



Fighting for Equality

Trade unions and LGBTI rights



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Introduction

Global Unions play an important role in advocating for workers' rights around the world and are essential to bringing democracy to our workplaces. Without collective voice and power, workers' rights, including their right to equality, equity and non-discrimination cannot be secured. As Global Unions, we are committed to ensuring that every worker is treated with dignity and respect. We fight for the rights of every worker and we stand against all forms of discrimination. Some examples of trade union victories around the world include: minimum wages, lower working time, weekends and paid holiday, protection from discrimination, maternity protection and parental leave, health and safety, time off for carers and freedom from violence and harassment at work.

For decades, Global Unions have campaigned for LGBTI workers' rights. In 2007, Public Services International and Education International published a brochure which set out how trade unions can implement LGBTI-inclusive policies, organise LGBTI workers and collectively negotiate for their rights. These first steps helped trade unions improve their understanding of LGBTI issues and how they can campaign for LGBTI rights. However, LGBTI people still face widespread discrimination in the workplace because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics: from income disparity to workplace harassment, from unfair treatment at work to discrimination when applying for a job.

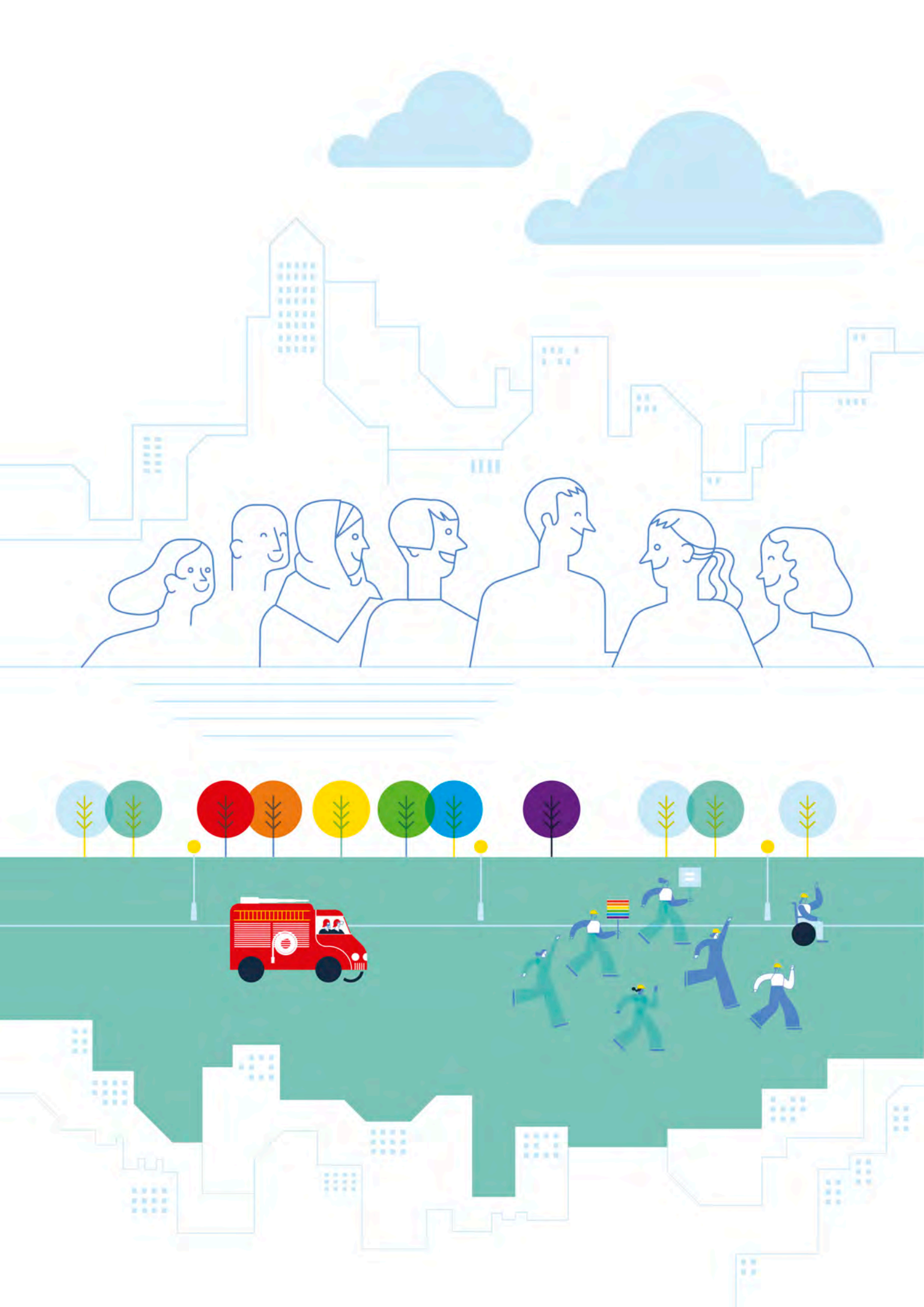
Many of our affiliated trade unions have accomplished so much in the struggle for LGBTI rights. The Global Unions have formalised a joint working group for the purpose of promoting and fighting for LGBTI rights and assisting affiliates in this important work. Our Solidarity Charter on LGBTI rights sets out how we will do this. You can read it at the end of this brochure.

We have created a dedicated space for LGBTI workers on our website, www.lgbtiworkers.org. At the time of publication, there are over 50 different examples of the work our affiliates have achieved, from equality policies and collective bargaining guides to changing their national discourse on LGBTI issues.

As trade unionists, we learn by seeing what works in other contexts and adapting it to our own. We want to encourage our affiliates to share their stories and to learn from other trade unionists around the world.

This brochure outlines some of the excellent campaigning trade unions have done throughout the world on LGBTI rights. We wanted to provide practical examples of what has worked for them. However, this is just a selection of the great work being done by trade unions. We encourage you to engage with our LGBTIworkers.org website and share your stories.

We hope that you find this a valuable resource.





Glossary of terms

There are terms throughout this brochure that might not be understood. For clarity, we have compiled a list of terms that might be useful when reading this brochure.

We have compiled these terms from a range of UN and well-known LGBTI not-for-profit organisations:

- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Free and Equal campaign: <https://www.unfe.org/definitions/>
- International Labour Organization (ILO): https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/WCMS_700554/lang-en/index.htm (Appendix 1)
- Stonewall UK: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/faqs-and-glossary/glossary-terms>
- ILGA Europe: <https://www.ilga-europe.org/resources/glossary>

LGBTI: LGBTI stands for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex”. While these terms have increasing resonance, different cultures use different terms to describe people who have same-sex relationships or who exhibit non-binary gender identities (such as hijra, meti, lala, skesana, motsoalle, mithli, kuchu, kawein, travesty, muxé, fa’afafine, fakaleiti, hamjensgara and two-spirit).

Gay: An adjective used to describe a man whose enduring romantic, emotional and/or physical attraction is to other men. The term can also be used to describe women who are attracted to other women.

Lesbian: A woman whose enduring romantic, emotional and/or physical attraction is to other women.

Bisexual/Bi: An adjective that describes people who have the capacity for romantic, emotional and/or physical attraction to person(s) of the same sex and/or gender, as well to person(s) of a different sex and/or gender.

Trans: An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man and trans woman.

Intersex: Intersex people are born with physical or biological sex characteristics, such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns, which do not fit the typical definitions of male or female. These characteristics may be apparent at birth or emerge later in life, often at puberty. Intersex people can have any sexual orientation and gender identity.

Gender identity: Refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth or the gender attributed to them by society. It includes the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms.

Gender expression: is the way in which we express our gender through actions and appearance. Gender expression can be any combination of masculine, feminine and androgynous. For a lot of people, their gender expression goes along with the ideas that our societies deem to be appropriate for their gender. For other people it does not. People whose gender expression does not fit into society's norms and expectations, such as men perceived as 'feminine' and women perceived as 'masculine' often face harsh sanctions, including physical, sexual and psychological violence and bullying. A person's gender expression is not always linked to the person's biological sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Homophobia: The fear or dislike of someone, based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bi people. Homophobic bullying may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bi.

Transphobia: The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it. Transphobia may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, trans.



Global Unions Solidarity Charter – LGBTI Workers

The Global Unions are independent trade union organisations, established to defend and further the economic and social interests of workers and their trade unions. Combined, we represent over 200 million workers around the world. We stand for the defence of democracy and peace and are opposed to any discrimination based on gender, nationality, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, ethnicity, beliefs, or against racialised communities. Discrimination in any form is damaging and harmful to the whole union movement.

The global labour movement stands with LGBTI people all over the world and we will continue working to ensure all workplaces are free from discrimination and harassment.

Global Unions use the acronym of LGBTI for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. We also employ this acronym to include all expressions of sexual orientation and gender identity.^[1]

We recognise the need for a solidarity charter for LGBTI workers who frequently experience forms of violence, harassment, discrimination and exclusion in society in general, and, in particular, throughout the employment cycle: from education, to access to employment, conditions of work and security of employment. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has found LGBTI workers experience a high level of bullying and harassment in the workplace because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. 69 countries in the world criminalise same-sex relationships, and 5 have the death penalty as punishment. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) even where legal protection is in place, the reality is that many LGBTI workers still face considerable discrimination at work. Far too often, employers freely discriminate if they believe a person to be LGBTI or deny them benefits such as parental leave, pensions and health care schemes.

Trade unions are powerful organisations for change – we will advocate for LGBTI people, and Global Unions will work to influence laws and regulations to ensure protection for LGBTI people where there are no such legal protections.

This is our Charter: a basis for standing in solidarity with LGBTI workers who are our union and family members and friends.

^[1] Global Unions accept that definitions of the acronym LGBTI are continuously changing and modernising. We also accept that LGBTI is not used in all contexts and in many communities' definitions of people in same sex relationships or non-gender binary people can be different.



The Charter

Understanding local contexts and working with LGBTI communities to promote solidarity

Global unions will ensure that contextual sensitivities are recognised in building solidarity with LGBTI communities, local LGBTI organisations, or if there are none, human rights organisations that work on LGBTI issues, with a view to identifying how best the trade union movement can help support and stand in solidarity with LGBTI workers. We recognise that the LGBTI community is not homogeneous and research in many countries shows that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals have different experiences in the workplace.

Discrimination against LGBTI is also compounded by the intersectionality of different types of discrimination such as age, disability, ethnicity, among others.

When promoting LGBTI rights and solidarity actions, Global Unions will continue to take all relevant steps to protect a diverse group of workers, including LGBTI workers, to address income inequality and unfair treatment on the job, especially in high-risk contexts where there are extreme risks for LGBTI people.

Global Unions as Allies

Global Unions recognise the need to be allies to LGBTI workers. The term 'ally' is a widely accepted term for people who may not identify as LGBTI but are committed to defend and promote the rights supportive of LGBTI people and seek to counter LGBTI discrimination.

- We will challenge unacceptable institutional behaviours or intolerance towards LGBTI workers;
- We will be visible in our support for anti-discrimination campaigns on LGBTI rights;
- We will use our position in society to stand up for LGBTI workers, as we do for all marginalised workers;
- We will listen to LGBTI workers' experiences to educate ourselves and our members.

Global Unions as Advocates

Trade unions have the power to influence the communities we organise. Global Unions will either advocate publicly or privately for the rights of LGBTI workers, depending on the local community and context.

Global Unions will work with government bodies and affiliated unions around the world to ensure appropriate non-discrimination legislation also explicitly covers LGBTI workers.



Global Unions will also endeavour to work with the multinational corporations we engage with to ensure there are non-discrimination measures in place to protect LGBTI workers within supply chains, and to negotiate specific LGBTI non-discrimination clauses into global framework agreements.

Creating partnerships with local or national LGBTI or other suitable organisations will enable Global Unions to provide support where appropriate for boycott actions.

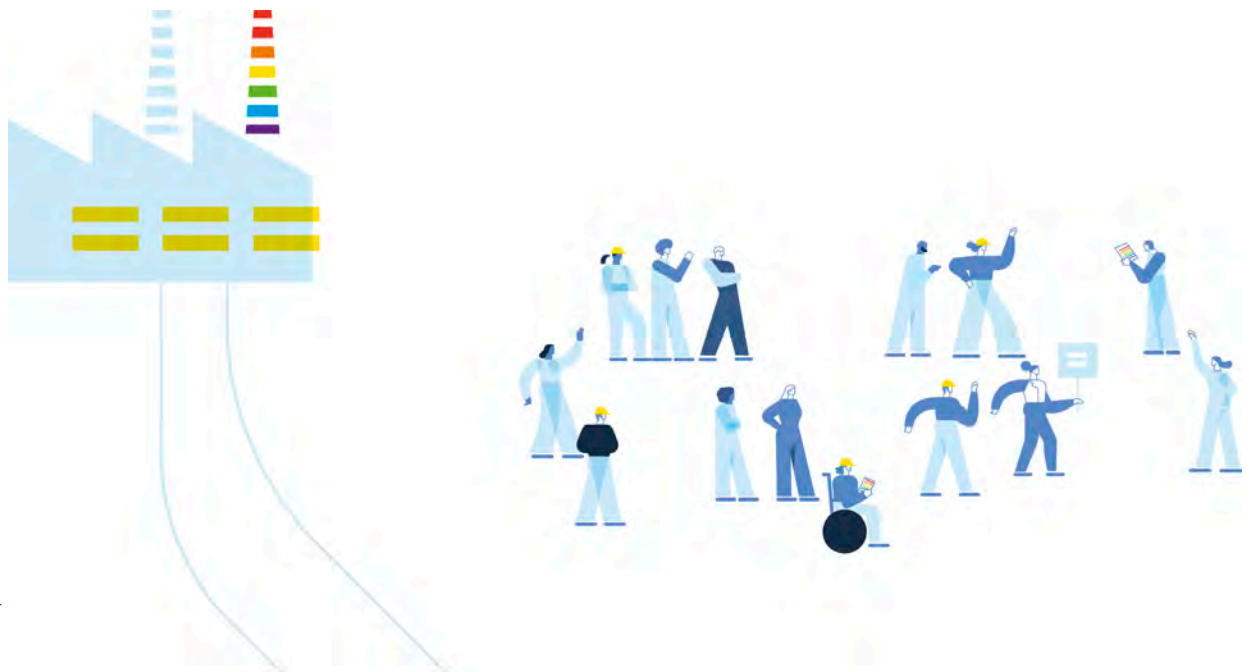
Global Unions will also use our formal status within intergovernmental bodies to advance the rights of LGBTI workers.

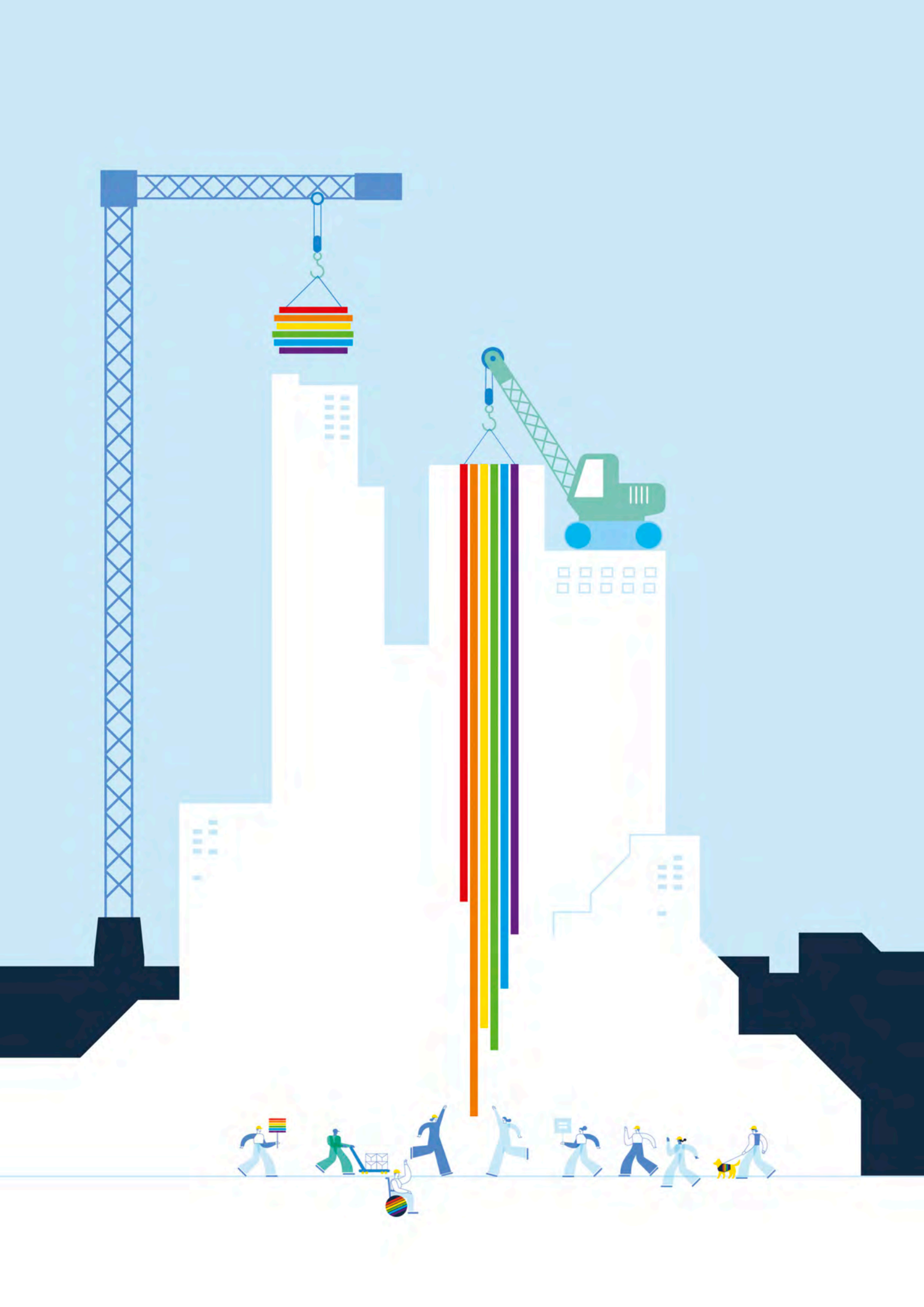
Solidarity Within Our Structures

Global Unions will work with affiliates to create decent workplaces and union environments for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, in which LGBTI workers are free to be who they are and encourage action that will bring about greater equality for all the communities.

Global Unions will assist any affiliate wanting to engage further on the issue of LGBTI rights and provide the necessary tools to help them build inclusivity of LGBTI workers. This includes LGBTI rights training and the inclusion of non-discrimination language for LGBTI workers in collective bargaining agreements to create more inclusive work environments.

We will continue to build a stronger and more inclusive trade union movement, at all levels, LGBTI workers' rights are trade union rights.





The struggle for trans rights at work

APUBA: Argentina

The University of Buenos Aires Staff Association (APUBA), the trade union representing non-teaching staff at the country's largest university, has been fighting tirelessly for decades for the rights of LGBTI workers. The union's first victory in the area was to gain recognition for same-sex couples on an equal basis with heterosexuals within the University's health insurance plan. APUBA's structures, from grassroots membership up to the general secretary, were also extremely active in campaigning for same-sex marriage and the country's ground-breaking gender identity legislation. Equal treatment in terms of marriage leave and spousal illness are now safeguarded through agreements with the University.

Identity, diversity and inclusion in the University of Buenos Aires

More recently, APUBA has stepped up its engagement with trans issues and particularly the inclusion and representation of trans people in the University's workforce. A key demand, advocated by APUBA, and now taken up by the federation representing all public university workers, is that the usual requirement for new hires to hold a high school diploma be waived for trans people. APUBA is also working with the Human Rights Directorate of the University of Buenos Aires and with the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity to make all forms and documents gender inclusive. Where previously the only options were 'female', 'male' and 'other', the union is pushing for the inclusion of self-identification so everyone can state the gender identity that reflects their true self. Workplace health insurance is now obliged by law to fund transition therapies. However, where the insurer questions or denies certain interventions, the union steps in to support the worker and make sure they receive the care they need.





Growing trans employment

Argentina has recently implemented a 1% quota for trans people within the federal public services. Many provinces and local authorities have already enacted or are about to pass similar provisions. APUBA has fully supported the measure but recognises that discrimination in education remains a significant barrier to trans people accessing quality employment in public institutions. For this reason, trade unions are now negotiating with the Ministry of Education to change the employment protocols for public universities so that trans people are not required to hold a high school diploma as a condition of employment. Instead, trans workers will be recruited and then offered assistance to complete those qualifications that they may not have previously gained due to discrimination, inequality and economic hardship. This would not only increase diversity in the workforce but, importantly, provide much needed employment opportunities to trans people who suffer huge discrimination in the labour market.

Despite the progress on the legislative front, trade unions still have a vital role to play in ensuring the law is turned into action. For example, the Province of Buenos Aires has already legislated quotas for trans people in all the region's public services. However, only where the union is active on the issue are quotas met. At the National University of Mar del Plata, more trans workers have been employed to meet the quotas because of the campaigning and engagement of trans trade unionists. Union activism is key in making sure progressive reforms are implemented on the ground.



LGBTI training and creating inclusive policies

COSATU: South Africa

The South African Trade Union Confederation, COSATU, has led the way on LGBTI workers' rights for years and played a major role in the promotion of LGBTI rights at work and in wider South African society.

Creating inclusive policies

Since 2012, COSATU has reviewed all their policies to ensure that they are inclusive and gender neutral.

Under COSATU's Gender Policy, specific reference is made to LGBTI workers. It lists practical steps for how COSATU members can help fight LGBTI discrimination, such as:

- Getting LGBTI activists in to participate in union structures
- Education and awareness raising of LGBTI issues among union members and leaders to confront and eliminate LGBTI discrimination in unions, workplaces and society
- Negotiating LGBTI provisions into collective agreements so all workers, regardless of sexuality, receive the same benefits
- Negotiating anti-discrimination clauses that specifically reference LGBTI workers
- Engaging openly in LGBTI campaigns and showing solidarity with LGBTI struggles

LGBTI training for leaders

COSATU has put considerable effort into training their leaders on LGBTI issues. COSATU recognises that without understanding and commitment from union leaders on these issues, it is difficult to have a strong and inclusive union movement.

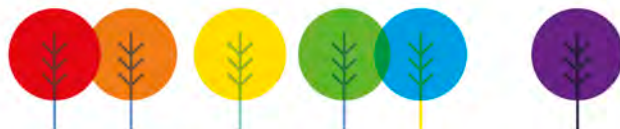


Since engaging COSATU leaders in LGBTI training, the COSATU Equality team has seen a remarkable shift in the attitudes of their leaders. They are now confident engaging on LGBTI issues. Many leaders regularly include LGBTI rights in their public statements.

Member engagement

During the covid-19 pandemic, COSATU held a webinar where LGBTI workers could share their experiences of the pandemic and discuss how it has impacted the working lives of LGBTI people. Many speakers faced direct discrimination in their workplace due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. From this webinar, a list of recommendations was devised around how COSATU could build LGBTI rights, which included better LGBTI issue training for union members at all levels, working with government to ensure that discrimination laws are enforced in the workplace, and working in solidarity with like-minded organisations to improve LGBTI rights in South African workplaces and across the continent.

For more information, please visit www.cosatu.org.za



Member-led activism and LGBTI representation in democratic structures

UNISON: UK

Trade unionism is all about organising workers around a common experience. UNISON is committed to achieving equality for all. One of the ways UNISON promotes equality is through self-organisation. Self-organisation brings together members from certain groups that face discrimination – women members, Black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members. Self-organisation helps the union identify and challenge discrimination and build equality. It can be a way for members to get involved in the union, developing skills, expertise and confidence.

UNISON has led on LGBTI and equality issues for decades. One of UNISON's key priorities is enabling their members to fight for LGBTI equality in the workplace. This means growing LGBTI representation through recruiting new LGBTI members and building the leadership skills of their LGBTI activists. A major part of this work is done through the LGBTI members' structure.

Creating an inclusive democracy for LGBTI members

UNISON's LGBTI structure plays a vital role in the union's democratic structure. UNISON believes that building strong local and national groups of LGBTI workers puts the union in the best position to fight all forms of LGBTI discrimination, whether inside or outside the union. There are three levels to UNISON's LGBTI structure and each level plays a distinct role in creating an inclusive environment for LGBTI members:



Branch level: there is a growing network of branch-level LGBTI groups that work within their branch to discuss local terms and conditions, support individual LGBTI members with issues at work and debate issues affecting the LGBTI community.



Regional level: these represent LGBTI members at a regional level, arrange training for activists, campaign for LGBTI equality and work with other activist groups in UNISON.

National level: there are two seats for each regional LGBTI group on UNISON's national LGBTI committee, which works with the national executive council and service group executives. There are also reserved seats for bisexual plus and transgender reps and for Black and disabled LGBTI reps.

Each year, hundreds of LGBTI members meet for the UNISON LGBTI conference where they can network, become involved in various LGBTI initiatives and vote on a variety of motions. The national LGBTI committee can submit two motions, which are then taken to the National UNISON conference. This ensures that LGBTI issues are shared with and adopted by the wider membership. The national LGBTI committee can also submit two motions to each of the service group conferences, which allows LGBTI workplace issues be raised as part of UNISON's bargaining agenda.

Guides for members

UNISON also provides practical guidance to members on how to make workplaces more inclusive. Acknowledging that there are different issues within the LGBTI acronym depending on how someone identifies, UNISON has created separate guidance for bi+ and trans workers, all which can be found on their website.

UNISON is set to launch a guide on ethical procurement for Pride committees in the UK. The guide will help Pride committees to ethically procure merchandise for Pride marches by encouraging them to use companies which adhere to strong labour standards throughout the supply chain and do not source from countries that persecute LGBTI people.

For more information about UNISON's LGBTI guides or democratic structure, you can visit their website: <https://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/lgbt/>

LGBTI networks and international solidarity

FNV (National Union of the Netherlands)

The Dutch national union's LGBTI network, the Pink Network or Netwerk Roze in Dutch, is an excellent example of how a union's LGBTI network can be integrated into trade union democratic structures and build outstanding international solidarity.

Commitment to equality in the workplace

The Pink Network's primary focus is improving LGBTI rights and equality in the workplace and the labour market, with the aim of fighting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics. The ultimate goal is to create inclusive workplaces, free from discrimination and harassment against LGBTI people.

The Pink Network advocates for greater LGBTI rights through the Rainbow Checklist for collective agreements. This is a set of indicators that should be considered when negotiating collective agreements in the Netherlands. The original version is in Dutch and based on Dutch legislation. However, it has been adapted for an international audience into English. You can see a copy of this checklist here: <https://lgbtiworkers.org/resources/publications/rainbow-collective-bargaining-checklist-federatie-nederlandse-vakbeweging-fnv?id=11058&lang=en>

The network is currently focused on a new project about bi workers. Recent statistics show that most bi workers in the Netherlands hide their identity because they don't feel safe telling their colleagues about their sexuality. To shift this attitude, the Pink Network has devised a questionnaire to gather information from bi workers and the results will form the basis of future work.





Building international solidarity

The Network is firmly committed to sexual and gender diversity policies in trade unions and workplaces, both in the Netherlands and through a long tradition of international cooperation.

As part of their international solidarity efforts, the Pink Network has cooperated with Turkish and Latin American LGBTI trade union groups to encourage joint campaigning on LGBTI rights in these countries. The Pink Network also works closely with European trade union LGBTI groups.



The Pink Network sees internationalism as an important part of building LGBTI workers' rights. This is why the Network has initiated a project to improve cooperation and strengthen activities between the Global Unions. This project will build LGBTI solidarity among the Global Unions and help to bring about greater LGBTI rights at international level. This brochure is one of the outcomes of this work.

For more information about the Pink Network, you can visit their website: <https://www.netwerkrozefnv.nl/english/>



Workplace activism and visibility of LGBTI members

Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA): UK and Ireland

The Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA), a union for transport workers in Great Britain and Ireland, campaigns to make the British and Irish railways LGBTI inclusive by 2025 through their Inclusive Rail campaign. Launched in 2018, this campaign has gone from strength to strength and has built activism in workplaces around Great Britain and Ireland.

#NoBystanders cards

Workers are asked to pledge to not stand by and watch bullying or harassing behaviours, but to take appropriate action. The TSSA has run many successful action days in workplaces getting members to pledge to never be a bystander to intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI people. It has also provided an opportunity to engage non-members with the union.



LGBTI role model posters

The TSSA poster campaign features TSSA members and staff who are proud to be LGBTI. These posters are designed to break down stereotypes and to acknowledge and celebrate diversity within the rail industry. The posters are double sided. One side challenges LGBTI stereotypes, the other explains why the member is proud to be LGBTI and a TSSA member. These have been placed in many of the workplaces where the TSSA has members.



LGBTI bargaining standards

TSSA launched their LGBTI Inclusive Workplaces Equality Bargaining Standard in 2018. The standard was developed as a resource to help reps and activists engage with their employer. Many employers have made a commitment to work with them on building towards or reaching either the gold, silver or bronze standards that are set out in the bargaining standard.

Soon, the TSSA will start their LGBTI Bargaining Standard Audits. These will assess whether an employer is meeting the level to which they have signed up and encourage employers to make further changes to become more LGBTI inclusive.

For more information about the TSSA Inclusive Rail campaign, or to see their LGBTI bargaining standard in full, visit their website: <https://www.tssa.org.uk/en/Equalities/-LGBT/inclusiverail/>

Building LGBTI rights in a hostile environment

Turkish Union of Journalists

Homophobia is on the rise within many parts of the Turkish media and more widely in Turkish society. The president of Turkey has made relentless attacks on the LGBTI community, entrenching existing inequalities in the country.

In order to fight the government's homophobic discourse, the Turkish Union of Journalists has been proactive in pushing to stamp out homophobia and sexism in the media. The union provides training and releases guidelines for journalists about how to report on LGBTI issues in Turkey in a non-discriminatory manner.



Union guide on the media and gender and LGBTI issues

Acknowledging the important role the media plays in Turkey, especially in forming public opinion, the Turkish Union of Journalists has created a brochure to educate members about discrimination based on gender and LGBTI identities. According to the union, discrimination and the fight against sexism and homophobia should be carried out systematically. In this struggle, the media has an important role to play in challenging widely accepted stereotypes and prejudices. The press also has a duty to counter unfounded assumptions with facts.

The brochure sets out practical ways journalists can better report on gender and LGBTI issues. The Turkish Journalists Union strongly believes that when women's and LGBTI issues are ignored, it reproduces inequality. Journalists must challenge stereotypes and create news that respects gender equality and LGBTI people as an indispensable part of ethical and responsible journalism.



The Turkish Journalists Union's guide on how this can be done include:

- Making sure a journalist does not assume gender identity solely on physical appearance
- Not using a person's gender identity or sexual orientation when it has nothing to do with the content of the news on which they are reporting
- Recognising that LGBTI people are not just "victims" but have their own experience and expertise. It is important to use different angles to present LGBTI people in the media

The Turkish Union of Journalists also hold training sessions for their members on how to report on these issues in ways that challenges the rise of homophobia in the country.

Member engagement and promotion of LGBTI rights in union structures

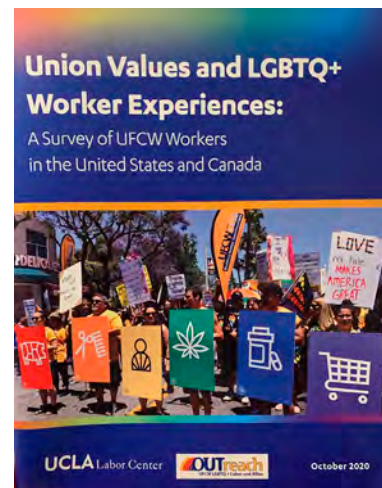
UFCW OUTreach: United States

The United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) has done significant work on LGBTI issues. UFCW OUTreach is a constituency group within the UFCW that is dedicated to building mutual support between the union's regions and locals and the LGBTI community and their allies.

Survey on union values and LGBTI worker experiences

UFCW OUTreach, in conjunction with UCLA Labor Centre, conducted a wide-ranging study of UFCW members, both of members who identify as LGBTI and those that do not. There were three broad findings from the study:

- UFCW is fighting for LGBTI rights and social justice: A high proportion of the LGBTI members surveyed were leaders in the workplace and have made their workplace safer for LGBTI workers by fighting for LGBTI rights. 71% of members surveyed who identify as LGBTI said that working to elect pro-LGBTI candidates would motivate them to participate in union and political activities.
- Union contracts and education protect LGBTI workers: 87% of all members surveyed believe that LGBTI workers should be protected by their union contracts or collective agreements. The majority supported bargaining to remove discriminatory healthcare policies that exclude gender-affirming care, but only 35% have received LGBTI training in the workplace. Survey participants who did receive training were more informed about LGBTI protections in their contracts and supportive of using collective bargaining agreements to secure these protections. They also demonstrated more responsiveness to anti-LGBTI discrimination at work and were more likely to engage the union when they saw it.





- Improving the workplace for LGBTI workers requires cultural and systemic change: The survey found that a quarter of LGBTI people have been bullied or harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and over 40% have heard negative LGBTI comments, stories or jokes in the workplace. Two-thirds of members said they did not have access to gender-neutral bathrooms at their workplaces, and that this was a significant health and safety issue.

Future focus of UFCW OUTreach

From these findings, UFCW OUTreach will advance LGBTI workplace inclusion measures by:

- Creating all-encompassing LGBTI training for UFCW members which includes organising around LGBTI issues, transgender rights, workplace allyship and bystander intervention
- Creating solid collective bargaining and grievance language to include non-discriminatory language to that covers gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression
- Increasing access to leadership positions within the union to ensure that LGBTI workers and members, especially young people and people of colour, are represented and promoted within all tiers of the union
- Creating a gender-inclusive culture by modelling gender-neutral language, refraining from assuming gender identity, and normalising pronoun sharing practices (e.g., adding pronouns to name tags at workshops, meetings, and workplaces)

You can read the full study and recommendations on the UFCW OUTreach website: <https://www.ufcwoutreach.org/>

Training Reps for Better LGBTI Inclusion

Comisiones Obreras: Spain

Making work inclusive of LGBTI people means changing attitudes and behaviour. For Comisiones Obreras, one of Spain's major trade unions, that means challenging prejudices, no matter how small, inside and outside of union structures.

The labour movement has long acknowledged the need for women workers to participate at every level of unions. If all negotiators are men, then equal pay is not going to be made an issue in collective agreements. Likewise, if union reps aren't aware of and trained in LGBTI equalities, then they're not going to include these important issues in negotiations with employers.

Awareness Raising and Identifying Discrimination

Workplace representatives need to both represent and be representative of the breadth of trade union members. Comisiones Obreras ensures that reps are aware of and sensitive to LGBTI issues in the workplace by offering training to all delegates.

This training offer comes in two forms. LGBTI issues are included in the broader equalities section of the basic training that all reps must complete on being elected. A much more detailed course dedicated to LGBTI issues is also offered to all reps. This consists of a series of awareness raising workshops, which are designed and led by LGBTI trade unionists. The idea comes from anti-sexism training where women have a space to explain to men how they are affected by misogyny.

Similarly, the LGBTI training seeks to show non-LGBTI people what forms discrimination takes and how it manifests at the workplace. Most importantly, the participants are taught how to identify discrimination and challenge it when they encounter it, including in the form of inappropriate jokes or homophobic and transphobic comments.

LGBTI Workers in the Lead

For the union, the success of the training stems from the fact that it is led and designed by LGBTI people. As when women's experiences are placed at the centre of anti-sexism training, the workshops provide a space for LGBTI workers to share their stories and present examples of discrimination and how it has affected their lives. This grounding in real-life experience helps participants to recognise the day-to-day impact of discrimination at work and develop strategies to challenge it.



LGBTI allies from within the trade union who have relevant skills and perspectives have also contributed to the process. For example, colleagues with a background in social work helped develop resources on evaluating and intervening in discriminatory situations.

Grassroots Activism and Political Pressure

World Pride 2017, which was held in Madrid, acted as a catalyst to coordinate LGBTI groups in the union. Prior to this, different regions and sectoral federations had active LGBTI groups but with little central coordination. By coming together for World Pride, local and sectoral groups were able to organise a confederal network for the first time and elaborate a national guide on LGBTI issues. This then led to the development of LGBTI training for union reps.



Better organisation of LGBTI workers in the union has also allowed Comisiones Obreras to intervene more effectively in the political space. In Madrid, as in other regions, Comisiones Obreras has pushed hard for both an anti-LGBTI discrimination law and specific legislation to protect trans people. These laws, which include protections at work, then provide the union with leverage to defend LGBTI rights in workplaces and negotiate resources for inclusion efforts with employers.

You can find more information and resources from Comisiones Obreras at https://www.ccoo.es/cms.php?cd_cms_pag=12874&opc_id=bbd3516148687ee7636522c00f9303f6

Advocating for better LGBTI rights in wider society

Australian Unions

The Australian union movement has a long and proud history of solidarity with the LGBTI community. Since the 1970s, LGBTI trade union activists have been at the forefront of the movement to create safe and inclusive workplaces in Australia. Working through unions, we have campaigned for laws that protect LGBTI workers from discrimination and negotiated workplace entitlements that recognise our relationships and address the challenges we face at work. LGBTI union activists have also driven many of the major reforms that have improved the lives of our community more broadly, from the initial push for decriminalisation all the way to ensuring access to appropriate healthcare and education support. Most recently, this commitment led the union movement to take a central role in the campaign for marriage equality in Australia.



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In 2004, the Australian government passed a law that barred same-sex couples from getting married. A grassroots LGBTI community campaign sprang up immediately to protest the law and this built momentum over time. In 2017, the governing conservative party responded to overwhelming community pressure and announced it would hold a national vote on whether to allow same-sex couples to marry. The LGBTI community opposed the vote on the basis that it was not necessary – the parliament could just change the laws without it – and conservatives found their proposal blocked. To get around that, they resolved to run a publicly funded voluntary national postal ‘survey’ of voters, the outcome of which they said would influence their decision about whether or not to change the law. Whilst the LGBTI community continued to oppose the vote, they recognised the importance of achieving a strong ‘Yes’ and began coalescing around a national campaign.



At that point, the Australian trade union movement went into action. Union officials were immediately seconded into the campaign to begin coordinating on the ground activities in towns and cities across the country. The Australian Council of Trade Unions provided resources and support to unions around the country wanting to encourage their members to participate. Whilst some union members were unhappy about this campaigning, unions overwhelmingly endorsed it on the basis that it was important to stand in solidarity with their LGBTI members in fighting for a fair and equal society.

In the state of Victoria, the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) coordinated the state's 'Yes' campaign. Student groups around Australia were mobilised in a voter enrolment drive using materials produced and distributed by the VTHC. From August to November, the Trades Hall building was a hive of activity with members of the community making phone calls to other voters, collecting rainbow posters to put up in their local area and picking up materials to run market stalls and doorknock their local streets. VTHC officials coordinated grassroots activities whilst also supporting trade unions in Victoria to contact their members by phone, mail and social media to encourage a strong 'Yes' vote.



On November 15, 2017 it was announced that Australia had overwhelmingly voted in favour of equality. 80% of Australian voters participated in the voluntary 'survey' and 62% voted in favour of allowing same-sex couples to marry. LGBTI trade union activists celebrated the win alongside our community – the party outside the Victorian Trades Hall building went long into the night. In 2020, two plaques were erected in the Victorian Trades Hall building to commemorate the role LGBTI union activists had played with their community

in the historic win and in 2021, the Victorian Trades Hall building was recognised by the state of Victoria as a place of significance for the LGBTI community.

Improving LGBTI rights through inclusive policies

RENGO: Japan

In Japan, trade unions have focused on improving working conditions so that no worker is subject to violence and discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Such discrimination can limit workers' access to social protection and workplace welfare provisions. Therefore, it is imperative that the labour movement ensure the rights of same-sex partners, as well as individual workers, are respected.

Survey conducted to create inclusive policies

In 2016, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO) conducted Japan's first LGBTI workplace awareness survey focusing on non-LGBTI people, which was published in August 2016. 8 per cent of the respondents identified as LGBTI. Nearly 23 per cent of the respondents had witnessed or heard of LGBTI-related harassment at their workplaces, including 1.3 per cent who said they had personally experienced harassment.

Following this survey, RENGO has developed:

- Guidelines for Trade Union Action to Prohibit Discrimination Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) were issued in November 2017. The guidelines include the key points that should be considered by trade unions in order to promote concrete action for LGBT workers. In addition to the guidelines, RENGO also produced a flyer, 'What are LGBT and SOGI', that was disseminated to RENGO affiliates in January 2018.
- A 2020-2021 Action Policy which states that 'in order to create a society that recognises diverse types of families and lifestyles and to push for much-needed change in wider society, we will work to improve the workplace environment by promoting amendments to the Civil Code, such as the system of optional separate surnames for married couples and securing the rights of same-sex partners.'
- Guidelines for the Practical Implementation of Anti-Harassment Legislation in the Workplace were prepared in response to anti-harassment measures passed in May 2019. These guidelines clearly state that harassment due to someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as 'outing' (unwanted disclosure of someone's sexual orientation or gender identity) are also acts of harassment and are thus subject to preventive measures by employers.



- RENGO's 'Fourth Gender Equality Promotion Plan Plus' covers the period between October 2020 and September 2021. The plan states that, when calculating women's participation and representation in an organisation, responses to questions about a person's gender should take into account their lived gender identity. The basic responses available should be: 'Female', 'Male', 'Neither' and 'No response'.



