Making Visible:

The Lived Realities of LBTQI+ across Nepal, Uganda and Zimbabwe

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WOMANKIND
WORLDWIDE EQUAL RESPECTED PROUD

Authors

This paper was written by Piyumi Samaraweera with input from Sarah Masters and is based on evidence and learning from three projects delivered by Womankind Worldwide and partners during 2018-2019. This was supplemented by interviews and meetings between the authors and key project contacts from Mitini Nepal, Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG) and Pakasipiti in Zimbabwe.

Acknowledgements

About Womankind Worldwide

Womankind Worldwide (Womankind) is a global women's rights organisation working with women's movements to transform the lives of women. Our vision is a world where the rights of all women are respected, valued and realised. We support women's movements to strengthen and grow by carrying out diverse joint activities, including advocacy and communications work, women's rights programming, awareness raising, knowledge sharing, research, capacity development and fundraising.

About this learning paper

This learning paper aims to share insight, analysis and reflection from our portfolio of work and builds upon a body of learning to support women's rights and movement strengthening. The paper aims to capture and collate some of the knowledge, learning and evidence around the focus and effectiveness of our work with partners who focus on lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex+ (LBTQI+) issues. By sharing this learning, we hope to provide new knowledge resulting from our feminist programme approaches to contribute to evidence and learning to support and strengthen women's movements. We acknowledge that there is no universally accepted umbrella term to capture the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE), nor do our partners use the same terminology as each other. Therefore in this report we will use the acronyms that partners use in the context of their projects and LBTQI+ at other times, with the intention of including everyone.[1] The divergent terms used by our partners also reflects the continued challenges of the politics of identify, inclusion and exclusion which exists within the LBTQI+ spectrum.

List of acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on Eliminating All forms of Discrimination Against Women	**IWD**	International Women's Day
CEDOVIP	Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention	**LGBTQI**	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women	**MSM**	Men who have Sex with Men
FGD	Focus Groups Discussions	**SDG**	Sustainable Development Goals
GBV	Gender Based Violence	**SMUG**	Sexual Minorities Uganda
GQ	Gender Queer	**SOGIE**	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression
HRAPF	Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum	**VAWG**	Violence Against Women and Girls
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies	**WER**	Women's Economic Rights
		WM	Women's Movement/s
IDAHOBIT	International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia	**WRO**	Women's Rights Organisation/s

Definitions

Women's rights organisations: These are women-led organisations working to advance women's rights and gender justice.

Women's movements: These are broad social movements led by women and their organisations that campaign for women's rights and gender justice at national, regional and international levels. They include WROs and other actors, including activists, academics, journalists, lawyers and trade unionists.

Intersectionality: A term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalised identities. Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalised identities and allows us to analyse social problems more thoroughly, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities.

Intersectional feminism: Feminism which accounts for all aspects of social and political identities (gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, etc.) and how related discriminations overlap (or 'intersect').

Lesbian: A woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.

Gay: A man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

Bi: An umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender. Bi people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pan, queer, and some other non-monosexual and non-monoromantic identities.

Bisexual: A person who experiences sexual, romantic and/or physical attraction to more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.

Trans: An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

Queer: A term which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid. Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBTI+ community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc). Although some LGBTI+ people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 1980s by the queer community who have embraced it. It is also seen my some as a political statement and position reflecting a diverse use of the term.

Intersex: A term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

Gender identity: How a person sees themselves – their internal sense and personal experience of gender. Only the individual can determine their own gender identity. Many people have a gender identity of a man or woman, but some people do not. People who do not identify as a man or a woman may identify as non-binary, both genders, neither gender, between genders, or not gendered at all.

Gender expression: How a person outwardly shows their gender identity. It includes physical expressions such as a person's clothing, hairstyle, makeup, and social expressions such as name and pronoun choice. Some examples of gender expression are masculine, feminine, and androgynous.

Heteronormative: A set of lifestyle norms, practices, and institutions that promote binary alignment of biological sex, gender identity, and gender roles; assume heterosexuality as a fundamental and natural norm; and privilege monogamous, committed relationships and reproductive sex above all other sexual practices.

Transgender man: A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

Transgender woman: A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.

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Laxmi Ghalan, Founding
President of Mitini Nepal, attends
a march for human rights.
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Executive summary

In this paper, Womankind draws on evidence and learning from three distinct but related LBTQI+ focused projects to better understand the impact of her programmatic approach through project delivery and partnership, in line with the Womankind Theory of Change. The paper also documents how supporting more marginalised voices within national women's movements can contribute to strengthening and sustaining such movements.

Womankind's programmatic approach to strengthening women's movements, as detailed in her strategy and Theory of Change, asserts that progressive change for women happens when diverse and independent women's movements have strength, resilience and collective power.[2] Whilst the actors in women's movements are varied, Womankind understands that women's rights organisations (WROs) form the backbone of women's movements and are the sites from which movements are built and supported.[3] Collaboration and partnership between Womankind and WROs is central to this and is grounded in feminist values. While there are many different understandings of feminism, some being more inclusive than others, it is important to note that Womankind's feminist standpoint is explicitly political and underpins her solidarity with all women. For Womankind, feminism is the path to achieve gender equality; it is about collectively and actively transforming the world so that women hold equal power, control and access to resources and rights. Womankind recognises that all women experience oppression in different ways, and she acts in solidarity with women in all their diversities so that every voice is heard and everyone has a choice in their future. To avoid replicating the power imbalances of patriarchal structures and systems, Womankind's partnerships are based on a power-with strategy with joint ownership and shared risks, responsibilities and benefits. Womankind's Theory of Change identifies a set of programme inputs, called pillars, (See image on page 6) underpinned by feminist leadership, which summarise the areas of support that Womankind includes in her programmes and in project design with partners to strengthen women's movements.[4]

Over the last 30 years, Womankind's mission has been to strengthen the agendas and organisational infrastructures of a diverse mix of WROs in the global south to bring about women's rights, particularly in areas related to violence against women and girls, (VAWG), women's economic rights (WER) and political and civic participation. Previously Womankind chose, on average, three organisations per country of varying sizes, capacity and thematic focus to ensure that a range of pressing women's rights issues were addressed across the spectrum of policy, service delivery and cultural norms and practices. These partners support constituencies of women who themselves are linked to broader networks of individuals and informal and formal groups in their contexts. With Womankind's 2016-2021 strategy and her focus on women's movements, she now has a deliberate focus on a wider range of partners including the three highlighted in this paper. Womankind has anywhere between 7-11 partners in each of her five focus countries and among them, WROs which focus on particularly marginalised constituencies including women with disabilities, indigenous women, lesbian bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex + (LBTQI+) persons, as well as those organisations which focus on younger women.

The focus of this paper: Introducing the projects

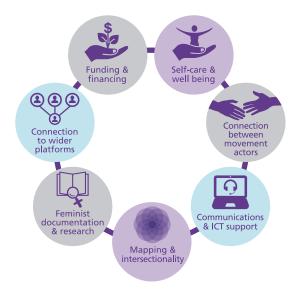### Pakasipiti, Zimbabwe: Promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms for LBTQ women

Pakasipiti facilitated the development of a national Charter to improve LBTQ women's access to their human rights in Zimbabwe. They used the Charter to influence decision-makers and duty bearers, and the process helped develop a support base and network of influencers and champions both for the organisation and the LBTQ community. The work included building the capacity of LBTQ women to understand, articulate and advocate on their own needs and rights. The Charter was launched during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence (GBV) in 2018. The project has enabled space for dialogue on the LBTQ community accessing their full human rights in Zimbabwe and has facilitated increased engagement between the LBTQ community and those working on women's rights.

FARUG, Uganda: Documenting the lived realities of LBQ women

FARUG captured and described the current lives of LBQ women and the state of organising of LBQ communities in Uganda for the   time, through a research and documentation project in 2018-19. The research methodology for this project was developed by a project implementation team which included members from different diversities within the LBQ community including lesbian, bisexual, queer, trans and intersex women. The project also built feminist leadership of LBQ women through a framework that brought out the alternative voices of marginalised women. The project produced a report and a video documentary which provide insights on the political, social, economic, legal and health experiences in the daily lives of LBQ women

1. See here for a robust glossary of related terms https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms
2. Womankind Worldwide (2016), Women's Movements: a Force for Change. Womankind Worldwide's Strategy 2016-2021. Available online at https://www.womankind.org.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/womankind-strategy-summary-2017.pdf
3. Batliwala, S. (2012), Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements. AWID, 2nd Edition. Available online at https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/changing_their_world_2ed_full_eng.pdf
4. Womankind Worldwide (2016), Theory of Change: How Womankind Makes Change Happen. Available online at: https://womankind.org,uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/womankind-theory-of-change.pdf

in Uganda. It is the first specific national study of its kind and the findings are a result of data collected from 220 LBQ identifying women. Most critically, the research outputs make visible LBQ women and their experiences in Uganda which in and of itself is pioneering and significant given the challenging legal context.

Womankind Worldwide's inputs for movement building taken from her Theory of Change.
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Mitini Nepal, Nepal: Enhancing the capacity to build advocacy groups for LBT persons

Mitini Nepal piloted a model to capacitate individuals who aim to address and champion issues faced by LBT persons in the community. While the Nepali constitution is pioneering and progressive in a regional context, and recognises the fundamental rights of LGBT persons, implementation is weak.[5] Homophobia is prevalent in Nepal and there is ingrained cultural, religious and political prejudice toward LBTQI+ women. The project provided training, support and guidance ranging from training of trainers, sexual awareness programmes and bi-monthly wellness circles, to help individuals overcome everyday struggles. It built their confidence and also enabled them to play an active role in achieving their fundamental rights. This project created four social and advocacy groups (advocacy groups) in the Kathmandu, Jhapa, Dang and Sunsari districts, and through those groups, helped reintegrate LBT individuals into the community by increasing awareness and enhancing the visibility of LBT persons as a community. It has capacitated members of those advocacy groups and others who participated in various information sharing activities to put forward LBT issues and enabled them to actively engage with local stakeholders. The active participation of these social mobilisers has strengthened the visibility of the LBT community. As a result of engagement through the project, both the National Human Rights

Commission and Nepal Police and LBT communities in these districts are more aware of legal and human rights issues. This has led to collaboration between LBT persons and duty bearers, including a commitment from duty bearers to prioritise issues of the LBT community and to create a safe space for them.

More details of the three implementing organisations, Pakasipiti, FARUG and Mitini are included in the relevant case studies below.

Summary of the lessons learned

These three initiatives each aligned with key elements of the Womankind Theory of Change. This is a brief summary of initial learning with particular reference to Womankind's movement strengthening inputs (known as pillars). More comprehensive information on each initiative is included in the relevant case study.

Pillar 1: Women activists are supported and encouraged to understand the political importance of self-care and wellbeing

All three projects, particularly the LBTQ Charter (Zimbabwe) and Advocacy Groups (Nepal) projects, centred around providing safe spaces for the LBTQI+ community to have dialogues and address issues of wellness, wellbeing, mental health and self-care. Through these sessions, participants and by extension, the LBTQI+ community, in each context explored and defined what wellness and wellbeing meant for them and what structures and initiatives would help to sustain this. This has helped establish the close relationship between personal wellbeing and living a life full of dignity in society.[6] Through self-care and wellbeing programming both staff and community have been involved and contributed to an increased practice of self-care among stakeholders. In practical terms, this is an acknowledgement of the need for time and space for women to consider and respond to their own needs in relation to self-care and wellbeing. Across the projects the concept of wellness circles were popular, where LBTQI+ members come together regularly to discuss challenges and solutions.

During the Lived Realities (Uganda) project, self-care and wellbeing of LBQ women research participants was prioritised and integrated. Every team that carried out research in communities included a peer counsellor to support the participants in case of an emotional trigger, particularly important for those disclosing traumatic experiences including violence or abuse. However, in retrospect, FARUG concluded that having a full time counsellor would have been more beneficial to the project in order to guide and support research participants as well as peer counselors and data collectors.

5. However, the right to same sex marriage is not yet legally recognised in Nepal.
6. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is one of the nine core United Nations (UN) human rights treaties and forms part of the International Bill of Human Rights alongside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. ICESCR focuses on rights that are crucial to enable people to live with dignity. It looks at working conditions, social security, adequate food, housing, health and education.

Pillar 2: Opportunities are provided to movement actors to connect with each other in safe spaces

The Lived Realities (Uganda) project in particular provided a safe space where LBQ activists, leaders and women across the country could share challenges and discuss their daily lived realities. It fostered a spirit of feminist solidarity and mutual respect based on frank, honest and open discussions about the challenges and obstacles LBQ women face on a daily basis. During those discussions, the acknowledgement by participants of the largely undocumented, often ignored, rich Herstory of the feminist agency of queer women is another important result of the project which emerged out of the safe space created for open conversations. The project also provided opportunities for different generations of LBQ women in leadership to contribute to sustaining the history of the LBTQI+ movement in Uganda through documentation.

Similarly the LBTQ Charter (Zimbabwe) project has fostered collaboration, solidarity and created opportunities for disrupting, critiquing and challenging ideologies and systems of oppression to achieve transformative change for LBTQ women. In Nepal, the social and advocacy groups purposefully focused on capacitating LBT women leaders, supporting them to convene and meet together in safe spaces as well as providing them with technical expertise for lobbying/advocacy with decision making bodies.

The safe spaces created through these projects for LBTQI+ leaders has enabled those women to better network, embrace feminism and effectively participate in the broader women's movement programmes and activities with a renewed sense of confidence. According to Mitini Nepal, it has also strengthened their staff's and wider LBTQI+ community's understanding of political economy dynamics of LBTQI+s in the community, and they hope to use the project documentation as a blueprint for future campaigns and projects.

Pillar 3: Appropriate communications and information and communication technologies (ICTs) support is provided to facilitate network and alliance building and action

All three of these projects have facilitated the LBTQI+ community to craft and tell their own stories in safe spaces and to share and learn without fear of judgement, stigma and discrimination. Through the various platforms and spaces of engagement, these experiences and stories have been documented and informed some national and regional level influencing and advocacy. Through social media, the staff and individuals involved developed safe

strategies to ensure sharing of information and make LBTQI+ issues more visible. In Nepal the project enabled district level monthly meetings, wellness circle, events, and various stakeholder interaction and sexual orientation programmes, which helped to build confidence of how they can share their identity openly within society.[7] The open storytelling also provided opportunities to share personal experiences with each other as well as build alliances with wider WROs. The projects have also strengthened partners (and the LBTQI+ communities') communication platforms especially through their online presence. In Nepal, Mitini produced 'SPECTRUM: LBTI stories and calls for justice and protection', a publication documenting the lives and journeys of five individuals and drafted by members of the social and advocacy groups to commemorate the 2019 International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), which was another good example of this pillar coming to life.[8]

Pillar 4: Key actors in the women's movement are mapped and issues of intersectionality are raised, understood and addressed

Representation matters. Womankind therefore purposefully works in solidarity with partners who focus on the LBTQI+ community in their respective countries and take a rights based approach. These three projects have fostered collaboration for each partner with more mainstream WROs in each of their contexts. Uganda based FARUG are now part of the Coalition on GBV and actively engaged in the #metoo dialogue during the 4th Uganda National Women's Week held in October 2019 on the state of activism and accountability on sexual and gender based violence in Uganda.[9] In Nepal, Mitini has been successful in mapping the organisations working on similar issues, resulting in raising issues mutually for an effective working modality. They have identified the key local, provincial and federal level actors within the women's movement. In Zimbabwe, Pakasipiti observed that civil society, women human rights defenders and donors are now more aware of gendered challenges, and support strategies around operating space for women's rights as well as LBTQ rights.

Pillar 5: Feminist documentation and research form the core of umbrella initiatives to bring WROs together

In the case of all three projects, the feminist documentation and related outputs have also contributed to a much needed context specific body of knowledge and insight, reflecting the real and specific needs of LBTQI+ women.

In Uganda, there was an absence of data on

7. Some of these events were literally conducted under a tree, in an open, public space to spread awareness and to socialise key messaging with the public. The meetings are then approachable by the public who want to learn about the issue being discussed.
8. Rajbhandari, S. (2019), SPECTRUM: LBTI Stories and Call for Justice and Protection. Available online at: http://mitininepal.org.np/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Spectrum-book.pdf
9. This is a group of women's rights organisations that come together to address gender based violence (GBV) hosted by the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP).

the actual scope and lived experiences of LBQ women, and the specifics of the marginalisation and discrimination they faced. FARUG prioritised documentation and research to provide the space and mechanisms for LBQ women to share their daily lived realities, to help debunk the myths and misconceptions surrounding their lives and to promote social understanding and inclusion. Sharing that lived reality has helped identify gaps and areas for strengthening in FARUG's own work with WROs. Through the political acts of telling, documenting and sharing stories, they aimed to shape and influence socio-political and socio-structural change, connecting the personal to the political. It is through this connecting of the personal to the political that new theories and new practices – ways of being – emerge.

In Zimbabwe, Pakasipiti prioritised documentation and research because it was the core activity through which they could draw up the LBTQ Charter. Without accurate voices, reflections and input from community members themselves, the Charter of Needs would have not spoken to the community's core issues. The output was feminist in essence, as were the approaches and processes. Ensuring that the LBTQ community led the process of collecting information and drafting the document was vital for the success of the result. Members all over Zimbabwe were involved in the process, and there was a need to have both a qualitative and quantitative component to the research to ensure that it suited the various contexts that Pakasipiti wanted to target. Pakasipiti also used their

Pakasipiti organise a group discussion as part of their 16 Days of Activism activities. © Pakasipiti.

networks and coalitions to open spaces and enable dialogue of localised constituencies. Social media engagement was also an effective method to ensure that a wider community engaged and contributed, if need be, remotely.

In Nepal, Mitini's SPECTRUM publication proved to be a key output of their project which allowed them to amplify the voice of both the organisation as well as that of the LBTQI+ community. The publication was also an important tool for Mitini and those involved to openly express a variety of sexual and gender orientations and support the rights of those individuals.

Pillar 6: Women's movement actors are given the opportunity to connect to wider platforms for movement building and learning

All three projects have enabled the respective organisations to enhance their own voice and visibility, and connect to wider platforms, both nationally and internationally. More details are included in the case study section for each project. At their core, each initiative centred grassroots actors with an element of linking the local to national through to international for the purpose of information sharing, influencing and building alliances beyond their immediate community.

Other learning: The case studies also highlight other aspects of learning about strengthening movements especially around safe spaces and cross-movement building. As Womankind supports more initiatives in the future, the knowledge and evidence base will strengthen and grow.

Introduction

In this paper, Womankind draws on evidence and learning from three distinct but related lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex+ (LBTQI+) focused projects (summarised below) to better understand the impact of her programmatic approach through project delivery and partnership, in line with the Womankind Theory of Change. The paper also documents how supporting more marginalised voices within national women's movements can contribute to strengthening and sustaining women's movements. The project work described has supported LBTQI+ movements themselves, helped them link to other women's movements as well as to wider social movements, demonstrating that impact has been felt across a diverse range of movement spaces. In addition to rich existing project documentation and evidence, Womankind explored a range of movement-focused questions, including which strategies and approaches were used in each initiative to strengthen the women's movement, and what sustained changes were achieved for the women's movement as a result of the initiative. The three projects are described in detail in this learning paper.

An intersectional approach to partnership and programmes

The term intersectionality, which is sometimes misunderstood and misused, was originally coined and popularised in 1989 by critical legal and race scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe bias and violence against black women, but it has become more widely used by other groups and individuals, including LGBTQI+ people.[10] Crenshaw sees intersectionality as a lens through which you can see where power collides and intersects. It helps illustrate when there are multiple layers of discrimination faced by an individual or community due to the intersecting of varying identity characteristics. This lens helps make visible what is often erased by less nuanced frameworks – and so we are better able to see what happens to people who are subject to such multiple and intersecting discriminations. Intersectional analysis aims to address the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression, sexual discrimination and various other systems of discrimination create inequalities that structure the relative positions of women. It takes account of historical, social and political contexts and also recognises unique individual experiences resulting from the coming together of different types of identity.[11] In an intersectional gender-analysis, we can see that patriarchy and power impacts women in different and unique ways, depending on their age, race, disability, sexual orientation etc.

These multiple discriminations and hierarchies are also apparent within various social movements, including women's movements. Womankind therefore recognises the importance of taking an intersectional approach to her work and has identified it as one of seven key pillars for strengthening movements. Womankind celebrates diversity and difference and believes in addressing the multiple ways that women experience oppression, and this is a cornerstone of her principle of feminist inclusion. (See page 6).

> *"Deep intersectional organising and challenging intersecting systems of oppression like patriarchy and cis-heteronormativity is crucial to demonstrating solidarity and seeking transformation. We can no longer separate our struggles and this should be reflected in our strategies and demands which should intersect with various oppressions that feminists face."*
>
> **Valerie Bah and Felogene Anumo, AWID**[12]

Understanding the issues: Discrimination against LGBTQI+ people worldwide

LGBTQI+ people are often stigmatised, discriminated against and subjected to violence and abuse based on their sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE). Over 70 countries in the world have a range of laws that deem forms of 'homosexual activity' illegal.[13] In 45 of those countries, the law is applied to women as well as men.[14] Punitive laws range from the death penalty to imprisonment and punishment. An even larger number of countries do not recognise the right to change one's gender assigned at birth. In contrast, only 26 countries recognise same sex marriage. Additionally, while globally it has become increasingly difficult for community-based organisations to operate due to shrinking space for civil society, this is particularly true for LGBTQI+ organisations. This is partly because globally, LGBTQI+ movements are relatively young, and many LGBTQI+ organisations have had little time to institutionalise.[15] As a result, often organisations focused on SOGIE are restricted from registering as legal entities and consequently have challenges in documenting and fundraising – well beyond the challenges faced by mainstream WROs.[16]

10. Crenshaw, K. (1989), Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrines, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. University of Chicago Legal Forum, Issue 1, Article 8.
11. AWID (2004), Intersectionality: a Tool for Gender and Economic Justice. Available online at: https://www.awid.org/publications/intersectionality-tool-gender-and-economic-justice
12. Bah, V. & Anumo, F. (2017), "The Revolution will not be NGO-ised:" Four Lessons from African Feminist Organising. Available online at: https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/revolution-will-not-be-ngo-ised-four-lessons-african-feminist-organising
13. Gupta, T. (2018), LGQ Women and the Need for Specified Activism in Kenya. Available online at: https://humanrights.blogs.sas.ac.uk/2018/06/14/lbq-women-activism-kenya/
14. Daly, F. (2018), The Global State of LGBTIQ Organizing: The Right to Register. Available online at: https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/CSOReportJuly2018_FINALWeb.pdf
15. Bishop, K. (2017), Standing Firm: Women- and Trans-Led Organisations Respond to Closing Space for Civil Society: Executive Summary, Key Findings and Recommendations. Available online at: https://www.mamacash.org/media/publications/mama_cash_exec_summary_standing_firm.pdf
16. Bishop, K. (2017), Standing Firm: Women- and Trans-Led Organisations Respond to Closing Space for Civil Society. Available online at: https://www.mamacash.org/media/publications/mc_closing_space_report_def.pdf

17. In the West in the 1960s, just as they found with the Left, women in gay liberation movements, found that their issues and voices were 'subsumed' by male-driven agendas. See Queers in Court: Gay Rights Law and Public Policy, pg 11 (By Susan Gluck Mezey, 2007), as cited in Wijesiriwardena, S. (2017), Where Have All the Queer Women Gone? Available online at: https://www.genderit.org/editorial/editorial-where-have-all-queer-women-gone#fn1 and as cited in Sida (2014), The Rights of LGBT People in Zimbabwe. Available online at: https://www.sida.se/globalassets/sida/eng/partners/human-rights-based-approach/lgbti/rights-of-lgbt-persons-zimbabwe.pdf.
18. Asean Sogie Caucus (2015), Sogie Intersections and Rainbow Coalition: A Roundtable Discussion on Locating the Intersections of LGBTQ Issues. Available online at: https://aseansogiecaucus.org/images/resources/publications/SOGIE%20Intersections%20and%20Rainbow%20Coalition%20-%20print%20version.pdf.
19. Human Dignity Trust (2016), Breaking the Silence: Criminalization of Lesbians and Bisexual Women and its Impacts. Available online at: http://www.humandignitytrust.org/uploaded/Library/Other_Material/Breaking_the_Silence-Criminalisation_of_LB_Women_and_its_Impacts-FINAL.pdf.

Activists from Mitini's Social and Advoacy Group on International Day Against Homophobia 2018.
© Mitini Nepal.

Within that power dynamic, and in efforts to address this worldwide discrimination, there is a large focus on men who have sex with men (MSM) and both resources and lobbying for change tends to focus on that population, leaving lesbian, bisexual, trans and queer women further on the margins.[17] Gender inequalities and differences in SOGIE expose individuals to different types of risks and impacts their levels of access, especially in areas of health, education, employment and access to and control of resources. As social groups with distinct views, needs, and preferences, LBTQI+ persons are frequently among the most marginalised segments of the population due to cultural and structural inequalities.[18] As a result, their economic, social, and legal status often limit their ability to fully and effectively participate in and benefit from access, and limit their ability to play a vital role in sustainable and inclusive development. Women's particular experience of discrimination, violence and oppression is unique and shaped by many different factors. Additionally, while there is a general paucity of disaggregated data, there is evidence to show that LBTQI+ women are at increased risk of discrimination and violence particularly sexual

violence, including targeted or 'corrective' rape, because of the intersection between their gender and sexual orientation.[19]

The patriarchal hierarchy often reproduces itself within national women's movements, and LBTQI+ persons are not included as equals. Respondents from the Lived Realities research in Uganda noted that, "Despite claims that the women's movement is all inclusive, that most women in the movement are reluctant to discuss issues related to sexuality, using the pretext of religion and morality." However there is evidence that this context is changing. FARUG facilitated a sexual orientation related panel during the annual Uganda Feminist Forum (UFF) in August 2019 at the request of UFF organisers, and FARUG is also working alongside five other Uganda based WROs on a consortium project that is enhancing platforms for women's advocacy, voice and empowerment. Similar developments have been apparent in both the Nepali and Zimbabwean contexts following the respective projects described in detail in this report, and evidences that intersectional, inclusive and participatory approaches are important to commit to and actively resource.

Case study: Pakasipiti, Zimbabwe: Promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms for LBTQ women

Context

In Zimbabwe, prevalent attitudes towards homosexuality are that it is often believed to be un-African and against the teachings of churches.[20] Since both religion and culture are fundamental to the values and attitudes of mainstream Zimbabwean society, LGBTI+ persons are excluded socially, culturally, religiously, economically, and politically, and face stigma and violence. In addition, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity is not prohibited, but on the contrary encouraged and sponsored by the state through hate speech and vilification in state media.[21]

Civic freedoms, including freedoms of association, peaceful assembly, and expression, are routinely and violently repressed in Zimbabwe and more intensely so since January 2019.[22] This has manifested through intensified arrests of activists and opposition leaders, intermittent internet shuts-downs and state sanctioned violence. This repressive context poses serious challenges to progressive social movements, but adds another layer of complexity to individuals and organisations focused on issues of SOGIE.

Sex between men is criminalised in Zimbabwean law but at present there is no reference to women in the law. However, LBTQI+ women have no legal protections against discrimination and violence. As a result, women often find themselves arrested and detained by police for acts they label as 'indecent'. These matters rarely reach the courts and often result in arbitrary arrests and unlawful detentions designed to act as a deterrent to 'homosexuality'. The impacts of these violations are multiple and complex and include consequences such as physical, emotional, and mental trauma; lack of access to basic socio-economic rights such as food, shelter, work, education and health that goes beyond the access issues that the population in general are faced with; and social exclusion and isolation including negative portrayal in the media. In addition, a lack of data and research around health issues affecting LBTQI+ women prevents them from accessing key and essential sexual and reproductive health services.[23]

The initiative

As in other contexts, in Zimbabwe, within broader LGBTQI+ and women's human rights issues, LBTQI+ women are particularly marginalised because of intersecting identities, contexts and realities. Womankind partner Pakasipiti therefore purposefully organise themselves as a collective voice in acting against human acts of violence and the undermining of basic human rights of LBTQ women in Zimbabwe; to create and document fundamental narratives of LBTQ women in relation to rights, bodily autonomy and choice.

In 2018/19, with Womankind's support, Pakasipiti facilitated the development of a National Charter to improve LBTQ women's awareness of and access to their human rights in Zimbabwe. This process included considered and inclusive consultation of the community to inform the development of the Charter; capacity building, and publishing and distributing the Charter (including via network organisations, media houses and online blog / dialogue spaces) to create and strengthen a support base of influential people to help influence strategic conversations and spaces beyond the LBTQ community. This was an acknowledgement of the need to engage beyond Pakasipiti's constituency in parallel with its own work and focus to build alliances, and the importance of intersectional approaches in support of women's rights.

> *"They spoke about actively creating different spaces where they could claim and use their power and autonomy. We also noticed that the groups of women and stakeholders in their different spaces saw the need to have a responsive document that always spoke to our changing environments. They also took it upon themselves to seek out spaces in their various communities to ensure that the Charter or issues around the LBTQ Charter were articulated and that they actively used it."*
>
> **Patience Mandishona, Director, Pakasipiti**

The process of developing the Charter was as important as the Charter itself, particularly from a movement strengthening aspect within the LBTQ movement. Those who were involved in developing the Charter actively participated throughout the process, from the inception of the idea; conceptualising, developing guidelines, collecting data, and drafting the language for inclusion.

> *"Whenever someone spoke around issues of data collection, developing papers and doing research, we were always thinking*

20. Sida (2014), The Rights of LGBT People in Zimbabwe. Available online at: https://www.sida.se/globalassets/sida/eng/partners/human-rights-based-approach/lgbti/rights-of-lgbt-persons-zimbabwe.pdf.
21. Ibid.
22. CIVICUS (2016), Monitor Tracking Civic Space. Available online at: https://monitor.civicus.org/country/zimbabwe/.
23. There is a lack of research targeting women who have sex with women (WSW) and LBTI women when it comes to HIV/AIDS. Research available indicates that Men Who have Sex with Men, MSM, are the sources for 7% of new infections and are targeted as a key population to be prioritised. More profound studies, done in Botswana and Malawi, estimate that HIV prevalence among MSM is between 20 and 33 per cent and it can be estimated that the numbers are similar in Zimbabwe. Sida (2014), The Rights of LGBT People in Zimbabwe p. 3.
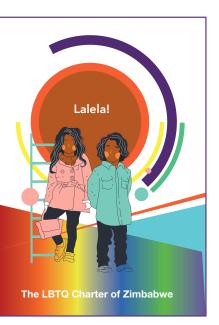
and assuming it's a very academic process for the intellectuals and that we could never also develop such; but now we realise through this workshop that there are various forms of speaking our voices."

Participant, national Charter development workshop

The project also created spaces which facilitated the creation of an advocacy agenda drawing on the Charter. The process contributed to a sense of agency amongst the LBTQ communities to increase their voice and visibility in a context where it has long been stifled and silenced.

"For the longest of time we are always asked in various spaces, what are the issues lesbian women face, what are their needs, demands and health concerns, and for once we have a unified voice that we can use to articulate this that we have written, that we have owned and that we will use to show people what lesbian women need."

Participant, national Charter development workshop

Front cover of Pakasipiti's LBTQ Charter of Zimbabwe, entitled 'Lalela!', a zulu word that means 'listen!' or 'hear us!'.
© Pakasipiti.

Although deeply rooted in the LBTQ community in Zimbabwe, the project created an opportunity for Pakasipiti and participants to hear and understand a range of regional differences within the national context. This was important in reaching a shared understanding in order to define and agree upon a unified agenda for the Charter. Pakasipiti successfully navigated and adapted activity plans to accommodate specific regional needs including language and culture but also facilitation, meeting venues and different working styles. Pakasipiti developed guidelines that were regionally and culturally nuanced and which responded to both the real and perceived power and hierarchy of their being based in Harare and working with communities outside of this urban centre.

How the initiative contributed to LBTQI+ movement strengthening in Zimbabwe

Feminist governance: The project increased Pakasipiti's staff capacity to develop better working methods, such as increased internal democracy through transparent steering documents or democratic mechanisms for decision making. It also led to increased gender equality across the LBTQ spectrum of identities within the organisation, and strengthened processes and routines for efficient implementation while adhering to feminist values and approaches.

Knowing their rights: The work included building the capacity of LBTQ women to understand, articulate and advocate on their own needs and rights. Nearly 1,000 LBTQ persons from within Pakasipiti's membership and from different communities in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare actively participated in trainings, meetings and community dialogues and strengthened their awareness of and ability to exercise their rights to bodily integrity and freedom from violence.

From the national to international spaces: The Charter was launched during the international campaign, 16 Days of Activism against GBV in 2018. The project has enabled space for dialogue on the LBTQI+ community accessing their full human rights in Zimbabwe and has facilitated increased engagement between the LBTQI+ community and those working on women's rights more broadly, including in international spaces.

Strengthening the base for influencing: Pakasipiti used the Charter to influence decision-makers and duty bearers, and this cross-movement building process helped develop a support base and network of influencers and champions both for the organisation and the LBTQI+ community. This resulted in the growth of Pakasipiti's membership base but also in creating a strong network of influential change makers, including women human rights defenders, who are willing to champion the rights of LBTQI+ women and other sexual minorities. Civil society and donors are also more aware of gendered challenges, and support strategies around operating space for women's rights and LBTQI+ rights. Both the women's rights movement and LBTQI+ women are able to engage in various spaces ensuring that the space is safe and embraces diversity for effective engagement.

"Women human rights defenders came on board and were also speaking out on the importance of breaking barriers. They also took it upon themselves to seek out spaces in their various communities to ensure that they share issues around the rights and autonomy of the LBTQ community."

Patience Mandishona, Director, Pakasipiti

Sustained changes for the LBTQI+ movement in Zimbabwe

The project strengthened awareness amongst civil society and donors of the gendered challenges facing the LBTQI+ community, and support strategies around the operating space for women's rights and LBTQI+ rights, partly due to the project and its activities. This contributed to an increase in positive coverage and reporting of LGBTI+ issues in the media and an increased presence of alternative social media spaces that spoke and gave visibility to the rights of sexual minorities.

Active conversations through safe spaces, including online platforms, focused on the need to build LBTQ leadership that will carry the agenda forward through collectives, organisations or individual activists. There is also more general activity on social media with discussions around visibility and healing of the LBTQ community which has contributed to building leadership of young LBTQ women. Within the spaces created there have been a growing number of young LBTQ persons between 18-25 years more actively engaging, which is an unforeseen but welcome outcome of the project.
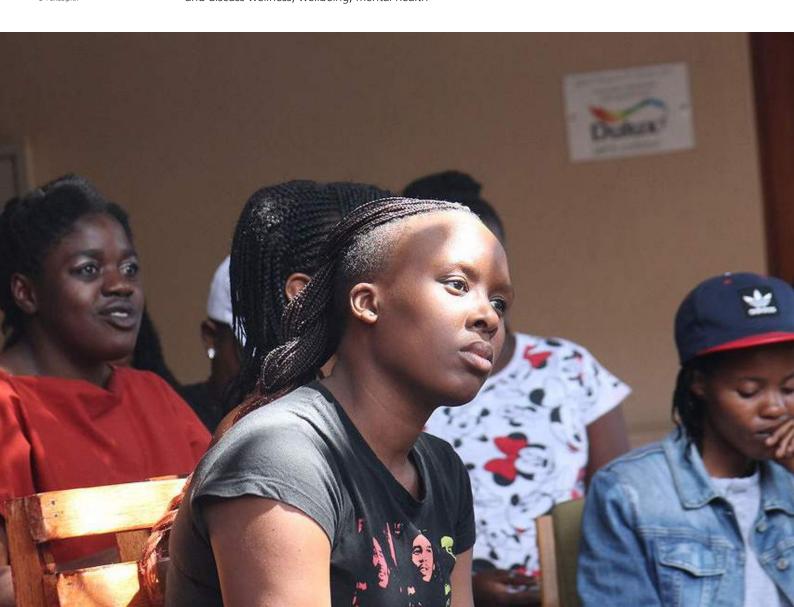
The LBTQ Charter project also crucially provided the LBTQI+ community with safe spaces to explore and discuss wellness, wellbeing, mental health and self-care. Activities were focused in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare as an opportunity to build on previous work and engagement of Pakasipiti, but also because of the presence of strategic allies such as Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, who immediately support the LBTQ community on safety and security issues. The safe spaces provided through the project ultimately enabled the LBTQ community to interrogate their needs and demands, and has also created space to advocate at local, regional and global levels.

Future support from INGOs like Womankind

The LBTQI+ movement in Zimbabwe needs continued support to build on its momentum. In responding to this, Pakasipiti has engaged in the Beijing +25 review process ahead of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2020. It has also worked on a national parallel report reviewing the state of LBTQ women's rights in Zimbabwe, highlighting progress and challenges. In doing so Pakasipiti has built on the learning from this project, particularly the issues highlighted during the LBTQ Charter development process, as it engaged LBTQ women in the development of the parallel report.

Pakasipiti organised inclusive consultations to inform the development of the LBTQ Charter.
© Pakasipiti.

Case study: Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG), Uganda: Documenting the lived realities of LBQ women

Context

In recent years, negative trends in the security and human rights situation for the LBTQI+ community in Uganda have largely been influenced by the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA)[24] which was tabled in 2013 and annulled by the Supreme Court in late 2014. Despite the annulment, the debate and climate of hostility and discrimination remains largely homophobic drawing in religious and traditional leaders, politicians, development partners and the public.[25] The government has continued to devise camouflaged ways of oppressing the rights and freedoms of sexual minorities using repressive clauses against LBTQI+ persons in other laws including the NGO Act (2015) which gives power to the head of the NGO board to close any organisation without warning if it deems the organisation is doing work that is considered contrary to public ethics (homosexuality being at the top of the list), the Registration of Persons Act (2015), and the Computer Misuse Act (2011).

The freedoms of expression, assembly and association continue to be violated in Uganda.[26] In October 2017 four well known NGOs were raided; in August 2018 Womankind's partner Women's International Peace Centre (then Isis-Wicce) experienced a break in and vandalism where all their electronic data was destroyed, including back up hard drives and cash stolen, evidencing the ever closing space for civil society. Again, in this context, the complexity and risks involved for individuals and organisations focused on SOGIE are significantly higher. In October 2019 there were numerous press articles about a plan by a section of Ugandan legislature to re-introduce the AHA and in response, an upsurge in anti-LGBT hate crimes.[27] While for the moment, the Office of the President has issued a statement condemning the murders and violent attacks against LGBT persons and assured that there will be no re-tabling of any related bill, it is an issue that continues to require vigilant monitoring.

Homophobia, though heavily fuelled by government officials and religious leaders, has continued to exist because of public ignorance, myths and misconceptions on issues pertaining to LBTQI+ persons. In the 2016 report, 'Uganda report of violations based on gender identity and sexual orientation', the research team documented and verified 171 cases where 78 violations (45.6%) were state perpetrated and 93 violations (54.4%) were perpetrated by non-state actors, and in both areas, the state failed to act.[28] This culture of impunity contributes to an environment where LBTQI+ persons continue to be targeted with violence and hate crimes, including from family members, experience evictions from their home or workplace, and corrective rape in addition to other forms of sexual and gender based violence, which serves to further stigmatise them but also exposes them to HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancy.

The role of the media contributes to the attitudes and behaviour towards LBTQI+ persons who have been named and shamed, an act that forces many to go into exile or go into hiding for fear of mob justice and other violence against them. As is a wider experience of LBTQI+ persons, some issues have not been adequately explored or addressed due to the focus on and the hierarchy of needs which prioritises MSM. For example, lesbians, bisexual women and transgender men and women are consistently excluded from national HIV/AIDS programming because there is limited understanding of their needs and issues coupled with the focus on MSM.

The initiative

Since 2003, FARUG has lobbied for the rights of women to empower LBQ persons in Uganda and advocated for the respect, protection and fulfilment of their rights. In 2018/19, FARUG captured and described the current lives of lesbian, bisexual and queer women and the state of organising of LBQ communities in Uganda for the first time, through a research and documentation project.[29] Through this, they wanted to expose the needs and challenges faced by LBQ women in accessing health and support services. They also wanted to use the research process and findings to counter the widely accepted homophobia, criminalisation and stigma which prevent LBQ women from reaching their full potential economically, and which make them increasingly vulnerable to multiple forms of violence. FARUG wanted to address the insufficient hard evidence of the direct impact of stigma on LBQ women and how it contributes to their exclusion from national sexual and reproductive health rights and women's rights programming.

The research methodology for this project was developed by a project implementation team which included members from different diversities within the LBTQI+ community including lesbian, bisexual, queer and intersex women, and transgender persons. The project also built feminist leadership among LBQ women in Uganda through a framework that sought to bring out the alternative voices of marginalised women. FARUG recruited a

24. Human Rights Watch (2014), Uganda: Anti-Homosexuality Act's Heavy Toll: Discriminatory Law Prompts Arrests, Attacks, Evictions, Flight. Available online at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/14/uganda-anti-homosexuality-acts-heavy-toll
25. BBC (2014), Uganda Court Annuls Anti-Homosexuality Law. Available online at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-28605400
26. CIVICUS (2016), Monitor Tracking Civic Space. Available online at: https://monitor.civicus.org/country/uganda/.
27. GALACK (2019), Call to Action Statement: Sexual Minorities Uganda. Available online at: https://www.galck.org/call-to-action-statement-sexual-minorities-uganda/
28. This report was released in September 2016 by Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF), and FARUG was a part of the consortium research team; see report here: Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) (2016), Uganda Report of Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity 2016. Available online at: http://faruganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Uganda-report-on-LGBTI-violations2016-1.pdf
29. The research was trans inclusive, but the trans women preferred to identify as queer.

consultant to lead the research, who then trained an LBQ field team on data collection, facilitation of Focus Group Discussions (FGD), interviewing and reporting. Through this process, key principles and skills around feminist research were shared, building capacity of the field team who then engaged with community members and documented stories.

> *"I cannot believe what I hear in the field, the stories are so heart breaking. It inspires me to work harder to advocate for the rights of LBQ women in Uganda."*
>
> **Jean, a lesbian woman trained on documentation**

The Lived Realities project produced a report and a video documentary providing insights on the political, social, economic, legal and health experiences in the daily lives of LBQ women in Uganda.[30] It is the first national study of its kind and the findings are a result of data collected from 220 LBQ identifying women living in Lira, Gulu, Tororo, Mbale, Jinja, Mpigi, Malaba, Kampala, Arua and Mbarara. Most critically, the research makes visible LBQ women and their experiences, led by and for LBQ women in Uganda, which in and of itself is pioneering and significant and is the first time that resources were available to FARUG in this way to allow focus on the lived realities of women and truly hear their experiences. The project also provided a safe space for LBQ activists to explore and discuss working drafts of the report and to strategise around a related online campaign that included five LBQ inclusive organisations. This process supported FARUG to strengthen the movement through collaboration with LBQ leaders from both rural and urban settings across the country, to agree upon and coordinate rapid response mechanisms for LBQ women in need of support and share information on violence faced by them. The scope and space for engagement with other LBQ leaders and connecting together for practical support and solidarity is an important outcome of the project, providing a good foundation for the further strengthening of the national LBQ movement.

Implementing a project of this nature in a context such as Uganda involved the ability to consider and mitigate a number of risks. As a result, FARUG were flexible and vigilant during the data collection process and considered a range of venues and spaces for this activity whilst sharing practical information with respondents about safety and security. The field team were trained in digital safety and security, as were the documentation team later dealing with the contents of the interviews.

The report and related campaign introduced scope to widen awareness throughout the project. FARUG alongside other LBQ inclusive organisations ran a successful International Women's Day campaign

#balanceforbetter via social media. FARUG also led a campaign "destabilising, decolonising, deheteronormalising myths surrounding violence faced by LBQ women" via their website (www.faruganda.org) and on Twitter and Facebook.

How the initiative contributed to LBTQI+ movement strengthening in Uganda

Strengthened feminist leadership and principles: The project centred on the feminist principle of sisterhood by ensuring that LBQ women worked together across generations, regions and in their organising.

Collective ownership and shared understanding: The research process for the project was a collectively owned effort with input from multiple sources through to the editing process itself by allies and partners from the women's movement. This was not only cost effective but also provided space for discussion and engagement beyond the LBQ community, leading to increased understanding and learning for FARUG and all involved. The project also helped mobilise LBQ women and activists across the country and facilitated links and alliances with other movements.

Strengthened LBQ engagement: The process of the research, and outreach and inclusion of diverse women within the LBQ movement helped to re-politicise the movement. In turn it strengthened LBQ advocacy as more LBQ women chose to speak up and shared their own experiences. This helped to galvanise interest in and the need to prioritise issues affecting LBQ women, which was further supported by FARUG's use of both video and audio media to help demystify and promote their voices and demands. This culminated in the online campaign '#balanceforbetter' which shared quotes of how LBQ women envisioned or understood gender equality, reaching over 500 people through social media despite challenges around Internet access and having social media accounts frozen during the campaign.

Strategic advocacy: The project findings shaped FARUG's strategic advocacy plan and follow up on provisions in the Ugandan Sexual Offences Bill, which is under threat of being re-tabled. In February 2019, FARUG, in coalition with sector peers Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) and Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) submitted recommendations to the legal and parliamentary committee and the Uganda Parliamentary Women's Association (UWOPA) on Clauses 16 and 17 of the Sexual Offences Bill, which were almost a repetition of sections 145 and 146 of the Penal Code Act, which makes it an offence for an adult

30. Freedom and Roam Uganda (2019), The Lived Realities of Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer (LBQ) Women in Uganda. Available online at https://faruganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Lived-Realities-Booklet-June-2019.pdf

to engage in same sex relations. The Bill also sought to incriminate women who engage in same sex relations. If passed, these clauses would have the same, if not worse, implications than the Anti Homosexuality Act that was annulled in 2014.

Raised visibility and profile: The awareness raising activities which flowed from the content of the Lived Realities research brought greater visibility and credibility to the organisation. This has resulted in a significant increase in FARUG's social media footprint and their membership. In parallel, there has been an increase in the number of LBQ women reaching out to FARUG through their social media seeking information and support on violence, stigma and discrimination, especially sexual and gender based violence, and reaching out to the organisation for information and services for redress.

Cross-movement building: The project has also contributed to the wider women's movement inviting FARUG to support their understanding of LBTQI+ issues. A good example is the invitation to FARUG to convene a panel on LBQs by the Uganda Feminist Forum. It also led to public dialogue on FARUG's work and served to empower FARUG staff through raising their profile and visibility to a wide range of actors. This included opportunities to attend international fora and spaces including Yale University in the USA, where the Executive Director Ssenfuka Warry presented on 'sexuality and gender' in April 2019. Administration Officer Arthur Mubiru also presented at the 'Rethink. Reimagine. Reboot' conference in 2019 in Nepal; and Mutyaba Gloriah the Programmes Director presented on 'LGBT equality=Gender equality?' during the European Union Development Days in June 2019 in Belgium. In August 2019 Gloriah was also elected as the Regional Representative for East Africa and Secretary on the Board of Directors of the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL), a pan African network for LBQ women's organisations.

Sustained changes for the LBTQI+ community in Uganda

The project has highlighted, and contributed to increased awareness of, the specific realities and experiences of LBQ women. It has also supported capacity building of a diverse range of LBQ women as part of the project delivery team. This shared vision and ownership, and a strong foundation of sisterhood was at the core of the project due to FARUG's deliberate intention and strategy to engage in this way. This has created a strong foundation from which FARUG and project participants can continue to discuss, define and develop new areas of work and activity.

In addition, engagement with those outside the movement, including through campaigns and strategic advocacy, has helped to create spaces for dialogue and awareness raising beyond the project group itself. The connections with other LBQ groups within Uganda, as well as those from within the wider women's movement, are important aspects of movement strengthening and building for continued focus and attention.

The increase in profile and visibility of FARUG itself is helping to connect with other allies and potential resources to further support LBQ women. The use of a range of media in the online campaign and to disseminate the project's findings has demonstrated the importance of alternative social media spaces and to make visible those affected, speaking with their own voice and expressing their own needs and desires.

The project itself led to a range of safe spaces for LBQ women to explore and discuss issues affecting them and find support and sisterhood in each other. This extends beyond the project scope and period of delivery through the creation of enduring connections and contacts.

FARUG has also shared that the project has advanced human rights and opportunities for LBQ women in Uganda through developing partnerships to build capacity and document human rights violations against LBQ women.

Future support from INGOs like Womankind

The Lived Realities project informed meaningful new programming, including the first high profile Uganda Lesbian Forum, (UGALEF) which took place in July 2019, the first LBQ directors' forum, and a training of trainers on movement building within the LBQ community. At the request of the organisers, FARUG convened a panel on the silence on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression at the annual Uganda Feminist Forum (UFF) in August 2019, and are currently an active partner of a Womankind supported multi-partner initiative focused on Women's Advocacy for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE), alongside five other feminist organisations.

The LBQ movement in Uganda is in need of sustained support by the diplomatic corps to raise concerns about the discrimination against LGBTQI+ persons with the government of Uganda. In order to guide strategic interventions, support of partners and to establish coherent messaging and action, the leadership of the LBQ community needs to be supported, as an equal partner within the broader LGBTQI+ community. Given the legislative context in Uganda, we need to understand that much of the organising happens outside of entities which are clearly registered, and as such, flexible and responsive funding needs to be made available for continued movement strengthening, as well as the safety and security of LBQ activists.

Case study: Mitini Nepal, Nepal: Enhancing the capacity to build advocacy groups for LBT persons

Context

Nepal is considered to be one of the most progressive states in terms of LGBTQI+ rights which are recognised in its Constitution (2015). It contains several articles that enshrine protections and rights for LGBTQI+ people including: Article 12 states that citizens will be allowed to choose their preferred gender identity on their citizenship document. The choices available are male, female or other; Article 18 states that gender and sexual minorities will not be discriminated against by the state and by the judiciary in the application of laws. It further adds that the government may make special provisions through laws to protect, empower and advance the rights of gender and sexual minorities and other marginalised and minority groups; and Article 42 lists gender and sexual minorities among the groups that have a right to participate in state mechanisms and public services to promote inclusion.

Even though in relative terms, Nepal is more open than Uganda and Zimbabwe, in recent months, the Nepal government has continued to push several pieces of draft legislation that threaten to undermine the right to freedom of expression, including the Media Council Bill and the Information Technology Bill. Journalists continue to face attacks and threats for their reporting, while protests against China have been suppressed.[31][32]

Despite a broadly enabling legal framework, including supportive laws and provisions, LGBTQI+ people still face continued layers of discrimination and oppression from socio-cultural norms in Nepal, resulting in multiple forms of societal, religious, economic and cultural discrimination which negatively impacts their socio-economic wellbeing. There continues to be significant pressure to conform and to marry a partner of the opposite sex. In particular, lesbians, bisexual women and trans men and trans women (LBT) still face discrimination and a threat to their identity. Within the LBTQI+ community, lesbians are one of the most marginalised groups and can experience significant family pressure to marry, being ostracised and made homeless through to sexual violence including corrective rape. The stigma and myth around sexual orientation and gender identity in popular culture leads to the perpetuation of belief systems that consider LBTQI+ persons to symbolise or represent a bad omen from God.

The initiative

Mitini Nepal (Mitini) has been active within the LBT community since May 2005 with a base in Kathmandu, working with the grassroots and connecting their issues to work at the national policy level including around the Nepal Constitution

Police chief speaks at the sexual orientation program for police hosted by Mitini and the community police partnership.
© Mitini Nepal.

(2015) mentioned earlier. In 2016, Mitini organised a workshop and consultation programme with the LBT community across 10-14 districts, where the need to build support and capacity for advocacy groups was consistently raised.[33] This request resonated with others that Mitini supported during 2017 and this project was developed to address the need to create connections between individuals and relevant government bodies, and to enable the local LBT community to voice and make visible their own issues. Mitini also wanted to better respond to the number of individuals who contacted them for support with legal redress including to lodge cases with the Human Rights Commission, to get legal recourse and/or protection, and receive social support. Mitini Nepal recognised the need and opportunity to adapt its approach to supporting multiple requests from various districts and prepared a new initiative that would focus on a number of them to better understand and respond to demand.

With Womankind's support in 2018/19, Mitini delivered a pilot project 'Enhancing the capacity to build advocacy groups for LBT persons' which provided support to LBT individuals in Kathmandu, Jhapa, Dang and Sunsari districts. The spaces created enabled these individuals to meet and built their capacity to identify and understand relevant institutions and processes that could be the focus of their advocacy and action. This included making links between the groups at district level and with their relevant local bodies so that LBT issues were on local agendas, a step towards having LBT concerns being heard and taken seriously.

> *"We have noticed that LBT participants who are shy at first and unaware about the terms of LGBTI itself become clear about the terms and they are confident to introduce themselves as LBT. They run the support group in their community where they discuss their common issues and solutions. As a result they are conducting different programmes coordinating with the heterosexual community. Their programs are influencing the community and changing their perspectives towards the sexual and gender minority community."*
>
> **Mitini Nepal, Field Officer**

The advocacy groups project provided training, support and guidance ranging from a training of trainers on advocacy and LBT rights, through to sexuality awareness programmes and bi-monthly wellness circles. These spaces helped individuals to meet and talk with their peers to find ways to overcome everyday struggles, built their confidence and also enabled them to take an active role in claiming their fundamental rights. This project created four social and advocacy groups, one in each district (Kathmandu, Jhapa, Dang and Sunsari) which supported the integration and acceptance of

LBT persons at community level through increasing awareness of their presence and rights, and enhancing their visibility as a distinct community within the local community. Each group meeting followed an informal style as defined by participants and appropriate to the local context, which were called 'One Under the Tree' sessions. This way of organising, which is a familiar one in Nepal, was an effective mechanism for community engagement on the topic as it normalised the conversation, and encouraged others to come forward and speak publically about their experiences.

To add to the evidence base on LBTQI+ issues, a project activity included the development and publication of 'SPECTRUM: LBTI stories and calls for justice and protection', documenting the lives and journeys of five individuals' to commemorate IDAHOBIT 2019. The publication has been an important tool for Mitini and those involved to openly express a variety of sexual and gender orientations and support the rights of those individuals.

How the initiative contributed to LBTQI+ movement strengthening in Nepal

Feminist governance: The project increased the capacity of Mitini Nepal's staff to develop more feminist and inclusive working practices, including the development of transparent steering documents and more democratic mechanisms for decision making, leading to improved processes and routines for efficient implementation.

Identity and diversity: This project has enabled those who identify as LBT within the four localities to feel more confident and comfortable in self identifying as such with each other, but also within their immediate community.

Shared skills and knowledge: In addition, the project has provided information, resources and skills to participants who used this knowledge to identify and engage with relevant local bodies, stakeholders and authorities including law enforcement officials; an important relationship in terms of the potential for reporting human rights violations and abuses.

Collective advocacy: The project has provided a critical foundation for the LBT community to engage with district level state actors to raise awareness of and claim the rights afforded to them through the Constitution (2015). Through the project, participants have gained a strong understanding and practical experience of raising their issues at community level and how to engage with local stakeholders.

Platforms for learning and sharing: The four district level social and advocacy groups created through the project came together to form a social and advocacy network. Using the platform of this network, Mitini Nepal celebrated the International

33. Nepal has 77 districts.

Day against Homophobia with a book launch titled 'SPECTRUM: LBTI stories and call for justice and protection'. The participants of the book launching programme were from government and non-government sectors including UN Women and media, who also provided input on the concrete actions that should be taken against homophobia. Mitini Nepal celebrated International Women's Day on 8th March 2019 by organising a rally with the theme 'Balance for Better'. The rally was organised in Kathmandu, where social and advocacy group members, young women leaders, Mitini's staff, LGBTQI+ community members and volunteers also participated. During the rally they distributed 2000+ pride coloured handmade brooches with different quotes, ply cards and flags with different slogans. They ended the rally with the quote, "The struggle for the LBTQI+ equality will only be won if we join together, if we speak out, if we stand in the defense of the rights of LBTQI+ women." Mitini drew on their experience, including from the project and the SPECTRUM publication, to participate in the first ever Global Feminism LBQ Women's Conference in July 2019 in South Africa. Not only a significant moment for the global LBQ movement, it was also one for Mitini Nepal, who were able to engage and share their recent project learning, as well as hear about examples of strategies and support from other countries and actors.

Sustained changes for the LBTQI+ movement in Nepal

As a result of engagement through the project, the National Human Rights Commission and Nepal Police and the LBT communities in these districts are now more mutually aware of the related legal and human rights issues. This has led to collaboration among LBT persons and such duty bearers, and a commitment from duty bearers to prioritise issues of the LBT community; a role model for other initiatives and others in the LBTQI+ movement beyond the project districts.

Although not a specific project activity, Mitini Nepal and those participating in the project at district level were able to respond to a number of issues and cases at national level. This demonstrates the importance of intersectional campaigns and action within and for the wider women's movement to challenge and address all forms of violence and injustice. Such strategic alliances are important for a campaign outcome, but also for long standing relationships and institutional support for each other. For example, Mitini Nepal and the four project groups were active together with the Young Women Leaders Group at the national level in the campaign to seek justice for the rape and murder of Nirmala Panta in February 2019.[34] The campaign led to the trial of eight police personnel for tampering with evidence.[35]

Future support from INGOs like Womankind

Currently Mitini are hoping to replicate this successful model across Nepal's many districts. While the legislative groundwork has been done, the LBT movement in Nepal needs support to strengthen their organising and advocacy, to convert legislation into practice.

34. A 13-year old girl was raped and killed in February 2019 in Nepal.
35. The Himalayan Times (2019), Eight Police Personnel Charged with Evidence Tampering in Nirmala Panta Case. Available online at: https://thehimalyantimes.com/nepal/eight-police-personnel-charged-for-tampering-evidence-in-nirmala-panta-case/

Panel discussion at sexual orientation programme for police hosted by Mitini and community police partnership.
© Mitini Nepal.

Lessons learned: Programming related

Partner-led, collaborative programme design is time consuming, but it is effective

Womankind is purposefully and truly partner-led. In her thirty years of existence, Womankind has not had offices outside of London, and has always worked in close partnership with women-led WROs in her focus countries. This reflects a conscious and political decision by Womankind to give her power to, and share it with, those who she is supporting and working with. While that makes it harder and more challenging at times, it is an active, conscious role and approach – acknowledging her location, the power that comes with it and actively seeking and hearing the views of her partners. This means that Womankind has less immediate, direct access to localised context specific information. It also means that Womankind heavily relies on and trusts local WROs to best understand both the issues faced by women, as well as the necessary solutions to them. This can also mean that the programme design process happens over a period of time taking a mixed approach of methods and often (although not always) starting with face to face conversations while Womankind staff are on country visits, followed up and deepened over email and other forms of tele-communication including Skype and Whatsapp. It is rarely a quick or simple process. However, the results are more meaningful for all concerned, with appropriate discussion and decisions to reach agreement on project scope, activities and budget, as well as on roles and responsibilities.

Some of the programmatic work that Womankind actively seeks to support, such as feminist documentation, creating safe spaces and the political understanding of self-care and wellbeing (see image page 6), are not traditionally sought after inputs, certainly not in traditional development work. As a result, southern based partners may not immediately think of them as options for project design or proposal development, not because they are less important or valuable in their estimation, but because there is rarely proactive funding made available for such programming. Explicitly encouraging conversations, based on Womankind's Theory of Change, and her appetite for programmes which includes such inputs, has opened up pioneering pathways for partners.

When Womankind and FARUG initially discussed project ideas to support, FARUG staff reverted to the tried and tested topics such as supporting front line medical needs of LBQ persons for example, (which is an important topic but one more widely supported by other organisations). The idea of a documentation piece had been a long held dream for FARUG, but it was not the first thing that they thought of when asked what they wished to do. They thought it was far from what Womankind would see as being viable. Thanks to open and honest partnership, FARUG had more discussion and exploration and that resulted in the Lived Reality project proposal. This has provided valuable collateral which has helped FARUG to open up multiple pathways for subsequent programming, including collaborations on policy and advocacy work including at the international level.

Approach has to cascade to different levels so actors feel ownership at multiple levels within the movement

In Zimbabwe, the LBTQ Charter project related meetings and sessions were held in three cities, Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare, to localise the thinking. Four small groups of the LBTQ community were brought together to brain storm on general issues that Pakasipiti felt were important, and these then formed the working team. The groups developed guidelines on how they were going to approach the project, firstly to collect data, record the data and identify the means of communications they would work with.

The entire Mitini Nepal project was based on the premise of cascading ownership. The idea of developing a replicable advocacy group model was precisely to decentralise knowledge and skills to enable local ownership and action, as well as to provide a safe space to explore self-care and identity.

The stakeholders of these projects were elevated beyond contributing to or benefitting from activities, (be those interviews, FGDs, consultations, marches or training activities). These stakeholders helped shape the processes and the outputs which were integral to the projects, which meant that the projects and their results were much more broadly owned by the communities, rather than by the implementing organisations alone.

Addressing conflict in an inclusive and respectful way can lead to meaningful programme adaptations and often better outcomes

When it comes to non-traditional programming related to women's rights, it is important to stand ready to face conflict, opposition and backlash, both from inside and outside the cause. This is particularly true for programming related to LBTQI+ issues, which face widespread opposition in most societies. Often Womankind and partners can anticipate some barriers or risks and include these in project risk matrixes, such as mitigation measures or building response strategies into their actual programming. However, local contexts and events can rapidly change and the nature of these are not always clear at the outset of a programme. As a result, it is essential that all parties are open to an adaptive planning approach, communicating and working together to ensure that no one is at risk of harm whilst ensuring that the project can continue where possible.

"We had to redo one of our workshops in Bulawayo as we experienced challenges around the varying geographical contexts and acknowledging that we had not contextualised our strategies to speak to the different regions. Generally there were challenges around language and culture which we had not taken into account when planning. Issues around facilitation, spaces and a varied working culture than that of Harare made us realise that we cannot use the same strategies in both towns. We needed translation on some issues and also when we developed guidelines we realised that there might be some issues that will differ from region to region due to language, culture and traditions. Bulawayo is more of Matabeleland / Ndebele culture while Harare is more of the Shona culture.

'One under the tree' circle organised by a Mitini activist.
© Mitini Nepal.

As Shona is the dominant language in Zimbabwe, the assumption was that the strategies developed there would work everywhere. And this did not hold true."
Pakasipiti, Zimbabwe

"Our women's day celebrations were raided at our office premises by police who called for an immediate suspension of the event. We were however able to outsmart them by shifting the event to another (undercover) location and continued with the celebrations."
FARUG, Uganda

Sometimes such barriers and conflict can lead to innovation and/or a stronger outcome. In the case of Pakasipiti's work, the internal conflict which arose during the process of drafting the LBT Charter led the organisation to understand that regional nuance needs to be a larger factor in their planning going forward. Giving room for that conflict instead of ignoring it ensured that the final drafted product was richer, more reflective of a wider constituent base, and one that is genuinely nationally owned.

FARUG, whose work is considered 'immoral' according to the 2015 Uganda NGO Act and therefore does not meet the eligibility requirements for accreditation, needed to find creative alternatives to disseminate and deliver the final project report to their target audience and allies. As a result they decided to create an audio-visual documentary to accompany the written report and disseminate them via media channels where the general public can download it for free. The documentary, created partly to side-step restrictive regulations, has lifted the stories into a three-dimensional format which is more impactful and accessible and allows for more personalised storytelling. However, FARUG acknowledge that given the political environment, the context of recent attacks and negative media profiling and political propaganda against their organisation, they should have put in place an emergency fund in the event of a security incident. In retrospect they suggest that they should have budgeted for a full time security person during their outreach activities to ensure the physical security of participants.

Building in activities to strengthen WROs, which are at the heart of movements, is critical as in turn, they have the potential to strengthen wider actors and activists in their movements

Women's movements are broad social movements led by women and their organisations that

campaign for women's rights and gender justice at national, regional and international levels. They include WROs and other actors including activists, academics, journalists, lawyers and trade unionists. WROs that focus on LBTQI+ communities and other such marginalised constituencies tend to reflect these same communities amongst their own staff. Therefore these three pilot projects have shown that it is important for LBTQI+ persons to lead and define issues for themselves within WROs, and that capacity building activities which are built into programmes led by such WROs will benefit both women's movements as well as those implementing WROs.

WROs are the sites from which movements are built, supported, serviced and governed...they are the primary structures in or through which movement leaders, activists, and members are organised, trained, capacitated, protected, and energised to pursue the transformational agenda of movement.[36]
Srilatha Batliwala, 'Changing their world, Concepts and practices of Women's Movements'

The FARUG project included the training of the LBQ field team and volunteers by a specialist consultant. This included methods and approaches to data collection, facilitation of focus group discussions (FGDs), interviewing and reporting. This resulted in FARUG's field team being technically proficient and working from a place of context specific, empathetic knowledge. The skills that they acquired go beyond FARUG, including to the individuals trained and their work and roles within the wider LBTQI+ movement. Furthermore, the project helped build leadership capacity, confidence and public speaking skills for the field team volunteers working on documenting the project, through providing opportunities for them to conduct participant interviews and facilitate FGDs. Every activity was coordinated by both a staff person in a supervisory role and a field team member in an implementation role, which created an informal, effective mentorship model.

In Nepal, the four district level advocacy groups came together to form a social and advocacy network which was equipped to create awareness on LBT rights through advocacy campaigns and awareness raising programmes, building coordination with local police, human rights commissioners, WROs and NGOs. The focal person of the individual advocacy groups developed their own action plans and conducted meetings in their respective districts to discuss the issues and challenges of the LBT women, and came up with ways to overcome those challenges. The project also allowed for Mitini Nepal and these district

36. Batliwala, S. (2012), Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements. AWID, 2nd Edition. Op. cit.

based groups to establish, trial and perfect a new structure for communication, leading to increased coordination which ultimately strengthens the movement.

Appropriate programming can provide mutual gain to implementing organisations and the movement/s they support

For the same reasons mentioned above, and because movements are made up of individuals as well as collectives, with support for diverse kinds of initiatives and programmes, the increase in visibility and support resulting from a programme will benefit both organisations and the movements they contribute to. The caveat here is that the implementing organisations need to take a lead role in shaping the project at design stage in particular, and have the autonomy to engage in adaptive management.

Cross-movement and intergenerational movement building

Programmes built on feminist inclusive principles can lead to increasing collaboration within and between movements and crucially, within and between generations. The mainstream women's movement is understood to mean the space where much of the visible discussion, agreement and collective activity takes place to push for change, yet a closer inspection of mainstream movements reflects a certain homogeneity which doesn't actually

Pakasipiti launch their LBTQ Charter during 16 Days of Activism 2018.
© Pakasipiti.

reflect the lived realities of all women. Mainstream movements are often led by elite urban women, and often exclude voices from the grassroots, young women and women on the margins of society – including LBQTI+ women, women with disabilities, women with HIV and indigenous women. While often the exclusion is perceived or even believed to be non-deliberate, the reality is that they replicate existing patriarchal hierarchies which need to be broken down. And these hierarchies are recreated even within LBTQI+ movements.

In Uganda, the FARUG Lived Realities project helped to strengthen feminist leadership and principles and institutionalised the feminist principle of sisterhood through ensuring that LBQ women work together across generations, regions and organising. This was done by mobilising LBQ women and activists across the country and building alliances with other movements, especially the sex workers movement. This has resulted in strengthened collaboration with LBQ leaders from both rural and urban settings across the country to coordinate quick response and share information on violence faced by LBQ women. The campaign fed into organising around sexual and gender based violence as a key concern to be addressed by LBQ community in the next five years during an LBQ movement convening. Following the success of the International Women's Day (IWD) #Balanceforbetter component of FARUG's online campaign, they were able to partner with FEM Alliance Uganda (an LBT organisation) and SMUG (an umbrella consortium of LGBTI organisations in Uganda) to organise a successful IWD celebration on

8th March 2019. Additionally, FARUG's Programmes Director was part of the team that designed the 2019 feminist training manual for a youth focused organisation MEMPROW, which for the first time covers sexuality more comprehensively.

Similarly in Zimbabwe, women human rights defenders outside of the LBT community lent their support and spoke out on the importance of breaking barriers. They also sought spaces in their various communities to share issues around the rights and autonomy of the LBTQI+ community. This has included regular engagement and ensuring that the LBT Charter initiative, Pakasipiti as an organisation, and the Charter itself were visible in these spaces both on and off line. The project has also resulted in increasing the visibility of the LBTQI+ community and its issues in online spaces with stakeholders from within and beyond the LBTQI+ community assisting in disseminating information.

Following on from the project, Mitini Nepal worked in collaboration with Global Fund for Women to build the capacity of 12 young women leaders (YWL) from the community. The YWL network also works on women's rights, and some members of the Social and Advocacy Network are also members of the YWL network. The two groups jointly conducted sexual orientation programmes and engaged in advocacy and lobbying for equal education for LGBTI+ students through awareness programmes at schools and colleges. They also participated in the 'One Billion Rising Celebration' organised by Sangat Nepal, which is the biggest mass action to end violence against women (cisgender, transgender, and those who hold fluid identities that are subject to gender based violence) in human history.

Increasing and strengthening the visibility and need for focus on the LBTQI+ constituency

All three initiatives have injected a renewed sense of urgency to address a range of issues affecting LBTQI+ persons in their local contexts. This is as a result of the interactive nature of the activities, as well as the wide and strategic documenting and cascading of authentic testimonials. As evidenced above, all three projects have helped to demystify and popularise the lived realities of LBTQI+ women through various forms of documentation and dissemination. However, we need to be aware of the global backlash that is evidenced by the rise of far-right populist governments and movements, including politico-religious groups and fundamentalisms, and the rollback on human rights and continued pressures this puts on the relatively young LBTQI+ movement.

According to Pakasipiti, there is now an increase in positive coverage and reporting of LGBTI+ issues in the media and also an increased presence of alternative social media spaces speaking and giving visibility to the need for acknowledgement of the rights of sexual minorities. Several women journalists, bloggers and writers who engaged in the project are now writing articles on feminism, movement building, health and women's political participation. There are also a few blogs written on various platforms addressing LBTQI+ issues unlike before when there was no acknowledgement of the topic at all. While this cannot be attributed to the LBT Charter alone, Pakasipiti see a clear correlation between the initiative and this result.

"Overall the project has enabled dialogue spaces and has facilitated more engagement of the LBTQI+ community with the broader women's rights movement. The project has helped foster dialogue on the LBTQI+ community accessing their full human rights and their citizenship rights in Zimbabwe. Despite Zimbabwe being a hostile environment in the past and also currently, there was not much hindrance in us carrying out the project. There was increased interest and participation as we started rolling out the project both on and off line and from various organisations we had not previously engaged with. Although the conversation around LGBTI+ rights for Zimbabwe is still not on political agendas, the conversations have started and the project objectives also facilitated the recognition of the marginalised LBTQI+ community within the discourse.

The Charter has enabled the LBTQI+ community itself to interrogate their needs, demands and answer the pertinent questions that are always asked about "what are the needs of the LBQ community." This Charter in a way has created space to start advocacy initiatives in various spaces not only at a local level, but regionally and globally. Creating and distributing the Charter has helped and will help the community to speak out openly and seek redress when their rights are violated. In the long run the Charter has also enabled conversations around how we could include it in conversations around CEDAW, CSW and the SDG spaces."

Pakasipiti, Zimbabwe

"In January 2019, the Kathmandu Social and Advocacy Group (SAAG) in coordination with Community Services and Community Police Service Centre held a session on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) with the community police, women and other community members in Tikhidewal-14, Lalitpur District. This was an activity to sensitise participants on SOGIE and LGBTI+ issues with specific focus on the role and duty of the police in explaining the procedure of handling LGBTI+ issues inside the police force as well as to interrogate police perception towards LGBTI issues. During the interaction, SAAG member Arsu Shrestha (Transman) and Bipin Kadayat (Intersex person) shared their experiences which illustrated the lack of equity in how they were treated by duty bearers. As a result, the community police and community services clearly and openly committed to better supporting the LGBTI+ community by considering the cases of violence more seriously and taking immediate action when issues were brought to their attention."

Mitini Nepal, Nepal

Pilot programmes open up a path for deepened and continued programmatic action which are evidence based

Many donors place a premium on qualitative data and seek formally documented evidence before committing funds for work which WROs may see as critical and urgent. When seeking funding for programme interventions, the burden of providing documented evidence is then placed on many small, often under-resourced WROs which becomes prohibitive. While there have been increased calls to trust WROs' expertise and take their experiences at face value, this is not yet a common practice.[37] As such, small-scale pilot programmes which have a seemingly basic premise can provide a much needed jumping off point for many WROs, particularly those that represent marginalised voices. Often times the problem is a situation of chicken or egg. There is no funding to evidence the need, and without evidence of the need, there is no funding for what is needed.

As detailed above (page 18) the FARUG-led Lived Realities project has informed significant subsequent programming including the first Uganda Lesbian Forum, the first LBQ directors' forum and an (upcoming) training of trainers on movement building within the LBQ community. Mitini Nepal has found that the district chapter based approach is effective and sustainable; they would like to replicate this across five more districts and are

currently seeking funding for that, as well as to deepen their work on the protection of human rights at a community level. The Pakasipiti-led LBTQ Charter has resulted in a subsequent project focused on developing counter practices to support the LBTQ community through education and media (funding being sourced for this currently).

Meaningful programming can have broader impacts on policy and advocacy

The LBTQ Charter of Zimbabwe was in and of itself an initiative to improve LBTQ women's access to their human rights, and they used and will continue to use the Charter to influence decision-makers and duty bearers. The programme also helped advocate for and increase space for LBTQ women within the contested and competitive space of LGBT rights nationally. In parallel with the Charter work, Pakasipiti and others came together as an LGBTQI+ sector, including sex workers, and made a joint statement in the critical pre-election period when it was important to address the political environment as a united front. The sector meetings helped mobilise and strategise together to respond to political and media related events that impact the LGBTQI+ community. However, in Zimbabwe, as in many other contexts, the issues of Men who have sex with men (MSM) tend to dominate the discourse, further marginalising LBTQ women which means that LBTQ spokespersons need to navigate a line of solidarity with the wider LGBTQI+ community while pushing back when MSM try to dominate the space. During the 2018 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence when Pakasipiti launched the LBTQ Charter, they were able to use the momentum gained from the Charter to push for a feminist voice within the LGBTQI+ movement, as they have done since their inception.

The data collected for the Lived Realities project guided FARUG's strategic advocacy engagement with the Sexual Offences Bill that was tabled in early 2019.[38] The project findings helped inform recommendations which FARUG submitted to the legal and parliamentary committee and the Uganda Parliamentary Women's Association (UWOPA), on Sections 16 and 17 of the Bill which are very problematic to the LGBTI+ community in Uganda. The bill was withdrawn in February 2019 largely because proposed additions to the Bill were broader than the Bill itself. As the amendments have not (yet) been consolidated the Bill has not been re-tabled since. In October 2019 MPs in Uganda tried to push for new laws to make homosexual acts punishable by death, so it is clear that the threat to the LGBTQI+ community in Uganda remains a real and current issue.[39]

37. Mama Cash, Influencing the Donor Community. Available online at: https://www.mamacash.org/en/influencing-the-donor-community and Esplen, E. (2013), Leaders for Change: Why Support Women's Rights Organisations? Available online at: https://www.womankind.org.uk/docs/default-source/resources/briefings/leadersforchange-final.pdf?sfvrsn=6.
38. The Bill sought to consolidate all Ugandan laws relating to sexual offences, combat sexual violence and provide punishments for perpetrators of sexual offences. Also to provide for procedures and requirements of evidence during trial of sexual offences and other related matters.
39. Burke, J. & Okiror, S. (2019), Ugandan MPs Press for Death Penalty for Homosexual Acts. Available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/15/ugandan-mps-press-for-death-penalty-for-homosexual-acts

Recommendations: Intersectional movement strengthening for women's rights practitioners and donors

Programme design

- Ensure women and women's rights organisations closest to the ground take the lead in design and implementation.
- Recognise and trust the expertise and lived experiences of women's rights organisations and women's movements, including those representing marginalised women.
- Make room for diverse voices at project design stage.
- Account for regional and contextual realities and ensure that these are adequately resourced including safety and security costs.
- Encourage women's rights organisations and women's movements to deliberately include strategies and approaches that contribute to movement strengthening in the development of new initiatives, and ensure they are appropriately resourced.
- Account for and embrace push back from within the movement/s and as well as from the outside.

Evidence and learning

- Provide support for women's rights organisations and women's movements to carry out research and documentation to evidence the impact and value of their work.
- Ensure that feminist, participatory methodologies are used for any related research.
- Peer review the findings with wider women's rights organisations as a way to share ownership of the findings.

- Fund women's rights organisations and women's movements to facilitate safe spaces where particularly marginalised communities can feel empowered to speak freely.
- Create opportunities and spaces to learn about, make mistakes and adapt movement strengthening, both on and offline.
- Document lessons learned wherever possible, including intersectional stories to underscore the importance of intersectional programming.

Funding

- Advocate for more flexible funding for women's movement strengthening that is designed with the involvement of women from those movements.
- Enable small, flexible funding pots for pilot projects which can help organisations establish an evidence base and recognised track record.
- Share lessons learned with donors about what works to strengthen women's movements.
- Increase devolved funding through women's funds and specialist intermediary organisations that have strong partnerships with southern women's rights organisations and women's movements.
- Increase the accessibility of existing funding streams to women's rights organisations and women's movements, particularly funds targeted at human rights and civil society organisations.
- Ensure adequate funding is allocated for monitoring, evaluation and learning and that chosen methodologies are suitable to the nature of the work women's movements undertake.
- Place greater emphasis on core and long term funding, where possible, based on women's rights organisations' plans and budgets, and provide sizable grants.
- Understand that while small amounts of money can stimulate innovation, they do not enable expansion, scale-up and strengthening of organisational and operational capacity where these might be necessary.

Merchandise from the first
Uganda Lesbian Forum (UGALEF)
in July 2019.
© Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG).

About Womankind Worldwide

Womankind Worldwide is a global women's rights organisation working in solidarity and equal partnership with women's rights organisations and movements to transform the lives of women.

Our vision is of a just world where the rights of all women are respected, valued and realised.

Womankind supports women's movements to strengthen and grow by providing a range of tools, including technical support, communications, connectivity and shared learning, joint advocacy and fundraising.

Wenlock Studios
50-52 Wharf Road
N1 7EU London, UK

www.womankind.org.uk

info@womankind.org.uk

UK registered charity No. 32820

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