RainboW
Refugees Welcome

Improving the welcome and reception of LGBTQIA+ refugees in Europe

This project is co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European union (2014-2020).

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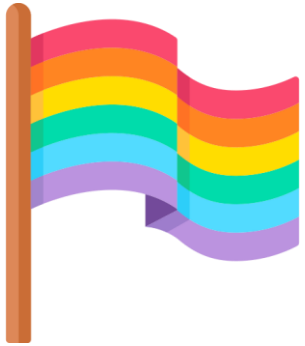

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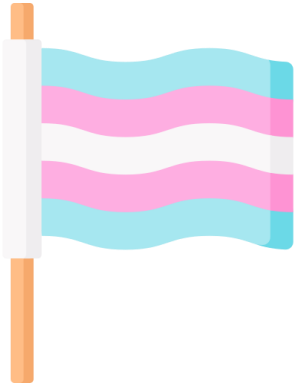


Clara

Myriam

Follow their journey to obtaining LGBTQIA+ refugee status

1

What do we mean by ‘asylum seeker’?

What is an asylum seeker and a refugee with regard to the law?

According to UNHCR, *"**an asylum seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed**."*

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.
- **Convention relating to the Status of Refugees** of 28 July 1951, also known as the **Geneva Convention**, defines the term refugee, lists the rights of refugees, establishes the legal obligation of States to protect them, and establishes the principle of non-refoulement.

The **main international instrument** used to protect refugees.

- **The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families**.

- Article 1 of the **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** provides that the High Contracting Parties *shall secure to everyone within their jurisdiction* the rights and freedoms outlined in the Convention.

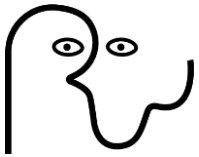
  Includes **any person** on their territory or under the control of State agents.

- **Yogyakarta Principles,** a universal guide for the protection and promotion of the human rights of LGBTQIA+ people.

  Principe n°23: *"Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution, including persecution related to sexual orientation or gender. A State may not remove, expel or extradite a person to any State where that person may face a well-founded fear of torture, persecution, or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity."*

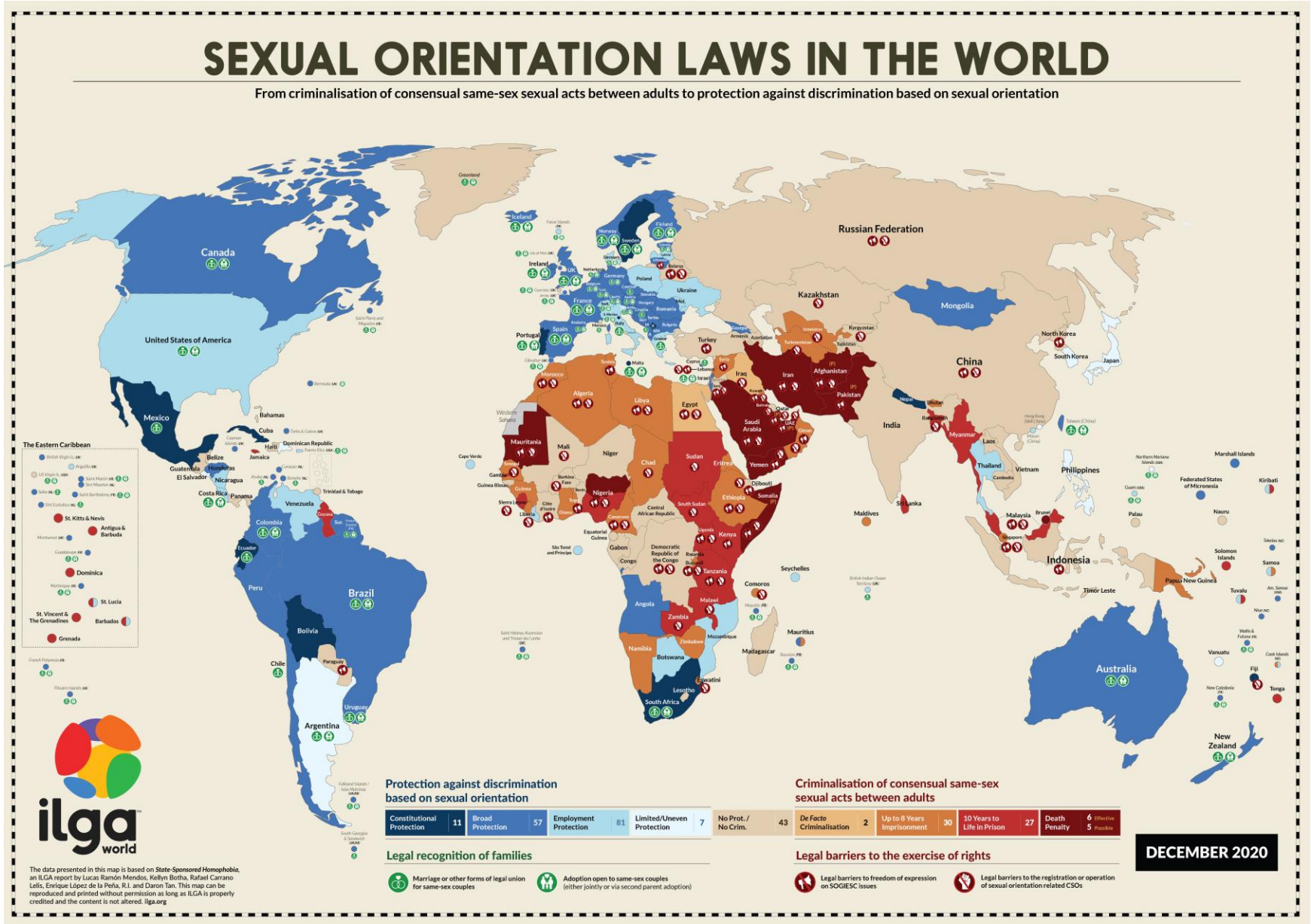
The application procedure based on SOGIESC raises certain problems mainly related to:

- **The absence of explicit recognition** of asylum requests based on SOGIESC in legal texts;
- **The assessment of the dangers** and **vulnerabilities** which have caused the asylum seeker to leave their country;
- **In some cases, proof of sexual orientation and/or gender identity** during their hearing at the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) and throughout the entire process;
- Insufficient **accommodation capacity** to accommodate all applicants with dignity, as well as the lack or non-existence of specific resources for LGBTQIA+ people.

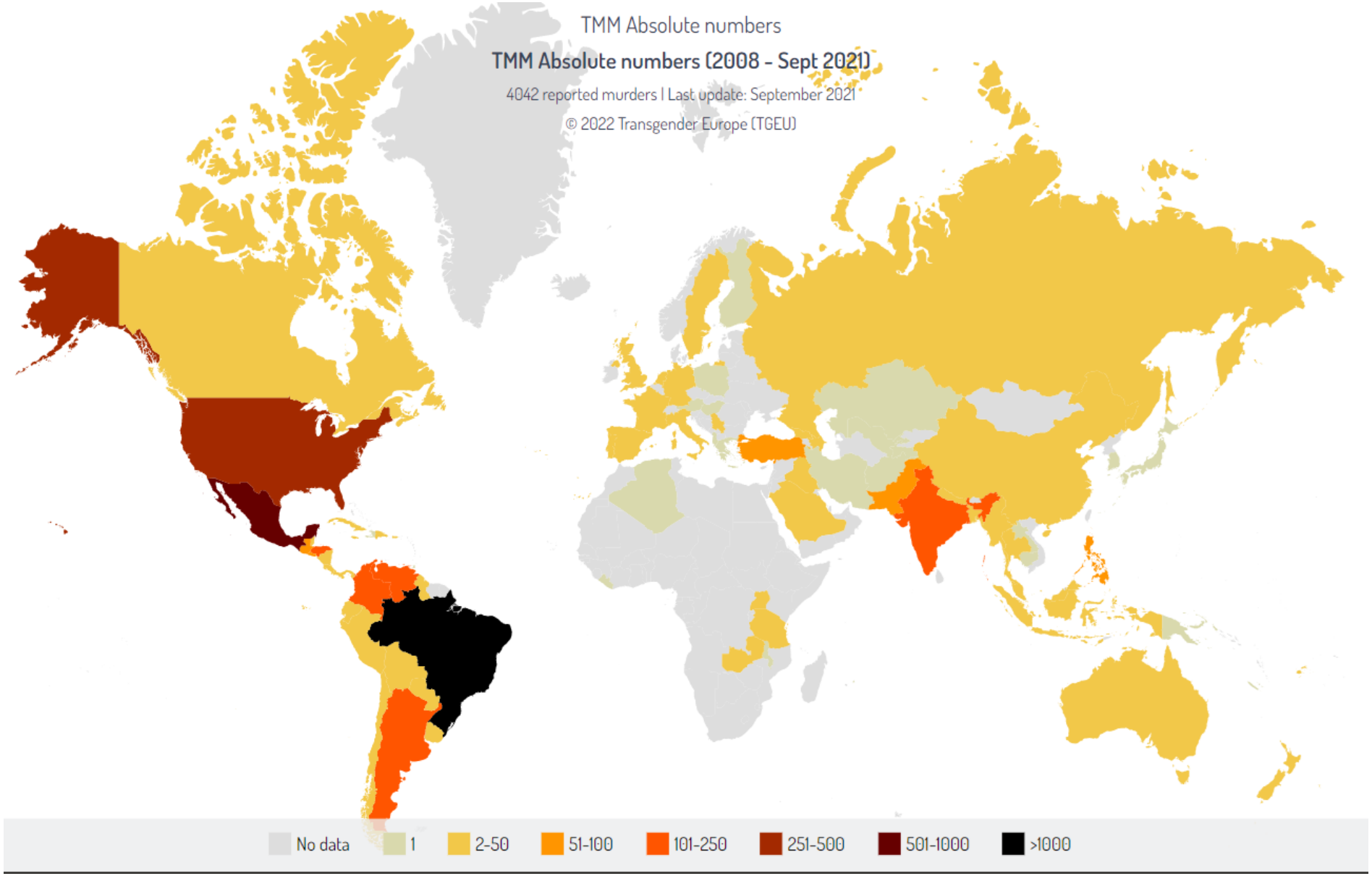


Practical exercise

Interactive map



Source: ILGA World



Source: [Transrespect vs Transphobia]

Concept of a safe country

For decades, Europe has been seen as a **safe haven** for asylum seekers.

A country designated as 'safe' *"implies that the human rights situation is considered satisfactory and governed by the rule of law, and that individuals are not subject to persecution."*

→

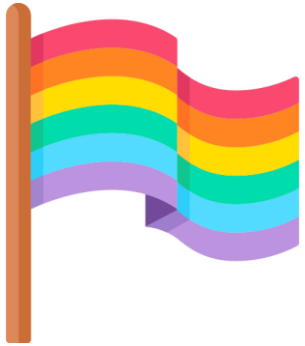
The concept of a 'safe' country for LGBTQIA+ people based on their legal protection is **problematic**.

It is problematic because the **specific nature of SOGIESC-related persecution** means that a country considered safe for any other reason of persecution will not necessarily be safe when it comes to SOGIESC.

Certain countries are 'officially' considered 'safe' as sexual orientation and/or gender identity are not penalised and/or criminalised in the country's legislation, although it is in practice **socially and/or culturally unacceptable to have SOGIESC that differ from the usual norms and customs**.

Example of Honduras

Life stories of LGBTQIA+ refugees



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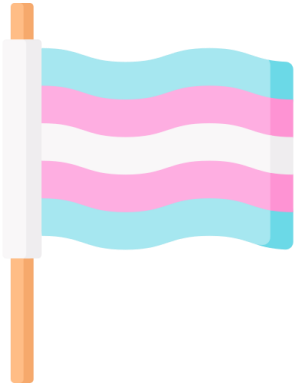


Clara

Myriam

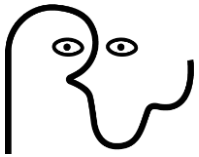
Intersectionality and assemblage

Intersectionality, a theory developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, is "*a phenomenon whereby each individual suffers oppression or has privileges as a result of belonging to multiple social categories.*"

In brief, it shows **how intersecting systems of oppression and privilege generate new realities at their intersection, rather than a simple sum**.

For example, as marginalised individuals, LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers face **twice as much discrimination and abuse**, as they find themselves at the **intersection of several marginalising factors**, including ethnicity and SOGIESC (as well as religion, social class, etc.).

However, it is essential to emphasise that the **intersection of our identities** can change over time and context and thus change privileges and oppression.

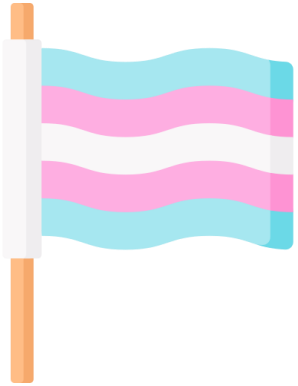


The benefits of applying an intersectional perspective:

- understanding how different systems of oppression **overlap**;
- visualising **power structures**, which are not necessarily intentional but which, nevertheless, **exacerbate a given situation**;
- understanding the **unique place** that certain groups/individuals occupy in society;
- taking into account **specific needs;**
- gaining a better understanding of **invisibilised realities** in order to address them;
- encouraging **dialogue;**
- proposing **targeted solutions.**

Life stories of LGBTQIA+ refugees

Myriam



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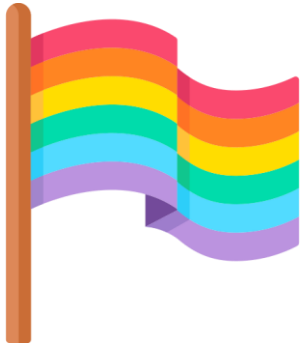
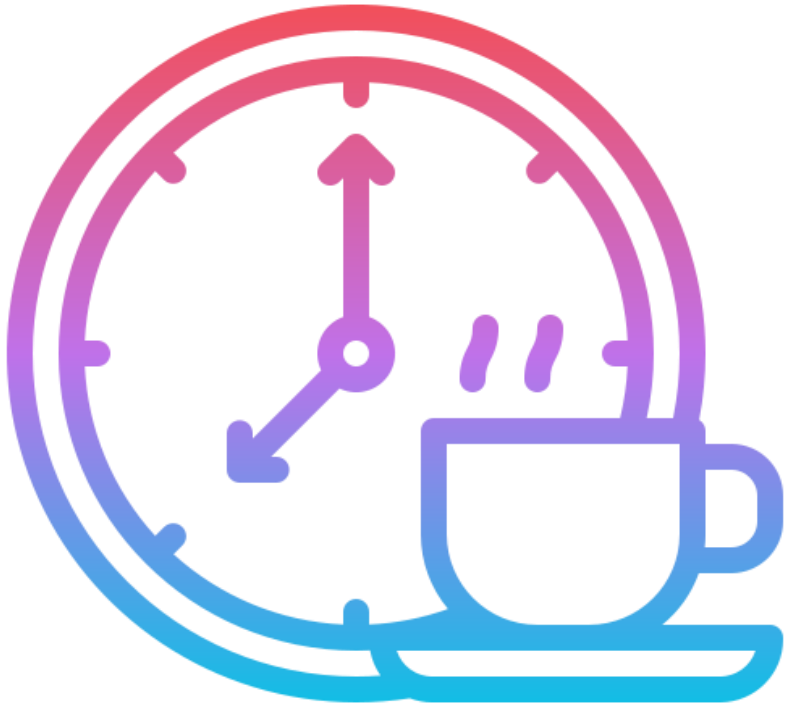


Alexi

30-minute break



Interculturality, religion, multiple identities and Eurocentrism

Interculturality is seen as a **process of communication and interaction** between individuals and groups with specific identities.

The aim is to **continuously encourage dialogue, understanding, coexistence** and, as a result, **integration.** Intercultural relations are based on **respect for diversity and mutual enrichment**.

Benefit of interculturality → Lies in its focus on the field of interaction between culturally differentiated individuals or groups.

Intercultural relations → Must be non-discriminatory relations based on respect and tolerance.

Multiple identities

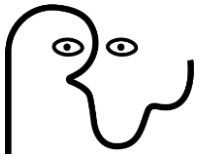
A person's identity is made up of a **host of elements**, such as nationality, belonging to a religion, an institution or a community with similar interests, and gender identities and/or sexual orientation.

LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers **fall neatly** into this notion of a composite identity as they can **identify with several kinds of 'belonging'**.

Out of these elements of belonging, we can take the example of **religion**, **as one of the elements that is part of the identity and culture of a country**. Currently, many religions, based on their interpretations, condemn homosexuality.

Interculturality is all the more important as we have a tendency to adopt **Eurocentric behaviours** when it comes to SOGIESC; thus it is important to adapt our work to avoid acting along these lines.

The Yogyakarta Principle n° 9 highlights the fact that an LGBTQIA+ asylum seeker's journey can be **influenced by a range of factors,** such as *cultural, economic, family, political, religious and social environments.*



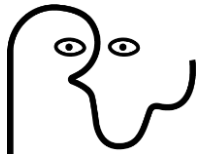
The understanding of SOGIESC in legal texts **is** deeply rooted in Eurocentrism **and interpreted through the lens of Western traditions**.

Western categories of "LGBTQIA+" **do not correspond** to all situations. **Origins, culture, traditions** and even **religion** can influence the perceptions and experiences of the LGBTQIA+ spectrum.

Furthermore, it is necessary to mention and clarify **that there is no simple translation of SOGIESC into all languages and cultural contexts**.

In conclusion, what we understand by interculturality involves:

- Recognising the existence of **links**, **values** and **commonalities** between different cultures;
- Recognising that cultures need each other, and are **interdependent**;
- Examining, **in a critical manner,** the values and anti-values present in our own culture;
- Identifying commonalities and shared interests that can **build unity in diversity**;
- Fostering a willingness and a desire to **learn** about other people and cultural groups;
- **Overcoming Eurocentrism** through dialogue and discussing cultural traits that interest or affect us;
- Encouraging active **respect** for others.



Practical exercise

2

Focus on LGBTQIA+ individuals

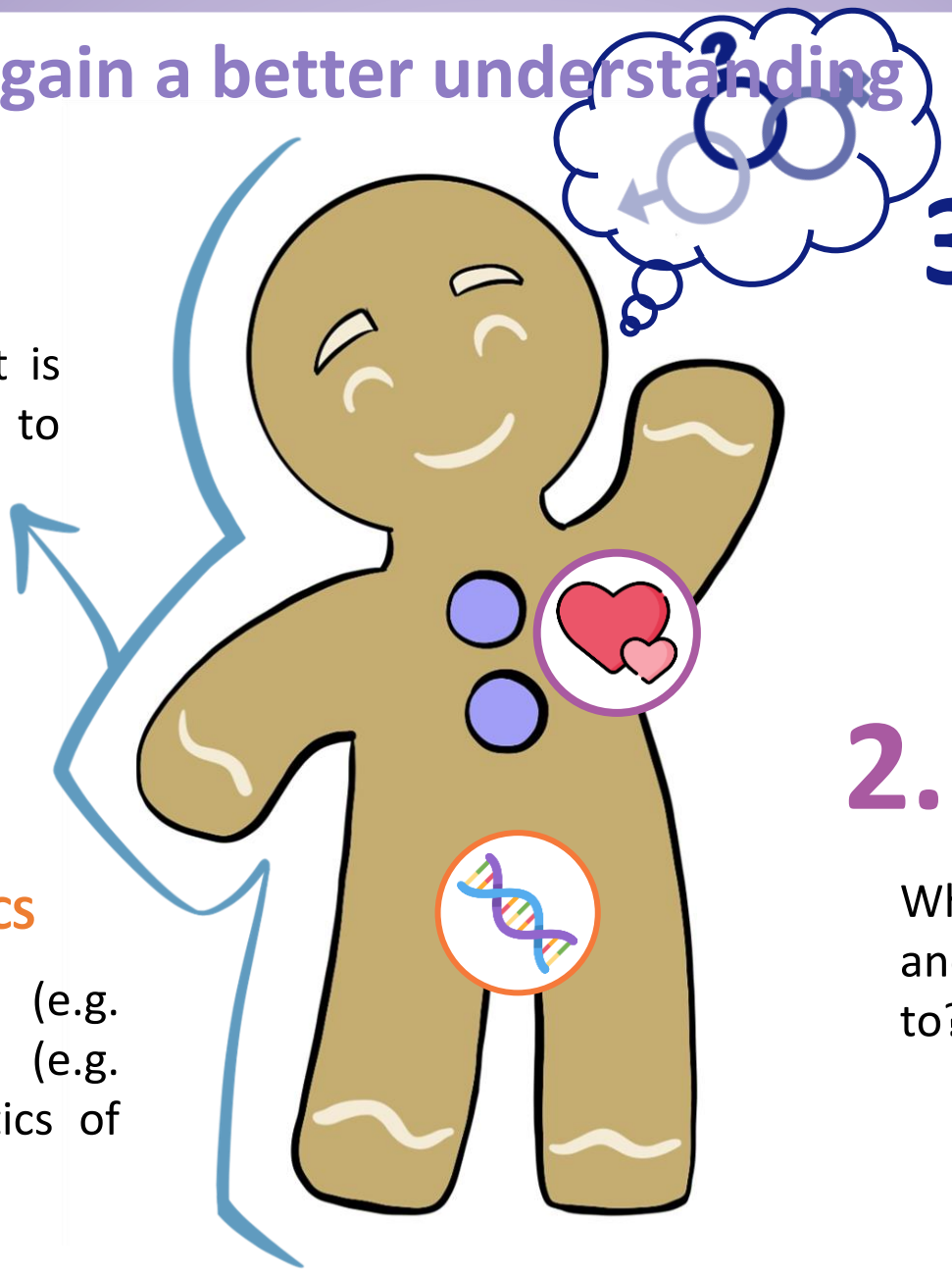
Tools to help you gain a better understanding

4. GENDER EXPRESSION

What do I look like? What is my behaviour with regard to others?

3. GENDER IDENTITY

How do I feel independent of what others think? Is there a gender I identify with?



2. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Who am I emotionally and/or sexually attracted to?

1. SEXUAL CHARACTERISTICS

What are the internal (e.g. hormones) and external (e.g. anatomical sex) characteristics of my body?

Based on Genderbread Person v4.0

What are SOGIESC?

Sexual **O**rientation, **G**ender **I**dentity, **G**ender **E**xpression, and **Sex** **C**haracteristics

SEXUAL AND AFFECTIVE ORIENTATION

LESBIAN

ASEXUAL

BISEXUAL

GAY

+

GENDER IDENTITY

NON-BINARY

AGENDER

TRANSGENDER

+

SEXUAL CHARACTERISTICS

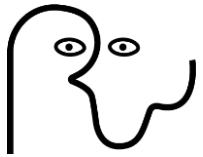
INTERSEX

+

QUEER

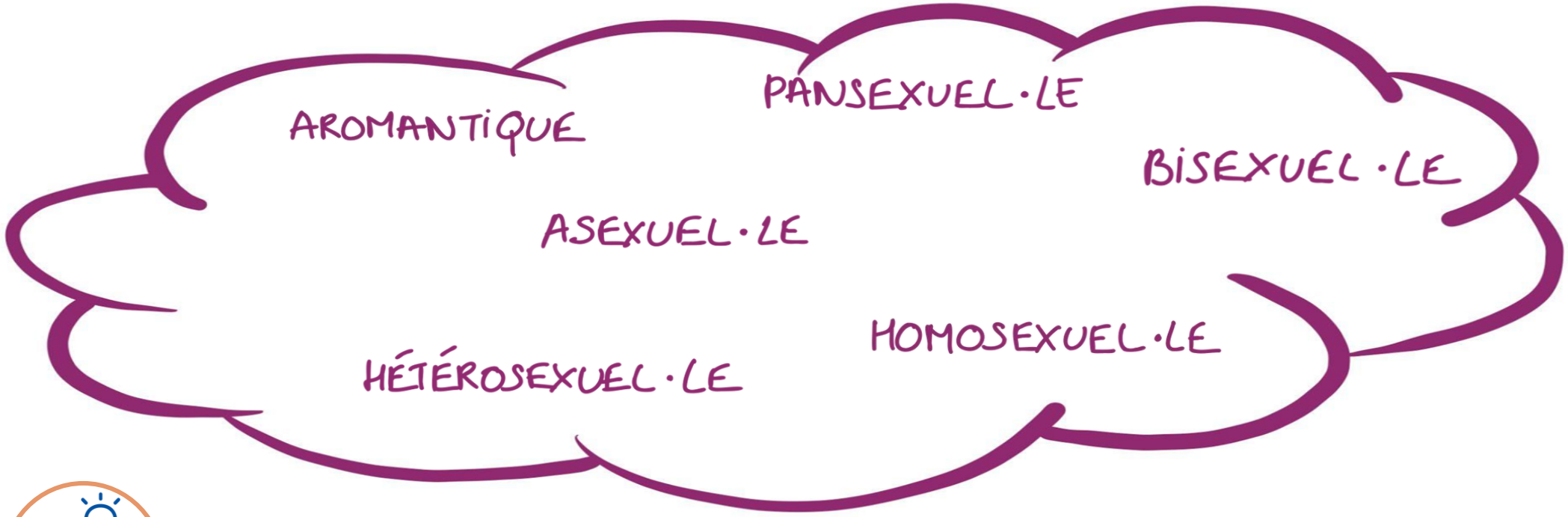
ALLY

L G B T Q I A+



Sexual orientation

Do I have a sexual or emotional attraction? Who am I attracted to?



Did you know?

New words are invented to **describe different existing sexual and emotional orientations**. These words help people to better understand themselves and others.

Gender Identity

This can change over time and vary considerably depending on the individual

Did you know?

Gender identity is the **gender that a person identifies with** independently of what others think of them.

Like our perception of colour, **gender identity is personal and unique**, i.e. it is different for each individual.

Sexual characteristics

What are the characteristics of my body?

People whose bodies have the primary and secondary characteristics considered to be
FEMININE

INTERSEX PEOPLE
have variations in primary and secondary sex characteristics

People whose bodies have the primary and secondary characteristics considered to be
MASCULINE

Did you know?

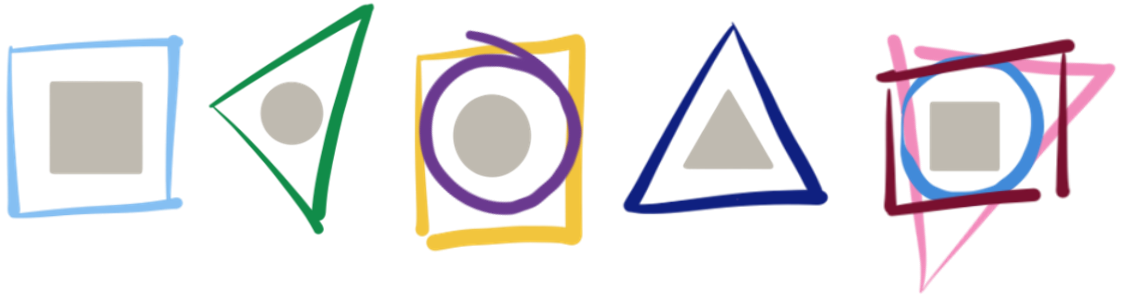
In the world, **about 1.7% of the population is intersex**. There are as many intersex people as there are redheads!

Gender expression

What we are and what we show to others.

Who I am to myself

Who I am to others



Did you know?

Our gender expression can change. It depends, to a degree, on the environment we find ourselves in. **If our environment is welcoming, we may decide to openly express our gender as we feel it.**

Lunch break

Practical exercise

How to support LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers

In practice, LGBTQIA+ people may face greater difficulties in accessing services available to all asylum seekers, and may require **additional specific assistance**.

Spoken language

Ask people how they want to be referred to rather than guessing.

Respect preferred pronouns and first names without asking for explanations and justification. Avoid using the person's *dead name*.

Be careful with regard to misgendering as this can be upsetting.

Titles

Avoid using titles in written language, in verbal communication, or as options on questionnaires.

Written language

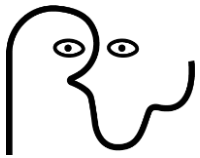
Try to use inclusive language (e.g. verb agreements) when using gendered languages, and neutral terms in written communication so that no one feels excluded.

Talking to a group

When dividing a group (e.g. into teams), base these divisions on something other than gender;

Mention everyone regardless of the proposed activity.

Use inclusive language even if you think a group is solely made up or all girls/women or all boys/men.



Talking correctly about SOGIESC

Transphobia, homophobia and biphobia are a range of hostile attitudes and feelings towards people who identify, or are perceived to identify, as being **L**esbian, **G**ay, Bisexual, **T**ransgender, **Q**ueer, **I**ntersex, **A**sexual, etc. (**LGBTQIA+**). These negative attitudes can manifest themselves in the form of contempt, antipathy and/or prejudice, and can be expressed through abuse (physical and/or verbal), harassment and discrimination.

Coming out
Act of revealing one's SOGIESC.

Outing
Act (to be avoided!) of publicly revealing a person's SOGIESC, usually without telling them beforehand or without their permission.

Heteronormativity
System in which being heterosexual and cisgender is considered to be the norm.

Intersex
And not hermaphroditism, which is a biological concept that does not correspond to intersex.

Passing
When a member of a minority group can 'pass for' a member of the dominant group. This may imply an idea of concealment and shift the responsibility for social inclusion onto the oppressed individual.

Cisgender
Person whose gender identity corresponds to the gender assigned to them at birth.

Transgender
Person whose gender identity differs from the gender assigned to them at birth. Be careful not to use the word transgender, which is pathologising and comes from terms used in psychiatry. A person can consider themselves transgender without necessarily undergoing a medical transition.

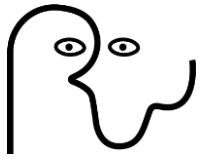
Abbreviations should be avoided as they can be perceived as being insulting and dehumanising.

LGBTQIA +phobic insults, which are common in everyday language, convey prejudice against LGBTQIA+ communities and increase discrimination. They must be **avoided**.

View infographic

Additional specific assistance:

- **Safe and appropriate** reception and care services, such as accommodation, that respect the choice and privacy of the asylum seeker, including those targeted towards adolescents and young asylum seekers who arrive with or without their family;
- Assistance in **accessing asylum procedures**, government services and those provided by humanitarian partner organisations;
- **Protection** from harassment, physical harm or violence based on their gender both in general and in detention centres;
- Access to **legal advice** or **representation**, as well as information on the possibility of seeking asylum based on SOGIESC-based persecution;
- **Specific protection measures** when they are at a high risk, sometimes including access to local LGBTQIA+ support groups, quicker resettlement or inclusion in additional third country admission schemes;
- **Safe, confidential and appropriate medical services**, including care based on sexual and reproductive health and rights (HIV and STI/STDs treatment, gender hormone treatments, etc.);
- **Mental health** advice and safe, confidential and appropriate **psychosocial support**.

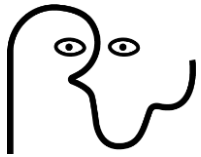


When developing your social network:

- Adopt a **holistic approach** in order to be able to access other services quickly and effectively, whether from volunteers from LGBTQIA+ associations, NGOs or anybody that can help in any way;
- Carry out a rapid evidence-based assessment in order to be able to **address the specific trauma** experienced by the person in question;
- Avoid falling into the **trap of psychologisation and/or pathologisation** with regard to their suffering.

One of the most common ways for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers to **form new ties** in the host country and to **share their experiences** is to contact LGBTQIA+ associations and organisations.

These groups and organisations provide a **safe space** where they can share their experiences with peers, **facilitate their process of acceptance** and their **positive self-identification** of their gender identity or sexual orientation.



Click here to find partner associations

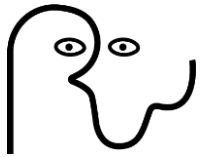
Help writing their account of persecution

A **written account** can be added to the application for asylum. This statement contains a **detailed account** of the person, their **history**, **trauma** and **fears** with regard to any potential return to their country of origin.

What it should contain

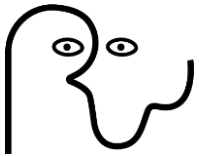
- The **harm and fears they have suffered** in as much detail as possible;
- The reasons why the asylum seeker was allegedly attacked, i.e. whether it was because they were identified as LGBTQIA+ or for some other reason, such as their religion, nationality, belonging to a social group, etc., along with a detailed account of the attack;
- The experience**, if applicable, of having been refused access to a service or a fundamental right**;
- The **potential risks** the asylum seeker will face if they return to their home country.

The asylum system itself can **retraumatise** LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers, as they have to recount and relive their experiences of violence and persecution.



Help during the hearing:

- Make sure that the person conducting the hearing is **capable** of taking into account all of the personal and general circumstances involved in the application, including cultural origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and the vulnerability of the applicant;
- Try to ensure that the hearing with the asylum seeker is conducted by a **person of the same sex**, if requested by the applicant;
- The interviewer and interpreter must **avoid expressing**, either verbally or through their body language, **any judgement** on the applicant's sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual behaviour or the relationship choices;
- The use of **non-offensive language** that demonstrates a positive attitude towards the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities is essential;
- Questions regarding incidents of sexual violence must be asked with the same **sensitivity** that would be given to any other victim of sexual violence, whatever the victim's gender;
- **Respect for the asylum seeker's dignity** must remain the priority at all times.



Learning about the LGBTQIA+ culture in your host country:

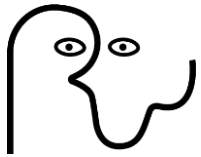
From the decriminalisation of homosexuality to the legalisation of same-sex marriage, the road to equal rights for LGBTQIA+ people was — and still is — long.

- **The Stonewall riots in 1969 in New York** were a major event in the history of LGBTQIA+ people as these riots marked the **emergence of the LGBTQIA+ movement** in the United States and around the world, and gave rise to the various Pride Marches.
- The first **Pride Marches** in Europe → **1972** in England and Italy, **1977** in France and Spain and in **1978** in Belgium during the first "Gay Day", the forerunner of the current Belgian Pride.
- On **17 mai 1990**, the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses.
- In **2001**, the Netherlands was the first country in the world to **legalise same-sex marriage**, followed by Belgium in **2003** and Spain in **2005.** In France, it was not authorised until **17 May 2013** and Italy not until **2016**.

Vulnerabilitiy(ies)

Vulnerabilitiy(ies)

- Pay attention to the **particular needs of specific profiles** and the intersectional analysis of LGBTQIA+ refugees' experiences.
- Strive to understand that these **acts of discrimination** do not happen in a vacuum, but are interwoven in a multidimensional way, creating new identities and forms of discrimination.
- Several studies show that LGBTQIA+ persons experience **inequalities in the provision of public services**, including discrimination in healthcare facilities and barriers to accessing other services.
- **Stigmatisation** and **discrimination**, combined with the **stress faced by minorities** and **the sociocultural norms** that privilege heterosexuality, cisgenderism, endosexism, and ethnocentrism, are some of the deeper causes that contribute to these inequalities.
- The needs of LGBTQIA+ people, particularly LGBTQIA+ refugees, lack of awareness and knowledge of the unique health needs of LGBTQIA+ people, and non-inclusive attitudes were identified as **possible contributing factors**.



Focus on the challenges faced by displaced LGBTQIA+ people

LGBTQIA+ minors, adolescents and young adults:

- Coming from hostile and non-supportive families and educational or societal contexts, they may come to terms with the gender identity and/or sexual orientation amidst feelings of **denial, secrecy and shame**.
- The lack of positive recognition and social validation has **serious consequences**, such as self-harming, sleep disorders, anxiety disorders, etc.
- Asylum applications tend to emphasise the **protection of minors** rather than other grounds for these applications, such as those based on SOGIESC.

Click here to learn more

Lesbian women

- In general, lesbian women face a **lack of visibility** in all societies.
- **Poorer medical care** than heterosexual women due to a fear of judgement by health professionals and gynaecologists in particular.
- When arriving in the host country, lesbian women rarely receive **screening for sexual transmitted infections/diseases** (STIs/STDs) that they may have contracted.
- They may be more exposed to **so-called honour crimes** and 'corrective rape', perhaps even by family or community members.
- They may also have been **forced** into heterosexual marriages and have given birth to one or more children.
- The fact of having children can **negatively impact the request for asylum based on SOGIESC**, as it may give an impression of dishonesty concerning the applicant's sexual orientation during the hearing.

Click here to learn more

Gay men

- Gay men tend to experience more **mobility**, more **visibility** and more **social validation**, and are more likely to participate in public life.
- As a result, they often face more **immediate risks** that threaten their physical wellbeing due to their real or perceived sexual orientation.
- Due to gender stereotypes and the fear of law enforcement, they may be **reluctant to disclose gender-based violence to the authorities** or find it **difficult to seek help** from service providers.
- In some countries, gay men accused of having sexual relations with other persons of the same sex may be subjected to **forced anal examinations**.
- Some have also been **forced** to marry women, and may have had one or more children, which may also penalise them at the hearing.

Click here to learn more

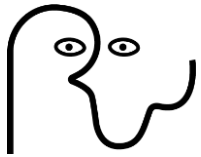
Transgender people

- This groups is particularly **misunderstood and severely marginalised** even by others whose SOGIESC differs from the heterosexual norm.
- Their identity and gender expression may not correspond with their physical appearance and the sex they were assigned at birth and which appears on their identity papers, which can cause them to be **wrongly advised** by government officials and humanitarian workers.
- They frequently **suffer abuse and discrimination** from government authorities, and gender-based violence perpetrated by government and non-government actors.
- They may find it difficult to **access the necessary items and support** for their medical needs, such as hormone therapies.
- Upon arrival in the host country, authorities, humanitarian staff and service providers **do not always understand the specific needs** of transgender people.

Click here to learn more

Intersex people

- Generally speaking, intersex people experience **more discrimination in their everyday lives** than other members of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- As a result, intersex children are at risk of being forced into hasty, **unnecessary, harmful and irreversible operations without medical justification** in order to 'correct' their anatomy.
- The United Nations considers unnecessary surgical procedures and treatments performed on intersex persons as a **human rights violation**.
- A number of States and human rights organisations have also called for an **end to these unnecessary operations and treatments**.
- Intersex people can be **marginalised and persecuted** even by other LGBTQIA+ people.
- They are considered to be physically disabled or government gender non-conforming due to their **atypical sexual anatomy** and secondary sexual characteristics.



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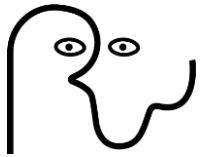
Bisexual people

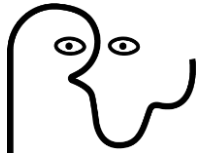
- Bisexuality is still not well understood in many countries, and as a result bisexual people are often discriminated against in the form of **teasing, belittling behaviour and/or insults**.
- There are also **mistaken beliefs** about bisexuality -> that bisexuality is abnormal, that bisexuals have more sexual needs than the 'norm'.
- Bisexual people consider their sexual orientation to be **flexible** and **constantly changing**, which leads to the mistaken impression that their sexuality is a choice and not an identity, or that they are using their sexual orientation in an opportunistic way.
- These types of behaviour negatively affect the **mental and emotional well-being** of bisexual people.
- There is a higher **rate of suicide and depression** among young people than among heterosexual and homosexual people.

Click here to learn more



Pansexual people

- Pansexual people often face discrimination largely due to a **poor understanding** in society of this sexual orientation. For example, they are sometimes seen as being bisexual when in fact they are two different sexual orientations.
- They may be **persecuted** due to their real or perceived ability to experience emotional, affective and sexual attraction to individuals of the same or different genders.
- They may be targeted because they are seen as having intimate relations with a transgender person, regardless of their actual gender identity.
- Pansexual asylum seekers are **less visible** compared to other SOGIESC.
- It is important **not to overlook this** and to offer the same psychological services and monitoring.



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Asexual people

- Asexual people sometimes face **discriminatory attitudes or behaviours** both from within and outside LGBTQIA+ communities.
- A **misunderstanding of asexuality** — which is still considered as a mental illness by some people — especially the belief that asexual people can not feel love and, therefore, are considered **abnormal**.
- Some asexual individuals have also been **victims** of 'corrective rape', while others are **forced** to engage in sexual acts and/or to **marry against their will**, or are forced to see a doctor to 'correct' their asexuality.
- Having only recently received recognition as a sexual orientation, asexual people often have **less legal protection** than homosexual, lesbian and bisexual people.
- This is also true for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers, who may, during their hearing, have to **prove that it is a sexual orientation** and that they are indeed asexual.

Click here to learn more

Journey of an LGBTQIA+ asylum seeker

Pre-departure stage

Discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people is deeply rooted and fuelled by **prejudice**, **social and cultural stereotypes** and **distorted** and **incorrect** information.

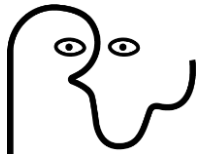
Departure and transit

The way in which a person leaves their country or flees persecution will be **influenced** by their education, their relative wealth and their skills.

Some people migrate in the hope of joining other family members or members of their community, which can involve a high level of social control. In particular, it can hinder the **self-identification** of LGBTQIA+ persons, even leading to **exclusion** from the community or family if their SOGIESC characteristics are discovered.

The asylum seeker's journey can be an ordeal in itself as it can last from months to years and can reinforce the trauma.

Migrating alone often pushes the person to **reach out to reception resources and communities**. But this can also lead to exclusion and isolation, and heavily depends on the individual's social skills.



Arrival in the host country

Asylum seekers may think that their arrival in Europe means an end to their troubles, but this is often not the case and can have a **serious psychological impact**.

This is even more true for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers, as there may still be a long way to go before receiving refugee status.

Dublin Convention:

The procedure can last up to 11 months commencing from the submission of the asylum application. The procedure follows a single principle: *"only one European State is responsible for the asylum application of a third-country national."*

The aim: to prevent an asylum seeker from seeking assistance from several European countries and/or choosing the country that will process their application.

Link to infographic

Resettlement

Defined by UNHCR as *"the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State, that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent residence. […] Resettlement is unique in that it is the only durable solution that involves the relocation of refugees from an asylum country to a third country."*

Asylum procedure

Each country has its own legislation concerning asylum procedures.

Procedure in Belgium

Procedure in France

Procedure in Spain

Procedure in Italy

Invisibility: a poor protection strategy?

Concept of *Passing*

When a member of a minority or marginalised group 'passes' for a member of the majority or dominant group.

↓

The aim is to ensure the safety and inclusion of members of the minority group in society.

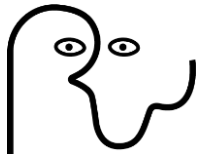
Lack of knowledge of LGBTQIA+ culture

SOGIESC questions are taboo and not broached + no LGBTQIA+ community in their country of origin.

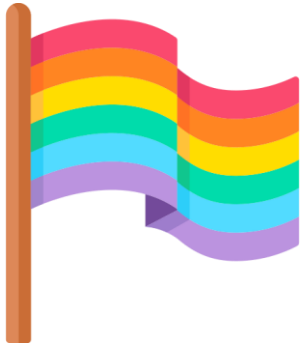
↓

Impossible to express who they are (gender identity) and who they love (sexual orientation).

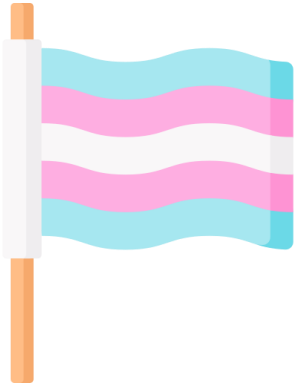
Importance of making LGBTQIA+ communities and culture more visible so that more and more people can identify themselves as such.



Life stories of LGBTQIA+ refugees



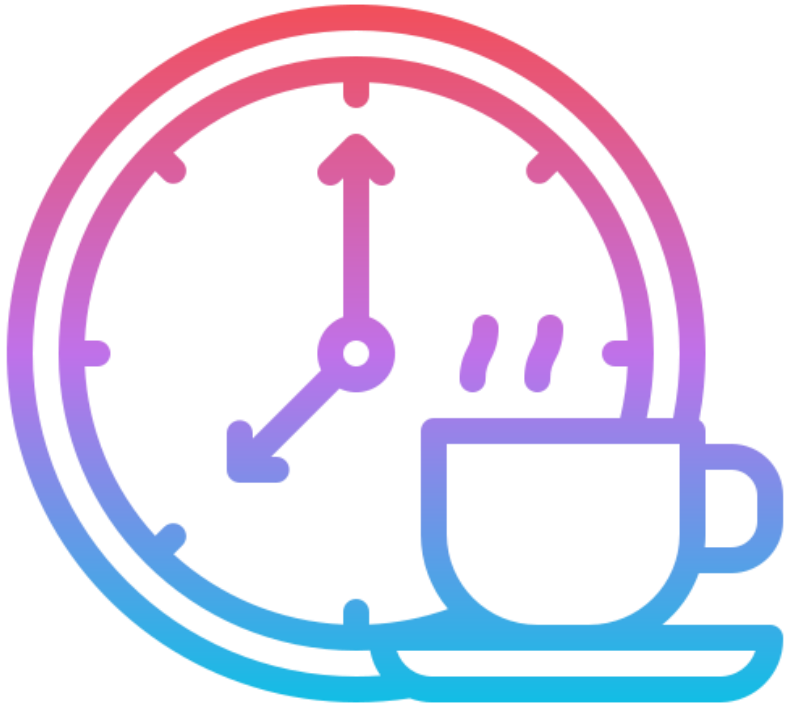
Alexi



Clara

Myriam

30-minute break

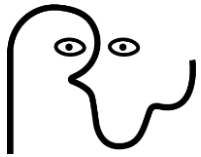


Consequences of experiences of persecution and violence

Limited access to healthcare

Asylum seekers experience traumatic events which mark them for life.

- Professional training in the field of healthcare is still imbued with **heteronormative approaches** and still has **many shortcomings**.
- In its 2015 annual report, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights reported that **many LGBTQIA+ people** fear **stigma and prejudice** in the health field.
- This is especially true for **transgender people** → verbal abuse, denial of care, and lack of access to wigs and make-up for transgender people in transition.
- The **language** barrier can also lead to difficulties in accessing healthcare.



Psychological disorders

- **Post-traumatic stress disorder** (PTSD) usually develops as a result of traumatic events, which are common among LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers.

  It is essential to provide **specialised healthcare services** and **psychosocial support**.

- **Generalised anxiety disorder** is characterised by feelings of nervousness and/or excessive worry about many activities or events.

  May be due to **abuse** and **trauma** that may resurface at any time in fragments (images, odours, physical sensations and sounds).

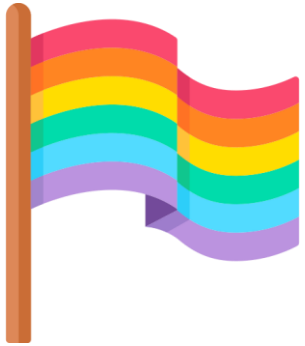
- **Depression** is one of the most common disorders experienced by LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers. It manifests as a feeling of sadness and/or loss of enjoyment or interest in everyday activities.

  It is common for people suffering from depression to feel indecisive, impotent and to dwell on death and suicide, hence **psychological support** is especially important.

- The **possible repercussions caused by depression are:**
  - **Sleeping problems,** which should not be overlooked as they can have serious consequences on life quality;
  - **Decrease in self-esteem** and a **lack of trust in others**.

The mental health of LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers is weakened by the persecution and violence they suffer throughout their life, and they are at a particularly high risk of developing depression, anxiety or even suicidal thoughts.

Life stories of LGBTQIA+ refugees



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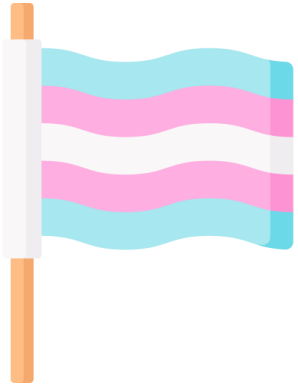

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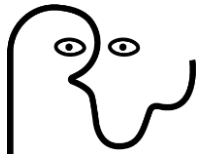
Racism

Attitudes of hatred, contempt and hostility towards certain people

- Racism is also a source of **worry** for many Western LGBTQIA+ communities, in which minority individuals, whether due to their race, ethnicity or nationality, describe experiencing discrimination and racism from other LGBTQIA+ individuals.

  Example -> black LGBTQIA+ people can face racism through the non-acceptance or non-understanding of their needs, or by their sexualisation, both by LGBTQIA+ communities of the (mainly white) host societies, and by their own community.

- This is also true for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers when they arrive in their host country → they face a **new situation of discrimination due to the new reality** they face as LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and their other identity aspects.



Impact of the community

Human group whose members are united by a social bond

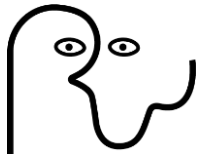
- However, a community can be in opposition with other communities, leading to **conflict between their respective members**. This is, for example, the case for members of the **LGBTQIA+ community** when **facing persecution or discrimination from other communities**.

- There is also the **issue of stigmatisation** of LGBTQIA+ individuals from their community of origin.

The persecution experienced may also come from their friends and relatives

Support

Negative impact



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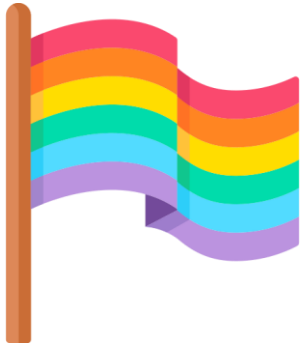

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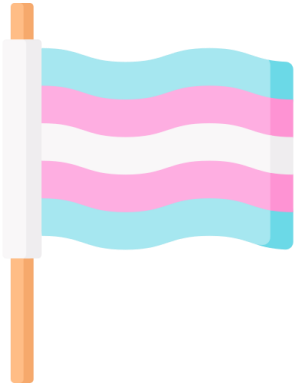

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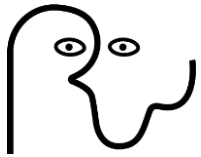
Internalised homophobia

- As questions surrounding SOGIESC **may be taboo or criminalised** in their home country and in the countries they travelled through during their displacement, many LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers **do not identify** as such when arriving in their host country, even **rejecting their SOGIESC altogether**.

- This is similar to **cognitive dissonance** as it corresponds, among other things, to a **coping mechanism** that helps to **repress information that the individual does not wish to accept**.

  Homosexual individuals who possess homophobic beliefs are the **first victims of their own internalised homophobia** and therefore experience this cognitive dissonance.

- This internalised homophobia can generate feelings or **shame** or **guilt**. In some cases, the **frustration** and **rage** generated by this results in aggression that a person will direct towards themselves or towards other LGBTQIA+ individuals.

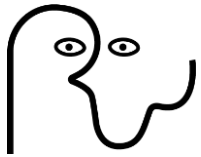


Normalisation of the abuse suffered

There are four levels of normalisation of the abuse suffered

1. The fact that the use of violence becomes justifiable therefore leads to an **increase in violence** against LGBTQIA+ persons;
2. LGBTQIA+ people may perceive many of the attacks and violent abuse they face in their daily lives as 'normal' → **they do not refer to these events** when telling their stories of persecution;
3. Authorities fail to identify patterns of violence, and **attention is focused only on the consequences and not on their causes** → this generates apathy or complicity with regard to rights violations;
4. At the social level, **dehumanisation** is generated by a lack of solidarity and empathy towards LGBTQIA+ individuals who are victims of this violence.

Many of the LGBTQIA+ people interviewed report multiple traumatic events such as verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, assault, harassment, blackmail, discrimination, etc



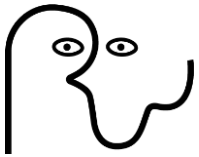
Three aspects of the current gender system:

1. The first is **heterosexism**, an ideological system that maintains that heterosexuality is the only valid form of expression and promotes a sexuality based on penetrative, reproductive and phallocentric sex;
2. the fulfilment of gender stereotypes, which stem from a **binary ideology**;
3. The third aspect is **cisgenderism**, meaning an ideological system based on the belief that the only valid genders are those that correspond with a person's reproductive organs.

Internalised LGBTQIA+ phobia occurs when LGBTQIA+ people integrate the negative meanings, prejudices and stereotypes associated with SOGIESC into their self-concept.

Perceived **stigma** of SOGIESC refers to the expectations of LGBTQIA+ people about the possible attitudes and reactions of others due to their SOGIESC.

When trying to **cover-up** their identity, LGBTQIA+ individuals modify their physical appearance and behaviour in order to make their SOGIESC invisible.



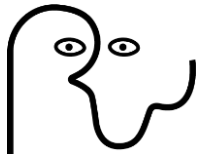
Indirect effects on the well-being of LGBTQIA+ persons:

- **Avoidance strategies**, such as avoiding access to services (self-exclusion) or hiding their sexual orientation as much as possible;
- Self-**harming** or **suicide attempts**.

Members of LGBTQIA+ communities experience higher rates of depression, self-harm and suicide attempts compared to heterosexual people.*

In this context of almost constant vulnerability, LGBTQIA+ people are more easily affected by psychological disorders as the 2018 report published by the organisation *Stonewall* shows:

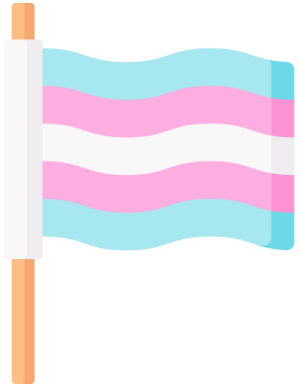
- 60% of young homosexuals have already self-harmed;
- 25% have attempted to commit suicide;
- 40% of transgender people have attempted to commit suicide.



Practical exercise

It's up to you to find the intersectional map of Alexi and Clara

Myriam



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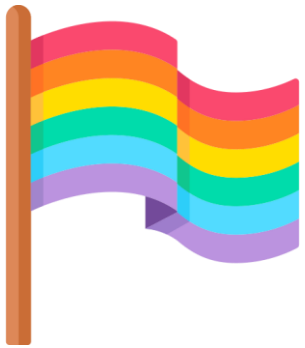

Alexi

Practical exercise

3

Take action

To participate in the public debate and make the issue more visible

- The aim of the Rainbow Welcome project is also **to offer a new perspective on the situation of LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and the persecution they face on a daily basis due to their SOGIESC, and to raise awareness of these issues among political actors and the general public**.

- The cornerstone of the reception and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ refugees is, therefore, the ability to **make the issue visible** along with its associated **challenges**. This effort to raise awareness is carried out through various channels and targets a variety of audiences.

Rainbow video and photo campaigns

Public debate with policymakers

Quantify the abuse suffered by LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers

Take action

And if you want to:

- Get involved
- Talk with others
- Learn more

Do not hesitate to get in touch with voluntary associations and institutions in your country

THANK YOU

For more insight, please consult our practical guide

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Refugees Welcome

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