



A Civil Society Guide to Cracking the World Bank

Harnessing LGBTI Economic Empowerment

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**Philip Crehan
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Preface

There are some buzzwords that we should forever lose in the archives of LinkedIn and forget from the hundreds of panel discussions we've all sat through. *Synergy, disruption, thought leader, ideation, artisanal* – many lack substance but are quick to be parroted and marketed. Other buzzwords carry a tremendous meaning, weight, and institutional backing, even if they are used often and sound overly technical. In this guide, I unabashedly use examples of the latter, like *economic empowerment, development, poverty*, and more. These are just a few examples of the hefty concepts this guide will focus on, in a dedicated attempt to articulate an emerging pathway for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) organizations to engage the remarkably financed, and highly influential, multilateral development banks (MDBs).

I hope this guide is timely. In an era like none other, we face exponentially more dangerous challenges: a global pandemic, populism and authoritarian leaders, rising nationalism in response to mass migration, threats to international cooperation, state-sponsored violence, and climate change – our modern day “Roaring 20s”. These are issues that face everyone, but even more so for those who have been historically excluded and therefore have less means of emerging unscathed. Aside from having serious impacts on the realization of our human rights and health, these paradigmatic challenges will also wreak havoc on socioeconomic empowerment and development. Speaking to just the COVID-19 pandemic alone, we must bravely acknowledge a long-term repercussion of this tidal wave, that it has pushed millions into a situational poverty with little hope of escape. From this, we must consider how poverty and livelihoods are inherently LGBTI concerns, even if there has been little work to include these communities into economic growth and recovery strategies. Our public and global institutions must address this, and we have every right to work with them on more inclusive interventions that work.

To advance economic empowerment and development for LGBTI people, its time to fully understand and leverage the gravity of the economic development and MDB community – particularly as these institutions are now developing their own LGBTI lines of work. This guide is the first of its kind, intended to alter the **knowledge imbalance** between the World Bank and LGBTI civil society organizations (CSOs) around the world. To empower LGBTI CSOs and to rectify this current knowledge gap, the Micro Rainbow International Foundation has supported this work with the idea that it should be long-term and mutually beneficial to civil society as well as the MDBs. In this sense, this guide should be read as a living document, intended to guide a normative shift for LGBTI CSOs in regards to advocacy strategies and under-utilized global institutions – and particularly in the numerous countries that the World Bank works.

As I finish this guide, I do so with a somewhat bittersweet sentiment. On the one hand, and informed by my experience working at the World Bank as a consultant from 2013–2017 to help lead its emerging LGBTI agenda, as well as serving as the Vice President of its LGBT employee resource group for a year, I saw as an “insider” how much great work happened in such a short timeframe. In many ways, the Bank is a unique institution that provides needed services in the world. On the other hand, and now as an “outsider”, I have an altered perspective that this multi-billion dollar institution can do so much more. I came to this perspective by gathering all publically available documents in regards to the World Bank and LGBTI issues, as well as by examining its founding documents, historical papers, corporate strategies, legal opinions, social assessments, oral histories, and more. Where more information was needed, I also interviewed the World Bank’s Global Advisor on SOGI, who is leading great work with the help of senior management and some staff throughout the institution. I stand by my conclusion that civil society is entitled to raise the caliber of this MDB to address our modern day challenges, and can meaningfully do so.

I now emerge with a hopeful optimism and significant expectation that the World Bank can do more on the very important issues that LGBTI people face – especially if this agenda is mutually understood and also decentralized away from its headquarters. Tapping into the strength and potential of LGBTI people everywhere is both **empowering and**

powerful. With this framing, let's get ready to sift through some (important) buzzwords and dive into the complicated and fascinating institution that is the World Bank.

Philip Crehan

Independent Consultant
Social Inclusion and Economic Development
Micro Rainbow International Foundation

Part 1:

Introduction

1.1. LGBTI Well-being: An Economic Development Imperative

Addressing discrimination, violence, and exclusion against LGBTI people will always be approached as violations of human rights.¹ Other impacts from these violations are the entrenchment of inequality of opportunities, which can limit one's ability to access the benefits of economic development, or the ability to find decent work and income generating activities that improve their quality of life. When deprived of these opportunities and corresponding benefits, LGBTI people can be stuck in a cycle of poverty fueled by exclusion and a lower socioeconomic status. Social exclusion can also limit LGBTI people's access to assets that are essential to economic well-being and can prevent them from attaining adequate standards of living. Overall, these personal limitations impact larger community-level and macroeconomic goals – some estimates place this cost to the economy in the billions of dollars lost due to the exclusion of LGBTI people.²

Overcoming discrimination, violence, and exclusion should be a key concern of institutions and governments promoting economic development and implementing poverty alleviation strategies. The multilateral development banks (MDBs) must do more to structure inclusive economic growth – the ways in which employment and financial advances apply equitably across all sectors, social groups, and socioeconomic classes – to reach LGBTI people, particularly those who are living in poverty. Inclusive economic growth can be jeopardized by social exclusion, which thus limits the contributions³ of LGBTI people as well as their ability to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from opportunities in the formal economy and partake in the redistribution of economic growth.

1.2. “Nothing About Us Without Us”

Based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics, concerns that LGBTI people are among the most vulnerable groups excluded from economic and social development have begun to drive some efforts of the MDBs. However, approaches to address such exclusion are often articulated through the perspective of the MDBs without significant opportunities for LGBTI civil society to present their lived realities, nor their ability to meaningfully participate in crafting measures to alleviate poverty in their communities.

While LGBTI CSOs typically advance their concerns through human rights mechanisms, the MDBs are beginning to advance LGBTI inclusion as a matter of **economic development**. Often, the MDB approach to economic development is focused almost exclusively on their clients – i.e. governments – and few mechanisms exist to leverage holistic input from civil society on decisions made between their government and the MDBs. Since many LGBTI advocates do not know how to engage these institutions nor have a platform to engage the government ministries who liaise with the MDBs, the voices of LGBTI people could be missing in the burgeoning agenda to advance their economic empowerment. Without this understanding of how to engage, there will continue to be a significant knowledge imbalance between LGBTI civil society and the MDBs. This stymies the ability of the MDBs to effectively ensure they are delivering on the ambition of the

1. Yogyakarta Principles plus 10. (2017, November 10). <https://yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles-en/>

2. Nyeck, S., & Shepherd, D. (2019). Cost of LGBT Stigma and Discrimination in South Africa. UCLA School of Law Williams Institute. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/cost-discrim-so-africa/> And Miller, J. (2019). The Economic Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in Kenya. Open for Business, <https://open-for-business.org/kenya-economic-case>

3. Badgett, M., & Waaldijk, K., & Rodgers, Y. (2019). The Relationship Between LGBT Inclusion and Economic Development, *UCLA School of Law – Williams Institute*. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-inclusion-development/a>

2030 Agenda, as well as ensuring that sustainable and inclusive development **leaves no one behind**.

1.3. The Civil Society Guides - why and for whom?

To empower LGBTI civil society organizations and to rectify this current knowledge gap, the Micro Rainbow International Foundation (MRIF) has focused on the World Bank Group and the Inter-American Development Bank, hoping later on to do the same with the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. As an organization that promotes human rights as well as economic and social empowerment of LGBTI people, the MRIF has initiated this endeavor to promote a better understanding of the MDBs and rectify the current knowledge imbalance between civil society and the MDBs.

These guides seek to inform and educate LGBTI CSOs so that they can advance - on their own terms - LGBTI economic empowerment through these development institutions. The aim is to support LGBTI CSOs to diversify and improve their advocacy strategies and to let the MDBs know how to promote LGBTI economic empowerment and **hold them accountable** for greater inclusion in economic growth, as well as guarantee that their voices are heard and not left behind in economic development strategies.

Although these guides are geared toward civil society organizations that advance the rights and well-being of LGBTI people, they may also be useful for many other stakeholders. For example, governments who also seek to advance a holistic and integrated human rights and economic development agenda via the MDBs might be guided by some of these recommendations - important, as they occupy specific positions of influence in these institutions. Additionally, and noting the intersectional nature of many issues focused on identity and vulnerability, other civil society organizations that promote the well-being of groups and communities might also find this guide helpful in their own engagement of the MDBs.

Unfortunately, speaking specifically to the creation of the World Bank, this guide will not necessarily be useful for all LGBTI CSOs around the world. Primarily, this institution cannot apply its analytics, programming, or dialogue with countries that are not members (e.g. Cuba, North Korea, etc), nor to countries that are above the economic threshold set by the World Bank - especially if these more advanced economies are among its largest shareholders as well as funders. For example, this latter category means that the World Bank cannot lend to, or conduct diagnostics on, the United States, Canada, or many countries in the European Union. In fact, the voting power configuration one of the larger organizations within the World Bank (the International Development Association) divides all member countries into one of two categories: Part 1 is comprised of wealthier nations (with the majority being OECD countries), and Part 2 is predominantly middle or lower income nations.⁴ These distinctions have heavily influenced the Bank's operations, as well as the field of economic development, to conceptualize and categorize a division between "developed" vs. "developing" countries. Not only is this a false dichotomy, it is also incompatible when all countries are confronted by emergent threats like the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, this guide can be pertinent to CSOs in the nearly 100 countries in which the World Bank operates, as well as to CSOs who might be based in advanced economies but work internationally. Additionally, it might be more pertinent to CSOs who are policy-oriented or engaged in advocacy with their government, or even those who wish to influence specific economic development projects. Finally, as this guide is intended to begin the conversation among civil society on how to collectively strategize the advancement of LGBTI issues throughout the World Bank, and is perhaps the first

4. The World Bank - Voting Powers, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/votingpowers>

attempt of its kind, it is not intended to be definitive and should be conceptualized as the initiation of a longer-term process of engagement.

1.4. A note on terminology

Although there are a range of expressions, characteristics, and identities that the *LGBTI* nomenclature cannot sufficiently represent, this guide nonetheless uses this acronym as it aligns with the World Bank's usage, as well as to reflect its growing popularity around the world. *SOGIESC* refers to sexual orientation, gender identity & expression, and sex characteristics, which collectively refer to the characteristics that can fuel exclusion and stigma against LGBTI people. However, this guide rather uses *SOGI* only to reflect the World Bank's usage, as listed on its website⁵ and in numerous publications. Concerns or questions regarding how the World Bank specifically addresses exclusion based on sex characteristics should be asked of the institution; this will be partly considered throughout this guide.

Civil society refers to the sector that is non-governmental and not-for-profit, comprised of stakeholders who approximately share common interests, purposes, or values. Civil society organizations, or CSOs, refer to a multitude of stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, domestic organizations, regional organizations, international organizations, charities, advocacy groups, coalitions, and more. By using *CSOs* throughout this guide, it is geared toward any organizational stakeholder within civil society, and particularly those who advocate the well-being of LGBTI people.

1.5. Outline

This guide proceeds as follows: to give more context on the World Bank, part 2 briefly describes its history and overall work, as well as its established entry points for civil society in general. Part 3 delves into its current LGBTI portfolio to showcase more salient entry points, concluding with recommendations for each dimension to scale-up impact for LGBTI people. For readers who want a more direct experience with this guide, this section presents the crux of advancing LGBTI CSO engagement with the Bank. Part 4 briefly examines potential entry points that should be re-examined in the future. Part 5 concludes with a summary. Annexes 1 and 2 offer more readings and research on the link between SOGI and socioeconomic and macroeconomic development.

5. The World Bank - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>

Part 2:

The World Bank Group

2.1. What is the World Bank?

Established in 1944 in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in the U.S., and alongside the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the IMF became known as the “Bretton Woods Institutions” – initially created to facilitate international economic cooperation and stability following the devastation of World War II. Although both are part of the United Nations system, as legally independent Specialized Agencies they are significantly different than many of the U.N. agencies by virtue of their mandates, funding structures, and governing bodies, among other reasons. This is especially so for the World Bank, which is now referred to as the World Bank Group to accommodate the addition of more organizations over the decades.

Given this autonomous role in relation to the U.N., the World Bank Group is better understood and analyzed as a multilateral development bank (MDB) – i.e. an international financial institution that is funded by numerous donor governments to lend to various recipient governments, with the intent to encourage economic development. As an MDB, it is the largest of its kind, in relation to the second-largest tier of development banks, the regional MDBs.

The World Bank Group is comprised of five organizations that work as one semi-attached family, yet serve different purposes as articulated in each of their founding Articles of Agreement.⁶ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA) comprise the World Bank⁷ itself, and are primarily the focus of this guide. The IBRD exists as the main mechanism to lend to middle- and lower-income countries, offering below-market interest rates to its clients. The IDA provides concessional lending with no (or low) interest rates, but only to the poorest of countries. Some countries are able to utilize both the IBRD and IDA resources by maintaining a “blend” status, determined partly by their Gross National Income but also other considerations. The third agency is the International Finance Corporation (see more in section 4.1), which focuses on the private sector by working with corporations to create an economic landscape whereby business can thrive and thus contribute to overall economic development. The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes are the last two organizations in the World Bank Group, and provide investment guarantees through political risk insurance (the former), and a platform to arbitrate investment disputes (the latter).⁸

Executive-level management of the World Bank Group is complex, with various separate and intermixing Boards of Directors for each organization. For clarity, this guide will briefly detail the Executive Board of the IBRD, who also serve ex-officio for IDA, particularly as it relates to the voting power and control over the direction of the institution. First and foremost, a senior governmental official from a member state (typically the Minister of Finance) is appointed to serve on the Board of Governors, serving to delegate oversight of day-to-day operations to the Executive Board.⁹ Once elected, the executive director works alongside the rest of the board to oversee many aspects of the Bank’s programs, especially lending operations, in addition to having an office in Washington, D.C. (its headquarters) to promote the interests of their government. In total, there are 25 executive directors who each represent one or a constituency of countries.¹⁰ Executive directors vote according to a weighted system based on the shares

6. The World Bank – Articles of Agreement, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/articles-of-agreement>

7. Henceforth to be referred to as the World Bank or “the Bank”.

8. The World Bank – About the World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about>

9. The World Bank – Board of Governors, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/governors>

10. The World Bank – Board of Directors, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/directors#:~:text=Bank%20Executive%20Directors%20serve%20ex,of%20the%20Board%20of%20Directors>

of the institution that their government(s) “own”. For example, and in regards to the IBRD, the U.S. has the most voting shares at close to 16%, with the second highest being the U.K. at close to 4%.¹¹ This is similar in the IDA, with the U.S. having close to 10% of the shares and the U.K. having around 7%.¹² In both institutions, the U.S. is by far the largest shareholder. Perhaps due to these proportion of shares, and in addition to numerous other economic and cultural factors, members can vote together and create voting blocs – sometimes resulting in geopolitical factions in response to the Bank’s programming.

The number of shares is very important to the clout that a particular government has within the World Bank, particularly in the ability of the largest shareholder to nominate the Bank’s president. Since the U.S. holds the most shares in the IBRD and IDA, by design (and by virtue of the veto power that those shares provide), the U.S. nominates the World Bank Group’s president (always an American), which is then sent to the Bank’s Executive Board for a vote. This has led to significant critiques, especially from the global south, that U.S. interests dominate the World Bank. Although this guide will not examine the veracity of those critiques, it is important to keep in mind as the Biden administration takes over the U.S. Presidency, working to rebuild international cooperation from a Trump administration that denigrated multilateral engagement as well as the LGBTI community, especially transgender people.

In 2013, and current to the time of this writing, the World Bank Group agreed upon an updated operational mission for its entire system, as articulated in the World Bank Group Strategy. From its founding in 1944 to help rebuild post-World War II Europe and thus promote stability, its mission has changed drastically over the decades, culminating in its present form as being the premiere development bank to combat poverty all over the world. This mission is particularly realized through the IBRD and IDA (again, these two institutions are collectively known as the World Bank) which are tasked mainly to promote two goals – the Twin Goals – to combat extreme poverty and to promote shared prosperity.¹³ Regarding poverty alleviation, this entails working toward a 3% reduction of people living on less than \$1.25 per day by 2030. Shared prosperity is a bit more vague, yet is defined as fostering income growth for those considered to be among the bottom 40% (socioeconomically) within each client country.¹⁴ Other central themes are identified as integral to the World Bank Group Strategy, such as gender equality and social inclusion – both examined in more detail in part 3, sections 7 and 8.

Regarding the Bank’s operations in countries around the world, one historical and ongoing pattern that emerges is decentralization – i.e. the ratio between staff based in Washington, D.C. and those based in country offices, and the corresponding institutional interplay. According to the Bank’s first-employed anthropologist and also first Director of Social Development, an institutional reform in the 1990s drove a pivotal decentralization that fueled significantly more work for country offices. For the first time, this empowered a new set of in-country stakeholders (particularly staff in charge, called Country Directors) to drive the development agenda specific to each country’s context. According to the Bank’s oral history of this Director, that reform and the “Bank decentralization gave tremendous power and authority to the country program directors. They had all of the financial resources. They could decide which networks were working there and which ones were not. So it was an interesting sort of balance of power question in terms of actual needs and the kind of specific preferences and interests in terms of the backgrounds of some of these country department directors.”¹⁵ This dynamic continues

11. The World Bank - Voting Powers, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/votingpowers>

12. The World Bank - Voting Powers, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/votingpowers>

13. The World Bank - World Bank Group Strategy, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16095>

14. The World Bank - World Bank Group Strategy, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16095>

15. The World Bank - Transcript of oral history interview with Gloria Davis held on June 28 and 29, 2004, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/576181468337293562/transcript-of-oral-history-interview-with-gloria-davis-held-on-june-28-and-29-2004>

to this day, with country offices being a major entry point to influence programming, and will thus be examined more throughout all sections in Part 3.

Although an in-depth examination of the World Bank's funding structure is outside the scope of this guide, there is one last pertinent point on its resource mobilization: the Bank's central budget vs. trust funds. As a highly ranked AAA investment bank, the IBRD receives its funds through borrowing from capital markets all over the world, all with low interest rates, primarily through issuing bonds. In turn, the bulk of this is then lent to middle income countries, also with low interest rates. Regarding its financial reserves, it receives even more funds from selling bonds and notes directly to governments, in addition to returns on its own investments as well as when borrowing countries repay their loans.¹⁶ In total, and since its founding in 1947, this has culminated in upwards of USD \$1 trillion lent to its clients.¹⁷ The IDA is somewhat different, and is funded every three years primarily by donor governments in a process called "replenishment" – although more recently now also borrows from capital markets and issues bonds. The latest replenishment concluded in 2019, with the U.K. providing the most at roughly 12% of the total funds, followed by Japan (10%) and then the U.S. (9.3%) – in total, setting a new record of funding at \$82 billion from 2020–2023.¹⁸ The overall funds of IBRD and IDA comprise the bulk of the Bank's central funding as applied to its lending portfolio with clients but also to administrative and operating costs.

Additionally, the World Bank houses numerous trust funds that are primarily resourced by donor governments to implement specific or thematic development goals. According to the Bank, these trust funds work alongside the institution's development agenda and Twin Goals, namely by providing extra financial (and targeted) resources, generating knowledge, and leveraging the Bank's convening power.¹⁹ These trust funds are well financed and sometimes support some of the more innovative parts of the Bank's programming. According to the 2018–2019 Annual Report on Trust Funds, these mechanisms are estimated to bring in over USD \$12 billion, with an extra \$23 billion going to similar mechanisms called financial intermediary funds. As part of this, trust funds sponsor roughly one third of the entire World Bank's advisory services and analytics.²⁰ This knowledge is often incorporated into programming that otherwise might not have been possible through typical lending. For example, the Bank touts the ability of trust funds to lead on global issues like climate change, crisis response, jobs, and gender equality, through analytics as well as programming that focuses on specific themes (e.g. the Global Environment Facility, the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality, etc.).²¹ In regards to the Bank's ability to provide cutting-edged analytics, as well as being able to implement interventions based on those data, some see these trust funds as driving a lot of that work within the World Bank.

2.2. New Norms within Development: from Knowledge to Themes

In order for the World Bank to reach its current mission as established in 2013, it has undergone various substantive shifts over the decades. Following its original mandate to support post-war reconstruction, the Bank then focused greatly on economic growth strategies through large loans via macroeconomic structural reforms. However, and particularly from the 1970s-1990s, a confluence of factors came together to incentivize the Bank to reevaluate its focus on macroeconomics alone. One crucial external driver of this change was civil society, who played significant roles by applying pressure to the

16. The World Bank - Getting to Know the World Bank, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/07/26/getting_to_know_theworldbank#:~:text=The%20Bank's%20financial%20reserves%20come,they%20pay%20back%20their%20loans.

17. The World Bank - Annual Report 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/annual-report>

18. The World Bank - Contributor Countries, <https://ida.worldbank.org/about/contributor-countries>

19. The World Bank - 2018-2019 Trust Fund Annual Report, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/trust-fund-annual-report-2019>

20. The World Bank - Trust Fund Annual Report for 2018-2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/trust-fund-annual-report-2019>

21. The World Bank - Trust Fund Annual Report for 2018-2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/trust-fund-annual-report-2019>

Bank. Other drivers of change included: new measurements of economic development that moved away from aggregate measures to a more nuanced understanding of poverty, an emerging economic development community that demanded more thoughtful approaches to problematic issues like conflict and fragile states, and even internal reforms as led by its presidents.²²

Eventually, the Bank shifted to an agenda that now diagnoses, provides technical expertise, and lends through specific sectors and themes to mitigate the economic, social, and cultural drivers of poverty. Specifically, two normative shifts have risen that now help fuel the development agenda whereby LGBTI issues can be incorporated – i.e. the rise of the “Knowledge Bank” and lending based on supporting larger “themes”.

In order to be able to diagnose and provide technical expertise, the World Bank had to establish itself as a credible and substantive institution. Although the Bank has always provided technical advice to its clients, in 1999 it further embraced its (self-declared) role as a Knowledge Bank and provided economic development research and data-driven expertise as a public good.²³ To varying degrees, this branding has remained in place as a central component of the institution, with significant funds going toward the creation of knowledge, data collection, and even an entire Vice Presidency and unit called “Development Economics” devoted to analytics. This is epitomized in the current World Bank-wide strategy: “The [World Bank Group] must make provisions to continue its role as a major source of global development knowledge and data as a public service to the international community.”²⁴ Given this role to produce knowledge and ability to generate data-driven development strategies, this will be examined more in section 3.4.

At least in theory, the Bank purports to use that knowledge to guide its lending to combat the economic, social, and cultural drivers of poverty. But to ensure these loans are targeted and combat the actual drivers, they are disseminated to specific **sectors** in client countries, as well as working toward specific **themes**. Sectoral lending is a bit easier to understand, given that it maps onto specific parts of a client’s government – i.e. the ministries and departments that manage agriculture, energy and extractives, social protection, transportation, and more. Concurrently, these loans are geared toward promoting specific themes that the Bank and its clients have agreed as pertinent to the development agenda – i.e. environmental and natural resource development, private sector development, urban and rural development, and more. Sectoral and thematic lending are not mutually exclusive, and at least in theory, work toward the same goals.

Specifically focusing on LGBTI entry points, the larger themes of gender equality, social development, and (to a lesser extent) human development are particularly important for this guide. The theme of gender prioritizes equality between women and men, especially in regards to gaps in health and education outcomes, removing constraints on women’s access to employment and control of assets, and promoting women’s voice and agency – all which will be examined more in section 3.7. Social Development, which was rebranded as “Social Sustainability and Inclusion” in 2019, seeks to promote the inclusion of people in development, and “reflects the World Bank’s focus on addressing long lasting barriers to development, strengthening the focus on people who have been excluded from economic and social opportunities, and increasing investment in inclusive growth.”²⁵ This latter theme has provided institutional space, and now houses, other themes like social inclusion (section 3.8.), community-driven development (section 3.9.), and issues of fragility, conflict, and violence (section 3.10.). Similarly, Human Development is a larger theme that guides ways to improve the lives of people, predominantly through education, social protection, labor, and health programming – all of which might be

22. The World Bank - Transcript of oral history interview with Gloria Davis held on June 28 and 29, 2004, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/576181468337293562/transcript-of-oral-history-interview-with-gloria-davis-held-on-june-28-and-29-2004>

23. Wagstaff, A. (2012, September 24). So what exactly is a “knowledge bank”? Let’s Talk Development. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/so-what-exactly-is-a-knowledge-bank-1>

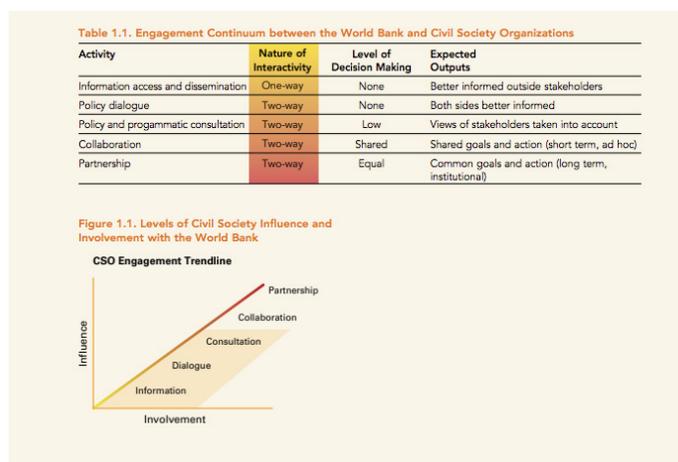
24. World Bank Group. 2013. World Bank Group Strategy. Washington, DC. ©World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16095>

25. The World Bank - Social Sustainability and Inclusion, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/overview#1>

potential entry points, yet due to a current lack of LGBTI programming are not given a large focus.

2.3. Established Entry Points for Civil Society

Over the decades, and largely in response to pressure from aggrieved organizations and governments, the Bank has worked toward a significant engagement of civil society through many pathways. This is briefly articulated in its brochure on “Civil Society Engagement” that outlines the five main ways the Bank has worked with organizations. This includes information sharing, dialogue and consultations, operational collaboration, partnerships, and advocacy.²⁶ According to a self-evaluation from 2010–2012 (the latest year available), the Bank most actively engaged civil society through information sharing, but less through mutually beneficial partnerships²⁷, as shown in the following graphic and with a description of each tier:



Source: World Bank - Civil Society Engagement: Review of Fiscal Years 2010–2012

Also according to the Bank’s CSO brochure, the Bank describes engagement with civil society through entry points at the country level, regional level, and global level. Within countries, the Bank describes how CSOs can be a part of consultations to inform its portfolio and partnerships with governments (discussed more in section 3.5.) as well as how CSOs can help inform the cycle of World Bank-administered programs, particularly through the processes of the Environmental and Social Framework (section 3.6.). At the regional level, the brochure is a bit vague, alluding to CSO participation in capacity building workshops and regional thematic meetings, although specific details are not provided.²⁸

At a global level, the Fall and Spring Meetings, which take place twice a year and are predominantly held in Washington, D.C., are another established entry point for civil society. Although the official meetings take place between the Bank’s senior management and heads of state (especially Ministers of Finance and the Board of Governors), the Bank and civil society have established a forum of dialogue right before the official meetings. Titled the “Civil Society Policy Forum” (CSPF), this forum attracts organizations and other stakeholders from around the world. Officially, the CSPF “is an integral part of the meetings and provides a platform for CSOs to openly share their views and perspectives, while facilitating dialogue with staff and other stakeholders on a wide range of development issues” – culminating in numerous panel discussions, roundtables with executive directors, town halls with the Bank’s president and the IMF’s managing

26. The World Bank - Civil Society Engagement, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/279151561662811381/CSO-Brochure-ENGLISH2019.pdf>

27. The World Bank - Civil Society Engagement: Review of Fiscal Years 2010–2012, <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/177921468152375251/pdf/809490WP0WBOC1020Box03798240PUBLIC0.pdf>

28. The World Bank - Civil Society Engagement, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/279151561662811381/CSO-Brochure-ENGLISH2019.pdf>

director, and other spaces for CSOs to convene.²⁹ To facilitate work in a more consistent way, the CSPF also has a working group comprised of five organizations currently intending to work from 2020-2022 to ensure more dialogue between the Bank and organizations.³⁰ Although the Bank says the CSPF is important, there is significant and consistent disagreement from many CSOs who describe this forum as superficial and rarely able to influence the details of specific projects.

Specific for LGBTI CSOs, the Fall and Spring Meetings have been a useful entry point to meet with senior management and ensure the Bank's commitment to advance inclusion. Through a coalition of organizations predominantly based in Washington, D.C., but also from around the world, many LGBTI leaders attend consistently and hold numerous public panel discussions as well as meetings with the Bank's executive directors, president, chief operating officer, and vice presidents. All of this engagement has been successful, contributing to an environment whereby the Bank consistently announces its support to combat exclusion and discrimination against LGBTI people.³¹ Further, past participants have even reflected that these meetings provided a new space to engage their government, that otherwise would not have been possible back in their countries.³² More on this coalition of organizations will be discussed throughout part 3.

2.4. Access to Information

One other important mechanism of the World Bank is its Policy on Access to Information, which the Bank heralds as one of the more transparent and advanced in the economic development field.³³ Launched in 2010, this policy requires the Bank to share significant amounts of information (with some exceptions³⁴) through public access, open data, open finances, and through an open knowledge repository. Additionally, it has a system of archives going back to 1946. For information that is not available through the website, archives, or library within its headquarters, there is a process by which one can request that information, as well as a way to appeal if the request is denied due to reasons of confidentiality.³⁵

This policy has greatly influenced the dissemination of publicly available information, although an in-depth examination is outside the scope of this guide. Suffice to say, there is a tremendous amount of (past and current) online information on the various processes of the Bank, including country portfolios via Country Pages, as well as lending strategies and frameworks, projects under preparation, current projects, project timelines, board proceedings, research and analytics, thematic diagnostics, summaries of consultations, open data,³⁶ and more – and therefore is very useful for understanding and engaging with the World Bank.

2.5. Implications for LGBTI Engagement

Although the World Bank is technically part of the U.N. System as a Specialized Agency, it is significantly different than the rest of the U.N. Agencies and is better analyzed through the lens of development banking. Further, working with the World Bank will entail a different approach than typical LGBTI funders and partners, especially governments and embassies, national human rights institutions, or even regional organizations like

29. The World Bank - Civil Society Engagement, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/279151561662811381/CSO-Brochure-ENGLISH2019.pdf>

30. The World Bank - Civil Society, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/partners/civil-society/civil-society-policy-forum>

31. Bank Information Center - LGBT and Indigenous Sexual Identities in Latin America, <https://bankinformationcenter.org/en-us/update/video-lgbt-and-indigenous-sexual-diversities-in-latin/>

32. Gathered by author through various conversations with global LGBTI leaders in numerous Fall/Spring Meetings

33. The World Bank - Access to Information, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/access-to-information>

34. The World Bank - List of Exceptions, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/access-to-information/ai-exception>

35. The World Bank - Overview, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/access-to-information/overview#1>

36. The World Bank - World Bank Open Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/>

the Organization of American States or the European Union. By its own description, the World Bank doesn't operate through a human rights-based approach but rather through the lens of economic development – although this is highly contested among several governmental donors (discussed more in section 3.3.). By using the machinery of economic development, it works with its clients (governments) to promote the Twin Goals of ending poverty and promoting shared prosperity. Through many technical economic pathways, and in many countries, the Bank can be difficult to understand and shrouded in mystery.

However, it is important to note that **this institution is public**, financed through various donor governments and working with clients who are mostly recipient governments. **As such, it's clearly within the purview and entitlements of CSOs around the world to better understand, interact with, and work alongside the World Bank.** This is not only an internal mandate from the World Bank to engage civil society in various ways,³⁷ but it is also the paradigm in which economic development now operates. In essence, it is expected that civil society organizations have a “seat” at the metaphorical table – not as an act of charity but as rather partners who contribute to better outcomes.

This guide seeks to provide a “how to” for understanding the peculiarities of this institution, particularly by showcasing some patterns that might be pertinent for LGBTI CSOs. In fact, two important patterns emerge when examining the World Bank in relation to the other MDBs. First, given its mandate to engage clients around the world, it is the most **financed** and **funded** MDB. With its international purview as well as its self-declared mission of being a Knowledge Bank and producing a wealth of data-driven social and economic reports, this has combined to create significant **soft power** or influence in the world. With this, the Bank has heavily influenced an entire economic development field, with its own **reputation** at the center. Altogether, this soft power and reputation now carry significant **clout**, not only among the economic development field but also among governments and many important stakeholders. In consideration of whether or not the World Bank is a viable pathway to promote LGBTI economic empowerment, CSOs should greatly consider the potential of tapping into the institution's resources, soft power, reputation, and clout.

The second pattern is that the World Bank goes through a structural reform with each incoming president, often coupled with smaller reforms every few years. Although it remains consistent and effective in its outward engagement with clients, specifically by providing below-market interest rates on loans as well as cutting-edge analytics and programs, it is in a constant state of internal flux. Pragmatically speaking, it is best to view this institution as an ever-shifting Rubik's Cube that will never have “perfectly matched” sides. For example, in just six short years alone, the World Bank was restructured from an internal mapping based on regions and sectoral lending, to an organization mapped around thematic “Global Practices”, back to the mapping based on regions and sectoral lending.

In light of this, this guide should not be seen as definitive, but rather the first attempt to provide strategic guidance on reliable entry points with the intent to be re-examined in subsequent years and in-step with the Bank's new reforms. It is intended to guide a (first) normative shift for LGBTI CSOs in regards to advocacy strategies and underutilized global institutions. It is based on pre-existing entry points throughout the institution, in addition to emerging entry points, in order to provide clear examples for CSOs to expand the tools and resources that become available as the MDBs become more responsive to the serious impacts of exclusion, discrimination, and violence based on SOGI. As such, it holds a wealth of potential for the LGBTI CSOs who invest in this pathway, albeit in a way that encourages long-term and adaptive engagement.

37. For example, see the Directive on Country Engagement or Brochure on Civil Society Engagement

Part 3:

Current LGBTI Work at the World Bank

3.1. Background

In comparison to the other MDBs, the World Bank is by far the leader on the integration of LGBTI issues into its analytical and programmatic agendas. By no means does this imply that the LGBTI agenda is firmly ingrained into the institution's DNA; in fact, and as this guide shows, there is plenty of room for more analytics and programs. But to briefly muse on just how much LGBTI-specific work has advanced within a short timeframe does inspire optimism for even more integration and advancement.

As recently as 2013, the World Bank began to advance on the issue of how to include LGBT people into its development agenda, with a focus on the socioeconomic and macroeconomic impacts of homophobia and transphobia. A few years after, a focus on the economic development challenges for intersex people was added to this work (albeit in inconsistent ways and with mixed success). Altogether, this push can be attributed to the alignment of four integral parts of the institution: internal staff (especially its LGBT employee resource group), select governments on the Executive Board of Directors, World Bank senior management (especially its president and vice presidents), and finally, civil society.

On the heels of advances for equal treatment of its gay and lesbian staff members in 2013, the Bank's internal resource group for LGBT staff (titled GLOBE) was able to pivot from internal workplace issues to the outward-facing development agenda - i.e. to assess how the World Bank specifically addressed homophobia and transphobia in the countries it worked.³⁸ GLOBE successfully secured a grant from a human rights trust fund,³⁹ financed from the Nordic governments, to generate knowledge on the socioeconomic impact and human rights implications of LGBT exclusion, while also promoting an internal cultural change within the Bank. From this grant emerged the first-ever methodology and estimates for measuring the macro-economic impact when countries exclude LGBT people, using India as a case study.⁴⁰ This began the successful push from internal staff members to provide one of the most compelling reasons for the Bank to act: a data-driven argument through the lens of economic development.

From 2013-2015, some members from the Bank's Executive Board of Directors, senior management, and civil society helped advance this agenda significantly. From the Board, and predominantly driven by the executive director's office that supported the Nordic Trust Fund⁴¹ as well as the executive director representing the United States, began to work together to combat an anti-LGBT voting bloc and successfully sent a strong message throughout the institution. Following this lead, senior management and the president sent more signals of support, including public statements about SOGI inclusion.⁴² However, it wasn't until civil society organizations entered this equation that it successfully propelled the Bank past messaging alone, partly by aligning with the efforts of the aforementioned Bank staff and partly by holding senior management accountable to their words. In 2015, a coalition of global CSOs formed to externally leverage a larger, more equitable seat at the table. Since then, many of these same

38. In conversation with Fabrice Houdart, GLOBE's President from 2012-2016 and lead on LGBT research in India

39. The Nordic Trust Fund, now in its second phase and called the "Human Rights and Development Trust Fund". Available: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/human-rights-and-development-trust-fund#1>

40. Badgett, M. (2014). *The economic cost of stigma and the exclusion of LGBT people: a case study of India (English)*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/527261468035379692/The-economic-cost-of-stigma-and-the-exclusion-of-LGBT-people-a-case-study-of-India>

41. Comprised of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, and Lithuania

42. The World Bank - Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Development, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2013/06/06/sexual-orientation-gender-identity-development>

organizations continue to work with the Bank to ensure that LGBT (now including intersex) issues stay a part of the development agenda.

In the years since, all of this work culminated in the hiring of a senior advisor in 2016 to further guide and promote LGBTI inclusion,⁴³ in addition to an internal task force to facilitate the agenda throughout various parts of the institution.⁴⁴ In just a handful of years, these efforts have promoted the inclusion of LGBTI issues into important strategies and frameworks within the institution, as well as greater participation into the Bank's central missions of economic development-focused analytics and programming with its clients – all discussed in the upcoming sections.

However, lest it be forgotten, this agenda is not complete since there still remains a lot of work to do, particularly in terms of amplifying the voices of LGBTI people around the world and to ensure an equitable seat at the table. The Bank is still a global institution that lends dozens of billions of dollars on an annual basis, with so little of those resources going toward LGBTI communities, nor a consistent approach to ensuring LGBTI inclusion in larger loans and programs. The potential of this public institution to do significantly more should inspire concerted efforts by civil society to more meaningfully engage with it. The rest of this section examines the current entry points at the World Bank, whereby LGBTI people were consulted or included in its programmatic or analytical processes, while concluding with recommendations along each entry point.

3.2. Avoiding Aid Conditionality – Two Differing Approaches

This section focuses on two differing strategies of how the World Bank has already acted on behalf of LGBTI people through one its most powerful operations – Investment Project Financing – albeit with mixed success due a complicated relationship with aid conditionality.

3.2a. Historical Background

The history of MDB-imposed aid conditionality is complex, with significant impacts on the poor and the economic development of its borrowers. On its surface, and by World Bank standards, aid conditionality is when a financial institution “links financial support to the implementation of a program of reforms that are considered critical for the country's economic and social development”.⁴⁵ These conditions can serve a dual purpose for lending agencies: to ensure their client's policy and economic frameworks facilitate the disbursement of funds in its intended way, while also securing accountability and repayment of the loan. But below the surface, and particularly in regards to the history of the World Bank, these conditions did not always serve the long-term best interest of their clients, especially for their most vulnerable and poor. In fact, critics show numerous examples over the decades when the Bank enforced generic macroeconomic reforms on developing nations, incentivizing the adjustment of their economic structures away from social safety nets and toward a neoliberal economic approach of global integration. Often caught in the cross hairs of these reforms were the poor, as their government's ability to provide safety nets and welfare systems was diminished.⁴⁶

Following significant backlash from borrowing governments and civil society, and particularly after the 1980s and the highly contested era of structural adjustment programs, the World Bank entered a new paradigm in which it now provides more autonomy to their clients over the loans they receive and the conditions they must

43. The World Bank – Clifton Cortez, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/team/clifton-cortez>

44. The World Bank – SOGI Task Force, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/team/sogi-task-force>

45. The World Bank. 2005. *Review of World Bank conditionality (English)*, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/228751468134390047/review-of-world-bank-conditionality>

46. Kidd, S. (Spring 2018). Pro-poor or Anti-poor? The World Bank and IMF's Approach to Social Protection. *The Bretton Woods Observer*. <https://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2018/03/pro-poor-anti-poor-world-bank-imfs-approach-social-protection/>

adhere to. This paradigm is now called “Country Engagement” and is solidified via a Bank-client agreement called a Country Partnership Framework, which strikes a balance between traditional conditionality and country ownership by structuring a mutually beneficial relationship⁴⁷ (see more in section 3.5).

However, critics are not so quick to accept this new paradigm as diametrically opposed to the era of generically imposed macroeconomic reforms, and point out the continued negative impact of policy-based lending – particularly as it relates to the sovereignty and cultural autonomy of its clients. This section does not analyze the veracity of those critiques, but rather showcases that they still exist as a relevant narrative. Some governments have even used these critiques as narrative to justify anti-LGBTI legislation when facing potential repercussions by the World Bank and the international development community. By briefly analyzing two case studies of the World Bank’s response to emerging anti-LGBTI legislation and crackdowns, this can guide how to leverage the World Bank in a way that does not provide fodder to governments to decry aid conditionality in support of its anti-LGBTI laws.

3.2b. Approach to Uganda vs. Tanzania

In 2014, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda signed into law the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA), which criminalized same-sex acts with punitive measures. This applied not only to those caught expressing same-sex love and desire, but also to anyone who knew about their sexual orientation yet did nothing to report it. This meant that anyone and everyone was responsible for turning in same-sex attracted people if they became aware of their sexual orientation – making this law a step more stringent than similar laws around the world.

At the time, the World Bank was about to disseminate a loan of USD \$90 million to Uganda’s Ministry of Health for the health systems. Also at this time, the World Bank was in its initial stage of addressing the economic impacts of homophobia and transphobia, but had not yet consulted LGBTI people as part of its due diligence to mitigate risk against vulnerable groups in the lending process. Right after this law passed in Uganda, the World Bank was thrust into the limelight due to internal and external pressure to address the AHA. Partly driven by the outcry of prominent human rights-based CSOs in Washington, D.C., senior members of the U.S. Congress intervened and used their leverage within the institution to strongly recommend a delay on the loan,⁴⁸ which was enough for the World Bank president to follow-suit by halting its disbursement.⁴⁹

Even though the Ugandan Supreme Court later struck down the law on a technicality and the World Bank loan was eventually disbursed, the Bank’s initial intervention gave the Ugandan president an ideal moment to cultivate the narrative that tolerance for same-sex love was being enforced through Western aid.⁵⁰ When confronted by delayed funds from the World Bank and other bilateral aid agencies, a senior government official in Uganda was reported to have said the president enacted the law “with the full witness of the international media to demonstrate Uganda’s independence in the face of Western pressure and provocation.”⁵¹ Influential and global media outlets

47. The World Bank - Country Engagement, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/country-strategies>

48. Feder, J. (2014, February 27). World Bank Delays \$90 Million Loan to Uganda As Bank President Blasts Anti-Gay Laws. *BuzzFeed News*. <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/lesterfeder/world-bank-delays-90-million-loan-to-uganda-as-bank-president>

49. Days later, the World Bank president tried to explain the need to do so – not as a mandate by the U.S. but by rather citing the punitive measure that others with knowledge of same-sex acts are forced to report, which has clear implications for the World Bank’s ability to deliver loans without exclusion or unequal access. Available: <https://www.devex.com/news/jim-kim-defends-world-bank-decision-to-delay-uganda-loan-83040>

50. Subscribe to the FT to Read: Financial Times Uganda Risks Western Backlash over Anti-gay Law. *Financial Times*. Accessed February 04, 2019. <https://www.ft.com/content/cc3e0758-a097-11e3-a72c-00144feab7de>

51. Boyles, A. (2014, March 4). Western Countries and World Bank Cut Aid to Uganda, Local Advocates Speak out. *GLAAD*. <https://www.glaad.org/blog/western-countries-and-world-bank-cut-aid-uganda-local-advocates-speak-out>

reinforced this message by writing that the World Bank had the “right intention”, but ultimately acted outside of its mandate and in a sporadic and inconsistent way.⁵² Ultimately, the Ugandan president was able to convince his supporters that the World Bank was enforcing unwanted conditions through its loans, and although the response to the Bank by Ugandan LGBTI civil society was mixed, the impact was a heightened visibility of violations of their human rights. In essence, the Ugandan president was able to wield the argument and cultural baggage against aid conditionality to promote his anti-LGBTI agenda, and in retaliation to a World Bank intervention.

In juxtaposition, when the government of Tanzania negatively targeted women and LGBTI people, the World Bank’s response was more nuanced and seemingly did not fuel censures of aid conditionality and anti-LGBTI rhetoric. In 2018, and in light of a government-led crackdown on these communities, the World Bank halted missions to the country and delayed a multimillion-dollar loan to its health sector.⁵³ Driven by its Global Advisor on SOGI, the Bank now has processes of examining emerging dangerous situations for LGBTI people (in relation to its programming), which include “under the radar” consultations with civil society as well as governmental officials.⁵⁴ In Tanzania, the Bank’s intervention was driven by its engagement of LGBTI civil society and was couched in preexisting dialogue on gender equality issues. In response, the Tanzanian president met with the World Bank to ensure that government officials would not harass or arrest LGBTI people – which was enough justification for the World Bank to lift the suspension on missions⁵⁵ and eventually disburse the loan. Although the long-term impact of this intervention should be examined in-depth, it does not seem to have culled more backlashes as it did in Uganda, and also was not reactive but rather informed by dialogue.

Recommendations

Before any recommendations are considered, LGBTI CSOs should give great care and thought on this potential entry point, particularly prioritizing the safety and well-being of the community. In no way should the World Bank dictate laws among the governments it works with, particularly on such complex issues of identity. Rather, the starting point and perspective for this entry point is how civil society can begin to utilize the new processes of engaging the Bank through dialogue, particularly in light of (emerging or historical) discriminatory laws or governmental crack-downs. Again, the safety of the community should be prioritized, as well as an examination of how this entry point could embolden LGBTI opponents, upon consideration of the following:

- Structure relationships with the World Bank country office, particularly if there are emerging or historical laws that criminalize LGBTI people. Following the example of Tanzania, this dialogue is crucial so the Bank can make an informed decision. CSOs have every right to have their voices heard, and that message should be clear: legal discrimination and other socially-driven challenges serve as mechanisms of exclusion, and the Bank must examine how it can disseminate loans without further emboldening legal exclusion. By its own mandate, the Bank cannot promote legal discrimination through its lending but rather has to promote inclusive programming. Numerous internal and external mechanisms have been created to promote this. With this understanding, LGBTI civil society can be another mechanism to ensure the Bank’s own non-discriminatory and inclusive mandate through meaningful dialogue with country office representatives. The voices of national civil society can deflate

52. (2014, April 12). Right Cause, Wrong Battle: Why the World Bank’s focus on gay rights is misguided. *The Economist*. <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2014/04/12/right-cause-wrong-battle>

53. Steer, G. (2018, November 16). What to Know About Tanzania’s Anti-LGBT Crackdown. *Time*. <http://time.com/5456826/tanzania-anti-gay-world-bank/>

54. Interview with Clifton Cortez, World Bank Global Advisor on SOGI

55. The World Bank - World Bank Statement on Lifting the Suspension of Missions to Tanzania. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2018/11/20/world-bank-statement-on-lifting-the-suspension-of-missions-to-tanzania>

the false governmental narrative of a “western imposition” and “aid conditionality” and place this issue in the realm of inclusive social and economic development.

- Given there is now a process in place for the Bank to undertake due diligence in regards to LGBTI well-being and address emerging laws and crack-downs, this sets a strong precedent for organizations to structure this dialogue. This can be more challenging in contexts where there are no World Bank representatives, likely due to small portfolios between the government and the Bank, or where those representatives make no effort to reply to requests. However, the World Bank’s Global Advisor on SOGI is another way to engage the institution. Being proactive in this engagement is strongly recommended, specifically by having a unified message (across the civil society sector) that speaks to the entry points and direct concerns of the World Bank.

3.3. Human Rights within the World Bank

This section focuses on human rights within the World Bank, not as a theme identified or prioritized by the institution but as rather an ideal that many stakeholders envision as central to economic development. As such, human rights have (historical and ongoing) important implications for LGBTI issues within the Bank.

As discussed prior, one of the most salient institutional standpoints for the World Bank is that it does not delve into human rights since it is “apolitical”.⁵⁶ This is less a statement of fact and more of a retrospective narrative that was built on the opinions, precedence, and guidance of its legal department situated in the Legal Vice Presidency, and as operationalized through some members of the Executive Board. As opposed to being an inherent truth, this narrative is an ongoing navigation, continuously codified through its internal culture and upheld by bureaucratic functions. Due to this, it is a greatly contested narrative with numerous state and non-state stakeholders diverging on how the World Bank should address a government’s obligations to uphold human rights. Even geopolitical factions among the Executive Board of Directors have sometimes emerged over the approach to human rights through pivotal lending strategies.

Although an in-depth examination of human rights, economic development, and the World Bank is outside the scope of this guide, a quick glimpse does provide context on this important debate. One of the most important documents for the World Bank is the Articles of Agreement, serving as its governing document by dictating its principles of organization, management, operation, and membership. To ensure that all activities, loans, and operations are in compliance with that mandate, the Bank’s lawyers constantly interpret those Articles. One of the Bank’s most influential General Counsel, Ibrahim Shihata,⁵⁷ greatly structured the Bank’s status quo on human rights within its development agenda: “...the Bank recognizes the limits resulting from its specialized mandate... and from the explicit provisions in its charter prohibiting it from interfering in the political affairs of its members and enjoining it to take only economic considerations into account”.⁵⁸ This conservative perspective on the complex interplay between human rights and economic development perhaps overlooks, as a joint OECD and World Bank publication notes, how the institution already implements policies to protect the rights of indigenous people, women, and those who have been involuntarily displaced. Instead of interpreting these protections as outside of the scope of its Articles of Agreement, these human right protections rather strengthen

56. Stephens, P. (2014, March 14). Jim Kim defends World Bank decision to delay Uganda loan. *Devex*, <https://www.devex.com/news/jim-kim-defends-world-bank-decision-to-delay-uganda-loan-83040>

57. The World Bank - Dedication of former World Bank Board Room in honor of Ibrahim F.I. Shihata, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2019/11/07/dedication-of-the-former-board-room-in-honor-of-mr-ibrahim-fi-shihata>

58. Shihata, Ibrahim. (1993). The World Bank and Human Rights - A Presentation Before the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights

development outcomes (an instrumental rationale) as well as adhere to the overarching U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (an intrinsic rationale).⁵⁹

Outside of the substantive dimensions regarding the link between human rights and economic development, there is also the historical examination of how human rights mechanisms actually drove the LGBTI agenda at the World Bank. As mentioned prior, the success of this agenda comes largely from an internal funding mechanism called the Nordic Trust Fund, put in place through the leadership of the Bank's executive director for the Nordic community and financed by those same countries, plus Germany. Currently, it has moved into a second phase and was re-named the Human Rights and Development Trust Fund. To advance human rights dimensions and standards throughout the Bank and within the development agenda, it supports knowledge and research, as well as discussions, capacity building, and trainings for World Bank staff.⁶⁰ In its current and previous iteration, it has financed some of the most progressive analytical work at the Bank, from measuring LGBTI exclusion in Asia and Europe, to researching the human development challenges of displaced children in Africa, to analyzing the inclusion of indigenous communities in Latin America, and more, all to promote the human rights of some of the most marginalized people.⁶¹

For LGBTI issues, in particular, the trust fund has contributed the bulk of funding that the Bank spent on data collection. For example, it financed analytical work in India, Thailand, and the Western Balkans (see more in section 3.4.), and also supported staff to include LGBTI issues into Systematic Country Diagnostics (section 3.5.) – all while ensuring that data collection captured the human rights dimensions as well as economic development challenges. The trust fund also contributed significant resources to knowledge briefs, toolkits, and training materials for World Bank staff to better understand the issues, as well as supported numerous public events.⁶² Programmatically, the trust fund also supported work in Thailand for the country office to engage the government on better safeguarding the rights of LGBTI people.⁶³

Recommendations

Although it is not an inherent truth that the World Bank can side-step human rights, but rather a constructed retrospective narrative, it is nonetheless a powerful sentiment with a lot of internal support. This is particularly bolstered through its legal department, and consequently, is also a popular viewpoint among the Executive Board of Directors – particularly those who have historically resisted considerations of human rights in general. For LGBTI CSOs, this is an important entry point that requires great consideration, especially for organizations that seek to engage World Bank country offices. The following two general recommendations can guide various approaches:

- In contexts where there are human rights abuses committed against LGBTI people by the state, present human rights documentation to country office staff (if safe to do so), as a way to begin the conversation on the Bank's potential role – particularly

59. World Bank, OECD. (2013). Integrating Human Rights into Development, Second Edition

60. The World Bank - Human Rights and Development Trust Fund, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/human-rights-and-development-trust-fund#1>

61. The World Bank - *Nordic Trust Fund Annual Progress Report 2017: Knowledge and Learning on Human Rights (English)*, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/200911536846956404/nordic-trust-fund-annual-progress-report-2017-knowledge-and-learning-on-human-rights>

62. The World Bank - The Economic Cost of Homophobia: How LGBT Exclusion Impacts Development, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2014/02/26/the-economic-cost-of-homophobia-how-lgbt-exclusion-impacts-development> and The World Bank - International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2017/05/17/ida-hot-2017-international-day-against-homophobia-transphobia-biphobia>

63. The World Bank - Ten Years of Building Knowledge on Human Rights in the World Bank Group (English), <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/838261570087406932/ten-years-of-building-knowledge-on-human-rights-in-the-world-bank-group>

examining if the Bank’s portfolio overlaps with, or inadvertently supports, those abuses.

- Signal interest to key governmental donors and stakeholders for more human rights and economic development analytics and programming. Focusing on the Human Rights and Development Trust Fund, for example, shows that it was created due to various governmental human rights-based approaches to foreign policy, foreign aid and multilateralism.⁶⁴ For these governments, this means that its approach to supporting the human rights of different groups through an MDB is a viable one. Approaching those same governments through embassies, development agencies, members on the World Bank’s Executive Board, or even the staff managing the Human Rights and Development Trust Fund, and signaling interest for more, creates the demand that this is an approach that is both viable and wanted.

3.4. Data and Knowledge

This section delves into the very important aspect of data and knowledge, before turning to the ways the Bank can use that knowledge to engage its clients through a partnership-based model.

3.4a. Construction of Knowledge – Substantive Expertise, Ubiquity, and Branding

As mentioned in section 2.2., around the turn of the century the World Bank officially declared and embraced its growing global role as a Knowledge Bank.⁶⁵ This has continued onwards and is epitomized in the 2013 World Bank Group Strategy: “The [World Bank Group] is increasingly providing a global public service by producing development data, such as statistics and indicators, and making them available. It is well regarded as a producer and disseminator of development research, knowledge, and data. The need for knowledge, research, and data is expected to grow as the international community demands more evidence to support a results-based approach to development.”⁶⁶ Through numerous methods, the Bank delivers on this promise by providing cutting-edge analytics and data-driven expertise, which are held in high esteem by the development community, many governments, U.N. Agencies, academics, and other stakeholders.

To better understand this esteem, a brief examination is needed to show how the World Bank engages in the construction of knowledge – which according to the Bank, is ultimately to the benefit of the global public. First and foremost, the Bank is able to provide a tremendous amount of expertise through its own human capital, its staff. Staff members are from diverse backgrounds and academic disciplines, comprised of economists, sociologists, and biologists, to name a few. There are also many highly specialized and technical experts, from rainforest specialists to human rights lawyers to engineers, and more. When the Bank doesn’t have a resident specialist to be involved in a particular research initiative or program, it can hire one as a consultant.

The Bank is then able to pivot this knowledge-base into numerous and diverse systems of data collection, not only among its client governments but even through regional and international norms of data collection – thus it is ubiquitous. Some examples of this include Systematic Country Diagnostics, poverty and social impact analyses, support to censuses and other nationally representative diagnostics, international measurements of poverty, standard-setting reports like the “World Development Report”, and global indices like “Doing Business” (DB) and “Women, Business and the Law” (WBL). These latter two examples, in particular, are important due to their ability to incentivize hundreds of policy and legal changes in many countries – in fact, DB contributed to

64. For example, see Sweden’s foreign aid policy: <https://sweden.se/society/sweden-and-human-rights/>

65. Wagstaff, A. (2012, September 20). So what exactly is a “knowledge bank”. World Bank Blogs. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/so-what-exactly-is-a-knowledge-bank-1>

66. World Bank Group. (2013). World Bank Group Strategy. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16095>

294 business reforms in 115 economies in one year alone,⁶⁷ while WBL contributed to 62 reforms in 40 economies in a two-year period.⁶⁸

This ability to significantly leverage policy change shows the strength of the Bank's intellectual capital to contribute to anti-poverty and inclusive growth in the world, which underpins its branding to provide research as a public good. There are hundreds of other examples, from indices to evaluations of a country's statistical capacity and more, which are also able to leverage significant policy change. Throughout these examples, and as mandated through its Policy of Access to Information (see section 2.4.) the data are open⁶⁹ and the reports are accessible online - which provides assurance that the knowledge produced can be trusted by the public. Together, the Bank is able to effectively brand its role as a Knowledge Bank in a way that instills trust as well as positive change in the world.

Altogether, the Bank's construction of knowledge is made and delivered through the process of **substantive expertise, ubiquity**, and through **branding**, particularly as a trusted public good. One further example shows just how extensive this agenda is, to the point that the Bank has effectively built an influential and global *knowledge infrastructure* - i.e. a myriad of people and organizations that create and sustain particular knowledge and its usage.⁷⁰ Working with the U.N. Statistical Commission, the Bank has built one of the largest statistical programs in the world - the International Comparison Program - with 176 participating governments and numerous institutions at the country, regional, and international level. Its purpose is to collect and compare price data and Gross Domestic Product information to estimate the premier and most-utilized global measurement of poverty: purchasing power parity (PPP).⁷¹ From this, PPP calculations at the national level heavily influence significant allocations of money and decisions, including from governments, the European Union, the World Economic Forum, to the tracking of the Sustainable Development Goals, and more.⁷² This knowledge infrastructure is therefore a highly influential endeavor and is fueled by the Bank's construction of knowledge, including its funding.

3.4b. LGBTI Data Collection and Research

The Bank has begun a significant process to blazon the need for LGBTI data collection within inclusive growth strategies - especially to combat poverty⁷³ and to promote shared prosperity,⁷⁴ but also through sectors like education, health, and labor (among others). Additionally, it has also contributed to a global narrative whereby the need for quantitative data is particularly important. In-line with its role as a Knowledge Bank, it has contributed to setting an LGBTI data agenda by offering **substantive expertise** and **branding**, but less so through ubiquity and scaling up investments for primary data collection in various ways.

Predominantly, the Bank has begun to offer its substantive expertise to quantitative data collection efforts. As described in section 3.3., the bulk of this research was supported by the Bank's human rights trust fund (as opposed to its central budget), with significant resources provided for data collection in India, Thailand, and the Western Balkans.

67. The World Bank - Business Reforms, <https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/reforms>

68. The World Bank - Business Reforms, <https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/reforms>

69. The World Bank - Open Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/>

70. Edwards, P. (2013, May). Knowledge Infrastructures: Intellectual Frameworks and Research Challenges. Deep Blue. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256684309_Knowledge_Infrastructures_Intellectual_Frameworks_and_Research_Challenges

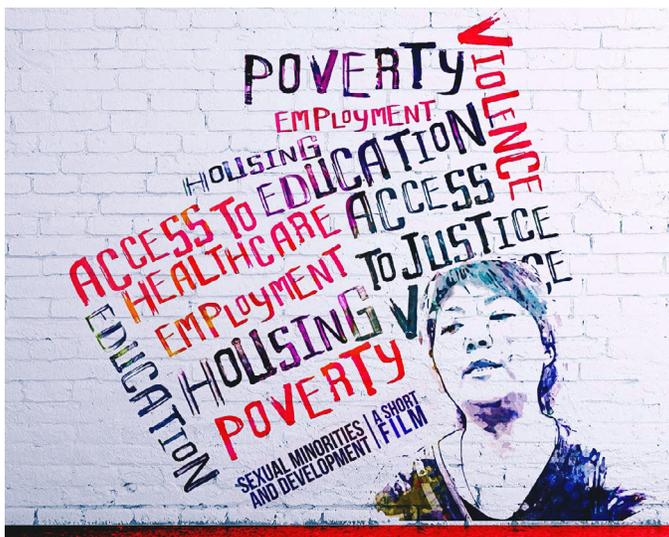
71. The World Bank - Annual Report, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/annual-report>

72. The World Bank - Fundamentals of Purchasing Power Parities, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/332341517441011666/PPP-brochure-2017-webformat-rev.pdf>

73. The World Bank (2016, May 17). *To Fight Poverty We Need to Fight Homophobia and Transphobia*, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/05/17/to-fight-poverty-we-need-to-fight-homophobia-and-transphobia>

74. The World Bank (2018, May 17). *Why LGBTI Inclusion is Key to Shared Prosperity*, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/05/17/why-lgbti-inclusion-is-key-to-shared-prosperity>

In India, these funds supported the first-ever macroeconomic model to measure the “cost” of LGBT exclusion and the loss to the economy, as measured in GDP,⁷⁵ as well as data collection that measured poverty within the LGBT community⁷⁶ and even a short documentary⁷⁷ (see photo below). In Thailand, this trust fund supported the largest quantitative data collection effort in the country, in which both LGBTI people and the general population were surveyed to uncover key patterns of stigma and social exclusion.⁷⁸ Finally, the trust fund supported a tremendous data collection effort throughout the Western Balkans to uncover the extent of discrimination and exclusion,⁷⁹ as well as experimental research to measure the impact of non-normative SOGI on accessing education in Serbia.⁸⁰



Source: Jake Fagan & Phil Crehan, “Sexual Minorities and Development: A Short Film”, World Bank

Regarding this research in the Western Balkans, one positive impact of the Bank’s substantive expertise has been for its implementing partner, a CSO called the LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey (ERA). At first, their partnership helped build the capacity of ERA to do more research on its own, as well as the ability to utilize data to speak to different stakeholders. In the years since, that capacity has fostered a deeper engagement between ERA and the government of Serbia as well as the European Union, still with the World Bank providing a role of facilitation. Finally, the research has even led to a recent Concept Note to perform another data collection effort, with some discussion for LGBTI programs to be supported by the World Bank via governance and justice sectoral lending.⁸¹

Outside of the support given by the human rights trust fund, other research on LGBT (sometimes including intersex) people has taken place as part of larger diagnostics. For example, a national gender-based diagnostic in Georgia included six focus group discussions with LGBT people in three cities, which allowed the research team to analyze and compare those findings to pre-existing quantitative measures of stigma against same-sex attracted neighbors, and thus uncover new patterns of violence against the

75. Badgett, M. (2014). *The economic cost of stigma and the exclusion of LGBT people: a case study of India (English)*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21515>

76. Amaltas - Excluded: *Experienced Discrimination, Life Chance and Socio-economic Situation of Sexual Minorities in India*

77. The World Bank (2015, March 13). *Sexual Minorities and Development: A Short Film* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjVhAsgfqME>

78. The World Bank. *Economic inclusion of LGBTI groups in Thailand (Vol. 2): main report (English)*. <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/174551494904827026/Economic-Inclusion-of-LGBTI-Groups-in-Thailand-English.pdf>

79. The World Bank. *Life on the Margins: Survey Results of the Experiences of LGBTI People in Southeastern Europe (English)*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30607>

80. Koehler, D. (2017). *Discrimination against sexual minorities in education and housing: evidence from two field experiments in Serbia (English)*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29977>

81. Based on an interview with Amarildo Fecanji, Executive Co-Director, ERA

community.⁸² Additionally, and as supported by the Development Economics research unit, the Bank created indicators that were specifically linked to Shared Prosperity in order to examine the legal inclusion of ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and LGBTI people, and even piloted research in six countries.⁸³ Regarding this latter research, the Bank has conducted a follow-up assessment in more countries – although the final report has not been published by the time of this writing.

Given these various research endeavors, the Bank is starting to deliver on its role as a Knowledge Bank for LGBTI issues by providing **substantive expertise**. The second component, its ability to scale-up this research through various methods and in different countries, is far more limited. For example, in the years since the bulk of the aforementioned research was completed in 2016–2017, only one new data collection effort has taken place, and it is unclear if the Bank will provide any more resources to continue on this important effort. However, speaking to the third component of being a Knowledge Bank, the Bank has effectively **branded** its role in this emerging LGBTI data agenda.

Regardless of its ability to actually support and finance more data collection, the Bank has nonetheless branded its role in the generation of LGBTI knowledge – and as a trusted public good – through two main ways. The first is through the many public statements and stories it posts on its site. This includes: “Feature Stories”, blog posts, public presentations in headquarters, events on the International Day Against Homophobia, Bi-phobia, and Transphobia,⁸⁴ and presentations in numerous global conferences. For example, a blog post from 2019 drives the point home: “To present credible evidence to the World Bank’s clients that exclusion based on... SOGI is a major problem for society and the economy alike, we need much more data than we currently possess... At the World Bank, we are committed to use our comparative advantage to help fill the LGBTI data gap and expand the evidence base on SOGI exclusion.”⁸⁵

The second way is far more significant. By partnering with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Bank co-led an expert consultation, including LGBTI CSOs, to agree upon 50+ indicators within five larger themes (education, political/civic participation, economic well-being, health, and personal safety and violence) – culminating in a LGBTI Inclusion Index.⁸⁶ With the agreed-upon indicators, UNDP and the Bank have established a very strong standard of measuring LGBTI inclusion for anyone who wants to collect and analyze those data, including governments, academics, civil society, and more. From a blog post that discussed the index: “While our set of indicators will quantify, compare, and track LGBTI inclusion, it can also become a policy roadmap on how to create LGBTI inclusive societies. The indicators define how we measure inclusion, meaning that policymakers can use them to engineer policies that improve a country’s standing in an inclusion index.”⁸⁷ Currently, UNDP officially owns this index⁸⁸ – although it remains unclear how it has informed data collection after it was published in 2018, or if any UNDP or Bank resources have gone to operationalize it. Yet, regardless of the Bank’s ability to actually invest in various data collection efforts,

82. The World Bank (2017). Gender Based Violence in Georgia: Links among Conflict, Economic Opportunities and Services. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29108>

83. The World Bank. Antidiscrimination Law and Shared Prosperity An Analysis of the Legal Framework of Six Economies and Their Impact on the Equality of Opportunities of Ethnic, Religious, and Sexual Minorities, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/26242>

84. The World Bank. (2020, May 18). Cost of Exclusion: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOTB) 2020. <https://live.worldbank.org/cost-exclusion-international-day-against-homophobia-transphobia-biphobia>

85. Gill, M. (2019, May 17). Walking the talk on LGBTI inclusion. *World Bank Blogs*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/walking-the-talk-lgbti-inclusion-idahot>

86. Badgett, M. & Sell, R. (2018). A set of Proposed Indicators for the LGBTI Inclusion Index. The World Bank. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/608921536847788293/pdf/129913-WP-UNDP-Indicators-for-the-LGBT-IInclusion-Index.pdf>

87. Cortez, C. (2017, December 11). Is your country LGBTI inclusive? With better data, we’ll know. *World Bank Blogs*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/your-country-lgbti-inclusive-better-data-we-ll-know>

88. As established in dialogue between the Global Advisor on SOGI and CSOs

it has nonetheless branded its role in a LGBTI data agenda through public messaging and standard setting, establishing both as trusted public goods.

Recommendations

With the significant data gaps that exist on LGBTI people and outcomes around the world, and the invisibility that often follows, this could be one of the most important entry points for CSOs to consider. Given the Bank's role in providing substantive expertise and ability to brand its role within the data-driven agenda, this leaves the real challenge of it being able to provide the **funds to scale-up data collection**. Significant funding will continue to be a great need for the data collection agenda, particularly since financial support for research is under-prioritized among general resource mobilization strategies. For example, some estimates place current investments in global LGBTI research to be only 4% of an already under-resourced social movement.⁸⁹ Thus, the following five recommendations can guide CSOs who want to use data and research as an entry point with the World Bank:

- Engage the country office, Global Advisor on SOGI, and other Bank staff to request ways to generate the funds to support *standalone LGBTI research*. Funding can come in many ways, including new grants, trust funds, from headquarters, through sectoral and thematic lending, or via co-financing between the Bank and other funders. Send a strong message that this research is wanted and should take place in tandem with LGBTI civil society leaders. This will ensure the Bank is meeting its own commitment to advance the LGBTI data and knowledge agenda. Research from India, Thailand, and the Western Balkans show this to be a viable pathway.
- Particularly with the country office, request that *LGBTI people and SOGI indicators are included into larger research endeavors and other diagnostics*. Research from Georgia and the legal analysis developed by the Development Economics unit provide viable examples that this is possible. There are dozens of other diagnostics that remain under-utilized, like poverty and social impact assessments, gender diagnostics, social assessments as part of the Environmental and Social Framework, and more – all can and should include SOGI indicators. In fact, the LGBTI Inclusion Index even provides a list of pertinent indicators in data collection and various ways to incorporate them.
- Request the operationalization of the LGBTI Inclusion Index. It's currently unclear if there are plans to educate stakeholders on how to use it. Given this index reflects significant expertise by civil society and the development community, it remains a viable way for some state statistical agencies, academia, civil society, and others to advance data collection among LGBTI people.
- Request support for capacity building to undertake LGBTI data collection. Given the Bank's substantive expertise, it has tremendous human capital that should contribute to the education of CSOs on best practices of research, new methodologies to guide data collection, data analysis, and the presentation of data and research. As reminder, this was a significant and positive outcome between the Bank and the CSO, the Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey (ERA). Further, this support for research capacity was a main idea that both the Bank and UNDP (and as co-written by this author) suggested to the development community in 2016, that support for capacity-building to generating a research and knowledge infrastructure can be beneficial to economic development outcomes and civil society.⁹⁰ However, it seems neither the Bank nor UNDP has significantly advanced this idea since then.
- Attend the Bank's Fall and Spring Meetings. As mentioned throughout this guide, this is a viable entry point since there is a history of strong CSO engagement with the Bank on LGBTI issues. This is a chance to voice an expectation that the Bank

89. Global Philanthropy Project. (2020, May 28). *2017–2018 Global Resources Report: Government & Philanthropic Support for LGBTI Communities*. <https://globalresourcesreport.org/>

90. Badgett, M. V. L. & Crehan, P. R. (2016). Investing in a research revolution for LGBTI inclusion (English). World Bank Group <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/196241478752872781/investing-in-a-research-revolution-for-lgbti-inclusion>

scale-up its analytical work. CSOs like Gender Action, Human Rights Watch, the Bank Information Center, Re-course, the Council for Global Equality, the Human Rights Campaign, and ERA are consistently in attendance and deliver similar messaging.

3.5. A New Paradigm of Country Engagement

This section examines the new paradigm of interaction between the Bank and its clients, which provides context for how each stakeholder examines and mitigates risk during the lending process, as discussed in the following section.

3.5a. Country Partnership Frameworks and other Diagnostics

As mentioned previously, the World Bank purports to have left behind the era of structural adjustment policies and aid conditionality by entering a new paradigm of more equitable engagement with its clients – i.e. borrowing governments. This new engagement is now a mandate of the institution, as issued by its president in 2014 through a World Bank Group Directive, titled “Country Engagement”.⁹¹ In order to ensure the interests of both borrower and lender, the crux of this partnership-based model is driven by the overarching agreement between the Bank and governments, titled the Country Partnership Framework (CPF).

According to the Directive, the CPF is the most pivotal document between the Bank and governments, operating for a period of four to six years and “identifies the key objectives and development results through which the [World Bank Group] intends to support a member country in its efforts to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity in a sustainable manner. It is the central tool that guides the [World Bank Group’s] support for the member country’s development program”.⁹² It is thus informed by the needs of both partners. To ensure country-ownership, the Bank includes the government’s own economic development vision and goals within the CPF. For the Bank, and within its main goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity, it draws upon a wealth of data and analytics that it has gathered in that country, summarized in a Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD).

The SCD is a second important part of Country Engagement. The Directive defines it as “a diagnostic exercise conducted by the [World Bank Group] in close consultation with national authorities, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders. It presents a systematic assessment of the constraints a country has to address and the opportunities it can embrace to accelerate progress toward the goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity in a sustainable way”.⁹³ As such, it is a data-driven diagnostic that highlights the most significant economic development challenges, to then inform the CPF from the Bank’s perspective.

There are two final steps as part of the Bank’s Country Engagement, serving as mid-term and final evaluations.⁹⁴ This includes a Performance and Learning Review (PLR) to be completed two years after a Country Partnership Framework to evaluate its implementation and to make any midcourse adjustments, as well as a Completion

91. The World Bank. (2014, July 1) Directive on Country Engagement. <https://policies.worldbank.org/en/policies/all/ppfdetail/3630>

92. The World Bank. (2014, July 1) Directive on Country Engagement. <https://policies.worldbank.org/en/policies/all/ppfdetail/3630>

93. The World Bank. Policy & Procedure Framework. <https://policies.worldbank.org/en/policies/all/ppfdetail>

94. The World Bank. Country Engagement. <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/country-strategies#1>

and Learning Review (CLR), to be completed at the end of the Country Partnership Framework's cycle as an assessment based on an agreed upon results framework.⁹⁵

3.5b. Inclusion in SCDs and CPFs

One important aspect of this Directive is the Bank's expectation to consult civil society and other stakeholders throughout its Country Engagement, and specifically to better inform the SCD, CPF, and PLR. Like with all of the other entry points in this guide, this means that hearing the voices of CSOs is not an act of charity, but rather an expectation as part of this new paradigm. This section focuses on how LGBTI issues have already made their way into SCDs and (to a lesser extent) CPFs, in order to showcase significant entry points for LGBTI CSOs.

Upon a review of recent SCDs, a significant number of LGBTI-inclusive diagnostics come from the Western Balkans, specifically in Albania,⁹⁶ Croatia⁹⁷, Kosovo⁹⁸, Macedonia,⁹⁹ and Montenegro.¹⁰⁰ Based on the author's experience, this resulted from efforts by select Washington, DC-based World Bank staff that created LGBTI country briefs and conducted consultations with the community, resulting in intermittent references in those five diagnostics.

Outside of Europe, and to varying degrees, LGBTI references made their way into some SCDs in different regions. For example, and largely driven by the work of Micro Rainbow Cambodia, the SCD for Cambodia¹⁰¹ reflects a significant examination of LGBTI issues, and even informed the CPF. Additionally, the SCD for South Africa¹⁰² shows a thoughtfulness to include LGBTI people through the lens of combating crime and promoting equity. Inversely, the SCD for Argentina¹⁰³ includes a mention of the rights of transgender people – although given it is only one brief reference, this significantly misses the rich history of advances of rights based on gender identity in the country. Similarly, the SCD for Botswana makes an equally short reference to same-sex attraction, in a context where the stakes were arguably higher when it was written: “Finally sexual minorities face significant discrimination, with homosexuality technically illegal. This prevents representative groups from getting a seat at the table of most discussions with government”.¹⁰⁴ (To note, the High Court of Botswana overturned the law against same-sex acts in 2019¹⁰⁵). Sporadic references aside, these SCDs lend more weight to the emerging normative

95. The World Bank. (2014, July 1) Directive on Country Engagement. <https://policies.worldbank.org/en/policies/all/ppfdetail/3630>

96. World Bank Group. (2015, April). Next Generation Albania: A Systematic Country Diagnostic. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/369731467992488252/pdf/95980-REVISED-SCD-Box393175B-PUBLIC-new-Albania-SCD-Final-4.pdf>

97. Muller, C. (2018, May 4). The Republic of Croatia Systematic Country Diagnostic. The World Bank. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/452231526559636808/pdf/Croatia-SCD-clean-05142018.pdf>

98. World Bank Group (2017). The Republic of Kosovo Systematic Country Diagnostic. The World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/26573?locale-attribute=en>

99. World Bank Group. (2018, November 29). FYR Macedonia Systematic Country Diagnostic: Seizing a Brighter Future for All. The World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/northmacedonia/publication/fyr-macedonia-systematic-country-diagnostic-seizing-brighter-future-for-all>

100. The World Bank. (2016, March 30). Achieving Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Amidst High Volatility: Systematic Country Diagnostic (Report No: 105019-ME). <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/642701468179098025/pdf/105019-SCD-P151813-OUO-9-SecM2016-0165.pdf>

101. The World Bank. (2017). Cambodia: Sustaining Strong Growth for the Benefit of All, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/27149#>

102. The World Bank. (2018) An Incomplete Transition: Overcoming the Legacy of Exclusion in South Africa, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29793>

103. The World Bank. (2018, December 31). Argentina Escaping Crises, Sustaining Growth, Sharing Prosperity (English), <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/696121537806645724/argentina-escaping-crises-sustaining-growth-sharing-prosperity>

104. The World Bank. (2015). Botswana: Systematic Country Diagnostic. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23103>

105. Chappell, B. (2019, June 11). *Botswana's High Court Rules Homosexuality Is Not A Crime*. [Radio broadcast]. NPR, <https://www.npr.org/2019/06/11/731576727/botswanas-high-court-rules-homosexuality-is-not-a-crime>

argument that economic development must address the challenges that LGBTI people experience.

After reviewing recent CPFs, there are significantly fewer frameworks that reference LGBTI issues. Specifically, the CPFs for Croatia,¹⁰⁶ Montenegro,¹⁰⁷ Thailand,¹⁰⁸ Uruguay,¹⁰⁹ and Cambodia¹¹⁰ all include LGBTI references. This is especially pertinent for Croatia, Montenegro, and Cambodia, for it shows at least three examples whereby LGBTI issues were included in two important parts of Country Engagement – showing a somewhat viable pathway in the future. Given the importance of the CPF to guide programs and loans, and noting that there is now a pathway to include LGBTI issues in these documents, this is a significant entry point that should be considered.

Recommendations

Predominantly, LGBTI inclusion in the SCDs and CPFs has resulted through the work of World Bank staff in headquarters, stemming less from interactions between CSOs and World Bank country offices. For example, quantitative research (see more in section 3.4.) as led by social inclusion advocates in headquarters, have greatly influenced LGBTI inclusion in the Western Balkans SCDs as well as Thailand’s CPF. In these two cases, this has greatly incentivized the country offices to advance dialogue with the governments, as well as informed how to create more inclusive programming. In the remaining aforementioned SCDs and CPFs, it is unclear how LGBTI references have impacted country office dialogue and operations. This means that this strategy currently stands somewhere between being only symbolic (on paper only) and a viable entry point for more inclusive work. To ensure this entry point can be both symbolic and practical, and utilized in more meaningful and prolific ways, the following three recommendations should be considered:

- Target upcoming SCDs and the World Bank staff who will lead them. This information will be written on the Bank’s site and on a country’s specific page, or might be available upon asking the country office. Usually, SCDs are managed by staff in the country management unit (i.e. staff in the country office as well as headquarters), and led by a Task Team Lead. Specialists and technical experts in headquarters are also brought into this process, including gender and social inclusion specialists. This is a great opportunity to firmly suggest participation in consultations, with the full knowledge that the Bank’s paradigm of Country Engagement requires this consultation. In these conversations, remember that the Bank is greatly motivated by quantitative data (especially) as well as qualitative data that show how exclusion impacts socioeconomic status and development outcomes. Successful inclusion in the SCDs is more likely to lead to inclusion in CPFs, which guides analytical and programmatic funding in the coming years.
- Target upcoming CPFs and the World Bank staff who will lead them. This information will be written on the Bank’s site and on a country’s specific page, or might be available upon asking the country office. Like the SCDs, this is also a great opportunity to firmly suggest participation in consultations, with the full knowledge that the Bank’s paradigm of Country Engagement requires this consultation. For CPFs that already

106. The World Bank. (2019). Country Partnership Framework: For the Republic of Croatia for the Period FY19-FY24. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/501721557239562800/pdf/Croatia-Country-Partnership-Framework-for-the-Period-of-FY19-FY24.pdf>

107. The World Bank. (2016, May 24). Country Partnership Framework for Montenegro for the Period FY16-FY20. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/715681467996758549/pdf/105039-CPS-P152920-PUBLIC-R2016-0095-2.pdf>

108. The World Bank. (no date given). Thailand – World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework 2019–2022. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/770551542942024490/pdf/125234-REPLACEMENT-PUBLIC-TH-WBG-Framework-ENG-FINAL-Mar-11.pdf>

109. The World Bank. (2015, December 21). Country Partnership Framework for The Oriental Republic of Uruguay (Report No. 97063-UY). <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/236451468197979364/pdf/97063-CAS-P152583-UO-9-R2015-0252-IFC-R2015-0361-MIGA-R2015-0103-Box394828B.pdf>

110. The World Bank. (2019, May 1). Country Partnership Framework for Kingdom of Cambodia. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31789/Cambodia-Country-Partnership-Framework-for-the-Period-of-FY2019-2023.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

include LGBTI references, this sets the scene in which loans and programs should be applied to include LGBTI people, in ways that promote economic empowerment.

- Focus on upcoming Performance and Learning Reviews and Completion and Learning Reviews. Both serve as evaluations during and at the conclusion of a CPF, and can be viable ways to show how the Bank fares on engaging LGBTI people. This might be more pertinent to countries that have LGBTI issues in their CPFs, but might also be viable in countries with inclusive SCDs. As there is significantly less work in relation to these evaluations, this should be re-examined in the future.

3.6. Emerging Spaces through the Environmental and Social Framework

This section describes the very technical process that the Bank and its clients must follow in order to mitigate risk to people and the environment, before returning back to the Bank's portfolio and as advanced through specific themes in the upcoming section.

3.6a. Mitigating Risk through "Safeguards"

In 2019 alone, the World Bank Group committed USD \$77.1 billion in loans, grants, equity investments and guarantees to close to 100 client countries as well as the private sector.¹¹¹ For the IBRD, this lending agency committed \$28 billion in net loans among its clients. For IDA, and going into 2021, donor countries committed to IDA \$82 billion until 2023 - its highest replenishment ever.¹¹² Suffice to say, this is a remarkably financed institution. But financing a diverse array of projects and across many sectors and themes, there are tremendous social and environmental implications tied to this much lending. For example, a project that seeks to construct a highway through forested areas may negatively impact the environment in addition to communities living there, perhaps even by displacing them from their homes. In fact, the World Bank has a history of lending that has negatively impacted the environment and populations, particularly in regards to the devastating impacts on people through mismanaged resettlement plans.¹¹³

Driven by civil society and some members of the Board, and in response to serious detrimental impacts of some lending, around the 1990s the World Bank formalized a series of policies and assessments to "safeguard" people and the environment from lending gone awry. In this, the borrowing country would undertake an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment to determine risk to the environment or people. From there, the borrower created a mitigation plan, which the Bank would then approve or ask for further consideration. Thus, a process of compliance - a Safeguards Framework - was created to ensure the mitigation of risk during the lending process and programmatic implementation, negotiated between the Bank and its borrowers. Articulated in ten standards, there were explicit mentions of groups of people or parts of the environment that must be specifically examined. For example, this included the involuntary resettlement of people, harm to indigenous peoples, the exploitation of natural habitats, and more.

However, and alongside many other criticisms, these standards did not present an ample methodological framework to consider how complex issues of vulnerability and discrimination might create barriers to access projects. Some Bank projects have already excluded LGBTI people in some countries, inadvertent though it may have been. For example, in 2013 the Blue Diamond Society in Nepal presented a case to the Bank's Inspection Panel on a vocational project that used language that excluded transgender and third gender people - a group that is specifically protected by the

111. The World Bank. (2020) World Bank Group Annual Reports. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/annual-report/world-bank-group-downloads>

112. The World Bank. (2020) World Bank Group Annual Reports. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/annual-report/world-bank-group-downloads>

113. The World Bank. (2015, April 15). World Bank: Address Failings on Resettlement. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/15/world-bank-address-failings-resettlement>

Nepalese Constitution¹¹⁴ (see more in section 3.12.). Additionally, social protections that focused on family planning and administered in Argentina from 2001–2006 excluded same-sex couples and households due to hetero-normative expectations of the family unit¹¹⁵ – even though civil unions for same-sex couples were already legalized in select Argentinian cities at the time.

In 2012, and in response to significant pressure from the Board and civil society, the Bank began a multi-year review to update the safeguards framework. Following this, it also became clear from those same stakeholders that an updated safeguards framework should contain specific provisions to incorporate non-discrimination and equal access to development gains. In 2016, the Bank’s Executive Board of Directors unanimously approved the third and final draft of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) – i.e. the new safeguards. To get to this decision, the World Bank conducted numerous global consultations with various stakeholders (including some LGBTI civil society): “the safeguards review included the most extensive consultation ever conducted by the World Bank. It concludes nearly four years of analysis and engagement around the world with governments, development experts, and civil society groups, reaching nearly 8,000 stakeholders in 63 countries”.¹¹⁶ Starting after the official ESF implementation in 2018, all projects financed through the Bank’s main lending instrument (Investment Project Financing) were required to abide by the ESF.

The new ESF seeks to improve upon the former framework in a few key areas, notably by changing the process to more easily utilize the borrower country’s regulatory framework to protect the environment and people from harm: “by focusing on the identification and management of environmental and social risks, [the ESF] will support Borrowers in their goal to reduce poverty and increase prosperity in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the environment and their citizens.”¹¹⁷ Thus, rather than having clients comply with a list of Bank-mandated standards, this new approach seeks to provide more flexibility to borrower countries and Bank staff to mitigate risk to people and the environment – seemingly trying to empower their own capacity and process. In this, the first standard is perhaps one of the most crucial parts of risk mitigation, the Environmental and Social Assessment – to be led by clients but also overseen by Bank staff. Following the assessment, the rest of the standards focus on: labor and working conditions; pollution prevention; community health and safety; involuntary resettlement; biodiversity conservation; indigenous peoples; cultural heritage; financial intermediaries; and stakeholder engagement and information disclosure.¹¹⁸

Proponents of the new ESF highlight that the former regulatory and compliance-based approach was antiquated, and that the new focus to work with countries to develop their own capacity to mitigate harm is an engagement built on partnership and capacity-building.¹¹⁹ In essence, this follows the purported trajectory of the overall work of the World Bank: what was once an engagement built upon compulsory policies is now a partnership built upon Bank-client dialogue and preserved in a Country Partnership Framework.

However, the new ESF also has significant criticisms. For example, many organizations have questioned its relevance and utility due to the newfound shift away from a

114. The World Bank. (2013). Request for Inspection. Nepal: Enhanced Vocational Education and Training Project (P104015). Notice of Non-Registration. <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P104015> Note: the Inspection Panel did not register this request due to missing basic admissibility criteria. Additionally, the World Bank office in Nepal met with the organization and changed the terminology to incorporate transgender and third gender individuals.

115. Jolly, S. (2010). Poverty and Sexuality: What are the Connections? Overview and Literature Review. SIDA. <https://www.sxpolitics.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/sida-study-of-poverty-and-sexuality1.pdf>

116. Consultations (2016, August 4) Review and Update of the World Bank Safeguards Policies. The World Bank Group. <https://consultations.worldbank.org/consultation/review-and-update-world-bank-safeguard-policies>

117. The World Bank. Environmental and Social Framework. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework>

118. The World Bank. Environmental and Social Framework. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework>

119. Morris, S. (2016). Doing More than Safeguarding the Safeguards at the World Bank. Center for Global Development. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/doing-more-safeguarding-safeguards-world-bank>

compliance-based system, arguing that the responsibility to mitigate harm and risk now lies on the borrower governments' regulatory and legal environments, which are drastically different from country to country. In providing the flexibility for borrower's to develop their own strategy of risk mitigation, this decreases the Bank's ability to enforce normative standards, and in the long-term, may reduce its role as a norm-setter.¹²⁰ An additional criticism is the lack of consideration of human rights.¹²¹ Although the Bank's companion piece to the ESF, the "Vision for Sustainable Development",¹²² includes some rights-based rhetoric, it is not tied to an operational component and human rights concerns are likely to be ignored. Together, the newfound responsibility of borrower's to analyze and mitigate risk, in addition to missing standards on human rights, can be a problematic combination. This may be especially so with countries that have discriminatory laws to exclude minority groups.

Specifically regarding LGBTI people, the final ESF itself contains no mentions of SOGI. This exclusion was in response to the significant pushback from anti-LGBTI governments, couched within their general criticism of human rights during public consultations.¹²³ To appease pro-LGBTI and human rights-focused governments, the Bank's president enacted a Directive to be implemented alongside the ESF. Titled "Addressing Risks and Impacts of Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups" the document specifically demarcates sexual orientation and gender identity as contributing toward individual as well as group disadvantage and vulnerability. Unlike the ESF which places responsibility on borrower regulatory frameworks, the Directive places this responsibility on Bank staff to ensure many vulnerable groups (including LGBTI people) are not impacted negatively, as per their due diligence within the social assessment.¹²⁴

3.6b. Leveraging this Highly Technical Process

The ESF and the interaction between the Bank and its borrowers is one of the more technical and specialized parts of the World Bank. Yet, given the Bank's mandate to ensure non-discrimination and inclusive programming in the lending process, this is also one of the largest entry points for CSOs to participate in the creation of programming and also to voice concerns.

As the ESF is likely to rely more on the borrower country's regulatory framework to protect the environment and people from harm, this can be very problematic for LGBTI people in countries that legally prohibit their relationships and identities, or where their governments actively scapegoat them. In these contexts, the Bank's Directive is even more important, by purporting that the Bank's staff members are responsible to work against the exclusion of vulnerable groups. To ensure this specifically applies to LGBTI people, the Bank created a Good Practice Note on SOGI. The rest of this section will briefly detail this very technical process and as articulated in that note.

Driven by the Directive, the Bank strengthens its commitment to LGBTI people through the ESF to: "identify vulnerable or disadvantaged individuals and groups, including sexual and gender minorities... assess risks and avoid or mitigate negative impacts that could affect them disproportionately, and... remove barriers to accessing project benefits."¹²⁵ Specifically, Bank staff can do this in at least three main ways. First, they

120. Sinani, N. (2016, July 26). World Bank's updated safeguards a missed opportunity to raise the bar for development policy. Huffington Post. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/world-banks-updated-safeg_b_11110340

121. Sinani, N. (2016, July 26). World Bank's updated safeguards a missed opportunity to raise the bar for development policy. Huffington Post. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/world-banks-updated-safeg_b_11110340

122. The World Bank. Environmental and Social Framework. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework>

123. The World Bank. (2016). Review and Update of the World Bank's Safeguard Policies Environmental and Social Framework (Proposed Third Draft). <https://consultations.worldbank.org/consultation/review-and-update-world-bank-safeguard-policies>

124. Gathered in interview with Clifton Cortez, Global Advisor on SOGI

125. The World Bank. (2019, October). Non-Discrimination: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/590671570796800429/Good-Practice-Note-SOGI.pdf>

can add SOGI issues into the Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA). Second, they can mainstream SOGI issues throughout the project by inclusion in the Environment and Social Commitment Plan. Third, SOGI issues can then be added to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.¹²⁶

In order to deliver on the ESA, the borrower undertakes a significant scoping exercise to identify environmental and social risks, with oversight by Bank staff. This scoping presents an opportunity for the inclusion of SOGI issues, especially when examining sub-national and national legal frameworks, as well as measurements of stigma, in regards to questions of programmatic access. Specifically, this stage provides an opportunity for Bank staff to contribute a project-level institutional scoping (on any number of issues tied to the Directive). According to the Good Practice Note, the Global Advisor on SOGI can create a “SOGI Country Profile” by undertaking a desk review or key informant interviews, and specifically can focus on the following indicators when incorporating information: housing and involuntary resettlement, legal personhood, health, labor, refugee protections, stakeholder engagement, and protection against violence or hate crimes.¹²⁷ From this, the Bank then demarcates risk based on SOGI as high, substantial, moderate, or low. The SOGI Country Profile is then shared with clients, who may or may not incorporate it into the ESA.

For assessments that are agreed upon to include SOGI issues, the Bank shows how the client can incorporate SOGI considerations throughout the 10 standards of the ESF, in addition to providing borrowers a mitigation hierarchy approach to avoiding potential risks. This hierarchy includes getting borrowers to anticipate and avoid risk, or when confronted by exclusion based on SOGI, to minimize, mitigate, or at the worst, offset or compensate people impacted by the project. From this, all of that information is included in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan, and perhaps becomes part of the legal agreement between the Bank and borrowers. Finally, and at least in theory, LGBTI groups can be specifically added to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan so that they are consulted throughout the lifecycle of the project.¹²⁸

After the ESF took effect in 2018, this was purported to have launched two SOGI-inclusive endeavors. With a grant from the Open Society Foundation, the Bank’s Global Director on the ESF and the Global Advisor on SOGI, *et al*, piloted a program with LGBTI people and other marginalized groups in order to create a knowledge-base on best practices of advancing social inclusion.¹²⁹ Additionally, and as per the scoping that informs the borrower’s assessment, the Global Advisor on SOGI has created as many as 70 SOGI Country Profiles on LGBTI vulnerability in relation to Bank programs, all which remain confidential and inaccessible to the public.¹³⁰ On this latter point, and in response to so much of the SOGI and ESF work remaining confidential, it is a challenge to evaluate the effectiveness of this process within the Bank’s programmatic cycle as mandated by the ESF and the Directive.

Recommendations

Given how specialized and technical the ESF can be, it is recommended to do as much due diligence as possible on this process, with the utmost consideration going toward

126. The World Bank. (2019, October). Non-Discrimination: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/590671570796800429/Good-Practice-Note-SOGI.pdf>

127. The World Bank. (2019, October). Non-Discrimination: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/590671570796800429/Good-Practice-Note-SOGI.pdf>

128. The World Bank. (2019, October). Non-Discrimination: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/590671570796800429/Good-Practice-Note-SOGI.pdf>

129. As gathered in the interview with the Global Advisor on SOGI

130. As gathered in a meeting with ESF Bank staff as part of the Bank’s Fall Meetings, 2020 and also in meetings with the Global Advisor on SOGI

the safety of LGBTI people. The following six recommendations can guide this overall consideration:

- Read key documents on the ESF and civil society engagement. One of the World Bank’s top “watchdogs”, the Bank Information Center, has compiled a succinct document to educate CSOs on how to navigate the ESF, titled the “Civil Society Guide to the World Bank’s Environmental and Social Framework”. Additionally, the Bank’s Good Practice Note on SOGI will also be a helpful way to contextualize this technical process. Both are listed in Annex 1.
- Engage the Global Advisor on SOGI, particularly in the creation of “SOGI Country Profiles”. This is a viable way to present the challenges that LGBTI people experience, as well as to showcase pre-existing data and research at the country level.
- Promote inclusion in consultations and stakeholder engagement. Particularly when SOGI considerations are added to scoping exercises and social assessments, the borrower and the Bank must include LGBTI organizations and people into consultations. But even without the inclusion of SOGI issues into these documents, Bank-financed programming must include a diverse array of civil society in consultations, which includes LGBTI organizations.
- Perhaps as a last resort and in response to a violation, utilize the project’s Grievance Mechanism. This is mandated by the World Bank and must be responsive to project-affected people or anyone harmed or excluded from a project.
- For organizations that work on intersex issues, utilize indicators specific to uncovering violations against diverse sex characteristics. The SOGI Good Practice Note seems to be the only World Bank resource that includes intersex-specific indicators for operations (in other Bank documents, issues of sex characteristics are subsumed and overlooked by SOGI). This could present an opportunity to work with staff to identify specific challenges that intersex people experience, particularly as it relates to the Bank’s support of health, education, and labor programming.
- When safe to do so, engage governmental ministries or officials involved in programming. This dialogue can increase the willingness of governments (as borrowers) to agree to SOGI and sex characteristic inputs from the Bank, and thus work toward more inclusion of LGBTI people throughout the project’s lifecycle.

3.7. Gender Equality

The following four sections (3.7.–3.10.) will focus on various themes in which LGBTI issues have been identified, specifically: gender equality; social inclusion; community-driven development; and fragility, conflict, and violence. In particular, both gender equality and social inclusion (the latter will be discussed next) are two themes that World Bank management have identified as being the most salient entry points for more LGBTI programming, and as such, are very important for this guide.

3.7a. What is Gender Equality through a Development Lens?

Throughout the history of the World Bank, one of the most successful advances by external and internal advocates is its expectation to address gender and promote the inclusion and outcomes of women and girls. This agenda was articulated in the 2012 World Development Report (WDR) on Gender Equality and Development¹³¹, and operationalized through the 2016–2023 Gender Strategy, which is led by the Gender unit. Although there remains significant work in regards to its implementation throughout the entirety of the Bank’s portfolio, it is nonetheless worthwhile to celebrate the many advances in integrating gender equality. LGBTI CSOs should learn from the organizational reforms

131. The World Bank. (2012). World Development Report 2012 : Gender Equality and Development. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4391>

that allowed for the integration of this agenda and conceptualize how to utilize its entry points, especially since the World Bank considers its work on gender to be a relevant way to pursue LGBTI issues.

The crux of this agenda can be found in the 2016–2023 Gender Strategy, a culmination of significant global consultations with over 1,000 people in 22 countries. This falls onto four objectives for the World Bank and in regards to its analytics and programming for women and girls: improve human endowments (e.g. health and education); remove constraints for more and better jobs; remove barriers to ownership of and control over assets; and enhance their voice and agency.¹³² These are four objectives that are derived from the 2012 WDR, one of the Bank’s most pivotal contributions to the field of economic development. Underlying this WDR is the normative assertion that the integration of women and girls is not an act of charity, but rather a combination of being the morally right thing to do in addition to being the key to bolstering stronger economic development outcomes: “Gender equality is a core development objective in its own right. It is also smart economics”.¹³³ Almost all of this work is centralized within the Gender unit, which has already led significant progress in numerous countries by closing gender gaps in education, promoting labor market inclusion in the STEM fields, increasing financial security of women in emerging markets, and more.¹³⁴

By many accounts, this agenda continues to be successful and contribute toward gender-disaggregated data and knowledge, as well as gender-balanced programming and stronger economic development outcomes. It has also received acknowledgements from the development community and from others around the world. For example, and upon a systematic review of global media outlets, the Independent Evaluation Group revealed 284 articles that specifically referenced the Bank’s gender programming, and found that 86% wrote positively, particularly in relation to issues like investing in women-owned businesses and combatting gender-based violence.¹³⁵

3.7b. Implications for LGBTI People

Unfortunately, by design and due to the decisions of the Gender unit’s senior management, LGBTI issues have been excluded from the Bank’s gender equality agenda and corresponding programming.¹³⁶ For example, and although the Bank’s president and senior team had designated gender as an entry point for SOGI inclusion in 2015, LGBTI references were purposefully left out of the 2016–2023 Gender Strategy, with a shaky suggestion that the Bank “should clarify how it will address sexual orientation and gender identity in the context of the Gender Strategy.”¹³⁷ This is an ongoing process of exclusion, and one that has culminated in removing LGBTI references from key gender equality action plans, an unwillingness to fund LGBTI research or programs through gender equality mechanisms, and a diminished capacity for clients to include SOGI in gender equality programs.¹³⁸ In essence, the Gender unit has effectively punted LGBTI issues to other parts and processes of the institution, while utilizing a cisgender binary that only focuses on women with heterosexual orientations.

To envision the empowerment of LGBTI people and to combat the challenges they face will inherently demand a critical engagement with harmful gender norms and their numerous manifestations. Albeit in different ways, the very concepts of sexual

132. The World Bank. (2015). *World Bank Group Gender Strategy (FY16-23)*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23425>

133. The World Bank. (2012). *World Development Report 2012 : Gender Equality and Development*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4391>

134. The World Bank. *The World Bank In Gender*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender>

135. The World Bank. (2020, April 1). *The World’s Bank: An Evaluation of the World Bank Group’s Global Convening*. https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/Evaluation/files/WBG_Convening_Power.pdf

136. Based on numerous conversations with CSOs from 2016–2020

137. World Bank Group. (2015). *World Bank Group Gender Strategy (FY16-23): Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23425>

138. Based on the author’s experience working at the Bank

orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics partly emerged in rebound to society's strict control over the construct of gender and corresponding mal-alignment to biological sex, particularly felt by those who do not or cannot conform to that construct. To remove SOGIESC from *gender equality* (i.e. another construct meant to allay the harmful original) is not only arbitrary, but also diminishes the overarching goal of the Bank's gender agenda by reaffirming the entrenched, historical binary construct. In more practical terms, this excludes the significant contributions of LGBTI people to the detriment of stronger economic development outcomes – especially excluded are LBT women and gender non-conforming people. By some of the Bank's own staff viewpoints (this author included), the link between societal misogyny and stigma against LGBTI people is clear: “Homophobia [and transphobia are] often a socialization tool to perpetuate hegemonic masculinity and thus gender inequalities.”¹³⁹

Against this filter created by the Gender unit, a few examples have still seeped through that included LGBT (not including intersex) people in larger gender-based diagnostics and projects. For example, the World Bank partnered with the Inter-American Development Bank, the Global Women's Institute, and the International Center for Research on Women to create programmatic guides for efforts to combat violence against women and girls, with one specifically focusing on sexual and gender minority women.¹⁴⁰ At the least, that guide helped facilitate LGBT inclusion into at least one larger diagnostic, when the World Bank in Georgia led nationally representative research on gender-based violence. As part of this research, and driven by a legal analysis and literature review, researchers led six focus groups discussions (FGDs) with LGBT participants across three cities, and further conducted an experimental comparison of FGD data with pre-existing quantitative data on social sentiments to uncover new patterns of gender-based violence motivated by homophobia and transphobia.¹⁴¹

As part of the Bank's growing mandate to uncover disparities based on gender and turn it into actionable plans, gender diagnostics at the country and regional level have also emerged – a couple that have included LGBT people. At the country level, and as far back as 2012, the Philippine's country office led a gender-based assessment that included a FGD with LGBT participants, and found that a major driver of violence committed against them was society's strict and binary expectations of gender.¹⁴² In the nine years and dozens of diagnostics since, this seems to be the only LGBT-inclusive gender assessment. Similarly, and driven by country gender assessments, regional gender action plans articulate how the Bank will incorporate gender through its regional portfolios. Out of five Regional Gender Action Plans, only the plan for South Asia¹⁴³ briefly mentions LGBT identities.

The absence of SOGI and LGBTI nomenclature from its most pivotal gender strategies has reinforced a negative feedback loop that continues to exclude them, which then serves as cover for the Gender unit to suggest a lack of “demand” or interest from governments.¹⁴⁴ Even though senior-level messaging purports that gender equality is one of the thematic entry points for LGBTI people, it is thus far predominantly in theory alone. The Gender unit has sent an implicit yet strong message to Bank staff, its clients, and civil society that this is not actually a viable entry point – as perhaps seen in the dearth of LGBTI-inclusive work through its most pivotal funding mechanism.

With resources from 14 governments and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality (UFGÉ) is the Gender Unit's main financial

139. Houdart, F. & Crehan, P. (2013, November 22). Why Inclusion of Sexual Minorities is Crucial to Gender Equality. *The World Bank Blogs*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/why-inclusion-sexual-minorities-crucial-gender-equality>

140. Sexual and Gender Minority women brief: <http://www.vawresourceguide.org/>

141. The World Bank. (2017). Gender Based Violence in Georgia: Links Among Conflict, Economic Opportunities and Services. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/558211513619282554/pdf/GBVinGeorgiaReportFinal102417-Web.pdf>

142. Antonio, J.; Rikken, R. & Verzosa, E. (2014, March 1). *Republic of the Philippines – Gender and development mainstreaming : country gender assessment 2012 (English)*. World Bank Group.

143. World Bank - South Asia Regional Gender Action Plan, <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/56616148727272050/pdf/112879-WP-PUBLIC-June-2016-SARRGAPFYUpdatedFYQfinal.pdf>

144. Based on the author's experience working at the Bank and in conversations with CSOs

mechanism to support innovative, evidence-based solutions to closing gender-based gaps for its clients. From 2012–2019 it received USD \$138 million in pledged contributions and dispersed 183 grants in 92 countries. Within these eight years, only one grant had any mention of LGBTI issues: USD \$120,000 to Argentina to support a youth empowerment program,¹⁴⁵ specifically by testing evidence of gender-based interventions on the provision of employment services and how discriminated groups (including LGBTI people) might face challenges.¹⁴⁶ In other words, only 0.09% of the entire UFGE portfolio had any explicit LGBTI focus.

Recommendations

In-line with the World Bank’s mandate to engage civil society, it should again be reiterated that LGBTI organizations that combat harmful gender norms – particularly those run by LBT women – have every right to be included in the gender equality agenda. Inclusion in gender-based diagnostics, analytics, consultations, and programs will lead to stronger outcomes for the Gender unit as well as development outcomes in general – it is both the “right” and “smart” thing to do. The following four recommendations emerge as the most strategic for utilizing a gender equality entry point for LGBTI organizations:

- Target country and regional diagnostics. At the country level, try to find the gender focal point and structure a relationship with the Bank’s country office that conveys how the inclusion of LGBTI people into gender-related work can bolster better outcomes, and advocate for inclusion in country and regional diagnostics, as well as primary research efforts. Having LGBTI inclusion in these public documents further reiterates that combatting homophobia, transphobia, and intersexphobia are economic development and gender equality imperatives, in addition to generating data to fill in significant knowledge gaps.
- Target research and programmatic funding. Applying for grants or financial resources can be a viable strategy, especially when there is a strong relationship with the country office. In some cases, the country office has a vested interest and incentive to facilitate new grants to civil society partners. Insofar as possible, aligning proposals with the normative themes of the WDR and Gender Strategy will also be strategic. (The Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality/UFGE is one example of potential grants). Find clarity, whether through the country office or online, if new grants are disseminated directly to NGOs (rare) or through a governmental ministry (more common). If the latter, and in contexts where it is safe to engage the government, this ministry could be an under-utilized and new ally. With every grant application, document the response received from the World Bank.
- Utilize strategic relationships with pro-LGBTI governments who also serve on the Bank’s Executive Board. Countries like Sweden, and more recently, Canada, are global leaders on gender equality and the rights of LGBTI people through foreign policy and international aid, as evidenced by their LGBTI-inclusive feminist foreign policies.¹⁴⁷ They are also both active at the World Bank on these issues, as well as being donors to the UFGE, among other trust funds. Signaling to them that your organization has applied to the UFGE or similar can be strategic. Creating these

145. The World Bank. (2019). 2019 Annual Report: Partnering for Gender Equality: Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/202821582701027262/pdf/Partnering-For-Gender-Equality-Umbrella-Facility-for-Gender-Equality.pdf>

146. The World Bank. (2017, January 13). Performance and Learning Review of the Country Partner Strategy for The Argentine Republic for the Period FY15–FY18. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/fr/605161487473227090/pdf/Argentina-PLR-2-SECPO2final-01262017.pdf>

147. Government Offices of Sweden. Feminist Foreign Policy. <https://www.government.se/government-policy/feminist-foreign-policy/> and Government of Canada. Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng

relationships can be hard; in the case of Sweden, the government actively supports human rights through its embassies, which might help this approach.

- Engage the World Bank Fall and Spring Meetings, although this recommendation is harder to fulfill by virtue of the cost of travel involved, active participation in these public meetings allows your voice to be heard. If attending, advocacy should be geared toward two sets of stakeholders, the World Bank’s senior management as well as the offices of members of the Executive Board. Consistently, gender is a prevalent theme at these meetings and many organizations working toward gender equality are quite active during these meetings, while a fraction of the organizations present work on LGBTI issues. Gender Action and Human Rights Watch, for example, are two consistently present NGOs that excel on both fronts.

3.8. Social Inclusion

Following an internal restructuring in 2019, the larger theme of Social Sustainability and Inclusion now houses its work on social inclusion, in addition to others (some discussed in the following sections).¹⁴⁸ This larger theme is important given the significant lending portfolio it supports across many regions – in 2019 alone that was well over USD \$5 billion.¹⁴⁹ Given that social inclusion itself is a smaller theme with less operational elements, it has significantly less budget. However, both themes are very important to this guide because they support the bulk of the Bank’s SOGI portfolio, as well as providing the institutional seat for the Global Advisor on SOGI.

3.8a. What is Social Inclusion?

As the World Bank adapts and expands its own normative standards of economic development, eliminating discrimination and promoting inclusive development are becoming more integral to its agenda. As the World Bank’s former president wrote in an op-ed to a prominent U.S. newspaper: “Eliminating discrimination is not only the right thing to do; it’s also critical to ensure that we have sustained, balanced and inclusive economic growth in all societies”.¹⁵⁰ This is reiterated throughout the World Bank Group Strategy and its Twin Goals, “inclusion entails empowering all citizens to participate in, and benefit from, the development process, removing barriers against those who are often excluded”.¹⁵¹ By using its machinery, the Bank has committed to combating exclusion in societies (as it overlaps with poverty and shared prosperity among its clients) as well as promoting more participation in its programming, both through the theme of social inclusion.

As the Bank’s 2013 flagship report on this theme notes, social inclusion is “the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society”.¹⁵² Promoting the inclusion of marginalized groups happens through a series of actions and programs toward a targeted end. In this sense, social inclusion is both a process as well as an outcome. Three main domains in society represent barriers, as well as opportunities, for inclusion. *Markets*, *services*, and *spaces* encompass a diversity of basic assets and entitlements that are essential for a fulfilled life. The test of promoting social inclusion demands asking why marginalized

148. The World Bank. Social Sustainability and Inclusion. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability>

149. The World Bank. (2019). Annual Report 2019 Lending Data. <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/724041569960954210/WBAR19-Lending-Data.pdf>

150. Kim, J. (2014, February 27). The high costs of institutional discrimination. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jim-yong-kim-the-high-costs-of-institutional-discrimination/2014/02/27/8cd37ad0-9fc5-11e3-b8d8-94577ff66b28_story.html

151. World Bank Group. (2013). World Bank Group Strategy. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16095>

152. The World Bank. (2013). Inclusion Matters: The Foundation for Shared Prosperity (Advance Edition). Washington, DC: World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16195>

groups are excluded from these three domains, and which processes may improve their ability, opportunity, and dignity to then take part in them.¹⁵³

According to the Bank's social inclusion site, this theme is not necessarily mandated through a consistent and Bank-wide framework. Rather, it utilizes a multi-pronged approach by trying to build the theme into numerous operations and seeing what "sticks". Although the World Bank Group Strategy elevates the importance of social inclusion to the Twin Goals, in addition to the flagship report providing an empirical and normative development underpinning, the Bank does not provide quantifiable mandates for being in operations - and it is unclear how many resources this theme receives from the Bank's central budget. Instead, it seems the Bank recommends that its staff utilize data collection, analysis, and monitoring and evaluation diagnostics to capture the socioeconomic and macroeconomic impacts of exclusion. Building on this, some staff members were able to add a significant focus on social inclusion to other frameworks (showcasing how inclusion strengthens the outcomes of that specific theme or sector), which then carries it into select operations. This is particularly so for frameworks that focus on historically marginalized groups, especially persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples.¹⁵⁴

3.8b. Implications for LGBTI People

For the social inclusion agenda to include SOGI issues required a process as well as a normative justification. In 2015 and following some bilateral aid agencies and multilateral organizations, the World Bank joined a few in the development community that explicitly addressed LGBTI issues within their larger portfolios. (This also came in response to its own decision to delay a loan to Uganda based on a homophobic law, see section 3.2b. for more history.) Sida, USAID, and UNDP, among others, primarily advanced these issues through human rights-based standards, programs, and dialogue. Cognizant that human rights was a line of work that the institution itself had predominantly shut off, the World Bank took a parallel approach by firmly situating LGBTI issues into its growing thematic work on social inclusion. In doing so, it was able to side-step internal and external debates around human rights and thus frame SOGI within its established purview to promote inclusive economic growth.

This new economic development framing has had at least two impacts. First, it influenced the field of economic development so that other institutions started to incorporate SOGI through the lens of economic development. For example, the World Economic Forum and some of the regional MDBs have recently ramped up their agendas to advance LGBTI inclusion. Second, and perhaps more theoretically, it opened the potential to advance the well-being of LGBTI people through new processes and mechanisms, particularly through new methods of data collection and measurements, financial resources, and working with under-utilized governmental ministries. But the true test of this second point lies in what the World Bank has actually accomplished through this new framing.

Currently, senior management heralds the theme of social inclusion as a significant entry point for more LGBTI inclusion (alongside gender equality, discussed prior). Although, in comparison to other social issues advanced through the theme of social inclusion, it's unclear how LGBTI people can be better included in data collection as well as how the issues will be operationalized in a consistent manner.¹⁵⁵ Regarding data collection, the Bank's SOGI site lists numerous data collection efforts. However, and as explained in sections 3.3. and 3.4., these efforts were rather spearheaded through a human rights trust fund and its corresponding donors. Regarding its implications for operations, and particularly in comparison to the inclusion of persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, SOGI does not have its own framework - thus limiting consistent ways to operationalize it. Without this strategic guidance, it's possible that numerous staff in

153. The World Bank. (2013). *Inclusion Matters: The Foundation for Shared Prosperity* (Advance Edition). Washington, DC: World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16195>

154. The World Bank. Social Inclusion. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-inclusion#2>

155. The World Bank. Social Inclusion. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-inclusion#2>

country offices as well as governments will not know how to integrate perspectives on SOGI in various parts of the Bank's lending processes. Yet, even without this framework, the Global Advisor on SOGI has still undertaken the significant task of working with certain clients, and as a result, some lending to Argentina and Chile included LGBTI components (see more in section 3.11.).¹⁵⁶ This is a promising pathway going forward.

Recommendations

Given the Bank has centralized a lot of its SOGI work within social inclusion, in addition to housing the Global Advisor on SOGI, this is one of the most important entry points for more work. The following four recommendations can guide LGBTI CSOs who seek to utilize social inclusion as an entry point:

- Engage the Global Advisor on SOGI in the Bank's headquarters. This staff member can guide CSOs on a country-specific approach as well as provide other recommendations. According to the mandate of this position, the Global Advisor on SOGI oversees LGBTI issues within the Bank while also serving as a liaison to external groups.¹⁵⁷ It is strongly suggested to reach out to the advisor, particularly if an organization envisions meaningful engagement with the Bank and through the entry points identified in this guide.
- Engage the country office. When contacting this office, build on social inclusion as a theme and showcase the Bank's own significant work on this theme. As reiterated in the Bank-wide strategy, social inclusion is crucial to the Twin Goals - and this is now inclusive of LGBTI perspectives. Going further, utilize the Social Inclusion Assessment Tool (SiAT)¹⁵⁸ to showcase how exclusion based on SOGI has left LGBTI people behind in social and economic development. Altogether, country office staff should be responsive to these requests.
- Promote intersectional approaches to diagnostics and larger programs. One progressive report to emerge from the Social Inclusion unit is a paper that focuses on promoting inclusive education systems for persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and LGBTI people.¹⁵⁹ This guidance sets a tremendous standard to work with the World Bank and other CSOs to ensure that education-based lending, as well as other programs, includes these groups. The report also includes indicators by which staff can benchmark inclusion.
- Join the coalition of CSOs who already engage the Bank. As discussed prior, there has been significant work by many LGBTI CSOs - predominantly in the U.S. but also from countries in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia - who have successfully worked with the World Bank by attending its Fall and Annual Meetings, as well as throughout the year via meetings with the Global Advisor on SOGI.¹⁶⁰ This is

156. The World Bank. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity#3> and as discussed in an interview with Clifton Cortez

157. The World Bank. (2016, October 16). World Bank Announces New Advisor on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/10/27/world-bank-announces-new-advisor-on-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-issues>

158. The World Bank. The Social Inclusion Assessment Tool (SiAT). <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/478071540591164260/SiAT-Logo-web.pdf>

159. McClain-Nhlapo; Vuyiswa, C.; Cortez, C. J.; Duchicela, L. F. & Lord, J. E. (2019, May 1). Equity and Inclusion in Education in World Bank Projects: Persons with Disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and Sexual and Gender Minorities (English). World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/590781562905434693/Equity-and-Inclusion-in-Education-in-World-Bank-Projects-Persons-with-Disabilities-Indigenous-Peoples-and-Sexual-and-Gender-Minorities>

160. Bank Information Center. LGBT and Indigenous Sexual Diversities in Latin America [Video]. <https://bankinformationcenter.org/en-us/update/video-lgbt-and-indigenous-sexual-diversities-in-latin/>

a well-established entry point that has led to significant and mutually beneficial contributions to LGBTI inclusive work.

3.9. Community-Driven Development

Although typical World Bank lending goes through governmental agencies via sectors and in support of themes, community-driven development (CDD) is a more direct allocation of resources to organizations and institutions within communities. Rather than a trickle down allocation of resources via the government, CDD allows communities greater participation to decide on the allocation of resources, and thus the development of programming. This approach is driven by the expertise of local leaders who have granular knowledge of their communities, which also provides local stakeholders more incentives to use the funds responsibly.¹⁶¹ For these reasons, the Bank describes CDD as promoting the principles of transparency, participation, local empowerment, demand-responsiveness, accountability, and cultivating local capacity.¹⁶²

In total, the overall portfolio of CDD programs is substantial. As of 2019, this accounts for USD \$21.6 billion with 219 active programs in 79 countries. Of these countries, 57 of them are in countries that work with the International Development Association – i.e. countries that are among the poorest by the Bank’s standards. Additionally, CDD programs have been established in 21 of the 36 countries that are struggling with fragility, conflict, or violence¹⁶³ (see the next section for more on this theme).

Out of all of these programs, the Bank has identified one that was inclusive of members of the LGBTI community. From 2011–2014, the Bank provided USD \$3.7 million to communities in Indonesia in a program called “PNPM Peduli”, which supported the themes of social protection, social inclusion, and human development. Specifically, this program sought to strengthen the capacities of CSOs to reach and empower marginalized groups by improving their socioeconomic conditions.¹⁶⁴ As part of this, the program included an organization, SWARA, which works on behalf of transgender people and addresses the challenges they face.

According to the Independent Evaluation Group within the Bank, this overall project fared moderately well, with the Bank’s specific portion being evaluated as slightly unsatisfactory. Overall, 209 CSOs participated in capacity-building activities, including 56 groups that worked toward economic livelihoods. With close to 20,000 beneficiaries in total, SWARA was able to include 467 transgender beneficiaries and provided job skills training, including how to start a business. Given the prevalent social stigma against transgender people in the country, this program provided an opportunity that otherwise would not have been possible, and even led to the successful creation of a hair salon.¹⁶⁵ As this seems to be one of the only efforts to incorporate transgender people into a CDD program, this sets a very strong precedent going forward.

Recommendations

LGBTI inclusion in CDD programs is a very promising entry point, particularly in its ability to deliver resources directly to CSOs to work toward the program’s goals. However, there seems to be only one example of LGBTI inclusion within the hundreds of CDD programs in dozens of countries – meaning this might be an uphill battle to replicate.

161. Wong, S. & Guggenheim, S. (2018, May). Community-Driven Development: Myths and Realities. World Bank Group. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/677351525887961626/pdf/WPS8435.pdf>

162. The World Bank. Community-Driven Development. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/communitydrivendevelopment#1>

163. The World Bank. Community-Driven Development. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/communitydrivendevelopment#2>

164. The World Bank. ICR Review: Independent Evaluation Group (Report Number: ICRR14902). <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/795021468188361825/pdf/ICRR14902-ICRR-PUBLIC-P126424-Box396265B.pdf>

165. The World Bank. (2013, October 1). Social Inclusion: A Transgender Story [Video]. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2013/10/01/social-inclusion-a-transgender-story>

The following two recommendations can guide LGBTI CSOs who might consider CDD programming as an entry point with the Bank:

- Where CDD programs now exist, identify the World Bank staff in charge to see how LGBTI organizations can take part. PNPM Peduli from Indonesia presents a great example that LGBTI CSO inclusion is a viable pathway that contributes to the overall outcomes of the program.
- Identify if there are specific policies at the local level of planning that dictate community-based participatory approaches.¹⁶⁶ If the Bank is considering CDD programming or CDD is included in the Country Partnership Framework, use this knowledge to target key governmental officials and World Bank staff to request inclusion in the program, and try to start from the beginning of the project cycle in order to increase the likelihood of LGBTI CSO inclusion throughout.

3.10. Fragility, Conflict, and Violence

As part of the World Bank's normative shift from traditional lending to one that addresses the causes and drivers of poverty, one significant workload is combatting fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV). The Bank has identified this theme as a "critical development challenge that threatens efforts to end extreme poverty, affecting both low- and middle-income countries".¹⁶⁷ In 2020, the Bank adopted an institution-wide strategy to significantly address FCV, including a multi-pronged approach to data collection and evidence-driven interventions, working with the private sector, creating new and innovative partnerships, and more.¹⁶⁸ The scope of this agenda should not be under-estimated, as the Bank has significantly shifted its operations to this agenda (now inclusive of COVID-19 pandemic impacts), with upwards of USD \$20 billion from IDA dedicated to its operationalization in countries that the Bank deems as affected by FCV.¹⁶⁹

Although the World Bank does not necessarily hold its FCV portfolio as an entry point for LGBTI issues, it has nonetheless compiled an eloquent discussion paper on SOGI within situations of fragility, conflict, and violence. This discussion paper does not clarify if SOGI issues or LGBTI people have been included in Bank-administered programming on FCV. Rather, it provides a clear justification on why SOGI needs to be considered in the FCV portfolio, as well as a pathway to amplify this focus through data collection, programming and project design, training and learning, and through the creation of partnerships.¹⁷⁰

Recommendations

Although this is a significant portfolio for the Bank, it is limited to countries that the Bank has deemed affected by FCV (see citation 168). Thus, the following two recommendations are geared toward LGBTI CSOs in those specific countries, all while prioritizing the safety of the community:

- Discuss with the country office or the Global Advisor on SOGI how to include LGBTI people and SOGI issues into FCV-focused analytics, project design, training, and new partnerships, as recommended by the aforementioned discussion paper. Although this

166. Wong, S. & Guggenheim, S. (2018, May). Community-Driven Development: Myths and Realities. World Bank Group. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/677351525887961626/pdf/WPS8435.pdf>

167. The World Bank. (2020, October 1). Fragility, Conflict & Violence. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview>

168. The World Bank. (2020, February 26). World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020-2025. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/publication/world-bank-group-strategy-for-fragility-conflict-and-violence-2020-2025>

169. The World Bank. Classification of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations>

170. World Bank. (2020). Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Contexts Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33722>

paper provides those potential entry points to work on LGBTI issues in FCV settings, there is no definitive recommendation on how to start this process, nor pertinent case studies offered. It will be crucial for LGBTI CSOs to start this conversation, guided by country office staff and the Global Advisor on SOGI.

- Document clear impacts that LGBTI people face in FCV settings, and provide this to the country office (if safe to do so). This will be crucial to establish that: (1) LGBTI people experience harm, (2) if there is a further impact or vulnerability based on their SOGI, (3) if their SOGI prohibits inclusion into the Bank's programming, (4) if there are specific interventions that should be examined, and (5) how the Bank can ensure the mitigation of risk for LGBTI people during analytics or programming.

3.11. Inclusion in World Bank Lending

As mentioned throughout this guide, one of the most crucial components of the World Bank is its lending portfolio, which is tremendous: in 2019 alone, the IBRD committed USD \$28 billion to its clients, as donors committed a further \$82 billion to the next round of IDA (2020–2023). To release these loans, Country Partnership Frameworks guide the Bank and governments through various dialogues, and once agreed upon, they are then disseminated to governments through specific sectors and in support of various themes. Once established, the Environmental and Social Framework instructs both stakeholders on how to ensure there is no harm to people and the environment. In order to ensure that specific issues (e.g. SOGI, disability, indigeneity, etc.) can be mainstreamed throughout the Bank and its development agenda, one of the most crucial ways is to have its clients request its inclusion as part of larger loan packages. With LGBTI issues, this important component has already happened at least three times – setting an important precedent going forward.

Thus far, SOGI inclusion into the Bank's lending portfolio has taken place in the Southern Cone in Latin America. In Argentina, the Bank has committed USD \$425 million to the government from 2015–2021 to improve the access of vulnerable youth to access labor markets.¹⁷¹ As part of this, there was a pilot initiative that specifically examined the access of transgender youth to access the services associated with the program.¹⁷² Additionally, and although now closed, in 2012 the Bank committed \$485 million to the state government of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to support its capacity to manage urban development and growth, particularly through affordable housing and expanding social protections to its poorer residents.¹⁷³ As part of this, there were specific components to ensure that groups could not be denied the services, including protections based on sexual orientation.¹⁷⁴ Finally, in Chile, the Bank committed over \$50 million from 2017–2027 to strengthen state universities to better address development challenges.¹⁷⁵ Within this, there are specific components built-in to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups, including LGBTI people.¹⁷⁶

Recommendations

Given the large size of these loans, and in comparison to how progressive these countries have been on promoting the rights and inclusion of LGBTI people, smaller piloted programs or protections against discrimination are minimal, at best. In other words,

171. The World Bank. (2020, December 3). Argentina Youth Employment Support Project. <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P133129?lang=en>

172. The World Bank. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity#3>

173. The World Bank. (2014, June 10). Rio de Janeiro Metropolitan Urban and Housing Development. <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P122391?lang=en>

174. The World Bank. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity#3>

175. The World Bank. (2017, October 20). Chile - Strengthening of State Universities Project. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/loans-credits/2017/10/23/chile-strengthening-of-state-universities-project>

176. The World Bank. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity#3>

a lot of work is needed to ensure a more equitable inclusion of LGBTI people into these larger loans. Yet, having these three examples does set a strong precedent going forward. The following two recommendations can guide CSOs who might consider how to engage the Bank on this important entry point:

- Engage the country office and establish that LGBTI inclusion adds to the thematic goals of the Bank's lending portfolio. For example, in the aforementioned loan to Argentina, it was disseminated through the Social Protection sector in support of Social Development and Protection (among other themes), especially social inclusion. Establish that LGBTI inclusion within larger loans is possible and adds to important development themes and better outcomes. If possible, follow-up with staff who work in particular themes and establish more of a demand for LGBTI inclusion into their portfolios.
- When safe to do so, engage the governmental ministries that liaise with the World Bank and request that LGBTI issues can be included in their dialogue with the Bank. If those ministries know that the Bank is incorporating these issues into its programming, this can increase governmental demand for them. This might be particularly so for countries that have national LGBTI action plans - a point which will be examined further in section 4.2.

3.12. The Inspection Panel

In contexts that World Bank programming hurts people or the environment, one method that can provide recourse is an independent complaints mechanism, the Inspection Panel. Acting as an impartial fact-finding body, its staff are meant to listen to aggrieved parties, investigate their complaints, and promote redress in situations that harm can be linked to the Bank. In September 2020, the Inspection Panel went through a reform, adding an accountability mechanism to undertake compliance reviews as well as new ways to promote dispute resolutions between stakeholders.¹⁷⁷

Upon a review of all cases presented to the Inspection Panel, only one was found that focused on LGBTI people. In Nepal, the Blue Diamond Society presented a case based on exclusion that transgender and third gender people faced when trying to access a Bank-administered vocational program that only listed a binary sex identification option. Based on this complaint, and in conversation between the Inspection Panel, Bank management and the responsible governmental ministry, more inclusive language was then included - and thus, this case did not have to proceed further.¹⁷⁸ This example still shows that LGBTI issues can be presented to this mechanism and in ways that advance more inclusive interventions.

Recommendations

As there is only one example of a LGBTI case being presented to the Inspection Panel, and in light of the mechanism's reform in late 2020, it's currently difficult to know all of the implications this could have for LGBTI CSOs. Certainly, it exists as a viable mechanism for aggrieved parties, but perhaps does not provide a proactive entry point to foster LGBTI inclusion throughout the Bank. As such, no recommendations will be provided; rather, it is included in this guide to only educate and in such cases of exclusion

177. World Bank Inspection Panel - About Us. <https://www.inspectionpanel.org/about-us/about-inspection-panel>

178. World Bank Inspection Panel - Panel Cases; Nepal: Enhanced Vocational Education and Training Project (Not Registered). <https://www.inspectionpanel.org/index.php/panel-cases/enhanced-vocational-education-and-training-project-not-registered>

or harm from Bank programming, whereby other routes of redress have already been examined.

3.13. GLOBE - The Employee Resource Group for LGBT Staff

Since its establishment in 1993, the World Bank's Employee Resource Group for LGBT staff (GLOBE) has successfully advocated for equal protections and employee benefits for its members, predominantly for same-sex couples but also by securing insurance coverage of gender-affirming surgeries for transgender staff.¹⁷⁹ As mentioned in section 3.1., and following significant gains for employees, in 2013 GLOBE's President turned the focus toward the development agenda, and successfully began a multi-year effort to get the Bank to acknowledge the socioeconomic and macroeconomic impacts of discrimination and violence against LGBT people in the countries where it operates.¹⁸⁰ Predominantly, this led to the first-ever macroeconomic model to measure the "cost" of homophobia and transphobia, as well as other research and public events (see section 3.4. for more information). As other internal and external stakeholders joined this effort, the culture of the Bank shifted and became more inclusive of LGBT (now including intersex) issues, culminating in the hiring of its Global Advisor on SOGI. Soon after, GLOBE turned its attention back to workplace issues, especially surveying LGBT staff and sensitizing all staff in country offices through training.

Recommendations

Although GLOBE has turned its focus back to issues facing LGBT staff members, the following two recommendations may offer guidance for CSOs who see this group as a potential entry point:

- Engage the board members of GLOBE. As GLOBE is advancing trainings in country offices, this can be a viable way to join those trainings and offer expertise on the challenges the community faces. This has already occurred in some country offices.¹⁸¹
- Engage members of GLOBE in country offices. Potentially, this can lead to a new ally, which can provide a greater understanding of the country portfolio and other analytical or programmatic entry points.

179. Bland, E. B. (2019, March 12). Celebrating 25 years of LGBT+ advancements at the World Bank Group. *World Bank Blogs*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/celebrating-25-years-lgbt-advancements-world-bank-group>

180. In conversation with Fabrice Houdart, GLOBE's President from 2012-2016 and lead on LGBT research in India

181. Gathered through conversations with current members on the Board of GLOBE

Part 4:

Potential Entry Points to Monitor

In addition to the themes discussed prior, there are numerous other areas that can include LGBTI issues – from the Bank’s commitments to combatting extreme poverty, to promoting urban development as well as social protections, financial inclusion, education, health, digital development, and more. However, instead of focusing on those themes, this section briefly describes different pathways that might be significant entry points for SOGI issues. Namely, the IFC, governmental ministries, and the Sustainable Development Goals should continue to be monitored as potential ways to incorporate LGBTI issues into the World Bank Group.

4.1. The International Finance Corporation

As established in section 2.1., the International Finance Corporation (IFC) is one of the five organizations that comprise the World Bank Group, and can be conceptualized as the its private sector arm given its work with clients to promote a business-conducive environment that contributes to overall economic growth. Established in 1956 through its own Articles of Agreement and By-Laws,¹⁸² it is now the largest global development institution with a private sector focus in the developing world.¹⁸³ Its mission has changed significantly over the years, culminating in its current mission to offer investments, advisory services, and other technical expertise, all with the ultimate goal of private sector growth that contributes to economic development as well as the World Bank Group’s Twin Goals. Its areas of expertise are diverse, including agribusinesses, health, tourism, venture capital, and more.¹⁸⁴ Given the size and scale of this global organization, a greater examination is outside the scope of this guide.

However, it is worth mentioning an emerging agenda within the IFC that focuses on some socially excluded groups, as couched within its larger gender equality agenda. As recent as 2020, IFC staff were approved to develop a unit to examine the business and private sector implications of the exclusion of LGBTI people and persons with disabilities, particularly in regards to the IFC’s purview and areas of expertise.¹⁸⁵ This emerging agenda will be housed in the IFC’s pre-existing work on gender equality, which focuses on women’s entrepreneurship, employment, insurance, and corporate leadership.¹⁸⁶ Even though there is a dearth of information on this new unit in the IFC, this should be revisited in the near future – particularly as more corporations and businesses understand the “business case” for including LGBTI people,¹⁸⁷ in addition to growing expectations among investors to include LGBTI-owned businesses in their portfolios.¹⁸⁸

182. The World Bank. By-Laws. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/corp_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/about+ifc_new/ifc+governance/articles/about+ifc+-+ifc+articles+of+agreement+-+by+laws

183. The World Bank. About IFC. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/corp_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/about+ifc_new

184. The World Bank. En Route to Investment. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/corp_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/home

185. Information gathered through conversations with IFC staff in 2020

186. The World Bank. IFC’s Priorities in Gender. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/gender+at+ifc/priorities/priorities

187. Houdart, F. (2020, January 24). Is LGBTI equality good for business or the right thing to do? *Out Leadership*. <https://outleadership.com/insights/is-lgbti-equality-good-for-business-or-the-right-thing-to-do/>

188. Subramanian, T.; Anderson, J. & Perianes, M. B. (2020, June). Investing with an LGBTIQI lens: Rethinking gender analysis across investing fields. *Criterion Institute*. <https://criterioninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/LGBTIQ-Report-Draft-Final-2020.pdf>

4.2. Connecting the Bank with Ministries to support governmental LGBTI action plans

As this guide has focused on the World Bank, less attention has been given to strategies for engaging governments. However, one emerging phenomenon among governments can be especially pertinent to its engagement with the Bank – namely, government action plans on LGBTI issues. As more governments (at the national and sub-national level) are creating action plans or strategies to better address the rights and inclusion of LGBTI people, a consistent challenge toward their implementation tends to be a limitation of funds. In these cases, the World Bank can play a pivotal role in resource mobilization through larger lending or even targeted assistance. One potential entry point can be for the Bank to engage ministries of finance, health, education, social development, or similar, with the goal of supporting these LGBTI action plans. For this to be possible, CSOs can facilitate connections between those ministries and the governmental office that houses the LGBTI action plan, so that the request to the Bank is clear and, ideally, couched in the Bank’s overall mission of the Twin Goals and as framed in the Country Partnership Framework. As there does not seem to be many examples along this dimension, this can be considered a potential entry point to be re-examined later on.

4.3. The Sustainable Development Goals

Although the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁸⁹ (SDGs) represent a significant global framework to aim toward the achievement of 17 goals for intra- and inter-governmental action, and thus represent some of the most pressing global concerns of this era, they are not explored in this guide for two reasons. First, LGBTI nomenclature and SOGI issues are not included in the actual SDG targets or explicitly in the indicators. This is not to discourage organizations from utilizing governmental and U.N. mechanisms to promote LGBTI inclusion in the implementation of the SDGs, as there is growing advocacy and literature that examines the centrality of LGBTI people and other excluded groups to the 2030 Agenda.¹⁹⁰

Second, and more importantly for the World Bank, the institution focuses more on its Twin Goals as well as paradigmatic Country Engagement as solidified in Country Partnership Frameworks, than it does the SDGs as the central strategies for economic development. This might be due to the Bank’s current institutional strategy being written in 2013, two years before the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ended and before the global community agreed to the SDGs. But even so, the MDGs are only briefly mentioned and are included to showcase how they can work alongside the Bank’s pivotal focus, the Twin Goals.¹⁹¹ Further, and in a review of many current CPFs, the SDGs are only sometimes mentioned as worthy development goals. Even then, these references seem to focus more on the central tenants of each goal (i.e. gender equality, decent work, etc.), rather than stressing them as a pathway for governments to adhere to through SDG implementation and participation in the U.N.-led voluntary national review process. For these two reasons, any potential recommendations would be too indirect and perhaps reduce the utility that this guide strives for, and thus, the SDGs can be seen as only a potential reference point for LGBTI CSOs engaging the World Bank.

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Part 5: Conclusion

This guide is the first of its kind, intended to alter the knowledge imbalance between the World Bank and LGBTI CSOs around the world – and particularly as the Bank continues to advance an LGBTI agenda. This guide is driven by the ideal that a mutual understanding can lead to stronger and more beneficial outcomes for both stakeholders. It does not do so by recommending a charity-driven approach to engagement. Rather, and by the Bank’s own standards, civil society is an integral stakeholder and partner in the economic development agenda. By analyzing current LGBTI entry points, and potentially emerging ones, this guide has recommended how CSOs can utilize this public institution to advance a more equitable seat at the table, and particularly in a more decentralized manner within the many countries the Bank operates. By understanding the Bank’s history, mission, mechanisms of general engagement with civil society, and how it has begun to address SOGI through human rights, knowledge-generation, country engagement, risk mitigation, and thematic and sectoral lending, this can allow LGBTI CSOs to find viable entry points at the country level (country offices) and international level (working through its headquarters in Washington, DC).

It is thus highly advised to revisit the recommendations in part 3, particularly how to advance more LGBTI work through: human rights; data collection and knowledge; Country Engagement and Country Partnership Frameworks; the Environmental and Social Framework; gender equality; social inclusion; community-driven development; fragility, conflict, and violence; and perhaps the Inspection Panel. Although this overall pathway expects a longer-term approach, a significant LGBTI portfolio within the Bank has already been developed and in the short timeframe of a handful of years. The potential of the World Bank to do more, and in tandem with an educated base of CSOs around the world, can be both empowering and powerful.

Annex 1: Key Resources On The World Bank and Engagement

Annex 1.1. From the World Bank

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Annex 1.2. From Civil Society

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Recourse. Southern Africa Civil Society Guide on Influencing World Bank Country Strategies.
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Annex 2: Key Readings on LGBTI Economic Development

Annex 2.1. Articulating an Economic Development Pathway

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https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/HIV-AIDS/Key%20populations/SDGs_SexualAndGenderMinorities.pdf

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<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/33722/Sexual-Orientation-and-Gender-Identity-in-Contexts-Affected-by-Fragility-Conflict-and-Violence-Discussion-Paper.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Annex 2.2. Pivotal Research through an Economic Development Lens

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