

# PacificMUN

Dare to Speak



UN Woman-Topic B  
Backgrounder Guide



## Right of LGBTQ Woman - UN Women

Topic B



# PacificMUN



### Letter from the Director

Dear delegates,

My name is Stephanie Chang and it is with utmost pleasure that I welcome you to The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN Women, in this iteration of PacificMUN 2019. I will be serving as your Director for the weekend alongside Margaret Yan and Eric Berzin, your respective Chairs. Currently, I am a Grade 11 student at Richmond Christian School and entering my third year of Model United Nations, having fostered a passion for global affairs ever since I first attended PacificMUN in 2017.

The first topic on our committee's agenda is the Political Influence of Women. As delegates, you will discuss the ability of women to enact change in global and local political spheres, emphasizing the importance (or lack thereof depending on your country's foreign policy) of women with varying backgrounds maintaining active stances in diplomacy. What happens when only men are tasked with creating policies that impact women, and why are equal-gendered governments so significant?

The second topic will focus on the Rights of LGBTQ Women. This subject should highlight the presence of female-identifying members of the LGBTQ community within a broad scope, considering not only Western perspectives, but universal attitudes that reflect the globe today. As both topics cover sensitive material, it is expected you remain mindful in researching solutions.

I truly believe that whether you are experiencing MUN for the first time or nearing the end of your Model UN career, PacificMUN 2019 will challenge you to think critically about international relations and allow you to forge long-lasting friendships. Personally, participating in Model UN has not only challenged me



to think beyond the scope of my own community, but educate myself on various issues that persist around the world. I hope that you will take this opportunity as a chance to step out of your comfort zone, no matter how intimidating the act of standing on the podium may seem.

If you have any questions regarding research, position papers, or this committee in general, please reach out at [unwomen@pacificmun.org](mailto:unwomen@pacificmun.org). Margaret, Eric, and myself are more than happy to assist you with any concerns in hopes that you will gain the confidence to actively speak out within committee discussions.

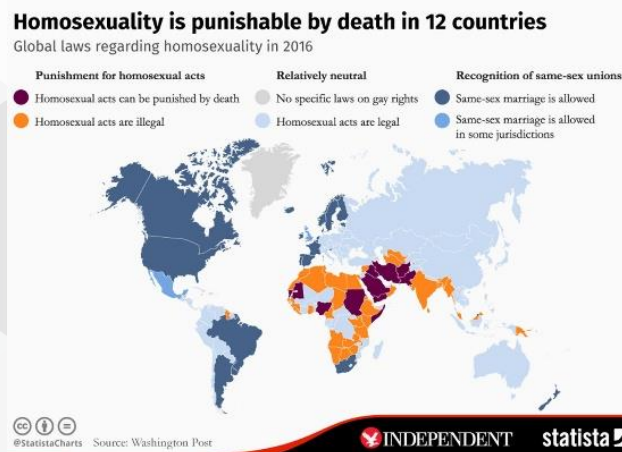
Please keep in mind that submitting a position paper is necessary to be considered for an award. While papers for this committee are optional, it is highly encouraged that you submit one as delegates who refrain from doing so are ineligible for awards. Any inquiries regarding position papers can be directed to the email above, with extensions permitted on a case-by-case basis. I wish you the best of luck in preparing for the conference and look forward to meeting all of you!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Chang  
Director of UN Women  
PacificMUN 2019

## Topic B: Rights of LGBTQ Women

### Introduction



*A map detailing the legal stances of all nations in relation to homosexual laws and rights available to same-sex couples.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/gay-lesbian-bisexual-relationships-illegal-in-74-countries-a7033666.html>

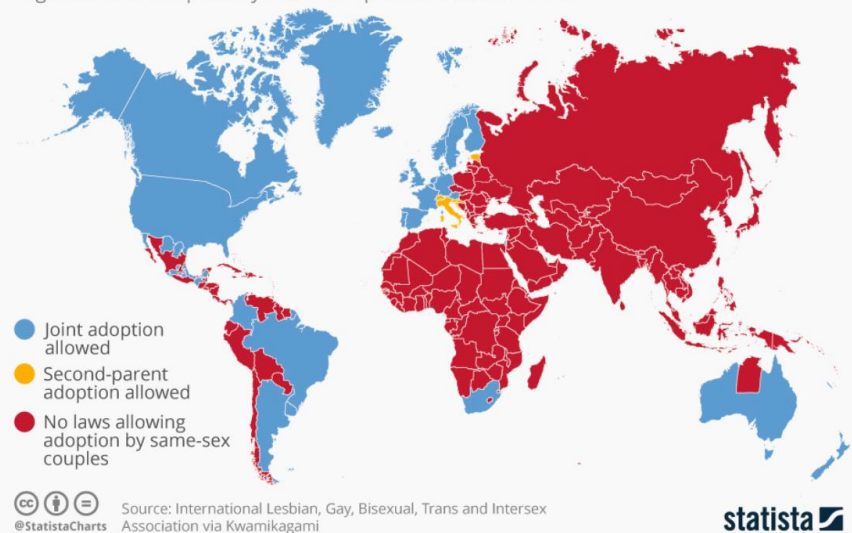


In the status quo, LGBTQ rights are heavily scrutinized by the international community and identifying individuals are violated on a daily basis. Despite progressive action in several Western liberal democracies and a handful of states overseas, including Taiwan, New Zealand, South Africa, and Argentina, non-heterosexual populations are at risk for punishments as serious as the death penalty in other nations. This is especially prevalent for LGBTQ women, who tend to experience sexism and homophobia, transphobia, or biphobia in conjunction with one another. Currently, the world is seeing discrepancies in laws on a spectrum: while some nations outright ban LGBTQ relationships, others permit them to a certain degree or in the absence of marriage.

Even in countries like the United States of America, LGBTQ women are significantly more at risk for poverty than cisgender women.<sup>2</sup> This means that 53% of either bisexual or lesbian women live below the poverty line compared to 21% of non-LGBTQ women. The vulnerability of these women escalates if they identify as a person of color, in which African American and Latina same-sex couples experience low or a lack of income to a greater degree than heterosexual couples.

### Where Adoption Is Illegal For LGBT+ Couples

Legal status of adoption by LGBT+ couples worldwide in 2018



*A map depicting the legality of same-sex parental adoption of children across the world.<sup>3</sup>*

The stigma that LGBTQ women are confronted with extends to harms that threaten familial security entirely. In 2017, only 26 nations permitted the joint-adoption of children by same-sex couples, with the majority of Asian, African, and Eastern European nations prohibiting this act. Other issues that LGBTQ individuals and partnerships may find include healthcare insurance exclusion for transgender people,

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/press/release/2015/03/13/108650/release-lgbt-women-are-among-most-at-risk-of-poverty-in-america/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.statista.com/chart/13179/where-adoption-is-illegal-for-lgbt-couples/>



workplace discrimination, harassment, and gaining access to public services typically reserved for heterosexual individuals with the same economic struggles.

In the developing world, women are still expected to conform to traditional gender roles and lack basic human rights, even disregarding LGBTQ identities. The struggle to obtain equal rights and social empowerment requires not only legislation of marriage, gender reassignment surgery, etc. but mutual, cultural acceptance for LGBTQ women to live safe lives that aren't threatened by perpetrators of violence. Additionally, this is true for developed nations as well, in the cases of transgender women in particular. Gaining the right to alter birth certificates for reassigned genders does not provide the same support as making domestic violence shelters more accessible for the transgender women who frequently experience more sexual and domestic abuse compared to heterosexual women.<sup>4</sup>

## Timeline

**2,900-2,500 BCE** - A biologically male body was uncovered by archaeologists in Prague, Czechoslovakia. It was found to be buried in clothes traditionally associated with women's burials during the time. There is speculation of the individual being the first transgender woman, or that they identified with a gender outside the binary spectrum.<sup>5</sup>

**1951** - The first transgender woman, Roberta Cowell, receives a gender reassignment through surgical procedures in the United Kingdom. Her birth certificate is altered accordingly.<sup>6</sup>

**1939** - *Diana: A Strange Autobiography* is written by a woman who went by the name of Diana Fredericks and details the author's lesbian identity, being cited as one of the first works of LGBTQ literature to present an optimistic ending wherein two women live alongside each other as a couple. The autobiography was published by Frances V. Rummell who emphasized the importance of the work as a real story.

**September 1955** - The Daughters of Bilitis or DOB is founded as the first lesbian rights organization, operating in San Francisco, California within the USA. Members organized private social events to escape potential threats, including police.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/21/trans-women-rape-domestic-violence-dangers>

<sup>5</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20140204003857/http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.ca/2011/04/grave-of-stone-age-transsexual.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/key-dates-lesbian-gay-bi-and-trans-equality>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/19/us/lgbt-rights-milestones-fast-facts/index.html>



**1963** - In the UK, the Minorities Research Group is recognized as the first sociopolitical society for lesbian women. The society later publishes *Arena Three*, an original magazine catered towards lesbian audiences.<sup>8</sup>

**December 2013** - Uganda passes the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which strengthens current punishments for gay individuals such as receiving seven years in prison if found to be in a non-heterosexual relationship. Acts of consensual sex and promoting LGBTQ rights are also deemed punishable offences by the Bill.<sup>9</sup>

**June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015** - The United States Supreme Court declares gay marriage as a legal right across the country, prohibiting all states with bans in effect to lift them.<sup>10</sup>

**June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016** - 49 individuals are killed and 53 injured by a mass shooting at Pulse, a gay nightclub, in Orlando, Florida. Several women of whom were allies, family, or regular attendees were also on the victim list.<sup>11</sup>

**November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017** - In a nationwide poll, 62% of Australians voted to legalize gay marriage. Noting this, the Prime Minister planned to draft documents for parliament approval in the near future.<sup>12</sup>

**May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018** - Two women in Beijing, China were physically assaulted by security guards while donning rainbow, pro-LGBTQ badges and attempting to enter the city's art district, 798 Art Zone. An LGBTQ activist had been distributing these badges in anticipation of May 17<sup>th</sup>, which marked the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia.<sup>13</sup>

## Historical Analysis

The origins of homosexuality date back to Ancient Greece, where same-sex relationships were largely unhealthy and reserved primarily for married men. Before and during marriages, men could purchase enslaved younger males for acts of sexual pleasure, despite loyalty to their wives. This was often perpetuated in exchange for the older man providing the younger with educational resources in order to gain high social standing.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bl.uk/lgbtq-histories/articles/arena-three-britains-first-lesbian-magazine>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/lgbti-lgbt-gay-human-rights-law-africa-uganda-kenya-nigeria-cameroon>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33290341>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2016/06/12/us/orlando-nightclub-shooting/index.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://globalnews.ca/news/3860802/australia-votes-yes-to-gay-marriage/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://medium.com/shanghaiist/two-women-beaten-by-security-guards-in-beijings-798-art-district-for-wearing-rainbow-badges-668c8c16201>



As for early records of transgender individuals, cults in Ancient Assyria possessed biologically male prostitutes that would wear female clothing and pretend to conceive. Later, in the Roman Republic, another cult of former men underwent castration and adopted feminine selves, wearing women's clothing and identifying as women correspondingly.

During the 1920s, the city of Berlin, Germany was deemed a progressive hub for the LGBT minority. Over a hundred gay and lesbian social and culinary establishments existed, promoting both daytime and nightlife presence. Neighboring cities followed suit with Florence, Italy maintaining an active gay district and Paris, France boasting areas known specifically for transgender events during the evening.<sup>14</sup>

Rising social movements for LGBT rights began to emerge, with movie productions featuring gay characters portrayed in supportive light. Businesses and print magazines pandered to LGBT readers when their emergence was understood as a means to profit. Allies and members of the LGBT community also began to rally together and oppose poor and stereotyped representations of LGBT persons in film or other media.

As scientists and doctors supported the movement due to recognizing LGBT traits as inherently normal, the Institute for Sexual Research was founded in 1919. LGBT individuals could seek guidance and access resources regarding gender reassignment or other practices to meet their needs. Lili Elbe, the first transgender woman and a Danish painter, received consultations from the Institute's lead doctor before undergoing successful surgery.

The movement in Germany continued to gain traction with the addition of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, which aligned scholars and members of the LGBT community in advocating for their basic human rights. However, backlash was inevitable with the introduction of the Great Depression, where fascism rose in societal circles during the 1930s. Adolf Hitler's ascent to power allowed an anti-LGBT section of the Gestapo, the Nazi secret police, to be established for the arrest of more than 8,500 homosexual men in 1935. The second World War soon led to the onslaught of LGBT individuals, where they were either imprisoned or sent to concentration camps.

For generations, LGBTQ women would not hold the legal rights to practice romantic relationships in the same way as heterosexual women. Women lacked presence compared to LGBTQ men who were popularized earlier on due to fetishization and prostitution. Additionally, women who identified with the movement typically faced even harsher discrimination and consequences than male counterparts, as women's rights failed to emerge until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This meant that while women were still fighting for women's rights, the battle for LGBTQ acceptance combined the efforts of men, women, and gender

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<sup>14</sup> <https://theconversation.com/how-the-nazis-destroyed-the-first-gay-rights-movement-80354>



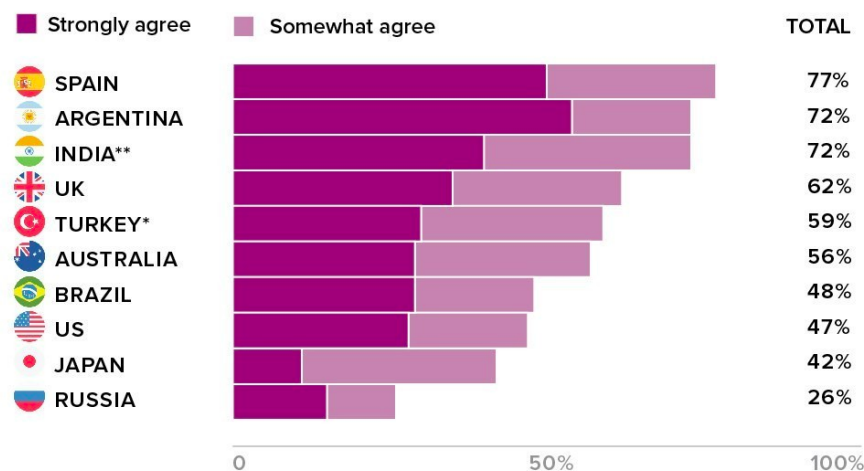
non-conforming individuals by the modern era. Organized societies worked in the underground to host events and private meetings for LGBTQ individuals to avoid contact with law enforcement.

Media and printed publications existed by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century for both LGBTQ audiences in general and specific groups, such as gay men. The most notable example is *Arena Three*, dubbed the first “lesbian magazine” in the UK that sought to build a community for lesbian women through quality content. In an interview with Diana Chapman, an original member of the journal, she rejected the notion that society would only value lesbians for pornographic appeal and instead believed in achieving equal rights as ordinary citizens.

The presence of LGBTQ representation in any positive light was typically met with disapproval from religions that taught against homosexuality and identifying outside of biological sex. These include forms of Christianity, Catholicism, Judaism, Mormonism, and Islam. While modern followers of these religions may be more open-minded individually, Christian scholars have largely held consistent historical opposition to growing LGBTQ trends in the West, many promoting anti-LGBTQ agendas in schools, government bodies, and certain occupations to this day.

## Current Situation

### Transgender people “should be allowed to use the restroom of the sex they identify with.”



BuzzFeed NEWS

Ipsos

The Williams Institute  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

*A chart depicting surveyed citizens in above nations on whether transgender persons should use the bathroom corresponding to their identified gender.<sup>15</sup>*

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/transgender-rights-how-supportive-is-your-country/>





While significant progress has been made to safeguard the rights of LGBTQ women, laws are incapable of addressing societal concerns directed towards non-heterosexual persons. Many nations still prohibit the expression of transgenderism or homosexuality, with the death penalty present in eight countries.<sup>16</sup> The issues that persist in the developed and developing world remain largely distinct; however, they can also overlap when considering the presence of backwards ideologies.

### ***Lack of Human Rights***

In nations where identifying as LGBTQ can indicate a prison or even death sentence, women specifically are vulnerable due to strict enforcement of gender roles and lack of women's rights. Certain parts of the Middle East and Asia may possess local cultures that emphasize the importance of a woman's job as a mother, often denying her of access to education or autonomy in choosing a career. For LGBTQ women in these circumstances, coming out or attempting to connect with a community could be life-threatening. Laws that are necessary to ensuring an LGBTQ woman's quality of life are absent entirely for intolerant nations. Workplace discrimination runs rampant on the basis of a woman identifying as LGBTQ and being female, too. Employers in developing or less socially-progressive countries may prefer male employees due to sexist biases, discriminating against or choosing to not hire LGBTQ persons. Furthermore, when the right to safety and free expression cannot be guaranteed, it is difficult to organize and form groups that can advocate for equal rights.

Decriminalizing homosexuality and transgenderism is the international community's main priority in addressing legal implications. Without the ability to voice opinions and demand change, progress for LGBTQ women in oppressive situations remains stagnant. The criminalization of LGBTQ persons also raises concerns for education, sexual health, and representation, as identifying individuals will not have legal access to resources. This includes leaving abusive partners or fleeing violence, which can be challenging enough for cisgender women.

### ***Social Stigma***

As religion and traditional, cultural belief systems play integral parts in forming society's perspectives, addressing social stigma is key to the safety of LGBTQ women. Currently, rural locations in Africa and urban areas in the Middle East deem the concept of LGBTQ identities as abominations, or unnatural occurrences. Western liberal democracies, on the other hand, possess vocal opposition to normalizing LGBTQ persons in mainstream society. This stigma has fueled an onslaught of hate crimes and attacks, targeting transgender and openly gay persons especially. In the United States of America, 28 transgender individuals were identified in 2017 after being killed for reasons under unjust hatred. Approximately 16 killings have been noted in 2018 as of now.<sup>17</sup> Not only is this social stigma deadly, but

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/27/gay-relationships-still-criminalised-countries-report>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2018>



the disproportionate rate at which transgender people of color are affected is shocking. Intolerance leads to these people lacking access to employment, housing, and health services that put them at risk for homelessness or inescapable poverty.

### ***Poor Mental Health***

Lack of social awareness and fear directed towards the LGBTQ community typically manifests into bullying and abuse, aimed to deny an individual's gender or sexual orientation. Recently, in the United States, a nine-year old boy committed suicide after coming out as gay and expressing his identity towards family and schoolmates.<sup>18</sup> The same article goes on to explain that while men statistically commit suicide at a higher rate than women, women account for the majority of attempts. The impacts of homophobia and transphobia vary drastically across regions; however, the resulting blows to one's mental health are undeniable. Other possible outcomes including depression, anxiety, and eating disorders can be triggered by low self-esteem, which is typical of youth who do not receive support for their identities, either from peers or family. The National Alliance on Mental Illness states: "LGBTQ individuals are almost 3 times more likely than others to experience a mental health condition such as major depression or generalized anxiety disorder. This fear of coming out and being discriminated against for sexual orientation and gender identities, can lead to depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, thoughts of suicide and substance abuse."<sup>19</sup>

### ***Intersectional Conflicts***

Many LGBTQ women possess identities that fit in a broad range of labels. An LGBTQ woman of color typically experiences life differently from a Caucasian LGBTQ male in an area with similar belief systems. It is important to consider that issues to address intersect and are contingent on one another. Problems plaguing low-income neighborhoods and affecting LGBTQ individuals may affect certain ethnicities more harshly, for example. Violence may also be more prevalent for less economically stable LGBTQ women of color, or substance abuse depending on ease of access. LGBTQ individuals exist in a wide spectrum of backgrounds, and addressing their human rights would also mean finding solutions to race-based issues.

For youth being bullied for reasons other than their gender or sexuality, exposing more of their identity could harm them exponentially. Intersectional conflicts are significant factors in determining a nation's tolerance towards the LGBTQ population, and differs across countries with varying demographics. The sexism aimed at women account for much of this overlap already and social barriers like the glass ceiling can prove even more challenging to overcome for women whose identities may have been historically oppressed for other reasons.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/28/health/preteen-suicide-jamel-myles/index.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/LGBTQ>



# United Nations Involvement

## **2011 Annual Report – The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011, this report was provided to the Human Rights Council detailing the discrimination faced by LGBTQ individuals through laws and harmful practices. The document outlines the human rights abuses towards the LGBTQ community worldwide and is the first United Nations report to officially establish the UN's stance on the movement.<sup>20</sup>

In the introduction, the report reads:

“1. In all regions, people experience violence and discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In many cases, even the perception of homosexuality or transgender identity puts people at risk. Violations include – but are not limited to – killings, rape and physical attacks, torture, arbitrary detention, the denial of rights to assembly, expression and information, and discrimination in employment, health and education. United Nations mechanisms, including human rights treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, have documented such violations for close to two decades.

2. The Secretary-General expressed his concern in a speech on Human Rights Day 2010, when he stated:

As men and women of conscience, we reject discrimination in general, and in particular discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity ... Where there is a tension between cultural attitudes and universal human rights, rights must carry the day. Together, we seek the repeal of laws that criminalize homosexuality, that permit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, that encourage violence.”<sup>21</sup>

Additionally, the report provides a list of responses and solutions nations can take to combat the growing violence against LGBTQ individuals, especially women, who are more likely to experience forms of sexual degradation and public harassment:

“...There are many examples of public information campaigns, sometimes developed with State support, designed to address societal prejudice. In Brazil, the Government has supported a public education campaign implemented under the slogan “Brazil without Homophobia”. Similar

<sup>20</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/12/398432-un-issues-first-report-human-rights-gay-and-lesbian-people>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/19session/A.HRC.19.41\\_English.pdf](https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/19session/A.HRC.19.41_English.pdf)



initiatives, often led by civil society, have been launched in countries in all regions. Celebrities have played an important role as message-carriers in such campaigns.”<sup>22</sup>

### ***United Nations Free and Equal***

A public campaign was created by the United Nations in July 2013 for the purpose of educating the world through social media, video messages, and events in order to advocate for LGBTQ rights. The campaign has since mobilized in more than 30 nations, calling on political figures, community heads, and celebrities to promote its goals. Free and Equal works to address the world’s third that criminalizes homosexuality and identifying as transgender, seeking to build community and tackle discriminatory laws.<sup>23</sup>

## **Seeking Resolution**

### ***Health and Counselling Resources***

Due to the rampant stigma experienced by LGBTQ women, suicide and depression rates are significantly higher than those of non-LGBTQ persons. An estimated 32-50% of transgender individuals have attempted suicide, with a greater percentage expressing suicidal tendencies.<sup>24</sup> Bullying and discrimination from society or close family can trigger the deterioration of mental health, coupled with inadequate healthcare systems or domestic violence. These issues continue to plague the LGBTQ community, especially LGBTQ youth who may be unable to leave abusive homes or gain access to resources that aid them in understanding their own identity.

For LGBTQ people of color, the risk of suicide is even higher.<sup>25</sup> The transphobia many experience may even be internal, in which lack of counselling services or professional guidance can lead to detrimental outcomes. Note that solutions centered around eradicating transgender traits or feelings in a person have been known to cause even more harm, wherein solutions that focus on supporting LGBTQ women can enhance their quality of life immensely.

UN Women should look to ways in which counselling can be made steadily available to all LGBTQ women, tackling the benefits of support and creating positive influential communities.

### ***Increased Education***

Whether implemented in schools or provided as public seminars, educating local populations on LGBTQ rights and the community can help dispel common misconceptions. Using education as a method to eliminate stigma requires consenting bodies, on a municipal or state level. Non-governmental

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<sup>22</sup> [https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/19session/A.HRC.19.41\\_English.pdf](https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/19session/A.HRC.19.41_English.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.unfe.org/about/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5178031/>

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/brynn-tannehill/the-truth-about-transgend\\_b\\_8564834.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/brynn-tannehill/the-truth-about-transgend_b_8564834.html)



organizations (NGOs) could also aid in establishing workshops or developing curriculums that teach the fundamentals of LGBTQ identities, introducing them to the general public or young children. Preventing homophobia and negative perspectives of LGBTQ individuals helps identifying women avoid discrimination in common places such as at work or on the street.

Inclusion in school curriculums increase not only locals' views on the LGBTQ community, but aids in acceptance and support for the movement. This is necessary to safeguard members' rights and reduce the risk of potential hate crimes. Having young adolescents understand gender and sexual orientation as distinctly diverse may also allow better choices in the future, as current sexual education proves insufficient for much of the developed and rapidly developing world. By teaching about LGBTQ identities, education works to normalize the community's existence and increases the scope of health topics covered.

As LGBTQ women are highly vulnerable, education can also serve as a way to access resources for women who are experiencing abusive relationships, whether at home or with a partner. These kinds of services are typically difficult to reach out to, as hotlines or programs for cisgender women may not indicate the same understanding towards transgender women. Women who are facing discrimination among family would also gain the ability to find shelters or safe spaces where their identities do not put their well-being in danger.

Delegates should consider the feasibility of widespread education and its varying effectiveness across nations with stricter laws on LGBTQ expression. In the developing world or countries with severe censorship, spreading education may be considered illegal. It is imperative that UN Women provides solutions that cater to the international community as a whole, respecting nations' sovereignty while still initiating progress.

### ***Legal Representation***

Currently, LGBTQ individuals still lack the same rights as their heterosexual counterparts in child adoption, marriage, housing, workplace discrimination, etc. State laws and practices make it difficult for LGBTQ persons to live comfortably and enjoy the same quality of life when their needs are not met by society. UN Women could suggest the introduction of an international body that could oversee smaller, sub-sections of government capable of legally representing LGBTQ interests in various issues. Increasing the number of public gender-neutral bathrooms, banning harmful gay conversion therapy practices, and other policy-related topics can be addressed by these committees on different scales.

While legal representation acts as the first step in creating safer environments for LGBTQ individuals, this solution may not prove as effective for countries that explicitly criminalize LGBTQ activities to extreme degrees. Furthermore, simply legalizing same-sex marriage or preventing employers from laying



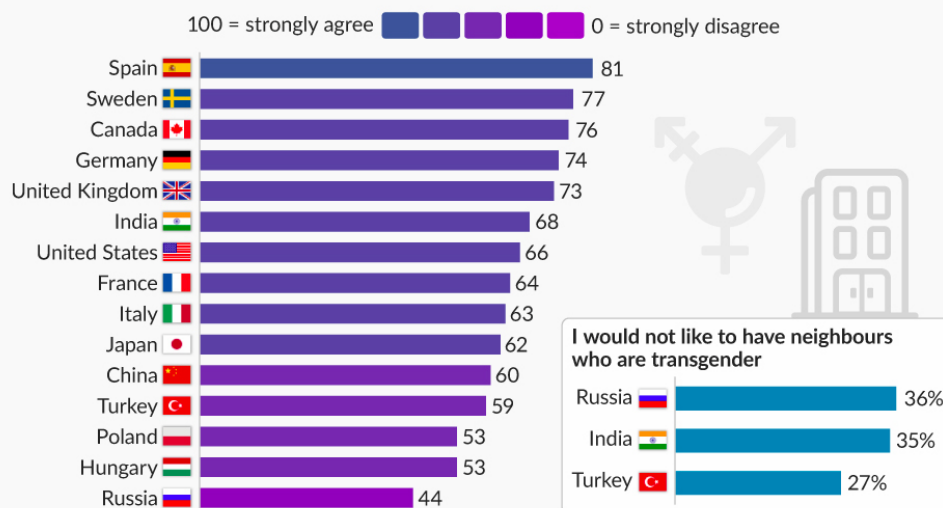
off LGBTQ persons on the basis of their identity is not the same as moving society forward. Other solutions must be used in conjunction in order to establish both legal and societal progress in accepting the LGBTQ population.

It is also important to consider how providing resources to LGBTQ women can greatly increase effective policy-making and introduce new perspectives among government circles. Women who identify with the community are typically more likely to experience poverty and economic hardship, even more so than LGBTQ males. Having women in office allows a direct voice from the LGBTQ community to the establishment of laws and can greatly enhance all governmental decisions due to perspective diversity.

## Bloc Positions

### How different countries feel about transgender rights

Level of agreement with transgender rights in selected countries\*



*A graph ranking countries on most accepting of transgender rights to least accepting.<sup>26</sup>*

### Pro-LGBTQ Bloc

For Western liberal democracies and much of the developed world, the fight for LGBTQ rights does not end with legalization. Countries like the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden, Germany, France, Italy, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and more possess active LGBTQ movements that continue to advocate for the well-being of LGBTQ women especially. In regions where social justice is widely accepted as a priority, women's and minority rights often intersect with the LGBTQ community and create incentives to support them where vulnerabilities may occur.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.statista.com/chart/7452/how-different-countries-feel-about-transgender-rights/>



In countries like the United States, this support is also met with a strong opposition. Emerging alt-right figures and ideologies in certain regions and on the Internet perpetuate discrimination against LGBTQ individuals. Women who identify as LGBTQ are typically harassed, whether virtually or in-person, due to the versatility of social media and more frequent appearances in media. Right-wing persons may also closely align with white supremacist movements or religion, to the extent of committing hate crimes against the LGBTQ community.

These nations must consider how to address societal perception as progressive laws may already be in place. Priorities may lie in increasing education or accessible resources rather than legal matters. It is important to understand that while this is true, newer areas of controversy could be on these countries' agendas as well.

### ***Anti-LGBTQ Bloc***

Countries including Iraq, Iran, Honduras, Uganda, the Russian Federation, Egypt, Nigeria, China, Japan, Jamaica, Lithuania, Venezuela, Turkey, and Papua New Guinea all hold strong sentiments against accepting the LGBTQ community and criminalize individuals.<sup>27</sup> Reasons for holding back on legalizing rights such as gay marriage can be attributed to traditional and religious beliefs, wherein nations' historical values play a role in determining gender norms for men and women. The intolerance of LGBTQ members and women especially may be combated with small activist groups, but little action is possible due to heavily sentences.

Several nations currently enforce the death penalty and years of imprisonment for those identifying under the LGBTQ umbrella. This includes allies and activists who advocate on behalf of LGBTQ persons. In order for change to take place, it is imperative these nations consider lifting bans for influencers to gain traction, eventually latching on to shifting societal perceptions.

### ***Emerging LGBTQ Rights Bloc***

Support for LGBTQ rights exist on a spectrum within the international community. For nations that are only beginning to establish stable governments or promote LGBTQ rights, there may be a slow emergence of the movement into mainstream culture. Countries in this bloc may not possess the full legalization of rights available to most pro-LGBTQ nations, but are rather on their way to achieving them.

The priority for these countries is to address any negative sentiments before violent backlash can occur. Nations like Colombia and Singapore rely on activists and the public to portray LGBTQ individuals in positive light for the success of any laws to be guaranteed. As long as censorship does not prevent advocates from expressing opinions, the presence of the LGBTQ community will continue to grow, as

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/mar/01/where-are-the-most-difficult-places-in-the-world-to-be-gay-or-transgender-lgbt>



well as those in opposition. Considering this, countries may also place their priorities elsewhere, which could decelerate progress if regional issues, especially for developing nations under this bloc, persist.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why are transgender women at a greater risk for sexual and domestic violence?
2. What can be done to promote the decriminalization of LGBTQ persons? What about states that have historically and actively oppressed LGBTQ individuals through extreme means of punishment?
3. What can nations do to combat workplace discrimination and strengthen job security for non-gender conforming or transgender women especially? How can governments prevent employers from firing LGBTQ women (who already face the wage gap) on the basis of gender or sexual orientation?
4. What is the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other non-profit bodies in supporting LGBTQ women internationally?
5. What can be implemented in schools to prevent bullying, discrimination from peers and teachers, frequent drug use, and escalating suicide rates in LGBTQ adolescents? Is education or curriculum alterations enough to safeguard the rights of young girls and boys?
6. In what legal areas do LGBTQ individuals hold lesser rights compared to the general population? Why is this the case for a specific country?
7. What can be done to address mass hate crimes and acts of violence against LGBTQ women in particular? How does this differ across the globe with countries of different political stances?
8. What are some solutions that can allow religion and the LGBTQ community to coexist peacefully?
9. What can be done to specifically address LGBTQ women in the developing world?
10. What can be done to shift social stigmas regarding LGBTQ Women into a more positive light?

## Further Reading

[www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/19session/A.HRC.19.41\\_English.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/19session/A.HRC.19.41_English.pdf)





[www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/key-dates-lesbian-gay-bi-and-trans-equality](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/key-dates-lesbian-gay-bi-and-trans-equality)

[www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/employee-non-discrimination\\_n\\_7671726](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/employee-non-discrimination_n_7671726)

[www.ebsco.com/academic-libraries/subjects/lgbt-gender-studies](http://www.ebsco.com/academic-libraries/subjects/lgbt-gender-studies)

[www.equaldex.com/](http://www.equaldex.com/)



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