LGBTQ+ communities around the globe have been facing an unprecedented wave of attacks.

Mali, the UK, Georgia, Trinidad and Tobago, Hungary, the US, Vanuatu, Peru and Argentina have all experienced significant declines in LGBTQ+ rights and protection mechanisms following the adoption of varying degrees of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.

Organisations championing LGBTQ+ rights and delivering inclusive programming worldwide have been forced to close operations due to restrictions on aid and funding cuts imposed by key donor states.

As of now...

- Being LGBTQ+ is criminalised in 66 countries (up from 62 in 2024)
- In at least six countries, being LGBTQ+ is punishable by death
- In at least 20 countries, being LGBTQ+ is punishable by life in prison

So, **how** can international and civil society organisations **best support the safety and security of LGBTQ+ staff** when they are travelling to or working in environments that are **hostile** to them?

LGBTQ+ individuals often face distinct risks in the workplace. These risks can include **external threats** (such as targeted violence, stigma or legal discrimination in certain countries) and **internal threats** (such as harassment, discrimination exclusion, or lack of support from colleagues).

Inclusive Security Risk Management is an evolving approach that is not just about compliance but recognises the need to apply an **intersectional lens** - *including an LGBTQ+ perspective* - to every aspect of organisational security.

Conventional Security Models can be blind to LGBTQ+-specific risks - risk assessments often use a “*one-size-fits-all*” model, omitting identity-based threats and strengths.

Without frameworks that account for this diversity, LGBTQ+ folk and other diverse groups are left unprotected.

It's not just about protection - it's about **respecting identities** and **creating systems** that work for everyone, applying the UN's “*Leave No One Behind*” principle.

So, how can your organisation put this into practice?

Here are five tips on how to ensure your safety and security framework is LGBTQ+ inclusive:

-  **Respect Privacy:** Avoid assuming LGBTQ+ staff need to be “out” at work for your organisation to implement inclusive policies. Inclusion can and should be achieved without requiring individuals to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity.

 Understand Organisational Culture:

Take the time to define and understand your organisation's culture regarding LGBTQ+ inclusion. This understanding will shape subsequent strategies. And remember, genuine inclusion must be reflected in everyday reality.

 Apply an LGBTQ+ Lens to Policies:

Incorporate diverse LGBTQ+ perspectives into security policies and risk assessments. This could cover individual safety and security, programmatic concerns, and broader organisational aspects such as visibility and communication.

-  **Provide Accessible Training and Awareness:** Ensure that training programs that incorporate LGBTQ+ realities are readily available and accessible to all staff.
-  **Implement Inclusive and Confidential Incident Management Processes:** Establish systems that allow for the confidential reporting and sensitive handling of incidents related to LGBTQ+ individuals, ensuring a safe and supportive environment.

In conclusion, LGBTQ+ staff are already navigating identity specific risks every day - *this is not new to them*. The priority should be on how your organisation can provide safer, more collaborative support, ensuring full inclusion in your Duty of Care.

And **remember**: LGBTQ+ staff themselves are not the risk - *the real risk lies in the environment*. By adopting inclusive security risk management practices, your organisation can better understand and address specific threats, **leaving no one behind**.

At **ILS**, our diverse team of advisors support international and local humanitarian and development actors to build and develop LGBTQ+ inclusive risk management frameworks. We also develop and deliver tailored training programs around LGBTQ+ inclusive security in various languages and accessible formats, including online and face to face.

👉 **Let's talk.** If your organisation is looking to increase inclusion in your Duty of Care and Security Risk Management Frameworks we'd love to work with you.