SOGIE

Sexual Orientation
Gender Identity
& Expression

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Acknowledgements

This booklet represents a significant milestone in the long journey of advocating for the human rights of people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in Vanuatu.

Its purpose is to present an affirming, human rights-based approach to people who feel and act different from the currently prevalent norms of society, because only when we can see, understand, affirm and respect others, can we truly accomplish the global and national development goal *to leave no one behind.*

This booklet was made possible through the work of many people.

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We still have a long way to go in reaching equality in inclusion, but knowing that we make the journey together with our members, our donors, our partners, and our allies makes it all worthwhile.

vpride
Embrace and Respect Our Differences
Celebrate Our Similarities

NDI

1. Introduction

Diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions are not new to the Pacific. There are some Pacific countries that have well-documented ancient traditions predating colonisation that reflect a unique local perspective of sexuality and gender, such as the *fa'afafine* in Samoa and *fakaleit* in Tonga. In other countries, there are less well-documented but still important traditions of people using gender-diverse roles and expressions. With colonisation, however, negative social attitudes and anti-LGBT laws were spread throughout the Pacific, and much of that remains today[1].

The result of these attitudes and laws have been and continue to be hostility, harassment, discrimination, violence, exclusion, and stigmatization, often rooted in lack of understanding and knowledge.

This booklet seeks to raise individual and community awareness, and presents an affirming, human rights-based approach to people who feel and act different from the currently prevalent norms of society. It also addresses and seeks to eliminate the invisibility, discrimination, and high rates of self-harm and suicide experienced by people with known and emerging identities along the SOGIE spectrum.

Only when we can see, understand, affirm and respect others, can we truly accomplish the goal that is preached in all our countries, namely, *to leave no one behind.*

1.1 Purpose and Overview

This booklet is designed first, to serve as an informational guide to expand our understanding of our Pacific brothers and sisters of diverse Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression and Identity (SOGIE).

It offers an introduction to SOGIE - what it means and how to better understand SOGIE diverse people. It also provides explanations of terminology and definitions, along with a discussion of human rights, human rights law, and the meaning of SOGIE inclusion from a human rights-based perspective.

Second, the booklet offers information for families and communities, that can help to make them more supportive, inclusive, and safe for their SOGIE members. Third, it offers targeted, best practices information designed to assist those that are responsible for providing quality health, education, and justice services to *all* members of our society. Finally, the booklet provides a basis for policy advocacy for SOGIE people.

In addition to factual information, the booklet provides stories and case experiences from the SOGIE community, to help those reading the booklet to develop the kind of understanding, empathy and compassion that comes from truly seeing other people as we see ourselves.

The primary audience for the booklet is the people of Vanuatu, and it will be available in its three official languages: Bislama, English and French. Given the lack of similar publications in the region, we hope that it will also be useful in other Pacific Island countries.

This booklet was developed by VPride with support from the National Democratic Institute. It is based on a wide variety of resources, developed by specialists around the world. In addition to the booklet content, extensive additional resources are provided in the appendices and the end notes.

1.2 About VPride

VPride is a Vanuatu, community-based organisation, founded in 2007, to help educate, advocate and mobilize around diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC[2]). The VPride network includes Ni-Vanuatu Men who have Sex with Men (MSMs), Transgender (TGs), and other Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) populations, as well as sex workers (SW). It has members in Shefa, Malampa and Sanma Provinces, with outreach planned to the other 3 provinces: Torba, Penama and Tafea.

Over the past 10+ years, VPride has worked to strengthen community leadership, mobilization and advocacy in the areas of sexuality and gender identities with respect to sexual health including STI's, HIV and AIDS, well-being and human rights. Activities have included sensitizing communities and institutions around the definitions of diverse SOGIESC, and providing a safe space for key actors to discuss the key human rights issues associated with SOGIESC. A few key activities and accomplishments have included;

- Outreach and support to LGBT in 3 different provinces
- Work with WSB as peer educators for HIV and STIs[3]
- Work with Ministry of Health to provide SOGIE training to new health care workers
- Work with Ministry of Education to provide SOGIE training to new teachers
- Work with Ministry of Justice to provide SOGIE training to Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF), Vanuatu police officers, and Vanuatu Family Protection officers
- Work with Oxfam in Vanuatu (OiV)facilitating Socio-Economic Empowerment Design training
- Formal partnership with OiV established in 2018
- Inclusion in and contributions to the Gender Protection Cluster
- Input into regional policy discussions, including the 2016 'Pacific Feminist Forum'
- Participation in key LGBTQ research projects in Vanuatu and the Pacific research projects
- Active member of SOGIE regional and global networks

VPride's mandate is in line with the worldwide problems around SOGIESC diversity.
While VPride is the only organisation of its kind in Vanuatu, its efforts are joined with a number of others across the Pacific, including national as well as and regional organisations, like the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN), the Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network, the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance, Pacific Pride Foundation, Rainbow Pride Foundation, the Kaleidoscope Australia Human Rights Foundation, Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM), and others.

VPride's *mission* is to mobilize, empower and advocate for people's human rights to express and to live, safely and peacefully, with their sexual orientation and gender identity.

VPride's vision is access to services, acceptance, freedom, human rights and legal protection for all people in Vanuatu regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The key principles and values that guide VPride's organisational decisions and actions are:

- *Human Rights*: VPride actively promotes and practices the Yogyakarta +10 principles
- *Inclusiveness*: VPride practices and champions inclusiveness inside our organisation and in the community, honoring all people's diverse strengths, needs, voices and backgrounds
- *Solidarity*: VPride promotes solidarity between all people working for their human rights;
- *Culture and Kastom*: VPride honors Vanuatu culture and kastom and seeks to reclaim Vanuatu culture and kastom for all people, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity

2. Understanding SOGIE

Understanding those who are different from us – or who we think are different from us- is never easy, as some of the quotes in the box illustrate. However, learning about the differences is the first step to building that understanding.

In this section we will talk about basic terminology, about how to understand differences in sexual orientation, identity and expression, how sexual identity is formed, and how identity, orientation and expression interact with other parts of our lives.

2.1 Terminology

Language describing sexuality, gender identities, gender expression, and for that matter, all identities is constantly evolving. Additionally, terms are used in varying ways across individuals, groups, and regions. It is telling that in Bislama we have no non-derogatory terms to describe those with different sexual orientations or identities. Previously, the term LGBT or LGBTQI has been used often.

In this booklet, we will use the term *SOGIE*, first to avoid the negative stigma that has already been attached to earlier terms, and second, because it is a more inclusive description of differences that may exist in people's sexual orientation, identity, and expression.

Some of the main groupings within SOGIE will be explained in the next section. Also, Appendix 1 of the booklet provides a comprehensive listing of terminology and definitions, relevant to SOGIE.

2.2 Understanding differences

As people, we are all the same, and yet, we have differences. When it comes to sexuality – including sexual orientation, sexual identity and sexual expression - some of these differences are visible, some are not. Some are by choice, many are not. Some are shaped by physical characteristics; many others are determined by culture.

Different cultures at different times have different ways of viewing both gender and gender roles. What is acceptable and even desirable behaviour for women today is vastly different from 100 years ago. Societies change their ideas and expectations constantly. This even includes how people are classified.

For this reason, we differentiate between sex and gender. The World Health Organisation (WHO) describes *sex* as characteristics that are biologically defined, whereas *gender* is based on socially constructed features, such as specific roles or expectations formulated by society[4]. Sex is a given, whereas gender is learned.

"To make a difference, understand differences."
— *Syed Sharukh*

"To recognise ourselves in each other Is to build the bridge towards compassion and love"
— *Mimi Novic*

"I don't like that man. I must get to know him better."
— *Abraham Lincoln*

"I think that hate is a feeling that can only exist where there is no understanding."
— *Tennessee Williams*

"Walk with me for a while, my friend—you in my shoes, I in yours—and then let us talk." — *Richelle E. Goodrich*

There are many variations in how people experience *gender* based upon self-perception and expression, on how they behave, and on the culture and time they live in.

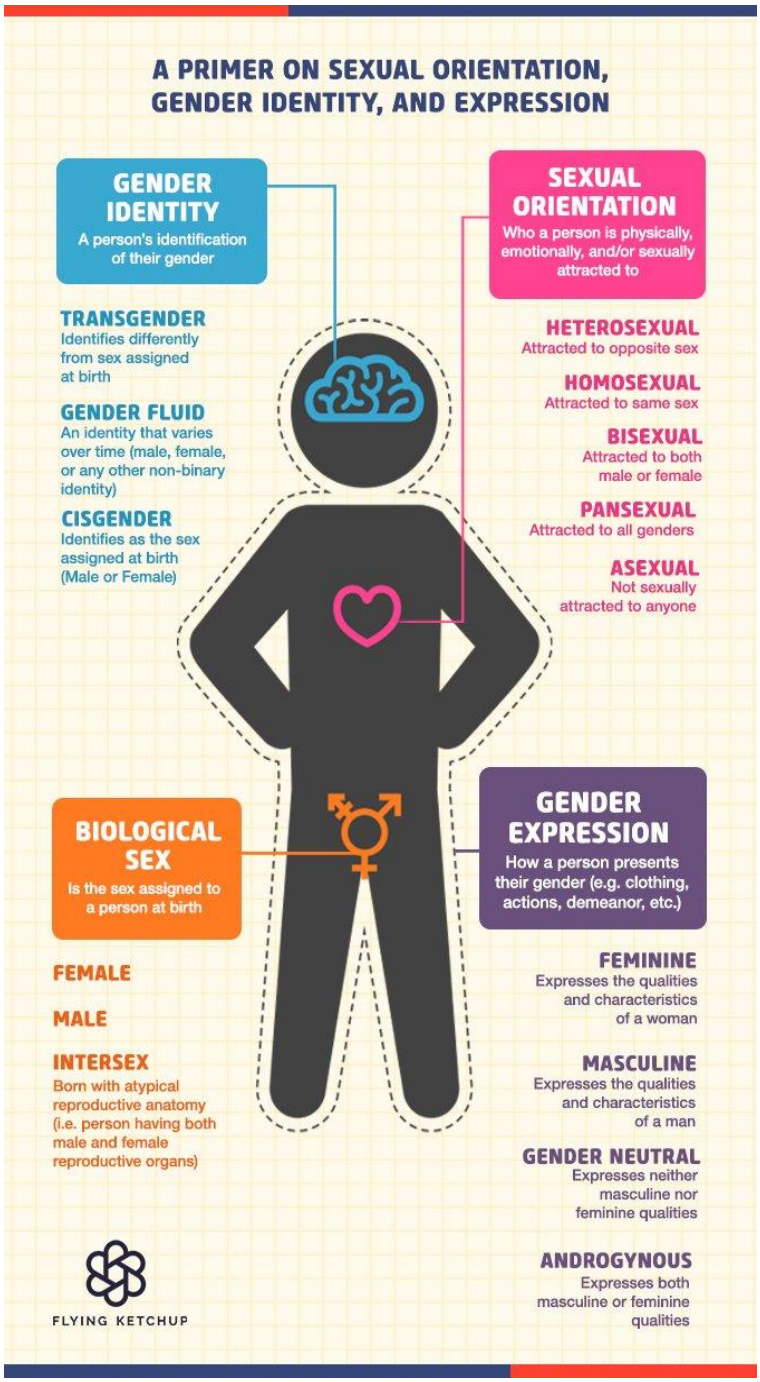
Most cultures today think of gender in a *binary* way, only recognizing male and female gender. There are other cultures though that recognize(d) a third gender, such as the Two Spirit people in Native American cultures[5], and the Hijras in India. In Samoa, people may be fafine (woman) or tagate (man), but they can also be fa'afafine - someone who is male by birth, but lives as a female- or *fa'atane* , a person who is female by birth, but live as a male.

This recognition of a third gender is also found in the Tongan fakaleiti (also fakafefine), the Cook Islands Māori akava'ine, the Hawaiian and Tahitian māhū (literally in the middle), the Māori whakawāhine, the Niuean fiafifine (also fakafifine), the Tokelauan fakafāfine, the Tuvaluan pinapinaaine, the Gilbertese binabinaaine, and the Wallisian fakafafine [6].

Understanding that gender and gender expression are shaped historically and culturally is a first step towards understanding SOGIE differences. Even if these differences may initially seem strange, inclusion, respect, and human rights are what is most important.

One easy way to explain SOGIE differences, is by considering four things that we all have in common:

- *Biological or anatomical sex* – this describes the physical characteristics that we were born with, such as body shape, genitals, body hair, and chromosomes.
- *Orientation*– this describes who we are attracted to, romantically or sexually
- *Gender Identity* – this describes how we think about ourselves in terms of gender and how our perceptions of ourselves align with gender definitions.
- *Gender Expression* – the way we express gender through how we dress or act, and how that is interpreted by others.



In a *binary* world, one in which we think only in terms of male/female distinctions, we divide the world into men and women, based on their biological sex. We often assume that men are only attracted to women, and vice versa. We also assume that the biological sex

corresponds to how we see ourselves, i.e., a man thinks of himself as a man. Finally, we expect that man to act, dress and express himself in the way that his particular society thinks that men should act, dress and express themselves.

The image above[7] not only summarizes the 4 areas that affect sexual orientation, identity and expression, it also suggests that often times there is a *continuum* in place. People find themselves not only at the extreme points where society may want to place them, but on many points in between, as shown in the visual below[8]. However, because language and identity are very personal and constantly changing, the best practice is still to allow individuals to self-identify rather than to use any of these terms to assess the identity of others.

For SOGIE diverse people then, the world is much more complex than the standard, binary, male/female distinction. Here are some examples:

1. *Intersex*: Some people are born with both male and female characteristics.
2. *Transgender*: Some people are born into a female or male body but their gender identity is different from their body. A person with a biologically male body may think of themselves as being female. Some of them may take steps to actually change their body to fit their mind.
3. *Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual*: Some people only feel romantically or sexually attracted to people like themselves: women to women or men to men. Others may feel attracted to both men and women.
4. *Expression*: Some women prefer to dress, talk, act like men, some men prefer to dress, talk, act like women, and some men and women prefer to express themselves androgynously, mixing male and female characteristics.

Again, the important part here is not really people's positions on the continuum, because for all of us, our bodies, how we feel about ourselves, who we are attracted to, and how we express ourselves are private matters.

What is important however, is that we are able to understand that there are differences between people and that if we acknowledge and respect those differences, then inclusion, cooperation, and collaboration become possible, creating a healthy and productive community and society.

2.3 Identity Formation

Identity formation is a complex, and often long-term process, which is made all the more difficult when a young person experiences hostility, violence, and/or a lack of support and information on other forms of sexuality or gender identity. Below is a simplified model of 4 stages of identity formation[9], based on western concepts and knowledge.

Stage 1: Sensitization. This stage usually occurs just before puberty. In this stage an individual believes that they are heterosexual or cisgender. They feel the same as most other people, aside from a few aspects such as choice of clothing, ways of expression, hairstyles, or a perceived difference In orientation.

Stage 2: Confusion. In this stage is an individual will feel confused about their identity. This usually occurs in adolescence where people start to feel attracted to other people (for example sexual attraction or the feeling of liking someone of the same sex). The lack of knowledge on sexuality, the heteronormative values learned from the society and culture, as well as the new/ never before experience of feelings and attraction makes that individual experience identity confusion.

Stage 3: Assumption. In this stage, an individual starts to accept that their identity is different from others. This process varies and happens in different ages. There is no specific or standard age for this. The 'coming out' process may happen in this stage or it may not. The person involved may not

be comfortable with themselves and may still feel isolated, alone, or depressed, but at one point in this stage they have already found their identity.

Stage 4: Commitment. Here, an individual feels comfortable with their identity and their life with that identity.

An individual may have felt doubtful and confused numerous times before finally accepting and feeling comfortable about their identity. Coming out or revealing information about gender identity and sexual orientation is not an easy thing to do, especially if family, community and society are not inclusive, supportive or accepting. It is important to remember here that people feel what they feel, and that this is rarely a matter of free or conscious choice.

The stages mentioned are complex and may take a long time, and it is important for people in health care, education, peer education, outreach, justice and safety, and advocacy/outreach to understand this. There are many processes that take place simultaneously, inside oneself (internal process) and outside (external process). Both of these processes are influenced by many factors. How a person feels inside is often shaped by cultural norms and beliefs, *kastom*, social class, the education level of an individual or society, conservatism and fundamentalism, and the law. If some or all of these disallow or denigrate non-conforming sexual identity and orientation, the person may feel confused for a long time and may internalize social stigmas and phobias, resulting in negative feelings, such as self-hate, depression, and other problems.

2.4 Intersectionality

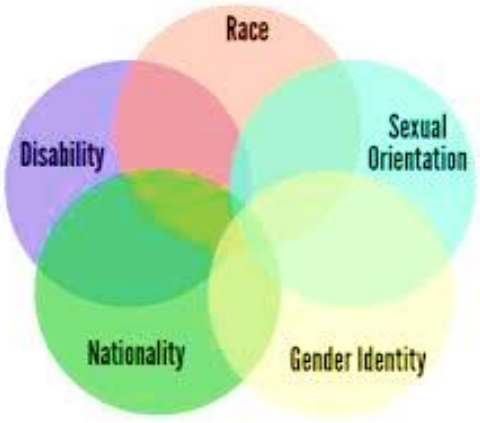
The life of a SOGIE person is not only shaped by sex and gender, but also by other factors such as age, disability, race, or class. For instance, the life of a young, healthy and wealthy white gay man is likely to be very different from the life of an older, black, transgender woman coping with health issues.

The term *intersectionality* is used to describe the idea that social identities such as race, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, health and many other characteristics are inseparable and experienced simultaneously. Intersectionality is particularly important because it helps us to see how interlocking systems of power impact those who are most marginalized in society. When an individual's identities overlap, multiple threats of discrimination within a number of minority classes exist.

For example, a girl of a disability may face discrimination in school, which is further compounded by pervasive sexism. Similarly, trans women of color face exceptionally high levels of discrimination and threats of violence, fueled by trans prejudice, sexism, misogyny, racism, homophobia and transphobia.

Add to this picture factors like age, social status, health and wealth, and one can see the complex difficulties faced by many SOGIE diverse people in all parts of their lives: family, community, education, health, employment, and safety and justice.

Intersectionality can also be viewed, of course, as a positive experience. There are many facets to our identities and where we come from that inform each other and enrich our understandings of cultures, values, and traditions. Transcending the oppressive impact of intersectional identities, it is important to acknowledge and validate the beauty of how living with a multi-faceted lens promotes connection with many other individuals' experiences and feelings. This is a key social emotional learning opportunity, both for SOGIE people and for others in the community, as both learn to see what they have in common and how they are different. We need to know and learn the landscape of each other's world and daily life in order to build trust, understanding, compassion, and empathy.



2.5 Stigma, Discrimination and Phobia

One of the main difficulties that SOGIE diverse people experience are the negative ideas and behaviors of those around them, often described as stigma, discrimination and phobia.

The word *stigma* means a negative prejudice towards an individual or group. These can be thoughts, feelings, opinions or judgements, all made without really knowing the other person. When someone acts on the negative prejudice, it becomes *discrimination*, specific negative treatment or exclusion of an individual or group based on a stigma.

Homophobia and *transphobia* are irrational and unbased fears towards homosexual and transgender people. It "can be directed at individuals or groups and manifests in many ways, including violence or other aggressive behaviour, stigmatization, hostility, disgust or other negative attitudes. It is often institutionalized through criminalization, discrimination, social exclusion, hate speech and hostile media coverage that pathologize and stigmatize trans people".[10]

Examples of SOGIE related stigma and discrimination exist at many levels:[11]:

Medical:

- Classifying gender non-conformity as a disease or disorder
- Therapies to 'cure' homosexuals or transgender.
- Comments by healthcare workers who preach and probe the transgender or homosexual patient to repent when patients come to them for care and treatment for a disease or infection
- Comments given by health care workers who state that anal sex is not normal.

Religion:

- Homosexuality is believed to be a sin.
- Being transsexual is called unnatural.
- Claiming that HIV has come about as a result of the sins of being a homosexual or transgender.

Socio-cultural:

- The assumption that everyone is heterosexual.
- Pressuring gay men to get married and have a family (having a wife and children).
- Name-calling, harassment or violence of people, based on their SOGIE

Law:

- Regulations that criminalize or provide legal sanctions for same sex sexual intercourse.
- Laws that do not protect people based on sexual orientation or identity
- Lack of punishment for those who harass or are violent towards SOGIE people
- No protection against cyber bullying or bullying in schools or communities

To think about this more, consider a few of the following scenarios[12]:

Scenario #1 I am a first-year junior high school student who was born as a male biologically but I identify myself as a female. When I leave my house, there is a group of people who often shout out, "sissy!" The first time this happened I did not feel anything. However, when this incident repeated, I felt scared and hurt. There is a sharp pain in my heart when I remember their words. Now I am afraid to leave the house and I stay at home in solitude. Sometimes I want to search for information about my condition, but I am too scared.

Scenario #2 I am a woman, only in my second year of college. I have a girlfriend. We have been secretly dating for the past year. But one day my family found out about our relationship. I was relentlessly scolded. One night, not long after that, a man who is a distant relative came into my room and told me he would help me become a normal woman. Then he raped me.

Scenario #3 I am a 23-year-old gay male. In a physical examination at the hospital, the doctor who examined me said that I must wear a condom when having sex with 'my girlfriend'. I tried telling him that I don't have sex with girls. But he seemed to pretend to not hear me and repeated his words over and over that I must always wear a condom when having sex with 'my girlfriend'.

Education and advocacy are key factors in changing discrimination, prejudice and stigma. We hope that this booklet and the resources it provides will support your efforts in this journey

3. SOGIE Rights

Human rights transcend any differences that may exist between people. In order to build positive communities and societies, it is important that we understand the idea of human rights and how a human rights perspective includes everyone. In this section, we will briefly review international, commonwealth, and national law and rights.

3.1 International Law and SDGs

In *BORN FREE AND EQUAL: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in International Human Rights Law*[13]*,* the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights *(OHCHR)* notes that "(t)he case for extending the same rights to LGBT persons as those enjoyed by everyone rests on two fundamental principles that underpin international human rights law: equality and non-discrimination.

The opening words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are unequivocal: 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.' Therefore, the protection of people on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity does not require the creation of new rights or special rights for LGBT people. Rather, it requires enforcement of the universally applicable guarantee of nondiscrimination in the enjoyment of all rights"[14]

BORN FREE AND EQUAL sets out five core legal obligations that member States have towards LGBT persons:

1. Protect individuals from homophobic and transphobic violence
2. Prevent torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of LGBT persons
3. Decriminalize homosexuality
4. Prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
5. Respect freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly

These obligations are guaranteed by international standards, to which Vanuatu and many other Pacific countries are signatories, including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the *Convention against Torture*, the *Convention of the Rights of the Child*[15]. *the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).*

Global Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are the overarching framework for international development. The UNDP notes that "(i)n September 2015, 193 Member States of the United Nations unanimously adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the global framework for efforts to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and tackle climate change by 2030.

Central to this agenda is the pledge that *no one should be left behind.* Achieving these goals will be impossible if LGBTI people, like other marginalized people, are not included. [16]

The 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contain multiple targets of relevance to LGBT human rights. SDG 5 calls on states to take action towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, which by definition includes lesbian, bisexual and trans women and girls. SDG 10 on reduced inequalities urges states to promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, and to eliminate discriminatory laws and promote appropriate legislation. SDG 16 on peace and justice calls for promotion of the rule of law and equal access

Achieving the SDGs requires good, solid data and evidence-based research to inform the legal, policy and programmatic frameworks needed to achieve results. Currently, however, there is a huge gap in the global data available on the inclusion of LGBTI people. To fill this gap, and as a contribution to support the implementation of Agenda 2030, on 10 December 2015, UNDP announced its commitment to lead the development of an LGBTI Inclusion Index that can inform evidence-based development strategies to advance the inclusion of LGBTI people"[17].

3.2 Commonwealth, the Pacific and Vanuatu

LGBT Rights throughout the Commonwealth

A number of provisions of the Commonwealth Charter are directly relevant to LGBT human rights[18]. Article 2 provides that member states are committed to equality and the protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all without discrimination on any grounds. Article 4 accepts that diversity and understanding multiple identities are fundamental to the Commonwealth's principles. Article 12 recognises that gender equality is essential for human development and basic

human rights. Multiple domestic courts in the Commonwealth have confirmed that criminalisation of and discrimination against LGBT people violate constitutional human rights norms. *Speaking out: The rights of LGBTI citizens from across the Commonwealth* provides further background on the Commonwealth.[19]

Pacific Region Context

In the Pacific region, at a 2015 conference, Karen Allen, interim UN Resident Coordinator," urged all of the Pacific States to decriminalize same-sex relations and adopt laws that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity" [20]. Similarly, UNDP's *Being LGBTI in Asia and the Pacific*, notes that LGBTI people are highly marginalized and face varied forms of stigma and discrimination based on their distinct sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions[21]. Currently, Vanuatu, like many other Pacific nations, does not have legal protection for LGBTs facing violence, exclusion or discrimination. This issue was among a number of key concerns raised in Vanuatu's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), held in Geneva in January 2019[3].

The Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality (PPA) has advocated for women's rights since 1994[22]. In 2017, Ministers for Women endorsed *The Pacific Platform for Action for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018-2030*[23].

The PPA envisions that "(a)ll people, *of all genders of all diversities*, enjoy their fundamental human rights, are empowered and benefit equally from development outcomes in all areas of their lives" and

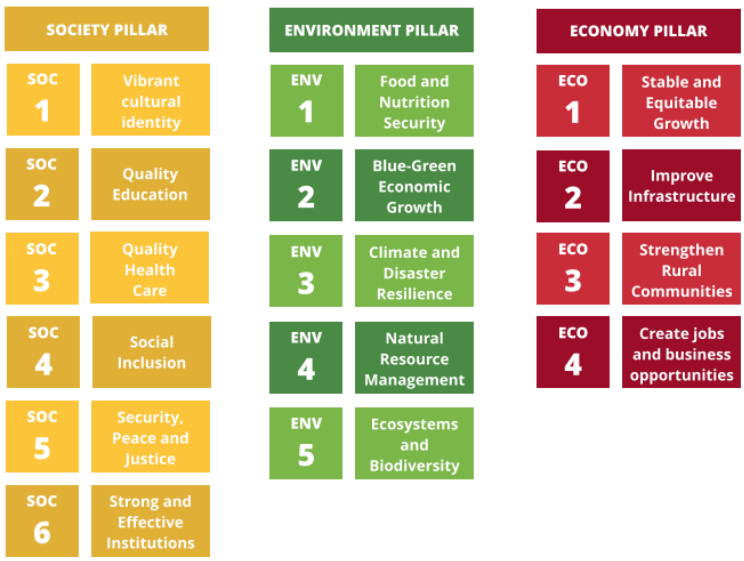
- "provides a roadmap for achieving gender equality and enhancing the well-being of all women and girls of all diversities in all their diversity, inclusive of young women, older women, rural women, women with disabilities, women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and indigenous women

- supports action on national, regional and international gender equality commitments made by Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs), particularly under the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

- guides PICTs, regional agencies and development partners in prioritising strategic approaches to achieve gender equality"[24].

Vanuatu

Since gaining Independence in 1980, Vanuatu joined the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations, and as noted earlier, became a signatory to a number of key Agreements and Conventions.



Vanuatu has developed its National Sustainable Development Goals, better known as the *Vanuatu 2030 The People's Plan.* Like many such documents, LGBT and other so-called vulnerable groups are not mentioned specifically, but the plan uses inclusive language. Of particular relevance is the Society Pillar, which seeks to "ensure we maintain a vibrant cultural identity underpinning a peaceful, just and inclusive society that is supported by responsive and capable institutions, delivering quality services to *all citizens*".

Within the Society Pillar, three goals are particularly relevant to diverse SOGIE people:

- Goal 2: *Quality Education*: An inclusive, equitable and quality education system with life-long *learning for all.*
- Goal 3: *Quality Health Care*: A healthy population that enjoys a high quality of physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being
- Goal 4: *Social Inclusion*: An inclusive society which upholds human dignity and where the rights of all Ni-Vanuatu including women, youth, the elderly and vulnerable groups are supported, protected and promoted in our legislation and institutions

In 2011, Vanuatu was one of 96 UN member states that signed the "*Joint Statement on Ending Acts of Violence and Related Human Rights Violations based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*". The statement includes condemnation of violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, stigmatization and prejudice based on SOGIE that undermine personal integrity and dignity. It also includes condemnation of killings and executions, torture, arbitrary arrest, and deprivation of economic, social, and cultural rights on those grounds.

In November 2016 at the UN General Assembly, Vanuatu also voted in support of the mandate of the *Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*. An independent expert's role would be to assess the implementation of international human rights instruments with a view to overcome violence and discrimination against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity and identify and address the root causes of violence and discrimination.

In spite of taking these positive steps towards the recognition and protection of SOGIE human rights in the UN arena, Vanuatu has very few actual legal protections in place for a person, based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Vanuatu *Constitution* offers general human rights protections but does not specifically prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. While consensual same-sex activity is legal in Vanuatu under the Penal Code, the only prohibition on "sexual preference" discrimination is in the *Teaching Service Act 2013.* The *National Youth Authority Act* is the only bill that recognizes persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity by affirming that "youth means any person aged between 12 to 30 years of age, including those with disabilities and of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity."

Comparing Vanuatu to other Pacific Island nations, its decriminalization of same-sex sexual conduct is ahead of including Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga where same-sex relationships are illegal and punishable by a jail sentence[25] . However, Vanuatu lags behind Fiji, Samoa and Kiribati which have legal protections against discrimination in employment whilst Samoa also has protections against hate crimes and a National Human Rights Institution which is inclusive of sexual orientation in its human rights work

4. SOGIE diverse people in Vanuatu

4.1 Issues and Challenges

Lack of legal protection

The first and major challenge is the lack of legal protection in Vanuatu for people of different SOGIE.

"In September 2015, 12 United Nations entities issued a *Joint Statement* calling on States to act urgently to end violence and discrimination against LGBTI adults, adolescents and children. The entities stated: "[W]e remain seriously concerned that around the world, millions of LGBTI individuals, those perceived as LGBTI and their families face widespread human rights violations. This is cause for alarm – and action." [26]

Even though Vanuatu endorsed the earlier 2011 statement, it has not yet recognized the lack of legal protection as a cause for alarm and action, even though, under international law, member States bear the primary duty to protect everyone from discrimination and violence.

Failing to protect the human rights of SOGIE people and failing to prevent violence and discrimination not only violates international human rights law. It also results in people being excluded from employment and key political, civic and social spaces. It generates poor health and allows for hostility, expressed through verbal, physical, psychological and sexual abuse and violence against LGBT people. All of these also negatively impact decent work, economic growth and development progress in Vanuatu.

Lack of data

The second major challenge is a complete lack of data on SOGIE people in Vanuatu. The lived experiences of VPride members clearly show that their reality reflects that of SOGIE people globally. Ni-Vanuatu SOGIE people face discrimination and harassment in the workplace, at schools, hospitals and public spaces and during times of disaster. SOGIE people are at higher risk of violence and mistreatment when a disaster occurs, and during times of disaster their specific needs are not addressed, they are misgendered, they are expected to use bathrooms and sleeping spaces they do not identify with, and are excluded from receiving services and goods.

However, there are no data collected by the Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO) as part of any of the census or other data collection projects. There are also no other studies or data documenting SOGIE presence, patterns or issues. Looking at the UNDP inclusions indicators, for instance, not even basic data such as prevalence of LGBT, employment, income, education or health are available. Not having data presents a real threat because it makes SOGIE people invisible and obscures the very real problems they face. One example that illustrates this is that of abuse.

The Vanuatu data that do exist, and this includes the information shared in this booklet that is drawn from the lived experience of SOGIE diverse people, is drawn predominantly from males and transwomen. This highlights the lack of visibility and capacity building for lesbians and transmen in the country.

Violence and abuse

The Vanuatu *National Child's Protection Policy*[27] states that sexual abuse and incest are common, that is has been increasing, and that marginalised groups face a higher risk of abuse. The policy quotes a 2011 Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) survey, noting that "sexual abuse is a big problem in Vanuatu", that "children are most often abused by someone they know and trust" and that the

"taboo nature of the issue does not enable public discussion to be held, nor is information available[28]". This survey and others generally show that female children are most likely to be at risk for incest and sexual abuse, but there are no data collected or available on SOGIE children.

Most all of VPride members have experienced sexual abuse as children and the perpetrator of the abuse was often a family member. As children, none of the VPride members felt that they could safely report the abuse they experienced.

Those who have experienced sexual or physical abuse in their teenage and adult years have still been reluctant to report to the police. If they are victims of sexual abuse, they are more likely to speak with their peers about the abuse rather than seek counselling at service providers.

In addition to experiencing abuse at home, many reported being bullied and physically assaulted at school. One member recalled how she was beaten up by a group of students in front of a teacher who did not intervene. Although the *Inclusive Education Policy* prohibits the discrimination and protects the rights of children to access and complete their education, regardless of gender, religion, nationality, race, language or disability and prohibits the discrimination, there are no SOGIE provisions in this policy. The *Teaching Service Act* explicitly prohibits discrimination on sexual orientation, but it is not enforced systematically. VPride members reported not feeling supported or safe in schools, with many dropping out of school due to bullying and discrimination from students and teachers.

Further aggravating the problem is cyber harassment and bullying. This includes 'outing' other SOGIE people, memes that mock SOGIE people and sharing images that are sexually explicit. The posts are reported to Facebook administrators but have not been lodged to the police due to a lack of cyber law and cyber law enforcement in Vanuatu.

MY STORY

LGBT people in Vanuatu regularly experience homophobic and transphobic violence, including physical violence, social harassment, and cyber violence.

One sad example of this occurred in March 2020 when Edgen Norman, one of VPride's founding members was found dead by the side of the road, brutally raped and viciously beaten by a group of young men.

Most all VPride members report being raped, beaten and abused as children, and this abuse continues through youth and adulthood. They are beaten in public, often justified by reference to kastom and religion, and forced into marriage by their families, at the threat of violence.

Religion and kastom

Like many other Pacific Island nations, attitudes towards gender and gender diversity are heavily influenced by *kastom* and church. Both of these tend to support conservative and male-dominated values and policies, with little tolerance for diversity or non-conformity. Positions of leadership and decision-making are mostly filled by men, and currently, there are no female members of parliament. In the churches too, despite some progress towards women's involvement in decision-making in the church, they remain strongly male-dominated.

In some areas, attitudes do seem to be changing, but slowly and especially in response to community dialogue and discussions around human rights.

Interestingly, some note that traditionally, Vanuatu *kastom* in Vanuatu was more tolerant of diverse gender expressions, at least in the home: *"If the chief or uncle of the family recognises [someone is] different - they use the word 'special' - then, they'll do the opposite-sex chores. But not in a public arena - it's just something they do at home … It's not an issue when it comes to kastom but when it comes to church, that's another issue*[29]'

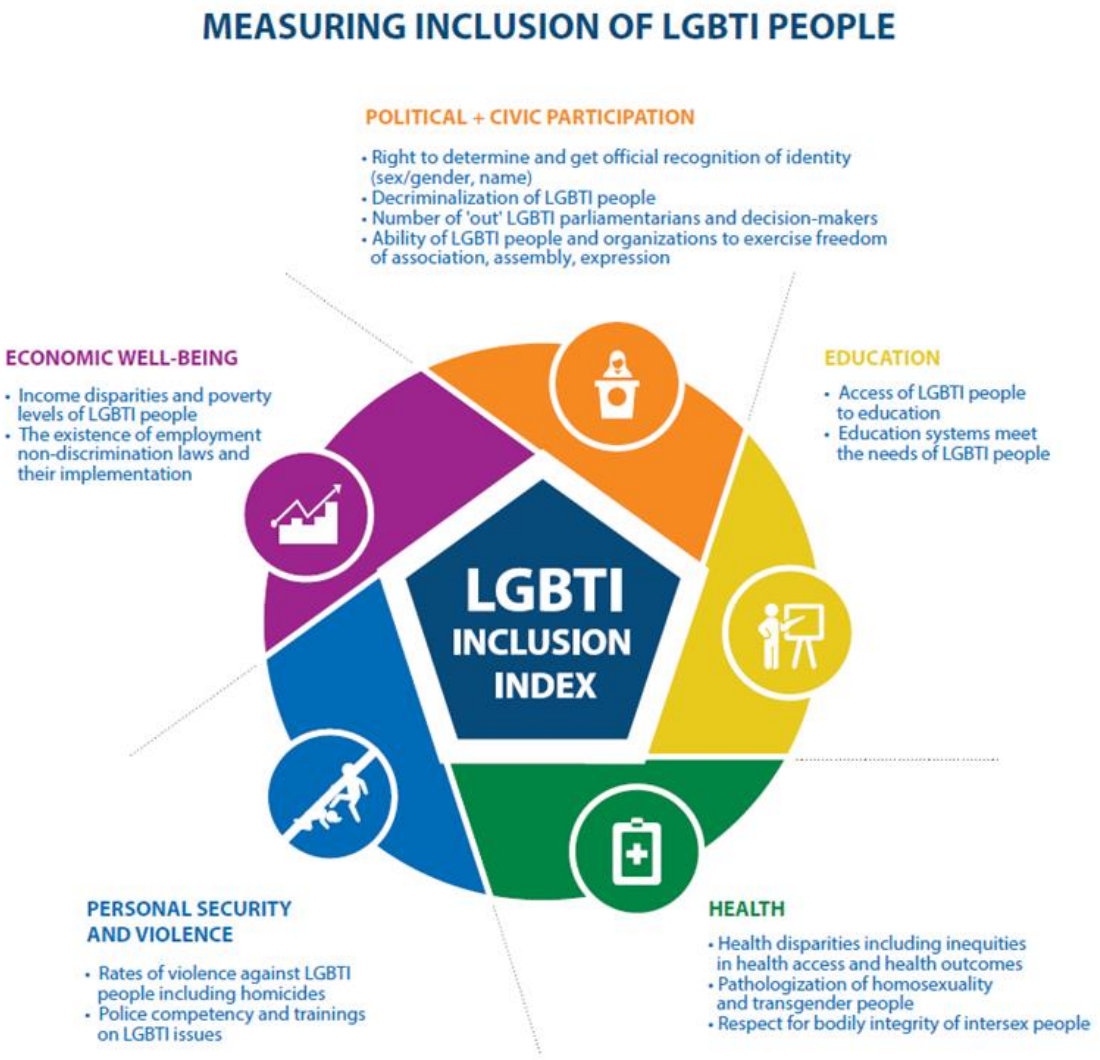
Religious conservatism is very strong, but more recently gender equality policies and trainings on the part of the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC) have made positive contributions. An Oxfam research report noted that VCC's Gender Coordinator stated that SOGIE people are accepted by the church as "part of the community, part of society"[30]

"In our church we have [a trans woman member], for example. Before - when [she] entered our church - everybody would be turning around, looking at [her], laughing and giggling. But [she] didn't stop coming to church. So now when [she] comes to church, [she] just walks past everybody and just sits where [she] wants to sit and everybody appreciates who it is. [She's] accepted here. We don't do all those kinds of things anymore, because we all know [she's] that kind of person and [she] chooses to be that kind of person, that's [her] right". T(#keel, p. 33)

4.2 The Meaning of Inclusion

UNDP defines inclusion as "access to opportunities and achievement of outcomes, as captured in human development indices…Thus inclusion means that every person has access to opportunities (including the capabilities to do and be as one chooses) and is able to make choices that lead to outcomes consistent with human dignity"[31]

The UNDP developed Inclusion Index and its subsequent indicators because, "(f)irst, the visibility of the stigma, violence, and discrimination against LGBT people has grown … (and) more data and research could increase the visibility of the challenges LGBT people face and improve the policies and programmes designed to better include LGBTI people in all aspects of life.



Second, a pledge of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, namely to "leave no one behind", makes questions of measurable inclusion high priorities.[32] The UNDP Inclusion Index summarized in the visual below identifies 5 priority areas, along with key factors to be addressed within each area:

4.3 The Importance of Allies

One of the difficult challenges of people who are different, in whatever way, is that they often feel alone are not represented, and are not heard. Having *allies* -people who support and advocate for them - can make all the difference in the world.

Allies are not part of the communities they help. An ally recognizes that even though they are not a member of the marginalized group they support; they can make a concerted effort to better understand the struggle. Anyone has the capability to be an ally and as the visual below shows, they can range from someone who just listens to someone who actively works to change the system.

Being an ally is not the same as being a friend or family member, even though friends and families can of course be allies. Being an ally means being willing to stand up, support and advocate. Often times, exactly because allies are from a different group, their voices are heard more, they have access to different spaces, and can use whatever power and privilege they have to influence others.

Being an ally is hard work. Saying that you are an ally is much easier than actually being a good ally. Like anyone else, you are affected by existing systems of power, discrimination and exclusion. Many of those who want to be allies are scared of stepping out, of speaking up, or of making mistakes that may make them look racist, sexist, transphobic, or homophobic. This simply means that as an ally, there is much to learn and to unlearn and mistakes will be made in the process.

> The first thing we need allies to do is listen. Come to us with a willingness to grow and evolve. You're going to make mistakes, and that's fine, but be willing to listen and grow from those mistakes. I think that's the most important trait an ally can have. – **SARAH MCBRIDE**

Some of the things that can build your capacity as an ally include:

- Be open to listening.
- Be aware of your assumptions and biases – do not impose your way seeing the world on others.
- Be open to learning. It is OK to ask questions but do at times, but do your own research and not expect to be taught or shown.
- Amplify the voices of those without your privilege – online and when physically present.
- Do not act as though you know best.
- Do not assume that every member of a marginalized group feels oppressed.
- Do the inner work to figure out how you yourself participate in oppressive systems.
- Do the outer work and figure out how to change the oppressive systems.

This booklet and the resources provided can offer a start to building allies, and developing knowledge, strength, courage and humility in the process.

5. SOGIE Members of Families and Communities

5.1 Issues and Challenges for Families and Communities

Families and communities play a crucial role in providing protection and support for the overall safety, health, and well-being of diverse SOGIE people. Research shows that SOGIE youth who have supportive families and communities have greater self-esteem and resilience and a lower risk of negative outcomes like depression, hopelessness and substance abuse. Conversely, lack of family and community support can negatively impact their overall social, emotional, and physical well-being[33].

The Family Acceptance Project notes that the age of coming out has decreased significantly since the 1970s, making it all the more important that families and communities can support and protect their children, noting that "(e)arlier ages of self-identifying as LGBTQ and greater awareness of sexual orientation and gender identity among adults and peers increase opportunities for positive development for LGBTQ young people but also increase the likelihood of rejection, victimization and abuse related to the young person's sexual orientation, gender identity and expression[34]".

Some of the major issues and challenges faced by SOGIE people in this area include:

- Being rejected, shunned, and evicted by their families and communities upon coming out as SOGIE diverse;
- Being emotionally, verbally, or physically abused by members of their families or communities;
- Being forced into traditional marriages, in spite of their SOGIE;
- Being excluded from family and community functions and relationships;
- Resulting increased risk of bullying, harassment, suicide, depression, isolation, HIV, STD, and substance abuse (see also visual below [35]

70.1%
of LGBTQ students report being verbally harassed.*

71%
of LGBTQ students report hearing homophobic remarks from teachers and/ or school staff because of their gender expression.*

53.3%
of LGBTQ students did not report experiences of bullying because they doubted an intervention.*

48.7%
of LGBTQ students have experienced cyberbullying.*

29%
of LGBTQ youth have experienced homelessness, been kicked out, or run away.^

86%
of LGBTQ youth said that recent politics have negatively impacted their well-being.^

5.2 Best Practices for Families and Communities

The process of "*coming out*" – meaning a person sharing their SOGIE identity – is often difficult, both for the person themselves and for their family. How a family reacts to their SOGIE child's coming out has a deep and lasting impact on their lives. Many parents may feel conflicted, worried and fearful, and are unsure on how they should react. The most important thing to remember is critical for the future of your child.

There are many ways for families to show their love and support, even if they disagree or if do not understand their sexual orientation or gender identity. If you feel conflicted, be honest about your feelings or concerns, but don't forget to tell your child you love them. If he, she or they know you love them, won't reject or abandon them, kick them out of the house or emotionally retreat from them, this will help you and your child stay connected.

Parents, caregivers and families can[36]:

- *Be supportive and affirming when their child comes out to you or discloses their identity***.**
  - Stay calm and focus on accepting and loving your child for who they are**.** Accepting them for who they are can help minimize shame and prevent low self-esteem. Don't forget that your child is still the same person.
  - If at all possible, let your child know that it takes courage and strength for them to come out and thank them for sharing this information with you and for keeping you involved in the process.
  - Learn everything you can and ask questions, especially about how you can help, and be sure to follow-through.
  - Try to understand what they feel and are experiencing. Even if you don't agree or understand, your child needs your love, support and validation in order to grow up healthy and happy.
  - Show respect. Support their self-expression, including clothing, jewelry, hairstyles, etc., and have conversations about it. Ask your SOGIE child or youth how they would like to be addressed and respect their wishes.
  - Ask your child before you "out" them. Let them tell you how they want to come out, who they want to come out to, and how they want you to share this information.
- *Avoid behavior that shows or feels like rejection, such as:*
  - Telling your child that their SOGIE identity is a phase they will grow out of.
  - Isolating your SOGIE child from family members and excluding them from family activities.
  - Verbally harassing your child because of their LGBTQ identity.
  - Blaming your child when they are discriminated against because of their LGBTQ identity.
  - Blocking your child's access to other SOGIE friends or SOGIE-friendly events.
  - Physically hurting your child because of their LGBTQ identity.
  - Telling your child that you are ashamed of them because of their LGBTQ identity.
  - Making your child keep their LGBTQ identity a secret and not letting them talk about it.

- *Stand up for your child*. If he, she or they are being bullied, take steps to deal with the bullying or social pressures they face. Additionally, make it known to others, including the extended family, that any jokes or slurs against SOGIE persons will not be tolerated.
- *Connect your child to SOGIE resources and groups.* In Vanuatu, connecting with VPride and other organisations that can provide SOGIE positive and safe spaces, role models, supportive allies and new friends protects your child from isolation and can help them to picture a happy, successful life.
- *Regularly check in*. Talk to your child regularly about their interests, friends, potential romances and any bullying or teasing they may experience. Welcome your child's SOGIE friends and parents to your home and family activities. This demonstrates that in you still love and support your child even if you may not support his/her lifestyle choices
- *Watch for signs*. Be on the lookout for signs of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and other issues with your child and any of your child's friends who may not have a strong support system.
- *Get help if you need it*. If you need support, someone to talk to or want to understand more about LGBTQ issues, don't be afraid to reach out. If possible, find a supportive faith community that welcomes your family and SOGIE child.

Communities can:

- *Provide support and learning opportunities for families:*
  - Every family will have their own dynamics and response after learning that their child has identified as diverse SOGIE. Families may need support to rebuild and strengthen their relationship with their child.
  - Families often need education and enhanced awareness - sharing a resource guide such as this booklet will be helpful.
  - Families who believe that a diverse SOGIE is wrong, can still support their child by modifying behaviors that might be perceived as rejection. They don't have to agree with the behavior, but they can still provide love and support to their child.
  - Families who reject their SOGIE child are sometimes motivated by a desire for their child to be accepted by others. Connecting them with other families or community members that have SOGIE experience can be helpful.
- *Provide a space and voice for SOGIE diverse families*
  - Create a safe and positive environment where families with SOGIE children and youth can share and reflect. These families often do not feel l like they have the chance to express their fears and anxieties about how others will view and treat their child, which makes offering a safe environment crucial to building understanding and confidence.
  - Use inclusive wording on forms and pictures to show different types of families.
  - Provide opportunities for SOGIE families to voice their concerns and make sure they are heard.
  - Recognize and acknowledge the contributions of the SOGIE community, showing and celebrating the accomplishments of current and historical LGBTQ figures by sharing and/or displaying them in church or community settings.
- *Ensure that your community is safe and inclusive for all*
  - As a community, you are responsible for the safety of everyone in the community.

- Be alert for any signs of bullying, harassment, or violence and be clear about not tolerating any of those.
- Make sure everyone in the community watches out for the safety of everyone else.
- Ensure that everyone in the community, regardless of their SOGIE, their disability, or anything else that makes them different is welcomed, respected, heard and included.
- Partner with local organisations such as VPride or a local school or church to host SOGIE awareness activities that are open to the community. Awareness initiatives can be modeled on examples such as National Bullying Prevention Month[37], Spirit Day[38], Day of Silence[39] or No Name Calling Week[40].

6. Workplace and SOGIE

6.1 Workplace Issues and Challenges

People of diverse SOGIE often face problems in the workplace, such as discrimination, exclusion, harassment, and stigma. They are often not considered for employment, or if they are hired, they face negative treatment from fellow employees, managers, or customers.

Needless to say, these problems are not only detrimental to those who face them. They are detrimental to the organisations themselves as they waste valuable labour resources and negatively affect productivity.

The good news is that worldwide, organisations have moved faster than governments in eliminating SOGIE related discrimination. Many large international companies like Vodafone, Citi and IBM, have realized the value and importance of their diverse SOGIE employees and have developed inclusive policies and supportive networks to make sure they feel safe and valued in their work[41].

Frequently cited benefits for doing so include: enhanced employee morale and satisfaction, organisational reputation for respect and inclusion, competitive advantage for attaching and retaining high quality employees, and a healthier workplace for all.[42]

> "Having consistently great workplaces boils down to not wasting human potential. As a global society, we all need to recognize that every person counts. That all people deserve and can have a great experience at work. And that when they do, there's a ripple effect—as those employees leave good days on the job to be better parents, community members, citizens."
>
> - *Ed Frauenheim, Director of Research and Content, Great Place to Work®*

In this context, it is important remember that an organisation recognises and respects local *kastom* and religious views, it is equally important that the organisation prevent inappropriate and harmful behavior, such as name-calling, harassment, discrimination and exclusion

6.2 Best Practices for Workplace SOGIE Diversity

Developing an organisational culture of inclusion requires a multi-pronged approach that incorporates workplace policy, leadership, behavior and assessment. Workplace diversity is about making sure that people of all different backgrounds can see themselves represented in the work environment, meaning that companies must hire and retain a diverse workforce that includes SOGIE employees.

However, diversity needs to go hand in hand with inclusion. Inclusion is about making sure that all employees see themselves are and feel protected and respected through organizational policy, leadership, behaviors and attitudes. Ultimately, inclusion is about creating a welcoming and

supportive environment where all employees are accepted for who they are and the value their unique perspectives and experiences bring to the workplace[43].

In developing policies, practices and training programs, organisations can and should call on local SOGIE organisations, such as VPride and their allies, who can assist usefully in the process.

The following are important *best practice steps* that organisations can take:

1. ***Assess your organisations current situation:***
    a. Examine if you currently hire and retain SOGIE employees and if so, at what level in the company
    b. Identify the issues and challenges currently faced by SOGIE diverse employees
    c. Review your company policies to ensure they are inclusive for all
    d. Review your company policies to ensure they explicitly prohibit discrimination and harassment of SOGIE and other diverse people
    e. Ensure that company leave policies and company health insurance policies include SOGIE diverse families and relations
2. ***Training and awareness:***
    a. Ensure that all employees receive comprehensive and effective anti-discrimination and harassment training; in addition to general awareness, such training must make clear what constitutes discrimination and harassment, how to avoid it, and the company policy against such behavior
    b. Ensure that the training includes gender, SOGIE, disabilities, and other groups
    c. Ensure that all employees are aware of existing policies and regularly receive refresher training
3. ***Respect and ensure privacy:***
    a. SOGIE information is private and should only be disclosed with permission from the employee and when necessary and relevant
4. ***Policy Enforcement:***
    a. Regularly review company practices to ensure anti-discrimination and harassment policies are enforced
    b. Ensure that employees have multiple points/people to lodge complaints with, e.g. supervisor, HR person, Equality/Inclusion Officer
    c. Ensure that any complaints are thoroughly investigated
    d. If there are issues or incidents, make sure that proper remedial, disciplinary and preventive actions are taken.
5. ***Support:***

If desired or appropriate, develop special *employee resource groups* to provide safe spaces, mutual support, and access to resources.

Sample inclusive policy statements include:

Our Organisation provides equal employment opportunity to everyone, without regard to age, disability, gender identity, national or island origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

Our Organisation does not tolerate any harassment of other employees, customers or suppliers, based on age, disability, gender identity, national or island origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

Any behavior that violates these policies is absolutely prohibited, regardless of the intention behind the behavior. Such behavior will be grounds for severe corrective action, up to and including dismissal. This includes but is not limited to any behavior, gestures, or speech that is hateful, threatening, abusive, violent, demeaning, or interfering with another employee, customer, contractor, or supplier, on or off-duty.

7. SOGIE Health Care

7.1 Issues and Challenges in Health Care

Gender inequality and human rights violations against the SOGIE community contributes to the rejection, avoidance or delay of the individual/ community's involvement in health programs or services such as the HIV program, starting from prevention, care and support, to treatment and impact mitigation. This contributes to the spreading of HIV as well as the mortality and morbidity rate that is essentially avoidable.

Because SOGIE diverse people are often discriminated against, ignored, mistreated, and/or stigmatized by health care providers and institutions, many avoid or delay medical attention. They may also receive inappropriate or inferior care, and treatments that are not tailored to their needs

SOGIE diverse people have the same basic health needs as anyone else and have the right to appropriate and proper care.

At the same time, they are a very diverse group of people and each group has unique health care needs. Male, female, transgender, and other genders have different health care needs, and thus require specific programs and services that are aware and sensitive of their different needs and are trained to meet these specific needs. Integrating SOGIE and the rights- based approach in HIV programs and services as well as SRHR programs will contribute to the quality of the services and the protection of both the SOGIE community and the community at large.

The right to health

The right to health is not to be understood as a right to be healthy.

The right to health contains both freedoms and entitlements. The freedoms include the right to control one's health and body, including sexual and reproductive freedom, and the right to be free from interference, such as the right to be free from torture, non-consensual medical treatment and experimentation.

By contrast, the entitlements include the right to a system of health protection which provides equality of opportunity for people to enjoy the highest attainable level of health.

(*Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,*

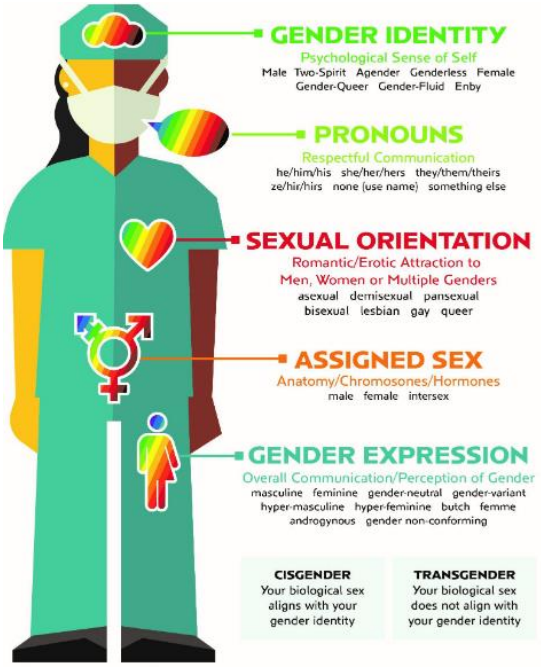
7.2 Best Practices in Providing SOGIE Health Care

Below is a summary of best practices in SOGIE health care[44]. Health practitioners are encouraged utilize these when treating SOGIE diverse patients.

Create an Inclusive and Welcoming Office Environment

- Health providers should create a welcoming and friendly environment for SOGIE patients.
- Health providers should be trained and educated on SOGIE terms, issues and needs.

- Health providers should understand that every person has their own sexual orientation *and* gender identity. A non-transgender person can be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, and a transgender person be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual (see also visual below[45]).
- Ensure that SOGIE patients are referred to competent providers when follow-up or specialist visits are necessary.
- Disseminate or visibly post a non-discrimination statement stating that care will be provided to all patients, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, physical ability or attributes, religion, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity/expression.
- Partners or significant others of SOGIE patients should be given the respect and access usually given to a spouse or relative.
- Include SOGIE specific media, signs and posters that include relevant information for LGBT patients in public areas, including local support resources and literature.
- Provide in-depth training for staff members on the health impacts of homophobia, SOGIE health concerns and providing culturally sensitive care for SOGIE patients.



Intake and Data Management

- Sexual orientation and gender identity are relevant to health care delivery, just like other demographic and personal characteristics. Providers should have data collection systems in place that capture sexual orientation and gender identity or expression information in electronic medical records
- Intake forms and interviews should collect useful information as possible, by giving options:
  - When asking about *relationships*, include options like "partnered" and partner
  - When asking about *name*s, include "preferred name" and "preferred pronoun"
  - When asking about *gender*, include options like gender at birth, gender identity, and transgender
  - If a patient discloses their sexual orientation or gender identity, this information is treated confidentially and with sensitivity and respect, only disclosed on a need-to-know basis
- Respect transgender patients by making sure all office staff – especially staff charged to process intakes - are trained to use a patient's preferred pronoun and name.

Patient Care

- As with all patient contacts, show empathy, open-mindedness, and do not render judgment.
- When talking about sexual or relationship partners, use gender-neutral language such as "partner(s)". Ask open-ended questions, and avoid making assumptions about the gender of a patient's partner(s), about sexual behavior(s), or about the patient's gender identity. Whenever possible, use the same language that a patient does to describe self, sexual partners, relationships, and identity.
- Try to get a *full information/diagnostic picture* of the patient:
  - Avoid the assumption that the patient's health issues revolve around sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or HIV/AIDS. Consider all possible diagnoses for a set of symptoms as you would with any other patient.

- Ask patients about a personal history of hate crimes, domestic violence or other forms of violence experienced, as victims of violence are at increased risk of post-traumatic stress disorder and other health problems, such as suicide, depression, and substance abuse.
- Be aware that SOGIE diverse people may need special tests, depending on their circumstances (for a detailed list, see [46] and [47] and [48])

Youth

- If a teenager or young person discloses their lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered identity to you, it is imperative that this information is treated with great sensitivity and respect.
- SOGIE youth are at increased risk for both suicide and abuse; pay special attention to the mental health of this patient.
- Ask about the patient's access to support. Isolation from peers and rejection by family are very real risk factors for some sexual minority youth.
- Do not assume that all young people are straight. Discussions of sexual activity and of safer sex methods should include information on safe sex with partners of either sex.

Lesbian Care

- If a female patient identifies as lesbian or bisexual, or identifies a female sexual partner, do not assume that she has never had a male sexual partner, has no children, has never been pregnant, or has little or no risk of STDs.
- All women need regular Pap tests, including lesbian and bisexual women. Many women who identify as lesbian have male sex partners or have had male sex partners in the past.
- Be aware that nulliparity is a risk factor for breast cancer, and that many lesbians are nulliparous. Lesbians also have higher rates of smoking and of obesity than heterosexual women and higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse, as well as higher rates of depression and anxiety.

Gay Care

- If a male patient identifies as gay or bisexual, or identifies a male sexual partner, do not assume that the patient has never had a female sexual partner or has no children, or has little or no risk of STDs.
- Remember that sexually active gay or bisexual men may need STD screening from the pharynx and rectum as well as genitals.
- Ask about previous Hepatitis A and B vaccination and/or infection. Vaccinate all sexually-active men who have sex with men with the Hepatitis A and B vaccines.

Transgender Care

- Recognize that not all transgender people have undergone trans-specific surgeries or hormone therapy treatment and this will determine the screening exams needed, such as prostate exams for trans woman or cervical or breast exams for some trans men. If medically relevant, respectfully ask the patient which surgeries, if any, he or she has undergone:
- Transgender men (female-to-male transsexuals) need Pap tests, unless they have had a complete hysterectomy. Never assume that a transgender patient has undergone trans-specific surgeries or treatments; always ask. They also need regular breast exams, as all breast tissue has generally not been removed even after chest reconstruction;

- Transgender women (male-to-female transsexuals) need prostate exams and regular breast exams if they are or have been receiving hormone therapy treatments.
- Transgender individuals receiving hormone therapy treatments should be monitored carefully by knowledgeable providers. Monitoring should include liver enzyme analysis as well as examination for common hormone therapy side effects, such as deep vein thrombosis. Transgender patients should be respectfully advised not to smoke if they are receiving hormone therapy treatments.
- Be aware that some transgender people may have received medical care, including hormones, surgery, or implants from non-traditional sources. While it is appropriate to respectfully warn such patients of any dangers associated with these practices or sources, providers should refrain from unnecessary assumptions, based on how they have received previous medical care.
- Avoid the assumption that a transgender person's health issues relate to their transition or associated treatments (such as hormone therapy treatment). Consider all possible diagnoses for a set of symptoms as you would any other patient. Do not advise transgender patients to cease hormone therapy treatments or other transgender medical treatment unless medically indicated.

Developing and implementing SOGIE best practices in health care is an important part of professional development and the end notes and resources contained in this booklet can be very helpful in the process. Effectively trained health care professionals are the key to ensuring that quality health care is delivered to all people, including SOGIE patients.

MY STORY

As a transwoman growing up, I had a goal of becoming a powerful fashionista lawyer with a wardrobe full of stylish dresses instead of the traditional boring black and white garb.

I dreamt of living with my man in a big house with a big swimming pool and to be the pride of my family and to be able to help people in my community. However, these dreams were dashed in school given the systemic bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence faced because of my gender identity as a transwoman.

The perpetrators were both students and teachers. I will never forget the 18th of April 2005 when a group of 45+ boys brutally attacked me in a boy's dormitory and gang beat me while a teacher watched and let them go on. Going to school after that was torture and I dropped out of school that same year. I was in Year 12. My dreams were dashed right there and then, gone with the wind.

The education system failed me. I am now working as a full- time volunteer for the VPride Foundation with irregular income and staying with my aunty.

This is my story and I am certain that there are many other untold similar stories of my LGBT sisters and brothers from the Pacific. The experiences that we LBT women go through makes our daily living in the community very difficult socially, emotionally, physically and ECONOMICALLY. Because we become victims of violence, stigma and discrimination, our self-esteem and self-confidence becomes dramatically low.

8. SOGIE Inclusive Education

8.1 Issues and challenges in Education

The Vanuatu People's plan aspires to an "inclusive, equitable and quality education system with life-long learning for all", ensuring that "*every child*, regardless of gender, location, educational needs or circumstances has access to the education system[49]. This includes SOGIE students, just like any other students.

It is important to note that the Vanuatu *Teaching Service Act 2013.* prohibits "sexual preference" discrimination. The *National Youth Authority Act* is the only bill in Vanuatu that recognizes persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity by affirming that "youth means any person aged between 12 to 30 years of age, including those with disabilities and of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity."

Vanuatu data on SOGIE students are not currently collected or available, so this section draws on global research and learning. Some of the key issues reported include[5051]:

- **Unsafe school climates**, including bullying, harassment, and violence, especially from peers:
  - 89.4% reported peer victimization
  - Most were unwilling or unable to advocate for their own protection
  - 59.5% of SOGIE students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and 44.6% felt unsafe because of their gender expression
- **Negative impact of unsafe school climates**: Students who experienced victimization at school were
  - 3 times more likely to have skipped school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable;
  - had demonstrated lower levels of academic achievement including lower GPAs;
  - had lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression
  - 60.4% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students nationwide felt so sad or helpless in schools that they stopped participating in usual activities
- **Inappropriate, insufficient sex education:** If sex education is provided in schools, SOGIE students are usually excluded from the curriculum. As a result, they are not taught relevant facts, affirming images, or appropriate health practices[52].
- **Effect of school drop out**
  - Reduced access to job opportunities
  - Limited access to affordable transport, finance and micro schemes
  - Limited access to health and to other education opportunities
  - Increased vulnerability to health risks including those resulting from sex work, unsafe sex, violence and rape
  - Limited access to sexual reproductive health and rights services

We know that "all students are most likely to reach their full educational potential in positive learning environments that are safe, secure, welcoming, and where they feel a sense of belonging**.** Fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness in school are crucial for putting all students on a path to success. Research demonstrates that an affirming school climate leads to improved behavioral, academic, and mental health outcomes for all students. Schools promoting SOGIE-inclusive and affirming learning environments have fewer student absences and greater improvements in academic achievement across class levels.

It is also important to remember that SOGIE-inclusive schools "benefit *all* students. Seeing SOGIE identities valued in the classroom, in the curriculum and in day-to-day interactions inspires empathy, understanding and respect. The overall school climate is safer. The lessons on history, literature and culture are more complete. And the dangerous expectations of performed gender roles—from the mask of suppressed emotional expression placed on boys to the unrealistic beauty standards facing girls—can give way to a culture that values all students"[53].

In order to ensure that school learning environments are supportive of all students, it is critical to implement specific policies and procedures that support SOGIE youth, affirm their identities, promote safe and healthy learning environments, and advance equity and respect for all [54]" Living Free and Equal notes that it is also essential to have inclusive curricula, training for teachers and staff, safe and inclusive environments, and accurate information about gender orientation, identity and expression[55].

8.2 Best practices for Education Professionals

The following are suggested best practices for education professionals to use whenever possible[56].[57]

Be clear about the school's commitment to a quality education for all.

This means the school's vision and mission statement must be welcoming and inclusive of all students, including SOGIE students. It also regularly assessing, strengthening, and monitoring school climate.

Ensure that school policies are clear, consistent, comprehensive and inclusive of all

Research shows that SOGIE students in schools with inclusive policies are less likely to experience harassment and more likely to advocate for themselves in the event that they do. Naming SOGIE identities within the policy is therefore paramount in promoting physical safety in your school.

An inclusive policy:

- Prohibits discrimination on gender orientation and identity in all areas, including admission, evaluation, dress code, discipline, and communication
- Includes gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation (actual or perceived) as protected, immutable identities, alongside nationality, race, religion, ethnicity, disability, etc.
- Lays out a clear expectation that all incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination will be investigated seriously.
- Lays out a clear expectation that staff will intervene to stop all forms of bullying and harassment, and will report incidents when they occur.
- Includes digital harassment within the scope of potential investigation and punishment, as SOGIE and other students often face the worst bullying from peers while online. Cyberbullying is a persistent threat that cannot be ignored by schools just because it occurs 'off school grounds.
- Makes it clear that students *and* educators will be held responsible for bullying behavior and protected from harassment.

Train teachers and staff

Schools need to effectively train teachers and staff to understand SOGIE concepts, SOGIE issues and SOGIE students' needs. Many teachers may not have been trained in this area, so ongoing professional development, support and resources are essential.

Schools need to ensure that teachers create inclusive learning environments in which all students, including SOGIE students, feel safe and welcome.

Make sure the curriculum and the school space are inclusive and safe

- If the school offers a sex or health education curriculum, ensure that SOGIE issues and needs are included and addressed in a positive manner and use the opportunity to educate non-SOGIE students
- Educate students and parents on SOGIE issues and needs
- Create a safe space for SOGIE students where they can feel protected and relaxed

Developing and implementing SOGIE best practices in education is an important part of professional development and the end notes and resources contained in this booklet can be very helpful in the process. Effectively trained education professionals are the key to ensuring that schools provide a positive and safe environment, that quality education is delivered to all students, and ensuring that all achieve their highest educational potential.

9. Justice and Safety for SOGIE People

9.1 Issues and challenges for SOGIE Justice and Safety

One of the goals of the Vanuatu People's Plan is "a *society where the rule of law is consistently upheld, and access to timely justice is available to everyone*" [58].

Living Free and Equal notes that the "United Nations and other human rights mechanisms have documented hate-motivated violence against LGBT and intersex people committed by police officers and other State officials, as well as by private individuals, organized groups, extremist organizations and other non-State actors.

Failure by State authorities to investigate and punish such violence – whether caused by State or non-State actors – is a breach of the State's obligation to protect everyone's right to life, liberty and security of person, as guaranteed by article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articles 6 and 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights"[59]..

To address this, the document calls for, among other things: leadership, strategic approach and participation; Public awareness campaigns; Training for law enforcement personnel; Measures to protect detainees from violence; and Measures to address education sector bullying.

Again, because there are no targeted SOGIE data collected in Vanuatu, it is difficult to assess the precise nature of the issues and challenges in the area of justice and safety. Global data along with data collected from personal interviews indicate, however, that SOGIE people regularly experience the following:

- Hostile attitudes from law enforcement officials
- Verbal and physical assault from officers
- Verbal and sexual harassment from officers
- Failure to recognize, properly record, and respond to SOGIE related crimes, including rape, harassment, abuse, and other forms of violence
- Failure to protect SOGIE people from danger
- Unjustified arrest and use of excessive force
- Lack of connections between law enforcement officials and the SOGIE community
- Lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of law enforcement of SOGIE terminology and needs
- Lack of trust between the SOGIE community and safety and justice officials

> "To challenge hate-based violence, the attitudes underlying such acts must be confronted. Statements made by officials and leaders condemning violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics can serve as a starting point for this. However, while welcome, such statements by themselves, if not accompanied by complementing measures, do little to stem the flow of violence experienced by LGBT and intersex people around the world. Combating such violence requires multifaceted responses, grounded in a national human rights-based strategy that engages a range of actors. Such a strategy should incorporate a framework for monitoring and preventing violence, adopting appropriate legislation that facilitates effective criminal law responses, including prompt investigation of the acts and prosecution of alleged perpetrators, and ensuring that victims receive support and remedy. Unfortunately, in many countries, these elements are absent; not only is there no such strategy, there is a lack of leadership in condemning and addressing violence. In some countries, the situation is worse; public leaders incite violence through hate speech, while criminalization of LGBT people tacitly encourages violence and deters victims from seeking justice".
>
> - *Living Free and Equal, p. 24*

9.2 Best Practices for SOGIE Safety and Justice

There are numerous resources available to support the development and implementation of safety and justice best practices in this area (see Section 8 Resources). Most of them recommend work in two areas: work internal to the safety and justice system, and external work[60].

Internal Work

1. Self-Review and Assessment

This involves taking an inventory of existing practices, including internal policies on SOGIE related training, data collection, and safety and justice policies and procedures. All of these need to be reviewed on bias, inclusion, and discrimination.

It is important that this review happen on a regular basis and that it is followed by action steps to ensure implementation and tracking.

Just as including women in the workforce greatly helps in providing gender appropriate and effective protection services, including SOGIE people in the workforce is also a very important steps to assist enhancing the quality of safety and justice services for all. Targeted recruitment and SOGIE appropriate workforce policies are important in accomplishing this.

A special note should be taken with regard to prisons, where SOGIE people, especially transgender people, are often at great risk and require special policies and protection. Again, there are many resources available for consultation and SOGIE communities and their allies can assist in reviewing and developing appropriate policies (for a good review, see [61])

2. Training

Mandatory and regular training of safety and justice officials is an essential requirement, both for the officers themselves and for those they serve. Such training should be provided for new recruits and for those already in service.

In terms of training, it is useful to connect with SOGIE organisations in the community, like VPride and their allies as they can provide valuable support for the training.

In designing and implementing the training, it is important to keep in mind:

- Thorough coverage of SOGIE related concepts and terminology
- Discussion of the lived experiences of SOGIE communities, including their experience with safety and justice professionals
- Respectful language and use of pronouns
- Thorough coverage of the safety and justice risks faced by SOGIE people on a daily basis
- Proper SOGIE inclusive intake and incident reporting methods, including how to respectfully collect comprehensive information
- Proper referral and support measures for SOGIE victims of crime and other incidents
- Building communication and connection skills to bridge barriers and differences
- Providing proper protection, including protection against domestic violence and assault
- Proper methods for taking SOGIE people into custody

- Providing proper protection for SOGIE people while in custody
- Training about HIV transmission and the realities of living with HIV today

3. Policies

Development of internal policies for law enforcement and prison officials, including:

- Development of non-discrimination policies
- Development of zero tolerance policies on harassment
- Reporting and discipline policies covering SOGIE harassment and violence
- Police policies and procedures for investigating sexual assaults experienced by members of SOGIE communities
- Policy and/or guidelines on policing and sex work in consultation with local community organizations, that understand the lived experiences of sex workers.

External Work

1. Community Outreach

- Develop SOGIE liaison persons and committees
- Establish regular communication and dialogue with SOGIE community
- Conduct outreach to Vanuatu communities to educate on SOGIE issues and needs
- Include SOGIE persons in community safety education and outreach
- Where possible, create and protect safe spaces for SOGIE people

2. Public Relations

- Be clear about law enforcement commitment to the safety and well-being of SOGIE people
- Publicly support and protect SOGIE events
- Include SOGIE people in key safety and justice events and publications
- During crime awareness publicity and education events, be sure to include SOGIE
- Consider developing an anti-SOGIE hate crime campaign that encourages members of communities to report hate-motivated violence to the police.
- Collect and publish data on SOGIE related crimes and incidents
- Support and amplify the voices of the SOGIE community in matters of safety and justice
- Proactively address issues related to SOGIE youth bullying in schools and community centres.

Appendix 1 Terminology

Language describing sexuality, gender identities, gender expression, and identities is constantly evolving. Additionally, terms and language may be used in varying ways across individuals, groups, and regions. These definitions are provided to help with general understanding of terms. Because language and identity are very personal and constantly changing, it remains best practice to allow individuals to self-identify rather than using the terms to assess the identity of others. The terminology is split into two sections, *Concepts* and *Identities.* Both are organised alphabetically.

Concepts

ALLY refers to someone who advocates and supports a community other than their own. Allies are not part of the communities they help.

EXPANSIVE, in an intersectional learning context, refers to covering a wide area in terms of the scope of identities; extensive and wide-ranging reflecting immediately the feeling and sense of openness and belongingness with recognition, communication, and dialogue. It differs from 'inclusive' which in meaning and implementation holds and maintains a power differential, whether or not intentionally set.

GENDER BINARY is the system of beliefs, structures, policies and practices that is based on the assumption that there are exactly/only two genders.

GENDER DYSPHORIA is the medical term to define a condition where one's emotional and psychological identity as male or female is felt to be different than one's biological sex. This dysphoria involves a conflict between a person's physical or assigned gender and the gender with which he/she/they identify. People with gender dysphoria may be very uncomfortable with the gender they were assigned, sometimes described as being uncomfortable with their body (particularly developments during puberty) or being uncomfortable with the expected roles of their assigned gender.

GENDER EXPRESSION/PRESENTATION refers to the way one expresses their gender identity. It is the physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Gender expression may show characteristics that are manly/masculine, womanly/feminine, it may be androgynous, showing neither masculine or feminine characteristics, or showing both simultaneously.

Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth. A transgender will normally express themselves according to their gender identity, not their biological sex

GENDER/GENDER IDENTITY refers to the individual identification of a person's gender, as defined by that person, and can differ from their sex assigned at birth. It is one's internal sense of being a "man or woman", neither of these, both, or other genders. Everyone has a gender identity, including no gender identity. For transgender people, their sex assigned at birth (male, female) and their gender identity are not necessarily the same.

HETERONORMATIVE/HETEROSEXISM reflects social structures and practices which serve to elevate and enforce heterosexuality while subordinating or suppressing other forms of sexuality. It defines a world view that assumes and/or promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation. It reflects a belief that everyone is and should be heterosexual/ straight. This includes prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory practices against people who identify as homosexual.

INTERSECTIONALITY refers to the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender, etc. as they apply to a given individual or group. This has presented as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage and more positive awareness of any given individual's or group's multi-faceted and informed experience.

LGBQ/GNCT refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer or Questioning/Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender. Though this acronym acknowledges that sexual orientation is separate from gender identity and expression, it still limits the many variations of sexual orientations that exist.

LGBTQI refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning and Intersex.

MSM (Men who have sex with men) is a technical term that emphasizes sexual intercourse between two men. This term is used in the medical world which only refers to sexual behavior, not gender identity or sexual orientation. An MSM could be a heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or transgender male.

SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH/BIOLOGICAL SEX is the assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex assigned at birth often based on physical anatomy at birth and/or genetic analysis.

SEXUAL FLUIDITY is the idea that sexual orientation/attraction can change over time, and depending on the situation at hand.

SEXUAL HEALTH According to the World Health Organization, sexual health is a state of complete physical, emotional, and social in relation to sexuality; not merely free from disease or dysfunction. Sexual health requires a positive approach to sexuality and sexual relations, including the possibility to have a sexual experience that is safe, pleasant, and free of coercion, discrimination, violence and threats. So that sexual health can be obtained and maintained, the sexual rights of all people must be respected, protected and fulfilled[62].

SEXUALITY According to WHO, sexuality is: "… the main aspects of being a human being in his/ her life, consisting of sex, gender identity and gender role, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed through various dimensions such as thoughts, fantasies, sexual arousal, beliefs, attitudes, values, behavior, intimacy, and reproduction. Sexuality is composed of all of the mentioned dimensions, but not all of these dimensions can be experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by interactions of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, and religious and spiritual factors[63]."

SEXUAL ORIENTATION/SEXUALITY is a person's physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic, and/or other form of attraction to others. The term *lesbian* describes a woman who is romantically, emotionally, and sexually attracted to other women. The term *gay* describes a man who is romantically, emotionally, and sexually attracted to other men, and the term *bisexual* describes an individual who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to both men and women.

SOGIE refers to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and describes a wider spectrum of all people, not only the LGBT community. It is now introduced in many legal and UN documents, and it is becoming popular in social media. Its usefulness lies in its inclusiveness. The term "LGBT" is specific to individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. SOGIE refers to characteristics common to all human beings. Everyone as a sexual orientation and everyone expresses their gender, not just individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

TRANSITION refers to a person's process of developing and assuming a gender expression to match their gender identity. Transition can include: coming out to one's family, friends, and/or co-workers; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) some form of surgery. It's best not to assume how one transitions as it is different for everyone.

Identities

AGENDER denotes 'without gender'. It is often used as an identification for people who do not identify with or conform to any gender.

ANDROGYNOUS is where gendered behaviors, presentations and roles include aspects of both masculinity and femininity. People of any gender identity or sexual orientation can be androgynous, but it is often favored by non-binary people as a means to externally express their gender identity. Androgyny can include dressing in way where one is unable to tell if they are male or female[64].

ASEXUAL is someone who experiences little or no sexual desire (but may desire nonsexual romantic connection).

BISEXUAL refers to individuals who are attracted to both men and women; sometimes used more broadly to refer to people who are attracted to others whose gender is like their own and to people whose gender is not like their own.

CISGENDER/CIS derives from a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side," as opposed to trans – which means "across." It is a term for someone who exclusively identifies as their sex assigned at birth – men who were assigned male at birth and women who were assigned female at birth. The term cisgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.

CROSS-DRESSING is the act of one dressing up as the gender that they do not normally find themselves living as. This is done to live out fantasies, for drag shows/parties, or for sexual excitement.

DEMIGENDER is a gender identity that involves feeling a partial, but not a full, connection to a particular gender identity or just to the concept of gender. Demi gender people often identify as non-binary.

GAY refers to people whose primary romantic/erotic attraction is to people of their same gender, i.e., men who are attracted to men, and women who are attracted to women.

GENDERFLUID is a gender identity which varies over time. A gender fluid person may at any time identify as male, female, agender, or any other non-binary identity, or some combination of identities. Their gender can also vary in response to different circumstances. Genderfluid people may also identify as multigender, non-binary and/or transgender. Genderfluid people may feel more comfortable using gender neutral pronouns and may have an androgynous gender expression. Being genderfluid has nothing to do with which set of genitalia one has, nor their sexual orientation.

GENDER-NEUTRAL is inclusive of all genders, as opposed to gender-specific. A "gender neutral" restroom is one that everybody can use. It is not only for "gender-neutral" people.

GENDER NON-BINARY is a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively male or female and are outside the gender binary.

GENDER NON-CONFORMING is a gender expression that does not conform with societal expectations and gender norms. These expectations vary across cultures and have changed over time.

GENDERQUEER is most commonly used to describe a person who feels that their gender identity does not fit into the socially constructed "norms" associated with their sex assigned at birth/biological sex. Genderqueer is an identity that falls anywhere between or outside man/boy/male and woman/ girl/female on the spectrum of gender identities.

HOMOPHOBIA is the irrational fear of homosexual feelings, thoughts, and behavior (or person) which leads to bias, accusations, and discrimination against homosexuals. Whereas transphobia is the irrational fear of transgender or of those who do not fit traditional binary gender norms.

In many cultures, homophobia and transphobia is so strong that homosexuals and transgender experience internalized stigma, which is when a homosexual or transgender internalizes the hatred, anger, and shame towards themselves.

INTERSEX is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a mix of or variation of male and female reproductive and/or sexual anatomy. It replaces the antiquated, stigmatized and misleading term “hermaphrodite

LESBIAN describes women whose primary romantic and erotic attraction is to women.

PANSEXUAL refers to being open with attraction to members of all sexual orientations and or gender identities including heterosexual/straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, etc.

QUEER is an umbrella term describing a wide range of people who do not conform to heterosexual/ straight and/or gender norms. It is a reclaimed derogatory slur taken as a political term to unite people who are marginalized because of their non-conformance to dominant gender identities and/or heterosexuality. It is sometimes used as a shortcut for LGBT while at other times used to distinguish politically queer people from more mainstream LGBT people. Because of its origin as a derogatory slur, it should be used thoughtfully, especially for public communication and if you yourself are not queer.

TRANS is anyone whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs significantly from what is expected of them in their culture based on their sex assigned at birth. This broad category includes transgender, transsexual and genderqueer people, crossdressers, drag queens and kings, masculine women and feminine men, and more. The term is so broad because it enables us to talk about issues facing the whole range of trans people.

TRANS FEMALE (or transgender woman, transwoman, or transsexual woman) is someone assigned male at birth who now identifies and lives as a woman.

TRANS MALE (or transgender man, transman or transsexual man) is someone assigned female at birth who now identifies and lives as a man.

TRANSGENDER refers specifically to people who have an experience of transitioning (socially and/or medically) from living as one gender to living as another gender. Transgender should almost always be used as an adjective. As a noun (e.g., “she’s a transgender”), it sounds disrespectful to many people, or as a past-tense verb (“transgendered”), it does not make sense.

TRANSSEXUAL is a historical original term that is often considered pejorative similar to transgender in that it indicates a difference between one’s gender identity and sex assigned at birth. Transsexual often, though not always, implicated hormonal/surgical transition. Unlike transgender/ trans, transsexual is not an umbrella term, as many transgender people do not identify as transsexual. When speaking/ writing about trans people, please avoid transsexual unless asked to use it by a transsexual person.

TWO-SPIRIT is a gender identity specific to Native American culture. If someone is two-spirited, their body simultaneously houses both a masculine spirit and a feminine spirit. They may fulfill both gender roles describing a range of gender and sexual orientation categories from cultural traditions, both historical and current.

Appendix 2 Resources

1. General Resources

Advancing the human rights and inclusion of LGBTI people: A handbook for parliamentarians https://hivlawcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/rbap-2017-parliamentarians-handbook-lgbti-inclusion.pdf

International Human Rights Law and Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/International-Human-Rights-Law.pdf LGBT Inclusion Index https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hiv-aids/lgbti-index.html

Living free and equal https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/LivingFreeAndEqual.pdf

The role of the United Nations in combatting discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/LGBT/UN_LGBTI_summary_2019.pdf

2. SOGIE related Organizations and Initiatives

- Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health or APCOM (http://www.apcom.org)
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association or ILGA http://ilga.org including ILGA ASIA (http://ilga.org/network/ilga-asia/)
- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia http://dayagainsthomophobia.org
- International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission or IGLHRC www.ilghrc.org
- ISEAN http://isean.asia
- The Asia and Pacific Transgender Network or APTN www.weareaptn.org

3. Family and Community Resources

Family Project https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/ and https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/FAP_pst.pdf

Family Education Best Practices https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/family-education-booklet

GSA Network Supporting LGBTQ Youth through Family Engagement https://gsanetwork.org/resources/supporting-lgbtq-youth-through-family-engagement/

4. Resources for the Workplace

Diversity Best Practices. LGBTQ Inclusive Practices https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/sites/diversitybestpractices.com/files/attachments/2019/04/lgbtq_inclusive_policies_practices_0.pdf

Beyond Diversity: An LGBT Best Practice Guide for Employers https://prideatwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Beyond-Diversity-LGBT-Guide.pdf

Best Practices for Building an LGBT-Inclusive Workplace https://www.littler.com/files/Best_Practices_for_Building_a_LGBT-Inclusive_Workplace.pdf

5. Health resources and articles

Best Practices in LGBT Care: A Guide for Primary Physicians https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304748627_Best_practices_in_LGBT_care_A_guide_for_primary_care_physicians

Improving the health care of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people: Understanding and Eliminating Health Disparitieshttps://www.lgbtqiahealtheducation.org/wp-content/uploads/Improving-the-Health-of-LGBT-People.pdf

Recommended Best Practices for Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Patients https://lgbtq.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/glbt/publication/attachments/BestPracticeMedicalProviders.pdf

SOGIE https://www.dolanassoc.com/single-post/2019/10/27/SOGIE---Sexual-Orientation-Gender-Identity-and-Gender-Expression

Top Health Issues for LGBT Populations Information & Resource Kit https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma12-4684.pdf

6. Education resources and articles

Being LGBT in School https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/publications/being-lgbt-in-school.htm

Creating Safe Space for GLBTQ Youth: A Toolkit https://advocatesforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/storage/advfy/documents/safespace.pdf

New LGBTQ Best Practices Guide https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2018/tts-new-lgbtq-best-practices-guide

Respect for All Policy Recommendations to Support LGBTQ Students https://www.glsen.org/activity/respect-all-policy-recommendations-support-lgbtq-students

School-related violence and bullying on the basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity or Expression (SOGIE) - Synthesis Report on China, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/school-related-violence-and-bullying-basis-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-or

SOGI 123 https://www.sogieducation.org/

SOGI inclusive classroom checklist https://www.sogieducation.org/all-educators-posts/sogi-inclusive-classroom-checklist-in-action

SOGIE Training Manual https://www.apcom.org/storage/2017/02/SOGIE-Training-Manual_EN.pdf

7. Safety and Justice resources

African LGBTQI activists trained on safety and security. https://outrightinternational.org/content/african-lgbtiq-activists-trained-safety-and-security

Best Practices of Law Enforcement in Working with LGBTQ Victims (Webinar)https://forge-forward.org/event/best-practices-of-law-enforcement-lgbtq-victims/

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