

AmplifyChange addresses sexual and reproductive health and rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex people

Everyone has the right to be treated as an equal, regardless of sexuality, or gender identity.

However, in 79 countries around the world, being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) is a crime, and can lead to imprisonment, discrimination and exclusion from your community. The death penalty remains a punishment option to sentence those accused of homosexuality in four African Countries.

At AmplifyChange we are working with groups to challenge stigma and discrimination experienced by individuals because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. This includes structural discrimination such as legislation and criminality of LGBTI persons, as well as working with local communities, media and government to break down the social stigma that excludes people from health services, policy decisions and education because they are viewed as 'different'.

AmplifyChange is supporting 38 grants working on LGBTI issues

The grants cover 18 countries and are supported by a total funding of 5,949,706 EUR across the different AmplifyChange grant types.

22% of the grants are based in South Asia, while 78% are based in Africa, including in Uganda, where despite the increasing hostility towards LGBTI rights AmplifyChange has the highest number of grants per country.



Lessons learned: challenges and successes

Challenges

- The media, religious leaders and politicians play a large role in the propagation of discriminatory social norms toward LGBTI persons. In a number of the countries that AmplifyChange grantees works in, identifying as LGBTI is illegal and can result in imprisonment
- Working on LGBTI issues in some contexts can put the lives of activists at risk, forcing them to work covertly and preventing their organisations from obtaining legal registration. This can put a strain on the funding of an organisation, and their ability to maintain advocacy and lobbying pressures. We support a number of organisations across West and East Africa working on LGBTI issues who are unregistered to ensure their safety and security
- Lack of engagement or commitment to budget and policy reform by governments on LGBTI rights. In many cases, government engagement is limited to HIV control amongst “key populations”
- Activism on LGBTI issues such as pride marches in Uganda are increasingly being suppressed, thus shrinking the public space that activists can occupy

Successful strategies

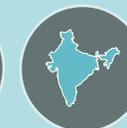
1. **Social media apps such as telegram and WhatsApp** are being used to provide private and secure means of communication, organising and sharing in contexts that are highly restrictive
2. **Engagement with religious leaders on LGBTI issues** can be an effective method to break down discriminatory social norms, and can achieve significant political and public impact
3. **Holding the government to account** through lobbying, working groups and petitions over discriminatory laws can lead to positive change



Humsafar Trust in India, as well as other grantees within the country, have worked tirelessly to ensure that the government listens and recognises the rights of transgender people through the Transgender Bill.

Humsafar Trust

Network



India

4. Simple evidence and data collection platforms addressing areas such as violations of SRHR have been effective in holding policy makers to account and ensuring justice for individuals in court

Strengthening to Network graduator, Lawyer's Alert, successfully set up a SRHR online reporting system in Nigeria. They are collating violations to generate reports for advocacy with policy makers and government, which can be accessed here. Their first report so far has been presented to:

- The committee on HIV & AIDs and Other Communicable Diseases of Nigeria's National Parliament and the National Agency for the Control of AIDS, NACA, have called for it to aid programming and policy reforms
- To African Parliamentarians at a UNDP regional meeting as evidence of the value of research in the law-making process
- Federal High Court Judges in Nigeria were presented with the findings at a Judges Conference to ignite social engineering on SRHR via the courts
- The media has also reproduced the report on a number of occasions
- Lawyer's Alert have also linked violation survivors to lawyers who have represented them in court



Lawyer's Alert



Association for Progressive Communications

5. Social norms are being addressed from local to international levels

Grantees such as the Association for Progressive Communications are enabling sexual rights activists in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka to engage politically, using the internet as a public space to challenge technology-related violence against women and LGBTI persons.



How we are learning as a Fund

- **Mentorship:** Closely cooperating with grantees throughout the grant set up and implementation periods. The relationships developed at the beginning of the grant cycle is essential for the delivery of bespoke advice
- **Connecting grantees:** Many of our grantees are working towards positive policy change, and are linking with each other to further push their advocacy goals. Where those connections aren't made naturally, we've been weaving them together at both the national and international level. HIV Alliance and Humsafar Trust for example have started to work together for Transgender rights – enshrined in law and implemented in the real world. In Uganda, Kuchu Times has been invited to attend events by the youth-focused AmplifyChange grantee Restless Development, thereby building connections across SRHR themes
- **Working with technical leaders from our grant portfolio:** The internet offers activists with a public space that is not open to them elsewhere. It is also becoming an increasingly important space for the establishment of social norms and to challenge existing social norms. A number of our grantees are explicitly using digital approaches to advocate for change and most grantees make use of digital technology to enhance communications and advocacy. To help concentrate innovation and share ideas we have been running a series of webinars on 'Using technology for advocacy in SRHR'. Leading grantees have brought together communities of grantees to share and learn from one another about the different platforms, technologies and online tools they are using to enhance their project impact and protect their digital security

Going forward we will

- **User centred design:** Capture learning in grantee-centred technical guidance, and organisational development resources, designed in conjunction with users: our grantees
- **Linking and learning:** Create more opportunities for grantees to connect, share and learn from each other through diverse platforms, including through digital communities
- **Strengthen support on security:** Security is a major concern for our grantees. We will encourage our larger LGBTI/stigma grantees to develop and share tools, webinars and learning on internet engagement and security. We will also forge connections with physical security organisations to potentially offer online training on both digital and physical security for our grantees
- **Amplify Southern voices:** Provide opportunities for grantees to boost their profile internationally and contribute thought leadership on LGBTI rights
- **Fund the hard places, not just windows of opportunity or the easiest environments to work in:** Continue to support initiatives where they are the most needed, including in challenging contexts where SRHR is weakest or civil society movements are least developed
- **Long-term, results-based financing:** Provide renewal funding to support existing, successful grantees to build on and further develop their initial projects

More information

- [State-Sponsored Homophobia, a world survey of sexual orientation laws: Criminalisation, Protection and Recognition - ilga.org](#)
 - [Where Love is Illegal](#)
 - [Tactical Technology Collective](#)
 - [Security in a box - digital security tools and tactics](#)
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Version 1 (Jan 2018) – this document will be regularly revised and updated with feedback from grantees and other stakeholders
