

**Webinar: “Making the Workplace Work for All: A Conversation with LGBTQI+ Activists on Strategies to Advance Worker Protections and Inclusive Growth”****Date: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 from 9:00am – 10:30am EDT**

**Julie Neill:** Welcome, everyone, to this month's Marketlinks webinar. We're so delighted that you've joined us today. And, without further ado, I'm going to turn it over to today's moderator, Jay Gilliam, USAID's Senior LGBTQI+ Coordinator to get us started.

**Jay Gilliam:** Thank you, Julie. Welcome to wherever you're joining us from around the world. And welcome to Making the Workplace Work for All: A Conversation with LGBTQI+ Activists on Strategies to Advance Worker Protections and Inclusive Growth. As Julie said, my name is Jay Gilliam. I use pronouns he/him/his. I'm the Senior LGBTQI+ Coordinator at USAID. We're so happy that you are here with us today. Today's event was in collaboration with the USAID Center for Economics and Market Development and the Marketlinks platform. Prior to kicking off the main program, I am excited to introduce USAID's Chief Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Officer, Neneh Diallo to offer some opening remarks. Chief Diversity Officer Diallo is USAID's first ever Chief Diversity Officer. A link to her bio is in the chat box. Since she has started this position, Neneh has been a strong ally and advocate on efforts on LGBTQI+ inclusion. So please join me in welcoming her today. Neneh, over to you.

**Neneh Diallo:** Thank you so much, Jay. Greetings. And greetings and welcome, everyone, today. My name is Neneh Diallo. My pronouns are she/her/hers. And I'm so happy to be here with you all today to serve as USAID's first chief diversity officer. As I pondered on the session's theme making the workplace work for all, I immediately reflected on my own experiences as a cisgender black woman throughout my career. I know firsthand what it feels like to be the *only* in the workplace, to be marginalized, subject to microaggressions, or made to feel unworthy of my title or position. I wish I could say my experience was ten years ago, or even five years ago. But it's been as recent as I was appointed to this position.

It's sad to say, but the workplace is not fully working for all people. And without acknowledging that, I certainly cannot expect to influence meaningful change in my role. The timing of this event could not have been better to showcase some of the work we're doing here and around the world at USAID within the DEIA space. And particularly on the topic of LGBTQI+ protections, inclusion, equity, and accessibility in the workplace and beyond -- from our newly updated DEIA strategic plan to our soon-to-be released updated LGBTQI+ 101 training that will be mandatory at USAID. And to our implementation of Executive Order 13988, preventing and combating discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.

We are making real, measurable progress toward advancing equity and making USAID a more safe and inclusive environment for our LGBTQI+ employees, allies, and partners. The USAID DEIA strategic plan includes specific goals related to advancing equity for USAID's LGBTQI+ workforce. These include striving to ensure that the federal health benefit system equitably serves all members of the workforce and their families, as well as expanding the use of gender markers and pronouns that respect transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary workforce. Through USAID's Executive Order 13988 working group led by then Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, we updated more than 100 chapters of USAID's internal operating policies to ensure they're using inclusive terminology regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. We've instituted a practice to ensure civil rights considerations factor into every agency operational policy change. All new policies must now include an assessment on whether the new policy might exclude or disadvantage a group of people. And how any negative impacts can be mitigated.

That being said, there's significant progress to be made within our federal government. And our country at large in this space. After all, the DEIA office exists to unravel structural inequities that have persisted for centuries. Despite all of the work we're doing at USAID to ensure equitable access to rights and opportunities regardless of gender or sexual identity, some of our workforce and partners still face barriers to equal opportunity and full inclusion in our workforce and in our programming. With all the work that we're doing, we know that the best way to address the needs of USAID staff is to hear straight from them. USAID is a learning organization. And we are committed to ensuring that our DEIA efforts are evidence-based and data-driven. We're currently developing USAID's first-ever DEIA climate survey. This survey will expand USAID's insights into the makeup of its workforce through the collection of expanded demographic data across the entire workforce. And will help us better unpack staff perceptions related to the agency's DEIA efforts.

DEIA counsels formed by USAID staff are working towards implementing and accelerating broader agency DEIA goals and objectives while also focusing on attending to the unique DEIA challenges within their Missions. We are especially proud of USAID's new DEIA toolkit because it puts power and resources into the hands of our staff as they work to lead innovative DEIA efforts. And I'm also proud to see that the agency leadership is committed to hiring DEIA advisers in Bureaus and even in Missions. So, while we work to advance inclusion and diversity within our workforce, it's important to acknowledge that this is not the experience of millions of people who come from minority groups or from the LGBTQI+ community across the world. So as an international development organization, it's important that we ensure our programs are void of discrimination and prejudice. And that the rights of all women and mankind are taken into account.

I was especially pleased when I started to know that USAID created a Senior LGBTQI+ Coordinator position to ensure that LGBTQI+ people are meaningfully integrated into USAID inclusive development programs, policies, research, and training. Another example of the agency's commitment to DEIA. So, it's my distinct pleasure to turn the spotlight back to USAID's current Senior LGBTQI+ Coordinator and the moderator for this event, Jay Gilliam. Thank you again for having me. And I look forward to the discussion. Over to you, Jay.

**Jay Gilliam:** Thank you so much, Neneh, for those really heartfelt words. And really appreciate what you're doing to help frame today's discussion, including what we are doing at USAID to really walk the walk in this space. And I know our team also shares your excitement about the upcoming launch of our LGBTQI+ 101 training, LGBTQI+ inclusion in USAID's workplace. Which has been under development for more than a year. So, we're really excited when that launches soon.

Again, everyone, welcome once more to today's event. I'm really pleased to be joined by an outstanding panel of experts in LGBTQI+ inclusive development trailblazers from all around the world. For today's discussion, I want to frame USAID's focus on LGBTQI+ workplace protections before starting the panel discussion. After the panel, we will move to a Q&A portion with the audience, you all. And then I'll wrap up the event today with some brief reflections on our discussions. So, please join the conversation by putting your questions for the panelists, myself, or Chief Diversity Officer Diallo in the chat box. And we will do our best to respond. And, of course, please remember to be respectful to one another and to our speakers. We also encourage you to amplify the conversation on Twitter and tag us using @USAID\_LGBTQI.

So before we move to the panelist discussion, let me share some additional context about what inspired today's conversation. For USAID, LGBTQI+ persons' access to safe, inclusive, and non-discriminatory workplaces is part and parcel of inclusive development. For us, inclusive development is an understanding that every individual and community of all diverse identities and experiences are instrumental in the transformation of their own societies. Their engagement throughout the development process just leads to better outcomes. We know LGBTQI+ persons bring labor, dynamacy and entrepreneurialism to workplaces and marketplaces in every region of the globe. That's why it's unacceptable that only 32% of companies globally guarantee some protections from discrimination at work based on sexual orientation. And only 10% offer some level of protection at work based on gender identity. Clearly, discrimination, intimidation, harassment, stigmatization, and exclusion impacts the inclusion, livelihoods, and dignity of LGBTQI+ persons all around the world. This will be discussed in much more detail by our panelists today.

In a blog kicking off the USAID Marketlinks LGBTQI+ theme month, I quoted Jaco Cilliers from the United Nations Development Program who said, in 2018, "Access to decent work forms an essential part of LGBTI persons' lives and is deeply intertwined with their socio-economic empowerment and ability to participate in the public sphere ... Discrimination towards LGBTI people in the workplace also represents a fundamental challenge to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's commitment to 'leave no one behind.'"

You know, growing up in Texas, and in my early professional career, I myself had anxiety about coming out and being my authentic self at work. In my first job, I wasn't out. I was afraid to be my true, authentic self to clients, to colleagues, to customers. And that hindered how I could do my work. How I could do my work the best way I knew how. My next job, I was able to start coming out. But as every LGBTQI+ person knows, coming out is a process. Coming out is a continual thing we do. And although it gets easier, it's never quite easy when you're doing it in a new space. Particularly in a new workplace where your livelihood is on the line.

So, we know that other than being a fundamental component of human dignity, the data supports that being our authentic selves in the workplace, in our lives, is the smart thing and the right thing to do for societies and full economies. For example, a 2022 Open for Business study from Keller, et al., found a positive correlation across the world between economic resilience and LGBTQI+ inclusion, including employment discrimination protections. Another study from Pre-net, et al., of 12 English-speaking countries in the Caribbean found that potentially hundreds of millions of dollars were lost in regional GDP due to labor market discrimination impacting LGBTQI+ people. This clearly packs a punch for individuals, communities, societies, and whole countries. And it's also clear that major stressors, like the COVID-19 pandemic, have acted to exacerbate these challenges for LGBTQI+ individuals, given the communities disproportionately represented in or rather pushed into the informal sector.

As Senior LGBTQI+ Coordinator, I work with my team in the Inclusive Development hub here at USAID and across our agency to build new training modules on LGBTQI+ inclusion the workplace, as well as conduct virtual trainings on LGBTQI+ inclusion to staff at headquarters and admissions around the world. Similarly, as I mentioned that the inaugural Summit for Democracy last December, USAID intends to support a new private/public partnership that will, among several things, seek to bolster the economic livelihoods of LGBTQI+ people during and after the COVID pandemic.

I also want to share an exciting, recent, programmatic example from India involving transgender individuals in water, sanitation and hygiene or WASH, as we call it. In 2021, USAID partnered with India's

WASH Institute and the academy to provide skills, training for community, self-help groups, to address local issues in more than 1,000 cities and towns, including training on how to operate and manage fecal sludge treatment plants. Importantly, the program targeted youth, women, and transgender individuals. Because many transgender individuals lost their earnings from working at bus stands and railway stations, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID trained more than 30 members in August 2021. This included developing their leadership skills and technical skills in fecal sludge treatment, disposal of treated waste water, reuse of sludge for agriculture and monitoring the quantity quality and of effluent.

The training helped participants get jobs and earn a monthly salary. Quote from one participant: “We use this as an opportunity to educate ourselves and move on to better things.” Additionally, because the training program imparts knowledge about government benefits, some members of the group were able to get government-issued cards, allowing them to access free subsidized food for low-income citizens. Importantly, this initiative provides a model for expansion and is inspiring other towns to adopt similar messages. So, let me be clear. This is a challenge that we have the tools, the technical expertise, and most importantly, the urgency, to address. This brings me to our panel today.

Our objectives here are three-fold. First, to clarify the link between LGBTQI+ worker protections, nondiscrimination in the workplace and inclusive development. Second, to grow awareness about key gaps and recent progress in safe and inclusive workplaces for LGBTQI+ people around the world. And, finally, to spotlight local best practices, studies, and recommendations from LGBTQI+ civil society and technical experts, to advance inclusive workplaces and protections. With that, it is my great pleasure to introduce our panelists today.

They include Yvonne Muthoni-Kenya Country Director with Open for Business, Ramil Andag- SOGIESC Rights Officer with APCOM and Nickoy Wilson, Policy and Advocacy Manager with Equality Jamaica, also known as JFLAG. We will share a link to their bios in the chat box. As a reminder, please add your questions to the panel in the Q&A box so we can keep this event interactive. I also encourage the panelists to ask follow-up questions to the other speakers or offer your reflection on your experience.

So, to start our discussion, I want to ask each panelist to describe the realities facing LGBTQI+ workers in your country and why you view inclusive workplace policies and practices as essential for inclusive economic growth. In this question, please address the legal and policy environment for LGBTQI+ people broadly as well as specifically for workplace antidiscrimination protections. So, with that, let's start with Yvonne.

**Yvonne Muthoni:** Thank you, Jay. Thank you very much. I'm happy to be here. My name is Yvonne Muthoni, as Jay said. I'm the Country Director for Open for Business here in Kenya. My intersectionality lies between the private sector, where I used to work before, and the CSO and NGO space, where I'm working now. And because of my background, of course, I have a bias towards workplace inclusion and ensuring that the private sector is taking more action towards LGBTQI+ inclusion, especially in countries like Kenya, where we still hold on to colonial laws that have not been repealed and it's the work that we're undertaking in this country, and in many countries in Africa — I think about 52.

So, I currently work with Open for Business. I'm a consultant for Open for Business. Open for Business is a U.K. based charity working with the private sector for the advancement of LGBTQ inclusion. We are a coalition of over 35 global companies, many of which operate in Kenya, but all of which have a footprint in Africa. Our goal is to make the economic and business case for LGBTQ inclusion through evidence-based research, and as such, make the case that businesses should become stronger allies for LGBTQ

inclusion. We also work to create a more inclusive culture in cities and societies in general, thus creating stronger allies for advancing LGBTQ rights. And consequently, hope to see a repeal of the penal codes 162 and 165, a court case that is being led by CSOs in Kenya, which include the National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya, which is a coalition organization of many different organizations, like Minority Remaining Action and other CSOs in Kenya.

We hope to achieve this change through, of course, one is our research. We have a number of publications that we have on our website. One, of course, of key importance to me is the Kenya Report, the economic case for LGBTQ inclusion in Kenya. We have the Channels of Influence Report, which is a great tool for businesses that want to know how to act and what to do in the public sphere. We have the City's Report, which is a great tool for cities, for mayors, who want to improve inclusion in their cities- and many other publications. We also host bilateral and collective quarterly roundtable meetings with business leaders, and this is just to increase the engagement of the private sector with Open for Business work. We also ensure we are participating in key business discussions and events, such as this, and other conferences. Of course, we want our reports to be heard and to be publicized as much as possible so that CSOs, leaders, policymakers are able to use the information that we have there, our findings.

Then we also partner with key development actors, CSO leaders and government bodies to advance inclusion and amplify each other's work. We are all working in the same space. Our main goal is the same-to ensure that everyone feels safe, secure, and can be their authentic selves. So, we work with different partners to bring this collective goal of LGBTQ inclusion in societies a reality. And, for me, of course, especially in this challenging market, such as Africa. The Kenya laws are not that supportive. Of course, there's the penal codes 162 and 165 that are being challenged in court. Workplace protections are very general and vague, but there have been some improvements and there have been some advances in certain aspects. Yes. Thank you.

**Jay Gilliam:** Thank you, Yvonne. It sounds like you and Open for Business have a lot of resources that you're offering folks in terms of how to advance nondiscrimination and LGBTQI+ inclusion. I'm sure that's really been helpful for the folks that you all are engaging with. I wanted to turn it over to Nickoy to share about the work you all are doing at JFLAG.

**Nickoy Wilson:** Okay, again, I'm Nickoy Wilson, Policy and Advocacy Manager for Equality Jamaica, also known as JFLAG. The situation in Jamaica is -- in terms of the discrimination that people face, about one third of LGBT Jamaicans-in our needs assessment that we did in 2019-experienced some challenge because of their -- you know, their LGBT status. And so, when it relates to just the issues that LGBT people face in the workplace in Jamaica, you know, they may enter the workplace and the hiring practice may be non-discriminatory, but then when they interact with colleagues and managers and supervisors, you know, sometimes they face discrimination. Now, this discrimination is rooted just like Yvonne, in Kenya, where there's the retention of these colonial laws.

In Jamaica, we retained the Offenses against Person's act. I believe it's an 1865 or 1864 act — it's a very old act. And, it basically helps to perpetuate the stigma and discrimination against LGBT people. Interestingly, one of the things about Jamaican society is that we had done a perception study some time ago and the Jamaicans indicated basically that, okay, LGBT people should be treated fairly. So, over 80% of them would have indicated this that LGBT people should be treated fairly, but when it came on to the repeal of the buggery law, most of them would with have said it should be retained, and even

more recently, one of our local newspapers did a poll and a significant number of people believe that the law should be retained.

So, you know, that's one of the things that we want to see happen, a repeal of those laws. There is a church that's very strong in Jamaica and they advocate for the retention of the law because for many Jamaicans, it's almost as if it's a -- it's almost like a cultural status symbol--it's something that reaffirms that okay we are a Christian society because Jamaicans like to say we are a Christian society and so repealing this law, to them, is opening the flood gates. Although, the reality is the police isn't hunting down LGBT in Jamaica. Prosecution of consenting adult males is not -- isn't something that is really heard of. In fact, when we did an analysis of ten years of data, looking at the buggery law--over 80% of the cases actually involve children being buggered, and the reality in Jamaica, when it comes down to that is that buggery is not considered rape. And, because these are prescribed sentences in the law of maximum ten years--and then for rape, the starting point for rape is 15 years--there is that disparity and inequality when you compare those two things. So, yes. You know, that's the situation in Jamaica. It is improving. And I think, as we will speak about later on, the business process outsourcing sector, which has the call centers, et cetera--They have kind of taken the lead in Jamaica on creating those sort of inclusive and diverse workspaces.

**Jay Gilliam:** Thank you for that, Nickoy and I think you really laid out the connections between society's perceptions of LGBTQI+ persons and how those impact the freedoms for getting jobs, for experiencing harassment and discrimination in the workplace--but also a little bit of hope from some of the research and polling that's being done--that things might be improving in Jamaica. So, thanks for that. Ramil, I want to come over to you and share all the work that you all are doing at APCOM, and kind of what is the environment that you all see this happening in, in terms of addressing workplace protections and inclusion?

**Ramil Andag:** Hi. Good evening from Bangkok, Thailand. I'm Ramil Andag, SOGIESC Rights Officer of APCOM--APCOM is a regional and government organization and we work in Asian Pacific region, and we have country partner organizations in most of the countries in the region. We work on health and rights of people and communities of diverse SOGIESC. For the rights part, that would be basically what we're doing on LGBTQ, SOGIESC and LGBT specifically and LGBTQI social economic inclusion. We're doing a lot of work on engaging private sector and multilateral development banks for SOGIESC inclusion. Same as Jay said earlier: The regions are still lost. There are some countries where there are laws which criminalize consensual sex acts. But even if in a country, for example, where it is not criminalized, there are no laws. Mostly, there are no laws which recognize or protect against discrimination based on SOGIESC. There are also some countries which have broad protections in their constitution and recognition. Some positive developments--there have been decriminalization in some and moves to decriminalize consensual same-sex acts and discussions around same-sex marriage and/or unions. But, generally, there is still that lack of protective laws and laws which recognize.

And I think also for private sector even if, for example, the private sector still works within the legal and policy environment of a country. And I think we should -- for me, we should not divorce the legal and public environment with the actual experiences of the LGBTQI experience of individuals and communities. Research, including the research which APCOM did, which indicates there's still discrimination based on SOGIESC--not only in the workplace, but in other rights basically and other development outcomes, if we are going to say that. Access to education, access to health care, and specifically in the workplace, research would show that discrimination happens in finding work, interviews, applying for work, keeping jobs, and promotions. There are experiences also of micro-

aggression. I think somebody also — micro-aggression was said earlier. And these are based on the binary conceptions of how the world should be.

Policy change takes a lot of time. LGBTQI civil society organizations have been very active in these campaigns for policy changes. But I guess also even -- perhaps we can also look at those neutral laws because some of these supposedly neutral laws are also being used disproportionately versus LGBTQI. Maybe a challenge also, if we talk about workplace, how do we also look at other development outcomes from a more intersectional and interrelated kind of perspective? If LGBTQI person has limited access to education, for example, this would have effects in the future, in the workplace, or access to health. And also when we're talking of workplace, I guess it's more the formal workplace, right? COVID experience and data would show us that there are many LGBTQI people who are engaged in the informal kind of work, and how do we also talk about protections on this? I hope that makes sense.

**Jay Gilliam:** No, no, definitely, Ramil and I think your perspective and experience in Asia, I think, also connects that within every region there are still a lot of ways to go in terms of, one, just talking about LGBTQI+ issues in society and making advancements for inclusion in the workplace. I want to go to some specific questions for each of you. Maybe going back to Nickoy. And, Nickoy, can you just share a little bit around the work that JFLAG has done with case studies and rapid assessments for workplaces in Jamaica? What have you found in regard to the challenges and bright spots for LGBTQI+ workers in Jamaica and for different types of workplaces?

**Nickoy Wilson:** Okay. So, we did a case study on the business process outsourcing sector. For those of you that do not know, the business processing outsourcing sector is BPO. It's basically focused on -- I don't want to say it's focused on call centers, but that's bulk of what they do in Jamaica. So, they come here and they set up call centers and they employ individuals. There are issues in terms of the amount of pay that these individuals get, which is also connected to their right to work. But they have been, for some time, viewed as, I guess, standard bearers for diversity and inclusion in Jamaica. Because the companies that come here, they tend to have inclusive policies from their head organization. So, those policies are basically adopted here in Jamaica. However, while the BPO sector does provide employment opportunities for LGBT people, there are still issues when it comes to promotion and, you know, whether or not the practices are, in fact, fair to LGBT people. There's a feeling that, I guess, a sort of -- it's not necessarily nepotism but favoritism within the workplace, that would prevent you or allow you to get a promotion. One of the issues that we found in the case study was that while the BPO sector does have inclusive policies-in terms of applying it to our local situation, that's not necessarily something, you know, that is done so the policies aren't necessarily, taking into consideration the cultural realities.

And moving on to the rapid assessment that we would have done-one of the issues that we found there -- the rapid assessment was done among the BPO sector, but also other businesses. We found that, you know, businesses will have inclusive policies. But then it does not specify LGBT. I mean, people will say, why does it need to specify LGBT? It's a reality in Jamaica that, you know, being LGBT is one of those things that, you know, you're likely to be discriminated. That's one of the basis on which you're likely to be discriminated so we have to address it head on. So, yeah the rapid assessment, in terms of the policies, you know-There may be inclusive policies but then the employers don't necessarily know about it, and this kind of reflects a general problem that the LGBT community faces is just not being aware of their rights. When we do have sensitization sessions, we realize there is that gap in terms of knowing their rights. It's also important for, you know, for the workplaces, when they have these policies, you

know, to educate their employees-inform them that this policy exists and, you know, this is how it works.

But, yeah, the rapid assessment and the case study would have basically confirmed what we already believed in terms of how culture plays a significant role, you know, in kind of helping to move the needle because even in organizations where people, you know, feel free to express themselves, there is -- you know, there is still hesitancy. You know, there is still the fear that okay when you leave the workplace, will you be harassed by, you know, these same colleagues and whether or not will you be comfortable to even make a report to say, you know, this person has been harassing me because they believe that I am LGBT or because I am LGBT. So, these are things that LGBT people face, you know, within the workplace and that was highlighted, you know, by these two documents. Just to say that in our bit to improve the situation for LGBT people, we are currently, you know, doing a project where we are adopting. So, we have done workplace sessions before, but this year, we are specifically doing a project where we adopt five organizations and we take them through, you know, LGBT rights-the issues facing LGBT people, how they can create an inclusive workspace for LGBT people and also, you know, how can they celebrate Pride within their workplace or just have stickers up or you know that say, for example, this is a non-discriminatory environment. So, that's what we have been doing particularly this year in trying to improve the situation for LGBT people. We also created an employer safe space manual which basically guides employers on how they can create a safe work environment for LGBT people.

**Jay Gilliam:** That's really, really great and I think you do highlight the connections of the environments that we are all working in, right? It really is important. The policy change is also important, but for policies to be fulfilled and implemented in the correct way, to fulfill their promise, that the environment to the work we have to do to make sure that our societies are more inclusive of LGBTQI+ folks, is just as important. Ramil, I want to come back to you. I know that APCOM works across Southeast Asia and has really been engaging with the private sector and entities like the Asian Development Bank on piloting projects and talking about strategies to advance LGBTQI+ inclusion, nondiscrimination in the workplace and trying to institutionalize some safe spaces. So I was wondering, can you share any unique insights from these experiences, including how institutions are engaging with civil society like APCOM and other partners?

**Ramil Andag:** Yeah. Not to say also that APCOM and our country partners are the only organizations in the space, engaging private sector and the finance sector but for APCOM's experience, we started the work which we have been doing, engaging the private sector and the Asian Development Bank, in 2018 with our APCOM and our country partner organizations in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, PDR, Philippines- and our engagements included partnership building, evidence building-where we did research because, I will also later, that evidence building has been very important when we're engaging with private sector and financial institutions capacity strengthening and awareness raising on SOGIESC and others.

For APCOM and our country partners organizations, when we started doing this it was new to us. Our experience, our travel. We did have a lot of learnings and reflections because, for the most part, our experience would have been with governments, would have been with civil society organizations, would have been with other development agencies-and bringing our collective lessons with our country partner organizations, our collective lessons learned and how we continue the work we're doing on financial sector and the private sector. Some of our reflections, some of the strategies which we have been using with governments, other civil society organizations, and other traditional partners may not work. So, we need to kind of reflect on our approaches. How do we make our frameworks resonate, for example? What will resonate with financial institutions? What will resonate with the private sector?



I think I heard this from a professor. How do we complement -- I hope I'm quoting her correctly: "How do we complement our human rights case with a business case? That being SOGIESC inclusive is not only the right thing to do but it also makes a good business case." And how do we equip organizations with an understanding of how the private sector works, right? We cannot engage. How do we also equip ourselves with that and how do we also get help from others on that. If we want to engage the private sector, it requires familiarity with how they operate. Are there existing policies where, in the private sector and in the finance sector, where we can anchor our kind of calls and focuses on? For example, we have strategy 2030 which talks about prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia-Pacific. Evidence building-how do we develop robust evidence for our focuses? In our experience, it's always ask-So our focuses would need to be evidence based.

Also, more forward looking, how do we partner perhaps with the private sector and the finance sector on evidence work? How can they partner with civil society organizations working on LGBTQI on evidence building? But approaching the private sector with openness to discuss SOGIESC. I think there have been moves already that Asian Development Bank on inclusion, including the safe space review. An important thing which I would like to highlight is engagements should be guided by the local context. What's the existing LGBTQI context and situation in a certain country? That's why for APCOM, partnership with in-country LGBTQ organizations is very important because things that we do should be guided by the local context. What can be done and what cannot be done within that context? Ensuring that we're doing no harm.

**Jay Gilliam:** I think that's really important and actually, I want to pick up on that with the next question to Yvonne. Just around, you know, engaging with other partners and parts of society on this. Yvonne, I know that you all do a lot of work on network building and using research and training to sensitize different parts of society in Kenya, as well as using kind of impact statements to mobilize commitments from the private sector for inclusive workplaces. So, I was wondering, can you talk about that work in terms of network building and how to utilize that to make positive movement forward on inclusive workplaces?

**Yvonne Muthoni:** Yes, thank you, Gilliam. We do conduct, as I mentioned earlier, the evidence-based research and this is mainly to provide a different angle, a different argument apart from the human rights argument and the religious argument. In Kenya right now, our current president has been heard saying that LGBTQ issues are not a human rights issue. So how, then, can we make a bigger impact with our arguments? How can we add on to the work that is already ongoing? How can we complement what CSOs are doing? So, we then provide the evidence-based research-the business case that was just mentioned, and the reason why we do this is because we want to provide businesses with the language that they can speak because when you speak to a business leader, sometimes it's hard for them to articulate the human rights issue. But it's easier for them to articulate the economic issue, the business issue. So, this is what we try to achieve with our reports. So, we host bilateral meetings and collective quarterly roundtable meetings with business leaders to be able to sort of cross-learn from each other. And just to build networks.

And we hope that, you know, our theory of change is that these business leaders will, in turn, speak to a third party during a meeting and they'll be able to articulate what the issues are in a language that they understand. And, of course, in the long run, we hope that this will shift the government's positioning on LGBTQ inclusion or just create a strong ally who can counter the religious community because in most of these countries, the religious community has a very strong sort of a powerful hold on politicians, a

powerful hold on leaders. Who else can counter that? For us, that's the business sector and the development sector, too. So, ours is to ensure that we provide the tools or the language that business leaders can use to articulate what the issues are and hopefully, in turn, that that will shift the conversation from, you know, culture which has been an argument. It's like when you sit with your friends somewhere at a bar and you're discussing religion-It never ends. It never ends. So, can we provide some evidence-based research or business case for LGBTQ inclusion? How we do it is by the roundtable meetings, by engaging with development actors such as USAID, embassies, other INGOs, CSOs -- just trying to collectively use-have our connections work for our mutual benefit.

**Jay Gilliam:** That's really great and that's a great lead-in to our last question that I want to ask you all before we turn it over to all of our participants, who I'm following in the chat box. There are really great questions being asked there and we're going to be able to get to those. For this last question for each of our panelists, we're going to make it a little quick, speedy response. But to each of you, you know, we're really fortunate today to have joining us development practitioners, implementing partners of USAID, as well as USAID staff-all of whom work to advocate governments, creating enabling environments that allow economies to be sustainable and inclusive. And so, to each of you, how would you recommend for all of the folks joining us today, to partner with LGBTQI+ led organizations, like yours, to advance these priorities? What do you recommend to have a successful cooperation and partnership that ensure LGBTQI+ people can thrive in any workplace? First, we're going to start with Nickoy, then go to Ramil and then end with Yvonne.

**Nickoy Wilson:** I mean, outside of, like, funding for programs, I think that there is technical support and insight that could be offered, you know, that could be offered in partnering with us because I know, especially within the United States, there is -- you know, there are certain states that are more progressive, et cetera. And, you know, we could get insight just in terms of how they dealt with, you know, the cultural realities there and even right now, in terms of lobbying, we don't necessarily have lobbies in Jamaica. I think that's possibly where we need to get to. I think that's another way just providing the technical assistance or training in lobbying so that we can effectively advocate our policymakers because one of the issues we face in Jamaica, when it comes down to policy change, which I think this may be the case everywhere, is the lack of political will. So, you know, you will speak to parliamentarians and other policymakers and they will say, yes, we agree that this is the case-we agree that the law isn't equal, but we do not want to commit political suicide by doing or saying things.

And parliamentarians have said things in favor of LGBT people. It has happened. They have attended our events but going to their constituency and saying to their constituents that LGBT people should be treated the same, is not necessarily something they will do. I really do think that really that technical support, especially around lobbying, you know, would be very, very helpful because I think that's where we're lacking. It's really kind of moving from talking to parliamentarians, sensitizing them, them becoming more aware to our stage, having them take action. I guess I can plug this here. That's why right now we actually have a project funded by USAID where we are doing a little bit more aggressive engagement of political actors. We're doing three trainings with them. This also includes trade unions because trade unions in Jamaica, they're very strong. So we are engaging these individuals. We are creating a LGBT and human rights caucus. We are doing research around LGBT issues, all to support this sort of initiative in terms of that push for policy change and giving the parliamentarians the data they need and the support they need, to not only to make the statements, but to also take action. Yeah. I think that's it. That's really how we have to partner is really getting that technical support, getting that insight and knowing how we can possibly approach certain situations in a different way and coming up with different strategies, because even like the workplace sensitizations that we're doing now-The

reason we decided to adopt workplaces was actually because of a project that Stonewall has in the UK where they have actually adopted workplaces. We thought it was a really good idea to adopt these workplaces and guide them, take them under our wing. Just to say that outside of the sensitization sessions, we also help with the development or review of inclusive workplace policies for them. So, that's also a part of the adoption.

**Jay Gilliam:** Thank you, Nickoy. I think you just gave folks a lot of ways that they could join in some of the work you're doing, and giving them ideas on how they can start partnering with LGBTQI+ organizations and work in places where they are. I want to hand it over to Ramil for some closing recommendations from you.

**Ramil Andag:** Thank you, Jay. And I think, maybe just some reminders. We all know this already: the more general frameworks of “nothing about us without us”-which requires a lot of meaningful engagements with LGBTQI people and organizations, because organizations know the context. Organizations know the situations. LGBTQI organizations know the situation. And, do no harm-how are we being informed by local context. Sustained and meaningful partnerships-events, for example, are good, but how do we also elevate partnerships to a more sustained and more strategic? How do offer also spaces for cross learning? Development organizations learning from civil society organizations, civil society organizations learning from development agencies-How do we support the ongoing advocacy and activities of LGBTQI organizations? This can be evidence building. This can be campaigns. And, how do we also open markets? Like private sector-how do we help in partnering with private sectors, for example, if that's something which is possible. And, how do we look at this from an intersectional perspective? I mean, SOGIESC and LGBTQI is one of the basis for differential treatment and discrimination, but there are also other layers of identities, like rural/urban, age, abilities and disabilities, educational background. [Those are at] the top of my head.

**Jay Gilliam:** Thank you for that, Ramil. Those are all key things that we should always be keeping in mind, and particularly what you started with: “Nothing about us without us.” Yvonne, what are some of the recommendations you would offer folks?

**Yvonne Muthoni:** I love nothing about us without us. But, yes, I think for the development actors or the development practitioners-for me this is U.N. bodies, your consulates — I think it's more mutual participation and more conversations around LGBT inclusion, especially in the countries which you have a presence in. So not just have that one conversation on Pride Day where you have a photo-op and then one year later, we are back at the same table asking, what are the issue? But there's been nothing between June 2022 and June 2023. So, I think there needs to be more action towards that end, because, for example, consulates — they occupy or they have access to very powerful spaces. So, hopefully, this message, these conversations that we have are conversations that they can carry forward to the spaces that they have access to, to these conversations they have a privilege of being part of. That also speaks to them being messengers of impact for LGBTQ inclusion. Just more effective dialogue. Policymakers— what also for you do you feel are the gaps that CSOs have not filled for you to be able to articulate the message of LGBTQ inclusion and what the issues are. Of course, it's also funding—things like research. There's a lack -- desperate need for research, especially in Africa, and especially for it to be online. It's quite difficult. We were conducting research with UNDP for certain cities. Countries like Zimbabwe barely have any information online. This creates such a difficult situation when you're trained to conduct research and fill some gaps. So, just funding toward those certain activities that form the basis of the strategies that our movement will take. For employers, it will be mutually beneficial partnerships- whether you're going to support civil society organizations and other NGOs financially or whether you're

going to support in kind. If you own a hotel, give a discount or something of the sort to CSOs who probably want to have a meeting. Or if it's, let's say, you know, you're GlaxoSmith Kline, is it possible to partner with organizations like Ishta or Nigolac and have free lube or things like that — like mutually beneficial partnerships.

Even if it's about when you're giving aid to another organization—apart from partnering with governments and big, corporate companies, you can also partner with CSOs. That, then, it — it sort of amplifies the work. It gives them the opportunity to amplify the work that they're doing. So, those partnerships, for me, are key. Then it's also, you know, just go through the channels of influence. It's a great resource. It's a great resource for employers. It provides guidance for public action by the private sector. Then we also have LGBTQ inclusion in the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, which is just a guide, sort of a premiere—a guide to linkages between SDGs and LGBTQ inclusion. We're running out of time for us to fulfill our U.N. Sustainable Development Goals. So now is the right time to start linking those goals to LGBTQ inclusion.

Then for LGBTQ advocates and CSOs and CBOs, we have a toolkit that we produced with Workplace Pride. I think it's a great resource for CSOs to use—to be able to learn how to engage. It gives us a guide on how to engage with the private sector because, obviously, it's not easily. The private sector needs constant engagement. The minute you stop having these discussions with the private sector, they move on to what is the bottom line for the company and how are we making money? You constantly have to keep reminding businesses that this is a business issue. Human rights is a business issue. You're not employing robots.

**Jay Gilliam:** Another-

**Yvonne Muthoni:** Sorry?

**Jay Gilliam:** Maybe one more recommendation.

**Yvonne Muthoni:** Okay. One of our CSOs, we have a CSO training coming up in Kenya, and I think maybe this could be rolled out in other places where we're not there. It's just something—just training CSOs how to use our research as a toolkit. Those are just the general recommendations that I'll give. Thank you.

**Jay Gilliam:** Yeah, I would say those are some really great, concrete recommendations that you've offered everyone joining us today. We have some questions that have come in from the audience, so I want to make sure that we have time to get through those and just as a reminder, you can use the chat box to post your question and we'll direct it to the panelists or a particular panelist. Questions can be addressed to the panelist, myself, or Chief Diversity Officer, Neneh Diallo.

We got a first question early on. Just in terms of, “Is there a launch date for the USAID LGBTQI+ 101 training?” What I can say is we are planning to launch it in early September. The training is actually going to be really interactive. It's in a magazine type format and includes interviews with the USAID staff both in our headquarters in D.C. as well as in our Missions around the world. We're really excited about this being launched and rolled out next month. I don't know if my colleagues who are from our Office of Civil Rights or Neneh's office in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility would like to add anything more about the training. They might use the chat box to do that. But stay tuned for LGBTQI+ 101 training.

We also got a question from FHI360 in Washington, D.C., an implementing partner of USAID. They write, "I support workforce development programs globally. I'm wondering about the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals in higher education in the panelists' countries, and the role that these institutions can play in supporting individuals as well as working with employers to advance inclusion." So, this is a really great question from FHI360 on how we do technical, educational, vocational training and higher education in the panelists' countries, and particularly the roles that these institutions can play in supporting individuals and working with employers to advance inclusion. Would any of the panelists like to respond to this question?

**Nickoy Wilson:** Sure. In Jamaica, as I mentioned, the cultural reality makes it difficult for any organization, you know, to take any real steps in trying to promote inclusion and diversity, because they do not want to alienate their clientele, et cetera. When it comes to our higher education institutions, for example the University of West Indies-they're very inclusive. Their campus is inclusive. I heard just last week that one of the halls of residents was actually asked, if you identify as, you know – if you identify with the pronouns he/him or she/her then, you know, join here. Join this. No matter your sex you were able to still -- that's something, you know, that is done, and I know that they do have a policy in terms of just how LGBT people are treated, et cetera.

In terms of, you know, partnering with workplaces, I think that there is an opportunity there, but I think we do have to work, you know, internally in terms of just how the university operates. For example, we signed memorandum of understanding with the medical sciences faculty to kind of inject, you know, LGBT issues within the curriculum, so that these health care workers-before they even get into the work environment, you know, they are aware of these issues and they are aware of how to treat, you know, with LGBT people. I think that's kind of first step. You know, kind of being able to have that introduced into that curriculum, and then, you know, kind of having that introduced in other curriculum. So even like, for example, you know, what Yvonne was saying about, you know, businesses kind of just -- you know, being more focused on, like, the economics of it all. You know, it's the same way in which you have to kind of inject. For example, you're doing an Economics Degree-How does LGBT issues -- how does that fit in there? Even an exam paper, even an assignment-It could be a situation with an LGBT person.

So, it's kind of getting us to that stage where, you know, we're actually incorporating LGBT issues into, you know, every subject area. I think it's then, when there's a recognition that this is actually very important to promote and to push, that we'll be able to have our educational institutions, you know, being able to partner with workplaces, and encourage them to create more inclusive work environments, especially because universities tend to have these relationships with workplaces. They have graduates leaving each year and feed them into these organizations. So, I think they are in a position to leverage -- it's a large university. There's a lot of students, and there's a lot of competition. But they can leverage that situation to say okay we want to send our student there, but we want to ensure that the environment we are sending them into is one that's inclusive and diverse. And I think they can especially do that when it comes on to, like, internships. Since they'll have a little bit more control there.

**Jay Gilliam:** Nickoy, thank you. I want to make sure we can get through some of the other questions and if Yvonne or Ramil want to respond to this question before we move to the next.

**Ramil Andag:** In our experience, sparking accurate conversations and imparting sensitive information about SOGIESC. Having these conversations, having these awareness-raising sessions is one good touch

point, because next steps could be discussed from there. Largely there's that lack of awareness on what's SOGIESC so other points could be identified from there.

**Jay Gilliam:** It always opens a door to having a broader, deeper conversation. Yvonne, did you want to add anything before we move on to the next question?

**Yvonne Muthoni:** Not really. Not really. We've not really worked with the technical and -- yeah, we mostly focus on private sector.

**Jay Gilliam:** We have another question brought up from our from the U.S. Department of Labor to our panelists, which is, "to what extent have you partnered with worker or labor organizations?" Any panelist can hop in here. I know you all talked about working with private sector, but what about labor or work organizations, unions and whatnot?

**Nickoy Wilson:** So, as I mentioned earlier, we are currently executing a USAID project which focuses on engaging political actors and labor unions. Thus far, the engagement has not necessarily born fruit. However, our discussions have been -- they've been very encouraging. You know, when we engage the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions, which is one of the, I say, groups — this confederation is of several trade unions — they actually were very supportive, and they did say that this is something that they really should — in terms of sexual orientation and identity discrimination, is something they should be focusing on because it's something that their international trade union, organization- that's a focus of theirs. They believe that they should be focusing on it. But it has been encouraging. The conversations have been encouraging, and I think there is a relationship that can be built there that will eventually, you know, bear some fruit.

**Jay Gilliam:** Others, have you engaged with labor and/or worker organizations?

**Yvonne Muthoni:** We have engaged with employment bodies, private sector bodies, actually. Your HR bodies. I mean, the engagement is still -- that engagement is still picking up slowly. But, I mean, it's sort of a new conversation to these bodies. So, still a lot of work to be done. But I would love to engage with ILO.

**Jay Gilliam:** That's great. It sounds like there's a new opportunity ramping up for all of us to engage with worker and labor organizations here.

**Yvonne Muthoni:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jay Gilliam:** We have another question from one of our friends, Eustice, who says "LGBTQI+ people are not a homogenous group. I think we all know that – so how can the specific needs of say, intersex people, be addressed as they are often the most affected by workplace inequality of all groups within the rainbow." So maybe, panelists, can you talk about how you have addressed issues within our rainbow community for particular groups? And if you've done anything around intersect issues, as Eustice has asked?

**Ramil Andag:** For us, for example, in the research that we do, we make sure that our analysis is nuanced and that we're looking at specific experiences. How is a certain -- how is a certain differential experience by a transwoman, a transman, an intersex person. I would say it's very important to link up with groups on intersect issues. They have the expertise on this. It's very important to link up with civil society

organizations working on trans issues, because they do have the expertise on this. But for APCOM, for us, we look into the specifics-how is something differential experience by a gay person, by a lesbian, by a trans woman, by a trans man, and that intersex person. Not to say that our data would be perfect, but it would have that nuancing.

**Jay Gilliam:** Thank you for that, Ramil. Yvonne and Nickoy, do you have research or work that kind of helps single out particular parts of our community and the work that you've been doing?

**Yvonne Muthoni:** No, because of the nature of the work in this economic case for LGBTQ inclusion, but I am happy that in Kenya the intersex organizations have done such a great job that they've been able to be included in collecting census, and I think now they're working on how to fine tune and make sure that people -- because I wasn't asked. But they are working on that. We just provide that economic angle, so because of that nature, we don't work on specific groups.

**Nickoy Wilson:** For us at JFLAG, we don't have any data on intersex individuals, in terms of how specific groups are affected in the workplace. I guess what I can say is that, you know, trans persons are more affected by workplace discrimination just because a lot of times they do want to express their gender and how they feel and not every workplace is as open to that. The BPO sector again has been accommodating to persons of trans experience and have allowed them to be their true selves within the work environment. So again, they are really kind of leading the charge when it comes to that. But that's really the extent of our work when it comes to intersex people.

**Jay Gilliam:** Sure, and I think this probably points, Yvonne-I think you noted earlier-that there's a lack of data in general on LGBTQI+ persons in this space. I know that we have a hard time distributing data, in the development space, on LGBTQI+ persons so -- it makes it that much more difficult and challenging to differentiate different parts of the community and getting data there, but it is definitely a spot that we know that we all need to be doing better in trying to find ways to address challenges for particular folks, within our umbrella, who are more marginalized because of their identity and who they are. Thank you for that, Eustice. That is just is going to be challenging us to do better to collect some of that information.

We have one more question I want to ask before we start wrapping up. This is from our participant in the UK. They say, "I work with a government agency that partners on public health work, and a number of countries with governments and institutions that can be hostile, discriminatory to LGBTQI+ persons in the community, and those conversations can be hard with those host governments when advocating for these rights as a key priority." The question is, quote, "I'm wondering if anyone has any thoughts on how an external agency engages supportively, non-extractively, with NGOs and CSOs that have a difficult relationship with the in-country government." And I think, you know, as we all opened up and you share in terms of the work that you all are doing in different regions of the world, that sometimes the governments that you are advocating for is not the most open to LGBTQI+ issues. So, how would you all respond to this participant, in terms of how other government and development organizations and agencies can have these really difficult conversations around LGBTQI+ inclusion with host country governments?

**Nickoy Wilson:** It's very difficult, because I remember even when I was saying earlier in terms of keeping these powerful positions, being able to like speak to those who make decisions in our country-For us in Jamaica, we -- I guess we have a kind of a hesitancy when it comes down to that, because any time there's external pressure, there is always the notion, this is not us. This is the U.S., the UK and whichever

other countries forcing their agenda on us. So, it's kind of that -- we're kind of in that situation. We're okay-we would like our local partners or high commissions, embassies, et cetera, those who represent them, those bodies-to speak to our policymakers and say, you know, this is something that needs to happen, but I don't know how much of that we can do because the church is going to come out and say they are being influenced by, you know, foreigners, so to speak. That's kind of the challenge that we have. What we have been trying to do as well is trying to localize the LGBT experience. We do have Pride. We do recognize Pride for June, but we really celebrate it in August when we have our independence and emancipation. So, we have tried to make it a little more culturally relevant and we are trying to make people realize being LGBT is not a foreign thing. LGBT Jamaicans have always existed, et cetera. That's kind of the balancing act that we have to, you know, do because we don't want it to seem as if, you know, the pressure is really just external. Because then that's going to cause more problems than anything else.

**Yvonne Muthoni:** Yeah.

**Ramil Andag:** Umm.

**Jay Gilliam:** I'm sorry. I think that kind of goes back — sorry, go ahead, Ramil.

**Ramil Andag:** I would go back to my point prior about meaningful engaging with local LGBTQI organizations on more sustained strategy engagements, because local LGBTQI organizations know the context, as I said earlier. Let's look at LGBTQI civil society organizations, not just data sources. We are the experts on this. These are our -- not just the data sources. We are the experts on this. This is our lived experience, and programs should be designed with us meaningfully participating in the crafting, not just as implementors not only as data source. This is our lived experience.

**Yvonne Muthoni:** Yeah, just to add on that, I think that again it's about the “nothing for us without us.” CSOs have worked really hard to try and gain access into some of these spaces with politicians and governments and everything. So, working with them is really key. But there's also spaces like, you know, your parliamentarians for global action where you can have a conversation with someone. Like, it's not about approaching one very hard-lined politician. It's looking for the spaces, parliamentarians for global action, the European Parliamentarian Faction, something like that-some of these spaces where inclusion is really a priority, and have conversation with these leaders that are coming from all over the globe, and you will find not everyone is adverse to LGBTQI inclusion. Not all the leaders are.

**Jay Gilliam:** Yeah, that's really great. Now that was a hard question, but we appreciate it and thank you for these thoughtful responses to that, because I think a lot of folks that are joining us want to be supporting all of the work that you all are doing. And so, obviously, going back to what Ramil said in terms of “nothing about us without us”-and helping to make sure that whatever work that you are doing and having conversations with the local government-that you, one, are bringing in local civil society, as all of you have said, to be part of that conversation and that the work that you are doing is supporting the strategies, the work, the goals of those local movements. And I think that is the best way that you can use the privilege and power that we have with some of the governments that might not be open to these issues.

So as we wrap up, I just want to say a big thank you to all of our panelists who have just shared some remarkable experiences and expertise in this space with our audience. Thank you to Chief Diversity Officer, Neneh Diallo, and to USAID Center for Markets and Economic Development, and for all of you



for joining today. Before leaving, I want to underscore three takeaways that I've had from today's conversation. One, is the crucial role of engagement, and that can look like a number of things. We just talked about using engagement with in-country host government leaders. We also talked about trainings and workshops for employers in terms of partnering with civil society, in terms of working with technical experts on LGBTQI+ inclusion. One, that engagement is really crucial to that work, whatever it looks like. Second, is the need for multisectoral approaches that, again include the private sector and other employers. I think we have a chance and opportunity to look at the work that we could be doing with labor and work organizations that came up today. And even institutions like multilateral development banks that APCOM is doing with the Asian Development Bank. And, then third, I think just the crucial role of network building-coalition strengthening and the efforts of local partners, like our panelists that are here today, and the groups and activists that they bring to this work is crucially important in terms of the work that we are doing together, to build LGBTQI+ inclusive workspaces.

For our part here at USAID, we are going to continue our efforts to walk the walk in this space, including building a work environment that is diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible, and with a door that's open for LGBTQI+ staff and allies. And so, if you would like to get in contact with our LGBTQI+ team here at USAID and the Inclusive Development Hub, you can always email us at [LGBTQI@USAID.gov](mailto:LGBTQI@USAID.gov), as well as follow us on Twitter at [@USAID\\_LGBTQI](https://twitter.com/USAID_LGBTQI), and we will drop that in the chat box so you have it. But again, I want to thank our panelists and thank all of our participants today so much for joining in this really important conversation on LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace. This is just the start of the work that we are all going to continue doing together to ensure full inclusion in all the workplaces that LGBTQI+ persons are. So again, thank you, everyone, for joining and we'll be in touch soon. Bye.