

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Established in 2011, **Kaleidoscope Trust** is a UK-based charity focused on fighting for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and gender diverse (LGBTI+) people across the Commonwealth and beyond. We fund, fight for and empower those upholding the human rights of LGBTI+ people by working with governments, change-makers and civil society organisations to effect meaningful and lasting change in the lives of LGBTI+ people. We do this principally through our research- and evidence-based advocacy and our high-impact programmes in line with our vision towards a free, safe and equal world for LGBTI+ people everywhere.

To help fulfil our mission, in 2023 we have produced this expanded and updated version of our 2021 ***Learning and Development Needs Assessment (LDNA) of LGBTI+ Civil Society in the Commonwealth***. Based on the invaluable feedback provided by **over 100 LGBTI+ organisations from 39 countries**, this updated LDNA aims to highlight emerging challenges, chart the needs of the global LGBTI+ movement, and propose actionable outcomes to support LGBTI+ organisations and communities around the world.

CONTEXT

We are witnessing a deteriorating socio-political environment for LGBTI+ communities globally, accentuated by rising anti-LGBTI+ intolerance and the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis. Anti-LGBTI+ laws and attitudes persist whilst increasingly negative rhetoric poses severe challenges for queer activists and organisations around the world. Over 60 countries continue to have jurisdictions which criminalise private, same-sex consensual sexual activity; nearly half of them are Commonwealth jurisdictions. All of them criminalise men and, at the time of writing, 41 criminalise women. Narratives portraying LGBTI+ individuals as threats have gained traction in many contexts, particularly when pushed by influential social and political actors (politicians, religious or tribal leaders). This has been further aggravated by a rise in well-resourced and influential conservative coalitions reinforcing this anti-LGBTI+ stance, both in the Global North and the Global South and East.

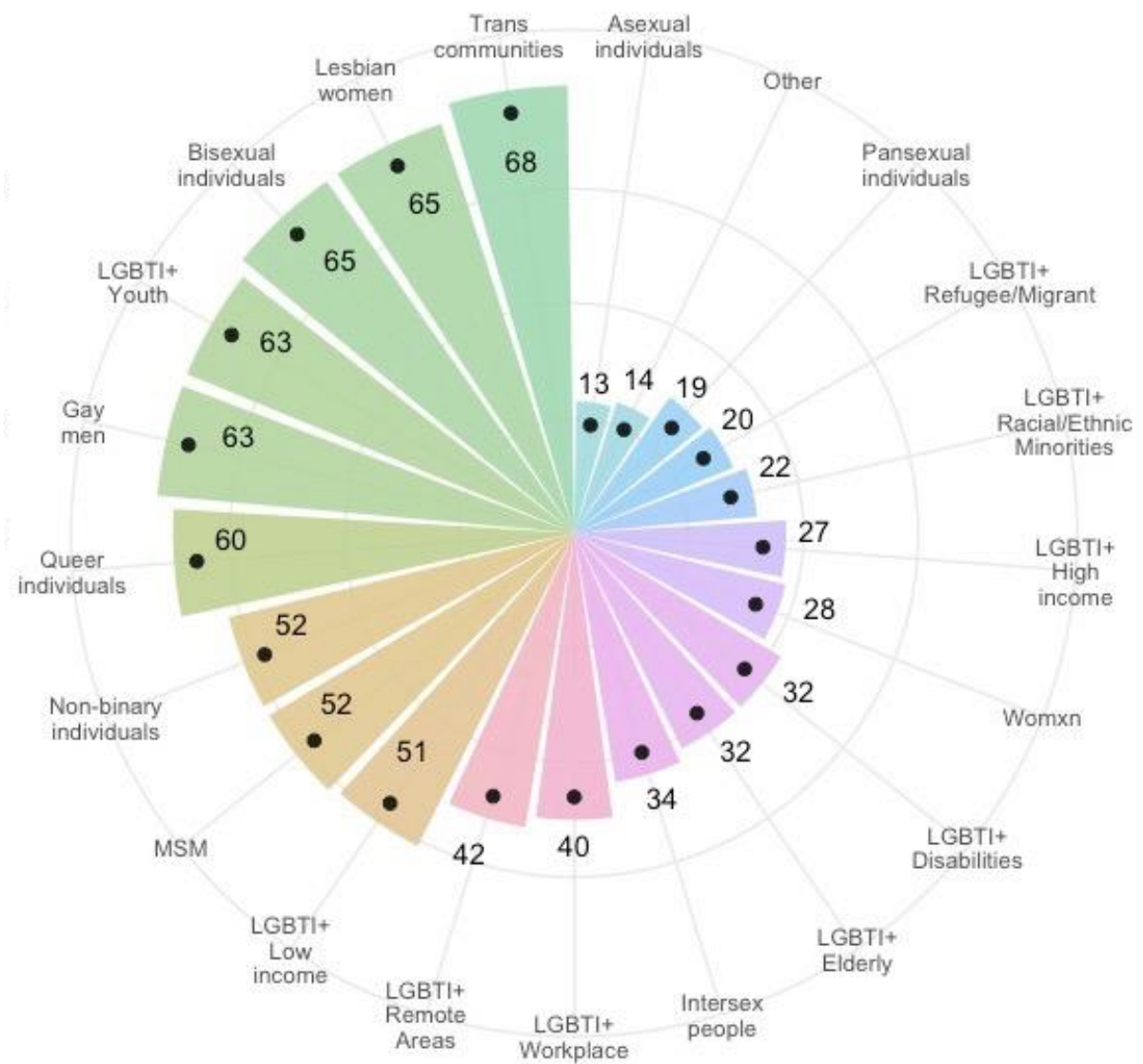
Simultaneously, resource and capacity constraints hamper the learning and development of LGBTI+ activists and organisations to carry out their core work and – in turn – to address new issues in a changing and often oppressive landscape. Amid this, while the recent accelerated shift towards digitisation during the COVID-19 pandemic has offered effective avenues for advocacy, it has also intensified existing challenges around access to technology and digital literacy. LGBTI+ activists face multifaceted landscapes marked by legal obstacles, societal stigmatisation, and resource constraints. The dichotomy between increasingly hostile environments and the potential of digital avenues underscores the need for strategies to navigate traditional barriers and new opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology included several tools: a literature review, an online survey completed by 89 respondents from 39 different countries, 13 Cultural Domain Analysis (CDA) sessions, 3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a further group session with Pacific TCEN members in Tonga, which was a part of a pre-organised regional convening.

The survey results reveal that every participating organisation engaged with multiple communities, with each interacting with a minimum of four groups. Notably, a significant 72% of these organisations collaborated with ten or more groups, as illustrated in the subsequent figure.

Number of Organisations Working with Different Populations



FUNDING

“Being donor-dependent makes reaching our desired targets difficult. Donations sometimes don’t align with our specific needs or the goals we’ve set for a given timeframe.”

KEY FINDINGS

Sources and Dependence on Funding

Heavy Reliance on International Funding: Over 76% of survey participants depend on funding from international donors, leaving them vulnerable to shifts based on donor priorities. Donor-driven agendas often misalign with organisations’ needs, impacting their ability to meet their own targets or strategies. Local government grants and corporate funding are the least common sources of funding, with only 10% of recipients benefiting from local government support and a mere 7.87% receiving corporate contributions.

Donor Dependency and Learning: Survey data reveals that the lack of funds is the number one challenge faced by organisations. Over half of the survey participants (51.68%) considered their fundraising abilities to be either ineffective or marginally effective. The constraints of relying heavily on donors not only affect operational aspects but significantly skews organisations’ learning and development agenda. The lack of financial autonomy means that learning initiatives are at the mercy of donor priorities, which might not necessarily align with the organisations’ specific developmental needs or objectives.

Restrictive Funding: The majority of organisations can only access restricted funding, earmarked for specific activities. Typically, only 30% of these funds are allocated for staff support, which not only limits opportunities for learning and development but also constrains coverage for other administrative costs and overheads. This includes overhead expenses like office rent, transportation, utilities, and essential operational hardware and software, thereby straining organisations’ ability to function optimally.

Technology, Infrastructure and Outreach Impact

Technology and Infrastructure: Limited funding not only constrains access to essential software (e.g., data sharing software, data analysis tools, financial platforms) and hardware (e.g., laptops), but also impacts data sharing capabilities. These constraints are particularly detrimental when it comes to remote learning and the dissemination of materials related to advocacy documents, communications campaigns, and research outputs.

Outreach Limitations: Inadequate funding restricts the scope of outreach programmes, especially in rural settings lacking basic infrastructure, widening the urban/rural gap in the provision of services.

Financial Impact of Anti-LGBTI+ Laws: Anti-LGBTI+ laws lead to activists facing fines that are often difficult to pay. This not only affects their personal and organisational financial stability but also hampers their ability to conduct outreach activities effectively.

Organisational Capacity and Development

Lack of Experience: Organisations find themselves in a catch-22 situation, struggling to secure large funds since they have never managed such substantial amounts before, which is often expected as a pre-requisite to provide funds to activists. This underscores the need for tailored training interventions to be better equipped to manage larger funds, building trust with funders and fostering organisations' growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Donor Flexibility: There is a need for donors to be more flexible in what they fund, extending beyond project-specific grants to include a higher percentage allocated for core operational costs like salaries and administration. Additionally, better coordination among various funders and donors is essential to avoid duplication of efforts and maximise the utilisation of resources. By raising the percentage of core funding relative to project funding and through strategic coordination, donors could contribute more effectively to the financial sustainability and operational efficiency of organisations.

Diversification of Resources: Explore support options for organisational diversification of funding sources, including seed funding for social enterprises, to reduce donor dependency.

Engage with Donors: Organisations such as KT and TCEN could encourage the creation of spaces for discussion with donors at the international, regional, and national levels, to which local organisations could be invited to discuss their experiences and raise awareness on their needs.

Emergency Funds: To address the financial impact of anti-LGBTI+ legislation, the establishment of an emergency fund is essential. This could involve providing legal assistance, covering fine payments, and safeguarding the safety and wellbeing of those unfairly affected by these laws.

Facilitate Connections: Partner with well-established organisations or individuals with experience in managing large funds to create a mentorship program. This partnership could allow less experienced organisations to learn from those who have successfully navigated similar challenges.

Provide Training: Develop training on **comprehensive resource mobilisation strategies** to ensure long-term financial sustainability. Organisations should be supported to navigate the complexities of both restricted and unrestricted funding.

Given the heavy reliance on **international restricted funding**, there is a clear need for skills training in managing such funds effectively. This includes understanding the terms and conditions of such funds, budgeting within constraints, and ensuring timely and accurate reporting. Additionally, to enhance sustainability and flexibility in their projects, organisations should also be provided with training on how to access unrestricted funds, allowing them greater autonomy in determining the allocation of resources based on their priorities.

Organise capacity-building workshops specifically targeted at **financial management of large funds**. This will help organisations understand the complexities associated with managing significant sums and prepare them for the responsibilities that come with it.

SKILLS

“We need support towards general skill development. As queer people, a lot of our members are deprived of quality education due to their identity.”

KEY FINDINGS

Funding Shortages, the Primary Barrier to Acquiring Knowledge and Skills: When asked about the main obstacles preventing organisations from obtaining the required knowledge and skills, 94.19% cited a lack of funding. This was followed by 79.07% pointing to limited access to training, underscoring the pressing demand for both increased funding and capacity-building initiatives.

Training Preferences: Participants across all regions prefer in-person sessions rather than online training. Whilst 60.92% expressed satisfaction with online courses, a significant 93.10% showed a preference for in-person training.

Resource Mobilisation Skills / Grant Writing: A ‘catch-22’ issue arises where organisations lack the grant-writing skills required to acquire funds while lacking the resources to train staff members in grant writing.

Top-Level Operational Skills:

Strategic Planning: Many organisations underscore the significance of strategic foresight in their operations. Survey data indicates a pressing need for training in strategic planning, ensuring their actions are both proactive and aligned with their overarching goals and mission.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL): There is a need for both training in MEAL and, for those who already possess the relevant knowledge, more MEAL tools (e.g., logic models, performance indicators, knowledge of data collection tools) for effective service delivery.

Research Skills: The survey results indicate a pressing need for research training, as only a small fraction (25%) of participating organisations demonstrates effective research skills, while nearly a quarter are not very effective and a significant 23.60% remain neutral on the matter. The lack of data collection and research skills hampers data analysis and affects organisational outcomes that could be derived from that data. While raising the need to improve research skills, it is needed to bridge the gap between academic research and practical advocacy through the creation of research partnership networks.

Advocacy and Campaigning Skills: When asked what could make their advocacy more effective for enhancing policies, laws, mechanisms, and societal perceptions affecting LGBTI+ individuals, a notable 86.05% of participants flagged strategic planning as the paramount concern, while a substantial 79.07% identified stakeholder analysis as another key focus. A key issue identified related to the need to bolster advocacy and campaigning skills across the board. In the context of LGBT+ organisations, strengthening advocacy requires support towards promoting and protecting the rights of the community, while campaigning support can be more issue-specific, aiming to effect change on particular policies and societal attitudes. Within the realm of advocacy, paralegal advocacy training stands as a critical need, especially for LGBT+ organisations. This could equip organisations with tools to use the law to defend and promote the rights of the community. It requires a deep understanding of legal frameworks, expertise in interpreting legislation, and the ability to engage in legal dialogue and negotiation with policymakers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Top-Level Operational Skills

Leadership: Effective leadership skills are key for organisational success. Training should be multi-faceted, covering strategic planning, conflict resolution, and team building. It should not only target managerial staff but also extend to volunteers and ordinary members to equip them with the leadership skills required to take on responsibilities if needed.

Strategic Planning: Investing in strategic planning training should be a priority. Such training can address key issues such as setting long-term goals, identifying potential challenges, resource allocation, and ensuring alignment between daily operations and overarching objectives.

MEAL Training: Training in the field of MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning) should provide a comprehensive overview of diverse methodologies and techniques. This includes not just the essentials of data collection and interpretation, but also advanced topics such as impact and process evaluation, data visualisation, and participatory monitoring. Moreover, specific issues that the training could explore may include ethical considerations in data collection, culturally sensitive evaluation methods, and the integration of technology in tracking and evaluating project outcomes.

Resource Mobilisation

Sustainable Resource Mobilisation: There is a need to place a greater focus on meeting organisational core skill needs such as sustainable resource mobilisation and facilitating inter-organisational collaboration, as opposed to simply focusing on individual-level skill development. Training topics to explore include understanding the resource landscape, engagement and relationship management, using digital tools and platforms (e.g., crowdfunding, online campaigns), and strategies for leveraging existing networks for shared resources.

Proposal Writing: When asked about ways to enhance their fundraising capabilities, organisations overwhelmingly identified two critical focal points. A significant 81.40% emphasised the need for honing skills in grant, proposal, and concept note writing, while an even more striking 83.72% highlighted the importance of improving their knowledge of available funding opportunities. Proposal writing is needed for effective resource mobilisation. Training programmes must target teams holistically —both in terms of a well-rounded skill set for different kinds of proposal writing and ensuring that all team members, not just a few experts, are competent in these skills.

Safety and Security

Safety and Security Training: Given the current environment, comprehensive safety and security training, both digital and physical, is imperative. This should also include crisis management and digital data protection modules. From the physical side of things, training should explore the basics of personal safety, workplace security protocols, travel safety, emergency response and crisis management. When focusing on digital safety and security, it is important to explore the basic of digital security, email and communication security, data storage and backup, data protection regulations, and VPN and network security.

Advocacy and Campaigning

Legal Advocacy: There is a need for training in legal advocacy skills to be carried out by qualified lawyers to effectively navigate the complex environments that many organisations operate within. Potential training topics could include understanding legal frameworks, legislative lobbying techniques, law interpretation and application, case law analysis, engaging with legal professionals, drafting legal documents, and media and legal advocacy to effectively communicate legal issues.

Paralegal Advocacy: Paralegal advocacy training is different from legal advocacy and involves working with paralegals assisting in specific causes within the boundaries set by their non-attorney status. Training is needed and should be primarily geared towards the accurate recording of issues affecting the community (e.g., violent attacks). While paralegal activists primarily offer support to specific cases and their respective communities, their contributions can also play a key role in accumulating evidence for future legal advocacy.

Campaigning Training: Organisations need specialised workshops focusing on campaigning strategies tailored to different demographic groups and societal contexts. This could include modules on campaign planning, public speaking, and effective social media use.

Data Management and Research

Research Training: A significant 41% of survey respondents indicated that they are not presently engaged in any research activities. Furthermore, an overwhelming 85% expressed a need for enhancing their skills in research methodology and methods. Some expressed interest in specific research projects such as exploring the history of genders and sexualities in their countries and conducting research on the number of incidents against LGBTIQ+ individuals, among others.

To bolster the efficacy of data collection and interpretation, it is advisable to expand up-skilling programmes to include multiple participants from each CSO. By doing so, it ensures that there are always several individuals equipped with the necessary research skills, thereby reducing potential disruptions, and ensuring continuous capacity within the organisation.

SOCIAL CONTEXT, SAFETY AND SECURITY

“There are laws limiting the services we can provide. We see healthcare providers discriminating against our community members.”

“The media spaces used for advocating for the rights and freedoms of all persons including the right of LGBTIQ+ persons have been blocked.”

KEY FINDINGS

Societal Prejudice: Societal norms often impact the learning and development efforts of LGBTIQ+ organisations. These norms create barriers to outreach and community engagement, which should make sensitisation of stakeholders a key focus of future capacity building interventions. The prejudice negatively impacts efforts to educate and engage both the LGBTIQ+ community and the wider society effectively.

Security Risks: LGBTIQ+ organisations face risks affecting both personal safety and organisational operations. Threats include harassment, intimidation, and in extreme cases, physical attacks. For instance, an organisation in Uganda reported incidents of physical violence against staff and community members. On the digital front, there are risks involving hacking, data breaches, and the exposure of sensitive personal information. Some organisations have had their social media accounts hacked, confidential data compromised, and personal identities of staff publicly disclosed. Such risks are particularly heightened in regions such as Africa. As noted in the Skills section, organisations often lack the appropriate tools to respond effectively. There is a pressing need for targeted training in physical safety protocols, cybersecurity measures, and crisis management to better equip them in tackling these issues.

Legislative Constraints: Anti-LGBTIQ+ legislation impedes basic organisational activities. For instance, some countries have laws that prevent LGBTIQ+ organisations from even registering, while others criminalise renting property to known LGBTIQ+ individuals. These legal constraints also limit access to essential resources for training and development.

Misinformation: The rise in misinformation acts as a learning and development challenge since organisations lack the tools to counteract false narratives. Additionally, it restricts access to reliable information essential for the organisation’s growth and development. The challenge requires training staff to proactively address and rectify fake news. A Southern African participant detailed their engagement with regulatory bodies: *“We are trying to work on issues related to safety discussing this with the media Ombudsman especially regarding one newspaper.”*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Media Literacy and Counter-Narrative Training: Equip organisations with skills in media literacy to discern and counteract fake news. This could involve training sessions on critical thinking, digital verification techniques, and understanding the anatomy of misinformation campaigns. After doing so, facilitate partnerships with media outlets, research institutions, and experts to facilitate a flow of reliable information and encourage platforms to challenge misinformation that affects the LGBT+ community. The training could also emphasise building partnerships with regulatory bodies to ensure a unified response to media challenges.

Societal Prejudices: To overcome the societal prejudices impeding effective outreach and advocacy, it is key for organisations to be supported to launch educational initiatives and public relations campaigns by providing training to do so, but also funding for those that already have the required skills but lack resources. These strategies could shift societal perceptions and foster a more inclusive environment.

Cyber-Security Support and Comprehensive Risk Management: As noted in the Skills section, the escalating vulnerability to hacking and other online threats, it is essential for organisations to have access to cyber-security experts to build robust digital strategies. These cybersecurity measures should be integrated into a comprehensive risk management framework, supporting organisations in crafting and implementing exhaustive risk plans. Those organisations who have already received such training should be supported with funding to implement projects based on the learning acquired.

Strategic Partnerships: Collaborate with international human rights organisations and legal aid bodies to provide guidance and representation. This would assist organisations in navigating hostile legislative environments, finding workarounds for registration, and ensuring that their rights are upheld to the maximum extent possible. Organisations could be supported to adopt discreet operational models. For instance, using virtual platforms for training and development can bypass traditional resource access constraints.

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

[It would help to have a] "minimum standards of governance, transparency and accountability toolkit for LGBTIQA+ CSOs."

KEY FINDINGS

Top-Level Challenges

Strategic Planning Capabilities: 86.05% of survey participants raised they need strategic planning to make their advocacy more effective. This reveals a critical need for developing strategic planning capabilities and engaging donors effectively. The absence of a comprehensive strategic plan including engagement with donors was flagged as a key gap.

Transparency and Accountability: Ethical governance is not only crucial for maintaining trust among donors and stakeholders but also for ensuring financial stability within the organisation. There is a need for training modules focusing on ethical governance to guide organisations through best practices since standardised governance practices could enhance both their transparency and efficiency.

Internal Policies and Systems: A significant proportion of respondents lack written operational procedures and strategic planning, with only 59.55% indicating that they have them and an even smaller 58.43% reporting the existence of a strategic plan. Learning and development should include designing and reassessing internal policies that are both audit-compliant and operationally effective.

Organisational Staffing and Wellbeing

Survey data reveals that the main challenges organisations face regarding their staff and volunteers relate to 1) lack of resources or funding, 2) skill development, and 3) staff burnout.

Health and Staff Wellbeing: Health complications among staff members, encompassing both physical health issues like COVID-19 and mental health issues, disrupt the continuity of organisational knowledge. For example, organisations have faced situations where staff members fell ill due to COVID-19 or cancer, leaving gaps in expertise and a diversion of resources away from advocacy and outreach activities. Trauma-informed training is lacking and could ensure staff are equipped to support diverse needs, both within the team and towards the communities they support. Furthermore, the impact on expertise requires support towards knowledge sharing frameworks, implementing internal cross-training programmes, mentorship schemes, and utilising digital platforms for documentation.

Staff Retention, Burnout, and Internal Conflicts: High turnover rates and burnout are impeding long-term goals and development. The absence of mental health support and conflict resolution mechanisms exacerbates this. Absence of central leadership and low pay rates are stretching organisational resources, affecting development, planning and staff retention.

Lack of Focus on Professional Development: Staff often juggle multiple responsibilities, leading to a dilution of focus on specialised training and professional development. This impacts their operational efficacy and limits targeted learning opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fostering Collective Wellbeing: Mental health and team-building initiatives are instrumental in cultivating a supportive organisational culture. Activities such as debriefing sessions, peer support groups, and mindfulness training can instil a sense of collective wellbeing, which in turn drives positive organisational growth.

Strengthening Governance: Resources are needed to strengthen governance structures to achieve organisational objectives. This includes providing support regarding:

- **Clear Reporting Lines:** Providing support to design clear hierarchies and structures, as well as reporting systems to avoid ambiguity in roles.
- **Transparent Decision-Making Processes:** Promoting trust within the organisation and with stakeholders through democratic internal processes.
- **Regular Review Mechanisms:** This requires knowledge of periodic assessment processes of goals, processes, and outcomes.
- **Ethical Standards and Guidelines:** Implementing a code of conduct to guide organisational behaviour and decisions, which organisations should be supported to develop.

Clarifying Organisational Identity: It is crucial for organisations to have a distinct and well-articulated identity. This identity, rooted in their primary objectives, could ensure clear communication, and avoid potential misunderstandings with stakeholders such as donors.

Mapping Progress: Investing in methods to record organisational activities is pivotal. This could involve collecting impactful stories from beneficiaries, and/ or establishing robust M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) frameworks. Implementing these frameworks would allow organisations to not only track progress but also evaluate the effectiveness of their initiatives.

Stakeholder Analysis: Developing dedicated stakeholder analysis toolkits could guide organisations in tailoring their approaches. By understanding the influence and stance of different decision-makers, organisations could strategise more effectively.

Enhancing Strategic Planning: Strategic plans need to be attuned to the evolving funding and political environments. Guided planning support is essential, especially since a significant 86% of survey participants identified this as vital for impactful advocacy.

Role Definition Sessions: Guide organisations in restructuring their staff roles. This would involve dedicated training sessions on role definition, delegation, and specialised skill enhancement, coupled with financial support mechanisms to enable the creation and sustainability of dedicated roles. This approach could ensure role clarity while fostering a conducive environment for tailored professional growth.

COMMUNICATION, COALITION BUILDING AND NETWORKING

“I’ve seen people who have stayed at home (in their countries) joining over Zoom while others from the (Global) North take the space even though they don’t know the realities of local people.”

KEY FINDINGS

When asked about their priorities to improve their capacity to engage in communication and networking activities, the three top choices provided by survey participants were access to professional training, additional funding for communication-related activities and tools, and the development of a formal communication strategy. The qualitative data further underscored the need for:

International and Regional Networking for Human Rights Advocacy: There is a need to engage in international and regional networking to gain knowledge and strengthen connections. Challenges persist, such as unequal representation and limited access to international platforms, which consequently impact both funding opportunities and the exchange of knowledge. There is a need to convene and collaborate across borders, both in person and online, to bolster advocacy efforts and share insights on combating LGBTI+ human rights abuses effectively. Engagement with private sector stakeholders has worked for some participants, which could be replicated in other contexts.

Diplomatic Mission Support: A key finding identified is that many organisations often rely on the support provided by embassies based in their countries. Several participants highlighted that embassies tend to fund broader LGBTI+ initiatives rather than specific sub-groups. This was evidenced by collaborations with the German and French Embassies in some countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

International and Regional Networking for Human Rights Advocacy: Organisations could be supported to **network and build partnerships** with international human rights platforms. This should include:

- Fellowship programmes allowing members from underrepresented regions to spend time with established human rights organisations, gaining first-hand experience.
- Grant schemes targeted at bolstering representation from areas with limited access (e.g., rural regions, low-income areas, ethnic minority communities, regions with restrictive legal frameworks, conflict zones), ensuring funding and knowledge exchange are equitable.
- Existing global events used as opportunities for face-to-face interactions.
- Regular cross-border conferences facilitating the sharing of strategies.

Digital Platforms for Resource Exchange: Digital hubs could be provided to **network and share resources** by:

- Developing a digital platform or app for continuous engagement and knowledge-sharing between organisations located in various regions.
- Creating a forum within existing websites for organisations to be able to interact with each other.

Private Sector Engagement: Engage the private sector in a dual role: as partners in advocacy efforts for rights and inclusion, and as potential sources for alternative funding. This engagement can contribute to advocacy efforts, as well as to explore new avenues for financing by collaborating with private corporations. This could include:

- Capacity-building workshops for organisations to effectively engage with private sector stakeholders.
- Facilitating dialogues between NGOs and private firms to identify common goals and partnership opportunities.

Diplomatic Engagement: Organisations could be supported in their diplomatic engagement efforts. This includes capacity development interventions aimed at preparing members to effectively engage with embassy stakeholders, ensuring mutual understanding and alignment of goals, to encourage partnerships and funding opportunities.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

“We find it difficult to engage with indigenous communities, and other populations that are neglected such as older people who face social isolation.”

KEY FINDINGS

Community engagement: Multiple challenges impact community engagement (e.g., geographical and financial constraints, safety issues, and language and legal barriers.)

Obstacles in reaching LGBTI+ subgroups: This includes those experiencing intersectional stigma, rural residents, low-visibility groups like transgender individuals, and those affected by technological or language barriers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey data reveals that the top priorities for organisations to improve their community outreach include increased funding (93%), followed by specialised training (83%) and additional staff (59%).

Community Engagement initiatives should include:

- Support to design and develop community centres to reach remote areas, ensuring grassroots engagement.
- Investment in digital platforms for online engagement, making interactions more cost-effective and broad-reaching.
- Language translation funding to cater to individuals with diverse language backgrounds.

Obstacles in Reaching LGBT+ Subgroups: Organisations should be supported to launch **dedicated outreach programmes** targeting hard-to-reach LGBTI+ subgroups. This should include:

- Collaborations with local community leaders in rural regions, ensuring tailored and effective engagements.
- Technological solutions like apps or platforms to bridge the digital divide and reach those limited by tech barriers.
- Focused campaigns spotlighting low-visibility groups like transgender individuals, ensuring their concerns and experiences are brought to the fore.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This learning and development needs assessment (LDNA) was conducted and written by Diego Garcia Rodriguez. Special thanks to Michael Rapley, Alice Moon and Siobhan Bligh for their editorial and substantive inputs. Thanks also to Juan Miguel Sanchez Marin, Mahoo Lyimo and Jesse Sperling for their review and guidance. We extend our deepest gratitude to The Commonwealth Equality Network (TCEN) for their collaboration throughout the course of this project. Our sincere appreciation also goes to UKAID for their generous support.

We are also immensely thankful to all the individuals who participated in our survey, cultural domain analysis sessions (CDAs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). Each participant's unique perspective enriched this study, providing depth to the findings. Their willingness to share their insights has been instrumental in shaping this LDNA while furthering our collective understanding of their needs and challenges. Thank you for your invaluable contributions to this important work.

