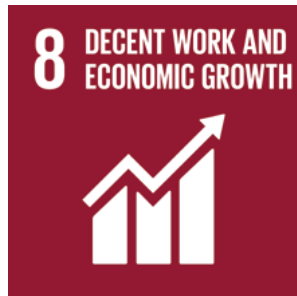


GUIDING PRINCIPLES
ON THE INCLUSION OF
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL,
TRANSGENDER, AND
INTERSEX (LGBTI) PEOPLE
IN DEVELOPMENT POLICY
AND PROGRAMS



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON THE INCLUSION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, AND INTERSEX (LGBTI) PEOPLE IN DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PROGRAMS

This document is authored by Andrew Park, with the assistance of Lucas Mendos, according to the terms of reference of a contract from RFSL – Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Rights. The document and its guiding principles reflect the beliefs and positions of RFSL.

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations 2030 Agenda is an ambitious plan which envisions a world free of poverty, hunger, disease, and want, a world where legal, social, and economic barriers to the full realization of human potential have been removed, and a world of universal respect for human rights and dignity. Though the 2030 Agenda does not explicitly reference LGBTI people, inclusion is a core principle of the new development goals reflected in the pledge to leave no one behind. The 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity to celebrate and improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people, their communities and their nations.

These guiding principles are meant to guide all actors in designing, implementing and monitoring international, national, and local development activities related to LGBTI people. They incorporate empirical and scientific knowledge as well as current international human rights standards. They should also be an advocacy tool for stakeholders working on development issues, providing common ground between discussions and activities of actors working in development and human rights.

Rather than address particular dimensions of development, such as health, safety, or employment, or housing, these guiding principles set out cross-cutting propositions that apply to all phases of development activities and advocacy. Guiding Principles 1 to 4 address fundamental questions about the realities and lived experience of LGBTI people, and they respond to misconceptions and stereotypes that are often used to exclude LGBTI people from development activities. Principles 5 to

8 address the role of LGBTI communities and NGOs in development activities, including data and research activities. Principles 9 to 13 address the operations of development agencies and individual development practitioners.

These principles recognize that a wide variety of actors, including governments, corporations, multi-lateral organizations, NGOs, civil society and individuals, all play a role in implementing the 2030 Agenda and other development priorities. These actors engage in policy making, research, advocacy, program design, implementation and evaluation, any myriad other functions collectively referred to herein as “development activities.” Individuals and organizations carrying out development activities, including LGBTI advocates, are referred to as “development practitioners.”

These principles also recognize that each person has a sexual orientation, a gender identity, a gender expression, and sex characteristics. (SOGIESC). However, individuals whose SOGIESC does not conform to the accepted norms of that individual’s society and culture often experience social, legal and cultural marginalization. Such marginalized groups can be identified by a number of different terms depending on the cultural context. The guiding principles apply to all such groups. The term “LGBTI” is used in this document to identify this population. In the international arena “LGBTI” has become the most widely recognized term to designate this population and serves as an accessible term for those who have become accustomed to it.

1.

LGBTI PEOPLE EXIST
IN ALL SOCIETIES AND
CULTURES.

Empirical research supports the proposition that individuals whose sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) vary from the norm, referred to herein as LGBTI people, can be found in all societies and cultures. Variations in sexual orientation can be classified according to differences in sexual behavior, sexual attraction, and self-declared identity, among other criteria. Variations in gender (including non-binary gender) can be classified according to the sex/gender assigned to an individual at birth, one's current inner awareness of gender, one's current expressed gender, one's legally recognized gender, one's socially assigned gender, and other factors. Variations in sex characteristics can be classified according to sex characteristics themselves, including genitals, gonads, chromosome or endocrine patterns, and whether they conform to medical or social norms for male or female bodies.

Development activities should account for the existence of LGBTI people in any target populations. Many LGBTI people avoid revealing their identity rather than risk violence and discrimination. However, the claim that LGBTI people do not exist in certain societies and cultures is not only untrue, it perpetuates the institutional exclusion of LGBTI people from development activities, and decreases the likelihood that development activities will reach the entire population. Not only are LGBTI people part of the general population, they can also share identities and characteristics with other groups being targeted by development activities such as racial, religious, ethnic and indigenous groups and groups impacted by climate change and conflict. Intersecting identities and circumstances may be tied to unique challenges and patterns of deprivation.

Inclusive development activities are free from assumptions of heteronormativity, and are designed, implemented and evaluated with regard to all people, regardless of SOGIESC. Additionally, specific initiatives targeting LGBTI people, including those meant to support the inclusion and participation of LGBTI people in development, or to address concerns and experiences of LGBTI people, can also serve to improve development outcomes for LGBTI people.

2.

THE TERMS AND LIVED EXPERIENCES RELATED TO DIVERSE LGBTI POPULATIONS DIFFER FROM CULTURE TO CULTURE.

There is no universally accepted set of terms to describe an individual whose SOGIESC differ from the norm in their culture. While terms and acronyms such as LGBTI have been popularized by an increasingly globalized awareness of SOGIESC, such terms may not adequately reflect local differences in the lived experience related to SOGIESC, and often cannot be used as the basis for a system to classify individuals with diverse SOGIESC. Identities, behaviors, desires, and expression, and the terms used to describe them, may vary from culture to culture based on language, history, religion, economic class, age, ethnicity, and other cultural influences.

Understanding local populations, and sub-populations, is key to the success of development activities targeted at those populations. The goal of leave-no-one-behind is not achievable without such an understanding. Development practitioners need to clearly define targeted populations, be they based on behavior, identity, or other factors, and to clearly communicate those operational definitions to others. In addition, development practitioners risk ignoring populations by using terms, definitions, and classifications that do not reflect the reality of local populations. Such an understanding is vital to collecting high-quality data, as well as to the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs meant to improve the development outcomes of local populations.

3.

AN INDIVIDUAL'S SOGIESC
IMPACTS A BROAD
RANGE OF ACTIVITIES AND
OPPORTUNITIES OVER THE
COURSE OF ONE'S LIFE.

From a psychosocial perspective, one's identity continually develops over the course of one's life. For those with a stigmatized SOGIESC, this life course can include unique challenges possibly resulting in poorer health outcomes and a decreased capacity to engage in vocational activities, interpersonal relationships, and life goals. SOGIESC can impact not only choice of sexual partners and expressed gender, but also the nature and extent of support networks, the structure of family relationships, preferred housing, migration and mobility patterns, patterns of civic participation, the accumulation and control of financial resources, methods of coping and resilience in instances of poverty or hardship, and other dimensions of development.

Many people believe that sexual behavior and/or dress is the only significant difference between LGBTI people and the rest of the population. In reality, an examination of the lived experience of LGBTI people reveals unique patterns and differences that go beyond the bedroom and what one wears. Accordingly, it is not sufficient to assume that strategies employed with the general population, particularly those that operate with heteronormative assumptions, will effectively reach LGBTI people and support them in reaching their full potential.

Skilled development practitioners understand that development strategies intended to reach LGBTI people need to account for the multiple ways that SOGIESC impacts an individual's life. Social science research can inform our understanding of positive human development for LGBTI people, indicating how development activities can support the expansion of capabilities of LGBTI people. Such research indicates that LGBTI people are better off if they are provided, among other things, education about sexuality and gender, support to form social and family relationships, the ability to establish social institutions, and the freedom to move in and out of communities.

4.

LGBTI PEOPLE FACE
DISPARITIES CAUSED BY
STIGMA AND PREJUDICE.

In many circumstances, LGBTI people have lower levels of physical and mental health, educational attainment, food security, household income, personal security, and civic participation. Research has shown that these disparities, as well as other aspects of poverty, can be attributed to stigma and prejudice, and that decreasing stigma and prejudice results in an improvement in outcomes.

The existence of comparatively poorer outcomes for LGBTI people has served as the basis of the claim that homosexuality, bisexuality, and gender non-conformity are themselves the cause of disease, lower intelligence, instability at work and school, selfishness, violent tendencies, and lack of parental fitness. To the contrary, empirical research has clearly demonstrated that these disparities are caused by social conditions, stigma, and prejudice, and are not a consequence of one's sexual orientation or gender identity (very little research has been conducted on sex characteristics). Effective development activities are based on an understanding of the causes and extent of these disparities.

5.

LGBTI PEOPLE HAVE A
VOICE IN DEVELOPMENT
ACTIVITIES (OR, NOTHING
ABOUT US WITHOUT US).

Accepted principles of international development recognize that local communities have a voice in development activities. Civil society organizations play a dynamic role in making the concerns and needs of communities heard, and they have a role in the formulation and implementation of development activities. Donor and partner countries are accountable to local communities for achieving results. Additionally, accepted human rights principles recognize the right of individuals and groups to participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development activities.

International development principles recognize that engagement of local communities is associated with a range of positive effects such as a better assessment of needs and capacities of individuals and groups, improvements in implementation and sustainability, and increased effectiveness. Agreements such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for action, and goals such as “leave no one behind,” establish the principles of ownership, transparency, accountability,

In those locations where local communities do not have the capability to play a role in development activities, allied LGBTI and other communities can be consulted, always with the goal of preserving the safety and agency of local LGBTI communities and empowering them to eventually participate in their own capacity.

International human rights norms recognize the importance of agency, freedom of expression and association, and the right to receive and impart information. The right of individuals to participate in policy processes has been recognized generally, and in the context of poverty reduction efforts. More than just pro forma consultations meant to validate international priorities, the ultimate goal of involving LGBTI communities is empowerment of LGBTI communities to be able to fully participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development activities. Participation may entail assigning specific resources and mechanisms such as technical assistance, training, and creation of spaces for civil society.

6.

LGBTI PEOPLE ARE
THE BEST EXPERTS
IN THEIR OWN LIVES.

LGBTI people are themselves the best experts on their own lived experience. Because LGBTI people have faced many attempts by others to define and characterize them, LGBTI communities and advocates have become a primary source of information about their own lived experience.

Throughout history, and in many parts of the world today, conflicts over the meaning and nature of sexuality and gender have been a central component of the battle for the dignity of LGBTI people. Many governments, important institutions, and experts have sought to understand LGBTI people for the purpose of prevention, cure, and punishment. Even well-intended efforts to support the lives of LGBTI people have fallen short because of gaps in knowledge. Public policy efforts targeted toward improving the lives of LGBTI people are more successful when they incorporate LGBTI people as sources of authentic knowledge.

Development practitioners should look to local communities as a primary source for expertise on issues related the lives of LGBTI people. Local communities should be consulted regarding questions of how to define and classify LGBTI individuals, how to identify the needs and priorities of LGBTI people, and how to best meet those needs through development activities. LGBTI people are, themselves, in the best position to decide whether and how to disclose their sexuality, gender and sex characteristics to others.

7.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
AND POLICIES SHOULD BE
BASED ON EVIDENCE,
NOT STEREOTYPES.

Scientific research free from bias and stereotypes has produced useful evidence about the challenges faced by LGBTI people and how to address those challenges. Development activities should be based on well-grounded knowledge about the lived experience of LGBTI people.

Historically, public policy related to LGBTI people has often been based on false stereotypes or on scientific research anchored in biased and incorrect beliefs about LGBTI people. Examples of such stereotypes and beliefs are that LGBTI people are diseased, hypersexual, unfit for parenthood, and incapable of intimate relationships, and unsupportive of their families and communities. Additional stereotypes are that homosexuality is a result of childhood sexual trauma or bad parenting, and that it can be detected through anal examinations, and cured through conversion therapy or corrective interventions. Transgender people have been stereotyped as mentally unstable, lesbians as physically violent and gay men as pedophiles. The myth of lesbian immunity, that lesbians are not at risk of HIV and other infectious diseases, and the myth of gay affluence, that gay people are richer than non-gay people, are also commonplace yet unsubstantiated beliefs.

Such stereotypes have been used as a basis for public policy including, to name a few, criminalizing homosexuality, same-sex sexual activity, expression of gender non-conformity, and advocacy and expression related to LGBTI people. Some countries continue to require sterilization of transgender people. Gay men face compulsory anal examinations. Conversion therapy continues to be encouraged by public policy in many countries. In addition, LGBTI people have faced legal prohibitions from public accommodations, as well as jobs in teaching, law enforcement, military service, and public service. LGBTI parents face continued attempts to have their children taken from them, and same-sex relationships, commitments, and cohabitation remain unrecognized or illegal in many jurisdictions.

Development practitioners should examine operational assumptions of development activities and look to authentic evidence about the lived realities of LGBTI people in the design, implementation and evaluation of LGBTI people.

8.

DATA COLLECTION
ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN
AS PART OF DEVELOPMENT
ACTIVITIES SHOULD
INCLUDE EFFORTS TO
IDENTIFY THE SOCIOECONOMIC
STATUS OF
TARGET POPULATIONS.

Development activities are heavily dependent on data collected from individuals and households. Having such data disaggregated according to SOGIESC is necessary to insure inclusion of LGBTI people in development activities. Thus, as development activities become increasingly inclusive of LGBTI people, data collection efforts should seek information about SOGIESC of target populations.

Disaggregated data about LGBTI populations is required for each phase of development activities, from prioritization to evaluation. Numerous different methods exist to collect high-quality data about LGBTI people, including large-scale surveys often used by development practitioners. Though LGBTI people are often classified as a “hard-to-reach” population, a growing number of governments and intergovernmental organizations are including questions about SOGIE on surveys about health, living conditions, education, and general demographics. Additionally, public and private research efforts have used a broad range of research methods to understand development challenges of LGBTI people. These efforts help inform the increasing body of knowledge about how to conduct such data collection efforts in ways that are ethical and produce high-quality results.

9.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DO NO HARM SHOULD BE APPLIED TO DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IMPACTING THE LIVES OF LGBTI PEOPLE.

The principle of do no harm affirms that development activities must not put those living in fragile contexts at greater risk than they would otherwise face without intervention. LGBTI people are often the focus of cultural, legal, and geopolitical battles, where they can be scapegoats, used as distractions for unrelated social and economic anxieties, or constructive participants in useful social change efforts. The ability of an LGBTI person to secure personal safety, employment, housing, education and healthcare can be impacted by shifts in the local political and cultural context. It can also depend on the ability of LGBTI people to engage in coping strategies to preserve their well-being. Development activities, including international development aid, can detrimentally impact the well-being of LGBTI people by altering local dynamics and interfering with local community strategies.

Development practitioners must envision, and remain vigilant for, possible harmful repercussions from interventions several steps ahead and base decisions on this scenario analysis. Consultation with the community is essential. Considerations might include insuring safe spaces, meeting locations, security of offices and equipment, and methods of communication. Additionally, regarding the visibility of development activities, practitioners should consider the benefits of avoiding visibility where it might trigger hostile responses, or encouraging visibility where it might serve a protective function. Thus, modifications of funder branding requirements, attendance at public events at meetings, media activities, and public engagement should be considered.

10.

COLLECTION,
MAINTENANCE AND
ANALYSIS OF DATA ABOUT
LGBTI PEOPLE SHOULD
BE DONE IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE HIGHEST
STANDARDS OF ETHICS.

Anyone engaged in collecting, and working with data about SOGIESC should observe strict protocols to protect the privacy and well-being of LGBTI people, preserve the ability of LGBTI people to consent to the use of their data, and to insure the confidentiality of data pertaining to such participants.

Information about a person's SOGIESC may be used as a basis for discrimination and violence. LGBTI people are a vulnerable group, requiring additional vigilance in the part of those collecting and using personal data. Researchers, scientific associations, and governments have established ethical, legal, and funding standards, to protect the well-being and privacy of individual participants in research efforts, as well as the confidentiality of their personal information and the effectiveness of data security measures. Such standards include internationally recognized standards of ethics for human subject research. These standards apply to all phases of data collection, management, storage, analysis, and dissemination.

Development practitioners should review the proposed and actual design and implementation of research initiatives involving LGBTI people in order to insure adherence to these standards. In some instances, including countries where anti-LGBTI hostility is intense and pervasive, the ethical use of particular methodologies may not be possible. Otherwise, development practitioners should require the adoption of appropriate protocols and monitoring of research efforts to adhere to such protocols.

11.

DEVELOPMENT
PRACTITIONERS AND THE
INSTITUTIONS IN WHICH THEY
WORK SHOULD HAVE
INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE,
CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND
AWARENESS, AND RESPECT
FOR THE RIGHTS AND
DIVERSITY OF LGBTI PEOPLE.

Development practitioners should seek to develop cultural sensitivity to LGBTI people. Specifically, this entails being aware of cultural differences and similarities between people without assigning positive or negative values to those differences. This approach to interacting with LGBTI people is vital considering that many barriers to development faced by LGBTI people find their source in negative judgements about them. Additionally, development practitioners must develop intercultural competence, that is the ability to communicate and engage interculturally in ways that are inclusive and productive. For LGBTI people, this includes, among other things, the respectful use of identity terms and gendered language in one-on-one as well as group interaction. Institutions involved in development activities should adopt and comply with principles of non-discrimination, and should promote inclusiveness amongst the workforce, governing structures, and public activities.

12.

ALL DEVELOPMENT
ACTIVITIES SHOULD
FURTHER THE REALIZATION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF
PEOPLE OF ALL SEXUAL
ORIENTATIONS, GENDER
IDENTITIES, GENDER
EXPRESSIONS, AND
SEX CHARACTERISTICS.

International development agencies have agreed to a common understanding that all programs of development cooperation, policies and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process.

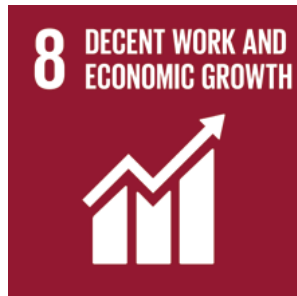
13.

ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT RESULTS, AND OPENLY ACCOUNTING FOR THEM, LIES AT THE HEART OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION.

International declarations have affirmed the central importance of increasing aid effectiveness. The development process should focus on people, including LGBTI people, as the main participant and beneficiary of development. Development activities should be evaluated based on their impact on the lives of LGBTI people.

Development focuses on people. Though institutional change is important, institutions, such as governments and international organizations, are a means to an end. The person is the central subject of the development process, and improving the lives of people is the primary goal of development. All development activities and decisions should be evaluated according to their effectiveness in achieving improvements in the lives of LGBTI people.

The purposes of international development assistance can be obscured by larger geopolitical disputes, as well as lack of clarity created by power imbalances in development cooperation. For LGBTI people, this can include being at the center of international tensions about larger human rights issues, calls for attaching conditions to aid, and efforts to play out the legacy of colonial-era laws. These disputes should be resolved by maintaining a people-centered approach and seeking to focus on insuring that development activities improves the lives of LGBTI people.



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