# Civil Society
# **Business Toolkit**

Empowering LGBTIQ+ Civil Society Through Business Collaboration

Co-created by:

Workplace **Pride**

Open For Business

**Other** THE OTHER FOUNDATION

# Foreword

**The interaction between civil society organisations (CSOs) and businesses around the globe has often been seen as a collision of two worlds. The former are focused on human rights, with over-arching principles and a long-term view. The latter are perceived as profit-oriented, with an eye to human capital and a short-term outlook.**

In reality, these two worlds have more in common than either may realise. Values such as respect and integrity, inclusion and diversity and partnership with others are just a few examples that they share.

This Civil Society Business Toolkit expands on this dynamic by providing CSOs with a guide for how to interact with businesses more effectively and productively. It focuses specifically on empowering LGBTIQ+* CSOs, regardless of their experience and background and has been written to be inclusive of individuals with limited experience of working with corporate and commercial terminology. With concrete examples and real-life actionable suggestions, the toolkit is designed to be practical, goal driven and sustainable.

The initiative and financial support for this toolkit came from the Global Equality Fund in Washington DC. Workplace Pride in Amsterdam has managed the project, while Open for Business in London has been responsible for the research element. The Other Foundation in Johannesburg has provided invaluable logistical support and regional insight.

By using this tool as a 'go-to-guide' for working more closely with the business world, LGBTIQ+ CSOs will benefit from a larger global support base and be more empowered to create positive, long-lasting changes for our community.

**David Pollard**
Executive Director
Workplace Pride

\* In line with Workplace Pride's own practice, we have adopted the term LGBTIQ+ throughout this toolkit except where we are quoting directly from a third-party source.

## In a nutshell, this toolkit will help you to:

- Understand myths and mindsets
- Establish the business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion
- Develop and sustain business partnerships
- Successfully engage and communicate with stakeholders
- Support policy and advice
- Advise on targets and measurement
- Encourage business advocacy
- Support businesses working in sensitive countries

# LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Today – Society at a Crossroads



**Me Too, Black Lives Matter and the Global Pandemic are some of the major social changes happening in our world over recent years.**

- We are at a crossroads in how societies react to these developments.
- COVID-19 will leave a mark on everyone and especially on marginalised communities including LGBTIQ+.
- Workplaces around the world are impacted by these events and it is unlikely that we will go back to 'business as usual'.

**Populism continues to have a negative effect on our community around the world. In some countries ideological challenges are becoming enshrined in legalisation.**

- Same-sex sexual relations are still criminalised in 70 countries, with the death penalty in place in **Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Nigeria and Somalia**. Another 27 nations impose maximum penalties for gay sex of between 10 years and life imprisonment.
- **Poland** continues to attack LGBTIQ+ ideology, with some 100 municipalities creating so-called LGBT-free zones. The community has no protection from hate crimes or discrimination.

- In **Brazil,** there are legal attempts to remove the word 'gender' and any talk of homosexuality or transgenderism from the curriculum.
- Hate crimes in **Germany** against LGBTIQ+ people have risen by 36% and this has been linked to an increase in politically motivated violence.
- In the **United States**, an unprecedented number of states are poised to enact several anti-LGBTIQ+ measures into law.
- In **China**, dozens of LGBTIQ+ accounts run by university students were deleted by social media platform WeChat, sparking fears of a crackdown on gay content online.
- **Malaysia** is seeking stricter religious laws against 'promoting LGBTIQ+ lifestyle', a proposal which comes amid concern over growing intolerance towards the LGBTIQ+ community in recent years.

- In **Uganda**, the parliament is promoting an anti-homosexuality bill which would make it a crime to identify as LGBTIQ+ and would hand authorities broad powers to target sexual minorities who already face criminalization and violence.
- A new draft law in **Ghana** proposes jail sentences for those who identify as LGBTIQ+ and for anyone who offers assistance to the LGBT+ community.

**However, there are positive signs of progress.**

- **Andorra, Chile, Cuba, Slovenia and Switzerland** have recently legalised marriage equality.

- In the **United States**, 400 major corporations came out in support of the Equality Act, which explicitly protects LGBTIQ+ people from discrimination. There was a massive show of support in **Germany** for the LGBTIQ+ community in connection with the Euro 2020 football match between **Hungary** and Germany.
- In **Gabon**, the country's parliament reversed its criminalisation of sexual relations between people of the same sex.
- **South Africa** has passed into law the Civil Union Amendment Act, prohibiting marriage officers from refusing to conduct same-sex marriages.

- **Angola** has enacted a new penal code that was passed in 2019, removing a provision outlawing "vices against nature" which was widely interpreted to criminalise same-sex relationships.
- Progress takes time, is never linear and advances will be met with obstacles. The role of civil society will continue to be critical to advancing LGBTIQ+ inclusion and essential in working with the business sector to navigate these issues and protect human rights.

Sources:
www.openlynews.com
www.hrc.org
www.ilga.org

# Contents

**Civil Society
Business Toolkit**

# What is the toolkit about?

**This toolkit is designed to help CSOs to develop and deepen their relationships with business partners and so progress LGBTIQ+ inclusion.**

**The toolkit comes in four sections:**

**A**

**Getting Started**
Clarifying your aspirations, your business partners' objectives, how to assess the current situation and how you can best work together.

**B**

**Why this Matters**
A summary of the business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, with an understanding of why it makes sense for CSOs to work with the corporate sector.

**C**

**Navigating the Toolkit**
Eight practical tools to help improve collaboration with business partners and to make your work with them both tangible and actionable.

**D**

**Commitments and Actions**
How to turn good intentions into a clear and committed set of actions which will advance LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace and in society, now and in the future.

**The toolkit is supported by our research, which was carried out with a range of civil society organisations and LGBTIQ+ activists. This evidence is used throughout the toolkit.**

# More about this toolkit

**Collaboration between civil society and business is important in advancing the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people.**

CSOs may wish to develop constructive relationships with businesses but often lack the knowledge and experience to make those first important steps.

While both civil society and the business sector stand to benefit from enhanced collaboration for greater LGBTIQ+ equality, there can be misunderstandings about each other's motives and there is a significant gap to be bridged.

This **Civil Society Business Toolkit** tackles these dilemmas through a systematic, sustainable and practical approach to help CSOs build and strengthen relationships with businesses. Features of this toolkit include:

- **Getting started,** including advice that will help CSOs understand the basic ins and outs of working with the business sector.

- **Demystifying the business world** for CSOs, allowing your organisation to work constructively with your business partners.

- **Approaches and methodologies** to identify potential business partners, their allies and associated stakeholders.

- **Creating a proposal for achieving business support** that will gain the commitment of business partners and help to increase the impact of your organisation.

- **Ensuring a sustainable approach,** with an emphasis on those approaches that have a long-term benefit for the LGBTIQ+ community.

- Though there is no one-size fits all approach, this toolkit will provide a better understanding of how to build a constructive relationship with business. This, in turn, will help build the capacity of CSOs to achieve greater impact on LGBTIQ+ human rights and equality.

**What you told us**

Throughout the toolkit we have included direct quotes from civil society and business leaders who we have interviewed as part of our research for this toolkit or other relevant work on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

# A. Getting Started

# Getting Started

**The toolkit is designed to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion by empowering civil society through business collaboration.**

This is not easy and so our approach is to build confidence step by step and to help you build sustainable relationships with the business sector. Every CSO will be different in terms of its skills, experience, local context, financial support and societal recognition. However, all are united by a mission to improve the lives of LGBTIQ+ people across the world.

Start with an **initial assessment** of the businesses that you want to work with. Use the approach outlined on the next page and ask some key questions.

Next, take a look at the **business case** for LGBTIQ+ inclusion. You may consider this obvious and assume that we have moved beyond needing a business case. However, in our experience, we still need to consider both the rational and the emotional motivations of our stakeholders. Understanding the business case and interpreting it in your unique context helps to define what value your organisation can bring to the table.
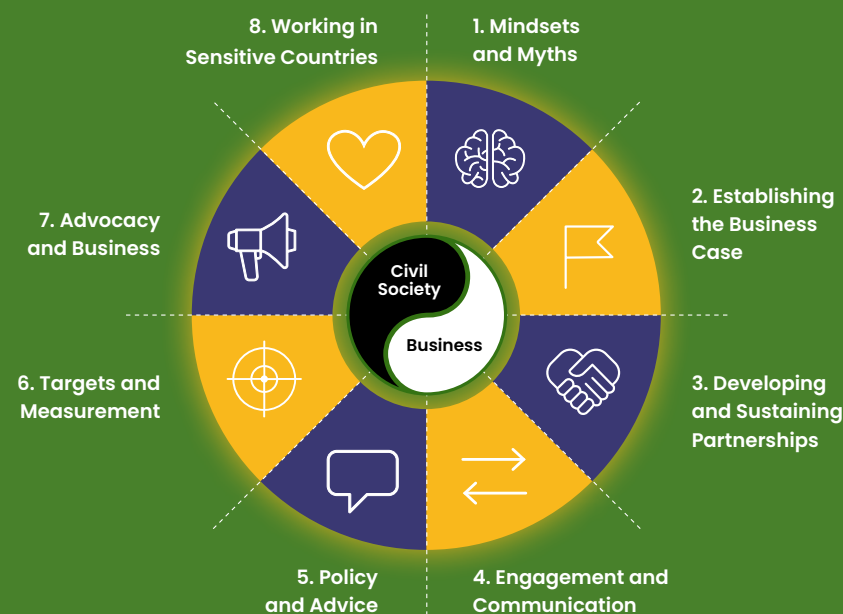
We have also included some ideas on **why CSOs should be doing business with business**. Being clear on why this matters for your organisation will help you to be a better business partner and so increase your impact.

This toolkit is based on **dedicated research** including a survey and in-depth interviews. Our research shows that by working with the business sector there is scope to achieve more with LGBTIQ+ inclusion. We have used the findings of this research throughout this toolkit and we also provide a summary section. As you review this, be sure to ask some questions. Does this resonate with your experience? How do you consider the opportunities of working with the business sector? What barriers does your organisation face? What are the actions that would really make a difference?

Next you will find our eight **toolkit themes** which will help you to identify the areas for focus and provide practical actions you can take with your business partners. Each tool has context for its implementation, examples of best practice, questions to consider, proposed actions, relevant data and further resources. Our research shows that by working with the business sector you can advance the goals of your organisation. Are you ready to take the next step?
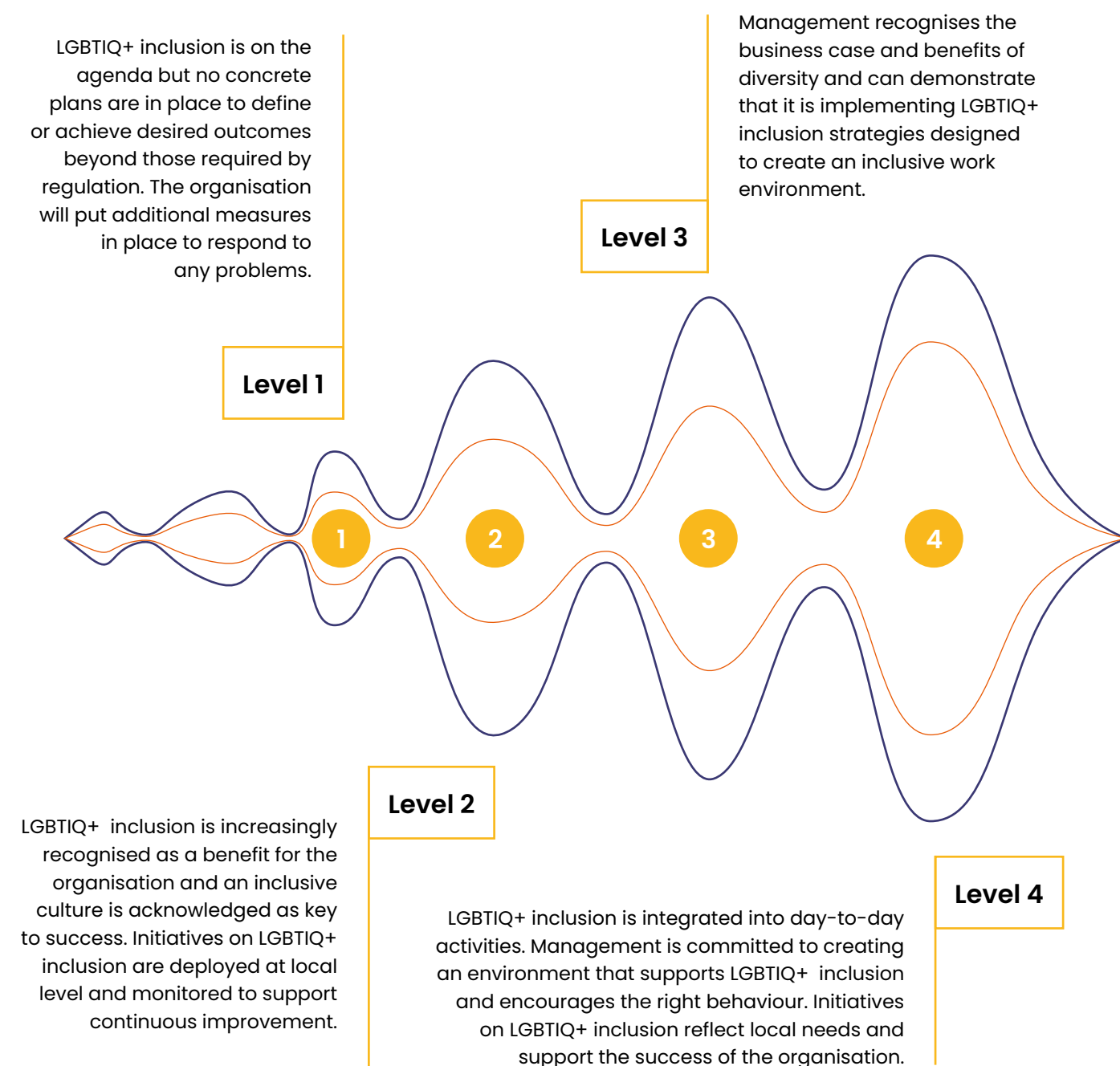
The toolkit concludes by reviewing how to build and sustain commitment to change among your business partners and suggests actions to accelerate this change and increase impact. Finally, we include some suggestions for further resources which will support your work to improve LGBTIQ+ inclusion and acknowledgement of all those across civil society and the business sector that have helped us to create this toolkit.

- 8. Working in Sensitive Countries
- 1. Mindsets and Myths
- 2. Establishing the Business Case
- 3. Developing and Sustaining Partnerships
- 4. Engagement and Communication
- 5. Policy and Advice
- 6. Targets and Measurement
- 7. Advocacy and Business

Civil Society / Business

---

# Initial Business Assessment

## When choosing which businesses to work with, first assess where they are on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

Businesses will be at different stages of maturity and progress and may be encouraged or hindered by local legislation and societal factors. Workplace Pride has developed a maturity model to help businesses assess where they are today on LGBTIQ+ inclusion and what they aspire to in the future.

**Level 1**
LGBTIQ+ inclusion is on the agenda but no concrete plans are in place to define or achieve desired outcomes beyond those required by regulation. The organisation will put additional measures in place to respond to any problems.

**Level 2**
LGBTIQ+ inclusion is increasingly recognised as a benefit for the organisation and an inclusive culture is acknowledged as key to success. Initiatives on LGBTIQ+ inclusion are deployed at local level and monitored to support continuous improvement.

**Level 3**
Management recognises the business case and benefits of diversity and can demonstrate that it is implementing LGBTIQ+ inclusion strategies designed to create an inclusive work environment.

**Level 4**
LGBTIQ+ inclusion is integrated into day-to-day activities. Management is committed to creating an environment that supports LGBTIQ+ inclusion and encourages the right behaviour. Initiatives on LGBTIQ+ inclusion reflect local needs and support the success of the organisation.

Progress may not be consistent and will not be linear. For example, a business may be at Level 3 when it comes to leadership commitment but at Level 1 in more sensitive countries where they struggle to get some of the basics right.

In assessing your future business partners' commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion, first ask some questions in the context of your current environment.

## Your business partners

- Where are they today?
- What level do they aspire to?
- What help do they need?
- What are the local challenges?
- How are they working today with civil society organisations?

## Your own organisation

- Where are you today?
- What do you aspire to?
- How can you support their work?
- What level of business interaction do you have today?
- What unique skills and insights can you offer to the business community?

**What are the actions which will have rapid impact and which actions will take longer to implement?**

## Assessing your capabilities

As well as assessing your partners' capabilities, you should also assess those of your own organisation. One way to do this is by reviewing your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, better known as a SWOT analysis.

Use the questions above to get started with this analysis and be sure to also consider the environment in which you are working and the societal and political opportunities and threats which arise.

There are many sources of advice on applying SWOT analysis for non-profit organisations. Here are two suggestions which provide worked examples: Purplepass and Bloomerang.

Strengths

Weaknesses

SWOT

Opportunities

Threats
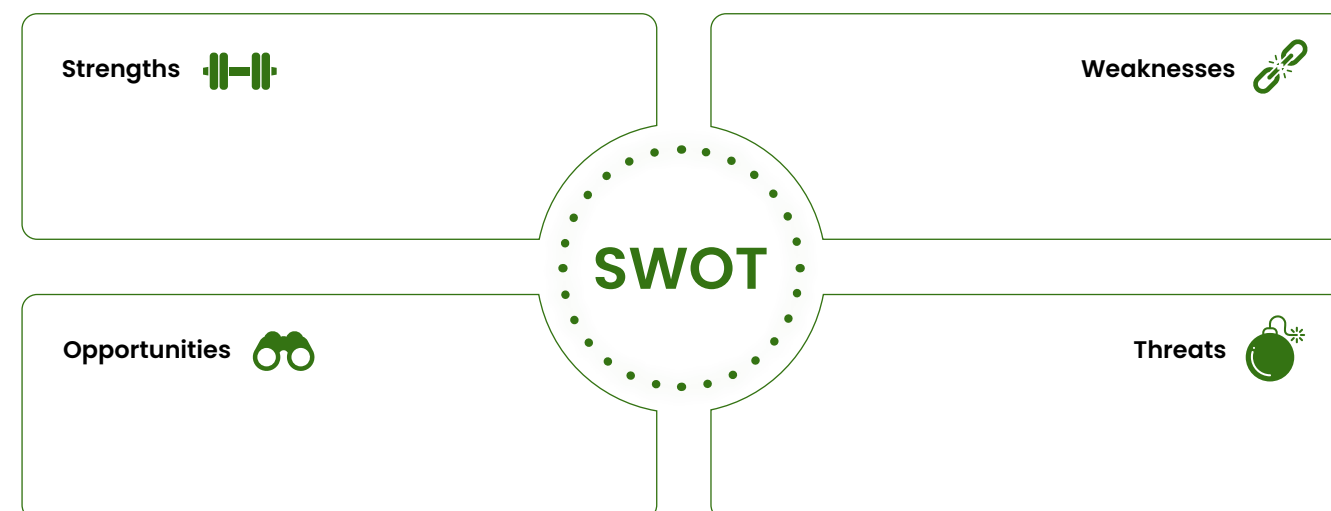
# B. Why this Matters

# Why this Matters

## The Business Case for LGBTIQ+ Inclusion

Many responsible businesses will already have a business case for LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion. But why are businesses interested in LGBTIQ+ inclusion? Although the reasons will vary by company and by sector, they generally consist of four elements:

• Talent and leadership

• Productivity and performance

• Brand and reputation

• Social and moral

The fourth component, social and moral, has become increasingly important in recent years and is often the area where businesses with good intentions need help from CSOs to have real impact.

CSOs need to understand the business case and consider how their skills, experience and networks can help businesses to create more inclusive workplaces.

Recent societal trends are concerning. A rise in homophobia fuelled by popularism, negative media reactions to transgender issues and the ongoing debate about the use of gender pronouns have all been used to stoke divisive culture wars.

So never assume the business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion is fully accepted. The need to revitalise and reframe the business case in a broader context has never been more important.

### Talent and leadership

**70%**
higher retention rates for staff who are fully out at work

**72%**
of LGBTIQ+ allies say they are more likely to accept a job at a company that supports LGBTI employees

### Productivity and performance

**30%**
Being fully out at work correlates with a 30% productivity benefit

When all employees can be their authentic selves, they are happier, more productive and more innovative, which is also good for business

### Brand and reputation

**$3.7tr**
LGBTIQ+ consumers represent a $3.7 trillion market

**71%**
of LGBTIQ+ consumers are more likely to buy from a company that supports LGBTI equality

### Social and moral

**70**
UN member states in which companies operate criminalise same-sex relations

Companies that respect their people expect zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment and have polices, processes and behaviours in place to ensure this

Workplace Pride (2020)

## What you told us

"

Employees who feel able to bring their full selves to work and who are valued for their authenticity are better workers. When an employee understands that their identities are not a problem but rather a value, they are more likely to be able to concentrate on their work, and they are more likely to stay.

It is important for any business to maintain as broadly diverse an employee population as possible, so that different audiences and populations see themselves at work. Transgender people in particular bring a richness of perspective that comes from walking through the world in more than one gender.

"

Leaders and managers can and should be building an inclusive workplace culture. There are three priorities. Firstly be authentic as a leader and don't be afraid of seeming vulnerable on this topic as no one has all of the answers.

Secondly, engage with LGBTI networks wherever your work around the world; they are there to help the business and our community. And lastly, make sure you connect all of your D&I (diversity and inclusion) efforts to the core values of your organisation.

# The Business Case for Civil Society and Business Partnerships

## Why do business with business?

Our research found that CSOs have mixed experiences when dealing with business. Legacies remain, previous missteps are long remembered and mistrust may prevail. Sometimes the two sectors can feel like two different worlds. Businesses may regard CSOs as single-issue agitators, while CSOs maybe see businesses as only interested in profit.

The myths and mindsets that build up over time get in the way of progress. This toolkit will address these issues in more detail later.

But first, in the context of the Business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion outlined on the previous page, why should CSOs get involved with businesses? Why does business matter? We see it as all about access and influence:

- Access to customers, suppliers and their own employees.
- Access to allies for LGBTIQ+ inclusion.
- Access to resources, both financial and human.
- Influencing policymakers in the public sector.
- Influencing other businesses that will seek competitive advantage.

CSOs play a vital role in taking the good intentions of business and turning them into sustainable action on the ground, helping to navigate local culture, providing access to their own networks and linking the efforts of individual businesses to a broader societal dialogue on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

## What you told us

> Making progress on LGBTIQ+ inclusion takes courage, takes champions, takes belief, takes time and above all it takes dedicated support from those that understand the local context.

> LGBTIQ+ activists express concerns that human rights-based arguments for LGBTIQ+ inclusion sometimes gain less traction than economic arguments.

> Some in civil society remain sceptical about the motivations of the business sector. After years of misunderstanding, they suspect that actions taken to highlight LGBTIQ+ human rights concerns may not genuine but motivated by rainbow washing and the desire to be seen as inclusive.

> Our relationships with local civil society are critical. Understanding the priorities in a specific country are can only come with working with civil society partners.

> Most mistakes happen because there is no communication with local LGBT communities. If you want to do something that isn't grounded within the vision of the local community about what is helpful for them, then it might only create a backlash.

# Research Highlights

## Overview

In developing this toolkit and to ensure it meets the needs of CSOs, we commissioned some original research which was conducted by our partner Open for Business. We targeted leaders within the CSO community, as well as LGBTIQ+ activists. A variety of organisations in different countries took part in the research which, included an online survey and in-depth interviews as its key tools.

## Methodology

Our research methodology was developed by Open for Business following a series of preliminary interviews and focus groups. We developed an online survey consisting of 21 questions and conducted in-depth 1-1 interviews. Leaders and activists from LGBTIQ+ CSOs were invited to take part in the survey. The survey was promoted across different online platforms with the intention that respondents would complete it, then bring it to the attention of others. This approach was selected both for convenience and to use personal networks in different regions.

To maintain confidentiality, the quotes in this toolkit are anonymous.

**We also conducted 10 in-depth interviews with participants across nine countries.**

**We received survey feedback across four sectors, with CSOs being the prime respondents (n = 34)**



- Local CSO/NGO
- International CSO/NGO
- Private Sector
- Government

59%, 23%, 15%, 3%
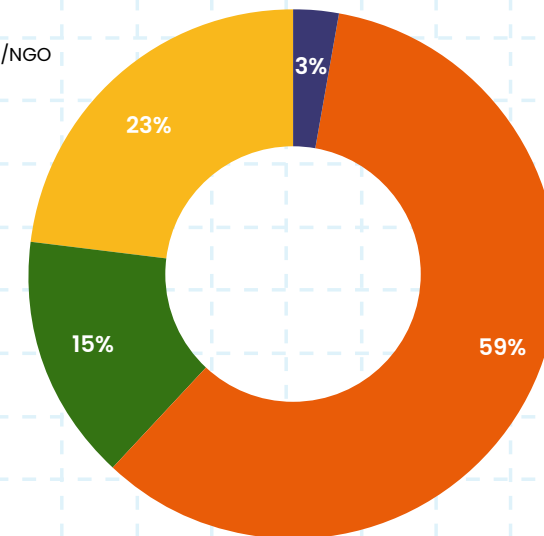
**The organisations surveyed are active in 14 countries with a broad geographic spread (n = 31)**



- Kenya
- Russia
- Netherlands
- USA
- Vietnam
- Venezuela
- Uganda
- South Africa
- Singapore
- India
- France
- Denmark
- Colombia
- Belgium

36%, 16%, 10%, 7%, 4%, 3%, 3%, 3%, 3%, 3%, 3%, 3%, 3%
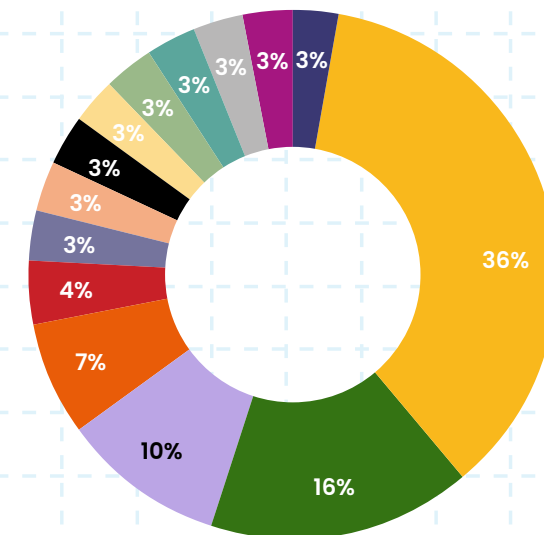
## Survey findings

**Working with business**

While 66% of the organisations surveyed report having worked with the business sector in the past, and 75% of those that haven't plan to do so in the future, their experiences have been mixed.

Sometimes, the engagement has been through head office rather than locally, resulting in the parent global company insisting that the local office work on LGBTIQ+ issues, which may then limit commitment.

**Business contribution**

Our respondents said that the priority contributions from the business sector in advancing LGBTIQ+ rights are:

- Developing LGBTIQ+ inclusive internal policies.
- Providing training and guidance on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.
- Creating opportunities for collective corporate advocacy to challenge discriminatory laws and practices.

**Priority areas for this toolkit**

More than 80% of respondents indicated that the top three priority areas for the toolkit to address in supporting CSOs working with business are:

- Developing and sustaining partnerships with the business sector.
- Engagement and communication strategies.
- Corporate sector as an ally.

### What you told us

> It is key for CSOs to understand how corporate communications and marketing work. Otherwise, each partner will talk past each other and have unrealistic expectations.

> There is huge potential for the business sector to drive social change, but unfortunately there is little strategic cooperation between HR and marketing and external relations departments which is required to ensure maximum impact.

> Developing internal policies that include the rights of all LGBTIQ+ people, especially Trans and Intersex rights, are a necessary contribution from the business sector towards LGBTIQ+ advocacy.

> Providing training and guidance regarding gender identity and expression was a much-needed area of support that companies should focus on.

**81%**

of respondents told us that the toolkit should be delivered as downloadable PDF

**57%**

wanted a dedicated website

We have provided both.

**80%**

of our survey respondents said that developing sustained partnerships with the business sector is a priority.

**Source:** Workplace Pride

## Challenges and impact

Further insights from our survey and interviews included the challenges and impact of working with the business sector. Overall, most respondents felt that the business sector is doing "somewhat well" across various points of action but that there is plenty of room for improvement.
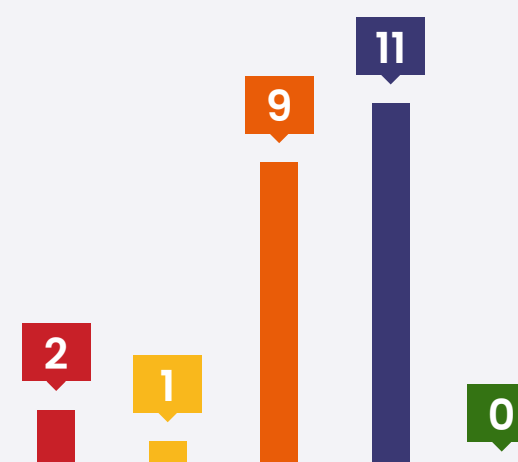
**We asked survey respondents to rate how well the business sector is doing in supporting LGBTIQ+ inclusion The results show significant scope for improvement (n = 23).**
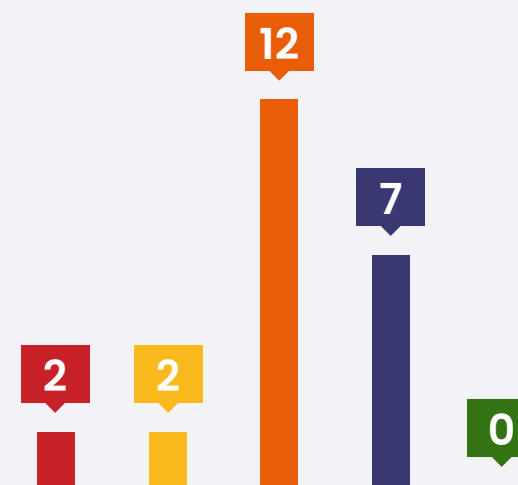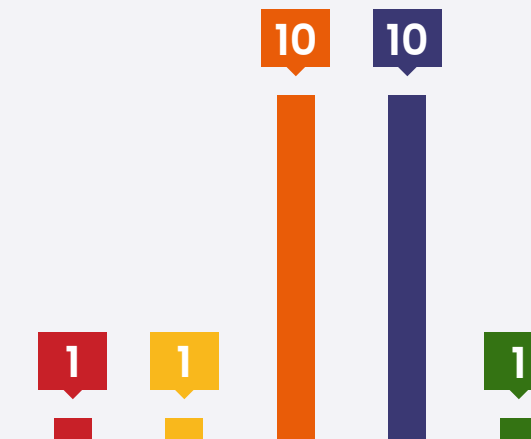
Engage in advancing LGBTIQ+ rights in your country/region?
2 | 2 | 12 | 7 | 0
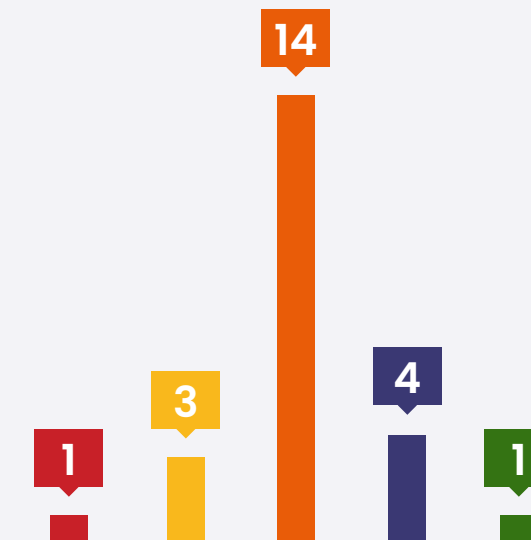
Collaborate with CSOs in advancing LGBTIQ+ rights in your country/region?
1 | 3 | 14 | 4 | 1

Foster efforts geared towards reducing stereotypes and stigmas in your country/region?
2 | 1 | 9 | 11 | 0

Financially support LGBTIQ+ events, organisations and initiatives in your country/region?
1 | 1 | 10 | 10 | 1

■ Extremely well  ■ Very well  ■ Somewhat well  ■ Not at all  ■ Not sure

## Core findings

We recorded mixed reactions when it came to the challenges that CSOs experience in engaging with the business sector. Responses from both the survey and the 1-1 interviews revealed the following challenges, which we have listed alphabetically.

- **Apolitical:** businesses will often have their own policies which limit or prohibit engaging in politics, especially in challenging countries and where they rely on government contracts and support.

- **Brand and reputation**: companies "fear loss of customers if they publicly admit associating with gender minorities (often assumed to be homosexual)". Another reason is the lack of understanding of the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ people in the workplace, making it less of a priority.

- **Constitutional, cultural and religious restrictions:** in addition to legislation which prohibits homosexuality or same-sex acts, religious and cultural beliefs also limit gender identities that don't conform to male or female assigned sex at birth. Currently, 69 UN member states still uphold colonial-era laws that criminalise consensual same-sex relationships. This provides a legal basis for disproportionate exclusion, stigma and discrimination of LGBTIQ+ people in the workplace.

- **COVID-19:** corporate social responsibility, especially LGBTIQ+ advocacy, has not been prioritised during the pandemic. Due to economic losses in the business sector because of COVID-19, LGBTIQ+ rights may not be at the top of a company's priorities.

- **Financial and human resources:** respondents felt that there was a huge gap in the resources needed to work with the business sector and that there is a need for "more human resource and financial capital."



- **Imposter syndrome:** this can be defined as a behavioural pattern in which an individual doubts their skills, talents or accomplishments and has a persistent internalised fear of being exposed as a 'fraud'. Recognising and mitigating these behaviours is crucial.

One respondent indicated that LGBTIQ+ people feel unseen and unheard on a daily basis and that "even when the community is invited to the table there is a reluctance in attending because we don't dare". And when at the table, the community feels like "a drop in the ocean" and the result is that their contributions will not be valued. This is especially true for younger activists.

- **Rainbow washing:** some companies have bold external communications strategies that support sexual and gender diversity in the workplace. However, these efforts may be interpreted as 'ainbow washing', meaning that the corporate motivation for supporting LGBTIQ+ equality is not coming from a place of core values.

- **Speaking their language:** those engaging with the business sector must speak the corporate language and know how systems in the corporate sector work. This will provide an advantage in building relationships. A lack of networking opportunities and platforms with corporate partners may mean that CSOs fail to build relationships with key business leaders.

- **Stigma and discrimination:** both within community member groups and at work. This can cause a barrier in the uptake of LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace.

- **Strategic planning and goal setting:** some CSOs realise that they have not included this in their approach and that CSOs need to analyse what they want from the business sector and to ensure that they frame their requests in a way that achieves these goals.

events and training packages – we need to address how to sell these packages to prospective companies.

## CSO needs

Our research also gave further insights into CSO needs and we have summarised these below.

### 1. Building CSO capability

CSOs face various challenges in engaging with the business sector including how to navigate organisations and negotiate financial and human capital. Could businesses offer CSO staff professional development opportunities and trainings; for example on how to present to a board or senior leaders?

### 2. Fundraising and the business sector

CSOs need to develop strategies to raise funds from the business sector. This could be through selling services such as learning

### 3. Sensitive countries

There is a need for guidance that is sensitive to geographical and sector-specific needs, recognising that LGBTIQ+ inclusion is not a one-size-fits-all situation. A solution in the UK may not be a suitable solution for the LGBTIQ+ community living in China or Ghana. Similarly, a solution for the automotive industry will not be the same for a legal firm or the energy sector.

### 4. Intersectional issues

This is about highlighting ways in which the business sector and CSOs could work together to integrate their advocacy with other intersectional issues like gender and disability. For example, working with a company that is speaking up about racism can offer LGBTIQ+ groups an entry point for highlighting the need for LGBTIQ+ concerns on tolerance and discrimination.

## Focus Areas

This toolkit is designed to meet your needs. Your response to our research questions informed us that the top three priority areas for the toolkit to address in supporting CSOs working with business are the ones below:

### Developing and sustaining partnerships with the corporate sector

As this is essentially the first step in engaging with the business sector, advice on how to network with businesses and examples of key actions and events to consider are required.

### Engagement and communication strategies

This should include ways in which CSOs can strike a balance between CSO sector language and business sector language. We need effective strategies to reach the right people within a specific company and to understand what messages are key for HR professionals or senior leaders.

### Corporate sector allies

This research, supported by the Open for Business 'Channels of Influence' report, shows that civil society groups, employees and consumers are putting more pressure on companies to ensure they are authentically supporting LGBTIQ+ inclusion.[2] We need to emphasise strategies that CSOs can use to improve the business sector's support and allyship for LGBTIQ+ inclusion. In addition, advice on ways to address r rainbow washing  is crucial to building the relationship between the business sector and LGBTIQ+ CSOs.

[2] Open for Business: Channels of Influence Report (March 2019)

# C. Navigating the Toolkit
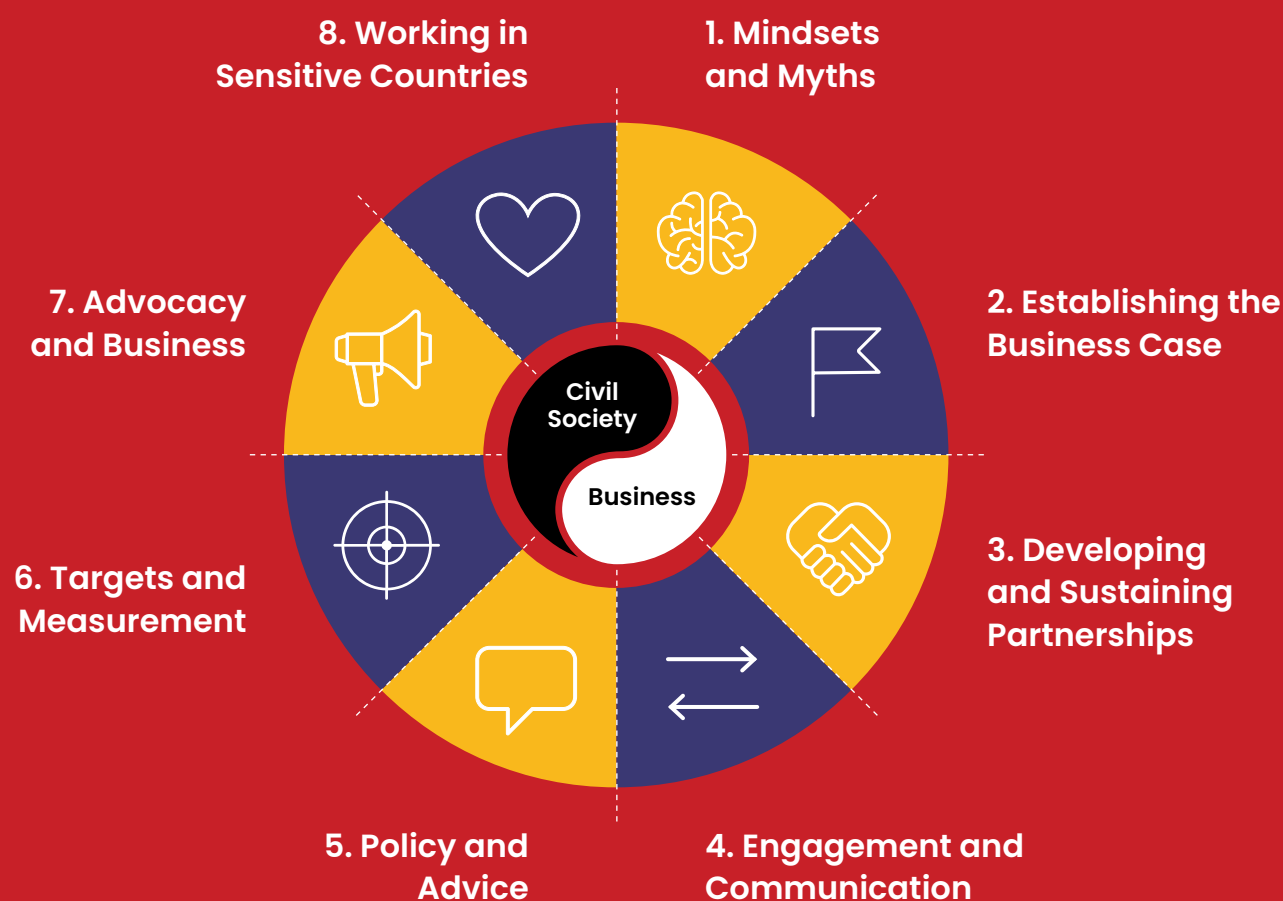
# Navigating the toolkit

**Based on the survey and interviews we conducted with CSO participants, we have identified eight focus areas and have developed eight tools to support developing and sustaining relationships with the business sector.**

Each tool includes a review of the facts and issues relating to a specific focus area, then looks at opportunities and challenges, and finally provides practical suggestions and approaches that you can use with your business partners. We include quotes from our research and a range of practical tools to help you make progress.

We begin with Myths and Mindsets, but there is no need to deploy every tool at the same time. The best way is to start with whatever interests you or your organisation most. Perhaps it's where you have gaps in your capabilities, or it could be where you feel confident in your approach but would benefit from fresh ideas or best practice.
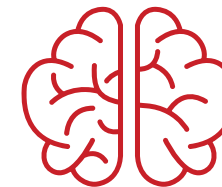
We also provide links to further information and advice.

Choose a few areas to focus on rather than trying to cover all bases. As experience builds and trusted relationships are formed with your business partners, you can review progress and use additional tools to support your continuing work together.



- **8. Working in Sensitive Countries**
- **1. Mindsets and Myths**
- **2. Establishing the Business Case**
- **3. Developing and Sustaining Partnerships**
- **4. Engagement and Communication**
- **5. Policy and Advice**
- **6. Targets and Measurement**
- **7. Advocacy and Business**

Civil Society
Business

# 1. Mindsets and Myths

## Overview

- › Myths and mindsets can limit progress on LGBTIQ+ inclusion
- › CSOs should try to separate fact from fiction and determine their preferred level of engagement with the business community
- › Suggestions of rainbow washing can be a barrier, but the extent of this can be objectively assessed

## What's this about?

Our research and experience show that civil society and businesses organisations often work in parallel on LGBTIQ+ inclusion and closer collaboration would help both to make progress.

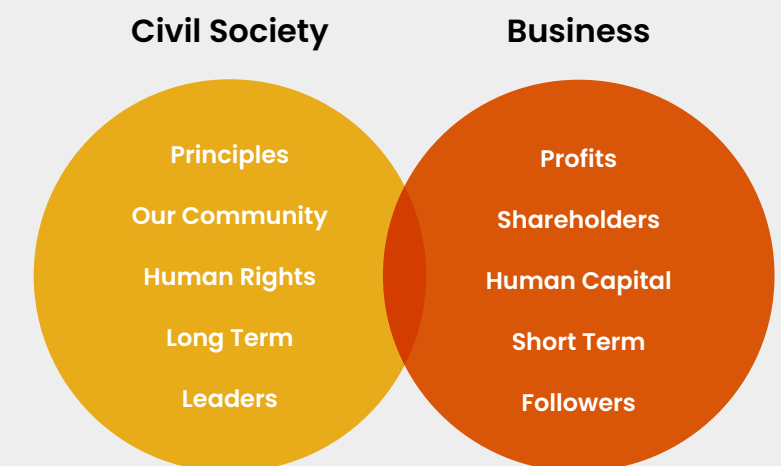However, civil society can view business with scepticism:

- Business is about profit rather than principles.
- Corporate LGBTIQ+ efforts are cynical and there's too much rainbow washing.
- If businesses really cared about LGBTIQ+ they would not do business in homophobic countries.

And businesses leaders may think:

- CSOs are all about activism and advocacy and that could be a risk to our business reputation.
- My business operates in some homophobic countries and working with CSOs in those locations could put our staff as well as our business at risk.

## Different worlds...

There may be lost opportunities if civil society and business see each other as different worlds, with different motivations and different mindsets.

### Civil Society

- Principles
- Our Community
- Human Rights
- Long Term
- Leaders

### Business

- Profits
- Shareholders
- Human Capital
- Short Term
- Followers

Rather than dwelling on the differences, look for the areas of common interest as a basis for partnership.

### Shared Values

- Respect & Integrity
- Inclusion & Diversity
- Social Capital
- Past, Present, Future
- Partners

A principle of 'Nothing About Us, Without Us', as adopted by the UN, should inform these relationships.

## What you told us

> [Amongst the CSO community] cynicism that the corporate sector only had profit as its motive does remain an issue. Surface the fact that this cynicism is out there and think about some of the ways to deal with it. If you have a long-term partnership where they trust you, you are more likely to be successful.

> During my time in the corporate world, I sometimes came across well intended people in civil society organisations who chose to stereotype business as only interested in profit and that this was the driver for the claimed commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion. In my experience, this is not the case and I think getting to know the individuals behind the corporate brand always helps. They have their own motivations for supporting LGBTIQ+ inclusion which goes way beyond profit and is often around fairness, equity and this simply being 'the right thing to do'. Some of these individuals will be gay; some will be allies; most will care and all would benefit from the perspectives and lived experience that civil society organisations can offer.



## Opportunities and challenges

### Myth busting

First, try to assess what's getting in the way of building business relationships and why. What history does your potential business partner have with LGBTIQ+ inclusion? What's worked? What have they learnt from any setbacks? If there is a suggestion of rainbow washing, make an objective assessment using the approach shown on the following page.

### Inside-out working

Put yourself in the shoes of your business partner. How do they operate? What are their constraints? What competitive advantage might progress on LGBTIQ+ inclusion offer to their business?

### Service mindset

What can your organisation provide to future business partners? What are the mutual benefits? How can you deliver those benefits and over what time period? Aim to be a legitimate party in the discussion and never become a victim.

## How to avoid rainbow washing

Rainbow washing is a term used to describe the action of using LGBTIQ+ issues in positive ways in order to distract attention from more negative actions by an organisation, country or government. It's a term easily used but difficult to prove (or remove) and can get in the way of developing good relationships with the business sector.

Here are eight indicators which help to assess the commitment of a potential business partner to LGBTIQ+ inclusion. Why not carry out a mutual assessment with your business partners?

1.  **Leadership commitment** through talking about the LGBTIQ+ business case, external announcements, signing commitments, attending conferences, speaking at events and through social media activity.

2.  **A D&I strategy** which includes LGBTIQ+ inclusion through membership of external organisations, internal awareness programmes, addressing intersectionality and applying this in difficult locations.

3.  **LGBTIQ+ employee networks** are in place, supported by senior sponsors and with their own budget and access to resources. The network will have a plan related to the company's D&I objectives.

4.  **Policies and measurements** are included which focus on LGBTIQ+ people including questions in employee surveys, career support, awareness training, transgender transition support and more.

5.  **Supply chain diversity** is promoted to ensure that suppliers, through their own actions, meet the company's expectations for LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the context of a broader D&I strategy.

6.  **External and internal communications** will reflect LGBTIQ+ inclusion on a continuous basis and not just around annual Pride events. This will include celebration of LGBTIQ+ and ally role models.

7.  **External benchmarking**, rankings and indices are used to engage staff, to stimulate improvement and to engage with external organisations working on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

8.  **Financial and pro bono** support is provided for CSOs which helps to reinforce the company's sustained commitment to social responsibility, including in sensitive countries.
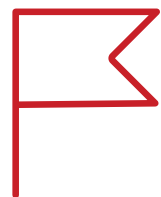
Adapted from: Jens Schadendorf (2021) Gayme Changer, London: LID Publishing, pp.54–56.

# 2. Establishing the Business Case

## Overview

> Getting clear on why this matters to the business sector

> What do you need to know about your business partners and what will they want to know about you?

> Aligning business and societal objectives

### What's this about?

The business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion is crucial when working with business partners.

There seems to be a perception gap between the business world of profit, customers and shareholders and the CSO world of purpose, equality and community.

How can we bridge that gap and find a common language to describe why this matters?

### Questions to consider

How do the goals of my organisation link with the goals of my future business partners? What values do we have in common? What are the differences?

How can our knowledge and experience of local opportunities and challenges help businesses to advance their own goals on LGBTIQ+ inclusion?

How can we help businesses play a bigger role externally as advocates or to simply to align with our cause? What are the first steps and how can we protect each other's reputation?

The Workplace Pride business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion is shown earlier in the toolkit. Here is another example from the Open for Business report 'New Global Champions' which relates LGBTIQ+ inclusion to business performance in high-potential emerging markets.

| | |
|---|---|
| Financial performance | High-potential emerging-market companies which openly support LGBT+ inclusion suffer no negative impact on revenue growth or earnings before interest and taxes. |
| Global markets & supply chains | LGBT+ inclusive companies have a higher proportion of international revenues, indicating they can more effectively tap into global markets and supply chains. |
| Talent acquisition & retention | High-potential emerging-market companies which openly support LGBT+ inclusion are better able to attract and retain talent. |
| Brand strength & customer orientation | High-potential emerging-market companies which openly support LGBT+ inclusion see stronger brands and better customer orientation. |
| Corporate governance | LGBT+ inclusive policies can be taken as an indicator of stronger corporate governance. |
| LGBT+ inclusive cities | LGBT+ inclusive cities can provide a supportive environment to help boost the competitiveness of high-potential emerging-market companies. |

## What you told us

" A senior leader at my company once asked me, 'surely by now we are beyond needing a case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion'? My response was 'well I am so pleased that you get it but don't assume everyone does and so we must reinforce the business case and adapt to new environments and trends'.

" A few years later, colleagues started to tell me that 'we really don't need all this LGBTIQ+ business case stuff on talent and productivity and brand... surely we are doing this because it the right thing to do'. It was then I knew we had our business case firmly established... but I also knew we still needed to keep working on it.

## Opportunities and challenges

**So what really is the business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion?**

The business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, as described on pages 14 and 15, includes four core themes:

- Talent and leadership.
- Productivity and performance.
- Brand and reputation.
- Social and moral.

The last theme is where CSOs will find the most synergies, but you need to be familiar with all four themes to make the business case for working with your organisation.

**What will businesses want to know about you?**

Responsible businesses will assess the value that a CSO can bring in advancing their work on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

This assessment will ask a number of questions:

- What can this CSO do for us now and in the future?
- How will working with this CSO protect and advance our reputation?
- Is this CSO credible? What are others saying? What are the media saying?
- Does the CSO have an established track record of effective advocacy and/or research which has impacted LGBTIQ+ inclusion?
- How well networked is this CSO with other companies?
- How can this CSO help us to communicate our message?

Responses to these questions should be considered when formulating and making an offer to a potential business partner:

**But how can we ever align our CSO objectives with business needs?**

It's about going beyond the business case and looking for common ground. For example, safety of staff and customers - both physical and psychological - matters to businesses. Businesses know that their brand and reputation depend on external perceptions. How can your CSO support this? How does your value proposition enhance theirs?

**Do businesses really care about human rights?**

This is part of the social and moral business

case. Many businesses operate in countries where same-sex activity is criminalised. These companies may have global policies and processes in place to uphold human rights and support their staff and customers. This is where dilemmas arise and where CSOs with local knowledge can facilitate a discussion with local business leaders to help fulfil their corporate objectives.

**How should we get our message across to the wider world?**

Businesses can often be hesitant to communicate their business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, especially in more sensitive countries. They worry about upsetting local partners or losing customers. CSOs can help by reframing the conversation with cultural sensitivity. This should include themes of fairness and respect in a local context as well as supporting leaders in personalising the message. Together we can create workplaces where everyone can be themselves no matter what their background.

---

📖

### Further Resources

- Open for Business: New Global Champions – Why fast-growing companies from emerging markets are embracing LGBT+ inclusion. View here.
- World Economic Forum: The simple reason why so many businesses support LGBT rights View here.
- McKinsey Quarterly: LGBTQ+ voices: learning from lived experiences. View here.

---

# 3. Developing and Sustaining Partnerships

### Overview

> **How can my organisation support business needs?**
> **What should I discuss in the initial meetings?**
> **How can I build trust and long-term relationships through which businesses become our allies?**

### What's this about?

Partnering with the business sector will help to accelerate change and achieve the goals of LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

Building lasting relationships with businesses will also provide a more sustainable source of financial support, access to other resources and an ally in advocating more broadly for LGBTIQ+ rights.

Many CSOs receive an income stream from donations which tends to be a less reliable basis on which to plan financially. This is especially true during economic downturns and donations may also rely on the goodwill or patronage of one individual which can change over time.

It starts by ensuring your goals and the goals of potential business partners have some common ground.

### First impressions

The initial meetings with business partners are where mutual benefits are discovered, trust is built and longer-term relationships are established. Preparation for these meetings needs close attention and requires you to step into the shoes of your potential partners.

What are the wants and needs of business partners in driving LGBTIQ+ inclusion?

- What is their business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion?
- What will gain support from the company's leaders?
- What might create resistance?

What is the motivation of the individuals that you are working with?

- Why are they doing this?
- What help do they need with their sponsors or budget holders?
- What will make them look good?

### What you told us

"

I think CSOs need to approach the business sector with some clarity on the purpose of the engagement. CSOs have to understand that it's a process of building a relationship and it's going to take time. So I think that it's important that we understand that corporates work differently and we have to work differently with them.

## Questions to consider

How can my organisation demonstrate sustained value to business?

What skills, unique approaches, local insights, resources or access can I offer?

What support do you need beyond financial donations?

- Pro bono professional support.
- Broadening ally networks.
- Access to customer and suppliers.
- Co-branding.
- Hosting and event management.

Which organisations should I approach and how do I segment them to catch the early adopters and interest the later followers?

Can I quantify the benefits offered by my organisation and turn these into a membership scheme?

## Agenda for initial meetings

Here is a suggested agenda for initial meetings with businesses in which you can establish the case for working with your organisation.

### Introductions
- Who is here today and why?

### Understanding their business
- Why does LGBTIQ+ inclusion matter?
- How will this help their business? What is the link to business customers and employees?
- Who is responsible?
- What do they find difficult?
- What is the relationship like between head office policymakers and local leaders?

### What can we offer you?
- Context for our work.
- Local perspective and networks.
- What is our value proposition including our strengths and those of the community?
- How can we support your business?

### What are the opportunities for cooperation?
- Identify a few areas to get started:
  – Influencing externally (but don't start with advocacy).
  – Localisation of global approaches.
  – Best practice sharing.
- Express in terms of clear benefits which will support your business partner's reputation.

### Next steps
- Who will do what and by when?

The idea of selling or promoting a proposal to business for LGBTIQ+ inclusion may be unfamiliar or you may feel that this is unnecessary. After all, the human rights case ought to be enough to convince everyone. However, put yourself in the position of a business leader deciding whether to work with your organisation. They will likely have to seek funding, allocate scarce resources and perhaps convince sceptics of the value. And funding is unlikely to be justified based on being 'the right thing to do'. When presenting your ideas and vision, ensure that there is a clear business case. How will your proposal support their business objectives, enhance their brand and reputation and engage customers and employees?

## Opportunities and challenges

### Consider a membership scheme
- For an established CSO, one of the best ways to secure business support is to quantify the benefits your organisation can offer and communicate these in terms that businesses will understand.
- A well-constructed membership scheme and the mutual commitments required to make this a success will help in making progress for both civil society and for business.
- Membership schemes come in many different formats, but the essential components are:
  – Clearly described services which support business needs and advance LGBTIQ+ inclusion. These services broadly fit into four categories:
    - Strategic insights and content support.
    - Peer connectivity and networking.
    - Research and events.
    - Learning and other services.
  – Differentiated service levels and pricing.
- Benefits which evolve each year.
- Effective relationship management, which will require resource commitment.
- The results should be sustained income and cash flow, deepening of relationships over many years, furthering the credibility of your organisation and developing a network of businesses committed to LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

### Pricing
Your membership scheme should be priced based on the value you offer rather than the costs you incur. This can be difficult to estimate, but look at comparable organisations, try to find out how much budget the person you are approaching will have and be sure to differentiate pricing based on service levels, geography and public versus business sector members. Also ensure you have a differentiated price range, with the lower end intended to attract interest and the upper end designed to fund your growth.

Workplace Pride's own membership scheme targets audiences predominantly in the public and business sectors in Europe. The scheme has evolved over 10 years and new benefits are added every year. The price range between the upper and lower membership tiers has a ratio of 3.5:1.

### Further Resources
A detailed example of Workplace Pride's membership scheme with clearly articulated benefits can be found here.

# 4. Engagement and Communication

## Overview

> Effective engagement and communication are essential to developing business relationships

> Use the 'Know, Feel, Do' approach to frame your messages

> Leaders need to be visible and audiences clearly identified

> Use access to your own external platform to encourage advocacy by the business sector



### What's this about?

Our research revealed that a primary concern of CSOs was effective communication with the corporate sector, mentioned by 87% of survey participants. Areas to focus on include:

- Framing messages that connect with the business sector's goals and avoid messages that may be considered too political.

- Ask questions to ensure that you target decision makers with influence (and budgets). Start with HR and D&I teams, but also consider those responsible for external affairs, community relations, brand and sustainability. The closer you can get to the business leaders the better.

- Ensuring communications approaches address all aspects of the business case and both business and societal issues.

- Promoting the value of what your organisation can offer in terms of a platform for business to find its voice on human rights issues.
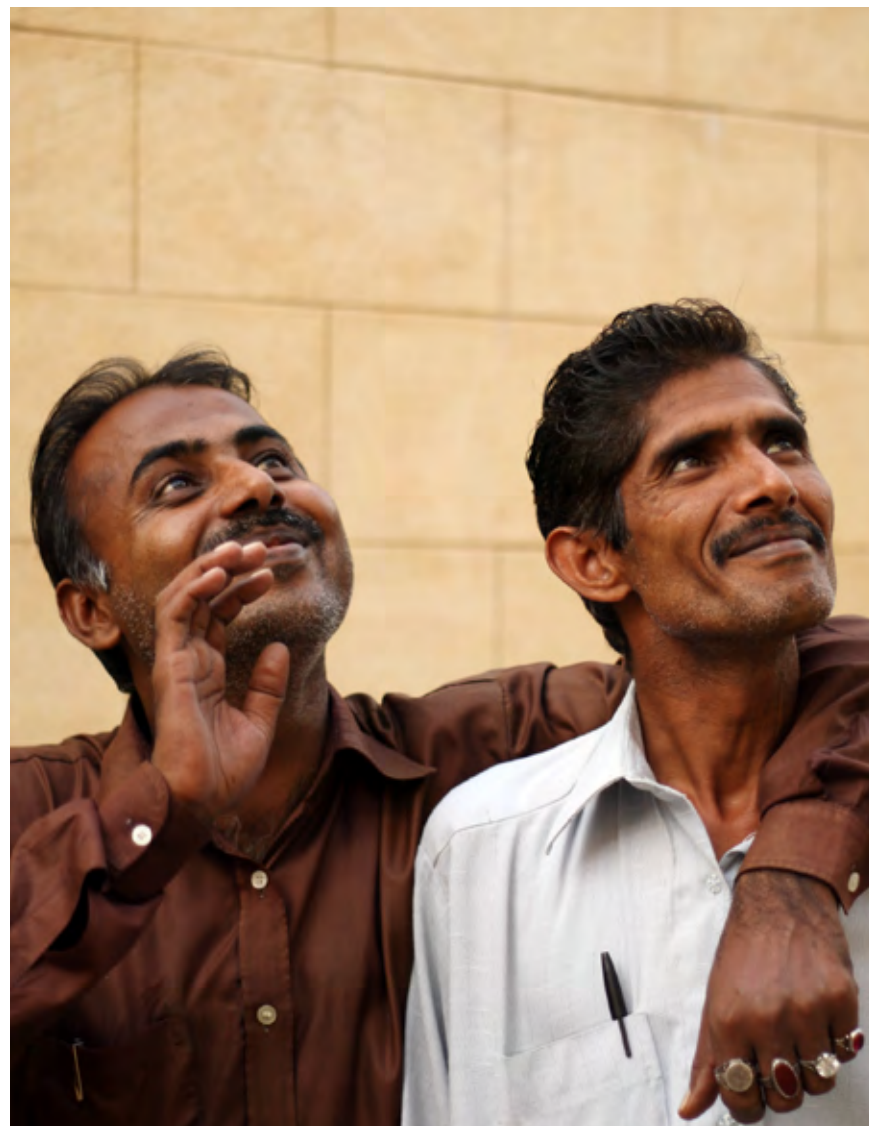
## How do I get my message across?

The 'Know, Feel, Do' approach is a tried and tested way of developing a communication strategy which meets both rational and emotional needs and is therefore more likely to gain commitment.

**In framing your messages, the essential questions to ask about your audience are:**

1. What do I want them to feel?
2. What do I want them to know?
3. What do I want them to do?

| Initiative | What is it? | How does it align? |
|---|---|---|
| Know | Share Inform Educate | Why does LGBTIQ+ inclusion matter? What are the critical issues for LGBTIQ+ inclusion in my country? What can my organisation offer and what are the benefits of partnering with us? What are other companies doing? |
| Feel | Inspire Impress Entertain | Raise awareness and visibility of LGBTIQ+ inclusion in my country. Align with broader human rights and sustainable development initiatives. Highlight the moral/human rights cases (with external speakers). |
| Do | Invite Persuade Collaborate | Make the LGBTIQ+ inclusion business case relevant for their organisation. Support for external activities such as international days and Pride events. Sponsor local external networks. Be willing to engage with government and other external stakeholders. |

## What you told us

"

As the Head of Inclusion and Diversity for a large multinational, I found that less is more when it came to working with civil society organisations. When I took on the role, I inherited a multitude of civil society relationships which I reduced by more than 50% and also focused the resources we used, both financial and human. As a result, our relationships with civil society improved, trust-based partnerships emerged, and with their help and encouragement, our impact was raised and sustained.

The CSOs that took the time to understand our world, our capabilities and our limitations were best able to challenge us and move us more towards a more human rights-based approach which in turn supported our brand and reputation. Success required both sides to 'stand in each other shoes' and to be good listeners, to show humility from the business perspective and to be confident in working with a complex and at times frustrating organisation from the CSO perspective.

## Opportunities and challenges

**Engaging with leadership**

Most leaders of responsible businesses will have some understanding of LGBTIQ+ inclusion. But how do they show their commitment? How do they become visible allies? How can local leaders adapt to policies set by head office?

**Helping business leaders to become allies by encouraging the following:**

- Meet with local (in-country) LGBTIQ+ employee networks.
- Ask critical questions of local leaders.
  - What are you doing to ensure LGBTIQ+ inclusion?
  - What are your local challenges with LGBTIQ+ inclusion?
  - How are you supporting your LGBTIQ+ community locally?
- Talk about LGBTIQ+ inclusion in staff meetings and externally, explaining why it matters to you as a leader.
- Offer business office environments and private networks as safe spaces for discussions on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.
- Sponsor and host external events with other businesses.

**Reaching the right audience**

Navigating corporate decision making can be difficult and time-consuming.

It's important to understand how decisions are made and who holds the budgets for discretionary spending on third-party organisations such as CSOs.

- Businesses like to see their decision making as fast, timely and focused on outcomes.
- From a business perspective, CSO decision making may seem to be more purposeful and consultative and therefore slower.
- It's not always clear who makes business decisions and who holds the budget/resources that will be needed. This opaqueness can be part of a negotiating process or may simply reflect a complex organisation.
- In initial meetings ask questions about decision making, accountability and budgets.

**Access to your platform**

Your CSO platform and associated networks have great value in helping business leaders to find their voice on LGBTIQ+ advocacy.

Can you offer this in a safe and professional way that will help future leaders to develop their own advocacy and external representation skills?

- Does your CSO have trustee or advisory board roles which business leaders could fulfil? What about speakers and panel discussions at external events?
- Could you offer internships for your partners' future leaders? Your organisation will benefit from some pro bono support and the intern will be able to develop skills such as influencing without authority, mentoring/reverse mentoring and understanding what it takes to represent their employer externally and deal with the challenges that will emerge.
- What are the co-branding and social media endorsement possibilities? How could your voice and reputation across the LGBTIQ+ community help your business partners to raise their profile in the public sphere in a genuine and sustainable way?

## What you told us

> I think civil society organisations should open up their advisory boards beyond their traditional members. CSOs need board members who have a background in the corporate sector too.

## Further Resources

There are multiple sources for the 'Know, Feel, Do' approach. Further information can be found here:
Baker Brand and Simply Stated Business.

# 5. Policy and Advice

### Overview

- LGBTIQ+ inclusive polices are at the core of best practice in leading businesses
- Many examples of policies are available online or through best practice sharing networks
- Businesses struggle with the interpretation and localisation of these policies which is where your CSO can make the difference

## What's this about?

LGBTIQ+ inclusive workplace polices result in higher employee productivity and retention, and lower absenteeism. CSOs can provide significant help to businesses in implementing policy and advice which support LGBTIQ+ employees, customers and suppliers.

Companies may have global policies relating to these issues but it is often left to local teams to implement them. This may lead to polices being omitted because 'it's too difficult here' or claims that legal or cultural restrictions prohibit certain approaches.

## Questions to consider

Which policies will make the biggest difference to LGBTIQ+ employees, customers and suppliers?

How can a global policy be adjusted locally where legal or social constraints may prevail?

What creative solutions lie within existing policies to ensure LGBTIQ+ staff and partner inclusion and safety?

## Policy checklist

What polices do your business partners have in place for the following needs?

- Domestic partners' benefits including pensions and healthcare.
- Parental leave policies that treat everyone equally, regardless of sexual orientation or marital status.
- Adoption leave and benefits for all.
- Transgender transition support including healthcare, leave and awareness-building for the transitioning employee's team.
- International mobility including partner needs and relocation.
- Self-identification and use of voluntary disclosure in employee surveys.
- Non-discrimination policies to include sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.
- Helplines and emergency support.
- HR systems and policies that use gender-neutral pronouns.
- Training of HR (and other) service providers on sexual orientation.

## What you told us

> In our business we work together with local LGBTI and organisations. In whatever we do always we check before. Whether its statements, events or policy. We can never be experts on a certain country or whether a certain statement is helpful or not. That's the principle of 'nothing about us without us' which we always try to be guided by.

### Opportunities and challenges

**Consult and convene**
Not all policies are the same and some will have greater impact than others. This judgement is as much subjective as objective, so companies need to involve employee resource groups and their allies in agreeing the approach and priorities.

CSOs can play a role in facilitating these conversations and bringing in others from their own network to share best practice. Consider working with your partners on a review of existing benefits which can reveal new ways to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

**Localise and challenge**
CSOs do not need to become experts in developing HR and customer-facing policies. Many of these are already available as best practice developed by other organisations. Your value comes in interpreting these policies in a local context, helping businesses to understand the constraints and challenges.

A common response can be the statement "it's illegal to be gay here so that policy can't apply". Challenge this. The policy will be about protecting sexual orientation and not sexual activity and thus is an anti-discrimination measure. For example, extending parental leave benefits to same-sex partners is a statement about fairness and equity and could be implemented regardless of whether marriage is legal locally.

**Leave no one behind**
Start by promoting non-discrimination polices that are fully inclusive. When developing policy which protects sexual orientation, be sure that the outcome is fair for all groups. Including sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in a company's anti-discrimination policy is also a positive statement of intent.

What about other groups? Are people with a disability or ethnic minorities and other protected characteristics also included? We need to ensure no one is left behind, particularly in countries with no employment protection for minorities.

**Awareness and training**
Don't stop with policy advice. Businesses also need to ensure their staff are aware of these enhanced benefits and how to access them.

Staff dealing with human resources issues are trained on LGBTIQ+ inclusion. For example, when dealing with international transfers, they should not assume that a spouse or partner is of a different gender. Ensure language, both verbal and written, is inclusive and gender neutral.

### Further Resources

- Mercer has published a guide to LGBT workplace benefits around the world. A sample report is available and the full version can be purchased here.

- Uber has a detailed set of Gender Transition Guidelines here.

- HRC also has advice on developing Gender Transition Guidelines here.

# 6. Targets and Measurement

### Overview

> Targets and measurements help to drive commitment and action

> CSOs can help businesses to establish targets which relate to the business case and are meaningful locally

> Understand and leverage competitor performance on LGBTIQ+ inclusion to influence progress

### What's this about?
Building and sustaining relationships with the business sector will be easier if the dialogue includes discussion of objectives, targets and measurements.

Businesses thrive on concrete measurement and sometimes it seems the more the better. Be proactive and come up with a few impactful targets using a mix of qualitative and quantitative measurements.

### Questions to consider
- What are the targets that your business partner can commit to?

- Is there a mix of internal and (where possible) external measures?

- Is there an existing staff satisfaction survey which can be improved with questions on LGBTIQ+ inclusion?

- If employee resource groups are in place, what are their goals and how do they relate to business results?

- How is LGBTIQ+ inclusion reflected in anti-discrimination and harassment policies?

CSOs can support businesses in establishing, localising and tracking a range of targets to demonstrate commitment and progress on LGBTIQ+ inclusion. Here are some examples:
- Establish and communicate core principles.

- Non-discrimination and harassment policies

- Employee benefits and supporting policies.

- Recruitment, onboarding and progression.

- Visible and sustained leadership commitment.

- Employee satisfaction to include LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

- Learning and awareness for staff and contractors.

- Support and sponsorship for LGBTIQ+ employee resource groups.

- External-facing activities including with customer and suppliers.

**For more sensitive countries, don't start with LGBTIQ+ inclusion but instead consider targets for:**
- Anti-discrimination and harassment measures.

- Broader awareness and learning programmes about inclusion.

- Maintaining a respectful workplace.

There are currently just four publicly out LGBT+ CEOs of Fortune 500 companies and no publicly out LGBT+ CEOs in the FTSE 100. And these figures haven't improved for several years.

In fact, there are now fewer LGBT+ CEOs in the FTSE 100 than in 2018.

**Source:** Business Leader

## Self-identification

This is an area often mentioned as best practice. However, it can be difficult to implement due to concerns about confidentiality and data privacy. Localisation is often a critical factor. A number of organisations have made progress and here are some suggested further resources:

- IBM has summarised its experience with LGBTIQ+ inclusion in employee surveys in a paper available here.

- The Human Right Campaign (HRC) has a detailed approach on LGBTIQ+ self-identification here.

### What you told us

"

It's often said in business that 'what gets measured gets done', although perhaps this is better stated as 'what gets committed gets done.' And while quantified measurements matter, so do that which focus on value and simply doing the right thing.

"

If you want to get the attention of a business partner on LGBTIQ+ inclusion, ask them how their competitors are doing and how they are showing up in LGBTIQ+ benchmark surveys.

## Opportunities and challenges

### Take a look at the Workplace Pride Global Benchmark

The Workplace Pride Global Benchmark is an online tool designed to measure LGBTIQ+ policies and practices for internationally active employers, representing more than 4 million staff. Created in 2014, the Global Benchmark supports organisations which are implementing global D&I and LGBTIQ+ policies, especially in countries where obstacles such as legal frameworks or cultural norms make it hard to do so.

**Workplace Pride Global Benchmark has a section on Societal Impact.**
Organisations that do well in this area:

- Show support for LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion in social, mainstream and LGBTIQ+ media.

- Are active members of LGBTIQ+ CSOs and have staff members actively involved in their work, including external events.

- Actively engage with LGBTIQ+ owned businesses as suppliers, partners and customers.

- Work directly with the community and coalitions, actively lobbying for LGBTIQ+ human rights.

**Carry out an assessment with these questions and use the results as a basis for a discussion on how your organisation can help.**

**Use these three questions to assess external societal impact.
How has your business partner engaged with the LGBTIQ+ community externally in the past year?**

1. They have not engaged with the LGBTIQ+ community externally.

2. They engaged actively by supporting their own LGBTIQ+ employee network with external activities.

3. They engaged actively with LGBTIQ+ employees in their customer and/or partner organisations.

- They formally engaged the LGBTIQ+ community outside their own organisation or that of their partners and customers.

- They developed plans and worked on LGBTIQ+ equality issues with the external LGBTIQ+ community.

**Which of the following external community activities has your business partner actively used in the past year to demonstrate commitment to LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion?**

- Communicated using social media, mainstream media and or LGBTIQ+ channels.

- Sponsored, supported or joined local and/or international human rights organisations working on LGBTIQ+ inclusion (either visible financial support or visible top management participation).

- Participated in local or international events in which all of their employees had easy access to the topic of LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

**What has your business partner done in the past year to address LGBTIQ+ inclusion and rights issues?**

- They took no specific action.

- They developed concrete strategies or plans for engaging with specific external LGBTIQ+ organisations to learn more about obstacles and issues faced by LGBTIQ+ people.

- Their leaders/employees serve on the board or in other leadership positions in LGBTIQ+ CSOs.

- They created or joined coalitions that publicly call for change to protect LGBTIQ+ rights and equality.

- They acted in the public sphere to influence the (local) climate (e.g. lobbying the government, activism).
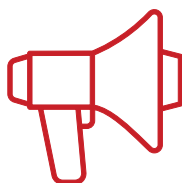
### Further Resources

- Workplace Pride Global Benchmark summary report 'What does Good Look Like' at this link.

- Stonewall Workplace Equality Index at this link.

- Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index at this link.

# 7. Advocacy and Business

## Overview

> Businesses often have inherent concerns about LGBTIQ+ advocacy although businesses have extensive experience engaging and lobbying governments on a variety of sensitive issues

> CSOs can play a vital role in understanding how effective advocacy can help to build business reputation

> The diplomatic sector can also be a strong ally and play a convening role between business and civil society

## What's this about?

CSOs play a critical role in encouraging businesses to get more involved with external advocacy. However, business may be reluctant due to concerns about brand and reputation, damaging customer relationships or may simply lack confidence in how to go about this.

Being effective at external advocacy and diplomacy doesn't necessarily mean being visible in public domains. There is more to it than simply flying rainbow flags once a year.

Our experience of working in this area is that often the best way to promote LGBTIQ+ inclusion is through a subtle and well-timed approach. This can be more persuasive, especially in sensitive countries where there is often societal resistance.

Looking at successful advocacy in other areas such as gender and disability may provide some useful guidance.

CSOs are well placed to navigate these possibilities. There is also a power in the collective advocacy of multiple businesses which well-networked CSOs can enable.

## Taking a structured approach

As with other elements of working with business, a structured and strategic approach will help.

The 'Channels of Influence' framework, developed by Open for Business, provides a good starting point. The essential idea is that companies can emphasise the importance of LGBTIQ+ inclusion though multiple channels, thereby creating advocates globally beyond the confines of a single company or network.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Value Chain Channel** | The Value Chain Channel includes a company's supply chain and distribution networks, as well as the end-buyers of its products and services – customers, clients and consumers. |
| | **Financial Channel** | The Financial Channel includes banking partners that provide financing lending and services (such as payroll), as well as investors (asset owners and managers) and direct investment. |
| | **Public Policy Channel** | The Public Policy Channel includes relationships with public officials, governments, politicians and policymakers, as well as relevant industry regulators and national human rights institutions. |
| | **Civil Society Channel** | The Civil Society Channel includes the civil society groups and NGOs that a company interacts with, the various communities that surround the business, and the media. |
| | **Industry Channel** | The Industry Channel includes any professional bodies or industry associations that a company or its employees may participate in, as well as chambers of commerce and trade unions. |

It remains critical that businesses consult closely with local communities and organisations before taking any action, particularly in countries where LGBTIQ+ rights are challenged. That's where the opportunity lies for CSOs.

## The embassy model

It can help to consider an organisation's relative focus on internal policies and practices and its willingness to commit to external advocacy which, with your insights, could enhance brand and reputation.

The embassy model refers to policies, not organisations, and acknowledges that companies need to adapt how they engage on LGBTIQ+ inclusion in sensitive countries.

### When in Rome
Adhere to the norms of the jurisdiction.

### Embassy
Implement and enforce protective policies and LGBT-supportive measures on corporate campuses.

### Advocate
Support local LGBT activism and lobby local legislators to enact protective laws.

This model was developed by Coqual (formerly The Center for Talent Innovation). An infographic with further information is available here. View the full report available to their Coqal members here.

## What you told us

A few years ago, one of our member business organisations wanted to arrange a conference to raise visibility on LGBTIQ+ issues in a homophobic country. We had interest from other Western companies and support from a local CSO. However, no one was willing to host the event due to fears of government reaction damaging their brand or worse, the safety of their people. The Dutch embassy stepped in to host our event, we focused on a theme of inclusion rather than LGBTIQ+ advocacy and ran a successful event the impact of which is felt locally to this day.

## Opportunities and challenges

### Principle for acting in the public sphere

At the outset, adopting clear principles in the approach to advocacy will help business leaders to gain confidence. How can you support this?

We recommend the approach developed by Open for Business in their advice to businesses.

**The following principles are recommended for companies acting in the public sphere on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.**

1. **Do no harm.** This is a guiding mantra of organisations that are concerned with human rights and social issues and requires an open and ongoing dialogue with CSOs representing the communities that will be impacted by the actions.

2. **Nothing about us without us.** Any advocacy undertaken on behalf of LGBTIQ+ communities should respect the self-determination of those communities and should ensure the full and direct participation of those representing them.

3. **Never assume.** The context of LGBTIQ+ inclusion can be complex and easily misunderstood by those outside of the community. CSOs are deeply embedded in local contexts and can help accurately identify what aims business can strive for.

4. **Locally led, globally supported.** Actions in support of LGBTIQ+ inclusion should be led by local senior executives of a company, with support from the global leadership and a clear worldwide commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

5. **The long view.** Prioritise creating sustainable mechanisms for continued dialogue across stakeholders on LGBTIQ+ inclusion, rather than specific near-term outcomes. In other words, don't 'win the battle and lose the war'.

### Broadening networks

Workplace Pride has experience of running international conferences in more than a dozen countries, including some sensitive locations. Many of these have been directly supported by the diplomatic sector. You can read more here.

Don't underestimate the value that your own networks can bring to the business sector, especially where you have trusted relationships with governments, opinion formers and policymakers.

Diplomatic missions around the world are involved in quiet diplomacy on LGBTIQ+ rights. Working with civil society and business is part of their mandate and they offer a convening role which your CSO can support.

The Netherlands is a co-founder and an active member of the Equal Rights Coalition. This is a group of 42 nations, currently co-chaired by Argentina and the UK, working in collaboration with civil society organisations for equal rights worldwide for LGBTIQ+ people. Many embassies throughout the world also maintain contacts with local LGBTIQ+ organisations and support them in a variety of ways.

Embassies can also provide safe locations to host events and may have a local convening power not always available to CSOs or businesses in more sensitive countries. Chambers of commerce, trade organisations and unions can also provide support to the LGBTIQ+ community and CSOs play a critical role in providing access to these networks to their business partners.

Sometimes it takes creativity. If a particular country bans Pride events on the basis of conservative values, could local network convening by a CSO enable such events if hosted by a business partner?

### Understanding government motivations

Governments have many objectives in supporting LGBTIQ+ rights:

- Showing their commitment to human rights.

- Showing that they are forward thinkers and committed to change.

- Connecting broader society with the business sector.

CSOs can play a convening role between the multiple stakeholders and become a trusted partner of both government and business.

### Linking to other Initiatives

Many businesses now understand that their broader role in society includes a responsibility to act to advance human rights and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These organisations will be familiar with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but they may not understand the relevance to LGBTIQ+ inclusion. As a CSO you can help them make this connection, which can create a stronger link with your own objectives.

### Further Resources

- The Open for Business 'Channels of Influence' framework can be found in more detail at this link.

- The Dutch government's approach to 'Improving the position of LGBTI people worldwide' at this link.

- Workplace Pride's 'Beyond Rainbows' paper connecting the UN SDGs with LGBTIQ+ at this link.

# 8. Working In Sensitive Countries

## Overview

> Countries where LGBTIQ+ rights and legal protections are limited or non-existent can be challenging even for well-intended and inclusive business to navigate

> CSOs can play a unique role in interpreting local context and finding common ground in sensitive locations

> Shifting the conversation towards inclusion takes time and patience but can be achieved through focus on respect and shared values

## What's this about?

70 countries continue to criminalise consensual same-sex activity between adults. In other countries, the lack of legal protection for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people, combined with social stigma, means that people can suffer discrimination and exclusion in silence.

Some businesses will have well-intended polices to ensure inclusion of their LGBTIQ+ staff wherever they work. But these may not be implemented in homophobic countries where concerns about brand, reputation and external relationships promote a cautious approach.

Dogmatic pursuit of global polices, often developed in more liberal environments, together with use of human rights rhetoric will achieve little. However, understanding local context and seeking an active dialogue around respect for all and eliminating discrimination is a potential way forward.

CSOs play a vital role as a bridge between global intent and local reality. Your local narrative and insights into how to approach a discussion on LGBTIQ+ inclusion will build businesses' confidence in taking a more assertive role in their approach.



Source: ILGA (December.2020)
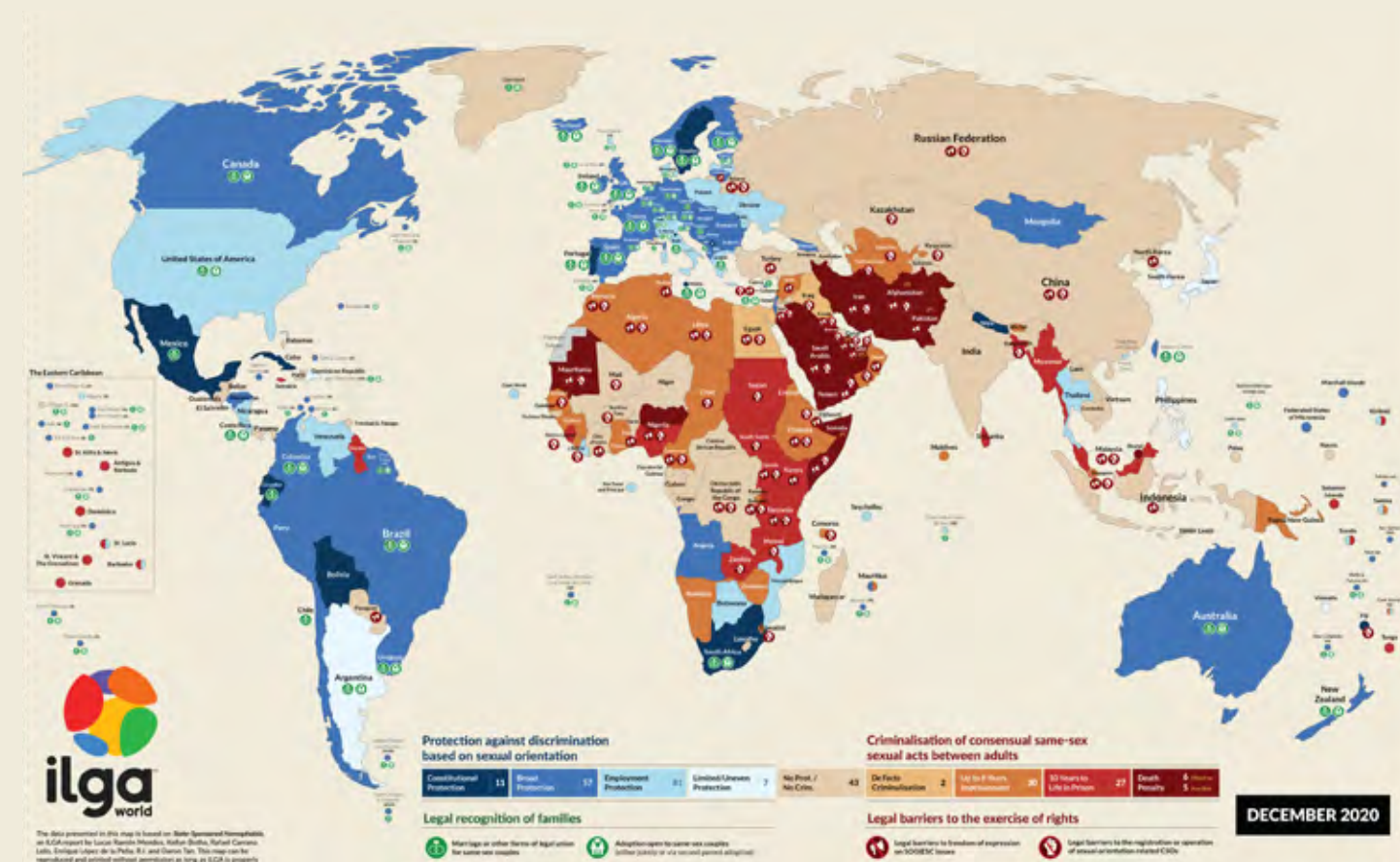
## Questions to consider

**What is actually illegal here?**
Challenge the statement 'being gay is illegal.' In many cases it isn't and often claimed legal constraints are used to safeguard societal norms and to avoid debate. In our experience, discussion with businesses should focus on protecting sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace rather than sexual activity which is inappropriate in the workplace regardless of orientation.

**What are the local societal norms around treating people with respect?**
Could this be a starting point for how we eliminate discrimination and localise the issue rather than imposing Western values?

## What you told us

"If a company takes a firm stand politicians will listen. There comes a certain point in a very difficult situation that you have to take a stand. If you just keep on going and you look the other way you are morally responsible for the atrocities that are happening.

"In spite of all the progress, too many countries still criminalise consensual same-sex acts and too few offer constitutional protection against discrimination due to sexual orientation. Homophobia is again on the rise fuelled by popularist rhetoric and now more than ever, business and civil society needs to work together to progress LGBTIQ+ inclusion around the world.

## Opportunities and challenges

### Interpreting local culture

*"Position yourself as the expert on this topic and set the tone for the conversation."*

Help your business partners to explore local cultural norms and find common ground in areas such as respect for others.

Focus on these value-based principles at the start and move the discussion to LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion later.

Help businesses to understand that for some of their employees, they may feel safer being out at work than at home.

### Focus the discussion on common ground

*"In my work on LGBTIQ+ inclusion around the world I have sometimes been told by local leaders that we can't take that approach here because 'in our country it's illegal to be gay'. Well, that may be so, but I have yet to find any law which prohibits showing respect to our colleagues at work and in upholding their human rights."*

Many businesses will have a set of values, perhaps included in a code of conduct, which guides their approach to matters such as discrimination and respect for others. These may refer explicitly to LGBTIQ+ inclusion and if they don't, they should.

In a responsible company, upholding these values is non-negotiable but the challenge is how to achieve this. Position homophobia as a human rights issue and ensure broader values such as respect and fairness are considered. Adopt zero tolerance on discrimination and harassment in general and highlight sexual orientation and gender identity specifically.

### Engaging local leaders

*"In sensitive countries you need to shift your language to non-discrimination. Regardless of any grounds, we do not discriminate. We do not tolerate harassment or violence."*

*"Companies should not present their LGBTIQ+ advocacy as something that they champion in 'the West'. They need to make sure this is positioned not as a 'Western value' but as a universal value."*

Local business leaders may believe they have no basis on which to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion and see their role as protecting the brand and reputation of their company. However, they will have broader responsibilities to their staff and customers. Facilitate dialogue using questions such as:

- How can you ensure respect and psychological safety for your LGBTIQ+ employees?
- How can you provide an inclusive environment for your staff who chose not to be out at work?

Engage with expatriate staff who may be more open about their sexual orientation and to whom the company also has a duty of care in the local environment.

Implement sexual orientation awareness training for local staff, ensuring that this is part of a broader approach to inclusion.

### Further Resources

- Case studies on LGBTIQ+ advocacy in Brunei and Uganda are included in Workplace Pride's research paper 'A Call to Action: Corporate Advocacy for LGBT+ Rights'. Further details will be found at https://workplacepride.org/a-call-to-action/
- Open for Business City Rankings which establish a connection between LGBT+ inclusion and economic competitiveness in cities around the world is at this link.

# Case Studies

Two of our collaborators have kindly provided short examples of their experience of working with businesses which echo some of the themes in this toolkit. These include selecting business partners, developing the partnership and business benefits, all achieved in sensitive locations.

## The National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

The National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC), an independent human rights institution working for legal and policy reforms towards equality and full inclusion of sexual and gender minorities in Kenya, has built successful relationships with small and medium-sized enterprises in Kenya.

The relationships were established through engagement with NGLHRC in different forums, harnessed by partner recommendations and introductions. We held initial meetings, discussed intentions, and desired outcomes and soon launched the campaigns.

In the organisation's experience, this is made possible by the fact that they have fewer decision-making processes. Smaller companies are more open and amenable to support diversity and inclusion even in countries where laws penalise same sex intimacy.

These companies have had public digital media campaigns that not only raise awareness, but also increase sales on items where proceeds from the sales are channelled towards supporting NGLHRC. This has enabled NGLHRC to diversify its income streams and provide support to some of their activities through these financial streams.

**Njeri Gateru**
Executive Director
National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

> **Smaller companies are more open and amenable to support diversity and inclusion even in countries where laws penalise same sex intimacy.**

# Case Studies

## Solidarity Foundation

Solidarity Foundation is a registered trust based in India supporting sex workers and gender and sexual minorities (LGBTIAQ+). We do this through building of grassroots collectives and leadership, livelihood initiatives and spotlighting overlooked issues.

In 2017, we participated in a conference in Chennai that we co-organised with Workplace Pride. This conference covered many LGBTIAQ+ workplace issues with a special focus on the transgender community. The event brought together many corporate leaders from multinationals and companies based in India. While some of these businesses were familiar with the topics we cover, they had never so fully seen the value of integrating with trans people in India.

This way of thinking is also supported through our Livelihood Project, in which we seek to interweave the support of businesses in employing individuals belonging to LGBTIAQ+ communities based on the abundant skills, abilities and knowledge they possess.

After the 2017 event, one of our trans stakeholders was able to find employment with a major multinational in Bangalore in a people-facing role. This was a first for our community and we were pleased to see that by 'meeting the businesses half-way' this directly resulted in a benefit for one of our community members.

**Shubha Chacko**
Member, Board of Trustees
Solidarity Foundation

> **Engaging with corporates in India has provided our community with an additional avenue of support that previously seemed unrealistic.**

# D. Commitments and Actions

• Where you decide to start will depend on the commitment of your business partners, the capabilities of your organisation, the resources of both and the local context for your LGBTIQ+ community. Our experience is that it's best to do a few things well rather than to overcommit.

• Each action should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. When developing actions, ask some questions:

– What is required?

– Who is accountable?

– Who else needs to be involved?

– When should it be completed?

– How will we measure progress?

If these questions can't be answered then the action probably needs reframing.

• Finally, prioritise the actions so that you can then focus on the most critical with your business partners. One way to do this is to think about each action in terms of:

– **Impact:** how much impact will this action have on LGBTIQ+ inclusion and will it happen in the short term or the longer term?

– **Doability:** do we have the resources, financial and human, to take this action and will it be easy or difficult to achieve?

These assessments will be qualitative but can nonetheless give a quick overview of priorities.

**Plot the actions marked X on the grid below and prioritise those in the top right quadrant. Also consider how the impact can be increased or the doability made easier for the actions in the other quadrants.**

# 4. Commitments and Actions

• Working with business partners on commitments and actions, which your organisation can nurture and support is what will really drive LGBTIQ+ inclusion over time.

• We have grouped the themes of this toolkit into four areas and have developed suggested actions under two headings:

**Building the Foundations** and **Moving Ahead**. Also think about which actions will have impact now and which will do in the future and which actions may be more or less successful depending on location.

## Suggested actions

Based on the eight tools, we have summarised some suggested actions. Some are for your CSO to work on, some are where you can support your business partners and some are to take jointly.

| Themes | Building the Foundations | Moving Ahead |
|---|---|---|
| **Getting Started**<br><br>**1. Mindsets and Myths**<br><br>**2. Establishing the Business Case** | • Understand your sponsors' LGBTIQ+ business case.<br><br>• Identify where the work of your CSO can support workplace inclusion.<br><br>• Clarify the benefits of what your CSO can offer to the business sector.<br><br>• Discuss beliefs with your business partner to reveal myths and mindsets. | • Help businesses to reframe their LGBTIQ+ narrative in a local context.<br><br>• Help leaders find their voice and explain why this matters externally.<br><br>• Establish links between the LGBTIQ+ business case and the goals of the organisation.<br><br>• Jointly conduct an assessment looking for any indicators of rainbow washing. |
| **Partnering with the Business Sector**<br><br>**3. Developing and Sustaining Partnerships**<br><br>**4. Engagement and Communication** | • Establish the agenda and desired outcomes for initial meetings with business partners.<br><br>• Understand your business partners' motivations, limitations and business case.<br><br>• Meet with business leaders and start to make the case for external advocacy. | • Develop a membership scheme as a source of stable income.<br><br>• Establish what support your CSO needs beyond the simply financial.<br><br>• Use the Know, Feel, Do approach to develop a communications plan.<br><br>• Offer your platform – virtual and in person – to support business advocacy and reputation. |

| Themes | Building the Foundations | Moving Ahead |
|---|---|---|
| **Fixing the Factory**<br><br>**5. Policy and Advice**<br><br>**6. Targets and Measurement** | • Initiate a dialogue on LGBTIQ+ friendly workplace policies and how these could be adapted to your location.<br><br>• Convene a conversation with LGBTIQ+ employee resource groups, sharing what other employers are doing.<br><br>• Develop a set of suggested measures to track the impact of LGBTIQ+ inclusion externally. | • Work with business partners to inventory their policies and offer advice on localisation.<br><br>• Develop and deliver LGBTIQ+ awareness programmes for use in the workplace.<br><br>• Develop or a means of sharing benchmarks and best practice with your business community. |
| **The Wider World**<br><br>**7. Advocacy and Business**<br><br>**8. Influencing Sensitive Countries** | • Start a conversation focused on respect and values rather than specifically on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.<br><br>• Set up a dialogue between businesses and CSOs to share best practice on advocacy.<br><br>• Use the embassy model to establish how far your business partners are is willing to go in the external domain. | • Assist your business partners in using the 'Channels of Influence' framework to help determine where to focus.<br><br>• Help to broaden business networks to include opinion formers, politicians and LGBTIQ+ role models.<br><br>• Challenge assumptions about legal constraints and suggest creative ways to ensure respect. |

# Sustaining Progress

**Encouraging businesses to endorse charters for LGBTIQ+ inclusion is one way to sustain progress through highlighting a common purpose and goals and demonstrating leadership commitment. Here are some examples of charters to which major organisations have committed.**

## The UN LGBTI Standards of Conduct for Business

The United Nations Human Rights Office has developed five standards of conduct to support the business community in tackling discrimination against (LGBTI) people. To date, 344 companies have committed to the standards.

The standards are a progression from the Declaration of Human Rights and were launched in 2017. View more here.

Workplace Pride has developed a toolkit to assist companies and civil society partners to implement the UN standards This toolkit will help to create a more inclusive workplace for LGBTIQ+ people and to contribute to positive social change in the communities where they do business. View more here.

The UN, in association with the Partnership for LGBTI Equality (PGLE) and The World Economic Forum, will soon be launching an analysis tool to help companies identify gaps and opportunities in their implementation of the UN LGBTI Standards. View more here.

### What do the standards say?

**1. RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS**
Businesses should develop policies, exercise due diligence and remediate adverse impacts to ensure they respect human rights of LGBTI people. Businesses should also establish mechanisms to monitor and communicate their compliance with human rights standards.

**2. ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION**
Businesses should ensure that there is no discrimination in their recruitment, employment, working conditions, benefits, respect for privacy or treatment of harassment.

**3. PROVIDE SUPPORT**
Businesses should provide a positive, affirmative environment so that LGBTI employees can work with dignity and without stigma.

**4. PREVENT OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**
Businesses should not discriminate against LGBTI suppliers, distributors or customers and should use their leverage to prevent discrimination and related abuses by their business partners.

**5. ACT IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE**
Businesses are encouraged to contribute to stopping human rights abuses in the countries in which they operate. In doing so, they should consult with local communities to identify steps they might take including public advocacy, collective action, social dialogue, support for LGBTI organisations and challenging abusive government actions.

### Further Resources

Here are links to some other charters. It is possible to adapt these for your own country or region.

- L'Autre Cercle
- The Declaration of Paramaribo (in Dutch)
- A more generic approach to civil society charters can be found here.

## The Declaration of Amsterdam

Workplace Pride developed the Declaration of Amsterdam in 2011, to help organisations to share their commitment to fostering a more inclusive workplace for LGBTIQ+ employees.

Committing to the declaration allows organisations to start a positive conversation on LGBTIQ+ inclusion internally and externally.

To date, 34 private and public organisations have signed the declaration.

### Questions for CSOs
- Have your business partners already committed to a charter or manifesto for LGBTIQ+ inclusion?
- If yes, how can your organisation support their commitment? Areas such as international mobility, brand and reputational and external advocacy are a good place to start.
- If no, would a charter or manifesto be a useful place to start a commitment conversation?
- Is there scope to adapt one of the existing charters or manifestos to your country/region, taking into account local factors?

### What does the declaration say?
1. Employers must provide a safe, comfortable equal opportunity workplace and promote authenticity for LGBTIQ+ employees.

2. Employers should work closely with and benefit from the knowledge of other parties (employee networks and NGOs) dealing with LGBTIQ+ workplace issues to achieve improvements.

3. Employers should identify and support leaders and decision makers (LGBTIQ+ and allies) who actively strive to create LGBTIQ+ inclusive working environments.

4. LGBTIQ+ employees should actively strive to be visible at work and collaborate with their employers on diversity and inclusion, leading the way for all employees.

5. LGBTIQ+ employees should guide their employers on measures to support this declaration's goals and implementing best practices.

6. Employers and LGBTIQ+ employees should create and support structures in the organisation that ensure progress.

7. Employers should embed the declaration's concepts in organisational principles and include them explicitly in external communications such as annual and corporate responsibility reports.

8. Employers and employees should develop and establish measurements that identify the level and progress of LGBTIQ+ inclusiveness within the organisation and benchmark this externally.

9. Employers should dedicate a minimum of 1 euro per employee in the organisation to support LGBTIQ+ programs and employee resource groups.

10. Organisations should visibly support the improvement of working environments for their LGBTIQ+ employees in all countries where they are active.

### Further Resources
- Full information on the Declaration of Amsterdam can be found here.

EQUAL RIGHTS

# Additional Resources

**On this page, we provide some selected additional resources which supplement the toolkit. To download any of the documents, simply click on the images below.**

# Closing Message

**As LGBTIQ+ civil society organisations evolve with their activism, they will likely come into contact with the world of business.**

With this toolkit, CSOs will be better equipped to interact by with business partners, be able to justify this interaction both internally and externally, make concrete and actionable progress and set the stage for greater and sustainable impact for LGBTIQ+ communities around the world.

The eight focus areas of the toolkit have been designed with a practical and structured approach that will be useful for CSOs at different levels of maturity and with different challenges. It is full of examples and additional resources that help make commitments and actions really 'doable'.

Finally, this toolkit is a call to action and very much part of the momentum created by the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements, as well as the global pandemic that has touched every aspect of our lives.

A candid assessment of how CSOs and businesses can work together, and on equal terms, will help all parties realise that the path to cooperation is attainable and even desirable - something that is currently very much a priority for all stakeholders.

# Toolkit Partners

**This toolkit has been developed by two CSOs that are making a real difference in LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion.**



Workplace Pride is a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to improving the lives of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) people in workplaces worldwide. We strive for a world of inclusive workplaces where LGBTIQ+ people can truly be themselves, are valued and, through their contributions, help to lead the way for others.

Based in Amsterdam, Workplace Pride was founded in 2006 and now has global reach through its members and partners and through a wide range of conferences and other events held around the world. There are now 72 Workplace Pride members representing more than 4 million employees across a range of private and public sector organisations.

Workplace Pride is known for its annual workplace inclusion benchmark which supports organisations in improving LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion globally especially where obstacles such as legal frameworks or cultural norms make it hard to do so.

Open For Business was launched in 2015, as a response by a number of leading global businesses to the growing backlash against LGBT+ inclusion in many parts of the world. The purpose of Open For Business is to advance LGBT+ rights globally. We are doing this in two ways.

At an international level, Open for Business is building a consensus among the business community that anti-LGBT+ policies run counter to the interests of business and economic development. At a local level, it is creating advocates in the local business communities, strengthening local business voices by providing them with evidence and fact-based arguments.

Three core objectives follow from this: first, to construct and promote unique research perspectives on the economic and business case for LGBT+ inclusion; second, to catalyse a collective voice on LGBT+ inclusion from the global business community; and third, to facilitate local networks of senior business leaders to advance LGBT+ inclusion.

# Toolkit Sponsors

**This project is sponsored by the Global Equality Fund in collaboration with The Other Foundation.**



The Global Equality Fund (GEF) is a unique and effective public-private partnership comprised of like-minded governments and private sector entities dedicated to advancing and defending the human rights and fundamental freedoms of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) persons around the world. Through the GEF, governments, companies, foundations, and NGOs work collaboratively to support local initiatives spearheaded by human rights defenders and civil society organizations working to protect LGBTIQ+ persons from violence and abuse, criminalisation, discrimination and stigma, and to empower local LGBTQI+ movements and people.

> " The Global Equality Fund provides emergency assistance to human rights defenders and human rights programming support to grassroots LGBTQI+ organizations to catalyze positive change and draws its strength from the support and partnership of an international coalition of like-minded governments, businesses, and foundations.
>
> **Antony Blinken**
> **US Secretary of State**

The Other Foundation is an African trust that advances equality and freedom in southern Africa, with a particular focus on sexual orientation and gender identity. It gathers support to defend and advance the human rights and social inclusion of homosexual and bisexual women and men, as well as transgender and intersex people in southern Africa – and it gives support to groups in a smart way that enables them to work effectively for lasting change, recognizing the particular dynamics of race, poverty and inequality, sex, national origin, heritage, and politics in our part of the world. It does this by working both as a fundraiser and a grant maker.

> " This Civil Society Business Toolkit is an important addition to empowering, and upskilling activists to develop approaches and sharpen advocacy strategies.  This toolkit contributes towards scaling up efforts for wider reach in developing new LGBTIQ+ enterprises, more collaboration between LGBTIQ+ owned businesses, improved access to corporate supply chains, and more inclusive corporate workplaces. Stronger multi-country networks amongst LGBTIQ+ civil society and business allies will advance an advocacy agenda and increase preventive security, because broad-based networks form a good protection and support system.
>
> **Sebenzile Nkambule**
> **Executive Officer for Strategic Partnerships**
> **The Other Foundation**

# Toolkit Contributors

**The development of this toolkit was a collaborative effort across several CSOs and also draws on our collective experience of the corporate sector.**

### David Pollard
David is co-founder and Executive Director of the Workplace Pride Foundation. David led the governance, sponsor liaison and promotion of the toolkit.

### Yvonne Muthoni
Yvonne is Country Director, Kenya at Open for Business. Yvonne led the research and analysis for the toolkit, including the survey and interviews.

### Graham Sparks
Graham is an independent Diversity and Inclusion consultant and a member of Workplace Pride's Advisory Board. Graham was project manager and led the content development of the toolkit.

**Workplace Pride**

**Open For Business**

**IAD CONSULTING** Inclusion And Diversity

Designed by Jamie Gregory
www.jamiegregory.co.uk

# Acknowledgements

**COC Netherlands**

www.coc.nl/engels

**The Eurocentralasian Lesbian* Community**

europeanlesbianconference.org

**Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya**

www.galck.org

**HÁTTÉR SOCIETY**

**Háttér Society**

en.hatter.hu

**ILGA EUROPE**

**ILGA Europe**

ilga-europe.org

**MAY 17**

**International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia**

may17.org

**MATIMBA**

**Matimba**

facebook.com/Matimba.org

**National Center for TRANSGENDER EQUALITY**

**National Center for Transgender Equality**

transequality.org

**National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission**

www.nglhrc.com

**Pride! AT WORK**

**Pride!@Work Thailand**

facebook.com/PrideAtWorkTH

**Solidarity Foundation**

**Solidarity Foundation**

www.solidarityfoundation.in

We respect the confidentiality of all participants in our research and we acknowledge the names of selected organisations with their permission. Quotes used throughout the toolkit are unattributed to protect confidentiality.

# Civil Society
# Business Toolkit

## Workplace Pride