

SUPPORTING DIGNITY: THE ROLE OF LGBTI RIGHTS AND SEXUAL RIGHTS IN CANADA’S INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

A Contribution to Canada’s International
Assistance Review by the Dignity Initiative



**DIGNITY
INITIATIVE**
ADVANCING LGBTI
HUMAN RIGHTS GLOBALLY

**INITIATIVE
POUR LA
DIGNITE**
FAIRE PROGRESSER LES DROITS
HUMAINS DES PERSONNES LGBTI
DANS LE MONDE

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Preface: About the Dignity Initiative & Its Submission

This report is one of four documents written by the Dignity Initiative, a working group of Canadian civil society organizations and individuals interested in supporting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) communities around the world.

The first document, completed in mid-2015, was a [Call to Action](#), outlining how the Canadian government should enhance its support for the human rights of LGBTI people around the globe. The Call to Action sets out 22 recommendations in the following four areas:

- Supporting LGBTI activists and human rights defenders
- Funding organizations around the world and in Canada who advance the human rights of LGBTI people
- Using diplomatic influence to signal a commitment to the human rights of LGBTI people, including with respect to international development
- Supporting refugees and facilitating asylum in Canada for LGBTI people fleeing persecution

The Call to Action has been endorsed by more than 130 civil society organizations across Canada and has been shared with all Members of Parliament and submitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie and the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

In June 2016, the Dignity Initiative hosted a national roundtable on advancing the rights of LGBTI persons globally, in which two additional reports were released:

- *Advancing Dignity: Assessing Canada's Global Action on Human Rights for LGBTI People* highlights how Canada's foreign policy and refugee policy can better support the human rights of LGBTI people.
- *Solidarity for Dignity: Insights for Canadian Organizations Working Globally to Support the Human Rights of LGBTI People* outlines best practices and case studies of how leading Canadian civil society organizations are currently supporting global human rights movements for LGBTI people.

This submission to Canada's international assistance review builds off of the findings from these two reports and the insights from participants in the Dignity Initiative's National Roundtable. We hope that this document will be a useful tool for the Canadian government's in highlighting how best to advance sexual rights and LGBTI rights into Canada's international development assistance.



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Signatory Organizations

Having read through and, in some cases, provided feedback on earlier iterations of this submission, the following organizations from Canada and around the world have endorsed the recommendations provided in this report:

1. Action Canada for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
2. The AIDS Committee of Durham Region (Canada)
3. AIDS Vancouver Island (Canada)
4. ARC International (Canada)
5. Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
6. Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives
7. Centre for Community Empowerment (Vietnam)
8. Dignity Initiative (Canada)
9. Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality (ECADE)
10. Equitas - International Centre for Human Rights Education (Canada)
11. Fierté Montréal Pride (Canada)
12. ILGA North America (Canada)
13. Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services, University of Alberta
14. Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment (iSEE), Vietnam
15. KyivPride Canada
16. LGBT Family Coalition (Canada)
17. LiGA (Ukraine) (https://www.lgbt.org.ua)
18. The MATCH International Women's Fund (Canada)
19. The McLeod Group (Canada)
20. Oxfam Canada
21. Queer Alliance Nigeria (Canada)
22. Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia (Canada)
23. Sexual Rights Centre (Zimbabwe)
24. Trans Research, Education, Advocacy & Training [TREAT] - Zimbabwe
25. United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW)

Overview Questions

What are Canada's strengths in providing international assistance through our development, humanitarian, and security and stabilization efforts? How can we best align them with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

For decades, Canada has been known internationally for its expertise in advancing rights-based, gender-sensitive, pro-poor development programming. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its focus on ensuring that no-one is left behind present a unique opportunity to build on this legacy.

We believe it is vital for Canadian assistance to include an explicit focus on gender-sensitive and rights-based policies and programming, and that this approach must also recognize the unique needs and particular challenges faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) persons around the world. Such work must be advanced with great humility, self-awareness and careful collaboration; as the recent Orlando shootings and as ongoing Canadian LGBTI human rights challenges highlight, discrimination on the basis of gender identity, gender expression, attraction, and/or intersex status are not limited to the global South.

Additionally, as noted in its Call to Action with recommendations for the Canadian government on advancing the human rights of LGBTI people, the Dignity Initiative recognizes the limitations of using the terms “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex” or LGBTI. There is a spectrum of gender identity and sexual diversity both in Canada and around the world, and there are many other words in various languages to describe this diversity, reflecting the culturally and historically specific ways in which diverse sexual and gender identities are recognized and expressed. In this paper, we use the term LGBTI because it is widely understood in the Canadian context and in international settings, but we acknowledge its limitations.

SDGs and LGBTI human rights:

As the leading UK-based LGBTI organization Stonewall detailed in a recent report (http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/sdg-guide_2.pdf), successfully meeting a number of the SDGs and their targets will partially depend on the extent to which LGBTI populations and their needs are addressed.

In particular, as we will highlight in greater detail throughout this report, the following SDG targets are deeply connected to issues pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity:

- *Target 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all [...]*
- *Target 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women [...] have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property [...]*
- *Target 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases*
- *Target 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being*

- *Target 3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse¹, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol*
- *Target 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services [...]*
- *Target 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage [...] for all*
- *Target 4.5 By 2030 [...] ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for [...] children in vulnerable situations*
- *Target 4.7 By 2030 [...] ensure [...] education for [...] human rights [&] promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence [...]*
- *Target 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere*
- *Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls [...]*
- *Target 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the [...] inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status*
- *Target 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity [...] including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices [...]*
- *Target 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services [...]*
- *Target 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death threats*
- *Target 16.3 [...] Ensure equal access to justice for all*

Which priorities should guide Canada's development assistance policies? And which international assistance activities should Canada scale back or phase out?

We applaud the Canadian government's focus on integrating a feminist approach to development policy and we believe that a feminist analysis should be prioritized *provided that* clear provisions are in place to ensure that the feminist approach taken integrates a comprehensive understanding of sexual orientation and gender. Doing so requires taking an intersectional approach and acknowledging/integrating various non-Western constructions of "LGBTI" identities.

Moreover, we believe that centering the voices and priorities of activists and movements in the global South is vital to ensuring that Canada's development assistance policies are as relevant and responsive as possible.

How can Canada best refocus its international assistance on helping the poorest and most vulnerable, and supporting fragile states? What can we learn from the experience of others in this regard?

As the Dignity Initiative has extensively detailed in our recent comparative policy report, "[Advancing Dignity](#)," Canadian international assistance will be unable to help some of the poorest and most vulnerable populations unless greater efforts are made to ensure that local LGBTI populations are consulted and their needs integrated into Canadian policy, programming, and monitoring/evaluation.

¹ We regret the SDG's choice of terminology in referring to substance "abuse," as this term has been widely criticized by those working in the fields of HIV, harm reduction, and drug policy; however, the content of this particular target has clear relevance to LGBTI health and human rights in light of higher prevalence of problematic substance use among LGBTI populations for a variety of reasons having to do with human rights.

The above-mentioned comparative policy report, “Advancing Dignity,” elaborates on how a number of countries and institutions have demonstrated leadership in this area, from which Canada can learn. Canada should learn, first and foremost, from the experience of organizations and individuals internationally who work on advancing the human rights of LGBTI persons in their home countries. In terms of development programming specifically, Canada can learn from the experience of the European Union, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States, all of who have demonstrated considerable leadership in integrating the rights of LGBTI persons into both their foreign policy and their development policy/programming.

One key lesson that should inform Canada’s approach to helping the poorest and most vulnerable relates to adopting an intersectional analysis in policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Factors like gender, gender identity, race, ethnic origin, attraction (sexual orientation), intersex status, disability, age, migration status, class, caste, employment precariousness, sex work, HIV status, use of prohibited drugs, and incarceration render individuals disproportionately at risk of experiencing poverty, violence, discrimination, and illness. For example, research on HIV infection in 15 countries found that transgender women were 49 times more likely to be living with HIV.² As a result, it is critical that Canadian development programming integrate an intersectional approach in which these overlapping forms of discrimination are actively woven into programming and evaluation.

Which organizations, institutions, and partners should Canada work with, and what is the most effective way to do so?

As we detail on pages 12-15 of the Dignity Initiative’s “Advancing Dignity” report (<http://www.dignityinitiative.ca/research-projects-2/policy-report/>), it is *essential* that Canada work with local organizations focused on LGBTI rights in order to ensure that programming in this area is as context-relevant as possible. Many Embassies and High Commissions already foster relationships with organizations focused on sexual rights and SOGI, and this is to be commended. However, much more work is needed in order to ensure that these relationships are consistently sought in Canada’s work globally. Canada would also benefit from collaboration and dialogue with global civil society networks of LGBTI organizations such as the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA) and OutRight Action International, as well as networks working on these issues from a broader sexual rights perspective, such as the Sexual Rights Initiative.

In order to effectively protect the rights of all people, including of LGBTI persons, it is critical that Canada engage in multilateral cooperation. Some of the most important organizations and institutions in which to be engaged on these issues are as follows:

- the Commonwealth;
- la Francophonie (to date, negligible work on LGBTI rights has been done within this institution; however, Canada along with France are well-positioned to engage in nuanced diplomatic efforts within this space);
- the European Parliament’s Intergroup on LGBTI rights (while Canada is not eligible to join as a member, valuable opportunities for collaboration and knowledge-sharing can be explored

² M. Bennett-Smith. “Transgender Women 49 Times More Likely To Have HIV, Study Says.” Huffpost Queer Voices, February 2, 2016.

- the Global Coalition for Equality (a multilateral initiative of which Canada is a founding member, launched at the Montevideo Global LGBTI Human Rights Conference);
- the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and other mechanisms and forums of the Organization of American States;
- the Pan-American Health Organization and World Health Organization;
- the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), including the UNAIDS Secretariat and the co-sponsor UN agencies that together constitute the joint programme as a whole (e.g. UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, etc.);
- the UN LGBT Core Group (of which Canada is currently not an official member);
- the UN Human Rights Council (including its Universal Periodic Review process), UN human rights treaty bodies and special procedures, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

For more information on these organizations/institutions and their significance, please see the Dignity Initiative report “Advancing Dignity” (especially pages 22-24): (<http://www.dignityinitiative.ca/research-projects-2/policy-report/>).

How can Canada deliver its international assistance most efficiently and effectively, and better measure results?

Canadian international development assistance can be made much more efficient and effective if it were to combine a greater variety of funding models and opportunities. Small-scale funding (e.g. CAD 1,000 - 10,000) for local organizations can play a vital role in enabling innovation by permitting organizations to test or pilot ideas. Furthermore, such funding can provide vitally needed funding to initiatives, individuals, and organizations who remain at the margins of society and are unable to qualify for larger funding opportunities: for example, LGBTI organizations are unable to legally register in many countries around the world and are consequently unable to qualify for any funding. In the Dignity Initiative’s report, *Solidarity for Dignity* (p.11), Southern organizations cited funding as a critical, overlooked need. Creating small pots of funding with more flexible criteria therefore serves a critical niche. Several of the international signatories on this submission have also confirmed that facilitating rapid access to small funding opportunities can significantly support outreach work, local festivals, workshops, and more at a grassroots level.

LGBTI organizations from across the global South have also repeatedly emphasized to Dignity Initiative members the need for core organizational funding and for a longer-term commitment to building communities and movements for human rights, including for LGBTI persons. Providing core organizational funding provides civil society with a much greater degree of flexibility and responsiveness and can consequently generate far more relevant outcomes than might be possible within the confines of a model of short-term, project funding. Many LGBTI organizations around the world (including some of the international signatories on this submission) are in desperate need of funding as a means to simply survive. Hence, enhancing support for core organizational funding (and not just project-based funding) can enable Canadian international assistance to become much more effective with much more meaningful results.

Finally, Canadian development programming can be made more effective by ensuring that LGBTI populations are consulted and actively integrated throughout all programming streams. As the McLeod

Group's 2013³ report noted, it is essential to mainstream LGBTI issues across donor countries' international development programming and foreign policy. LGBTI people are often at disproportionate risk of gender-based violence, HIV, homelessness, human trafficking, and poverty; as a result, programming related to these areas should be particularly focused on integrating an LGBTI lens in order to ensure that such programming reaches some of the most marginalized populations.

³ E. Jackson, Ian Smillie, and S. Brown. [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights: A Call for Canadian Leadership](#). The McLeod Group, March 2013.

Health and Rights of Women and Children

Building on our commitment to a feminist approach and support for the gender equality goal of the 2030 Agenda, where should Canada focus its international assistance efforts in this area? Can Canada take advantage of specific opportunities to demonstrate new or continued leadership on women's empowerment and gender equality?

Lesbian, bi and trans women experience multiple forms of discrimination and violence in light of their gender and LGBTI status. Additionally, because gender-based violence is often motivated by desires to reinforce traditional gender norms, male and non-binary people who do not conform to traditional gender norms are also often targets of gender-based violence and discrimination.

For these reasons, it is critical that Canada's work to advance the health and rights of women include a strong focus on LGBTI persons (and, in particular, LBT women). Some concrete ways that this can be accomplished include:

- Expanding the definition of 'gender' in order to ensure that Canadian programming and policies are fully trans-inclusive.
- Ensuring that funding focused on the rights of women and children prioritizes the rights of LBT women and non-binary/male LGBT persons, since all of these populations are at high risk of gender-based persecution.
- Ensuring that programs focused on gender equality and on gender-based violence address the particular needs of LGBTI persons (and LBT women in particular).

We feel it important to add this important note regarding the stated and welcome commitment to a feminist foreign policy: Canada's work to advance the health and rights and women, including through its development assistance, needs to ensure that it includes the rights of women (and all persons, of whatever gender and sexual orientation) who engage in sex work. It is critical that, in articulating a feminist approach to development (and other aspects of our foreign policy), Canada supports organizations of sex workers in advocating for and realizing the human rights of sex workers, including to health. Canada must avoid the unfortunate approach, adopted by some other countries similarly professing a "feminist" foreign policy, that incorrectly conflates and equates sex work with trafficking and exploitation, and that misleadingly promotes the harmful criminalization of sex workers, their clients and/or their workplaces and "third parties" in the name of protecting women's rights and health. Aside from sex workers' rights organization around the world (e.g., Global Network of Sex Work Projects) and across Canada (e.g., members of the Canadian Alliance for Sex Work Law Reform), in addition numerous international health agencies (e.g., UNAIDS, WHO), human rights organizations (e.g., Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International) and expert bodies (e.g., Global Commission on HIV and the Law) have all called for an end to such criminalization as essential to the health and human rights of sex workers.

How can Canada's efforts to support well being and empowerment better benefit children and youth, including in the education sector?

LGBTI children and youth face particular barriers, rights violations, and have particular need for protection, particularly in education. Providing access to supportive and safe environments and sexual health and rights education can greatly enhance the well being of LGBTI children and youth. Egale Canada has been actively engaged in advancing LGBTI-inclusive education curriculum in partnership

with local organizations in the Baltic States and would be well positioned to provide further insight on this matter.

What strategic role can Canada play in advancing health-related SDGs to improve the health of women and girls, including adolescents, in particular their sexual and reproductive health and rights?

LGBTI persons often face particular concerns related to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Trans persons are rarely able to safely access the hormones and services necessary for safe transitioning. Gay and bisexual men, and other men who have sex with men (MSM), as well as trans people (and trans women in particular), are disproportionately at risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) illnesses. LGBTI persons are also more likely to work as sex workers, which amplifies the risk of sexual violence and sexual health concerns. The risks to health (including of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections) of MSM, trans people and sex workers are exaggerated by hostile social and legal environments, including those where stigma, discrimination and violence are frequently encountered, where consensual sex is criminalized, where evidence-based and community-appropriate health education and services are censored or otherwise impeded by policy, law or custom, and where there is little effective protection for rights and access to a remedy in the event of rights being violated. In some contexts (for example, parts of Southern Africa), lesbian and bisexual women are at risk of so-called “corrective rape” or “curative rape” by family/community members. Yet, in spite of the considerable challenges and risks facing LGBTI populations, these very same populations are frequently denied access to health services because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, and/or involvement in sex work.

Canada can play a strategic role in advancing health-related SDGs by ensuring that its work on sexual and reproductive health and rights recognize the particular challenges and needs facing LGBTI populations, including LGBTI persons who are sex workers. For example, Canada can prioritize:

- Training healthcare providers about the needs and rights of LGBTI persons and of sex workers.
- Creating outreach health services for LGBTI persons who are otherwise unable to leave their homes or access health services.
- Continuing to fund and support programming related to HIV and STI prevention, treatment, care, and support, including programming specifically designed with, by and for LGBTI persons and sex workers.
- Investing in health care services that enable trans people to transition safely.

Governance, Pluralism, Diversity and Human Rights

How can Canada best help implement Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda-to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels?

Access to justice and legal protections are often out of reach for LGBTI persons in the many dozens of countries/jurisdictions that continue to criminalize same-sex relations. The UN Human Rights Council has noted a range of human rights violations targeting LGBTI individuals, including murder, torture, violence, arbitrary detention, denial of rights to assembly and expression, and discrimination in health care, education, employment, and housing. Custody rights for LGBTI parents are also violated in a number of countries around the world. Hence, if the goal of providing “justice for all” is to be met, the substantive legal, attitudinal, and institutional barriers that LGBTI persons face in accessing justice must also be addressed.

How can Canada promote inclusion, advance respect for diversity, and uphold human rights?

The Dignity Initiative's [Call to Action](#), a 22-point series of recommendations endorsed by more than 130 civil society organizations, details a number of ways in which Canada can promote inclusion, advance respect for diversity, and uphold human rights by ensuring that the rights and respect of LGBT people are upheld.

Of these 22 recommendations, the following are most pertinent for how Canadian development assistance can promote inclusion, respect for diversity, and human rights:

- Work with respected jurists and faith leaders, as well as other human rights defenders and community leaders, both in Canada and in countries where LGBTI people face criminalization, discrimination and violence, to support a wide and diverse array of voices speaking up for the human rights of LGBTI people.
- Strengthen the capacity of both LGBTI and non-LGBTI human rights organizations to defend basic human rights, including for LGBTI people. Provide support for building the capacity of lawyers, law enforcement personnel, national human rights institutions and judicial systems to respect and defend human rights, including the rights of LGBTI people. Ex-amples include providing support for non-governmental organizations challenging discriminatory anti-LGBTI legislation in courts, or funding security and safety measures for human rights defenders facing threats of violence.
- Beyond simply responding to urgent situations of attacks on human rights, provide financial support for LGBTI move-ment-building around the world, including core and program support to organizations working in areas such as health, community development, and engagement of religious leaders and institutions, so as to assist in mobilizing key constitu-encies speaking out in support of human rights for LGBTI people.
- Ensure that official development assistance (ODA) does not go to non-governmental organizations that promote or support legislation criminalizing LGBTI people or that encourage hatred or violence against LGBTI people. Examine options for redirecting any such funding within

a country, while taking care to preserve essential health and social services, so as to support service providers that are inclusive and address the needs of LGBTI people, and to support community advocacy efforts to protect the human rights of LGBTI people.

- Mainstream LGBTI rights into development funding policies and processes, such that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms oblige organizations, where appropriate, to report on the extent to which projects have worked with LGBTI populations to protect and advance their well-being and rights.
- Ensure that LGBTI rights are systematically integrated into other intersecting international development and human rights funding programs, such as those to alleviate poverty, protect against discrimination, promote civil liberties, address gender-based violence, and/or promote health (i.e., including HIV prevention and care, and sexual and reproductive health more broadly).
- Enhance the human rights capacity of DFATD, including through the provision of additional resources to human rights policy and legal divisions, to support a more comprehensive and consistent approach to the promotion of human rights, including those of LGBTI people.

In what areas of governance can Canada's international assistance have the most impact?

Canadian international assistance can have significant impact in advancing equity, equality and human rights by investing in the capacity of civil society, law enforcement institutions, judiciaries and human rights commissions. Across all of these areas of governance, Canada's international assistance should include opportunities for raising awareness and building support for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of LGBTI persons and communities, with greater efforts made to ensure that local LGBTI community members and human rights defenders are consulted and engaged.

As highlighted by LGBTI organizations from the global South, and reflected in the Dignity Initiative's report, [Solidarity for Dignity](#), such efforts can and should include the following kinds of support:

- Creating spaces to convene and share best practices
- Providing funding support (core organizational funding as well as project-based funding)
- Supporting organizational/individual capacity-building

Peace and Security

What specific strengths should Canada build upon to respond to peace and security challenges?

While this remains a work in progress domestically on many fronts -- including addressing the legacies of colonization against Indigenous people and the persistent reality of racism against Black people and other racialized people -- comparatively speaking, Canada as a country has a stated and meaningful commitment to building a democracy founded on pluralism and a deep respect for diversity. Many terrorist attacks are founded on the opposite logic and target particular minorities, including religious minorities and, as was recently evidenced by the Orlando shootings, LGBTI persons. Canada must better leverage its experience in, and stated commitment to, fostering pluralism and diversity within its work to respond to peace and security challenges. In response to the growth of terrorist networks and fears for security, and in response to the global refugee crisis, the global political environment is marked by growing levels of xenophobia and racism, and by significant erosion of civil liberties and of space for civil society organizations; in such times, it is even more important for political leaders and UN Member States affirm their commitment to diversity, pluralism and human rights as essential elements of ultimately building healthier, safer societies.

Responding to Humanitarian Crises and the Needs of Displaced Populations

How can Canada better support the protection of vulnerable populations in crises and strengthen respect for humanitarian principles?

As Envisioning Global LGBT Human Rights detailed in a recent report (https://www.dropbox.com/s/yk5dooij8qbiajm/Envisioning_ImmigrationRegime_Report_Revised%202016.pdf?dl=0), LGBTI persons often face double marginalization: in addition to fleeing situations of conflict/persecution, these individuals are at high risk of violence and discrimination among other refugees/displaced persons if their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or intersex status is revealed. Further, as the above-mentioned report highlights in great detail, displaced LGBTI persons face a considerable number of threats and barriers that prevent them from fleeing persecution. Part of Canada's work to support the protection of vulnerable populations in crises must therefore include policies and programming that seek to ensure the safety of LGBTI persons.

Canada can do so by:

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration, and Citizenship, working to establish official Guidelines on the concerns, needs, and issues faced by LGBTI asylum-seekers.
- Supporting the UNHCR in implementing awareness-building/training about the rights of LGBTI persons for all staff and volunteers at refugee/internally displaced persons camps.
- Working with local LGBT rights organizations during situations of conflict in order to mitigate the harm and persecution faced by LGBT persons.

Delivering Results

What concrete steps could Canada take to make its international assistance delivery approaches and mechanisms more efficient, effective and innovative? How can we promote greater coherence between our development, trade and diplomacy efforts?

Making international development assistance more efficient, effective, and innovative necessitates making changes to the kinds of available funding. During the Dignity Initiative's National Roundtable on Advancing LGBTI Rights Globally, which took place in Ottawa from June 1-2, 2016, civil society experts from Canada and from the global South emphasized four different kinds of changes that are needed:

1. **Access to small, flexible seed funding:** For many emerging social movements (including LGBTI movements), accessing conventional large-scale grants is an impossibility since these organizations are unable to legally register/qualify for charitable status and since the annual operating budget for many such organizations may be considerably smaller than these large grants. Further, the most marginalized members of LGBTI communities (for example, trans women) may be shunned or misrepresented within a country's mainstream LGBTI organization, with the result that some of the most important advocacy work may be conducted by individual activists rather than through organizations. Hence, supporting some of the most marginalized groups in society requires creating funding opportunities that are smaller in scale and more flexible in eligibility criteria and reporting requirements. Canada has learned of the potential impact of such small-scale funding through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, which has supported work ranging from trans research/programming in Zimbabwe to research, advocacy work, and national awareness-raising campaigns on LGBTI rights in Vietnam.⁴ Canada's development assistance should better acknowledge these dynamics by introducing small-scale, flexible funding mechanisms.
2. **Core funding for organizations:** All too often, the drive for results-based, transparent funding has unintentionally undermined one of the most effective means to foster change in support of human rights: providing core funding for local organizations. The organizations engaged in much of the most critical, transformative front-line work often struggle to keep the lights on as a result of having to cobble together funding from project-to-project to support change. By focusing primarily on project-based funding, Canadian development assistance can hinder organizations' ability to be fully responsive to emerging opportunities, dynamics, and needs within their national or regional contexts, effectively diminishing organizations' abilities to contribute to long-term changes that extend beyond a three to five year funding model. Evidence suggests that investing in core funding for organizations can result in much more effective outcomes than investing in projects.⁵
3. **Major grants to development organizations:** Investing in the capacity of Canadian organizations to develop large-scale projects in collaboration with local partners has been a cornerstone of Canada's development assistance, and can yield important results. These kinds of

⁴ For more information about the scale and impact of some of this work, please see the Dignity Initiative's report "[Solidarity for Dignity](#)" and [Rob Salerno's article documenting LGBTI-focused CFLI grants in Xtra](#).

⁵ See, for example, Mahmood, Shakeel, et al. "Strategies for capacity building for health research in Bangladesh: Role of core funding and a common monitoring and evaluation framework." *Health Research Policy and Systems* 9.1 (2011): 1.

funding mechanisms should be continued. Further, it will be advisable to ensure that these funding mechanisms include programming focused on protecting sexual rights and the rights of LGBTI people. At present, organizations like ARC International, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, Equitas- International Centre for Human Rights Education, and Oxfam Canada have all developed substantive programming on LGBTI rights around the world with the assistance of foreign government agencies (e.g. the European Union, the Netherlands) or other funders (e.g., private foundations). It is vital that Canada take greater measures to invest in the strength of its own civil society in engaging in this international work.

- 4. Funding a learning agenda/convening spaces:** In the Dignity Initiative's report [Solidarity for Dignity](#), which examined civil society's role in advancing LGBTI rights internationally, LGBTI activists from the global South believed that one of the most important roles for Canadian civil society to play related to creating spaces for convening and sharing best practices. Investing in spaces for learning and sharing is critical to fostering innovative and effective results, since otherwise the lessons and insights generated through Canadian development assistance are missed. Investing in learning/sharing opportunities may be particularly important for areas like the rights of LGBTI persons, since the opportunities and challenges with engaging in LGBTI advocacy are rapidly evolving. Canadian civil society has demonstrated a strong interest and expertise in creating such spaces as the WorldPride Human Rights Conference in 2014, the ILGA-North America Summit, and the upcoming Human Rights Conference for Fierté Canada Pride in Montreal in 2017.

Which organizations, communities, coalitions or partnerships should Canada work with? How best can we work with them to deliver our international assistance objectives?

As we have highlighted throughout this report, we believe that it is vital for Canada to engage with organizations, communities, coalitions, or partnerships specialized in advancing sexual rights and LGBTI rights. Engaging in this work effectively requires building and sustaining relationships with a diversity of local LGBTI populations, activists and organizations, and ensuring that the perspectives of local LGBTI movements are centered in Canadian development programming. This work should be complemented by engagement with international LGBTI organizations like ILGA and OUTRight International, with sexual rights coalitions and organizations like the Sexual Rights Initiative and with multilateral organizations such as the Equal Rights Coalition (of which Canada recently became a founding member at the Montevideo conference in 2017), the Organization of American States, and the UN Human Rights Council.

Engaging in this work effectively also necessitates engaging with individual Canadian organizations such as ARC International, Egale Canada, Equitas, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Oxfam Canada, MATCH International, Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights and the McLeod Group, with Canadian civil society coalitions such as the [Dignity Initiative](#), and with diaspora community organizations in Canada that take up LGBTI rights and related sexual rights concerns, such as Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, Arc-en-ciel d'Afrique, FrancoQueer and KyivPride Canada, to name just a few examples.

How can we enhance broader engagement of Canadians in our international assistance efforts?

A growing number of Canadian LGBTI organizations (for example, Egale Canada, ARC International, and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network) are extensively engaged in programming focused on LGBTI rights around the world. Organizations and initiatives founded by LGBTI Canadians from diasporic populations are emerging and engaging in vital solidarity/programming work (for example, Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, Arc-en-ciel d'Afrique, FrancoQueer and KyivPride Canada). Faith-based initiatives such as the El-Tawjid Mosque and the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto also engage in transnational work in support of the rights of LGBTI persons. However, none of these organizations enjoy financial support or regular communication with Canadian government officials focused on international assistance. While several development NGOs, such as Equitas - International Centre for Human Rights Education, the MATCH International Women's Fund, and Oxfam Canada have also engaged in LGBTI programming, none of these organizations' major LGBTI projects have received funding through Canada's development assistance for this work. Moving forward, Canada's international assistance should feature more concerted and regular engagement with organizations focused on LGBTI rights, including rights defenders and organizations internationally as well as Canadian NGOs working internationally on these issues. collaborating with LGBTI organizations and rights defenders internationally.