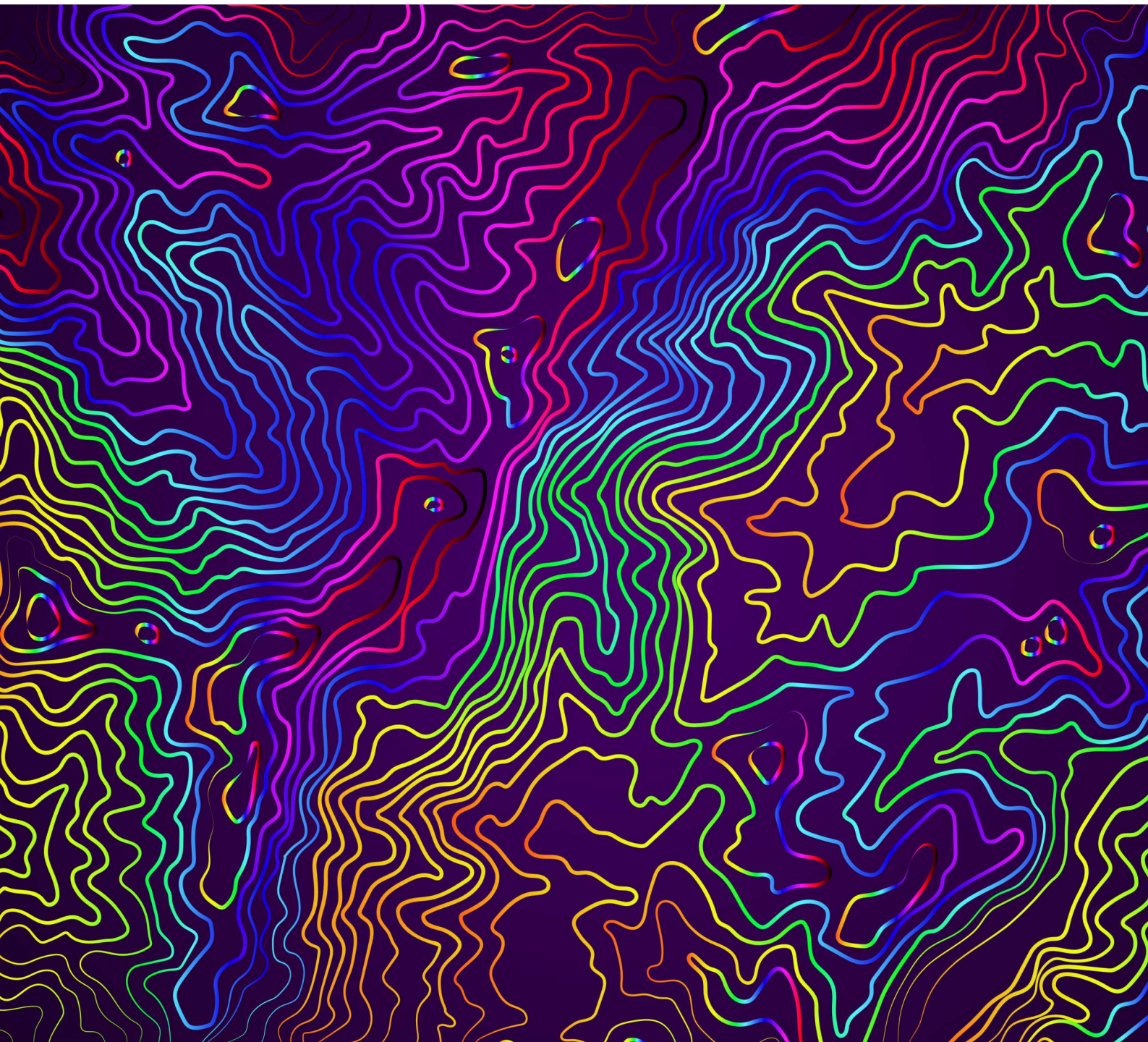




**ASEAN SOGIE  
CAUCUS**

# **SOGIESC Mainstreaming**

Experiences and Reflections from  
Southeast Asian Civil Society Organizations



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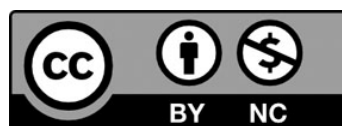
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ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) is a regional organization that dynamically engages diverse actors to collectively advocate for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, non-binary, and gender-diverse (LGBTQIA+) persons in Southeast Asia. Its mission is to empower, to develop capacities, and to expand spaces for leadership of LGBTQIA+ persons in defending their human rights. ASC is legally registered in the Philippines as Southeast Asia Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression Caucus (ASC), Inc.

Our organization is in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2021.

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

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# 1

## Background of the Study

The ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) is a regional organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, nonbinary, and gender diverse (LGBTQIA+) in Southeast Asia (SEA).<sup>1</sup> It has actively advocated for the inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in the broader human rights demands within the ASEAN intergovernmental bodies. Established in 2011, ASC has actively promoted the human rights of LGBTQIA+ persons in the region and engages with allies, civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, and other international institutions. With its extensive work, the ASC recognizes that influencing ASEAN requires the engagement of both domestic and instrumental mechanisms. In fact, ASC also recognized that in recent years, there have been positive advances among non-LGBTQIA+ civil society groups in terms of their political commitment to integrate SOGIESC in their respective work. As such, these compliments ASC's strategic goal to mainstream SOGIESC within ASEAN civil society.

Intersectionality is increasingly being recognized as a core principle and approach to LGBTQIA+ human rights advocacy. This is being facilitated by the recent authoritative interpretations issued by various UN human rights mechanisms. The recognition of SOGIESC as a protected category that coexists within the multiple and diverse identities of persons is reflected in the General Comments of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The CRC General Comment No. 21 affirmed that children in street situations are not a homogeneous group but have diverse characteristics including their "age, sex, ethnicity, indigenous identity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, among others."<sup>2</sup> The CEDAW General

- 
- 1 ASC recognizes the diversity of identities and lived experiences of persons whose SOGIESC are beyond the heteronormative, cisgender, and binary identities. There are also local or cultural terms that denote gender diverse lived realities that are not fully captured by commonly used terms such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, nonbinary, and gender diverse (LGBTQIA+).
  - 2 Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), 2017. General Comment No. 21 on children in street situations. CRC/C/GC/21.

Recommendation No. 35 made mention of being “lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex” as one of the factors that affect a woman’s lived experience of discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, addressing the human rights of LGBTQIA+ persons is increasingly being interpreted as inherent in the state obligations under various human rights instruments. In their review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic’s (Lao PDR) obligation under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Human Rights Committee expressed that the country’s current legal framework does not provide comprehensive protection from discrimination based on various grounds including sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>4</sup> Weighing on the nondiscrimination obligation of the Philippines under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended to the government to “[a]dopt a comprehensive strategy to prevent intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities on the grounds of sex, age, origin, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, impairment, migrant, asylum-seeking or refugee status, and social status.”<sup>5</sup>

Applying an intersectional approach requires advocates to go beyond operating in silos. Issues affecting LGBTQIA+ persons are very diverse, and they cannot be classified as SOGIESC-based issues alone. Issues like employment discrimination, barriers to education, torture and cruel and degrading treatment, domestic violence, and barriers to access to social protection during emergencies cannot be dealt with by LGBTQIA+-focused groups alone. This would require cross-movement work and strategic alliances across broader human rights, gender justice, and social justice movements.

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3 Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), 2017. General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation No. 19. CEDAW/C/GC/35.

4 Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), 2018. Human Rights Committee: Concluding Observations on the Initial Report of Laos PDR. CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1.

5 Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), 2018. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Concluding Observations on the initial report of the Philippines. CRPD/C/PHL/CO/1.

The context described above prodded ASC to undertake this research. The primary objective of the research is to describe the extent to which SOGIESC is integrated into the programs of non-LGBTQIA+ CSOs in Southeast Asia. The subsequent objectives of the research are as follows:

- to probe how SOGIESC is integrated within the work of non-LGBTQIA+ CSOs;
- to identify the good practices that facilitate the SOGIESC integration in their process, programs, and activities; and
- to provide recommendations based on the experiences of various CSOs to strengthen their work on integrating SOGIESC in their organization.

## 2

# Methodology

The SOGIESC mapping activity was initiated through purposive sampling, based on the engagements of the ASC with the CSOs operating in the Southeast Asian (SEA) Region. At least one representative from the participating organizations was requested. This representative must hold a decision-making role, or at least at a managerial level. The CSO representatives were interviewed from June to July 2022, which was immediately followed by documentation and report writing.

A total of six organizations participated with consent in this research. The participating organizations are the following: (1) **ALTSEAN–Burma**, (2) **ASEAN Youth Forum**, (3) **CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation**, (4) **Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation (Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia or YLBHI)**, (5) **Save the Children Philippines**, and (6) **Strengthening Human Rights and Peace Research and Education in ASEAN/SEA Programme (SHAPE–SEA)**. All the research participants were given the opportunity to review and feedback on the research outcome prior to finalization.

The ASC Team, with the Project Consultant, used the following methods to generate information and insights from the representatives of participating CSOs: (a) key informant interviews (KIIs), and (b) reviews of relevant online resources and documents.

The participants were interviewed online through the Zoom application. The interview was guided by the ASC-approved questionnaire (Annex 1) with the following core areas: (1) the background of CSOs; (2) the scope of mainstreaming SOGIESC; (3) driving factors to be inclusive; (4) the impediments in integrating SOGIESC issues in the organization; (5) the impacts of inclusivity and mainstreaming SOGIESC issues; and (6) CSOs' plans and next steps.

On the other hand, relevant resources online through their websites, and social media platforms that participants shared were reviewed. Likewise, they sent research or documents to concretely illustrate the insights and information discussed during the interview. The said resources were utilized to add value to the discussions in this output.



### 3

## Scope of Mainstreaming SOGIESC

The participating CSOs shared their respective programmatic and strategic efforts in responding to SOGIESC issues. Their actions reflected their strengths and aspirations in mainstreaming SOGIESC within the processes, procedures, and programs of their organization. It was evident that they have created and promoted enabling spaces for employees and stakeholders who identify as LGBTQIA+ persons.

The employees who self-identify as LGBTQIA+ persons are able to lead, advocate for, and influence their work strategies and outputs, resulting in SOGIESC-inclusive planning and implementation of their activities. To be able to respond to SOGIESC issues, the CSOs have access to funding and research, and are able to produce relevant materials. They likewise mainstream SOGIESC in their capacity-building activities.

The CSO representatives also relayed their apprehensions on the sustainability of their current efforts, in terms of programs and strategies, since there are no concrete policies that institutionalize them.

### **Programmatic and strategic efforts in responding to SOGIESC issues**

The CSO participants, particularly AYF and SHAPE–SEA, shared with pride that as part of the LGBTQIA+ sector, they can strategically advocate for equal rights, and promote the mainstreaming of SOGIESC-inclusive activities and programs in their organizations.

In the case of AYF, the respondent recalled that despite the impact of the start of the pandemic in 2020, innovative tactics in commemorating important events like the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) were implemented. Part of this event was an online activity wherein they gathered the youth, for a dream-up session to imagine a world free from discrimination, with safe spaces for all LGBTQIA+ youth in the SEA region.

Meanwhile, according to the participant from SHAPE–SEA, during the first phase of their regional program, they supported a number of research projects that focused on SOGIESC in SEA. These were strong and powerful endeavors undertaken by academics who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community. They integrated and promoted the feminist approach in conducting research as well as in analyzing data. Thus, gender, as a whole concept, was an integral part of the research conducted. They also organized a regional seminar on gender and SOGIESC with a focus on mainstreaming SOGIESC in human rights and peace research in SEA. These discussions include challenges, institutional barriers, and methods of introducing such to the larger academic community.

Further, the representative from SHAPE–SEA recognized that a leader coming from the LGBTQIA+ sector is deemed as one of the strengths of the Program. With his leadership, they can integrate personal advocacies in the research and operations, which is considered a demonstration of the Program’s flexibility. The Program has very good experts and staff who have the capability of influencing the integration of SOGIESC in the research and activities to be implemented. He also cited that they have strong partnerships, links, and networks with organizations like the ASC.

In the case of YLBHI, the organization creates and promotes a safe space for the members of the LGBTQIA+ sector in Indonesia as they further work towards mainstreaming SOGIESC issues in their process and programs. The participant from YLBHI shared that the organization is considered a safe haven for many NGOs and networks even though it has been attacked by intolerant groups for holding discussions about past gross human rights violations (65 past massacres). This did not stop YLBHI from carrying out its work. Such incidents showed that YLBHI is inclusive and works with courage. As such, they became the emergency office of *Arus Pelangi* when they were attacked. They also act as lawyers for LGBTQIA+ people when vigilante Islamist groups assault them.

Further, YLBHI provided colleagues with opportunities to participate in international conferences, such as the 2015 ILGA Asia Conference in Taiwan. According to the respondent, this was where he learned about the issues concerning same-sex marriage. At the time, this was still a challenging issue in Indonesia, among other equally important LGBTQIA+ issues in the country. Such SOGIESC issues are a part of the constitutional rights that the organization pushes for although they may not be the main focus at the moment.

## Access to funding, research, and relevant materials

A representative from CIVICUS shared that they are able to provide resources when responding to SOGIESC issues, such as facilitating the provision of funding, the conduct of research, and the sharing of references. They produce relevant materials and organizational outputs that support or mainstream SOGIESC issues.

CIVICUS also mentioned that they also develop or share joint statements, joint press releases, and interviews with key LGBTQIA+ activists. They connect their advocacy in Geneva and discuss how the efforts for LGBTQIA+ people are impacted, such as their upcoming resolutions for Afghanistan and the human rights defenders. They ensure that in their intervention, the concerns of the LGBTQ women are also being captured in consultation with research partners from Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, ALTSEAN–Burma actively signs endorsements or joint statements as an organization, and not as individuals. This is one of the strengths of the organization in the context of ASEAN advocacy campaigns. They participate in IDAHOBIT and Pride Month activities, and proactively promote these on their social media and other media platforms. ALTSEAN–Burma actively supports the points of view or suggestions of LGBTQIA+ organizations like the ASC.

The ALTSEAN–Burma's youth program "Bridges MM" is another space where guest speakers and hosts discuss SOGIESC. It began in 2020 as an online dialogue for the diverse youth of Burma, both in the country and in the diaspora. In addition, the interpreter for Semesters 1 and 2 is a transgender woman, and this position of power compels participants, regardless of their attitudes, to pay attention.

ALTSEAN–Burma and YLBHI also conduct SOGIESC-inclusive capacity-building activities. Stothard furthered that ALTSEAN–Burma's training program, which started in 1997, did not exclude lesbians, or bisexual women, and their acceptance had already been integrated. Several years ago, they recognized the need to promote recognition of and cooperation with transgender women and men. Presently, they work with trans women, who are interfacing for at least three hours per semester with their trainees, in order to encourage respect and mindfulness. The training also teaches these women how to interact with people of diverse SOGIESC.

ALTSEAN–Burma recalled that in one of its training sessions, a participant came out as a transgender man. A discussion was opened because he was boarding in the same room as the female trainees for the live-in program. ALTSEAN–Burma offered to transfer him to a separate room. However, the female trainees did not want to isolate him and preferred that he continue sharing the same room for the remainder of the program. This made the training very effective, in terms of realistically interfacing with fellow participants. Said

participant opened up about his situation and the ALTSEAN–Burma, along with their partners, provided resources to enable the participant to be reintegrated into his community.

In a previous batch of women trainees, one of the participants reconnected with her brother who had left their family and moved to Thailand. The trainer found out that her brother is transgender. The staff at ALTSEAN–Burma supported the trainee to understand the situation in order to accept her sibling's identity and to be more supportive. She reconciled with reality and became more sensitive to the situation of their family.

YLBHI shared that internally, orientation or training on SOGIESC and LGBTQIA+ rights is mandatory to instill a gender justice perspective, and consequently, to build on their capabilities in handling LGBTQIA+ rights. This is part of their internal legal training on KALABAHU, which is an acronym for *Karya Latihan Bantuan Hukum* (Legal Aid Training Workshop). They invite and recommend LGBTQIA+ partners, individuals, and organizations to participate in the said training sessions as well as other paralegal training programs.

A representative of YLBHI communicated that she attended the training sessions on SOGIESC in Yogyakarta Province. The lawyer attendees already knew how to advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights. She recognized the need to learn more about SOGIESC issues, such as the spectrum of sexual orientation and the forms of discrimination faced by the LGBTQIA+ sector.

## Sustainability of programs and strategies

Despite the extensively shared information on mainstreaming SOGIESC in their respective organizations, the CSO representatives expressed apprehensions about the sustainability of the programs and strategies or the gains of their work. This is mainly due to a lack of concrete policies in their organization that can ensure the continuity of such processes, programs, and activities. They even emphasized that LGBTQIA+ rights advocacy should be part of the requirements or capacities needed for the positions that they are currently handling.

The participant from SHAPE–SEA recognized that the program, unlike the established organizations, is realistically time-bound. The endeavor that will run from 2022 to 2024 has limited resources. However, he emphasized that mainstreaming gender or SOGIESC is the ultimate goal to ensure that academic communities and CSOs will have the capacity to tackle SOGIESC issues. SHAPE–SEA hopes that those who benefitted from the program could further the human rights and peace situation in the region and in mainstreaming SOGIESC in their organizations.

## 4

# Driving Factors to Being SOGIESC-inclusive

The participating CSOs tackled the factors that motivate them or drive them to respond to SOGIESC issues. Most of the organizations identified internal factors like close working relations with LGBTQIA+ rights advocates (whether as individuals or as organizations); laws and policies governing the country where the office of the organization is located or operating; aspiration of the organization to build an organizational culture that respect and promote human rights; and the stakeholders and clients of their organization. Likewise, external factors such as the political, and social, as well as particular circumstances in human rights advocacy of various communities were discussed.

### Close working relations with LGBTQIA+ rights advocates

Notably, close working relations with LGBTQIA+ rights advocates, whether these are at the individual or organizational level, were the common reasons why most CSOs are motivated to respond to SOGIESC issues. The participant from AYF recognized that there are many LGBTQIA+ people today who are out and fighting for the human rights of LGBTQIA+ and are likely more politically conscious than he is. As more protests are being organized by women or LGBTQIA+ people, the AYF is highly motivated to respond to SOGIESC issues. He also observed that there are more LGBTQIA+ people on the AYF's horizon, thus, they are frequenting their programs and activities. And although he surmised that the safe spaces they organized have made LGBTQIA+ people attend their activities, according to him, there is no concrete evidence to indicate that the increasing number of LGBTQIA+ people participating in AYF's activities is a trend due to their direct impact on the youth or LGBTQIA+ sector.

The AYF representative could not recall any specific or big incident that pushed them to respond to SOGIESC issues. However, he said that the motivation might have come from external factors, and close relationships with other organizations, like the ASC. Meanwhile, ALTSEAN–Burma shared that what motivates them is the alliances and support of LGBTQIA+ activists, and networking with other LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ organizations.

## **Laws and policies governing the country of location**

There was a unique case among the participating CSOs—motivation came from the existing laws and policies governing the country where their office is located or operating. CIVICUS cited that the constitution of the South Africa—where its headquarters is located—protects people based on their sexual orientation. The presence of this enabling national law influences their organizational advocacy and mindset. As such, the representative from the organization said that his colleagues are aware of SOGIESC issues, and are considered LGBTQIA+ allies. This is also in alignment with the organization's broad strategy to work with the most affected communities. Because of this, they work conscientiously to address SOGIESC issues within their organization. Efforts are also being done by their partners and members in increasing the visibility of SOGIESC issues in society.

## **Aspiration to build a culture that respect and promote human rights**

Another driving factor that motivates the CSOs is the aspiration of their organization to build a culture that respects and promotes human rights. Save the Children Philippines wants to build a culture of quality and inclusion. This branding requires that personnel and staff respect these rights, recognize diversity, and implement programs that are responsive to the diversity of children, and not as a homogenous population.

This was a similar motivation shared by ALTSEAN–Burma, given their knowledge of LGBTQIA+ human rights violations and context in Malaysia. According to them, the motivations of organizations should be grounded on human rights principles. Organizations must have a personal connection and genuine solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ sector. ALTSEAN–Burma recalled that some members of the staff are part of the LGBTQIA+ sector. However, this representation was not perceived as the main driver alone of motivation for the organization to be SOGIESC-inclusive.

Save the Children Philippines reiterated that they also aspire to be inclusive. This means children with varying SOGIESC, and other intersectionalities like indigenous peoples and persons with disability, among others, are all part of their work. At the global and national level, there are staff members who identify as someone within the LGBTQIA+ community and are also advocates or influencers within this organization's pursuit of inclusion.

What also drives their motivation are the research findings. One study about the experiences during the pandemic cited an incident that was broadcast on social media where the kids who violated the curfew were harassed. Others include stories of gay or lesbian children who experienced discrimination and online bullying. These realities also motivate them to address SOGIESC issues.

## **Clients or stakeholders of the Organization**

SHAPE–SEA indicated that their clients or stakeholders motivate them to mainstream SOGIESC issues. Initiatives come from the academic communities; and the leaders of academic institutions, with the lens of intersectionality, put these efforts on the mainstream. SHAPE–SEA believes that the Program goes beyond the spaces of the academe, which has become constituted by ivory towers and echo chambers. Moreover, their Program will widen the venue where SOGIESC as an analytical framework can be used by various communities, outside of the typical academe or CSOs working on human rights. Also, given the impacts of the pandemic, it was realized that the framework, and data collection, among other processes, need to be significantly integrated with SOGIESC.

In terms of the motivating factors to mainstream SOGIESC, YLBHI strongly emphasized that anybody wanting to join their organization must understand their code of ethics—Justice Is for All. Based on its organizational history, defending the marginalized has always been its priority. Because the organization is also multisectoral, all members of the organization must defend their clients and stakeholders, even the religious minority groups, who are marginalized. As early as the 1980s, they already defended a transgender person named Vivian Rubianti.

Meanwhile, a representative from YLBHI shared that awareness of SOGIESC issues motivates her to advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights. She has seen the injustices done to some of the members of the LGBTQIA+ people of Indonesia.

## 5

# Challenges Faced in Integrating SOGIESC into the Organization

The CSOs identified the internal context and external factors that limit their initiatives in addressing SOGIESC issues in their organizations. These are the glaring obstacles: (a) outright challenges in influencing the ASEAN mechanisms to recognize SOGIESC issues; including the use of the terminologies SOGIESC and LGBTQIA+; (b) well-being of CSO representatives who are likewise LGBTQIA+ allies or advocates, and other stakeholders; (c) limited or lack of resources (i.e. funding, human resources and their capacities, and office amenities); (d) restrictive organizational partners who limit the efforts to promote SOGIESC-inclusive activities or outputs; and (e) sociopolitical conditions in the country of operation, e.g. hate and stigma against the LGBTQIA+ people.

### Use of terminologies

Among the outright challenges for AYF is its work with ASEAN mechanisms to recognize SOGIESC issues, including the use of the terminologies like SOGIESC and LGBTQIA+. AYF clarified that the organization has no internal struggles to include SOGIESC initiatives within the organization. However, they recognized that in the political pillar, it is challenging to influence the AICHR because there is no concrete recognition of their relations as allies. Nevertheless, the AYF persists in advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights.

AYF partnered with the Council of ASEAN Youth Corporation (CAYC), a recognized and accredited youth organization by ASEAN, to gain endorsement or support for their statements. However, the latter sometimes hesitate to use the terminologies SOGIE or LGBTQIA+. In spite of this, AYF still publishes its original statements with the correct terminologies.



Meanwhile, a YLBHI representative said that she is having difficulty understanding the concepts of LGBTQIA+. This springs from local language barriers. She also relayed that more capacity-building activities are needed to make the lawyers more knowledgeable on SOGIESC issues and mainstreaming efforts.

## **Well-being of CSO Representatives**

During the course of research interviews, participants manifested that the situation of the clients of the CSOs highly impacts the well-being of CSO representatives who are also LGBTQIA+ allies or advocates. AYF admitted that violent attacks against LGBTQIA+ people have numbed him, and he now hesitates to respond to repeated incidents, like those in Myanmar, Malaysia, and Palestine. AYF further shared that there is no capacity to document violent incidents against the youth or to address issues through repeated statements.

Meanwhile, ALTSEAN–Burma cited its recently endorsed statement recognizing that LGBTQIA+ communities are at risk of atrocities from their own ethnic communities.

## **Limited or lack of resources**

A common challenge among the CSOs is the limited or lack of funding. Human resources issues were raised, in terms of workload and technical capacities. In addition, CSOs were concerned with inadequate or poor office amenities. Addressing these concerns should help further the work on mainstreaming SOGIESC issues within the organizations.

A representative from CIVICUS shared that they have limited human resources to cover Asia despite the huge responsibilities following the mandate of the organization. This created a hindrance for them from getting timely updates about the issues surrounding the LGBTQIA+ community or SOGIESC-related issues in the region. To address this problem, they had to rely on the information provided by the LGBTQIA+ regional organizations.

The programming of Save the Children Philippines includes developing in its members an appreciation and understanding of the concepts, and internal capacities in mainstreaming SOGIESC. However, some bilateral donors or corporate funders may be traditional and unsupportive of the efforts addressing SOGIESC issues. Writing and packaging proposals, therefore, present a big challenge to the organizations. Working on SOGIESC-related proposals, the collaboration between Save the Children Norway and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs serves as an inspiration for all the other offices. It likewise serves as a model or case study in soliciting support from other such institutions.

ALTSEAN–Burma pointed out that it is typical for people to be heteronormative. Therefore, there is a need to be aware and sensitive in terms of incorporating SOGIESC issues in one's organization.

It was stated in the interviews that there is a need for SOGIESC-inclusive capacity development programs due to the lack of resources that can influence the processes and structure of the organizations in terms of SOGIESC.

### **Organizational partners**

Some CSOs have organizational partners that are restrictive. This poses a hindrance in promoting SOGIESC-inclusive activities or outputs. SHAPE–SEA recalled that there are conventional organizations and personalities in Southeast Asian academic institutions who were challenging to persuade. The Program respects this aspect, given the nature of the partnerships and ownership of the events, like webinars. As such, these circumstances also limited them to include SOGIESC issues or even as an analytical framework.

### **Sociopolitical conditions in the country of operation**

Among the obstacles discussed were the sociopolitical conditions in the country of operation, such as prevailing hate and stigma against the LGBTQIA+ people. In the case of YLBI, the politicians in their country use the popularity of LGBTQIA+ issues to further their political careers.

YLBHI mentioned the incident in 2014 wherein an LGBTQIA+ person was imprisoned just because of their SOGIESC. A local policy that discriminates against LGBTQIA+ people because of their SOGIESC exists, which makes people justify their attacks and hate for the community. There are also attacks on social media, further normalizing the hate and stigma. These all remain very challenging for LGBTQIA+ organizations because they are usually capital-centered and have little or no presence at the provincial level.

Moreover, YLBHI shared that the religious leaders in their country promote disinformation about LGBTQIA+ people. This supports hate and stigma, especially because religion has a major influence on most Indonesians. Several incidents were cited concerning the police being abusive and exhibiting transphobic/homophobic behaviors. Likewise, political leaders set a bad example by giving hate speeches about LGBTQIA+ people.

## 6

# Impact of Mainstreaming SOGIESC into the Organization

For the participating CSOs that have been mainstreaming SOGIESC issues and concerns into their organizations, overall significant changes that were observed include a wider reach across sectors during campaigns and advocacy, and increased awareness of SOGIESC concepts and issues within and beyond their organization. The participants also shared that their organizations felt some transformation towards being sensitive to their LGBTQIA+ employees and becoming better allies of LGBTQIA+ persons.

### Wider reach for advocacy across sectors

Whenever organizations like the Council of ASEAN Youth Cooperation invisibilize the LGBTQIA+ language, it is not a drawback for AYF. As shared, AYF will continue to work and make sacrifices, and if necessary, criticize the ASEAN bodies for its advocacies. AYF confirmed that mainstreaming SOGIESC showed that AYF is indeed a safe space for LGBTQIA+ people. This also means more opportunities for them to further widen their reach across the youth sector when promoting their organization's work.

### Transformation toward a more inclusive organization

As cited by the organizations, there is an advantage of mainstreaming SOGIESC issues— institutions become more inclusive and sensitive to their LGBTQIA+ employees. Another benefit is having more advocates or LGBTQIA+ allies.

One of the CSO representatives observed that the people in their organization became more vocal about LGBTQIA+ issues, and there was an increase in engagement. However, he inferred that efforts like the issuance of advocacy statements and open letters to governments may still be at the surface level since these are all done ad hoc. At this

point, the impacts could not be measured yet pending guidance from their recently developed Strategic Plan.

Meanwhile, Save the Children Philippines highlighted that since they are at a nascent stage of SOGIESC inclusion, there are no significant changes yet. However, the employees exhibited more mindfulness and sensitivity to other people's SOGIESC and religion, among others. There is observed openness and willingness in the team to learn more about SOGIESC. Thus, the organization intends to capacitate all 240 employees and staff all over the country through training on gender equality.

Further, YLBHI observed that there are now more people in the organization who are becoming advocates of LGBTQIA+ rights. Mainstreaming SOGIESC led to LGBTQIA+ individuals or organizations pursuing assistance with their legal cases, as well as seeking refuge and protection from YLBHI.

## **Awareness of SOGIESC concepts and issues**

Overall, there is a noticeable increase in awareness of SOGIESC concepts and issues within and outside the organization. SHAPE–SEA pointed out that the Program is unique and considered a niche in the academic field. However, to measure the impacts of the Program, it would lie on the acceptability and the level of understanding of academics and the academic leadership, and the level of collaboration or relationship with SOGIESC organizations or individuals. SHAPE–SEA underscored that acceptability and understanding of SOGIESC is already high in the academe. Thus, SOGIESC as a useful framework is no longer debatable. Furthermore, given the number of researchers and audiences engaged within the past seven years, they concluded that a crucial number of stakeholders has already been reached and that the use of SOGIESC as an analytical tool proved to be successful. According to SHAPE–SEA, openly discussing SOGIESC concepts and other approaches to inclusion is no longer hard.

A representative from ALTSEAN–Burma realized the importance of open discussion. When the staff is able to develop an understanding of dealing with such issues, they end up working better with each other. It fostered understanding and compassion for one another, not only in terms of the SOGIESC issues but the overall openness that it creates within the organization.

## 7

# Civil Society Organizations' Plans and Next Steps

Participant organizations reflected on their plans to strengthen and address gaps in integrating SOGIESC issues in their respective organizations, such as (a) LGBTQIA+ representation in the organizational structure and composition; and policies on human resource development that includes SOGIESC-inclusive hiring process, staffing, and capacity building program; (b) sustainable and strategic partnerships by CSOs that can further support, and protect the LGBTQIA+ organizations; (c) capacity-building programs on SOGIESC concepts, issues, and relevant international human rights instruments or agreements; (d) younger people engaged in the advocacy, in the ASEAN mechanisms, and in their respective organizations; (e) mainstreaming SOGIESC concepts and issues in plans, programs and enabling mechanisms of the CSOs through organizational policies to institutionalize them; and (f) more resources and access to funding.

### **LGBTQIA+ representation in the organizational structure and composition**

According to the participant from AYF, their board is composed of 11 country representatives, with equal representation of women and men, and two slots for youth minorities like LGBTQIA+ youth or other sectors. This proportioning is not concretely indicated in organizational-level policy. The representative believes that there should be LGBTQIA+ representation on the board, and in the secretariat. The youth with disabilities or refugee youth also deserves a voice and representation on the board. He furthered that in the process of hiring staff in the AYF Secretariat, the requirements should indicate capacities relevant to LGBTQIA+ rights advocacy. This will ensure that the efforts of the organization in terms of SOGIESC will be mainstreamed and that its response will be appropriate.

A human resource officer from Save the Children Philippines is also working on the capacity development plan of the organization in terms of rights awareness to incorporate issues on SOGIESC. It is notable that some of their staff are well-versed in SOGIESC concepts. Likewise, they will be exploring ways how to work with the Department of Education with respect to their mandate.

ALTSEAN–Burma calls for internal training on integrating SOGIESC issues. The organization yearns to learn appropriate ways to respond to and support its stakeholders from the LGBTQIA+ community.

### **Sustainable and strategic partnerships with CSOs**

Sustainable and strategic partnerships of CSOs are important to support and protect LGBTQIA+ people or organizations. One of the CSO representatives encouraged the ASC to become a member of their network, so they can benefit more from its mandate, amplifying the voices of LGBTQIA+ organizations in Asia and within the Global South. Likewise, the CSO representative recommended inviting more LGBTQIA+ organizations as members, so they can work on SOGIESC issues. Trust-building exercises, such as through discussions with other organizations, will nurture synergistic, sustainable, and collaborative actions.

Like the other organizations, SHAPE–SEA is also open to working with ASC and other LGBTQIA+ or non-LGBTQIA+ organizations in pursuit of mainstreaming SOGIESC issues or using them as an analytical framework. They added that they need to strengthen partnerships to initiate strategic approaches in influencing various spaces like the academe and other CSOs. This is a more institutionalized or systematic approach than being reactionary in terms of handling SOGIESC issues.

SHAPE–SEA proposed that both a proactive and strategic approach by the Program could solve particular SOGIESC issues. This is because of the uncertainties in the landscape of democracy and human rights in the region. Organizations working together will ensure that efforts by each one of them do not exist in silos.

For ALTSEAN–Burma, support for LGBTQIA+ organizations through statements or initiatives signed as an organization is essential to signify a commitment to allyship and inclusion. In line with this, she stressed the need for CSOs to be explicit allies of each other to create a sense of community.

YLBHI shared about their organization's focus on local policies for advocacy. They have concrete plans on how to increase their knowledge and capacities in protecting and advocating for the human rights of LGBTQIA+ people. SOGIESC is now included in their programming including sustaining their advocacy to stop discrimination against LGBTQIA+. This will entail soliciting more funds for their programs that are relevant to strengthening their internal organization's capacity to be more inclusive of SOGIESC. A strong and highly capable human resource for responses to emergency cases concerning LGBTQIA+ people is another necessity. This includes more lawyers in the provinces or other areas needing legal assistance. Also important is the provision of safe spaces for those who are experiencing attacks from vigilantes.

Meanwhile, the endeavors of Save the Children Philippines with GALANG Philippines hope to serve as a springboard for better appreciation and support of SOGIESC issues from the child's rights perspective. Likewise, they will roll out training on inclusion to better understand concepts of SOGIESC, and apply the intersectionality of issues in program design, and initiatives.

## **Capacity-building programs on SOGIESC**

The CSOs intend to sustain capacity-building programs on SOGIESC concepts, issues, and relevant international human rights instruments or agreements. ALTSEAN–Burma realized that the lack of knowledge on gender-fair terminologies can unavoidably misgender people and trigger them. Thus, it would be helpful if there are best practices shared in dealing with honorifics or the use of the right pronouns. She also pointed out that younger people should be engaged in the advocacy and engagement in the ASEAN mechanisms and in their respective organizations. Organizations should integrate policies and practices into the programs within the institution.

## **Mainstreaming SOGIESC concepts and issues, and more resources in the advocacy**

As such, it is important to institutionalize mainstreaming of SOGIESC concepts and issues in plans and programs, and enabling mechanisms of the CSOs through organizational policies, strategic plans, and programs. Paramount also is the CSOs' access to resources and opportunities to engage with networks that can support and protect LGBTQIA+ advocacy, as well as the people and the organizations.

## 8

# Conclusions and Recommendations

Organizations engaged in this study operate from various contexts described by the thematic areas of work ranging from child rights to access to justice or to broader issues of democratization. Their programs vary ranging from advocacy work to capacity building, to research, and to direct service provision. Given this diversity, envisaging a one-size-fits-all approach to SOGIESC mainstreaming will be highly challenging. Based on the experiences shared by the research participants, key elements in different dimensions of organizational work have the potential to further mainstream. First is leadership and organizational commitment to creating safe and open spaces for conversations on SOGIESC issues, and in responding to specific concerns of LGBTQIA+ employees or volunteers. Second is the commitment to learning about SOGIESC concepts and perspectives, and understanding the advocacy work of LGBTQIA+ groups or movements. Third is the visibility of self-identified LGBTQIA+ persons as leaders, staff, or volunteers within the organization, and their engagement in internal advocacy.

Given the extensive, thoughtful, and passionate insights of the representatives of the six CSOs, the recommendations below are being offered as entry points for non-LGBTQIA+ focused organizations should they consider integrating SOGIESC into their work. The recommendations are categorized in terms of organizational development interventions needed, resources and capacity building to be provided, and overall strategic partnerships and solidarity building of CSOs operating in the region.

### Organizational Governance

- CSOs need to institutionalize their SOGIESC initiatives or undertakings through a SOGIESC-inclusive organizational agenda and strategic goals or plans.
- Policies and programs should be in place to ensure that strategic plans and goals are met, including the institutionalization of relevant policies on hiring and staffing, other relevant undertakings to ensure that resources are secured, and robust capacity development programs on SOGIESC inclusion in the organization are institutionalized.



- Given the concrete agenda, plans, and goals, organizational monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and documentation should also be in place and strengthened to include SOGIESC-related indicators and targets.
- CSOs should likewise build and access a knowledge management system (KMS) for CSOs working on human rights based on their shared documents, advocacy and instructional materials, and research. This will lead to a comprehensive and strategic communications plan or projects among organizations.

### Resources and Capacity-Building

- CSOs should intensify SOGIESC awareness campaigns and conduct capacity-building activities to better understand LGBTQIA+ issues relevant to the sector of respective CSOs.
- Technical training on mainstreaming SOGIESC in organizations should be part of the capacity-building program. Consider the case studies of Southeast Asian countries that have enacted laws and policies that institutionalize mainstreaming of gender lens within government structures, ensure budget allocation for gender, create permanent positions responsible for gender mainstreaming, and facilitate other resources or processes.
- LGBTQIA+ people must take on leadership positions or roles in their respective organizations to ensure that the SOGIESC lens is integrated and sustained. It was apparent that CSOs need more human resources to expand advocacy and program coverage. Thus, they need more advocacy officers, staff, and SOGIESC experts. Across the interviews conducted, it is really important, especially in the light of capacitated LGBTQIA+ individuals on fundamental freedoms and human rights.
- Regarding safety and legal protection, CSOs have shared how they had to provide access to enabling facilities for LGBTQIA+ victim-survivors of violence. This should also be part of the resources to be generated for CSOs. They should be aware of the facilities that are SOGIESC-inclusive and not heteronormative like the other facilities intended for women victims/survivors.

## **Sustainable and Strategic Partnerships, and Solidarity Building**

- Considering the conduct of Consultative Meetings with non-LGBTQIA+- and LGBTQIA+-focused organizations to assess opportunities towards complementary goals and outcomes would be complementary to ASC's advocacy work.
- Share the results of SOGIESC mapping and current efforts with the trusted rights-based CSOs so they may also consider important insights or best practices in this mapping project.
- Forge partnerships and develop strategic communications plans among trusted CSOs to amplify respective issues and advocacies. The enabling spaces created by various CSOs can be optimized through a concrete and strategic communications plan among participating CSOs to address the shrinking spaces on human rights advocacy and democracy.
- Sustain the gains of human rights advocacy and engage in solidarity building by concretizing the recommendations above, considering strategic membership to larger human rights organizations that lobby for global and regional rights, and localizing such efforts by lobbying for national-level legislations or leveraging on current enabling laws and policies in their respective countries.

Given the insights of participating organizations, this mapping project may be expanded or replicated to gain more knowledge on SOGIESC mainstreaming. Diverse CSOs working in the ASEAN region may be interviewed and probed in terms of their advocacy in countries with existing gender mainstreaming laws or policies.

## Annex 1

**Key Informant Interview Guide Questions****RESPONDENT INFORMATION**

<b>Name of Respondent</b>	
<b>Position/Designation</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<b>Date of Interview</b>	
<b>Any data privacy concerns</b>	<i>(e.g. request to not be named; only organization's name is mentioned; etc.) If none, write "N/A"</i>

**A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

<b>A.1. Objectives and mandates</b>	
<b>A.2. Key areas of work</b>	
<b>A.3. Specific activities</b>	
<b>A.4. Extent of engagement with regional platforms</b>	
<b>Points of Interest</b>	<i>(e.g. as an interviewer, were there any interesting or noteworthy details mentioned?) If none, write "N/A."</i>
<b>Points of concern</b>	<i>(e.g. were there any questions or points of discussion that the interviewee was uncomfortable or unsure about? If so, what are your thoughts regarding where this discomfort/uncertainty is coming from?) If none, write "N/A."</i>
<b>Other Notes</b>	<i>(e.g. as an interviewer, are there other ideas, questions, or concerns that came to mind during this part of the interview?) If none, write "N/A."</i>

## B. OVERVIEW OF SOGIESC INTEGRATION

<b>B.1.</b> <b>Specific actions to respond to LGBTIQ/SOGIESC issues</b>	
<b>B.2.</b> <b>Where/how SOGIESC issues been integrated into program/agenda</b>	
<b>B.3.</b> <b>Organization's strengths and weaknesses in responding to SOGIESC issues</b>	
<b>Points of Interest</b>	<i>(e.g. as an interviewer, were there any interesting or noteworthy details mentioned?)          If none, write "N/A."</i>
<b>Points of concern</b>	<i>(e.g. were there any questions or points of discussion that the interviewee was uncomfortable or unsure about? If so, what are your thoughts regarding where this discomfort/uncertainty is coming from?)          If none, write "N/A."</i>
<b>Other Notes</b>	<i>(e.g. as an interviewer, are there other ideas, questions, or concerns that came to mind during this part of the interview?)          If none, write "N/A."</i>

### C. MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR INTEGRATING SOGIESC

<p><b>C.1.</b>  <b>Motivations to start responding to SOGIESC issues</b></p>	
<p><b>C.2.</b>  <b>Internal factors supporting SOGIESC-inclusive initiatives</b></p>	
<p><b>C.3.</b>  <b>External factors supporting SOGIESC-inclusive initiatives</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of Interest</b></p>	<p><i>(e.g. as an interviewer, were there any interesting or noteworthy details mentioned?)</i>  <i>If none, write "N/A."</i></p>
<p><b>Points of concern</b></p>	<p><i>(e.g. were there any questions or points of discussion that the interviewee was uncomfortable or unsure about? If so, what are your thoughts regarding where this discomfort/uncertainty is coming from?)</i>  <i>If none, write "N/A."</i></p>
<p><b>Other Notes</b></p>	<p><i>(e.g. as an interviewer, are there other ideas, questions, or concerns that came to mind during this part of the interview?)</i>  <i>If none, write "N/A."</i></p>

## D. CHALLENGES TO INTEGRATING SOGIESC

<p><b>D.1.</b> Internal factors limiting/challenging SOGIESC-inclusive initiatives</p>	
<p><b>D.2.</b> External factors limiting/challenging SOGIESC-inclusive initiatives</p>	
<p><b>D.3.</b> Most significant obstacles to responding to SOGIESC issues</p>	
<p><b>Points of Interest</b></p>	<p><i>(e.g. as an interviewer, were there any interesting or noteworthy details mentioned?)</i> <i>If none, write "N/A."</i></p>
<p><b>Points of concern</b></p>	<p><i>(e.g. were there any questions or points of discussion that the interviewee was uncomfortable or unsure about? If so, what are your thoughts regarding where this discomfort/uncertainty is coming from?)</i> <i>If none, write "N/A."</i></p>
<p><b>Other Notes</b></p>	<p><i>(e.g. as an interviewer, are there other ideas, questions, or concerns that came to mind during this part of the interview?)</i> <i>If none, write "N/A."</i></p>

## E. IMPACT OF SOGIESC INTEGRATION OF SOGIESC ISSUES

<p><b>E.1.</b>  <b>Significant changes to organization since SOGIESC initiatives began</b></p>	
<p><b>E.2.</b>  <b>Benefits / Drawbacks to organization since SOGIESC initiatives began</b></p>	
<p><b>E.3.</b>  <b>Impact (benefits/negative consequences) to constituents</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of Interest</b></p>	<p><i>(e.g. as an interviewer, were there any interesting or noteworthy details mentioned?)                  If none, write "N/A."</i></p>
<p><b>Points of concern</b></p>	<p><i>(e.g. were there any questions or points of discussion that the interviewee was uncomfortable or unsure about? If so, what are your thoughts regarding where this discomfort/uncertainty is coming from?)                  If none, write "N/A."</i></p>
<p><b>Other Notes</b></p>	<p><i>(e.g. as an interviewer, are there other ideas, questions, or concerns that came to mind during this part of the interview?)                  If none, write "N/A."</i></p>

## F. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MOVING FORWARD

<b>F.1.</b> <b>Plans moving forward to respond to SOGEISC issues</b>	
<b>F.2.</b> <b>Needs to strengthen work on LGBTIQ issues</b>	
<b>Points of Interest</b>	<i>(e.g. as an interviewer, were there any interesting or noteworthy details mentioned?)          If none, write "N/A."</i>
<b>Points of concern</b>	<i>(e.g. were there any questions or points of discussion that the interviewee was uncomfortable or unsure about? If so, what are your thoughts regarding where this discomfort/uncertainty is coming from?)          If none, write "N/A."</i>
<b>Other Notes</b>	<i>(e.g. as an interviewer, are there other ideas, questions, or concerns that came to mind during this part of the interview?)          If none, write "N/A."</i>



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