



BUSINESS PRIMER

LGBT+ Inclusion and the UN Sustainable Development Goals



Open
For
Business

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About Open For Business

Open For Business is a coalition of global companies making the case that inclusive, diverse societies are better for business and better for economic growth. The purpose of the coalition is to advance LGBT+ inclusion globally, by promoting the economic and business case for equality of opportunity for everyone, all across the world.

Open For Business coalition partners share a deep-rooted commitment to diversity and inclusion in their own workplaces, and they are concerned about the spread of anti-LGBT+ policies in many countries in which they operate. In order to promote open and inclusive societies where business can flourish, the coalition presents the data that demonstrates inclusion is better for business and better for economic growth.



About this report

What is the purpose of this report?

This is a business primer, designed to act as a guide to linkages between the SDGs and LGBT+ inclusion. It builds a bridge to support companies having committed to both and it highlights ways in which the SDGs matter for LGBT+ populations worldwide.

What is its scope?

This report brings an LGBT+ lens to 20 targets of the SDGs. These targets have been identified to support existing business action on the SDGs.

Who is this report for?

This is a business primer, designed for company representatives wanting to connect the dots between SDG action and commitments to LGBT+ inclusion. It may also be of interest to policymakers in building an inclusive path towards Agenda 2030.

Who are the authors?

This report was authored by **Dr Felicity Daly**, a researcher at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London. Dr Daly brings over two decades' experience in development research, policy, advocacy and technical assistance. She has worked extensively as an independent consultant writing reports and policy briefs for UN agencies and others. She also served in senior management positions for UK charities including as Executive Director of a UK charity seeking to uphold the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people internationally. Additional drafting support was provided by **Jon Miller**, **Kathryn Dovey** and **Ann-Kathrin Richter**.

The Open For Business Research Advisory Board

The work of Open For Business is supported by a Research Advisory Board, which provides ongoing guidance and feedback, and helps to ensure the economic case for LGBT+ inclusion is comprehensive and up to date.

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This publication has been made possible by the following sponsors:



BRUNSWICK

Executive summary

With just 10 years remaining to meet the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the clock is ticking. Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development was endorsed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September 2015 setting out these 17 goals and 169 targets to end poverty and inequality and confront climate change. The Global Goals result from an inclusive process that involved states, civil society and business, and they emphasize a new approach to development that aspires to “*leave no one behind*.”¹

LGBT+ people have often faced barriers in accessing economic and social development initiatives. While LGBT+ people are not explicitly identified as a marginalized population in Agenda 2030, several SDG targets provide entry points that can be utilized by advocates of inclusive societies to ensure that LGBT+ people are not left behind. That is the purpose of this business primer – to highlight the linkages and build bridges between SDG action and commitments to LGBT+ inclusion.

After the Global Goals were launched the UN Secretary General asserted that the SDGs will only be realized if UN member states reach all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity². This is supported by the work of Open For Business, which has shown that there is a clear economic case for encouraging the inclusion of LGBT+ people in society. It is also the message of the UN OHCHR Standards of Conduct for Business which build on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and support companies in eliminating LGBT+ discrimination within the workforce and preventing human rights violations against LGBT+ consumers, suppliers and distributors.³

Now there are just 10 years to fulfil the SDG commitments, an unprecedented effort is needed across society, and business has a fundamental role to play. This primer highlights 20 SDG targets that are highly relevant to companies' actions to enhance LGBT+ inclusion while contributing to the realisation of Agenda 2030. It covers poverty, health, education, gender equality, decent work, inequality and more, each time bringing the lens of LGBT+ realities. This primer is designed to ensure that LGBT+ inclusion is woven into business action on the SDGs and vice versa to ensure that everyone benefits from action towards Agenda 2030.

Foreword



**Kathryn Dovey, Executive Director,
Open For Business**

In 2020 we are 10 years away from the deadline for meeting the sustainable development goals and the realisation of Agenda 2030. 2020 is of course a year like no other and this year's UN General Assembly be like no other as we all adapt to the current multiple crises brought about by COVID-19.

At Open For Business we understand the importance of making sure no-one is left behind and ensuring that everyone can benefit from development and economic progress. LGBT+ populations are not specifically mentioned in the 17 SDGs, nevertheless the lives of LGBT+ people are closely intertwined with the objectives set out in the goals and targets. This primer aims to draw out that connection. It is designed to support business representatives in their existing efforts to support the SDGs, particularly those companies that have already made a case for LGBT+ inclusion in their work.

This primer looks across all 17 goals and 160 targets and identifies a subset of 20 targets building on eight of the goals. This is not to say that the rest do not matter of course, it is rather an exercise in highlighting the clearest links to the world of LGBT+ inclusion. The publication covers poverty, health, education, gender equality, decent work, inequality and more. Each time setting out the background data on why a particular target matters and what companies might do in response.

We hope it will be a helpful addition to the library of resources ensuring that LGBT+ inclusion is part and parcel of Agenda 2030 and our collective journey to meeting the 17 Global Goals.



**Aline Santos, EVP Global Marketing
& Chief Diversity and Inclusion
Officer, Unilever**

At Unilever, we believe that business must serve society and that it is not possible to achieve long-term success in a world where people are excluded and left behind. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an action plan for the planet and society to thrive, addressing poverty, hunger and climate change. They address issues central to human progress and sustainable development, such as gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and responsible consumption and production.

2020 has brought unprecedented challenges, which mean these goals matter more than ever.

We are convinced that achieving the SDGs will be good for the planet and global economy, but what is absent is a recognition of the dotted lines between the SDG objectives and LGBT+ inclusivity. We pride ourselves on being a diverse and tolerant business, but we are still learning there remains much to be done to create a tolerant and inclusive world.

In line with Unilever's vision to be a beacon of inclusion for the LGBT+ community and its allies, we are delighted to work with Open for Business to deliver this report. It analyses the SDGs through an LGBT+ inclusive lens, draws out the main issues for companies and policymakers to consider and emphasises the importance of a truly inclusive approach to development.

Sustainable Development Goals



End poverty in all its forms everywhere



1.1

By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day



1.2

By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

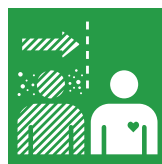


1.4

By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



3.3

By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases



3.4

By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being



3.5

Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



4.3

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university



4.5

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



5.1

End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere



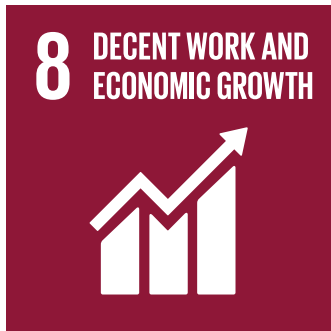
5.2

Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation



5.5

Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



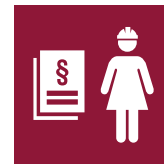
8.3

Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services



8.5

By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value



8.8

Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reduce inequality within and among countries



10.2

By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status



10.3

Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



11.3

By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



16.1

Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere



16.6

Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels



16.7

Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Focus Targets



Goal 1

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.1

By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.

Studies have found that rates of poverty, food insecurity and joblessness are elevated in LGBT+ communities.⁴ Evidence synthesized from a multi-year development research project demonstrated clear links between “*non-normative sexual desires, relationships and behaviour and the experience of poverty among LGBT+ people*”.⁵ In every country that has been studied violence, discrimination and social stigma limit LGBT+ people’s full participation in the economy, which could also reduce economic output more generally.⁶

By working to advance LGBT+ inclusion, businesses are supporting poverty reduction in societies as well as among LGBT+ communities. Open For Business has demonstrated that improving LGBT+ inclusion bolsters economic performance demonstrated by stronger growth and higher levels of entrepreneurialism.⁷ The United Nations Global Compact calls on companies to respect human rights in accordance with international standards and recognizes the importance of business in reducing poverty through economic output, creating sustainable employment opportunities, stimulating supply chains and contributing to tax revenue. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has published guidelines to support businesses to uphold the international standards that protect the human rights of LGBT+ people.⁸

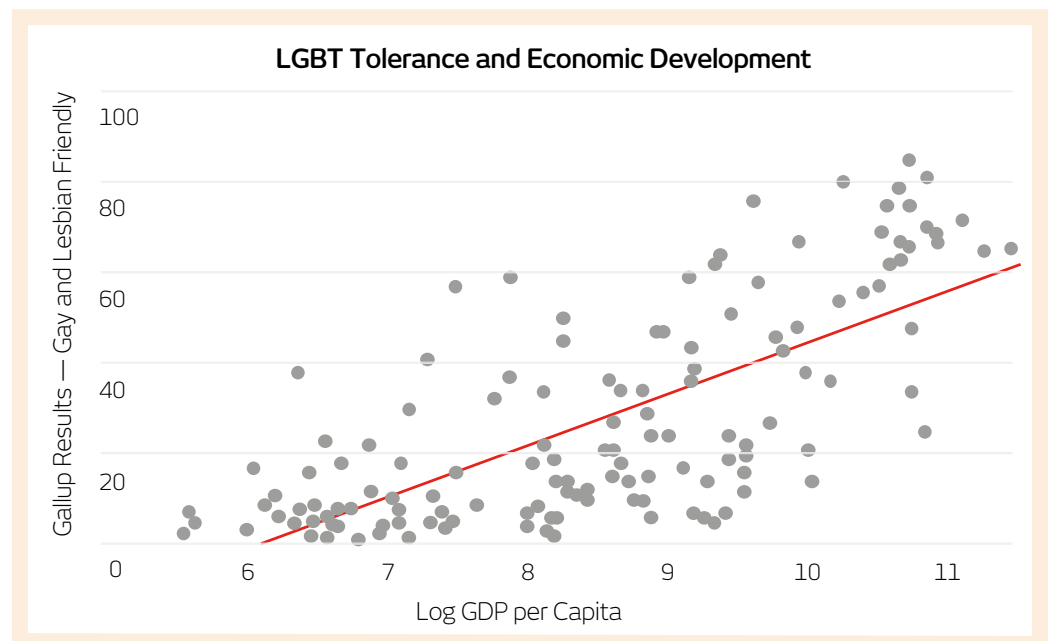


Figure 1: LGB&T inclusion is closely correlated to economic development

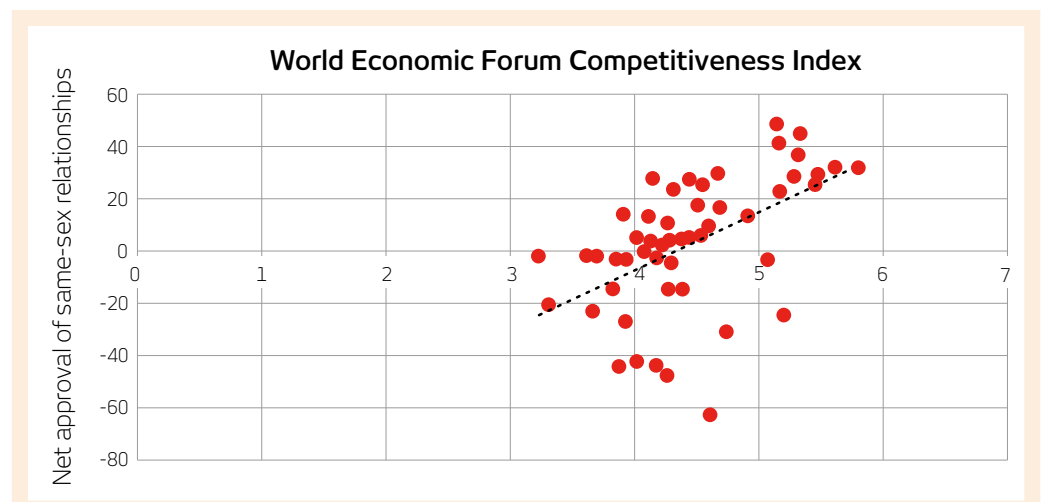


Figure 2: LGBT+ inclusion is tied to competitiveness

1.2

By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

Even in high-income countries where laws and policies that protect the human rights of LGBT+ people have been introduced social discrimination and violence continue to fuel poverty relative to the general population. A US study indicates that a greater percentage of gay and bisexual men fell at or below the federal poverty line compared with heterosexual men and that poverty rates for women in same-sex couples are higher, compared with heterosexual men.⁹ In Canada, research shows that gay men have personal incomes that are 12% lower than those of heterosexual men.¹⁰ An EU-wide study revealed that the unemployment rate among the LGBT+ population was at 15%, which was 4.5% higher than the general population at that time.¹¹

By eliminating LGBT+ discrimination within the workforce and preventing human rights violations against LGBT+ consumers, suppliers and distributors, businesses can help reduce poverty overall and ensure greater socio-economic inclusion of LGBT+ people.

1.4

By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.

When LGBT+ people are denied their human rights and equality of opportunity in accessing these economic resources it has a harmful effect on a country's level of economic development as demonstrated through analysis of 39 countries, including 29 "emerging economies", showing a positive correlation between per capita GDP and the existence of legal rights for LGBT+ people.¹² In many countries laws are designed to ensure men control capital and can own and inherit property, making women dependent on their male relatives and putting pressure lesbian and bisexual women to enter a heterosexual marriage.^{13,14} Micro Rainbow International Foundation focuses on alleviating poverty amongst the LGBT+ population and their economic empowerment programming has improved the livelihoods of LGBT+ people living in poverty. These programmes have shown that when LGBT+ people improve their economic prospects they gain greater acceptance within their families and societies.¹⁵

By fostering new opportunities for LGBT+ people to learn skills, utilize technology, improve chances to secure jobs, and by supporting micro enterprises and microfinance, businesses have a role to play in reducing disparities in access to economic resources.

Goal 3

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

3.3

By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.

Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transwomen continue to bear a disproportionate burden of new HIV infections worldwide.¹⁶ The reasons for their heightened vulnerability to HIV are multifactorial, in part due to entrenched structural barriers including criminalization, stigma, discrimination and violence.^{17,18,19} Lesbian, bisexual, and other women who have sex with women encounter a key HIV transmission risk when they experience sexual violence.²⁰

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated LGBT+ people's pre-existing social and economic inequalities resulting in: loss of income; food insecurity; disruptions in access to healthcare including HIV treatment; poor mental health; increased family and domestic violence, putting LGBT+ people at heightened vulnerability of homelessness. In certain settings LGBT+ communities have been scapegoated for the spread of the virus²¹. A report from the US revealed that LGBT+ people represent 40.5% of employees in sectors heavily impacted by the COVID-19 crisis including food services, hospitals, education and retail - industries which employ only 22% of workers from the general population.²²

Businesses have served as a key partner in the global response to HIV and other infectious diseases via platforms such as the Global Business Coalition on Health and through private sector contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. In the context of COVID-19 businesses have innovated within their operations to ensure worker health and safety and have found ways to protect and enhance the health of consumers.

By making the case for LGBT+ inclusion in society – including access to health care – and by supporting the health of employees and consumers, businesses can help to improve health outcomes in society, including communicable diseases.

3.4

By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

Numerous studies have established that a higher burden of poor mental health exists among LGBT+ people compared to the general population. A systematic review found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are at higher risk of depression and anxiety, suicidal thoughts and deliberate self-harm. Studies have demonstrated that depression symptoms are more prevalent among trans people compared with cisgender sexual minorities.²³ Diversity in sexuality or gender identity does not cause such "disorders". These disparities are a reflection of structural prejudice, discrimination, victimization and violence.^{24,25} These disparities are a reflection of structural prejudice, discrimination, victimization and violence.^{26,27} These factors produce chronic stress, characterized as "minority stress" that perpetuate poor mental health among LGBT+ people.

National suicide mortality rates will be measured to demonstrate progress on this target and it has been established through numerous studies that LGBT+ people have higher rates of suicidal ideation and attempts related to minority stress. Efforts to deliver this commitment will require increasing LGBT+ people's access to mental health and well-being services as well as focusing on addressing homophobia, transphobia and biphobia within societies. Open For Business has found that LGBT+ inclusion leads to enhanced employee productivity and better mental health at the level of the individual LGBT+ employees.²⁸

By making the case for LGBT+ inclusion in society – including access to health care – and through employee assistance programmes for LGBT+ employees who may face minority stress inside and/or outside the workplace, businesses can help to ensure a healthy workforce.

3.5

Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that drug and alcohol use is significantly higher among lesbian, gay, and bisexual people compared with heterosexual people.^{29,30} In countries where drug use data is collected, drug use is found to be higher among lesbian, gay, and bisexual people when compared to heterosexual people. There is significantly less research relating to drug and alcohol use among transgender people worldwide, but in one US study more than a quarter of trans people reported they used drugs or alcohol to cope with the impact of discrimination.³¹ Using alcohol and drugs to cope with minority stress and socializing in LGBT+ friendly spaces where alcohol is served and drugs may be accessible both contribute to higher rates of problematic drug and alcohol use among LGBT+ people.³²

By working towards LGBT+ inclusive societies, and thereby reducing minority stress, businesses can help tackle substance abuse and the harmful use of alcohol in society. Employee resource groups and assistance programmes may facilitate access to recovery services and counselling.

Goal 4

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.3

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

In many countries, criminalisation, discriminatory policies and hostile social attitudes persist in the contexts in which education takes place. Consequently, LGBT+ students face challenges in completing education and undertaking tertiary training. Available evidence on LGBT+ people's access to higher education and vocational education and training demonstrates that LGBT+ students face discrimination and violence in learning settings by both peers and teachers.^{33,34,35, 36}

Investments in education can bring many economic benefits, such as the development of a skilled workforce. Many businesses invest in education programmes, and evidence shows that this can build brand differentiation, employee retention and morale, profitability and business resilience.³⁷

By ensuring that education programmes are fully LGBT+ inclusive, and by providing vocational training and apprenticeship programmes to all workers without discrimination, businesses can play a meaningful role in ensuring equal access for all to education and training.

4.5

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

Only 66% of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education, 45% in lower secondary, and 25% in upper secondary.³⁸ Only 12% of the poorest males and 8% of the poorest females complete lower secondary school.³⁹ While these measurements highlight disparities based on gender and wealth, there is a lack of data on educational disparities associated with sexual orientation and gender identity. Nevertheless, it is clear that completion of studies is shaped by discriminatory policies and harmful cultural norms. Students often face bullying and discrimination in school settings if they do not conform to gender norms.⁴⁰ Transgender and gender non-conforming students may be forced to wear school uniforms that do not match their gender expression and may also encounter further discrimination if their school documents, diplomas, or certificates do not match their gender identity.⁴¹

By offering vocational training, apprenticeships and work experience schemes to LGBT+ people and providing targeted support to help them move into jobs and to be retained in employment, businesses can help eliminate disparities in education for vulnerable populations.

Goal 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.1

End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

Lesbian and bisexual women and trans people face compounded forms of discrimination that stem from both harmful gender norms and stigma against their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.⁴² It is important to consider how to include lesbian and bisexual women in approaches to address discrimination and promote socio-economic inclusion given that *"the bulk of discourse and action surrounding gender equality and women's empowerment in the development community has assumed a normative notion of 'woman' as heterosexual and cisgender. This means that lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) women are largely excluded from the critical dialogues that inform development programs and investments and the benefits that are derived from them."*⁴³

Research shows that businesses that invest in women may benefit through increased productivity, organisational effectiveness, return on investment and higher consumer satisfaction.⁴⁴

By advancing workplace inclusion of women in a way that addresses the specific barriers that lesbian and bisexual women and trans people face in recruitment, retention and advancement, businesses can help to end discrimination against *all* women.

5.2

Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

Lesbian and bisexual women and trans people are at high risk for multiple forms of violence committed against them within their partnerships, families and societies. Sexual violence is often perpetrated against people who do not conform to gender norms and lesbian and bisexual women and trans people face targeted forms of violence.⁴⁵ In settings where there have been high rates of sexual assault targeting lesbian and bisexual women perpetrators have misguidedly intended to "correct" their victim's sexuality.⁴⁶ A US survey of trans people found that 47% of respondents were sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime, rising to 53% among black trans respondents.⁴⁷

Following impact of the #metoo movement and the conviction of several high-profile serial sexual predators, businesses need to build a culture where all are safe and able to raise issues. Businesses must ensure that no-one in the workplace faces unwanted sexual attention or sexual coercion from co-workers or clients and that their workplaces are free of gender harassment, including inappropriate remarks and images.

By considering the specific forms of harassment that lesbian and bisexual women workers and trans workers may face, and by ensuring that workplace harassment prevention efforts explicitly forbid homophobic, transphobic and biphobic language and acts, businesses can help to eliminate violence and exploitation against *all* women.

5.5

Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

There are 42 countries worldwide that explicitly criminalize same-sex relations between women, which puts lesbians and bisexual women at risk of arrest, prosecution and police brutality.^{48,49} This places significant barriers to their engagement in political and public life and threatens their economic prospects wherein employers have impunity to discriminate against them. Legal barriers including the lack of legal gender recognition limits trans people's ability to change their gender marker and names on official identity documents pose barriers for trans people to engage in society and employment safely.⁵⁰ A US survey revealed that 40% of trans respondents who presented identification that did not match their gender identity reported being harassed.⁵¹

UN Women and the UN Global Compact have set out Women's Empowerment Principles, which have been adopted by 3,000 companies and stress that employers must treat all women and men fairly at work by respecting and support human rights and non-discrimination.⁵² UN Women recognizes the human rights of LGBT+ people as an intrinsic element of their mandate to achieve gender equality and deliver the SDGs. Businesses seeking to advance gender equality should embrace women and men in all their diversity, without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

By working towards gender equality that embraces women and men in all their diversity – without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression – businesses have a significant role to play in advancing women's leadership.

Goal 8

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8.3

Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

A study on LGBT+ entrepreneurship in the US found that states with policies unfriendly to the LGBT+ community lost many, if not all, of their nascent LGBT+ entrepreneurs before they founded their companies in inclusive states such as California, Illinois and New York - translating to the loss more than 1 million jobs for States that are not LGBT+ inclusive.⁵³ This study also found that 37% of LGBT+ entrepreneurs chose not to self-identify as LGBT+ while fundraising capital for their businesses with 12% citing concerns that being "out" might hurt their chances to secure capital.⁵⁴

The UN Global Compact has identified the key role of businesses in creating decent sustainable jobs.⁵⁵ By fostering an environment for entrepreneurs that is inclusive of LGBT+ people, businesses can ensure equal access to such opportunities.

8.5

By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Achieving decent employment for trans people requires specific attention. A US survey found that trans people experienced unemployment at twice the national unemployment rate, with trans people of colour experiencing unemployment up to four times the national rate; 90% experienced harassment, mistreatment or discrimination on the job; and 47% had an adverse job outcome, such as being fired, not hired or denied a promotion because of being transgender or gender non-conforming.⁵⁶

An Open For Business study conducted by Boston Consulting Group analysed 96 of the fastest-growing companies headquartered in emerging markets found that companies that advocate LGBT+ inclusive policies tend to attract and retain top talent.⁵⁷ By building a safe, supportive and non-discriminatory workplace, business can increase employment opportunities for LGBT+ people.

8.8

Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

Research has found that organizations that are supportive of LGBT+ employees benefit from more committed, productive workforces with improved workplace relationships and health outcomes.⁵⁸ Furthermore, legal protections have encouraged more trans people to come out at work which allows trans people to be "*happier, healthier, more productive and loyal employees*".⁵⁹

Analysis of 96 fast-growing companies in emerging markets identified that the number of companies that have public policies against LGBT+ discrimination has doubled from 19 in 2015 to 37 in 2019.⁶⁰ Businesses must implement and promote anti-discrimination policies that are inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. Publishing data showing how this benefits businesses could provide a resource for advocacy to change national labour law.

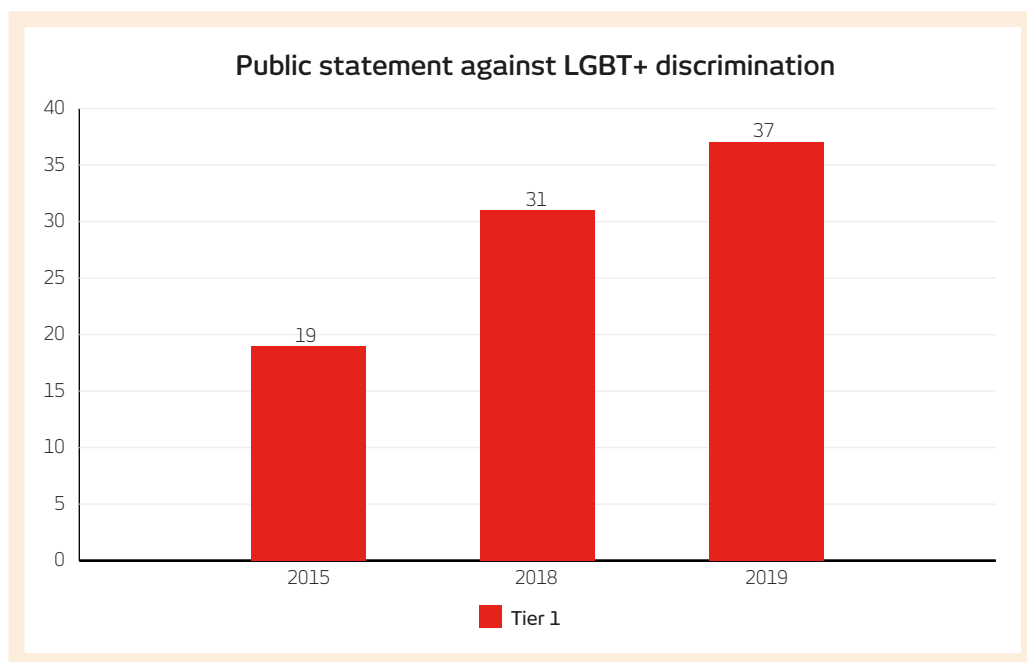


Figure 3: The number of the world’s biggest companies that have released a public statement against LGBT+ discrimination is rising year by year

High-performing companies are more likely to be LGBT+ friendly:

Many of Fortune magazine’s 500 largest publicly-traded companies have LGBT+ inclusion policies in place, according to analysis by the Human Rights Campaign

Human Rights Campaign (2017) LGBTQ Equality of the Fortune 500

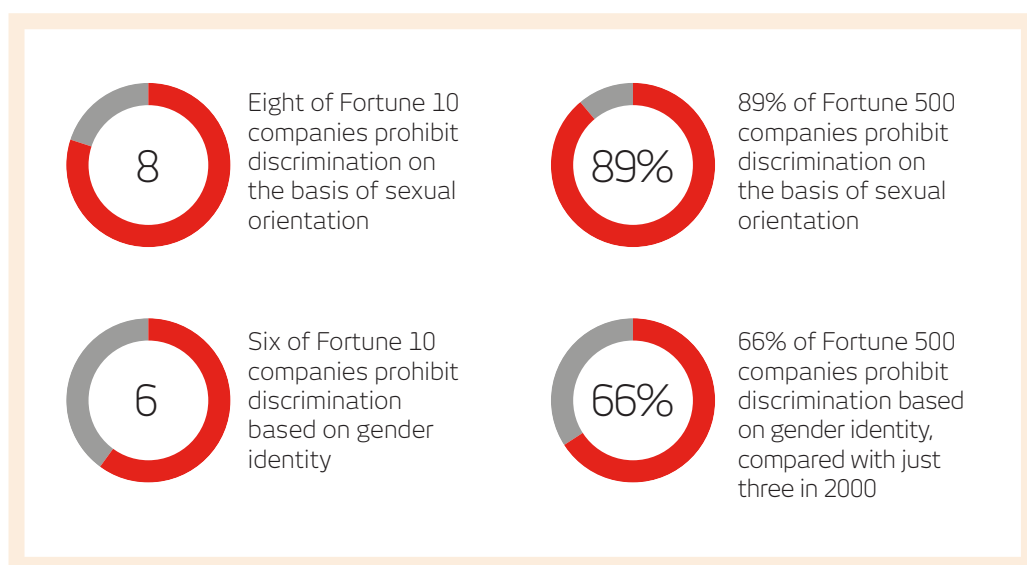


Figure 4: Most Fortune 10 companies have LGBT+ inclusion policies in place

Goal 10

Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.2

By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

International human rights experts and UN system actors are acutely concerned that LGBT+ people do not have equitable access to the benefits of social and economic development.

They note: *"the development commitments of the international community, placed in the frame of the SDGs, demands that immediate attention be given to ensuring that the systematic exclusion of these groups, communities and populations be addressed"*.⁶¹

This is a key target for businesses to utilize as they pursue LGBT+ inclusion. It was explicitly framed to include 'other status' which can serve as an entry point to address barriers to socio-economic inclusion based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression and provides scope to address discriminatory legislation, policies and action.⁶² Successful, enterprising businesses thrive in diverse, inclusive societies.

10.3

Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

This target seeks to decrease the proportion of the population that reports they have personally felt discriminated against or harassed on the basis of grounds of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law. While there are numerous legal and policies barriers that constrain the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people they are dependent on the existence of laws that criminalize same-sex consensual activity, which remain in place in 70 countries worldwide.

Trans people face myriad legal and cultural norms that seek to control how they express their gender and limit their full participation in society.

Open For Business studies note that anti-LGBT+ policies are counter to the interests of business and economic growth and has documented risks for business operating in countries that criminalise LGBT+ people and have high legal levels of discrimination in society. These include: threats to employee safety and security including criminal conviction, harassment and violence; compliance concerns when business codes conflict with national law; and brand and reputational risks including negative opinions held by employees and consumers; and the possibility of activism against businesses such as boycotts.⁶³ Open For Business has found that there is consumer willingness to change consumption behaviours, including supporting boycotts of companies doing business in countries where there is discrimination and criminalisation of LGBT+ people, and showing preferences for employment with firms demonstrating a mandate for LGBT+ inclusion.⁶⁴

Nearly 300 companies worldwide have endorsed the UN Standards of Conduct for Business on Tackling Discrimination against LGBTI people.⁶⁵ These standards recommend that businesses work closely with LGBT+ civil society in order to identify how they can best demonstrate their support to change national policy. With the guidance of LGBT+ human rights defenders, businesses should consider the public steps they might take to promote LGBT+ inclusion including: fostering dialogue with societal leaders; challenging government actions; undertaking high level advocacy; and tangibly supporting grassroots advocacy to overturn discriminatory laws, policies and practices. Open For Business has set out additional examples of progressive actions in the Channels of Influence report.

New Survey Data

Consumers are ready to act in support of global LGBT inclusion

To explore further the risks associated with public opinion, Open For Business commissioned a survey of attitudes among US and UK consumers towards companies doing business in countries with anti-LGB&T laws.* The results are published for the first time in this report. The results show the strength of popular support for global LGB&T inclusion – to the extent that they support boycotts, change consumption behaviors and employment preferences:

* Research by Brunswick Insight; N=525 in the US; N=543 in the UK

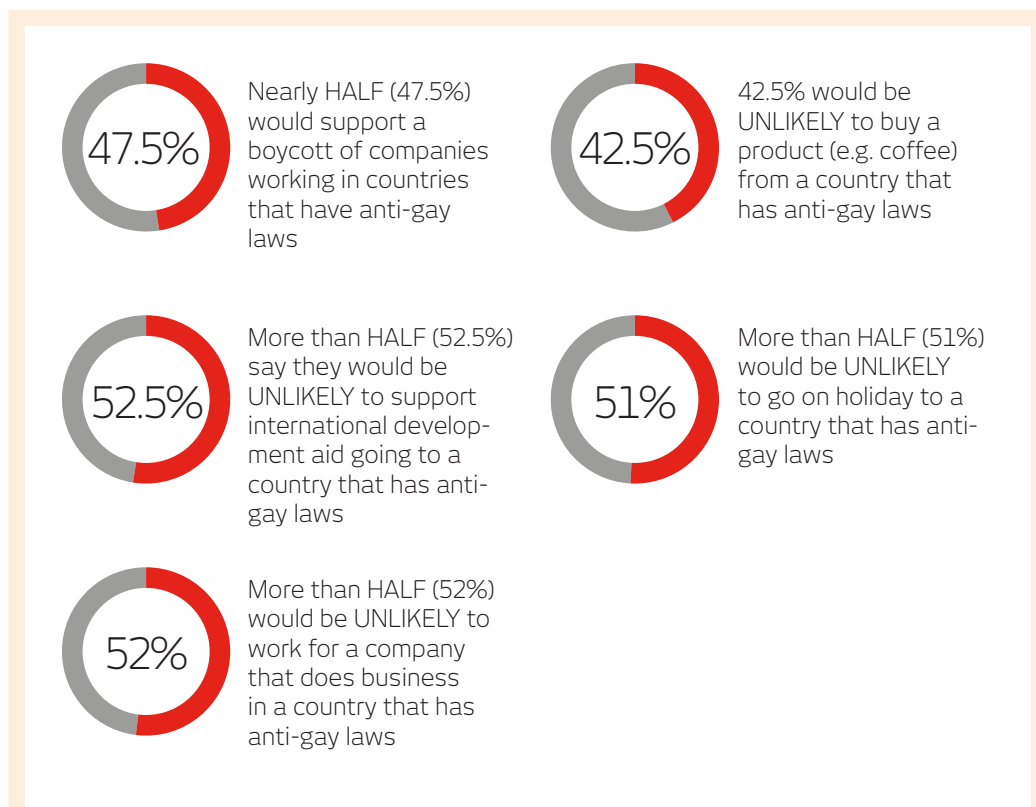


Figure 5: UK and US consumers are voting with their feet on LGBT+ discrimination



Value Chain Channel

The Value Chain Channel includes a company's supply chain and distribution networks, as well as the end-buyers of its products and services – customers, clients and consumers.



Financial Channel

The Financial Channel includes banking partners that provide financing lending and services (such as payroll), as well as investors (asset owners and managers) and direct investment.



Public Policy Channel

The Public Policy Channel includes relationships with public officials, governments, politicians and policymakers, as well as relevant industry regulators and national human rights institutions.



Civil Society Channel

The Civil Society Channel includes the civil society groups and NGOs that a company interacts with, the various communities that surround the business, and the media.



Industry Channel

The Industry Channel includes any professional bodies or industry associations that a company or its employees may participate in, as well as Chambers of Commerce and Trade Unions.

Goal 11

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

11.3

By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

More than half the global population now lives in cities and that is projected to rise to at least 60% by 2030.⁶⁶ Over the past several decades LGBT+ communities have established a visible presence in cities, particularly in high-income countries.⁶⁷ Within cities, LGBT+ people may face housing discrimination being denied leases and mortgages, harassed by neighbours or evicted from their homes.⁶⁸ These forms of discrimination drive LGBT+ people into homelessness at twice the rate of the general population and LGBT+ people are more likely to be turned away from shelters serving the general homeless population.⁶⁹ Homelessness can result in LGBT+ people's further exclusion as lack of a fixed address can make it difficult or impossible to get a bank account, receive mail, register with health providers or to provide identification needed when seeking employment.⁷⁰

Open For Business has presented evidence demonstrating that "open" and diverse cities that are LGBT+ inclusive are more competitive and better able to serve as hubs for the operation of leading businesses. LGBT+ inclusion signals that *"a city has a tolerant, dynamic cultural life, and that it is a globally integrated place to do business"*.⁷¹ Recent research conducted by Boston Consulting Group for Open For Business analysing 96 companies in emerging markets found that LGBT+ inclusive cities provide a supportive environment that boosts the competitiveness of high-potential companies. Businesses that operate in a way that is inclusive of LGBT+ people provide a model for greater inclusion within cities.

By engaging constructively with the governments of cities in which they do business, companies can encourage more LGBT+ friendly environments, thereby promoting more inclusive cities.

By engaging constructively with the governments of cities in which they do business, companies can encourage more LGBT+ friendly environments, thereby promoting more inclusive cities.

LGBT+ inclusion is correlated with city GDP per capita

Using the City LGBT+ Inclusion Score we can explore the connection between inclusion and the economic performance of a city. A clear relationship becomes evident: more inclusive cities tend to have higher GDP per capita. The regression line suggests a stronger uplift in the move from very low to medium inclusion scores (i.e., from dangerous or hostile to tolerance not inclusion). An outlier in this graph is the city with high GDP per capita but a medium inclusion score: this is Singapore.

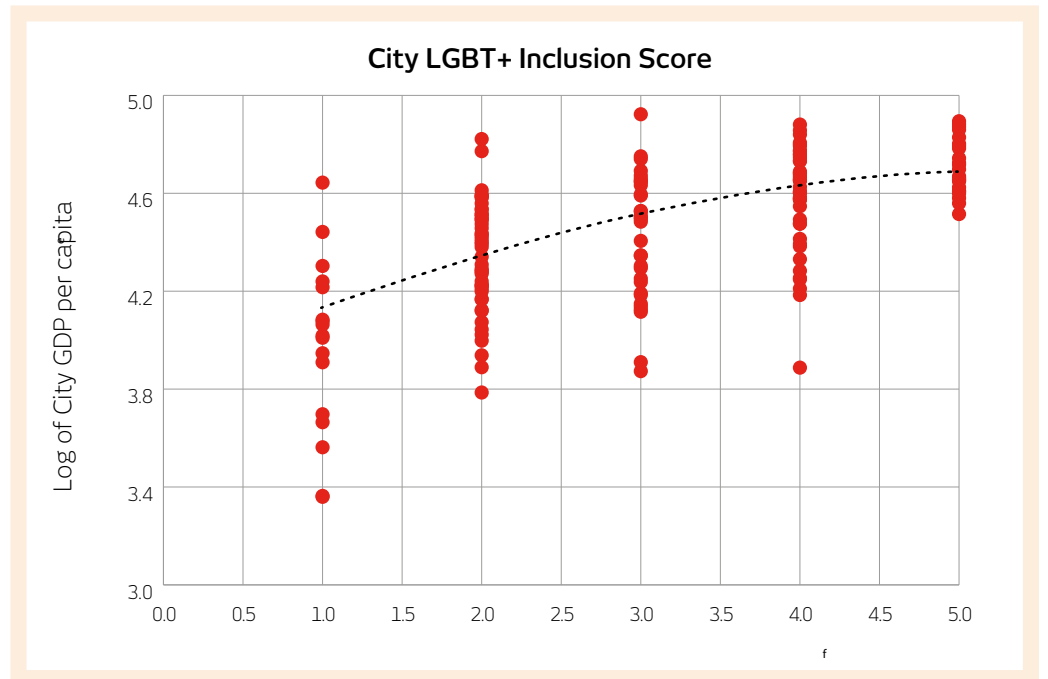


Figure 6: City LGBT+ inclusion and GDP per capit

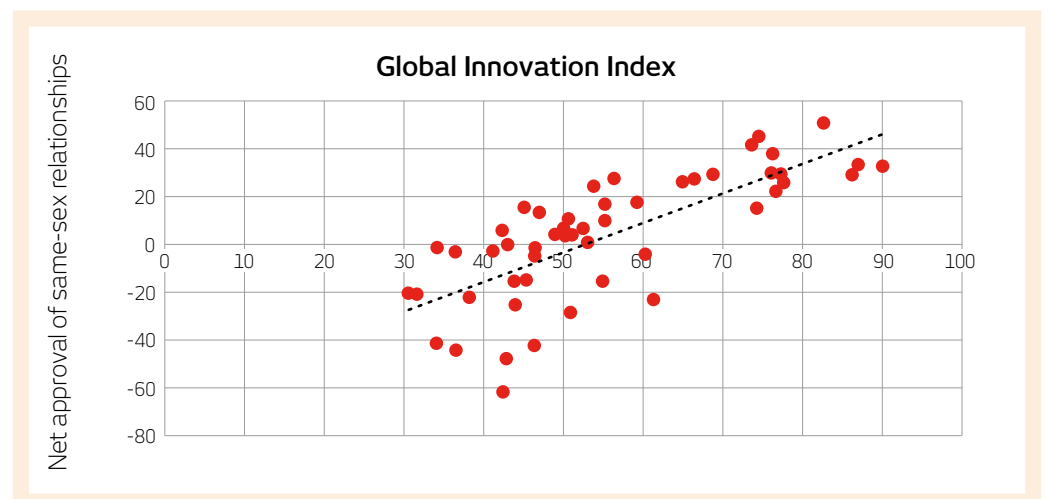


Figure 7: LGBT+ Inclusion and Innovation

Goal 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

16.1

Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

The UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity asserted that lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender non-conforming persons are at heightened risk of physical and sexual violence and that sexual orientation or gender identity plays a key role in the perpetration of such abuse.^{72,73,74} Citing data from a trans violence monitoring project that recorded 2,609 reports of murder of trans and gender non-conforming people in 71 countries worldwide between 2008 and 2017, the Independent Expert cautioned that given hate crimes are not systematically recorded, the actual figure is certain to be higher.^{75,76}

High rates of violence and lack of personal safety experienced by LGBT+ people are fuelled by homophobia, transphobia and biphobia and undermined by the absence of anti-hate crime legislation in many countries. By challenging harmful social norms and exemplifying LGBT+ inclusion in their operations, including zero tolerance for violence against LGBT+ people, businesses can contribute to curbing violence.

16.6

Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

A report on laws governing the registration of LGBT+ civil society organisations found that in 54 countries, civil society organisations are unable to register if they cite that their aim is to serve LGBT+ people and that such organisations often operate without official status or find other ways to register and maintain that status by concealing their real purpose.⁷⁷ It could be argued that this normalizes operational incentives that can have long-term adverse effects on the transparency and efficiency of their operations.⁷⁸

Open For Business has demonstrated that in countries where there is structural and social discrimination against LGBT+ people there are higher rates of corruption and lack of transparency.⁷⁹ Countries that are more inclusive of LGBT+ people are more likely to have stronger institutions that allow for growth and sustainable economic growth.⁸⁰ By encouraging accountability and transparency and promoting diversity and inclusion, businesses can create an atmosphere of trust and communication which is essential for effective operations.

16.7

Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

LGBT+ civil society movements often assert that there should be “nothing about us without us” when developing interventions to protect and promote the human rights of LGBT+ people. The UN Standards of Conduct for Business stress that businesses consult with and be guided by LGBT+ human rights defenders when considering what actions businesses could take to signal solidarity and promote LGBT+ inclusion at a societal level.⁸¹

LGBT+ inclusion in decision-making at a corporate level can be enhanced by establishing LGBT+ employee networks and ensuring professional advancement pathways do not exclude the promotion of competent LGBT+ employees. By increasing diversity on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression in management committees and board appointments, businesses can ensure that corporate decision-making is LGBT+ inclusive and representative.

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