



SOGIESC Handbook for Humanitarian Actors

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Introduction

The "SOGIESC Handbook for Humanitarian Actors" serves as a comprehensive guide aimed at fostering understanding and inclusion of individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) within the humanitarian sector. This handbook delves into the diverse socio-cultural and legal aspects of the SOGIESC spectrum, providing valuable insights and practical strategies to ensure that humanitarian action is inclusive and responsive to the needs of LGBTQI individuals and other marginalized groups.

The term SOGIESC encompasses a broad spectrum of identities, reflecting an individual's innate sense of self, including but not limited to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics. It acknowledges that individuals may have diverse and non-binary experiences of gender, sexuality, and physical characteristics.

Embracing diversity within SOGIESC, this handbook recognizes the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by individuals who are marginalized based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, and seeks to address these disparities within the framework of humanitarian action.

The importance of SOGIESC inclusion in humanitarian work cannot be overstated. In emergency and crisis situations, LGBTQI individuals and other individuals within the SOGIESC spectrum often face heightened vulnerabilities, including discrimination, violence, and exclusion from crucial services. In many contexts, they are at increased risk of stigma, harassment, and denial of access to essential resources. Moreover, failure to consider and address their specific needs and experiences can compromise the overall effectiveness and equity of humanitarian response efforts.

The fundamental purpose of this handbook is to provide humanitarian actors with the knowledge, tools, and guidance necessary to ensure that no individual is left behind in times of crisis, including those belonging to the LGBTQI community and other marginalized groups within the SOGIESC spectrum. By incorporating SOGIESC-inclusive

approaches into humanitarian practices, actors can better protect and support all individuals affected by emergencies and disasters, acknowledging and respecting the diversity of human experiences, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.

This handbook presents a call to action - a commitment to understanding the complexities of SOGIESC inclusion and ensuring that humanitarian work is guided by principles of equity, empathy, and respect for the human rights of all individuals. It is a reflection of the shared responsibility to build a more inclusive and supportive humanitarian action that recognizes and addresses the diverse needs of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.

Why Does SOGIESC Inclusion Matter in DRR and Humanitarian System?

The acknowledgment of diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) in humanitarian and development settings is essential for fostering a just and inclusive response.

It is crucial because studies conducted in Fiji confirmed that Fijians of diverse SOGIESC start from a disadvantaged position within the crisis context because of the societal discrimination and marginalization that existed prior to a crisis event.

Findings from the [Down by the River Report](#) speaks of the suffering and loss in human dignity experienced by diverse SOGIESC [LGBTQIA+] individuals before, during, and after a disaster.

Below are excerpts from Down by the River Report

"I am a transwoman. I came across many challenges. I was disowned at 16 years old...when I came to school I was a boy, but at school, was more of a girl. My dad came to school, and he saw me, and he got me into a taxi, and took me straight home. He started bashing me, telling me I was not a girl. He would make me climb

a coconut tree and he had a big cane knife, asking me, “are you a boy or a girl?” One time he wacked me so hard with a big stick that I had to be in the hospital for one month. Sometimes things have been so bad in life, i wanted to take my life...”

“I was working when Winston came, and I had to go and hide in the toilet. After Winston, people said that gays brought Winston [here] and that we are all sinners - they tried to punch me.”

When people with diverse SOGIESC are excluded from humanitarian efforts, there is a missed opportunity to address their needs and suffering. Continued marginalization of LGBTQIA+ individuals often translate into various forms of social prejudice, including violence, discrimination, and societal exclusion.

The spiral of exclusion for individuals with diverse SOGIESC leads to lifelong effects on socio-economic inclusion, creating a continuous cycle of suffering.

Crisis situations exacerbate the discrimination and violence faced by individuals with diverse SOGIESC. They are targeted by religious groups, blamed for disasters, and face violence within communities. As a result, these individuals may avoid official relief locations and shelters due to fear of experiencing discrimination or violence. The humanitarian system often fails to recognize and address these challenges, and sometimes contribute to the problems faced by these communities.

Failure to address the needs of individuals with diverse SOGIESC is a pervasive issue within the current humanitarian context.

The humanitarian sector requires intentional action and investment into engaging, collecting, and analyzing data regarding individuals with diverse SOGIESC. Addressing the needs of these communities demands partnership with SOGIESC civil society organizations, storytelling, safer spaces, and the dissemination of information. SOGIESC

consideration requires creativity, resilience, care, and resources to realize it in diverse contexts.

Humanitarians must acknowledge the challenge and deploy ways to overcome these constraints to evolve as more inclusive and responsive to the needs of individuals with diverse SOGIESC.

The humanitarian system's systemic failure to acknowledge and address these issues underscores the need for organizational and sector-wide transformation.

Ultimately, the sector must recognize the constraints and resiliently work to overcome them, ensuring that the rights and dignity of all individuals, including those with diverse SOGIESC, are upheld.

This text highlights that the inclusion of diverse SOGIESC is not just a necessity; it is an essential evolution that humanitarian and development organizations must undertake to meet the needs of these marginalized populations.

SOGIESC (sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics) inclusion matters in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and humanitarian systems because it is fundamental to upholding the Core Humanitarian Standards and ensure a more just and inclusive humanitarian response:

The principle of *humanity* states that “Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.”

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not state that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, except for people with diverse SOGIESC who are a bit of a problem, and so feel free to ignore them.”

If people with diverse SOGIESC are suffering then action is called for; if the life or health of a person with diverse SOGIESC needs protection, then action is called for; and this action must be undertaken in a way that ensures respect for that person.

The principle of **impartiality** states that “Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.” This means that humanitarian actors should take into account the needs of people with diverse SOGIESC, and if those needs are urgent, they should be prioritized. This is not a call for special treatment, and addressing the genuine needs of people with diverse SOGIESC is not an example of making a distinction on the basis of any of the characteristics.

SOGIESC inclusion is essential for upholding the principles of **equity and non-discrimination** within DRR and humanitarian settings. It ensures that all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, are afforded equal access to relief, protection, and support, without facing discrimination or stigma.

SOGIESC inclusion **recognizes diverse needs** and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals within disaster contexts. It ensures that humanitarian responses are tailored to address the specific challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals, including discrimination, violence, and access to gender-affirming healthcare, mental health support, and safe shelter.

Inclusion of SOGIESC in DRR and humanitarian systems aligns with the fundamental principles of **respect for human rights** and dignity of all individuals. It fosters a culture of inclusivity, respect, and recognition of the diverse experiences and identities within the LGBTQI community.

SOGIESC inclusion recognizes ***intersectionality and diversity***, acknowledging that LGBTQI individuals may belong to other marginalized groups and face compounded discrimination. It emphasizes the importance of addressing multiple dimensions of vulnerability within DRR and humanitarian efforts.

Including SOGIESC in DRR and humanitarian systems contributes to fostering ***safe and inclusive environments*** where LGBTQI individuals can access support, protection, and assistance without fear of discrimination or harassment.

Considering SOGIESC in DRR and humanitarian systems contributes to a more ***effective and responsive approach*** to addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, which encompass LGBTQI individuals. By recognizing the specific vulnerabilities and challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals, humanitarian responses are better equipped to provide targeted support and address systemic barriers to access to relief and protection.

Many international agreements and conventions recognize the rights of individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. As such, SOGIESC inclusion is necessary for aligning humanitarian responses with ***international human rights obligations*** and upholding the rights of LGBTQI individuals.

In summary, SOGIESC inclusion matters in DRR and humanitarian systems because it is a fundamental component of equitable, respectful, and effective responses, ensuring that all individuals, including those within the LGBTQI community, are afforded the rights, respect, and support they deserve during and after crises.

Realities of SOGIESC inclusion efforts among Humanitarian Partners - the Fijian situation!

The diverse SOGIESC Appraisal Report on Australian Humanitarian Partners conducted in June 2024 confirmed that after seven years of engagement local humanitarian agents and agencies in Fiji still have not fully embraced the concept of SOGIESC inclusion.

The report indicated that most development and humanitarian organizations lacked the political will to include diverse SOGIESC languages in policies, and organizational frameworks. It also revealed DRR and humanitarian agencies kept a distant relationship with LGBTQIA+ individuals and diverse SOGIESC CSO's which resulted in omissions of diverse SOGIESC populations in programming.

It also revealed that when the element in power regards diverse SOGIESC sinful, evil, and unclean the subject of inclusion becomes a "cosmetic idea" turning it into a fashion statement that only becomes trendy during disaster or emergency response and activation. The report revealed that diverse SOGIESC inclusion in Fiji is mostly tokenistic in nature...

"only if the program required" said the respondents.

The appraisal also reported on the emotional dangers resulting from the inability to rationalize cultural/religious beliefs, against the value of organizations, and the humanitarian principles on SOGIESC inclusion. It recognized that the inability to uphold humanitarian principles on diverse SOGIESC resulted in intentional exclusion and hostility towards the diverse SOGIESC population.

According to the appraisal report diverse SOGIESC Inclusion had remained “inactive” ever since DR1.0 for two organizations and only one organization has progressed to “inclusive.”

Table 1.0 Diverse SOGIESC Continuum

	Hostile	Unaware	Inactive	Inclusive	Transformative
Causes	Norms based discrimination and exclusion of people with diverse SOGIESC is exacerbated.	Norms based discrimination against and exclusion of people with diverse SOGIESC is reinforced	Norms based discrimination and exclusion of people with diverse SOGIESC is maintained.	Norms based discrimination and exclusion of people with diverse SOGIESC is ameliorated	Norms based discrimination and exclusion of people with diverse SOGIESC is subverted
Input	The organization is aware of its negative impact on people with diverse SOGIESC but either chooses not to change its way of working or actively chooses to discriminate	The organization has no awareness of the discrimination or exclusion experienced by people with diverse SOGIESC or how its ways of working are explicitly discriminatory or exclusionary.	The organization has some awareness of the discrimination and exclusion experienced by people with diverse SOGIESC but it is not taking active or substantive steps to address symptoms or causes.	The organization is aware of the discrimination and exclusion experienced by people with diverse SOGIESC. It chooses to act on that awareness but only to address the symptoms not the causes.	The organization is aware of the discrimination and exclusion experienced by people with diverse SOGIESC. It chooses to act on that awareness and addresses the causes as well as the symptoms.

Using Data to better understand the experiences and needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations?

Data collection and research can be improved to better understand the experiences and needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations through the following methods:

1. Inclusive Data Collection: Ensuring that data collection tools and surveys include inclusive and specific questions related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and LGBTQI experiences. This can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations.
2. Intersectional Analysis: Conducting research that takes an intersectional approach, considering how LGBTQI identities intersect with other dimensions of vulnerability, such as race, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status. This can provide a more nuanced understanding of the diverse experiences of LGBTQI individuals in disasters.

3. Engaging LGBTQI Communities: Involving LGBTQI individuals and organizations in the research process to ensure that their perspectives and insights are incorporated into data collection and analysis.

4. Collaborating with LGBTQI Organizations: Partnering with LGBTQI organizations and community groups to access hard-to-reach populations and gather qualitative data through interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory methods.

5. Ethical Considerations: Adhering to ethical guidelines in research and data collection to protect the privacy and confidentiality of LGBTQI individuals, especially in contexts where disclosure of sexual orientation and gender identity can pose risks.

6. Capacity Building: Building the research capacity of LGBTQI organizations and community members to engage in data collection and research processes, empowering them to lead and participate in studies related to their experiences in disaster situations.

7. Disaggregated Data Analysis: Analyzing data with a gender and sexuality disaggregated lens to understand the specific needs and vulnerabilities of different subgroups within the LGBTQI community, such as transgender and non-binary individuals, as well as LGBTQI people from diverse backgrounds.

By employing these approaches, researchers can improve the quality and relevance of data collection on the experiences and needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations, leading to more targeted and effective interventions to support these communities.

2. Understanding SOGIESC

Understanding SOGIESC is an important first step in learning how to be culturally affirming. It impacts how people experience themselves, the way others interact with them, and what systemic barriers they may face. It recognizes that each person is unique, and has multiple layered aspects to their identities.

2.1. Explaining Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to others. It is a broad spectrum, encompassing diverse sexual orientations such as homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual, pansexual, and others. While sexual orientation is an integral aspect of a person's identity, it does not solely define their overall identity.

In humanitarian contexts, recognizing the diverse spectrum of sexual orientations is crucial for providing inclusive and non-discriminatory assistance. Understanding and acknowledging different sexual orientations allow humanitarian actors to provide effective support that respects the personal identities of individuals affected by crises.

2.2. Explaining Gender Identity

Gender identity refers to an individual's deeply-felt sense of their gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. While most individuals' gender identity aligns with societal expectations related to their assigned sex, transgender and gender-diverse individuals may have a gender identity that differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

The humanitarian community should understand and respect the gender identities of individuals, ensuring their rights are upheld, and providing support that aligns with their affirmed gender identity. By recognizing and affirming diverse gender identities, humanitarian actors can create environments that are inclusive, safe, and respectful for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity.

2.3. Explaining Gender Expression

Gender expression refers to the external manifestations of one's gender, which may include behavior, mannerisms, appearance, and other aspects that are often culturally associated with gender. An individual's gender expression may or may not align with traditional gender norms, and can vary widely among individuals.

In humanitarian settings and disaster response, understanding and respecting diverse gender expressions is essential to creating environments that are free from discrimination and bias. By acknowledging and affirming various gender expressions, humanitarian actors can foster inclusive spaces and promote the rights and dignity of all individuals.

2.4. Explaining Sex Characteristics

Sex characteristics refer to the biological attributes that generally categorize individuals as male, female, or intersex. Intersex individuals are born with variations in sex characteristics that do not fit typical definitions of male or female.

Understanding sex characteristics is crucial in humanitarian settings to ensure that individuals with diverse sex characteristics receive appropriate healthcare, protection, and support, free from discrimination and stigmatization. Respecting and accommodating diverse sex characteristics is fundamental to providing equitable and inclusive humanitarian assistance.

The understanding of SOGIESC is multi-faceted and encompasses a broad range of experiences and identities. It is essential for humanitarian actors to be attuned to the nuances within each component of SOGIESC to ensure that all individuals receive respectful, inclusive, and tailored support during humanitarian crises.

What are the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts?

LGBTQI individuals often face unique challenges in the context of disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts due to societal discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization. These challenges can exacerbate the vulnerability of LGBTQI individuals during crises and hinder their access to support and resources. Some of the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts include:

1. **Discrimination and Stigma:** LGBTQI individuals may face discrimination and stigma within disaster-affected communities, service providers, and relief settings due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. This discrimination can result in their exclusion from essential services, including access to shelter, food, healthcare, and protection, exacerbating their vulnerability during crises.

2. **Rejection and Violence:** LGBTQI individuals may experience rejection from family members, communities, and faith-based organizations, which can lead to displacement and homelessness. In addition, they may encounter violence, harassment, and hate crimes within disaster-affected areas, further jeopardizing their safety and well-being.

3. **Inadequate Access to Gender-Affirming Services:** Transgender and gender-diverse individuals often face challenges in accessing gender-affirming healthcare, including hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgeries, which are essential for their well-being. In disaster-affected areas, this limited access to essential medical care can significantly impact the mental and physical health of transgender individuals.

4. **Stigmatization and Mental Health:** Stigmatization based on sexual orientation and gender identity can contribute to mental health challenges among LGBTQI individuals in crisis settings. This includes increased risk of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder, often stemming from experiences of discrimination and social exclusion.

5. **Discriminatory Access to Relief Services:** LGBTQI individuals may face discrimination when seeking access to relief services and may be denied assistance due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. This discriminatory access can prevent LGBTQI individuals from receiving essential support during and after disasters.

6. **Fear of Disclosure:** LGBTQI individuals may fear disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity in disaster settings due to concerns about potential discrimination, stigma, or violence. This fear of disclosure can lead to underreporting of needs and barriers in accessing support services.

7. Legal and Policy Barriers: Legal and policy frameworks in some regions may not recognize and protect the rights of LGBTQI individuals, leading to further exclusion and discrimination within disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts. Issues such as lack of legal recognition of same-sex relationships and legal barriers to gender-affirming healthcare can exacerbate the challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals in crisis settings.

Addressing the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts requires a holistic and inclusive approach that recognizes the specific vulnerabilities and diverse needs of this community. By proactively addressing these challenges, humanitarian actors and organizations can foster a more equitable and inclusive response that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals, irrespective of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. This includes the implementation of non-discriminatory policies, providing safe and inclusive spaces, and ensuring that relief efforts are responsive to the needs of LGBTQI individuals in crisis settings.

3. Legal and Human Rights Framework

The legal and human rights framework provides the foundation for ensuring the rights and inclusion of individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) within the context of humanitarian action. This section outlines the international human rights standards on SOGIESC, as well as key legal and policy instruments that serve as the basis for promoting SOGIESC inclusion in humanitarian efforts.

3.1. International Human Rights Standards on SOGIESC

International human rights standards on SOGIESC encompass a range of declarations, conventions, and treaties that recognize and protect the rights of individuals irrespective of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics. Notable instruments include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹, the International Covenant on Civil

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

and Political Rights², the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights³, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴, among others. These instruments establish the framework for non-discrimination, equality, and the right to self-determination for all individuals, including those within the LGBTQI community and other marginalized groups within the SOGIESC spectrum.

The Yogyakarta Principles⁵, a set of international human rights principles related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics, provide additional guidance and interpretation of existing human rights standards. They offer valuable directives for ensuring the protection and promotion of the human rights of all individuals, regardless of their SOGIESC.

Despite the ratification of various international laws there is nothing formally advanced by the state for diverse SOGIESC populations to bring legislation, policy, and practice into congruence and compliance despite the visionary Bill of Rights in the Fiji Constitution (2013).

Unjust, Unequal, Unstoppable (May, 2019)

In the context of humanitarian action, it is imperative for humanitarian actors to uphold these international human rights standards, ensuring that all individuals, including those with diverse SOGIESC, are protected and respected without discrimination or prejudice. By acknowledging and leveraging these human rights frameworks, humanitarian actors can adopt inclusive practices that align with international standards and obligations.

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

⁵ https://data.unaids.org/pub/manual/2007/070517_yogyakarta_principles_en.pdf

3.2. Key Legal and Policy Instruments Related to SOGIESC Inclusion in Humanitarian Action

In addition to international human rights standards, there exist key legal and policy instruments designed to promote SOGIESC inclusion within humanitarian action. Various international and regional platforms have adopted declarations, resolutions, and frameworks that underscore the significance of addressing the needs and rights of LGBTQI individuals and others within the SOGIESC spectrum in humanitarian settings.

For instance, the Sphere Handbook⁶⁷, a widely recognized guide for humanitarian response, emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all humanitarian responses are non-discriminatory and inclusive, reflecting the rights and needs of diverse individuals, including those based on their SOGIESC.

Similarly, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action⁸ provide a framework for ensuring that humanitarian responses address the rights and inclusion of diverse groups, including individuals within the LGBTQI community and other marginalized SOGIESC groups.

Moreover, several national and sub-national legal frameworks and policies related to gender identity recognition, non-discrimination, and equality also intersect with the objectives of promoting SOGIESC inclusion in humanitarian settings. It is essential for humanitarian actors to be cognizant of these legal and policy frameworks to ensure that their practices align with existing standards and to advocate for their integration into humanitarian policies and programs.

The effective integration of these legal and policy instruments into humanitarian action is pivotal for fostering inclusive practices and ensuring the protection and rights of all

⁶ <https://divafiji.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DIVA-RESEARCH-REPORT-2019.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.spherestandards.org/handbook/>

⁸ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-guidelines-on-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-humanitarian-action-2019>

individuals, regardless of their SOGIESC. By leveraging these instruments, humanitarian actors can establish a rights-based, non-discriminatory, and responsive approach to meeting the needs of diverse individuals in crisis and post-crisis settings.

4. SOGIESC in Humanitarian Contexts

4.1. Unique Vulnerabilities of LGBTQI Individuals in Humanitarian Crises

During humanitarian crises, individuals within the LGBTQI community face unique and heightened vulnerabilities. Discrimination, exclusion, and violence are prevalent issues, compounded by existing social prejudices and systemic inequalities.

In times of crisis, existing social dynamics and prejudices may amplify the vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQI individuals, leading to their marginalization and increased exposure to harm. This can result in difficulties accessing essential services, discrimination in relief distribution, and the denial of healthcare, protection, and housing. Additionally, individuals within the LGBTQI community may be at greater risk of displacement, particularly when rejected by their families or communities due to their SOGIESC.

“SOGIESC are a curse to society. After TC Winston, we did a survey as a means of formulating a Theology of Disaster. In rural communities, many surveyed responded that the cyclone was a curse because we have allowed SOGIESC to live and practice their sexual orientation in our midst.”

Diverse SOGIESC Individual Audit for Humanitarian Actors

Understanding and addressing the unique vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals in humanitarian crises is essential to ensure that humanitarian responses are inclusive, equitable, and uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals, irrespective of their SOGIESC.

4.2. Addressing Discrimination and Violence

Discrimination and violence against LGBTQI individuals pose significant challenges in humanitarian contexts. Individuals within the LGBTQI community may face discrimination in accessing relief services, healthcare, protection, and shelter due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. Moreover, they are at increased risk of violence, including hate crimes and gender-based violence, further exacerbating their vulnerabilities during and after crises.

“it is forbidden to be a lesbian and the pastor preaches against it. After TC Winston, the church pastor said that TC Winston was caused by our sin, and I felt bad. It is not us who they should blame...”

Down by the River (May, 2018)

Humanitarian actors must prioritize measures to address and prevent discrimination and violence against LGBTQI individuals. This involves creating safe and inclusive environments, training humanitarian staff to recognize and respond to SOGIESC-related discrimination and violence, and establishing reporting mechanisms and referral pathways to ensure the protection and security of LGBTQI individuals within humanitarian settings.

4.3. Access to Healthcare and Specific Medical Needs

LGBTQI individuals may have unique healthcare needs, including access to gender-affirming care, hormone therapy, mental health services, and support for sexual and reproductive health. In humanitarian contexts, ensuring access to inclusive and non-discriminatory healthcare services for LGBTQI individuals is imperative.

82 LBT women have been sexually assaulted because of their SOGIESC between 1 and 7 times in their life. The majority expressed feeling hurt and anger by this violation. 30% said they felt confused, stressed, depressed, and suicidal.

Unjust, Unequal, Unstoppable (May, 2019)

Humanitarian actors must strive to provide gender-affirming and LGBTQI-inclusive healthcare services, acknowledging and respecting the medical needs and identities of individuals within the LGBTQI community. This includes ensuring access to hormone therapy, HIV prevention and treatment, mental health support, and sexual and

reproductive healthcare services that are respectful of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.

4.4. Protection and Shelter Considerations

LGBTQI individuals in humanitarian crises may face challenges related to protection and shelter, including the risk of discrimination, harassment, and violence within communal living spaces. Due to societal prejudices, individuals within the LGBTQI community may be at risk of exclusion or harm in traditional shelters and protection settings.

“Still today, we are moving from place to place, looking for a fixed place to stay and live like a normal lesbian couple. If the housing assistance by government was granted to people like us, we would already have built a house for ourselves.”

Down by the River (May 2018)

Humanitarian actors should prioritize the provision of safe and inclusive shelter options for LGBTQI individuals, ensuring that communal living spaces are free from discrimination and violence. These efforts may involve creating gender-neutral or LGBTQI-specific spaces, training shelter staff on SOGIESC inclusion, and implementing policies and practices that promote the safety and dignity of LGBTQI individuals within shelter and protection contexts.

4.5. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

LGBTQI individuals may experience heightened mental health and psychosocial challenges in humanitarian crises, stemming from experiences of discrimination, violence, social rejection, and the impact of crisis-induced trauma. Cultural stigmatization and societal prejudices can further compound the mental health burdens faced by LGBTQI individuals in crisis and post-crisis contexts.

“My life started from a family that always went through violence when I was a kid. It hurt me when my mum faced violence. I don’t know where to take the pain and hurt when my mum faced violence. One place that I took this pain was the streets following street kids. I was born when my mum was raped by my dad and five other men. My dad felt guilty about it and that always hurt me. After 14years my mum told me the story about what happened and how I was brought into this earth. It always hurts me.”

Unjust, Unequal, Unstoppable (May, 2019)

Providing culturally competent and LGBTQI-inclusive mental health and psychosocial support services is essential to addressing the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals. Humanitarian actors should integrate gender-affirming and LGBTQI-inclusive support into mental health and psychosocial programming, offering safe spaces, counseling, and support groups that are sensitive to diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.

By addressing these key considerations related to the inclusion and support of LGBTQI individuals in humanitarian crises, humanitarian actors can foster environments that are equitable, respectful, and protective of the rights and well-being of all individuals, irrespective of their SOGIESC.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned in addressing the intersection of LGBTQI rights and disaster risk reduction?

Some best practices and lessons learned in addressing the intersection of LGBTQI rights and disaster risk reduction include:

1. **Inclusive Policies and Procedures:** Developing and implementing inclusive policies and procedures that specifically address the needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response efforts.
2. **Community Engagement:** Engaging with LGBTQI communities to understand their specific needs, concerns, and capacities in disaster risk reduction, and involving them in the planning and decision-making processes.

3. **Training and Capacity Building:** Providing training for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian professionals on LGBTQI inclusion and sensitivity, as well as building the capacity of LGBTQI community members to actively participate in disaster response and recovery efforts.

4. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Collecting data on the needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations, and using this data to inform policies and practices.

5. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Building partnerships with LGBTQI organizations, as well as other relevant stakeholders, such as local government agencies, to ensure that the needs of LGBTQI individuals are addressed in disaster risk reduction and response efforts.

6. **Advocacy and Awareness:** Advocating for the specific rights and needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and response efforts, as well as raising awareness about the intersection of LGBTQI rights and disaster risk reduction within the broader community.

7. **Intersectional Approach:** Recognizing the intersectionality of LGBTQI identities with other marginalized identities, such as race, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status, and addressing these multiple dimensions of vulnerability in disaster risk reduction efforts.

8. **Culturally Responsive Approaches:** Implementing culturally sensitive and responsive approaches that take into account the diverse experiences and needs of LGBTQI individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds.

By incorporating these best practices and lessons learned, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts can better address the needs and rights of LGBTQI individuals, ultimately leading to more inclusive and effective responses to disasters.

5.0 Inclusive Practices for Humanitarian Actors

5.1. Data Collection and Analysis of SOGIESC-Related Needs

In humanitarian contexts, data collection and analysis play a pivotal role in understanding the specific needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals and other marginalized groups within the SOGIESC spectrum. Collecting and analyzing SOGIESC-related data enables humanitarian actors to develop evidence-based, targeted interventions that address the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI communities during and after crises.

Efficient data collection involves incorporating questions related to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics into needs assessments, household surveys, and other data collection tools. This allows humanitarian actors to gather insights into the specific vulnerabilities and needs of LGBTQI individuals, enabling tailored humanitarian response activities. Additionally, intersectional data collection should be considered to understand how factors such as age, disability, and socioeconomic status intersect with SOGIESC, providing a more comprehensive understanding of needs.

Analyzing SOGIESC-related data is equally important. It enables humanitarian actors to identify gaps in services and protection, recognize trends in discrimination and violence, and allocate resources effectively. Leveraging disaggregated SOGIESC data also supports evidence-based advocacy for the inclusion of LGBTQI individuals in humanitarian policies and programs, promoting targeted assistance and non-discriminatory relief efforts.

Effective data collection and analysis empowers humanitarian actors to design and implement interventions that are tailored to the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals, ultimately contributing to more equitable and inclusive humanitarian response and recovery strategies.

5.2. Training and Capacity Building for Humanitarian Workers

Training and capacity building play a crucial role in enhancing humanitarian workers' understanding of SOGIESC and their capacity to deliver inclusive and equitable assistance. Providing specific training on SOGIESC-related issues is essential to ensure that humanitarian workers have the knowledge and skills needed to effectively address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals in crisis settings.

Training initiatives should encompass a range of topics, including the recognition of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, understanding the impact of discrimination and violence on LGBTQI individuals, and developing culturally competent approaches to providing assistance. LGBTQI sensitivity training should also cover aspects such as appropriate language use, recognizing biases, and understanding the specific challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals in humanitarian crises.

Capacity building should also include practical guidance on how to create safe and inclusive spaces, deliver gender-affirming healthcare, provide culturally sensitive mental health support, and integrate non-discriminatory practices into relief efforts. By equipping humanitarian workers with the necessary knowledge and skills, organizations can ensure that their responses are respectful, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of LGBTQI individuals in crisis-affected settings.

Importantly, capacity building efforts should extend beyond frontline humanitarian workers to encompass managers, decision-makers, and technical staff, ensuring that inclusive practices and approaches are integrated into all levels of humanitarian programming.

5.3. Developing Inclusive Policies and Practices

Developing inclusive policies and practices is fundamental to fostering an environment that respects and upholds the rights and dignity of LGBTQI individuals within humanitarian settings. It involves integrating SOGIESC-inclusive guidelines into policy frameworks, operational procedures, and codes of conduct, ensuring that humanitarian responses are non-discriminatory and respectful of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.

Inclusive policies and practices should address various aspects of humanitarian programming, including protection, shelter, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), education, and livelihoods support. These policies should explicitly recognize the specific vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals and outline measures to ensure their inclusion and protection throughout all stages of humanitarian response.

Moreover, developing inclusive practices involves mainstreaming SOGIESC inclusion into program design and implementation. This includes the integration of gender-sensitive indicators, the development of SOGIESC-responsive referral mechanisms, and the adoption of non-discriminatory service delivery protocols. Additionally, it involves addressing the specific barriers LGBTQI individuals face in accessing relief and protection services, ensuring that assistance is provided in a manner that respects their human rights and dignity while preserving privacy and confidentiality.

Crafting inclusive policies and practices is foundational to creating an environment that is equitable, respectful, and responsive to the needs of LGBTQI individuals during and after crises. It sets the framework for the organization's commitment to promoting SOGIESC inclusion and affirming the rights of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

5.4. Creating Safe Spaces for LGBTQI Individuals

Creating safe spaces for LGBTQI individuals within humanitarian settings is essential to ensuring their protection, dignity, and well-being. Safe spaces provide environments that are free from discrimination, harassment, and violence, enabling LGBTQI individuals to access services and support without fear of stigma or exclusion.

Humanitarian actors can establish safe spaces through diverse approaches, such as establishing LGBTQI-specific service areas, inclusion support groups, or designated community centers that prioritize the safety and well-being of LGBTQI individuals. Safe spaces should offer a range of services, including counseling, legal assistance,

psychosocial support, gender-affirming healthcare, and access to information while promoting an environment of acceptance, respect, and confidentiality.

Furthermore, providing safe spaces involves the training of staff and volunteers to create an inclusive and affirming environment. This includes promoting an understanding of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities within humanitarian settings, recognizing biases, and adopting non-discriminatory practices. Safe spaces should also address the specific protection concerns faced by LGBTQI individuals, offering refuge from threats of violence or discrimination.

Developing safe spaces acknowledges the specific vulnerabilities and needs of LGBTQI individuals, providing them with an environment where they can receive support and assistance without having to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity. It serves as a critical component in fostering inclusivity, respect, and safety within humanitarian contexts.

5.5. Ensuring Non-Discrimination and Privacy

Non-discrimination and privacy are essential considerations in humanitarian contexts to ensure that all individuals, including those within the LGBTQI community, are treated equitably and respectfully. Humanitarian actors must establish mechanisms that prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics, and preserve the privacy and confidentiality of LGBTQI individuals.

In practice, ensuring non-discrimination encompasses the adoption of inclusive language and respectful terminology, creating culturally sensitive programs and services, and instituting measures to prevent discrimination and bias within humanitarian settings. Humanitarian actors should also develop and disseminate non-discriminatory codes of conduct and ethical guidelines that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on SOGIESC, setting the standard for respectful and equitable conduct.

Preserving the privacy of LGBTQI individuals involves guaranteeing confidentiality in service provision, ensuring that individuals' sexual orientation, gender identity, and other

personal information are protected from unauthorized disclosure. This includes adopting measures to safeguard LGBTQI individuals' personal data, respecting their chosen names and gender pronouns, and providing services in a manner that preserves their privacy and dignity.

By ensuring non-discrimination and privacy, humanitarian actors create an environment where LGBTQI individuals can access assistance and support without facing judgment or fear of exposure. It underscores the commitment to respecting the rights and dignity of all individuals and is essential for establishing a culture of inclusivity, equity, and respect within humanitarian settings.

Adopting and integrating inclusive practices within humanitarian work is essential to ensuring the safety, dignity, and rights of all individuals, including those within the LGBTQI community. These inclusive practices contribute to a more just and compassionate humanitarian response, where all individuals are afforded the rights, respect, and support they deserve, irrespective of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.

Key priorities and recommendations for governments and international organizations to better support the inclusion of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts

Key priorities and recommendations for governments and international organizations to better support the inclusion of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts include:

1. **Inclusive Policies:** Governments and international organizations should prioritize the development and implementation of inclusive policies that explicitly recognize and address the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response efforts.

2. **Legal Protection:** Governments should enact and enforce laws that protect the rights of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations, including non-discrimination laws and policies that ensure equal access to relief and recovery services.

3. **Capacity Building and Training:** Governments and international organizations should provide training and capacity building opportunities for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian professionals on LGBTQI inclusion and sensitivity, as well as building the capacity of LGBTQI community members to actively participate in disaster response and recovery efforts.

4. **Data Collection and Research:** Governments and international organizations should support and fund research and data collection efforts that specifically focus on the experiences and needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations, to inform more inclusive and targeted interventions.

5. **Partnership with LGBTQI Organizations:** Governments and international organizations should collaborate with LGBTQI organizations and community groups to ensure that the voices and experiences of LGBTQI individuals are integrated into disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response efforts.

6. **Awareness and Sensitization:** Conduct awareness campaigns and sensitization programs to promote respect for the rights and dignity of LGBTQI individuals within disaster-affected communities and among humanitarian workers.

7. **Inclusive Relief Services:** Ensure that relief services are inclusive and accessible to LGBTQI individuals, addressing the specific needs of these communities, such as access to gender-affirming healthcare, protection from discrimination, and mental health support.

8. **Advocacy and Representation:** Governments and international organizations should actively advocate for the inclusion of LGBTQI individuals in global humanitarian policies

and frameworks, and ensure their representation in decision-making processes related to disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response.

By prioritizing these recommendations, governments and international organizations can contribute to creating more inclusive and equitable disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts that effectively address the needs of LGBTQI individuals.

Intentional collaboration and coalition building with mainstream disaster relief agencies to ensure the needs of LGBTQI communities are addressed

Collaboration between LGBTQI organizations and mainstream disaster relief agencies is essential to ensure that the needs of LGBTQI communities are addressed during times of crisis.

First and foremost, it is important for LGBTQI organizations and mainstream disaster relief agencies to establish strong lines of communication and collaboration. This could involve building relationships with key staff members within these agencies, participating in training and networking opportunities, and actively seeking out opportunities for collaboration.

LGBTQI organizations and mainstream disaster relief agencies can build coalition by providing expertise and resources specific to the needs of LGBTQI individuals and communities. This could involve providing safe space to proactively provide and seek supervision on LGBTQIA+ issues, education and training that are helpful for both agencies, offering guidance on how to effectively engage with LGBTQI individuals, and sharing best practices for supporting LGBTQI communities in times of crisis.

Mainstream disaster relief agencies should actively seek out diverse SOGIESC organizations to ensure that the unique needs of LGBTQI individuals are taken into account in disaster response plans and programs. This involves advocating for the inclusion of LGBTQI-specific considerations in disaster response protocols, providing input on the development of inclusive shelter and support services, and sharing

information on how to effectively reach and support LGBTQI individuals in the aftermath of a disaster.

Collaboration could also involve joint outreach and advocacy efforts to ensure that LGBTQI individuals are aware of and able to access the support and resources provided by mainstream disaster relief agencies. This could include working together to develop and distribute LGBTQI-inclusive disaster preparedness materials, organizing outreach events targeting LGBTQI communities, and providing mutual referrals and support to ensure that LGBTQI individuals are connected with the assistance they need.

Ultimately, by working together, LGBTQI organizations and mainstream disaster relief agencies can ensure that the needs of LGBTQI communities are effectively addressed in times of crisis. This collaboration is crucial for building more inclusive and effective disaster response efforts that take into account the diverse needs and experiences of all individuals and communities.

6. Case Studies and Best Practices

6.1. Successful Interventions and Programs for LGBTQI Individuals in Humanitarian Settings

In recent years, several successful interventions and programs have been implemented to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals in humanitarian settings. These initiatives have provided valuable insights into best practices and effective interventions that promote the inclusion and well-being of LGBTQI individuals during and after crises.

One successful intervention was the Livelihood and Food Security Partnership with Partners in Community Development through the support of AHP. The training resulted in the establishment of the Nadi Pride Hub and Tavua Pride Hub Farm Project.

“...we have seen the contribution that the LGBTQI+ gives to the community. This has caused attitude change from villagers who used to stigmatize them. The project has allowed us to see a different perspective of LGBTQI+ community.”

Back To Office Report, Asaeli Sinusetaki (March, 2024)

In terms of awareness and capacity building, LGBTQI sensitivity training for humanitarian workers has been a significant intervention. Training programs that aim to enhance the understanding of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities among humanitarian staff have contributed to more inclusive and respectful services for LGBTQI individuals.

One such success was the delivery of SOGIESC within GESI at the Emergency Operations Centre Trainings in 2020 and 2021 (AHP PPF 1 Report, 2021).⁹ Through these interventions, diverse SOGIESC organizations (RPF) lobbied for the inclusion of progressive inclusive language in the review of the National DRR policy and the National Disaster Management Act for Fiji.

6.2. Lessons Learned and Promising Practices from agencies

Lessons learned from different development and humanitarian agencies have provided valuable insights into promising practices for promoting the inclusion and well-being of LGBTQI individuals in humanitarian settings. These lessons have demonstrated the importance of tailoring interventions to meet the specific needs and contexts of diverse populations, all while recognizing the national diversity of SOGIESC.

In many agencies, advocacy and community mobilization have played a pivotal role in driving awareness and promoting the rights and well-being of LGBTQI individuals. Grassroots LGBTQI organizations and community groups have been instrumental in advocating for the rights of LGBTQI individuals and promoting inclusive practices within humanitarian settings. For example, Rainbow Pride Foundation was the first Queer

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<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/#search/counselling+report/FMfcgzGkbDbSsxXbwzkGpPLSZwrnXlzk?projector=1&messagePartId=0.3>

organization that made-up the government first responder team to Kadavu, after TC Sarah.

Additionally, partnerships between humanitarian organizations, LGBTQI-focused CSOs, and local advocacy groups have proven to be effective in addressing the vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals. Collaborative efforts facilitate the design and delivery of tailored interventions, ensuring that the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals are recognized and addressed within humanitarian programs. These partnerships have served as a vehicle for promoting inclusive policies and practices that respect the rights of LGBTQI individuals and foster a more supportive environment in crisis-affected regions.

Moreover, capacity building at the community level has been vital for promoting the rights and well-being of LGBTQI individuals. Promising practices include the empowerment of LGBTQI community members to actively participate in decision-making processes, advocate for their rights, and provide support to peers within humanitarian settings. Community resilience and advocacy have been influential in fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTQI individuals, showcasing the significance of community-driven interventions in advancing the well-being of marginalized individuals.

The evidence from these case studies and best practices informs the design and implementation of interventions that effectively address the specific challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals during and after crises, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and supportive humanitarian response

How can LGBTQI organisations work with humanitarian agencies and governments to increase awareness and understanding of the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations?

LGBTQI organizations can work with local communities and governments to increase awareness and understanding of the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations through various strategies:

1. **Community Engagement:** LGBTQI organizations can actively engage with local LGBTQI communities, as well as broader disaster-affected communities, to understand and address their specific needs and challenges. This can include organizing community meetings, focus groups, and outreach activities to gather input and raise awareness about LGBTQI-related issues in disaster situations.

2. **Training and Workshops:** Conducting training sessions and workshops for local community members, first responders, and government officials to increase their understanding of LGBTQI-related issues in disasters. This can help dispel myths, reduce stigma, and promote inclusive practices.

3. **Advocacy and Collaboration:** Collaborating with local advocacy groups, community leaders, and government agencies to advocate for inclusive policies and practices that address the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery efforts.

4. **Capacity Building:** Providing capacity-building opportunities for local governments and organizations to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to support LGBTQI individuals during disasters. This may include developing guidelines, toolkits, and training materials specific to LGBTQI-inclusive disaster response.

5. **Cultural Competency:** Educating local communities and governments about the diverse experiences and identities within the LGBTQI community, emphasizing the importance of cultural competency and sensitivity in disaster response efforts.

6. **Data Collection and Research:** Collaborating with local research institutions and government agencies to collect and analyze data on the experiences and needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations, providing evidence to support targeted interventions.

7. **Joint Initiatives:** Partnering with local governments and organizations to implement joint initiatives that address the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals, such as setting up

safe spaces, providing access to gender-affirming care, and ensuring non-discriminatory access to relief services.

8. Media and Communication: Utilizing media channels and communication platforms to disseminate accurate and inclusive messaging about the needs and rights of LGBTQI individuals in disasters, fostering a more supportive and understanding environment.

By working collaboratively with local communities and governments, LGBTQI organizations can effectively raise awareness and advocate for policies and actions that address the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations.

What strategies have been effective in advocating for the inclusion of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction policies and practices?

Effective strategies in advocating for the inclusion of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction policies and practices include:

1. Collaboration and Coalition Building: Forming alliances with other advocacy groups, disaster response organizations, and governmental agencies to collectively advocate for policies and practices that address the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction.

2. Data Collection and Research: Conducting research and collecting data on the experiences and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations to provide evidence-based advocacy for their inclusion in disaster risk reduction policies and practices.

3. Policy Advocacy: Engaging in policy advocacy at local, national, and international levels to promote the inclusion of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction planning, implementation, and response efforts.

4. **Legal Advocacy:** Advocating for legal protections and non-discrimination laws that explicitly include LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction policies and practices.

5. **Sensitization and Training:** Providing training and sensitization programs for policymakers, disaster response personnel, and community leaders to increase their understanding of LGBTQI-specific needs in disaster situations.

6. **Awareness Campaigns:** Launching public awareness campaigns to educate the public, government officials, and disaster response organizations about the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals in disasters and the importance of inclusive policies and practices.

7. **Engaging with International Organizations:** Collaborating with international organizations, such as the United Nations and regional bodies, to advocate for LGBTQI inclusion in global disaster risk reduction frameworks and policies.

8. **Community Mobilization:** Mobilizing LGBTQI communities and allies to advocate for their inclusion in disaster risk reduction policies and practices, empowering them to voice their needs and concerns.

9. **Capacity Building:** Building the capacity of LGBTQI organizations and activists to effectively advocate for inclusion in disaster risk reduction policies, including providing skills training and resources for effective advocacy efforts.

10. **Engaging with Disaster Risk Reduction Platforms:** Participating in disaster risk reduction platforms, conferences, and partnerships to present the case for LGBTQI inclusion and to influence the agenda-setting process.

By employing these advocacy strategies, LGBTQI organizations and their allies can drive systemic change and improve the inclusion of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction policies and practices.

What specific programs or initiatives have been successful in addressing the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster-affected areas?

Several successful programs and initiatives have been implemented to address the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster-affected areas. Some examples include:

1. **Safe Shelters and Housing Programs:** Establishing safe shelters and housing programs specifically designed for LGBTQI individuals displaced by disasters, providing a supportive and inclusive environment where they can access essential services without fear of discrimination or harassment.
2. **LGBTQI-Inclusive Mental Health Support:** Implementing counseling and mental health support programs tailored to the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals in disaster-affected areas, addressing issues such as stigma, discrimination, and the impact of trauma on mental well-being.
3. **Legal Assistance and Advocacy:** Providing legal assistance, advocacy, and support services to address issues such as discrimination, harassment, and access to legal documents for LGBTQI individuals affected by disasters, helping to safeguard their rights and dignity.
4. **Gender-Affirming Healthcare Services:** Offering gender-affirming healthcare services, including access to hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgeries, and general healthcare tailored to the unique needs of transgender and non-binary individuals in disaster-affected areas.
5. **Capacity Building and Leadership Development:** Providing training and leadership development opportunities for LGBTQI organizations and activists in disaster-affected areas, enabling them to advocate for the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals and lead community-based responses.

6. **Community Resilience Programs:** Developing community-based resilience programs that empower LGBTQI individuals to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters, fostering a sense of self-reliance and collective support within the LGBTQI community.

7. **Sensitization and Training for Humanitarian Workers:** Conducting sensitization workshops and specialized training for humanitarian workers, emergency responders, and service providers to increase their understanding of LGBTQI-specific needs and ensure they are equipped to provide inclusive and respectful assistance.

8. **Data Collection and Research Initiatives:** Engaging in research and data collection initiatives to better understand the experiences and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals in disaster-affected areas, informing evidence-based policies and interventions.

9. **Advocacy and Policy Change Efforts:** Engaging in advocacy campaigns and policy change efforts at local, national, and international levels to promote LGBTQI-inclusive disaster risk reduction policies and practices, contributing to systemic change.

These programs and initiatives have demonstrated positive outcomes in addressing the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster-affected areas, paving the way for more inclusive and supportive approaches to disaster response and recovery.

Mainstreaming SOGIESC in Humanitarian Action

7.1. Integrating SOGIESC Considerations into Needs Assessments and Program Design
Integrating SOGIESC considerations into needs assessments and program design is essential for ensuring the inclusion and well-being of LGBTQI individuals in humanitarian action. Needs assessments provide a critical insight into the specific vulnerabilities and challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals during crises, informing the development of tailored and targeted interventions.

Incorporating SOGIESC considerations into needs assessments involves including questions related to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex

characteristics to gather data on the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals. By recognizing the diverse experiences and vulnerabilities within the LGBTQI community, needs assessments can inform evidence-based program design, ensuring that interventions are responsive and inclusive.

Program design should consider SOGIESC factors as an integral component of programming, aligning with the principles of equity, non-discrimination, and respect for human rights. This includes tailoring services, protection measures, and assistance to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals, ensuring that programs are developed with a deep understanding of the diverse needs and experiences within the LGBTQI community.

COVID-19 Case Study:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, needs assessments conducted in various regions integrated SOGIESC considerations to understand the specific impacts of the pandemic on LGBTQI individuals. These assessments identified unique challenges, including increased risks of discrimination, loss of support networks, and delays in accessing gender-affirming healthcare services. As a result, tailored programming, including mental health support, empowerment programs, and access to gender-affirming healthcare, were developed to address these needs and vulnerabilities.

7.2. Coordination and Collaboration with LGBTQI Organizations

Effective coordination and collaboration with LGBTQI organizations play a crucial role in mainstreaming SOGIESC considerations within humanitarian action. These organizations possess valuable expertise, resources, and community connections that are essential for the development and implementation of inclusive and respectful interventions for LGBTQI individuals in crisis settings.

Collaborative efforts involve engaging with LGBTQI organizations to ensure that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals are recognized and addressed

within humanitarian programming. This may include joint needs assessments, collaborative program design, and the establishment of referral mechanisms to provide tailored support to LGBTQI individuals. LGBTQI organizations also play a vital role in providing community-based support, advocacy, and empowerment programs for LGBTQI individuals in crisis environments.

Furthermore, coordination and collaboration foster a supportive and mutually beneficial partnership that promotes inclusive and equitable humanitarian responses. By working in tandem with LGBTQI organizations, humanitarian actors can leverage community knowledge and insights, and ensure that the voices and needs of LGBTQI individuals are at the forefront of decision-making processes.

Hurricane Response Case Study:

Following the impact of Hurricane X, a collaborative effort between a humanitarian organization and a local LGBTQI organization was established to provide targeted support. The collaboration involved jointly assessing the needs of LGBTQI individuals, co-designing tailored protection and mental health support programs, and conducting workshops to enhance the understanding of SOGIESC among humanitarian workers. As a result, the intervention was able to address specific vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQI individuals, fostering a supportive and inclusive response.

7.3. Advocacy and Policy Influence for LGBTQI Inclusion in Humanitarian Contexts

Advocacy and policy influence are critical for mainstreaming SOGIESC in humanitarian contexts. Efforts to advocate for policy and practice changes that promote the inclusion and respect of LGBTQI individuals within humanitarian action are essential for driving systemic change and fostering a culture of inclusivity and equity.

Advocacy initiatives should focus on raising awareness about the specific vulnerabilities and needs of LGBTQI individuals during humanitarian crises, promoting non-discrimination, and advancing the rights of marginalized communities. This includes

engaging in dialogue with humanitarian actors, governmental bodies, and international organizations to influence policies and practices that uphold the rights and dignity of LGBTQI communities.

Policy influence is essential for developing and implementing inclusive policies, guidelines, and frameworks that incorporate SOGIESC considerations into humanitarian action. This involves advocating for the integration of LGBTQI-specific services, protection measures, and non-discriminatory practices into humanitarian policies, ensuring that LGBTQI individuals are afforded equal access to relief and protection efforts.

Disaster Response Policy Influence Case Study:

In the aftermath of a major disaster, a coalition of LGBTQI advocacy groups and humanitarian actors conducted an advocacy campaign to influence disaster response policies. The collective effort led to the integration of LGBTI-specific indicators into needs assessments, the development of non-discriminatory shelter and protection guidelines, and the inclusion of LGBTQI-specific considerations in humanitarian response protocols. As a result, disaster response efforts were more inclusive and responsive to the needs of LGBTQI individuals.

In conclusion, mainstreaming SOGIESC in humanitarian action necessitates integrating SOGIESC considerations into needs assessments and program design, fostering coordination and collaboration with LGBTQI organizations, and advocating for policy and practice changes that promote the inclusion and respect of LGBTQI individuals. These efforts are fundamental for fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and respectful humanitarian response that prioritizes the rights and well-being of all individuals, including those within the LGBTQI community.

What role can allies and non-LGBTQI organisations play in supporting and amplifying the work of LGBTQI organisations in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts?

Allies and non-LGBTQI organizations can play a vital role in supporting and amplifying the work of LGBTQI organizations in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts by:

1. **Providing Resources:** Allies and non-LGBTQI organizations can provide financial support, access to facilities, or in-kind donations to LGBTQI organizations, enabling them to effectively carry out their disaster risk reduction and humanitarian work.
2. **Building Partnerships:** Non-LGBTQI organizations can partner with LGBTQI organizations to collaborate on disaster response and mitigation efforts, bringing together diverse expertise and networks to support the LGBTQI community during and after disasters.
3. **Amplifying Voices:** Through their platforms and networks, allies and non-LGBTQI organizations can amplify the voices and perspectives of LGBTQI organizations, raising awareness about the specific needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations.
4. **Advocacy and Lobbying:** Allies and non-LGBTQI organizations can support LGBTQI organizations in advocacy efforts by using their influence and resources to advocate for policies, laws, and practices that promote the inclusion and protection of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts.
5. **Training and Capacity Building:** Non-LGBTQI organizations can provide training and capacity-building opportunities for LGBTQI organizations, helping them enhance their skills and knowledge related to disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery.
6. **Addressing Intersectionality:** Allies and non-LGBTQI organizations can work with LGBTQI organizations to address the intersectional needs of LGBTQI individuals,

considering factors such as race, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status in disaster response efforts.

7. Promoting Inclusivity: Non-LGBTQI organizations can foster inclusive environments and ensure that their own disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts are responsive to the needs of LGBTQI individuals, serving as examples of best practices for others to follow.

8. Providing Support Services: Allies and non-LGBTQI organizations can offer support services, such as mental health support, legal assistance, and shelter, specifically tailored to LGBTQI individuals affected by disasters, complementing the work of LGBTQI organizations.

By taking on these roles, allies and non-LGBTQI organizations can contribute to creating a more inclusive, supportive, and effective response to the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts.

How can LGBTQI organisations work with local communities and governments to increase awareness and understanding of the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations?

LGBTQI organizations can work with local communities and governments to increase awareness and understanding of the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations through various strategies:

1. Community Engagement: LGBTQI organizations can actively engage with local LGBTQI communities, as well as broader disaster-affected communities, to understand and address their specific needs and challenges. This can include organizing community meetings, focus groups, and outreach activities to gather input and raise awareness about LGBTQI-related issues in disaster situations.

2. Training and Workshops: Conducting training sessions and workshops for local community members, first responders, and government officials to increase their understanding of LGBTQI-related issues in disasters. This can help dispel myths, reduce stigma, and promote inclusive practices.

3. Advocacy and Collaboration: Collaborating with local advocacy groups, community leaders, and government agencies to advocate for inclusive policies and practices that address the needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery efforts.

4. Capacity Building: Providing capacity-building opportunities for local governments and organizations to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to support LGBTQI individuals during disasters. This may include developing guidelines, toolkits, and training materials specific to LGBTQI-inclusive disaster response.

5. Cultural Competency: Educating local communities and governments about the diverse experiences and identities within the LGBTQI community, emphasizing the importance of cultural competency and sensitivity in disaster response efforts.

6. Data Collection and Research: Collaborating with local research institutions and government agencies to collect and analyze data on the experiences and needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations, providing evidence to support targeted interventions.

7. Joint Initiatives: Partnering with local governments and organizations to implement joint initiatives that address the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals, such as setting up safe spaces, providing access to gender-affirming care, and ensuring non-discriminatory access to relief services.

8. Media and Communication: Utilizing media channels and communication platforms to disseminate accurate and inclusive messaging about the needs and rights of LGBTQI individuals in disasters, fostering a more supportive and understanding environment.

By working collaboratively with local communities and governments, LGBTQI organizations can effectively raise awareness and advocate for policies and actions that address the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals in disaster situations.

How can LGBTQI organisations ensure that their work is intersectional and addresses the needs of more marginalized members of the LGBTQI community, such as transgender and non-binary individuals within the Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian systems?

LGBTQI organisations can ensure that their work is intersectional and addresses the needs of more marginalized members of the LGBTQI community, such as transgender and non-binary individuals within the Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian systems by taking the following steps:

1. Inclusive Policies and Practices: LGBTQI organisations can develop and implement inclusive policies and practices that specifically address the needs of transgender and non-binary individuals within disaster risk reduction and humanitarian systems. This can include ensuring that all materials and resources are non-binary and transgender-inclusive, as well as implementing non-discriminatory policies.
2. Representation and Diversity: LGBTQI organisations should strive to have diverse representation within their leadership and decision-making processes, including transgender and non-binary individuals. This can help ensure that the voices and experiences of these marginalized groups are included in the planning and execution of disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts.
3. Partnerships and Collaboration: LGBTQI organisations can collaborate with other organizations and agencies that specifically focus on transgender and non-binary issues, as well as those that have expertise in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response. By partnering with these groups, LGBTQI organisations can ensure that their efforts are informed by and responsive to the needs of transgender and non-binary individuals.

4. Training and Capacity Building: LGBTQI organisations can provide training and capacity building opportunities for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian professionals on LGBTQI inclusion, specifically focusing on the needs of transgender and non-binary individuals. This can help ensure that those working in the field are aware of, and sensitive to, the specific challenges faced by these communities.

5. Advocacy and Awareness: LGBTQI organisations can advocate for the inclusion of transgender and non-binary individuals in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts, as well as raise awareness about the specific challenges and needs of these communities. This can help ensure that policies and practices are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all LGBTQI individuals.

Toolkit for SOGIESC Inclusion

8.1. Sample Assessment Tools for LGBTQI Needs

Sample assessment tools for LGBTQI needs are fundamental for understanding the specific vulnerabilities and challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals, enabling the development of targeted and effective interventions within humanitarian settings. These tools aim to gather comprehensive data, identify complex needs, and inform inclusive program design. A sample assessment tool may include questions related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and specific challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals during crises. Additionally, it can assess experiences of discrimination, violence, and access to protection and support services. Moreover, the assessment tool should be designed in consultation with LGBTQI organizations and advocates to ensure that it aligns with the unique needs and experiences of the LGBTQI community. These assessment tools should be implemented with strict confidentiality measures to protect the privacy and security of respondents.

8.2. Guidelines for Sensitization and Capacity Building

Guidelines for sensitization and capacity building are essential resources for equipping humanitarian workers with the knowledge and skills needed to understand and address

the needs of LGBTQI individuals in crisis-affected settings. These guidelines may include training modules that provide an understanding of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expression, non-discriminatory language use, and the impact of societal prejudices on LGBTQI individuals. The guidelines also need to address specific needs, such as gender-affirming healthcare and mental health support, tailored to LGBTQI individuals.

8.3. Policy Templates for Inclusive Humanitarian Action

Policy templates for inclusive humanitarian action provide the framework for integrating SOGIESC considerations into humanitarian policies, protocols, and frameworks. These templates aim to ensure that LGBTQI individuals are afforded equitable access to services, protection, and support. The policies should outline non-discriminatory practices, guidelines for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of LGBTQI individuals, referrals to specialized support services and promote a culture of respect and inclusion. The policy templates should be aligned with international human rights standards related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression and developed in consultation with LGBTQI organizations and human rights advocates. It's important to incorporate these policies into broader humanitarian policies and protocols.

8.4. Resources for Further Reading and Reference

Providing comprehensive resources for further reading and reference is critical for continuous learning and knowledge-building on SOGIESC inclusion within humanitarian action. These resources may include academic articles, reports, best practice guidelines, and advocacy resources specific to the needs and rights of LGBTQI individuals in crisis settings. In addition, it should include resources on international human rights standards, declarations, and reports related to SOGIESC inclusion. These resources should be easily accessible to humanitarian actors, LGBTQI organizations, and advocates, providing a comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape of SOGIESC inclusion and the advocacy efforts related to LGBTQI rights in humanitarian settings.

The inclusion of individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in humanitarian settings is imperative for fostering equitable, respectful, and effective response and support mechanisms. This conclusion provides a summary of key considerations and recommendations, emphasizing the urgency of mainstreaming SOGIESC inclusion in humanitarian work and calling upon stakeholders to take action to uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals, irrespective of their SOGIESC.

Summary of Key Considerations and Recommendations

The following are the key considerations and recommendations for mainstreaming SOGIESC inclusion in humanitarian work:

1. **Understanding and Addressing the Diverse Needs of LGBTQI Individuals:** Humanitarian organizations must recognize the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI individuals during crises, including discrimination, violence, and access to specific healthcare and protection needs. By acknowledging the diversity of SOGIESC, organizations can tailor interventions to meet the distinct needs of LGBTQI individuals.
2. **Inclusive Practices within Needs Assessments and Program Design:** Integrating SOGIESC considerations into needs assessments and program design is essential for developing targeted and effective interventions that address the specific vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQI individuals during crises. By incorporating inclusive practices, organizations can foster respectful and equitable humanitarian responses.
3. **Collaboration and Coordination with LGBTQI Organizations:** Meaningful collaboration with LGBTQI organizations is pivotal for fostering a more inclusive and respectful humanitarian response. Such partnerships ensure that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQI individuals are recognized and addressed within humanitarian programming.

4. **Advocacy and Policy Influence for LGBTQI Inclusion:** Advocacy efforts are critical for influencing policies and practices that promote the rights and inclusion of LGBTQI individuals in humanitarian contexts. By advocating for changes that uphold the rights and dignity of LGBTQI individuals, organizations can drive systemic change and foster a culture of inclusivity and equity.

5. **Developing Inclusive Policies and Practices:** Inclusive policies that explicitly recognize SOGIESC considerations are essential for ensuring non-discriminatory and respectful humanitarian actions. By developing and implementing inclusive policies and practices, organizations can provide equitable access to relief and protection efforts for LGBTQI individuals.

Call to Action for Mainstreaming SOGIESC Inclusion in Humanitarian Work

The call to action for mainstreaming SOGIESC inclusion in humanitarian work is motivated by the urgent need to create an inclusive and equitable humanitarian response that prioritizes the rights and well-being of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.

Mainstreaming SOGIESC inclusion in humanitarian work entails a commitment to the following actions:

1. **Recognition and Valuing of Diversity:** Humanitarian actors must recognize, value, and respect the diversity of SOGIESC, acknowledging and addressing the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQI individuals during crises and post-crisis settings.

2. **Integration of Inclusive Practices:** There is a need to integrate inclusive practices, policies, and services that uphold the rights and dignity of LGBTQI individuals into all levels of humanitarian response.

3. Advocacy for Systemic Change: A call to advocate for policy changes that foster a more inclusive, respectful, and equitable humanitarian response, driven by the recognition and respect of the rights of LGBTQI individuals within crisis settings.

4. Strengthening Partnerships and Collaboration: A commitment to fostering meaningful collaboration with LGBTQI organizations, recognizing their essential role in informing and shaping inclusive humanitarian response efforts.

5. Continuous Learning and Improvement: A commitment to continuous learning, improvement, and capacity building to ensure that humanitarian workers and organizations are equipped with the necessary understanding and skills to effectively address the needs of LGBTQI individuals during and after crises.

Ultimately, the call to action for mainstreaming SOGIESC inclusion in humanitarian work is driven by the imperative to uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals, fostering a more just, inclusive, and compassionate humanitarian response, where all individuals, including those within the LGBTQI community, are afforded the rights, respect, and support they deserve.