



ReportOUT

“In Zimbabwe there is no law that protects us. There are no police that protects us. Our own law discriminates against us.”



**2020-
2021**

**OUT in Zimbabwe:
The Lived Experiences of Sexual and
Gender Minorities in Zimbabwe**

REPORTOUT IS A GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION THAT DOCUMENTS THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES, AND THEIR COMMUNITIES, IN DIFFERENT NATIONS ACROSS THE GLOBE.

WE USE OUR RESEARCH TO INFORM THE PUBLIC, EDUCATE OTHERS, AND TO CAMPAIGN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS INFRINGEMENTS AGAINST SEXUAL AND GENDER IDENTITIES.

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ReportOUT
Pride Media Centre
Unit T1, Stonehills
Shields Road, Pelaw
Gateshead. NE10 0HW
United Kingdom

For more information, please visit our website: www.reportout.org
Registered Charity Number (England and Wales): 1185887

LEAD RESEARCHER: JEMMA CABLE



@SOGIReportOUT



@SOGI_ReportOUT



+44 191 348 1820



@OUT_Report



@ReportOUT



Contactus@reportout.org

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GALZ



Zimbabwe LGBTQIA+ Crusaders



Sexual Rights Centre



Intersex Advocate Trust Zimbabwe IAZ



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2. GLOSSARY

SOGI - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

SOGISEC - Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics

SRC - Sexual Rights Centre

GALZ - Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe

WCC - Women's Cultural Club

ZANU-PF - Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

3. OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

The key findings of this research study, have found that:

- Many sexual and gender minorities have limited job security - despite the fact that the majority of sexual and gender minorities are highly educated.
- More than a third of sexual and gender minorities have faced discrimination in the job market.
- Over half of sexual and gender minorities have felt that due to being a sexual or gender minority, they have missed out on employment prospects.
- For most of the sexual and gender minorities who are employed, they are paid minimum wage and their wages are not increased with the monthly inflation/currency disparity between the Zimbabwe Bond and the US Dollar.
- Over a third of sexual and gender minorities do not use mainstream hospitals because of who they are.
- Over half of sexual and gender minorities have mental health problems as a result of how they have been treated because of who they are.
- The majority of sexual and gender minorities feel that there are not enough support services for the their communities in Zimbabwe.
- A significant number of sexual and gender minorities feel that the legal system in Zimbabwe is not fair towards sexual and gender minorities.
- The most basic of human rights are not being met for many Zimbabweans who are sexual and gender minorities.

ReportOUT have provided a list of recommendations at the end of this document that must be implemented to ensure that human rights for Zimbabwean sexual and gender minorities citizens are protected.

4. WHAT IS LIFE LIKE FOR SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES IN ZIMBABWE?

Introduction

10% of Zimbabwe's population of over 15,000,000 are estimated to be sexual and gender minorities (Development and Cooperation, Badza, 2019, Worldometer, 2021). However, homo/bi/transphobia in Zimbabwe is evident in most aspects of Zimbabwe's society today. The Zimbabwe Government is the primary driving force that filters this message of homo/bi/transphobia through their politics, state-controlled media, policing, legislation, and policies.

Zimbabwe's history of sexual and gender minorities

Common myths and narratives state that sexual and gender minorities are 'UnAfrican' and therefore, does not exist in Africa (Chigudu, 2016). However, tracing homosexuality in Zimbabwe back leads to evidence of thousand-year-old rock paintings by the San people, depicting anal sex between men (Evaristo, 2014). This is the earliest evidence suggesting that sexual and gender minorities existed in pre-colonial Africa (Evaristo, 2014).

Epprecht sourced further evidence of sexual and gender minorities; he found evidence of 300 trials that took place in the local magistrates' court for 'crimes' such as sodomy and homosexual indecent assault, which were heard between 1892 and 1923 (Goddard, 2004). In 1999, Epprecht found records from Binduar Magistrate Court which showed that the fine for homosexuality was one cattle, whilst the fine for adultery was six cattle (Mabvurira, Motsi, Masuka, Chigondo, 2012).

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The Shona make up 80% of Zimbabwe's population (The Culture Trip), therefore their attitude towards sexual and gender minorities helps to highlight general perceptions in Zimbabwe. Traditionally, the Shona assume that sexual relationships are between a married man and woman and are for the primary purpose of conception (Mudavanhu, 2010). The emphasis on procreation is still documented today through social and religious practises, for example, if a Shona person dies without producing children, a 'kurova guva', a memorial ceremony cannot be held (Goddard, 2004).

There is no word in the Shona language for homosexuality, therefore, the borrowed word 'ngochani' is used (Mudavanhu, 2010). The word ngochani, according to Epprecht, was acquired from other Bantu languages and first appeared in the Shona language through workers in mining compounds (Mabvurira, Motsi, Masuka, Chigondo, 2012).

Homosexual experimentation between men and young adolescent boys was common. For example, when herding cattle, homosexual play was expected of boys at the age of puberty (Mabvurira, Motsi, Masuka, Chigondo, 2012). In addition, temporary marriages between miners were common, where they would take adolescent boys to use as their wives for prolonged periods (Mabvurira, Motsi, Masuka, Chigondo, 2012). On the other hand, adult men engaging in such homosexual activity were view as bewitched or as witches (Mabvurira, Motsi, Masuka, Chigondo, 2012).

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The first sexual and gender minorities groups in Zimbabwe were the Monday Night and the Women's Cultural Club, which in 1988 went on to form Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe, also known as GALZ (Mabvuriba, 2012). GALZ is an association that promotes, represents, and protects the rights and interests of the sexual and gender minorities community in Zimbabwe (GALZ, 2018).

GALZ rose to international attention in 1995 at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair, where the theme for that year was 'Human Rights and Justice' (GALZ website). Former president, Robert Mugabe, refused to participate in the opening of the book fair unless GALZ were expelled from the fair (Backer, 2005). After expelling GALZ from the fair, Mugabe described the events as; "outrageous and repugnant to my human conscience that such immoral and repulsive organisations, like those of homosexuals who offend both against the law of nature and the morals and religious beliefs espoused by our society, should have any advocates in our midst or even elsewhere in the world" (Backer, 2005). In 1997, Mugabe prevented GALZ from exhibiting at the fair again and stated "'If dogs and pigs don't do it, why must human beings? Can human beings be human beings if they do worse than pigs?'" (Backer, 2005).

Legislation

The first mention within legislation of homosexuality is contained in the 1914 Immigration Act, stating those who are convicted of 'sodomy' and 'other unnatural offences' are declared 'prohibited immigrants' (Goddard, 2004, Mabvurira, Motsi, Masuka and Chigondo, 2012).

Under current legislation of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act 2006, Section 73 of the act criminalises same-sex sexual behaviour between men (Home Office, 2018).

S.73 states that:

"Any male person who, with the consent of another male person, knowingly performs with that other person anal sexual intercourse, or any act involving physical contact other than anal sexual intercourse that would be regarded by a reasonable person to be an indecent act, shall be guilty of sodomy".

If found guilty, the fine is up to or exceeding level fourteen or imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year or both.

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The definition of sodomy is listed under Chapter V, Crimes Against The Person, Part III, Sexual crimes and crimes against morality, Division B: Sexual Crimes. Sodomy falls under this list alongside sexual offences such as rape, aggravated indecent assault, sexual intercourse, or performing indecent acts with young persons.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe, which was published in 2013 contains, under Section 78(3), the following; 'Persons of the same sex are prohibited from marrying each other'. In May 2019, The Zimbabwe Cabinet approved a bill to ban same-sex marriage, coinciding with the National Constitution legislation earlier published (ILGA, 2019).

Lesbians, transgender, and intersex persons do not have their identity recognised legally. There is no legislation criminalising women who have sex with women. Transgender individuals are unable to have their gender identity legally recognised in court proceedings or law enforcement (Home Office, 2018). Intersex persons are not recognised in law, therefore, have no legal recourse to address issues of discrimination (Intersex Community of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe intersex Movement, Rise Above, Women's Organisation, NNID Foundation, 2019).

Case Law

The following case law helps to demonstrate Zimbabwe's judicial approach towards sexual and gender minorities.

Banana v State, Supreme Court of Zimbabwe, [2000] 4 LRC 621

The Supreme Court had to decide whether the crime of sodomy conformed with s.23 of the Zimbabwe Constitution, which guarantees protection against discrimination on the ground of gender (Human Dignity Trust). The Supreme Court held, by a 3-2 majority, that gender could not be construed to include sexual orientation, and that the crime of sodomy could not be held to be unconstitutional (Human Dignity Trust).

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Nathanson v Mteliso & Ors, (HB 176/19, HC 1873/14) [2019] ZWBHC 135

This was a landmark ruling and the first case where Zimbabwe's Judicial system recognised that gender does not have to be male or female (Advocate, 2019). This case involves Ricki Nathanson, a transgender woman, who was arrested for using the women's bathroom. For three days Ricki was subjected to deprivation of liberty, was forced to remove her clothes in front of five police officers to 'verify her gender', and, was taken to hospitals without her consent to be 'examined' by doctors (Advocate, 2019). Nathanson was awarded damages for unlawful arrest, malicious prosecution, and emotional distress (Advocate, 2019). The High Court confirmed that "Transgender citizens are part of Zimbabwean society. Their rights ought to be recognised like those of other citizens. Our constitution does not provide for their discrimination. It is nothing but delusional thinking to wish away the rights of transgender" [people] (Mail and Guardian, Esterhuizen, 2019).

Institutionalized Homophobia: The State

In 1980 with a post-independent Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe and his party Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) served as the country's Prime Minister, and then President in 1987. Robert Mugabe was well known for his anti-sexual and gender minorities rhetoric, which he perpetuated for the duration of his Presidency. For example, in 2002, Mugabe instructed the Central Intelligence Organisation to compile a list of potential sexual and gender minorities ministers and officials in government (Backer, 2005). Later Alum Mpfu, former head of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, resigned (Backer, 2005).

In his UN General Assembly speech in 2015, Mugabe rejected pressure from Western countries to adopt 'new rights' in regards to the sexual and gender minorities community; stating that 'We equally reject attempts to prescribe 'new rights' that are contrary to our values, norms, traditions, and beliefs. We are not gays!' (Zimbabwe Independent, 2015). Later in 2016, as Zimbabwe was suffering from one of the worst droughts in two decades leaving three million people in need, Mugabe announced after applying for \$1.6 billion in aid that Zimbabwe will not accept any aid if it implies that the country will have to accept gay rights (Pink News, 2016).

4. WHAT IS LIFE LIKE FOR SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES IN ZIMBABWE?

Mugabe was later removed from power in 2017 through military intervention, then Former Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa stepped in as President, and later narrowly won the election (Freedom House, 2019). Mnangagwa gave an interview in January 2018 to CNN and, when questioned regarding anything he would do to progress sexual and gender minorities rights, he responded; “Those people who want it are the people who should canvass for it, but it’s not my duty to campaign for this ... In our constitution, it is banned ... and it is my duty to obey my constitution.” (Pink News, 2018). Although this sets out clearly that Mnangagwa was not going to campaign for sexual and gender minorities rights, later that year ahead of the July 2018 national elections, top ruling party officials of ZANU-PF met with representatives of the sexual and gender minorities, including GALZ (Human Rights Watch, 2018). In this meeting, they thanked Mnangagwa for this unprecedented event and for a better understanding than his predecessor (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

State-controlled media

The state controls the majority of media outlets in Zimbabwe, including radio stations, newspapers, and television channels. Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation is the primary radio broadcaster. The main state-controlled newspapers are The Herald, The Sunday Mail, The Chronicle, and The Sunday Gazette (Goddard, 2004). Television is controlled by ZANU-PF, and senior programmers have openly stated that both radio and television are in place to promote the interests of ZANU-PF (Goddard, 2004).

The authorities can and continue to refuse licenses of community stations, therefore restricting the diversity of radio stations and information broadcasted to Zimbabweans (Freedom House, 2019). Commercial radio licenses are generally granted to state-controlled companies and/or individuals with ties to ZANU-PF (Freedom House, 2019).

In 1993, GALZ applied to The Herald to advertise its counselling services (Goddard, 2004). Their application was rejected on the basis that the newspaper is a ‘Family newspaper and does not run contact adverts for sex’ (Goddard, 2004). The Herald contacted the Advertising Association of Zimbabwe, seeking their opinion concerning this matter, who responded that as homosexuality is illegal, the newspapers cannot run such advertisements (Goddard, 2004).

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Safety

Following Mugabe's famous speech referring to sexual and gender minorities as 'worse than pigs and dogs', he tried to encourage citizens to arrest and hand over sexual and gender minorities to the Police (Goddard, 2004). The clear message spread to Zimbabweans and to the Police force, who are supposed to protect Zimbabweans, is that the SOGIESC community can be harassed with impunity (Goddard, 2004). With the state targeting sexual and gender minorities and consequently encouraging the entire country to do so, how could sexual and gender minorities ever be 'safe' in Zimbabwe when their own Government are against them? The very institutions in place to protect human rights were not only neglecting the SOGIESC's communities basic human rights, but encouraging human rights abuses against them.

GALZ recorded human rights violations of sexual and gender minorities over seven years; the results showed that assault (18%), threats (15%), and blackmail (13%) were the most common violations recorded against sexual and gender minorities (GALZ, 2018). The report stated that 50% of gay men in the study had experienced physical assault, 64% were disowned by their families, and 27% of lesbians have reported disownment (GALZ, 2018).

The Afrobarometer 2016, interviewed 2,400 Zimbabweans and asked how they would feel having homosexuals as neighbours. The response was that nearly 9/10 of Zimbabweans (89%) say they would 'somewhat dislike' or 'strongly dislike' having homosexuals as neighbours. This research highlights how sexual and gender minorities are viewed and treated by the public in Zimbabwe.

The power of the state has created a collective fear, hatred, and consequently exclusion of sexual and gender minorities (GALZ, 2012). This collective hatred, enforced by the state, filters down into every aspect of Zimbabwean society. These societal attitudes towards sexual and gender minorities are often characterised by ignorance and homophobia (Sida, 2014). Freedom of expression for sexual and gender minorities are seriously restricted, whether it be through the laws, or unofficial bans in place such as stopping sexual and gender minorities from using the state-controlled media to have their voices heard (GALZ, 2019). Those who publicly admit their sexual orientation are often perceived as a threat to the morals of black African society (GALZ, 2004).

The reality of day to day life for many members of the SOGIESC community is that they are: denied employment opportunities, denied custody/ guardianship/ access to their children, face harassment in public places, and are not given the proper if any protection from the authorities. (Sida, 2014).

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Conclusion

The fundamental human rights of sexual and gender minorities in Zimbabwe are not being met. The Government and institutions that are supposed to be in place to protect people are neglecting to protect sexual and gender minorities and their basic human rights. This research hopes to add to the existing literature of the lived experiences of sexual and gender minorities, and bring their voices and their lives to light to inform change in Zimbabwe for the SOGIESC community, for the better.

5. METHODOLOGY

Survey Aim

The aim of the survey and interviews were to discover the lived experiences of sexual and gender minorities in Zimbabwe, to inform social change and provide recommendations to the Zimbabwean Government to improve the lives of sexual and gender minorities living in Zimbabwe.

The objectives of the survey and interview were:

- To examine the lived experiences of sexual and gender minorities in and from Zimbabwe;
- To explore the barriers that sexual and gender minorities face in their everyday lives;
- To measure social, legal, religious, and cultural pressures faced by sexual and gender minorities;
- To evaluate any issues raised by this research so that it may feed into policy decisions and activism moving forward.

Literature review

The report draws from relevant published sources; including United Nations documents, reports by other human rights organisation, Zimbabwean sexual and gender minorities organisations, reputable news sites, surveys and academic articles. This was in order to triangulate the literature already published to mirror this against our findings.

Method

A comprehensive survey of 88 questions was created to find out what individual's experiences have been as a sexual and gender minority in Zimbabwe, and to find out what people's opinions are in relation to public perceptions towards sexual and gender minorities. The survey was sent to several different organisations and charities based in Zimbabwe through social media and then shared with members of the organisations. You can request a copy of the survey questions by contacting us at contactus@reportout.org.

5. METHODOLOGY

The interviewees were sourced through contacting organisations and people via social media and by interviewees leaving their contact details at the end of the survey if they were interested in taking part. Interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom and WhatsApp video between January 2021 and March 2021.

Data collection and Analysis

A total of 55 respondents completed the survey. The findings of the survey were analysed by ReportOUT and quality checked by ReportOUT trustees before publication. The key headline survey findings are outlined in this report, and qualitative comments in the survey were themed using thematic analysis to check for themes across the data, as well as using quotes to highlight particular areas of sexual and gender minorities own lived experiences.

The interviews are presented as case studies with direct quotes highlighting each person's own lived experience.

Limitations

As with all research, there are limitations. We recognise that a large portion of the respondents identified as gay men. We also recognise that we have very small sample sizes of people who are intersex. Therefore, we hope an additional study could address this issue.

We also recognise that many of the organisations we approached to promote respondents for our survey and interviews are urban-based and younger. Therefore, we recommend a further study be conducted for older sexual and gender minorities in rural areas of Zimbabwe.

6. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

55 respondents took part in the survey. The following findings tell you more about the respondents as a whole:



Sexual and gender minorities completing the survey were mainly between 21-29 years old.

21-29 years old (54.5%), 30-39 years old (30.9%), 18-20 years old (12.7%), and prefer not to say (1.8%). There were no ages reported over 40 years of age.



The majority of sexual and gender minorities completing the survey still live in Zimbabwe.

92.7% lived in Zimbabwe and 7.3% no longer live in Zimbabwe. 100% of those who no longer lived in Zimbabwe now live in South Africa.



The majority of sexual and gender minorities live in urban areas.

50.9% live in a city, 34.5% live in a town, and 14.5% live in the suburbs.



The majority of sexual and gender minorities are living with their family.

Living with family (49.1%), living alone (27.3%), living with a partner (12.7%), living with friends (7.3%), and temporary accommodation (3.6%).



Sexual and gender minorities identify their gender in a variety of ways.

Male (30.9%), Female (18.2%), Trans man (14.5%), Trans woman (10.9%), Cisgender male (9.1%), Genderqueer (7.3%), Non-binary (5.5%), and Cisgender female (3.6%).

6. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



Sexual and gender minorities people identify their sexual orientations in a variety of ways.

Gay man (49.1%), Lesbian or gay woman (32.7%), Bisexual man (5.5%), Bisexual woman (5.5%), Heterosexual (3.6%), and prefer not to say (3.6%).



The majority of sexual and gender minorities identify with a religion.

Catholic Christianity (32.7%), Protestant Christianity (25.5%), other Christian (23.6%), Shona* (9.1%), Islam (3.6%), borderline between Christianity and traditional religion (1.8%), Agnostic (1.8%), and prefer not to answer (1.8%).



The majority of sexual and gender minorities are dating someone.

Dating (54.5%), single (36.4%), living with someone (5.5%), and engaged (3.6%).

***Please note that we recognise that Shona is a tribe and language, however, some respondents have chosen to identify their religion as Shona.**

7. CASE STUDY

Christopher (not real name), a 21-year-old bisexual man was interviewed by ReportOUT in February 2021:

"I was actually exposed to the community in 2019, and I discovered that there were more of us out there. I thought it was just me. Some things are to do with our cultural upbringing and it is taboo to be LGBTI. They will dehumanise you. Some go to the extent of beating people.

The media isn't really helping, also with the independent papers and news stations they actually avoid talking about it. When an incident really happens some reports and journalists say "this is crazy, this is not god's plan".

[Discussing the impact on Christopher's mental health] It leaves some sort of trauma. There is a real struggle and it affects people mentally a lot. Most of the community are living in depression, especially when you have no one. You will be depressed, isolated, and anxious. That affects your confidence. The counsellors in Zimbabwe, there are plenty of them but actually trying to approach them with your story is complicated. I know they are supposed to be professional and ethical but there is some sort of judgement This has put me off from accessing counselling.

We aren't really safe. The law might be protecting us but the police and law enforcement are not really. When they identify a member of the community they are out to get them, even if they have done nothing wrong.

Currently, we have a mandatory module called gender studies at University, we are not really studying it. We have aspects that we are looking at but we are not talking about the real things. We are supposed to talk about sexuality, but the preachers are just going with the heteronormative way of life. We are talking about being masculine and feminine but we are not touching on sexuality and that a man can be a female. It is just a shame that we are hiding that.

[Discussing religion] It very very strongly and aggressively does not allow it, it is taboo, it is basically not god's plan. I find that in Zimbabwe it is not a topic that is up for debate usually, it [is] something which we say that we know is happening, we know it is wrong, we don't engage in conversation. So in religion when it does come up it is reprimanded heavily.

I found that the Sexual Rights Centre have workshops, teaching LGBTQ about their rights. What to do when you are arrested for example, and there needs to be more than that. We need a restructuring of the law and constitution. After all, we are trying to uphold human rights, but are we really upholding them when we are suppressing another part of humankind?"

8. KEY FINDINGS: CHILDREN AND FAMILY



The majority of sexual and gender minorities' families have not been supportive of their family member as a SOGI person.

Not supportive (36.4%), some family members have been supportive (34.5%), have a supportive family (20.0%), and prefer not to answer (9.1%).



Some sexual and gender minorities have been disowned by their family because of their SOGI.

Not disowned (65.5%), disowned (27.3%), and prefer not to say (7.3%).



The majority of sexual and gender minorities have not been denied custody, guardianship, or access to their own children.

Not applicable to me (70.9%), no (25.5%), yes (1.8%), and prefer not to answer (1.8%).

When asked to explain what happened, a respondent replied:

"They said a Satanist cannot take care of a child"

9. CASE STUDY



Malume was working at the Intersex Advocate Trust Zimbabwe (IAZ), and was interviewed by ReportOUT in February 2021:

“It is not about the SOGIESC, but it is about the right that I have as a human being.

I was born and abandoned and grew up in an orphanage. I would be isolated and locked in a room. I was not allowed to play with the other children because they would identify the condition that was in you.

You don't know the correct date you were born, you are just using estimates that they give you. My appearance of me and my papers, they don't carry each other. If I go home and I am not the sex they assign me, then what happens to me as a human being?

I have tuberculosis and I was diagnosed with HIV and HIV2. I went to the hospital, [and they said] just because of my biological makeup I couldn't get the medication. They clearly said to my face that they cannot diagnose the treatment for you, as we do not know whether you are male or female.

If I go to the hospital with a problem, you will find that it has nothing to do with my biological makeup but you find that somehow it has to link with my biological makeup. So I won't be able to access the medication needed.

[Discussing Hormonal Therapy] Most of the medication you are being given, we are being given the wrong medication. We need doctors and nurses to be the ones who are protecting us.

[Discussing Media] We [Sexual Right's Centre] have managed to sensitise ones under LGBTI better. There are some media that don't even want to hear about them [SOGIESC community], no matter how hard you try, you find that you are sidelined and they do not want to even hear your story.

I was working as a sound engineer for a local company when I met one of the community friends, I DJed and set up the equipment. When my boss saw me talking to her I lost my job then and there.

If the Government would understand the fundamental of human rights, that is the most important rights. If the top people do not understand, you find in most cases it is something that is written on paper but is not being practised in order.

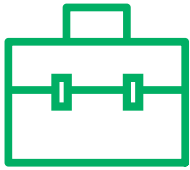
Intersex persons are vulnerable in each and every space they go through. In LGBTI organisations you will find most of the activities were not there for the intersex person and they were excluded. We need our voices to be heard.”

10. KEY FINDINGS: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL STABILITY



Most sexual and gender minorities are highly educated.

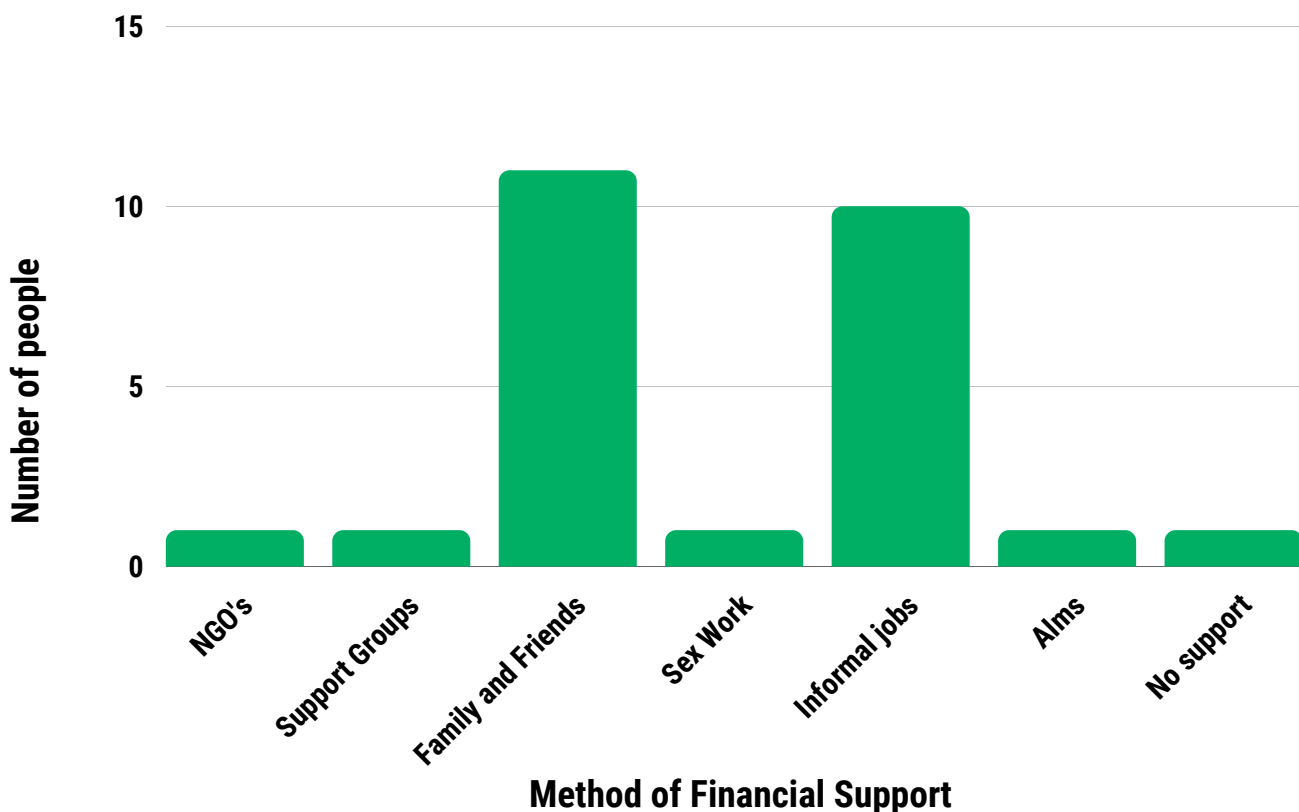
Higher education (50.9%), secondary education (21.8%), postgraduate (16.4%), vocational qualification (7.3%), and partly educated (3.6%).



Despite sexual and gender minorities being educated, they still have limited job security.

Student (23.6%), full time employment (20.0%), unemployed (18.2%), self employed (16.4%), temporary work (9.1%), apprenticeship (1.8%), voluntary work (9.1%) and on a contract break (1.8%).

Sexual and gender minorities who are unemployed, financially support themselves in a variety of ways:



The majority of sexual and gender minorities who are employed are paid minimum wage.

National minimum wage (26.7%), Government private sector minimum wage (13.3%), \$7,085 and below (13.3%), between \$7,860 and \$17,368 (10.0%), working in agriculture and domestic section (lower than minimum wage) (3.3%), and prefer not to answer (33.3%).



10. KEY FINDINGS: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

In your opinion, how difficult is it to access the job market as a sexual and gender minority?

(10 = very difficult and 1 = very easy) 56.4% of the respondents answered 10, 10.9% answered 9, 9.1% answered 8, 7.3% answered 7, 5.5% answered 5, 3.6% answered 4, 1.8% answered 3, and 5.5% answered 1.

When asked to explain their rating, respondents replied (each quote is from a different respondent):

- “If you disclose your orientation, it causes you to be excluded from most jobs.”
- “One has to fake gender and sexual orientation to be taken in.”
- “Very few people are comfortable hanging around or working with SOGIESC people.”
- “Discrimination from even getting a chance to interview for the job if you are known to be LGBTQ person.”

“Stringent labour policies still exist and viable employment opportunities are within the public service sector (health, education, police and military) which are heavily government regulated. I'm aware of fellow LGBTIQ colleagues that have had their employment contracts with the public service sector terminated for either being expressively LGBTIQ, maliciously outed by workmates or simply suspected of being LGBTIQ. Resultantly, most LGBTIQ persons resort to sex work, artisanal and informal livelihood options.”

“Some employers are discriminating when hiring. They prefer the traditional formal appearance of a clear cut man or woman.”

In your opinion how difficult is it to get paid work if you don't have a job (10 = very difficult and 1 = very easy). 73.1% of respondents answered 10, 3.8% answered 9, 5.8% answered 8, 5.8% answered 7, 3.8% answered 6, 1.9% answered 5, 1.9% answered 3, 1.9% answered 2, and 1.9% answered 1.

When asked to explain their rating, respondents replied:

- “Most low skill and mechanical labour remain strictly gendered. For transgender or gender, diverse persons being hired for short time contracts and other forms of informal labour is very difficult. Employers in need of domestic labour, household work etc often have reservations hiring LGBTIQ workers due to strict cultural and religious values.”
- “People take advantage of me because they know I won't report them to the police because I sell old clothes.”
- “Stigma against LGBTI people.”

10. KEY FINDINGS: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

More than a third of sexual and gender minorities face discrimination in the job market because of who they are:

- 49.1% of respondents had not faced discrimination, 36.4% had faced discrimination, and 14.5% preferred not to say.

When asked to explain their answer, respondents replied (each quote is from a different respondent):

- “I was a teacher and when they find out about my sexuality I was fired.”
- “The discrimination is both outright and implicit and ranges from verbal abuse (name-calling, homophobic slurs etc) to denial of essential social services such as healthcare and for trans-diverse and intersex communities, there is even challenging procuring gender-affirming identity particulars through the local registries. The discrimination sometimes amounts to physical abuse by members of the public or retributive and discriminatory treatment and harassment by members of the police.”
- “I was mocked when my former colleagues discovered I was gay and no one would want to share a room with me when we went for a business trip.”
- “They said they employed a woman, not a man I have become.”
- “In the modelling sector, I have been ridiculed and told I didn’t cut the part because of me being a lesbian as it is against Zimbabweans indigenous cultures and religions.”
- “Passing degrading comments, being bullied and told to man up or stop acting like a girl.”

Over half of sexual and gender minorities feel that their sexual and/or gender identity has meant that they have missed out on employment prospects.

- 27.3% of respondents felt that they had missed out, 29.1% of respondents felt that they had somewhat missed out, and 43.6% felt that they had not missed out.

10. KEY FINDINGS: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

When asked to explain their answers, respondents replied:

“The moment I am outed they feel disgusted to even consider me even if I’m good or better than most of the people who are in the competition.”

“I have been to many interviews but once I get there I see the stigma and discrimination because of the way I act and being queer.”

“My career options are limited to the NGO sector as the public and private sector remain homophobic and discriminatory.”

Over a quarter of sexual and gender minorities do not have access to a bank account:

74.5% have a bank account and 25.5% do not.

Sexual and gender minorities people face discrimination accessing a bank account, below are examples of discrimination some of our respondents have faced.

“There are sections of bank account application forms that are gender-exclusive, chiefly considering the male and female gender/sex. For numerous LGBTIQ persons, the due diligence and anti-terrorism procedures done by banks, often result in them being ineligible to open bank accounts.”

“They started asking questions that my face and the way I look doesn't match with my gender marker.”

11. CASE STUDY

Mmeli, a 23-year-old gay man, was interviewed by ReportOUT in January 2021:

“Zimbabwe is not LGBTI friendly at all. Villages don’t know much about gay people. You will tell them you are gay and they laugh at you and make fun of you. They think it’s wrong. Being gay in a village can be traumatic it is extra homophobic, more than in the cities. It is quite impossible to be gay in Zimbabwe and to live a good life.

If people don’t know you are gay, then everything is okay for you. If people get to know that you are, that’s when everything starts to change and they will treat you differently. The communities are so homophobic at times, they won’t allow you to be gay in the community, they will treat you so bad until you leave. Most of my friends are self-employed because they are LGBTI. It is very hard for the community to survive through COVID-19.

All the media is state-owned, so they will never talk any good about the LGBT community. When it comes to social media, if you are out you have to create a ghost account so nobody can see that it is you. I know people who can’t go to school in Zimbabwe because they are scared of homophobia. I couldn’t even finish high school because of the homophobia I was facing every day.

When it comes to employment it is almost impossible to be employed as an LGBTI person in Zimbabwe. You will have to be in the closet to be employed. We face judgement from healthcare providers. Some places will not give you help, even though they know we need it.

I wouldn’t advise somebody [who has left Zimbabwe for another country] to return to Zimbabwe if they are LGBTI. You can never report homophobia to the police in Zimbabwe. If you are attacked for being gay, no one will help you. If somebody steals from you, you can report it. If somebody does something wrong, you can report it. You can never report homophobia [to the police]. If you go to report something to the police, you will be arrested for being gay. It [therefore] gives them the right to attack gay men, it gives them the right to be homophobic and it gives them the right to do whatever they like to gay men because they know they will never be arrested and never pay for it.

The law is always against you, education is against you, health[care] is against you. It is sad. The problem is growing up I did not know about any support services. You can never advertise anything LGBTI in Zimbabwe, it is impossible and you can get arrested for that. I had to flee from Zimbabwe because most people would attack me for being gay, especially members of my community. It was hard to survive. I want LGBT treated the same when it comes to health, employment. I want to see gay marriage. Gay parents. Gay people adopting children.”

12. KEY FINDINGS: HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH



A concerning number of sexual and gender minorities cannot afford health care.

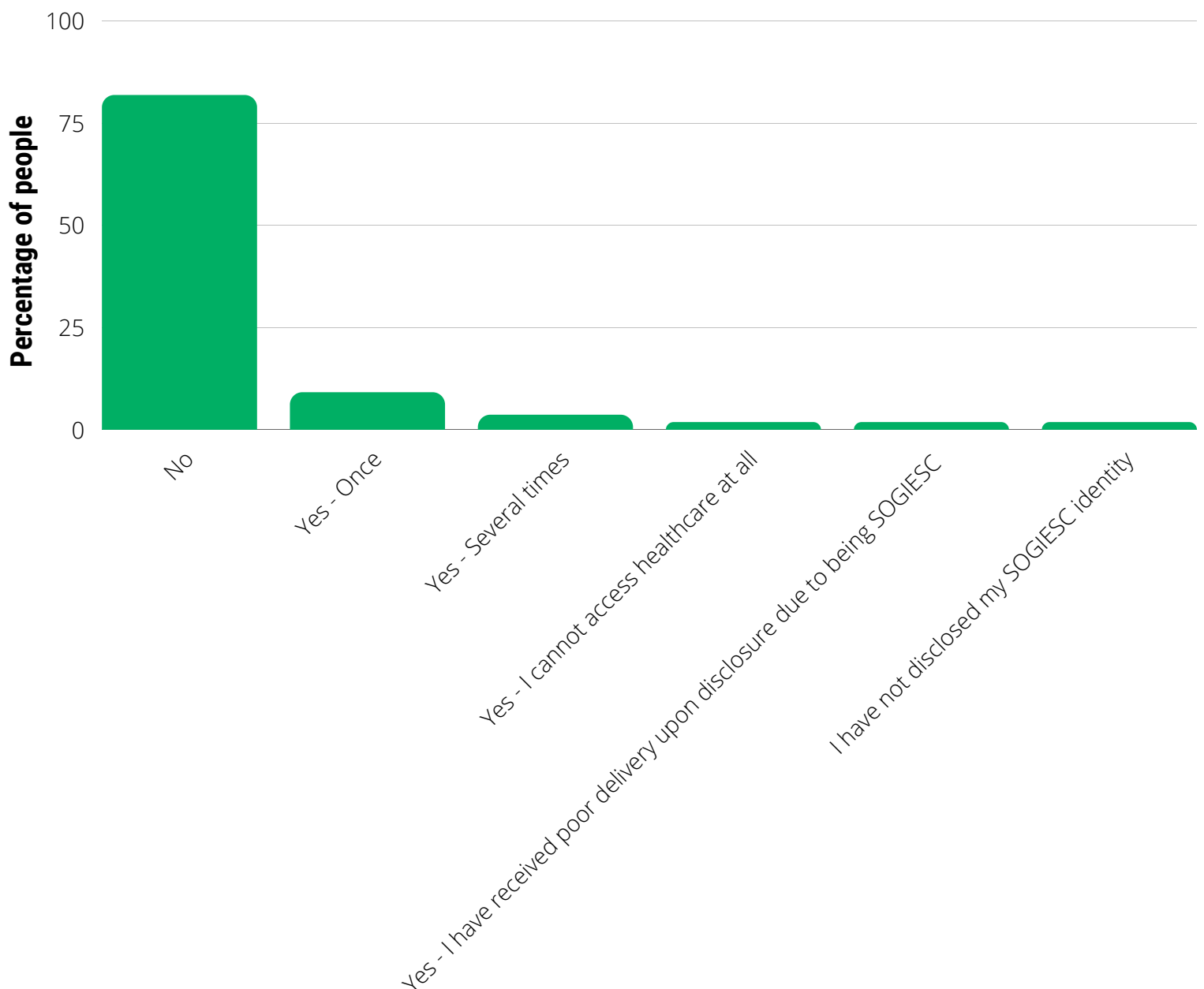
49.1% cannot afford healthcare and 50.9% can.



Over a third of sexual and gender minorities refuse to use mainstream hospitals because of who they are.

34.5% refuse to use mainstream hospitals.

When asked if respondents have ever been refused or had difficulties accessing health care because of their sexual or gender identity, they replied:



12. KEY FINDINGS: HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

When asked to explain any difficulties or discrimination sexual and gender minorities have faced when accessing healthcare, respondents replied:

“Inappropriate questions due to my sexuality.”

“It's usually the clear back door chit chat amongst the healthcare professionals.”

“I have experienced homophobic remarks and ridicule by healthcare workers. And there is usually a tendency to mock LGBTQI persons when they divulge their sexual identity so as to obtain appropriate medical diagnosis and care.”

“Lack of privacy.”

“A counsellor who provided me HIV counselling and testing five years back asked me to repent and stop being gay.”

“Yes, I overheard a receptionist at a clinic telling people about my identity.”



Over half of sexual and gender minorities have mental health problems as a result of how they have been treated because of their SOGI.

38.2% have depression, 16.4% have anxiety, 7.3% have insomnia, and 38.2% do not have any mental health problems.



Of the sexual and gender minorities who did have mental health problems, the main ways they coped with their mental health problems (in order) are:

1- Counselling, 2- Help from friends/family/partner, and 3- Alcohol.

13. CASE STUDY

Shingiria, a 32-year-old gay man, was interviewed by ReportOUT in February 2021:

"In Zimbabwe from my experience, you get discrimination in all the sectors, if you go to school you are being called names, if you go to church you are being called demons, devil children, and when you are home you are called names. We are told that this is not in our culture, this is not in our bible you are practising evil, and it is part of the Illuminati. When I was in high school and secondary school that is when I started facing lots of challenges. Sometimes I would not feel like going to school because I would be called different names, discriminated against, bullied, and beaten up by other boys at school.

There are organisations offering healthcare to the LGBTI community. There are other areas, such as in rural areas where they cannot access clinic, it becomes difficult to access public hospitals. For example, if you go there, and you have warts, or sexual diseases and tell the staff what you have, at some point you know there is discrimination. A friend of mine went to the hospital and told them what he was going through the sickness/disease that he had, the nurse called out the rest of the nurses and doctors to come and see the guy who had warts, which means that he is gay.

We have brothers and sisters in rural areas that cannot access mainstream clinic which are in towns. I believe the government has a really long way to go when it comes to catering for the LGBTI community. I believe that government needs to repeal the law that discriminates against the LGBTI community. I am of the belief that NGO's can chip in and help to build clinics, also the government can create awareness when it comes to the health sector.

It all comes back to the law that is there, which I feel that the government should repeal. It does not allow us as gay men or lesbians to walk in the streets or do anything that we want to do as a couple or as the gay community. It is very difficult here, you have to hide behind something, just for you to walk in the streets, you have to say that you are brothers. The government has to repeal the law that discriminates against us.

Telling the truth, I didn't feel safe. Even when I visit home [Zimbabwe], I don't feel safe as I always feel like someone might know I am gay and that I am dating a guy and they may attack me or I will get arrested. For me to go out, especially to clubs where gay people gather, I don't feel safe. You never know you might get raided, so it is not that safe to be in Zimbabwe.

I feel like I am kind of free, it is so different from when I used to live in Zimbabwe. I used to live in fear. The major one was that I was not feeling safe at home, my uncle found out I was gay and he was a pastor preaching in church. I was scared that if the rest of my family found out I was gay they may chase me out, beat me up, that was one of the major reasons that I had to leave. The help that we need either from the government and the international community, is the changing of the policies. That is the most important thing."

14. KEY FINDINGS: LEGALISATION

When asked on a scale of 1-10 (1 = very fair and 10 = not fair at all) how fair sexual and gender minorities felt that the legal system in Zimbabwe was for sexual and gender minorities:

- 38.2% of respondents felt that it was not at all fair.

When asked to explain their rating, respondents replied (please note that each quote comes from a different respondent):

“While there are limited convictions of LGBTIQ cases, the legal environment however remains very repressive. The legal discourse features Sodomy laws that outrightly outlaws LGBTIQ sexual practices and preferences. It is against this law that sections of the legal system continuously repress and discriminate against LGBTIQ persons....In instances of homophobia, sexual assault and all forms of abuse against LGBTIQ persons, the law remains ineffective in providing redress and justice. The failure of LGBTIQ persons to legally form civil unions is within itself a violation of human rights which further perpetuates the indignity and injustice against LGBTIQ persons.”

“They do not include or take into consideration the feelings and needs of the LGBTQ people.”

“One needs to be well within deeper knowledge of their rights to receive fair legal treatment which unfortunately is not the case for the majority of SOGI people.”

“The fact that being caught being anything other than heterosexual can lead to imprisonment scares me, and that we're not allowed to marry highlights how unfair our justice system is.”

“Because right now SOGI people are hated by the community because we don't have SOGI rights in our country.”

“We need to be heard and let the community accept us as we are.”

SOGIESC people had a mixed response concerning how effective International Human Rights Groups have been protecting SOGIESC human rights in Zimbabwe (on a scale of 1-10, 1 = very effective and 10 = not at all effective).

16.4% voted 1/10, 3.6% voted 2/10, 9.1% voted 3/10, 10.9% voted 4/10, 12.7% voted 5/10, 18.2% voted 6/10, 10.9% voted 7/10, 5.5% voted 8/10, 1.8% voted 9/10, and 10.9% voted 10/10.

14. KEY FINDINGS: LEGALISATION

When asked to explain their rating, respondents replied:

- “While the international community has made invaluable contributions in challenging human rights violations in their multiplicity, there is still little being said or done to address the abuse and repression of LGBTIQ rights. It would be important to increase support for strategic litigation and case building in instances of human rights violations against LGBTIQ communities.”
- “Not much has been done especially for people out of towns or cities.”
- “Recommendations from the UPR process have not been actioned.”
- “They have tried highlighting issues LGBTIQ people face but because of lack of will from government to also take lead in protecting all human beings, the efforts have somewhat been ineffective.”

Changes SOGIESC people want to see in national legislation:

- “Support of LGBTQI+ persons and help fight against discrimination all round.”
- “SOGI people being treated the same way as all citizens.”
- “I want LGBTQ rights to be accepted because we are no less of human beings and we have our own unique rights.”
- “Legalisation of SOGI because we are also people and love is love.”
- “I would like to see a system that offers SOGI people a seat at decision-making tables. Decisions of change and treatment.”
- “Zimbabwe has a generally poor justice system and most of our laws continue to infringe on human rights and social liberties, particularly of minority groups. It would be important for our legislation to continuously reform and become progressive. Zimbabwe needs to make sincere and practical commitments towards repealing its Sodomy laws as the implications of these span beyond just the legal purview resulting in untold social, economic, health and cultural harms against LGBTIQ persons.”
- “Homosexuality being decriminalised and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity being somewhat a punishable offence as well as punishing homophobic violence against the LGBT+ community.”
- “The archaic codified law on sodomy should be repealed, it’s possible to challenge it constitutionally as well.”
- “I want to see people who participate in hate crimes being convicted. I want the legislation to allow gay marriage after we have rights and we deserve to be happy and have equal opportunities/ privileges as heterosexuals.”
- “Decriminalisation of LGBTQIA, Same-sex marriages or civil partnerships, adoption services for diverse couples, protection from hate/discrimination/violence.”

15. CASE STUDY

Tadios, Regional Coordinator at GALZ, interviewed by ReportOUT in January 2021:

[GALZ] “We identify as a human rights organisation, we believe our vision is to promote to ensure LGBTI individuals are treated as equal citizens in Zimbabwe. They are at the same par as every other individual.

I was outed by somebody, without my consent so that is how my family got to know about it. There was a time at this point where my family disowned me for about two and a half years. You realise that we are socialised to think that all we are as a man, is that we should get married to a woman from the role models in society. When I was growing up there weren't any TV shows that modelled same-sex couples, there was no internet, and there was no way to know any information.

The bulk religion in Zimbabwe is Christianity, and with them being Christian they will often say we believe homosexuality is a sin. So most people would view homosexuality as the biggest sin.

The pastors preach that all homosexuals will go to hell and then you get the courage to talk to the pastor and you say to them “Pastor, I am gay will you please pray for me so that I don't go to hell”. [SOGI people] “They suffer in silence, they suffer in churches, they suffer in families”. Most LGBTI people are really disconnected from church because of the hate speech we obtain. You realise that religion and connecting with their spirituality is also something that overall the wellbeing of an individual is affected, as their spirituality is not being fed or nourished.

You realise that for some LGBTI people, some force themselves in marriages just to try and silence the critics. Some people live double lives, heterosexual during the day and homosexual at night. In terms of society generally, the environment is a bit tense. Not many people can openly come out and be safe. It is unsafe for anyone to openly come out and identify as LGBTI.

[Discussing stigma and discrimination] It pushes people away from accessing services, some people will not go for HIV services, people fear being judged.

From a GALZ perspective, we have come from a different perspective. We have lived in the era of Robert Mugabe where the state was the actor in terms of violation, GALZ has been raided several times. We have not had raids in about seven years. However, the impact of the raids we had some time back, is still lingering in the minds of people. This has put some people away from coming to GALZ, they are afraid of what will happen, will I be stigmatised? Will I be raided?" (continued on next page...)

15. CASE STUDY CONTINUED...

"LGBTI individuals are afraid of reporting to the police, even if someone steals from me I may be afraid of going to the police, even though it is nothing to do with my sexual orientation. But someone may use it against me, what if my sexuality comes into play, I will be treated differently? You find that most LGBTI individuals are victims of abuse which they are afraid to report, they are victims of blackmail and extortion which they cannot report, especially when it is based on their SOGI.

It is draining for the transgender community because they want to pursue who they are and there are no services for them, so you find this complicates things. If a transgender person dresses according to their sex, at times doing so poses them at risk of being physically attacked. The sex you are assigned at birth is the one you have to use throughout your lifetime. There is no gender marker.

I would say 98% of LGBTI people who are employed have not disclosed their sexuality because doing so would make them lose their jobs.

Health care has a user fee, most of the LGBTI are unemployed and besides these public health institutions, you can imagine that most of the health care workers are not really well trained to offer services to LGBTI individuals. The needs of a gay man are not the same as a transwoman, neither are they the same of a lesbian woman, neither are they the same as a transgender man. Healthcare workers in Zimbabwe do not know the difference, they just use a one size fits all model. You find over the years from 2015 to date we [GALZ] have tried to use sensitisation on healthcare workers, most of them think a man is a man. They don't even know all that, you have to break it down for them and make them understand the different needs. The mental health needs and the physical health needs.

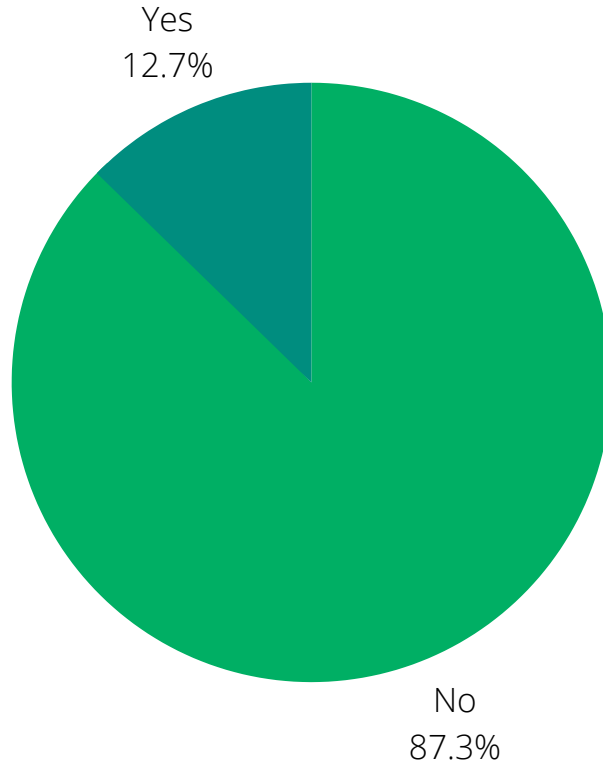
In a small town, in the clinic you will be using, the nurse or healthcare worker is someone they go to church with, is someone who is friends with their mother. How do you then access services from someone who may not keep the professional conduct of confidentiality and may tell your mother?

The services that are mostly available are not for LGBTI people, they are for men having sex with men. The women having sex with women, they don't have services available and they are not really covered by some of the funding partners. The gaps that exist are that there are no gender-affirming services, most transgender individuals are prescribing for themselves and you can imagine how dangerous that is. To self prescribe your own hormones and your own hormone therapy and they are buying this from the black market, making it expensive and there is no monitoring from health care professionals. They are simply injecting themselves. It is those services that are missing.

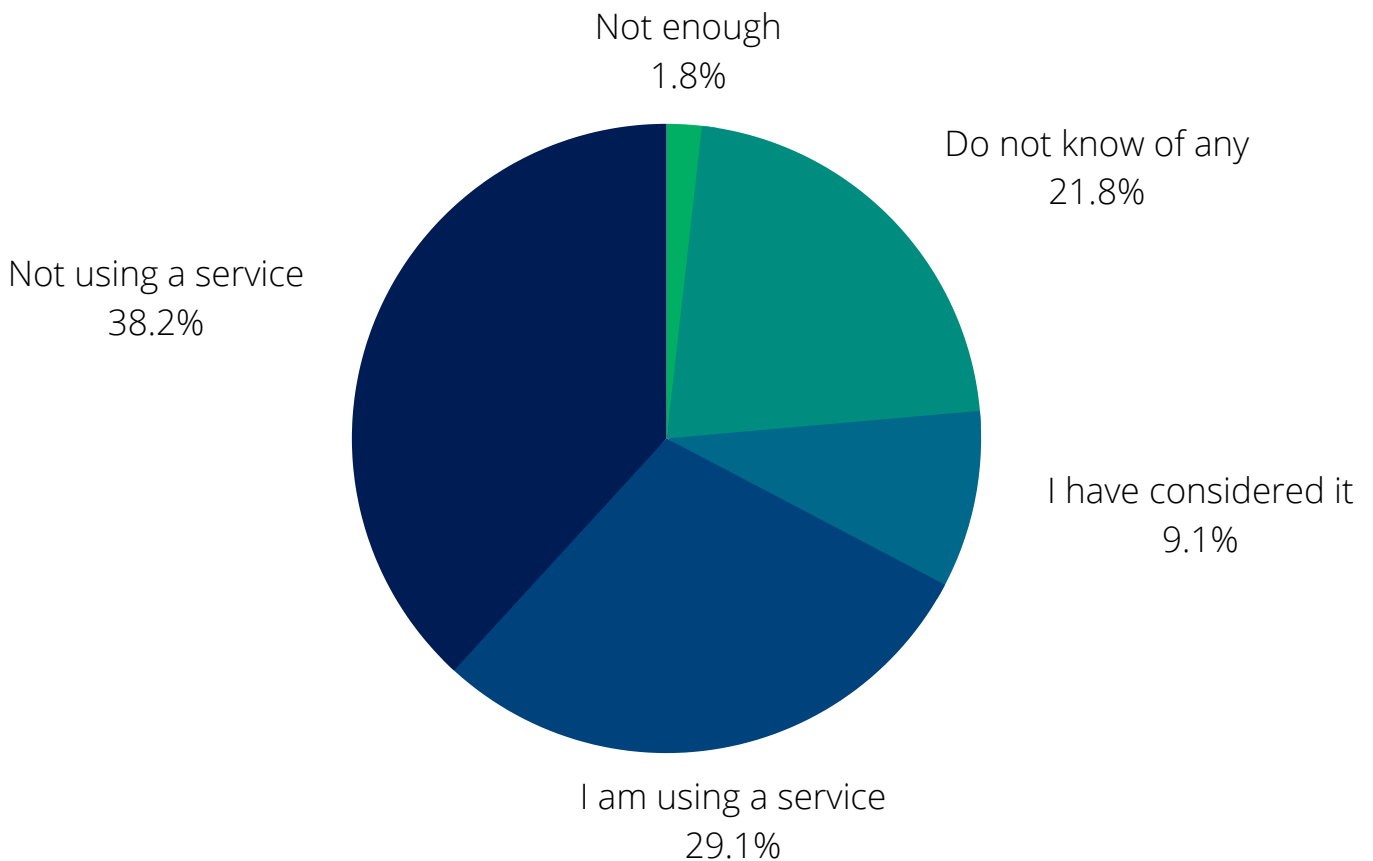
[Changes you would like to see] It would be decriminalisation, tolerance by citizens, tolerance on diversity, and promoting safety and security of an individual which needs to be monitor closely."

16. KEY FINDINGS: SUPPORT SERVICES

The majority of sexual and gender minorities feel that there are not enough support services for sexual and gender minorities in Zimbabwe:



Over a third of sexual and gender minorities do not use support services:



16. KEY FINDINGS: SUPPORT SERVICES

When asked what support services respondents are using, the most common answers were:

- GALZ, Sexual Rights Centre, VOVO, and Transsmart.

When asked what support services sexual and gender minorities would like to see, respondents replied with similar responses, which were: Legal support, healthcare facilities, mental health services and financial and employment support.

“Food support and financial support services in terms of helping those rejected by their families to finish school and be better people in society as well as food supplies for those who are finding difficulty in feeding themselves due to lack of employment, as well employment itself so one can work and make a living.”

- “1. Justice and legal support,
2. Healthcare, mental health and psychosocial support,
3. Socioeconomic empowerment, life skills and livelihood support.”

“Friendly Queer Online / Physical Mental Health Counselling and Support Systems.”

“Accommodation requests, credit, debt, and housing issues, civil matters related to domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or restraining orders or injunctions for individuals at risk.”

“Parents and guardians support systems.”

17. CASE STUDY

Mojalifa is the Programmes Manager at the Sexual Rights Centre. He is a 32-year-old gay man and he was interviewed by ReportOUT in January 2021:

"I grew up in a very conservative society with a Christian foundation, going to church every Sunday. I came out when I was in my town, I was just telling my parents what I felt I didn't even know it was called coming out.

In a bigger city, people were more open and had different ideas. People were embracing diversity and each other. I was then able to find a group of people. There was no organisation at the time to work to advance the rights of LGBT, I made friends with Sian and we founded the Sexual Rights Centre in 2007.

[Discussing Moja's role as Programmes Manager at the Sexual Rights Centre] I oversee the implementation of all the projects that we have in the organisation, so it is from programme design to execution of those projects and to overall support programmes staff and team to make sure we carry out the duties, adhere to organisation values and organisation principles.

I strongly feel that environments like Zimbabwe where we have still had laws that criminalise SOGIESC, public perception and opinion are always to the negative because they draw the belief that because of the criminalisation of SOGI. Then people are okay/right in discriminating/excluding and looking down on other communities based on the SOGI.

We have state-controlled media, we have privately owned media and we also have social media. The state-controlled media has had a negative approach towards SOGI issues, even from the times of our former President Mugabe, he would use or the Government would use media as a weapon to destroy those that they view as enemies of the state. The Government has used the media to destroy those that they think have no place in society, usually, people who express themselves differently are viewed as if they do not belong.

Most of the people have challenges with sourcing employment because SOGI has resorted to informal employment or self-employment where they find jobs for themselves by engaging in small scale trading and other forms of self-employment" (Case study continued on the next page...)

17. CASE STUDY CONTINUED...

"The Sexual Rights Centre has made huge milestones in trying to make sure access to health care services is achieved or attained by many people regardless of SOGI. We have programmes that make healthcare easily and accessible to communities. The issue of accessing health care services has been the biggest challenge to the SOGI community.

Various religions that are available have not been open to SOGI people, we have heard the Christian religion expressing that sex work and homosexuality are merely sins. People want to identify with a certain religion for their own spiritual growth and knowledge but unfortunately, most religions are not welcoming. There are new modern Pentecostal churches that are outrightly homophobic and intolerant, they practise exorcism and believe they can treat the sexuality of someone...

The message most of the churches give out is that homosexuality is a sin and you will burn and die in hell. Imagine what that kind of message does to a young gay man who is still discovering themselves. They grow up with a lot of shame and this leads to a lot of suicidal cases and added to the psychosocial problems most of the communities experience.

[There are] so many cases of gay people, sex workers, transgender people, [getting] arrested on a daily basis. There is an increase in blackmail with a sexual partner and them threatening to expose you by leaking photos to the media."

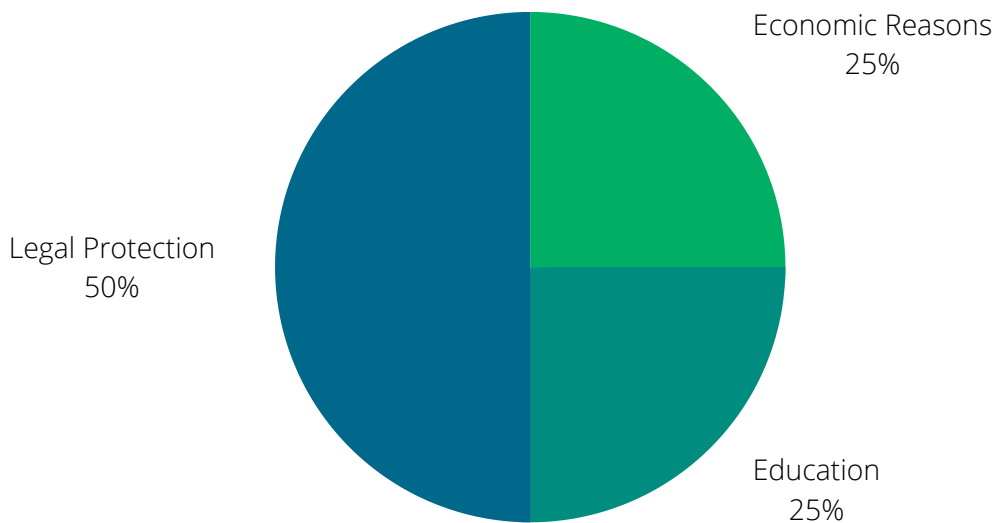
18. KEY FINDINGS: ASYLUM



Sexual and gender minorities leaving Zimbabwe claimed asylum in South Africa.

100% of respondents who have left Zimbabwe have moved to South Africa.

The main reason sexual and gender minorities are claiming asylum in other countries is for Legal protection.



75% of respondents voted that on a scale of 1-10 (1 being not at all satisfied and 10 being very satisfied) that as a sexual and gender minority they were very satisfied with their new home country in comparison to Zimbabwe.

When asked to explain their answer, respondents replied:

"In South Africa, you are protected by the law because we have gay rights here compared to Zimbabwe."

"Since it's very legal here... I feel safe and I don't have to hide my sexuality or be embarrassed about it."

19. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations taken from the results of this extensive research study. ReportOUT recommend the following:

- Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act 2006, Section 73 to be repealed by the Zimbabwe Government. Sexual and gender minorities should not face legal challenges for engaging in same-sex activity;
- Enforce legislation criminalising hate speech towards the sexual and gender minorities and all citizens;
- Zimbabwe should remedy the lack of police accountability to ensure the protection of Sexual and gender minorities' fundamental human rights;
- Education, training, and, sensitisation of Government Officials, Police, Teaching and Healthcare sectors and other enforcement agencies about sexual and gender minorities. To ensure better understanding and treatment of sexual and gender minorities;
- Employers must enact anti-discrimination policies which protect sexual and gender minorities;
- Organisations that deal with sexual and gender minority Zimbabweans need funding, training and support from the state and other funders. The mental health needs of Sexual and gender minority Zimbabweans urgently need to be supported.

Zimbabwe has signed and ratified several binding international human rights treaties, such as the:

- CCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- CERD: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- CESCR: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

ReportOUT extends an invite to work together with the state and its bodies to ensure Zimbabwe has a future in which sexual and gender minorities are safe and their human rights are respected.

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ReportOUT
Pride Media Centre
Unit T1, Stonehills
Shields Road, Pelaw
Gateshead. NE10 0HW
United Kingdom

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