



The International PRIDE Centre

Operational Toolkit: LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Humanitarian Response

March 2026

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1. Introduction & Evidence Base

The International PRIDE Centre is an Africa-based initiative working to ensure LGBTQIA+ individuals affected by displacement, humanitarian crises, and emergencies are not left behind. The PRIDE Centre publishes legal and policy analyses, preparedness tools, and inclusive

programming guidance to humanitarian actors, NGOs, and UN agencies in regions with restrictive laws and limited protections for LGBTQIA+ communities. In the absence of demographic data in the countries where we work, The International PRIDE Centre conservatively estimates that 5%¹ of disaster-affected populations are SOGIESC minorities.

As of March 2026, The PRIDE Centre have interviewed and collected data across six sub-Saharan countries (Malawi, Nigeria, Burundi, DRC, Uganda and Kenya) from LGBTQIA+ persons living in humanitarian crises; LGBTQIA+ - led civil society organisations; International NGOs; UN Agencies and donors to the humanitarian sector. 132 interviews were conducted with 567 participants, including representatives from 52 LGBTQIA+ civil society organisations. This data collection (executed through extensive focus group discussions and key informant interviews) was designed to identify LGBTQIA+ needs in crises, lessons to be learnt from effective models of emergency service delivery models, and gaps in existing humanitarian service delivery models. PRIDE Centre field research across sub-Saharan Africa demonstrates that LGBTQIA+ individuals face heightened risks of violence, discrimination, and exclusion in humanitarian contexts. These challenges are often operational in nature, requiring practical programme and organisational adaptation.

LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Programme and Operational Guidelines is informed by an analytical review of direct feedback from LGBTQIA+ persons living in displacement and / or crisis, LGBTQIA+ led organisations, and persons leading or employed by organisations delivering assistance to vulnerable persons in humanitarian settings. This document should be read alongside the PRIDE Centre's [LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Risk Assessment Tool](#) (December 2025), and a range of country specific PRIDE Centre [Legal Analyses](#).

1.1 Operational Guidelines Purpose

Laws and regulations prohibiting and criminalising individuals with diverse sexual orientation or gender identity and expressions and sexual characteristics (SOGIESC) are rapidly expanding. In certain countries, the provision of support or services to LGBTQIA+ persons is also criminalised. This is creating an increasingly restrictive operating environment for Civil Society Organisations, NGOs (national, international) and UN Agencies.

The following guidelines are intended for use in countries where anti-LGBTQIA+ laws have been proposed or adopted, or political leaders have increased anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric or enforcement; and countries grappling with acute and protracted crises, including conflict, food and climate crises, emergencies, and displacement. These guidelines are aimed at supporting organisations to abide by the Humanitarian Imperative, Humanitarian Principles; and enable the delivery of inclusive services to LGBTQIA+ communities as safely as possible for beneficiaries and staff. These guidelines can also be applied in contexts where the donor country has introduced

¹ Several studies estimate LGBTQIA+ persons to be 5-10% of the population, though large numbers are not free to self-identify. Ipsos (2023) "LGBT+ PRIDE 2023: A 30-country Ipsos Global Advisor Survey"

LGBTQIA+ policies. Guidelines are also intended to help aid agencies navigate the uncertainties and risks of operating in environments which are restrictive to assisting LGBTQIA+ persons. This document will provide guidance for how agencies can balance compliance with restrictive and/or discriminatory laws, while also meeting the needs of these critically underserved and marginalized populations.

The International PRIDE Centre does not intend that these guidelines are used in countries adopting more LGBTQIA+ inclusive laws, or where such adaptations may not be necessary given more favourable judicial and social environments. The PRIDE Centre believes that the rights and voices of those with diverse SOGIESC must be promoted, advocated and strengthened where it is safe to do so.

2. Guiding Principles of LGBTQIA+ Inclusion

LGBTQIA+ inclusion in humanitarian response must be grounded in protection, safety, and respect for human dignity. In many crisis-affected contexts, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, LGBTQIA+ individuals face heightened risks of violence, discrimination, denial of services, and exclusion from humanitarian programmes. Inclusion efforts must therefore prioritise *Do No Harm* and ensure that assistance does not increase visibility or exposure to harm.

Humanitarian actors have a responsibility to provide assistance based on need alone. Discrimination or denial of service—whether explicit or informal—is unacceptable and undermines both protection outcomes and humanitarian principles. Agencies must take proactive steps to prevent discriminatory practices and respond decisively when they occur.

Confidentiality and informed consent are essential. Sensitive information related to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or sex characteristics must only be collected when absolutely necessary and when robust safeguards are in place. Monitoring and reporting systems should minimise risk by prioritising ethical, low-visibility approaches to learning and accountability.

Meaningful inclusion does not require disclosure or public representation. Programmes should be designed to ensure safe access without requiring individuals to identify themselves or engage through unsafe community structures. Contextual and adaptive approaches are essential, as legal, social, and security environments vary and may change rapidly.

Finally, inclusion is an organisation-wide responsibility. Leadership commitment, staff training, clear accountability mechanisms, and safe feedback systems are critical to ensuring that programmes remain responsive, equitable, and accessible to LGBTQIA+ individuals throughout the humanitarian response.

3. LGTBQIA+ Inclusion in Programme Audit

Programme audits and assessments are critical tools for identifying whether humanitarian programmes are safely accessible, non-discriminatory, and inclusive of LGBTQIA+ individuals. In many crisis-affected contexts, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, exclusion does not result from explicit policy decisions but from operational practices that unintentionally increase risk, enable denial of service, or fail to recognise diverse vulnerabilities.

PRIDE Centre field research demonstrates that LGBTQIA+ individuals are frequently excluded at multiple stages of the programme cycle, including needs assessments, targeting, service delivery, and accountability mechanisms. Programme audit and assessment processes therefore play a central role in identifying these gaps and supporting agencies to adapt their interventions without causing harm.

An LGBTQIA+ inclusion audit is not a one-time activity. It should be integrated into routine programme management and conducted at key moments, including programme design, mid-term review, scale-up, and during significant changes in the legal, security, or social context.

3.1 Scope of the Audit

An LGBTQIA+ inclusion-focused audit examines both programme design and programme implementation. It assesses whether inclusion commitments translate into safe and equitable access in practice.

Key areas of assessment include:

- **Protection and Safety:**
Whether participation in programmes exposes LGBTQIA+ individuals to violence, harassment, arrest, or stigma, particularly at service points or during registration and verification processes.
- **Access and Denial of Service:**
Whether services are being denied, restricted, or delivered in a discriminatory manner by frontline staff, partners, or service providers, including informal or unreported practices.
- **Inclusion in Targeting and Assessments:**
Whether needs assessments, vulnerability criteria, and targeting frameworks recognise forms of exclusion linked to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or sex characteristics.
- **Confidentiality and Data Practices:**
Whether personal information is handled safely and whether data collection practices minimise risk and respect informed consent.

- **Accountability and Feedback:**
Whether safe, confidential mechanisms exist for reporting exclusion, denial of service, or harm, and whether reported issues lead to corrective action.

3.2 Programme Audit Methodology

LGBTQIA+ inclusion audits should combine document review, operational observation, and consultation, while prioritising safety at all times.

Document review may include project proposals, logframes, SOPs, codes of conduct, training materials, and reporting tools. However, audits must go beyond written commitments and assess how programmes function in practice.

Consultation should be conducted carefully and may involve indirect engagement through trusted intermediaries rather than direct identification of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Audits should never require disclosure of identity or participation in ways that increase risk.

The purpose of an audit is not only to identify gaps, but to enable practical programme adaptation. Audit findings should result in clear, documented actions, including adjustments to service delivery modalities, staff training, referral pathways, outreach strategies, and accountability mechanisms. Where risks are identified, agencies must prioritise immediate mitigation measures. Where denial of service or exclusion is identified, corrective action must be taken at both individual and systemic levels.

Audit outcomes should feed directly into programme decision-making, continuity planning, and organisational learning processes. LGBTQIA+ inclusion audits contribute to organisational accountability by making exclusion and discrimination visible and actionable. Findings should be reviewed regularly by programme leadership and integrated into monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems.

By embedding inclusion audits into routine programme management, agencies strengthen their ability to deliver assistance that is safe, equitable, and responsive to the needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals throughout humanitarian response cycles.

4. LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Programming

Adaptation strategies prioritise safety-first delivery, provider accountability, trusted intermediaries, and expanded vulnerability criteria beyond household norms.

4.1 Needs Assessment

Inclusive needs assessments are the foundation of effective LGBTQIA+ inclusive humanitarian programming. Given the criminalisation, stigma, and real risk of violence faced by LGBTQIA+ people in many humanitarian settings, needs assessments must be designed to prioritise safety, confidentiality, and trust over data volume. The table below provides detailed

operational guidance for making needs assessments LGBTQIA+ inclusive across diverse humanitarian contexts.

Integrating sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) considerations into humanitarian assessments is essential to ensuring that the needs of LGBTQIA+ people are not overlooked. However, this must be done using approaches that prioritise safety, dignity, and informed consent. Data collection should always be voluntary, confidential, and designed to minimise risk, recognising that forced or mandatory disclosure of identity can expose individuals to serious harm in hostile or criminalising environments.

Humanitarian actors should avoid assessment practices that assume disclosure is safe or necessary. Instead, they should work closely with trusted LGBTQIA+ organisations that have established relationships with communities and are better positioned to reach individuals who may remain hidden due to fear, stigma, or past experiences of violence. These partnerships can support more accurate needs identification while reducing the risk of harm.

Where it is safe to do so, data may be disaggregated to better understand specific risks and barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ people. However, protection considerations must always take precedence over data completeness. In many contexts, invisibility, self-censorship, and fear of reprisals create unavoidable gaps in information. These gaps should not be interpreted as an absence of need but as indicators of heightened vulnerability.

Ultimately, inclusive assessment practices require flexibility, ethical judgement, and a clear understanding that the goal is not exhaustive data collection, but the identification of risks and needs in ways that uphold the safety and dignity of those most at risk

	Risks	Inclusion Opportunities	Practical Examples
Context Analysis	LGBTQIA+ risks overlooked; programmes designed on false assumptions of safety or neutrality	Explicitly analyse SOGIESC-related legal, social, and security risks	Map criminalisation, morality laws, encampment policies, police practices, and armed group behaviour. Update analysis regularly as laws and security conditions change.
Stakeholder Engagement	Exclusion of LGBTQIA+ voices; reliance on hostile or uninformed gatekeepers	Engage trusted LGBTQIA+ led organisations and informal networks	Consult discreetly with community leaders, peer networks, or organisations already trusted by LGBTQIA+ communities. Avoid public consultations that expose participants.
Sampling	Most vulnerable groups remain invisible (e.g. trans, intersex, LBQ women)	Use purposive and snowball sampling through trusted intermediaries	Accept that samples may not be statistically representative. Prioritise reaching those most at risk.
Disclosure of Identity	Forced disclosure leads to fear, re-traumatisation, or violence	Ensure disclosure of SOGIESC is always voluntary	Never require individuals to disclose or label their identity to access assistance. Use needs-based rather than identity-based eligibility criteria, in line with the Humanitarian Principles.

Assessment Tools and Language	Binary or heteronormative tools exclude LGBTQIA+ people	Use inclusive, neutral, and flexible language	Replace binary sex/gender options with open or multiple-choice formats where safe. Avoid terms that imply illegality or moral judgement.
Enumerator Selection	Mistrust, fear, or re-traumatisation during interviews	Use trained, vetted, and sensitised enumerators	Where possible, work with LGBTQIA+ enumerators or allies trained in confidentiality, trauma-informed approaches, and non-discrimination.
Enumerator Training	Harmful questioning, misgendering, or victim-blaming	Provide mandatory SOGIESC and safeguarding training	Training should cover confidentiality, informed consent, trauma awareness, correct pronoun use, and how to respond to distress or disclosure of violence.
Interview Setting	Risk of outing, surveillance, insensitivity, or retaliation	Conduct assessments in safe and discreet environments	Avoid visible NGO branding or locations associated with LGBTQIA+ activism where this increases risk. Consider remote or one-on-one approaches where appropriate.
Data Collection Methods	Digital data exposes participants to surveillance or leaks	Use low-risk, context-appropriate data collection methods	In high-risk settings, prioritise paper-based tools (that are destroyed as soon as possible) or encrypted devices. Avoid cloud storage that may be accessible to authorities.
Data Disaggregation	Lack of evidence perpetuates invisibility	Disaggregate by SOGIESC only when safe and necessary	Clearly justify why SOGIESC data is being collected and how it will improve

			protection or access. If risk outweighs benefit, do not disaggregate.
Protection Referrals	Identification of needs without support increases harm	Integrate immediate referral pathways	Ensure enumerators can safely refer participants to legal aid, medical care, shelters, or psychosocial support if urgent risks are disclosed.
Informed Consent	Participants unaware of risks or data use	Obtain informed, ongoing consent	Explain how data will be used, stored, and who will have access. Allow participants to withdraw at any point without consequence.
Confidentiality and Anonymity	Breaches lead to arrest, violence, or eviction	Apply strict confidentiality protocols	Remove identifying details, use codes instead of names, and restrict access to raw data to essential staff only.
Do No Harm Analysis	Assessment itself triggers violence or targeting	Conduct a Do No Harm risk assessment before data collection	Ask: Who could be harmed if this data is collected or leaked? Adjust tools, timing, or scope accordingly.
Validation of Findings	Public validation exposes communities	Validate findings through safe, closed mechanisms	Share findings discreetly with trusted community representatives or organisations rather than public forums.
Feedback to Communities	Extractive assessments undermine trust	Close the feedback loop safely	Provide communities with information on how findings informed programmes, using secure channels and non-identifying formats.

4.2 Programme Design

Inclusive programme design is critical to preventing harm and ensuring that humanitarian assistance genuinely improves safety, dignity, and access for the LGBTQIA+ community. Standard humanitarian vulnerability categories (e.g. women, youth, persons with disabilities etc) are insufficient on their own and frequently obscure the specific protection risks linked to diverse SOGIESC.

Programmes must therefore be intentionally designed to address differentiated risks, while embedding protection, mental health, legal support, and security as core—not peripheral—components. The table below provides detailed operational guidance for LGBTQIA+-inclusive programme design, with a strong focus on protection outcomes.

Inclusive programme design must remain adaptive. Programmes should be regularly reviewed to assess whether changing security conditions, funding constraints, or political shifts have altered risk levels for LGBTQIA+ participants. Design decisions should always err on the side of safety, dignity, and community-defined priorities.

	Common Design Failures	Inclusive Design Principles	Practical Tips
Vulnerability Frameworks	Assuming that LGBTQIA+ people are already hidden within generic humanitarian categories; Trans and LBQ women excluded from vulnerability analyses	Use SOGIESC-informed vulnerability analysis	Explicitly recognise SOGIESC as protection-relevant. Avoid assuming that all LGBTQIA+ people face the same risks or require identical interventions as each other or other cohorts
Protection as an Integrated Objective	Protection treated as a standalone sector or by referral-only, without full programmatic integration	Mainstream protection across all programmes	Define protection outcomes (safety, freedom from violence, legal security) as primary objectives in health, shelter, livelihoods, and education and other sectoral programmes

Risk Differentiation	Risk analyses of service-accessibility does not include people with diverse SOGIESC	Design interventions based on needs and specific risk profiles	Conduct LGBTQIA+ risk mapping for visibility, documentation status, housing, and mobility before finalising activities
Safeguarding	Safeguarding frameworks don't always include SOGIESC-based harm	Integrate SOGIESC-inclusive safeguarding	Update safeguarding policies to address outing, misgendering, sexual violence, and abuse by staff or partners.
Referral Pathways	Referrals expose individuals to hostile systems	Design safe, vetted referral pathways	Only refer to service providers who have been assessed as LGBTQIA+ safe. Never require police reports or family involvement.
Mental Health Integration	MHPSS introduced with a delay after crisis	Embed mental health support from the outset of a crisis and needs identification	Include trauma-informed psychosocial support within all programmes, particularly for those facing prolonged displacement, vulnerability, or legal limbo.
Legal Support Integration	Legal aid treated as optional or external service	Integrate legal assistance into programme design	Budget for legal aid, paralegal support, and documentation assistance as standard components.
Security and Confidentiality	Visibility of service to the LGBTQIA+ community increases targeting	Design for low-visibility and discretion	Avoid branding, availability of beneficiary lists, or group activities that could expose participants. Details of recipients/beneficiaries must remain confidential, data protected. If identifying details are shared, it must be with LGBTQIA+

		persons consent, and on a need-to-know basis internal to the organisation.
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Programme Design by Population Group

	Protection Risks ²	Design Priorities	Inclusive Interventions - Examples
Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals	Higher visibility; targeted violence; denial of healthcare; homelessness; documentation mismatch	Prioritise physical safety, safe housing, healthcare access, and legal protection at a minimum	Trans-specific safe housing; confidential access to gender-affirming care; legal support related to documentation and arrest/detention; livelihoods not dependent on public-facing roles; integrated trauma counselling.
LBQ Women	Corrective rape; family violence; economic dependency; invisibility in programmes; stateless children	Address to GBV, access to legal aid, economic autonomy, access to education for children, and discreet access to aid services (e.g. health)	Confidential GBV response without police reporting; women-only safe spaces; livelihoods support for single mothers; legal aid for custody and housing disputes; targeted MHPSS.
Intersex People	Extreme invisibility; lack of documentation; medical abuse	Design discreet, rights-based interventions	Support for birth registration and legal identity; access to non-coercive, informed healthcare; confidential psychosocial support; advocacy with service providers on intersex inclusion.

² Risks are based on the findings of PRIDE Centre primary data research conducted in 2025-26.

Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and IDPs	Camp violence; exclusion from humanitarian aid; legal limbo; restricted movement	Combine immediate protection with durable solutions, ensure equal and safe access to humanitarian services	LGBTQIA+-specific safe shelters; SOGIESC-trained caseworkers; documentation and resettlement support; emergency relocation; integrated mental health and legal services.
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4.3 Implementation

LGBTQIA+-inclusive implementation translates safe and inclusive programme design into day-to-day practice. Even well-designed programmes can cause serious harm if implemented without attention to power dynamics, visibility risks, staff behaviour, and operational procedures. In contexts of criminalisation and active persecution, how assistance is delivered is often as important as what assistance is delivered.

Implementation must therefore prioritise partnership with LGBTQIA+ communities, socio-economic understanding, discretion, staff accountability, and continuous risk management. The tables below provide detailed operational guidance for implementing humanitarian programmes in ways that actively reduce harm and strengthen protection for LGBTQIA+ people. Implementation should be continuously reviewed to ensure that procedures intended to increase efficiency do not inadvertently increase risk. In hostile contexts, safe implementation often requires slower, more discreet, and relationship-based approaches that prioritise protection over visibility or scale.

Implementation Principles and Practices

	Common Implementation Risks	Inclusive Practice	Practical Operational Guidance
Partnerships	Tokenistic engagement; exclusion of LGBTQIA+ community expertise	Partner with LGBTQIA+ led organisations wherever possible	Prioritise sub-grants, direct funding, and co-implementation with LGBTQIA+ led CSOs. Compensate partners fairly and include them in decision-making, not only outreach.
Power Dynamics	INGOs/UN dominate decisions; local partners bear front-line risk	Share power and risk responsibly	Do not outsource high-risk activities to local organisations. When partnering with local organisations, ensure there is sufficient safeguarding, resources, security support, and decision-making authority.
Delivery Modalities	Visibility exposes participants to violence or arrest	Use discreet and low-profile delivery methods	Deliver assistance through one-on-one support, mobile services, vouchers, or LGBTQIA+ safe referrals, rather than public distributions or group activities where risk is high.
Branding and Visibility	Logos and messaging attract hostility	Minimise visible LGBTQIA+ references at operational level	Avoid public signage, branded materials, or beneficiary lists that could identify LGBTQIA+ participants or partners.
Eligibility Requirements	Documentation requirements exclude or expose LGBTQIA+ people	Remove harmful administrative barriers	Do not require police reports, family consent, marriage certificates, or identity documents that do not match gender expression.
Flexibility	Rigid and inflexible procedures fail in volatile contexts	Build operational flexibility	Allow adaptations to delivery methods as security conditions, laws, or funding environments change.

Staff Capacity, Conduct, and Accountability

	Risks if Not Addressed	Inclusive Practice	Practical Operational Guidance
Staff Training	Misgendering, outing, victim-blaming	Mandatory SOGIESC training for all staff	Training should cover confidentiality, trauma-informed engagement, correct pronoun use, unconscious bias, and responding to disclosures of mistreatment, violence.
Recruitment and Vetting	Abusive or hostile staff engaging with LGBTQIA+ community	Apply inclusive recruitment and vetting	Screen staff and partners for discriminatory attitudes. Include SOGIESC inclusion in codes of conduct and contracts.
Confidentiality	Staff leaks information intentionally or unintentionally	Enforce strict confidentiality protocols; review and ensure highest standards of data protection	Limit access to sensitive data; prohibit informal sharing of information; apply disciplinary measures for breaches.
Supervision and Support	Burnout and secondary trauma among staff	Provide supervision and psychosocial support	Offer staff debriefing and mental health support, particularly for those handling GBV, torture, or protection cases.
Accountability Mechanisms	Abuse goes unreported	Ensure accessible complaints and feedback mechanisms	Provide confidential, anonymous, and LGBTQIA+-safe reporting channels for beneficiaries and partners.

Differentiated Implementation Considerations by Population Group

Key Implementation Risks	Implementation Priorities	Practical Examples
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Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Persons	Outing through mismatched IDs; public service denial	Prioritise protection, privacy and dignity	Allow self-identified names and genders; deliver services without requiring ID changes; ensure private service access and staff respect.
LBQ Women	Exposure to family or partner violence; Trickle-down LGBTQIA+ discrimination to children of LBQ women	Confidential and survivor-centred delivery, child protection	Schedule discreet appointments; avoid mixed-gender group activities; provide survivor-led referral options; provide child protection support and/or referrals
Intersex People	Erasure within implementation processes	Ensure access to services without exposure	Avoid binary assumptions; ensure respectful, confidential service delivery.
Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and IDPs	Camp-based violence; exclusion from aid	Safe access and accompaniment	Coordinate discreet access to services; provide accompaniment to UNHCR, health, or legal appointments where safe.

Embedding Protection During Implementation

	Implementation Requirement	Operational Guidance
Ongoing Risk Monitoring	Detect emerging threats early	Conduct regular informal check-ins with partners and participants; adjust activities when risks increase.
Crisis Response	Rapid support during arrests or attacks	Maintain updated emergency referral lists, legal contacts, and relocation options.
Mental Health Support	Address cumulative harm	Integrate MHPSS check-ins into routine service delivery, not only after incidents.

Legal Support	Immediate legal protection for urgent cases	Ensure rapid access to lawyers or paralegals during arrests, evictions, or raids.
Data Protection	Prevent secondary harm	Store data securely; anonymise case files; avoid unnecessary data sharing with authorities or donors.

4.4 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEAL) systems play a critical protection role in LGBTQIA+-inclusive humanitarian programming. In hostile and criminalised environments, poorly designed MEAL systems can expose individuals and organisations to serious harm, while extractive or compliance-driven monitoring can undermine trust and participation in communities and amongst those accessing services. LGBTQIA+-inclusive MEAL must therefore prioritise safety, dignity, and adaptive learning over data volume or visibility.

MEAL systems should be designed to answer a core question: Are programmes increasing safety, dignity, and access for LGBTQIA+ people without increasing risk? The tables below provide detailed operational guidance for protection-sensitive MEAL.

MEAL systems for LGBTQIA+-inclusive humanitarian programming must be flexible, proportionate, and ethically grounded. In high-risk environments, *less data collected safely* is always preferable to *more data collected unsafely*. Learning should be used first and foremost to prevent harm, strengthen protection, and adapt responses to rapidly changing political, security, and funding conditions.

MEAL Principles for LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Programming

	MEAL Risks	Inclusive Practice	Practical Operational Guidance
Purpose of MEAL	Monitoring focused only on outputs and donor compliance	Prioritise protection-relevant outcomes	Frame indicators around safety, dignity, access, and reduced harm of all community members, rather than numbers reached or visibility. Design

			indicators for less visible/hidden community members.
Outcome Indicators	Indicators ignore lived experience	Use outcome indicators that reflect safety, dignity, and access for all community members	Examples include perceived safety accessing services, reduced fear of violence, or improved access without discrimination or denial of services.
Data Minimisation	Excessive data collection increases exposure, interview/survey fatigue, and community distrust	Collect only data that is strictly necessary	Avoid collecting names, addresses, or detailed case histories unless essential for protection or service delivery.
Risk-Benefit Analysis	Data collected without assessing potential harm	Conduct risk assessments for all MEAL activities in all locations	Ask whether collecting each data point could expose individuals or organisations if leaked or misused.
Confidentiality	Weak data protection leads to breaches, and increases risk of harm	Apply strict confidentiality and access controls	Restrict access to sensitive data, use anonymisation, and ensure secure storage aligned with context risk.

Data Collection

	Risks	Inclusive Practice	Practical Operational Guidance
Quantitative Data	Numerical data collection targets enhance risk unsafe visibility	Use low-risk, aggregate data	Report aggregated trends rather than individual-level data; avoid disaggregation that could identify and expose smaller vulnerable groups.
Qualitative Data	Direct quotes risk identification	Use anonymised quotes and composite narratives	Remove identifying details; combine stories where necessary to protect individuals and organisations.

Digital Tools	Surveillance or hacking	Use context-appropriate, secure tools	Avoid cloud-based systems in high-risk contexts; use encrypted devices and offline storage where safer.
Third-Party Data Sharing	Donor or partner misuse	Control onward data sharing	Do not share raw datasets externally; provide summarised findings with clear protection caveats.
Partner Data Protection	Local CSOs exposed through reporting	Align MEAL requirements with partner safety	Adapt reporting templates to reduce burden and risk for LGBTQIA+-led organisations.

Feedback and Accountability

Feedback Mechanism	Risks	Inclusive Practice	Practical Operational Guidance
Complaints Mechanisms	Fear of retaliation prevents reporting to service providers	Ensure anonymous and safe feedback channels	Provide multiple options (hotlines, suggestion boxes, trusted focal points) that do not require identity disclosure.
Qualitative Feedback	Participants exposed through group forums	Use discreet, individual feedback methods	Prioritise one-on-one check-ins, encrypted messaging, or trusted intermediaries.
Community Validation	Public validation exposes communities	Validate findings through closed, safe channels	Share findings discreetly with trusted representatives rather than open meetings.
Participation in Learning	LGBTQIA+ communities excluded from learning loops	Close the feedback loop safely	Inform LGBTQIA+ and all communities how feedback influenced programme changes using secure, non-identifying methods.

What to Review in Volatile Contexts

Learning Area	Inclusive Practice	Operational Guidance
Security	Continuously adapt to evolving risks in areas of operations	Regularly reassess whether activities, locations, or modalities remain safe as laws, violence, or law enforcement evolves.
Funding	Prepare for funding volatility	Monitor impacts of funding cuts and adapt programmes to prioritise life-saving protection, health and mental health services – in consultation with LGBTQIA+ communities and organisations.
Learning	Treat MEAL as an ongoing process	Use real-time learning to adjust targeting, delivery, or referrals rather than waiting for endline evaluations.
Partnerships	Learn with LGBTQIA+ partners	Integrate partner insights into learning processes and compensate them for MEAL contributions.

Considerations by Population Group

Population Group	Inclusive MEAL Approach	Practical Examples
Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Persons	Avoid disaggregating small datasets	Measure changes in perceived safety or service access, rather than by using LGBTQIA+ identity metrics.
LBQ Women	Discreet and survivor-centred feedback	Use anonymous feedback and indirect indicators related to safety and autonomy.
Intersex People	Use rights-based qualitative indicators	Track improvements in access to documentation or respectful healthcare without requiring disclosure.

Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and IDPs	Camp-sensitive MEAL approaches	Avoid camp-wide surveys; rely on trusted intermediaries and confidential case monitoring.
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5. Sector-Specific Operational Guidelines

5.1 Health

Discrimination in healthcare, denial of treatment, collapse of HIV services due to funding cuts, lack of gender-affirming care, and fear of accessing health facilities have all had a devastating impact on the LGBTQIA+ community living in humanitarian crises.

Access to safe and non-discriminatory healthcare is repeatedly one of the most urgent needs identified by LGBTQIA+ communities. Many individuals avoid hospitals and clinics due to harassment, misgendering, refusal of treatment, or exposure to police or hostile communities. Health programming must therefore prioritise confidentiality, dignity, and safe access while restoring essential sexual and reproductive health services that have been disrupted.

The tables below provide operational guidance for designing and delivering LGBTQIA+ inclusive health interventions.

Health Programme Design and Delivery

Programming Area	Common Barriers	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Access to Healthcare	LGBTQIA+ individuals denied care or treated with hostility	Establish referral pathways to safe providers	Map, engage and vet clinics known to provide non-discriminatory care. Work with trusted LGBTQIA+ organisations to identify safe facilities and ensure discreet referrals.

Healthcare Provider Attitudes	Misgendering, humiliation, refusal of treatment, discrimination	Train, sensitise healthcare providers on SOGIESC inclusion	Conduct training on confidentiality, respectful communication, gender diversity, and non-discrimination. Include case scenarios and accountability procedures for discriminatory behaviour.
Facility Safety	Hospitals become sites of harassment, exposure, or arrest	Use discreet and low-visibility service delivery	Avoid publicly labelling services as LGBTQIA+ programmes. Provide appointment-based consultations and private service areas where possible.
Documentation Barriers	Mismatched IDs lead to harassment or service denial	Remove documentation requirements where possible	Allow patients to access services without requiring identity documents or gender markers that may not match their gender expression.
Confidentiality	Patient information leaked to authorities, families, or communities	Strengthen medical confidentiality practices	Limit access to patient data, anonymise records where possible, and reinforce confidentiality policies with all staff and partners.

Essential Health Services

Service Area	Key Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
HIV/AIDS Treatment	Treatment interruption leading to severe health deterioration	Restore and maintain access to ARVs	Support reliable supply chains, discreet ART distribution points, and community-based treatment delivery where clinics are hostile.
HIV Prevention	Increased HIV transmission due to lack of prevention services	Ensure access to PrEP, condoms, and lubricants	Provide confidential distribution points and outreach services for prevention commodities.

STI Testing and Treatment	Untreated infections due to stigma or discrimination	Offer non-judgmental STI services	Partner with clinics that provide confidential testing and treatment without discrimination.
Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)	LGBTQIA+ individuals excluded from SRH services	Provide inclusive SRH services	Ensure access to contraception, maternal care for LBQ women, and medical care for survivors of sexual violence.
Gender-Affirming Care	Unsafe self-medication and black-market hormone use	Facilitate access to safe hormone therapy and gender-affirming care	Establish referral pathways to trained providers and support confidential consultations for gender-affirming healthcare.

Service Delivery Alternatives in Hostile Environments

Delivery Modality	Key Risks	Inclusive Approach	Operational Guidance
Mobile Clinics	LGBTQIA+ individuals avoid hospitals due to discrimination	Deploy mobile health services	Provide periodic confidential services in locations identified as safe by community partners.
Community-Based Health Services	Public health systems inaccessible due to stigma	Deliver services through trusted organisations	Support community-led outreach, health consultations, and safe distribution of treatment or prevention supplies.
Telehealth Services	Travel to facilities increases exposure to violence	Provide remote consultations	Use secure communication tools for follow-up consultations and medical advice where digital safety allows.
Peer Health Navigators	Individuals struggle to navigate hostile health systems	Train community health navigators	Equip peer navigators to accompany individuals to clinics and assist with referrals to trusted providers.

Differentiated Health Considerations by Population Group

Population Group	Key Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals	Denial of care, misgendering, lack of hormone therapy	Provide gender-affirming healthcare and respectful treatment	Ensure access to hormone therapy, confidential consultations, and providers trained to respect chosen names and pronouns.
LBQ Women	Exclusion from reproductive healthcare and GBV services	Ensure inclusive SRH and GBV services	Provide access to contraception, maternal care, and survivor-centred GBV medical support without discrimination.
Intersex People	Medical abuse and lack of informed consent	Provide rights-based and non-coercive healthcare	Train providers on intersex variations and informed consent principles; avoid unnecessary medical interventions.
Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and IDPs	Restricted access to health systems and insurance	Ensure access through humanitarian health programmes	Facilitate referrals through humanitarian clinics and assist with documentation required for health access where possible.

5.2 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Trauma, depression, PTSD, severe anxiety, and suicidal ideation linked to violence, discrimination, prolonged displacement, legal limbo, and social isolation are amongst the most frequently reported problems by the LGBTQIA+ community. These challenges are even more prevalent amongst forcibly displaced LGBTQIA+ persons.

LGBTQIA+ individuals in humanitarian crises frequently experience cumulative trauma resulting from family rejection, community violence, displacement, and systemic discrimination. Many also face prolonged uncertainty related to asylum processes, housing insecurity, and exclusion from services. As a result, mental health and psychosocial support must be integrated as a core primary protection intervention rather than a secondary service.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) programming must ensure confidentiality, safety, and cultural competence, recognising that many LGBTQIA+ individuals avoid formal mental health services due to fear of stigma, forced disclosure, or involvement of authorities. MHPSS programmes should be designed as long-term protective interventions rather than short-term crisis responses. In contexts of ongoing violence, displacement, and legal uncertainty, sustained psychosocial support is essential to help LGBTQIA+ individuals rebuild resilience, maintain social connections, and safely navigate humanitarian systems.

The tables below provide operational guidance for delivering LGBTQIA+-inclusive MHPSS interventions.

MHPSS Programme Design and Delivery

MHPSS Programming Area	Common Barriers	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Access to Mental Health Services	LGBTQIA+ individuals avoid services due to stigma or discrimination	Provide LGBTQIA+ competent counselling services	Recruit or train counsellors who understand SOGIESC issues, minority stress, trauma related to violence, and displacement experiences.
Confidentiality and Trust	Fear of being reported to authorities, families, or community leaders	Guarantee strict confidentiality protocols	Ensure counselling services do not require disclosure to police, families, or authorities. Clearly communicate confidentiality policies to participants.
Trauma-Informed Care	Re-traumatisation through insensitive questioning	Use trauma-informed counselling approaches	Train practitioners in trauma-informed care, including recognising triggers, managing distress, and avoiding victim-blaming language.

Service Accessibility	Geographic and security barriers prevent access	Provide flexible and discreet service modalities	Offer counselling through mobile services, safe community locations, or secure remote platforms where appropriate.
Integration with Protection Services	Mental health needs addressed separately from protection risks	Integrate MHPSS into protection programming	Ensure mental health support is available alongside legal aid, shelter services, and emergency protection responses.

Psychosocial Support Modalities

Support Modality	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Individual Counselling	Severe trauma remains untreated	Provide confidential trauma-informed counselling	Offer one-on-one counselling sessions with trained practitioners experienced in LGBTQIA+ issues and crisis trauma.
Peer Support Networks	Social isolation worsens mental health outcomes	Facilitate peer-based psychosocial support	Establish discreet peer support groups led by trained facilitators within trusted community networks.
Group Support (Safe Modalities)	Participants exposed through visible gatherings	Use secure and carefully managed group sessions	Hold small, confidential sessions in safe locations or online platforms with strict confidentiality agreements.
Community Support Systems	Lack of social support structures	Strengthen informal support networks	Support LGBTQIA+-led organisations to run support groups, safe spaces, or informal mental health networks.

Suicide and Crisis Response

Intervention Area	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Suicide Risk Identification	Warning signs missed by programme staff	Train staff to recognise suicide risk indicators	Equip frontline staff with basic training on identifying suicidal ideation for all groups and appropriate responses.
Crisis Intervention	Individuals in crisis receive no immediate support	Establish crisis response protocols	Develop referral pathways for emergency counselling, crisis hotlines, or urgent psychological support.
Safe Referral Systems	Individuals referred to hostile services	Use vetted and safe mental health providers	Ensure referrals only go to providers trained in LGBTQIA+ inclusive care.
Long-Term Support	Repeated trauma leads to worsening mental health	Provide ongoing mental health follow-up	Ensure participants can access continuous support rather than one-time counselling sessions.

Differentiated MHPSS Considerations by Population Group

Population Group	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals	Severe social stigma, violence, and identity-based rejection	Provide identity-affirming counselling	Offer counselling that validates gender identity and addresses trauma related to discrimination and violence.
LBQ Women	Family violence, forced marriage, corrective rape	Provide survivor-centred trauma support	Integrate GBV-informed counselling services and safe peer support networks for women.

Intersex People	Lifelong trauma linked to medical abuse and invisibility	Provide specialised psychosocial support	Offer counselling addressing identity development, bodily autonomy, and experiences of medical harm.
Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and IDPs	Prolonged uncertainty, displacement trauma, and resettlement delays	Provide displacement-sensitive mental health support	Offer counselling that addresses displacement stress, asylum processes, and uncertainty about future safety.

5.3 Protection and Legal Aid

When it comes to protection and legal assistance, common LGBTQIA+ experiences include, arbitrary arrests, extortion, criminalisation under morality laws, documentation barriers, lack of legal representation, and limited access to justice.

LGBTQIA+ individuals in many humanitarian contexts face heightened exposure to arrest, detention, police harassment, and legal persecution. Criminalisation of same-sex relations, "morality" charges, and administrative barriers often prevent individuals from accessing justice or defending themselves against abuse. Refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons frequently remain trapped in legal limbo without documentation, preventing them from accessing services, employment, or resettlement pathways.

Protection and legal aid programming must therefore focus on strengthening access to justice, supporting safe documentation processes, and ensuring rapid response mechanisms for arrests, raids, or violence targeting LGBTQIA+ individuals or organisations. Protection and legal aid interventions should be closely coordinated with health, shelter, and psychosocial support services. Access to justice is often a critical first step in restoring safety and dignity for LGBTQIA+ individuals facing persecution, violence, or displacement.

The tables below provide operational guidance for implementing LGBTQIA+-inclusive protection and legal aid interventions.

Protection and Legal Aid Programming

Protection Area	Common Barriers	Inclusive Approaches	Practical Examples
Access to Legal Representation	LGBTQIA+ individuals unable to find safe legal representation	Establish or fund pro bono legal aid networks	Partner with trusted lawyers and human rights organisations willing to defend LGBTQIA+ clients. Create confidential referral mechanisms to connect individuals to legal support.
Police Harassment and Arbitrary Arrest	Individuals detained or extorted without legal support	Provide rapid legal response mechanisms	Develop emergency legal hotlines and maintain a roster of lawyers who can respond quickly to arrests or detention.
Legal System Discrimination	Courts and police hostile toward LGBTQIA+ individuals	Use strategic and protective legal approaches	Train lawyers on protection-sensitive litigation and prioritise legal strategies that minimise exposure or retaliation.
Documentation Barriers	Refugees and displaced persons lack identity or refugee documentation	Support safe documentation processes	Assist individuals with refugee registration, mandate letters, and identity documentation needed for protection and access to services.
Confidentiality and Security	Legal cases expose individuals to public scrutiny or retaliation	Protect confidentiality in legal processes	Ensure case files are stored securely and that legal partners understand the sensitivity of SOGIESC-related cases.

Legal Literacy and Community-Based Protection

Intervention Area	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Legal Literacy Training	Communities unaware of their rights or legal options	Provide community legal education	Deliver discreet workshops explaining legal rights during arrests, police stops, or eviction threats.
Community Paralegals	Individuals lack support navigating legal systems	Train community-based paralegals	Equip trusted community members with basic legal knowledge to support documentation processes and referrals.

Rights Awareness Materials	Information inaccessible or unsafe to distribute publicly	Provide discreet educational materials	Develop pocket guides or secure digital materials explaining legal rights and emergency contacts.
Protection Networks	Individuals face threats without support structures	Strengthen community protection networks	Work with LGBTQIA+-led organisations to establish emergency communication and support systems.

Emergency Response to Arrests, Raids, or Violence

Response Area	Risk	Inclusive Approaches	Practical Examples
Emergency Legal Response	Individuals remain detained without representation	Establish rapid response systems	Maintain emergency funds and legal contacts to support immediate legal representation following arrests or raids.
Crisis Coordination	Arrests or raids escalate without coordinated support	Develop coordinated crisis protocols	Coordinate between lawyers, protection actors, and community organisations to respond to incidents quickly and safely.
Safe Relocation	Individuals remain in dangerous environments after release	Provide emergency relocation support	Support temporary relocation to safe housing or shelters for individuals facing continued threats.
Documentation of Abuses	Human rights violations remain unrecorded	Document cases safely and securely	Collect anonymised evidence of abuse to support advocacy and protection monitoring where safe to do so.

Differentiated Legal Protection Considerations by Population Group

Population Group	Key Legal Risks	Inclusive Legal Response	Practical Examples
Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals	Arrest linked to gender expression or ID mismatch	Provide legal assistance for identity documentation issues	Support legal advocacy related to identity documents and representation during arrests linked to gender expression.
LBQ Women	Forced marriage, custody disputes, and gender-based violence	Provide GBV-informed legal assistance	Offer legal support related to protection orders, custody rights, and protection from forced marriage.
Children of forcibly displaced LGBTQIA+ parents	Statelessness due to absence of recognition and documentation for LGBTQIA+ parents; lack of access to education and health services	Provide child protection legal support for LGBTQIA+ families	Support children of LGBTQIA+ parents to access birth documentation, refugee asylum documentation
Intersex People	Lack of legal recognition and documentation	Support legal identity and documentation processes	Assist with birth registration, identity documentation, and legal advocacy related to recognition of intersex status.
Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and IDPs	Prolonged asylum processes and lack of legal documentation	Provide legal assistance for refugee status and protection claims	Support case preparation, legal accompaniment, and advocacy related to asylum and resettlement procedures.

5.4 Shelter

The most reported shelter needs by the LGBTQIA+ community identified by PRIDE Centre research is, homelessness, forced eviction, lack of safe houses, discrimination by landlords, inability to pay rent, and exposure to violence in communal living environments.

LGBTQIA+ individuals in humanitarian crises frequently experience housing instability due to family rejection, discrimination by landlords, and violence within displacement settings. Many are forced to leave their homes suddenly and have limited access to safe shelter options. In camps and shared accommodation, individuals whose gender expression does not conform to social expectations often face harassment, assault, or expulsion.

Shelter programming must therefore prioritise safety, confidentiality, and dignity while expanding access to emergency housing and sustainable shelter solutions for LGBTQIA+ individuals at risk of homelessness. Shelter programme teams must ensure they listen and react to the needs and shelter preferences of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Shelter interventions should prioritise safety, confidentiality, and long-term stability. In highly hostile environments, discreet, community-managed shelter solutions are often more effective than large, visible housing facilities are likely to expose residents to additional protection risks. Do No Harm must inform all inclusive shelter programming.

The tables below provide operational guidance for implementing LGBTQIA+-inclusive shelter interventions.

Shelter Programme Design and Delivery

Shelter Programming Area	Common Barriers	Inclusive Approaches	Practical Examples
Access to Emergency Shelter	LGBTQIA+ individuals denied shelter or expelled due to identity	Support LGBTQIA+-specific safe houses	Partner with trusted LGBTQIA+-led organisations to establish confidential safe houses or emergency accommodation options.

		and emergency shelters	
Safety in Shelter Placement	Residents face harassment or violence from other occupants	Consider gender expression and safety in placement decisions	Ensure shelter allocation processes account for risks related to gender expression and identity. Provide private or small shared spaces where possible. Do not force LGBTQIA+ into male/female segregated shelter units.
Confidentiality of Shelter Locations	Safe house locations exposed, leading to raids or violence	Maintain strict confidentiality of shelter locations	Limit knowledge of safe house locations to essential staff and partners and implement security protocols for entry and access.
Short-Term Shelter Limitations	Temporary housing solutions fail to provide long-term safety	Develop pathways to longer-term housing	Integrate shelter support with livelihoods programmes and housing assistance to reduce repeated displacement.
Documentation and Access Barriers	Individuals denied rental accommodation due to lack of documents	Reduce documentation requirements for shelter access	Ensure emergency shelters do not require identity documents that may expose individuals or create barriers to access.

Preventing Evictions and Housing Exploitation

Intervention Area	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Legal Protection from Evictions	Landlords exploit or evict LGBTQIA+ tenants	Advocate against discriminatory evictions	Provide legal support and advocacy to challenge unlawful evictions and discriminatory rental practices.

Housing Rights Awareness	Tenants unaware of legal protections	Provide housing rights education	Develop discreet materials informing individuals of their housing rights and legal support options.
Monitoring Housing Discrimination	Abuse and exploitation remain undocumented	Track patterns of housing discrimination	Work with community organisations to document eviction trends and housing abuses where safe.
Landlord Engagement	Hostile landlords exclude LGBTQIA+ tenants	Identify and engage safer landlords	Build relationships with vetted landlords willing to provide safe housing options for programme participants.

Sustainability of Shelters

Sustainability Area	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Funding Stability	Safe houses close when short-term funding ends	Plan for long-term shelter sustainability	Diversify funding sources and integrate shelter support into broader protection programming.
Community-Based Shelter Models	Centralised shelters become targets for attacks	Support decentralised housing approaches	Use smaller dispersed housing units or host-family models where safe and appropriate.
Integration with Livelihoods	Residents remain dependent on emergency housing	Link shelter to economic support	Combine housing assistance with livelihoods programmes to support transition to independent housing.
Partnership with Local Organisations	Shelter programmes lack local legitimacy or trust	Work through LGBTQIA+-led organisations	Support community-led shelter management and strengthen organisational capacity for shelter operations.

Differentiated Shelter Considerations by Population Group

Population Group	Key Shelter Risks	Inclusive Shelter Response	Practical Examples
Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals	Violence in shared shelters due to discrimination related to gender expression	Provide gender-affirming shelter placement	Allocate private rooms or trans-inclusive housing spaces where possible. Ensure staff respect chosen names and pronouns.
LBQ Women	Family rejection and exposure to gender-based violence	Provide safe housing for women facing GBV	Establish discreet shelters for women and single mothers escaping family violence or forced marriage.
Intersex People	Lack of recognition or appropriate accommodation	Ensure inclusive shelter policies	Train shelter staff on intersex inclusion and avoid binary housing assumptions where possible.
Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and IDPs	Violence in camps and overcrowded shelters	Provide alternative safe housing options	Support relocation to safer housing outside camps where possible and provide legal assistance related to housing access.

5.5 Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

Common livelihoods/economic needs reported by the LGBTQIA+ community are employment discrimination, exclusion from formal labour markets, economic marginalisation, and reliance on survival sex work due to lack of safe income opportunities.

Many LGBTQIA+ individuals in humanitarian settings face severe barriers to employment because of stigma, criminalisation, and discrimination in workplaces. Transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are particularly affected due to visibility linked to gender expression, while refugees and displaced persons often face additional legal restrictions preventing them from working. Economic exclusion frequently pushes individuals toward high-risk coping strategies, including survival sex work, unsafe migration, or exploitative labour. LGBTQIA+ interviewees (in a place such as Kinshasa, DRC) reflected that with livelihoods comes

respect from some community members, and a place in society. Whilst this is evident in some locations, the PRIDE Centre recognises that this is not true in other complex environments and locations.

Livelihood programming must prioritise safe, flexible, and discreet income opportunities that reduce exposure to discrimination or violence while supporting long-term economic independence. Livelihood interventions should aim not only to provide income but also to strengthen dignity, autonomy, and protection. Economic independence can significantly reduce exposure to violence, exploitation, and forced displacement, making livelihoods programming a critical component of LGBTQIA+-inclusive humanitarian response.

The tables below provide operational guidance for implementing LGBTQIA+-inclusive livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions.

Livelihood Programme Design and Delivery

Livelihood Programming Area	Common Barriers	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Access to Employment	LGBTQIA+ individuals excluded from formal employment due to discrimination	Provide alternative livelihood pathways	Develop livelihood programmes that do not rely solely on formal employment markets and instead support self-employment or cooperative models.
Vocational Skills Development	Training programmes do not reflect safety, protection risks or labour market realities	Provide vocational training in transferable and discreet skills	Focus on skills that can be practiced independently or remotely such as tailoring, digital services, design, repair trades, or online work where feasible.
Workplace Discrimination	Individuals dismissed or harassed when identity becomes known	Design livelihood opportunities that reduce visibility risks	Prioritise home-based work, small enterprises, or informal sector opportunities where participants can control their working environments.

Access to Financial Resources	Individuals lack capital to start businesses	Provide seed capital and in-kind support	Offer small grants, equipment, or start-up materials (e.g., sewing machines, laptops, tools) to enable safe income generation.
Financial Inclusion	Lack of bank accounts or financial documentation	Support alternative financial access mechanisms	Facilitate safe savings groups, community finance schemes, or mobile money systems where banking access is limited.

Community-Based Economic Models

Economic Intervention	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Cooperatives and Collective Enterprises	Individuals face isolation and economic vulnerability	Support LGBTQIA+-inclusive cooperatives	Establish cooperative businesses such as farming groups, tailoring workshops, or craft enterprises run collectively by community members.
Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)	Individuals excluded from financial systems	Establish inclusive savings groups	Support LGBTQIA+-friendly savings and loan groups that allow members to build capital and access small loans.
Peer Economic Networks	Individuals lack business mentorship or support	Strengthen peer-to-peer economic support networks	Facilitate knowledge-sharing networks where community members mentor each other in small business development.
Market Linkages	Businesses fail due to lack of customers	Support access to safe markets	Connect entrepreneurs to markets through discreet sales channels, trusted intermediaries, or digital platforms.

Reducing Economic Risk and Exploitation

Risk Area	Risk	Inclusive Practice	Operational Guidance
Survival Sex Work	LGBTQIA+ individuals rely on high-risk income sources	Expand safe livelihood options	Provide targeted economic support and training that creates realistic alternatives to survival sex work.
			Combine economic support with other interventions (e.g. shelter) to ease financial strains whilst individuals reach and maintain livelihood opportunities.
Workplace Exploitation	Individuals accept unsafe or exploitative jobs	Provide labour rights education	Offer training on labour rights, fair wages, and identifying exploitative work arrangements.
Economic Dependency	Individuals remain dependent on abusive households or partners	Promote financial independence	Prioritise livelihood programmes for individuals facing family rejection or gender-based violence.
Economic Shocks	Income loss leads to renewed vulnerability	Build financial resilience	Support savings schemes, diversified income sources, and financial planning training.

Differentiated Livelihood Considerations by Population Group

Population Group	Key Economic Risks	Inclusive Livelihood Response	Practical Examples
Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals	Visible gender expression leads to workplace exclusion	Support independent and community-based employment	Provide home-based work opportunities, cooperative enterprises, remote training, and skills training not dependent on formal hiring processes.

LBQ Women	Economic dependency and caregiving responsibilities	Provide flexible livelihood opportunities	Support small businesses, childcare-friendly work arrangements, and targeted financial support for single mothers.
Intersex People	Social stigma and lack of documentation	Provide discreet livelihood support	Ensure livelihood programmes do not require identity disclosure and support access to safe income opportunities.
Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and IDPs	Legal barriers prevent formal employment	Provide portable and adaptable livelihood skills	Focus on skills that can be used across locations and support income generation within displacement settings.

5.6 Education

The key reported needs addressed in this section are school expulsions, harassment in learning environments, disrupted education pathways, and limited access to safe educational opportunities for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

LGBTQIA+ people frequently face discrimination, bullying, and expulsion from educational institutions. Many are forced to drop out due to harassment, family rejection, or threats of violence. In displacement settings, documentation barriers and financial hardship further restrict access to education. Education programming must therefore prioritise safe learning environments, alternative education pathways, and opportunities for skills development that support long-term independence. The PRIDE Centre recognises the particular challenges related to strengthening inclusive education in public local education settings.

Education interventions should focus on restoring learning opportunities, strengthening safety in educational environments, and ensuring that LGBTQIA+ individuals, and children of LGBTQIA+ parents can pursue education without fear of discrimination or violence. Access to education is a key pathway to long-term protection, dignity, and economic independence.

The tables below provide operational guidance for implementing LGBTQIA+-inclusive education interventions.

Education Programme Design and Delivery

Education Programming Area	Common Barriers	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Access to Education	LGBTQIA+ students expelled or excluded from schools	Support alternative education pathways	Provide bridge programmes, safe community learning centres, or online learning opportunities for individuals forced out of formal education systems.
Educational Discrimination	Bullying, harassment, and discrimination by teachers or students	Promote inclusive education environments	Work with schools and education partners to implement anti-discrimination policies and inclusive codes of conduct, where possible.
Documentation Barriers	Lack of identity or birth certificates prevents school enrolment	Support documentation for school registration	Assist students with obtaining birth certificates or alternative documentation required for school enrolment where possible. Work/refer with other organisations who have experience with providing documentation support.
Economic Barriers to Education	Students unable to afford school fees or materials	Provide scholarships and financial assistance	Offer scholarships, stipends, or educational materials for LGBTQIA+ students who face financial exclusion.
Educational Continuity	Interrupted schooling due to displacement or violence	Provide flexible learning opportunities	Support evening classes, distance learning, or accelerated education programmes to allow students to resume education safely.

Skills Development and Technical Training

Training Area	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
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Technical and Vocational Training	LGBTQIA+ individuals lack employable skills	Provide practical skills training	Offer training in trades such as IT support, or digital services that support economic independence. Consult with the community to identify appropriate trades.
Scholarship Programmes	Marginalised LGBTQIA+ students unable to pursue further education	Provide targeted scholarship support	Develop scholarship programmes for LGBTQIA+ students excluded from higher education due to discrimination. Work in partnership with education institutions, identifying safe academic pathways.
Career Guidance and Mentorship	Students lack professional support networks	Provide mentorship programmes	Connect students with mentors who can support career planning and educational development.
Education-Livelihood Pathways	Education does not translate into employment opportunities	Integrate education with livelihoods programming	Link vocational training with livelihood initiatives to support transition from education to employment.

Safety and Protection in Education Settings

Protection Area	Risk	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
School-Based Violence	Bullying, harassment, or assault in educational settings, including in camp settings	Establish safety mechanisms and pathways for LGBTQIA+ students	Introduce/strengthen confidential reporting mechanisms and clear disciplinary procedures for harassment or violence.

Teacher and Staff Awareness	Discrimination from educators	Provide inclusion training and sensitisation for teachers and school staff	Conduct awareness training on inclusion, student protection, and non-discrimination, where possible.
Safe Learning Environments	Students avoid education due to fear, leading to absenteeism	Create safe and inclusive spaces	Establish safe classrooms, peer support groups, or school-based counselling services where possible.
Protection from Forced Disclosure	Students outed to families or authorities	Protect student confidentiality	Ensure school staff maintain confidentiality regarding students' identities or personal circumstances.

Differentiated Education Considerations by Population Group

Population Group	Key Education Risks	Inclusive Education Response	Practical Examples
Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals	Expulsion due to gender expression or uniform rules	Support gender-inclusive school policies	Promote inclusive education
LBQ Women	Early school dropout due to family pressure, pregnancy or forced marriage	Provide education support and scholarships	Offer scholarships and safe learning opportunities for women facing family rejection or violence.
Children of Forcibly Displaced LGBTQIA+ parents	Lack of access to education due to absence of documentation	Identify at-risk children and prioritise their access to education	Provide support to access documentation (e.g. birth certificates, refugee/asylum documents).

Intersex People	Bullying and lack of recognition in school systems	Promote inclusive education policies	Train educators on inclusion and prevent harassment.
Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and IDPs	Interrupted schooling and documentation barriers	Support access to education in displacement settings	Facilitate enrolment in host-country schools, community education programmes, or alternative learning centres, working with refugee/protection specialists

5.7 Safety, Security, and Digital Protection

Physical violence, targeted attacks, mob justice, doxxing, surveillance, online harassment, and security threats against LGBTQIA+ individuals and organisations, are the most commonly reported safety, security and digital protection issues.

In many humanitarian contexts, LGBTQIA+ people face heightened security risks from state authorities, armed actors, communities, and organised digital harassment networks. Threats may include physical assault, arbitrary arrest, raids on community spaces, online entrapment, and the leaking of personal information (doxxing). These risks are often amplified in displacement settings where individuals lack protection networks and legal safeguards.

Safety and security programming must therefore integrate physical protection, digital security, and community-based protection strategies. Operational systems must also embed staff training, accountability, ethical monitoring practices, and clear protection escalation procedures. Denial of services or discrimination must be treated as a protection incident requiring immediate response.

These interventions should not be treated as stand-alone activities. In contexts of criminalisation and active persecution, effective humanitarian programming depends on strong protection systems that safeguard both individuals and the organisations supporting them.

The tables below provide operational guidance for implementing LGBTQIA+-inclusive safety and security interventions.

Security Risk Management

Security Area	Common Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Security Risk Assessments	LGBTQIA+ security threats not identified or underestimated	Conduct regular security risk assessments	Assess risks related to mobility, housing, service access, and digital exposure. Update assessments regularly as security conditions change.
Protection Incident Response	Violence or threats not treated as protection emergencies	Treat denial of services or attacks as protection incidents	Establish clear procedures for LGBTQIA+ reporting, documenting, and responding to incidents including violence, arrests, or harassment. Intended for LGBTQIA+ service users and staff.
Operational Security	Programme visibility increases risk to participants	Implement low-visibility operational models	Avoid publicly identifying programme locations, staff, or participants where this increases risk.
Staff Security Awareness	Staff unaware of risks faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals	Provide security awareness training	Train staff on risk identification, safe communication practices, and how to respond to protection threats.

Digital Security and Data Protection

Digital Security Area	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Online Harassment and Doxing	Personal information leaked online leading to violence	Provide digital security training	Train staff and community members on protecting personal identifying information, safe online communication, and identifying digital threats.

Secure Communication	Sensitive communications intercepted or monitored	Use encrypted communication platforms	Encourage the use of secure messaging applications and encrypted email systems for sensitive discussions.
Data Storage and Protection	Personal data exposed through insecure storage	Implement secure data protection protocols	Store sensitive information on encrypted devices, restrict access to authorised staff, and avoid unnecessary data collection.
Digital Surveillance	Authorities monitor digital activity of organisations or individuals	Promote safe digital practices	Provide guidance on VPN use, safe browsing practices, and secure file sharing where appropriate.

Crisis Response and Emergency Preparedness

Crisis Area	Risks	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Emergency Response Planning	Organisations unprepared for LGBTQIA+ related arrests, raids, or violence	Develop crisis response and evacuation plans	Establish emergency protocols for rapid relocation, legal response, and staff safety during crises.
Rapid Protection Escalation	Protection threats ignored or delayed	Establish escalation procedures	Ensure staff know when and how to escalate threats to protection leads, legal teams, or emergency response partners.
Evacuation and Relocation	Individuals remain in unsafe environments	Provide emergency relocation support	Coordinate with shelters, legal partners, and humanitarian actors to facilitate safe relocation when necessary.
Incident Documentation	LGBTQIA+ related security incidents remain undocumented	Record incidents safely and confidentially	Maintain secure incident logs that inform protection programming while safeguarding identities.

Community-Based Protection and Early Warning Systems

Community Protection Area	Risk	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Community Protection Networks	LGBTQIA+ individuals lack collective protection systems	Support LGBTQIA+ community-based protection networks	Strengthen LGBTQIA+-led groups that provide peer protection, information sharing, and crisis alerts.
Early Warning Mechanisms	Threats detected too late	Establish early warning systems	Create communication channels for rapidly sharing information about raids, violence, or emerging threats.
Trusted Focal Points	Community members lack safe contacts for support	Establish protection focal points	Train trusted individuals within communities to coordinate protection responses and referrals.
Coordination with Protection Actors	Security threats addressed in isolation	Strengthen coordination with humanitarian protection actors	Link community protection systems with legal aid, shelter providers, and emergency response actors.

Operational Safeguards and Accountability

Safeguard Area	Risk	Inclusive Approach	Practical Examples
Staff Training and Accountability	Staff unintentionally increase risk for LGBTQIA+ persons	Train staff on protection-sensitive security practices	Ensure all programme staff understand confidentiality, risk management, and safe engagement with LGBTQIA+ communities.

Ethical Monitoring and Learning	Monitoring activities expose individuals to risk	Apply ethical and protection-sensitive MEAL	Ensure monitoring activities minimise data collection and prioritise participant safety.
Protection Escalation Procedures	Serious incidents mishandled or ignored	Implement clear escalation protocols	Establish procedures for escalating protection incidents to senior management and relevant protection actors.
Service Denial as Protection Incident	Discrimination treated as administrative issue	Treat denial of services as protection violation	Ensure any refusal of services based on SOGIESC triggers investigation and immediate protection response.

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With the participation of



Activity supported by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
 Activité réalisée avec l'appui du Fonds canadien d'initiatives locales

