Recognizing, Documenting, and Addressing Anti-Gender Opposition



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#### About GATE

GATE is an international advocacy organization working towards justice and equality for trans, gender diverse, and intersex (TGDI) communities. Rooted in our movements, we work collaboratively with strategic partners at the global level to provide knowledge, resources, and access to international institutions and processes. Our vision is a world free from human rights violations based on gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics. Our strategy is to transform the landscape of global advocacy, knowledge creation, and resource distribution through critical inclusion of trans, gender diverse, and intersex movements at all levels of political, legal, and socio-economic processes. Find out more about GATE by visiting <u>gate.ngo</u>

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# **Purpose of the Toolkit**

GATE is dedicated to increasing the capacity of trans, gender diverse, and intersex (TGDI) communities' response to anti-gender movements operating at the international, regional, and national levels. This toolkit is designed to be used by TGDI organizations, collectives, activists, and allies to inform and build upon their work in countering anti-gender opposition. It draws upon a comprehensive review of existing academic literature, reports, other toolkits, and case studies on anti-gender movements. The toolkit was developed using a participatory approach to working with TGDI activists and experts. In particular, the toolkit provides practical guidance and methods for TGDI organizations and others to recognize, contextualize, document, and report anti-gender movements and attacks on their personnel and organizations. It aims to provide pro-TGDI equality movements with easily adaptable practical knowledge, skills, and resources to address and respond to these attacks.

# What is the Anti-Gender Movement?

The anti-gender movement is composed of an array of groups that oppose so-called 'gender ideology,' 'gender theory,' or 'genderism' (Kováts, 2017). These are terms used to describe the perceived threat to so-called 'traditional' gender roles and identities in a misleading way to manipulate public opinion and create fear around the idea of gender as a social construct. Research has shown that 'gender ideology' is an empty signifier, which can tap into different fears and anxieties in specific contexts and, therefore, be shaped to fit distinct political projects (Martínez et al., 2021; Corrêa, 2017). Contextual analysis is not only required, it is strategically crucial. Anti-gender efforts are successful because they connect actors who wouldn't typically collaborate. The anti-gender movement is often associated with racism, homophobia, and transphobia.

It is essential to unearth more about how these complex coalitions develop and endure. Rooted in colonialism, the global anti-gender movement employs analogous tactics. Frequently seeking shelter in religious and moral rationales, it mirrors the discourse of colonial powers that utilized comparable arguments to validate their oppressive deeds. The imposition of conservative religious principles during colonization, frequently displacing or stifling indigenous belief systems, has indelibly influenced societal perspectives on gender. Rooted in these colonial religious ideologies, the anti-gender movement perpetuates discrimination against non-cisnormative identities.

They are well-funded, transnational movements of (mostly) right-wing actors united in opposition to equality, democracy, and rights for women, LGBTIQ+, and other oppressed groups, from sex workers to migrants and refugees (Brett, 2022). The anti-gender opposition has existed in many parts of the world for a significant time. However, as a global and interconnected movement, it is a novel phenomenon that has gained ground in recent years and is distinct from previous anti-feminism, homophobia, and transphobia waves.

It has gained strength and momentum in the global arena and consolidated itself as a transnational phenomenon backed by the rising conservatism and religious fundamentalism that we are witnessing worldwide (especially in the Global North, where the financing for this movement is coming from). To emphasize their worldwide scope and highlight their unique feature in the larger context of opposition to feminism and LGBTIQ+ rights, we shall refer to them as transnational anti-gender movements rather than a singular movement.

"Anti-gender as a term won't be recognized by most activists here. These actors are operating as part of a broader disinformation movement similar to the one we are witnessing in Russia. Decolonizing response is a crucial approach in our regional setting."

Activist, Pakistan

The transnational anti-gender movements do not hold a conservative position with a clear set of principles, but rather, they constitute a fascist trend, left- and right-wing, that mobilize a range of rhetorical strategies from across the political spectrum to maximize the fear of infiltration and destruction (Butler, 2021). Historically comprised of right-wingers and far-right, right-wing populists, conservative religious groups, civil society, and State actors, they primarily target the human rights of trans and gender diverse people (Wittenius, 2022). In addition, they oppose sexual and reproductive rights, particularly abortion, LGBTIQ+ rights, same-sex marriage, sex workers' rights, and the decriminalization of sex work, in particular. These actors push their views via campaigns that counter efforts to end gender-based violence, and instate anti-bullying programs, comprehensive sexuality education in schools, and gender studies in higher education. Ultimately, they are part of a larger anti-rights, anti-progressive, anti-democracy movement that places the rights of many under threat.

"The political spectrum is getting more and more right-wing, radicalized, and anti-LGBTIQ. The anti-gender movement is well connected to anti-abortion groups, targeting LGBTQ people and abortion rights. They are well-infiltrated in the State sector, healthcare, and education."

Alexandra Demetrianova, Head of Campaigns and Advocacy, Sapling

# Relevance and Importance of Studying the Impact of Anti-Gender Movements on TGDI Communities

Studying the effect of anti-gender movements on TGDI communities is essential as these movements often mobilize against trans and gender diverse people, as well as the wider LGBTIQ+ community, by promoting discriminatory policies and practices (GATE, 2022). Anti-gender movements are often associated with views that are anti-feminist/anti-gender equality, racist, homophobic, and transphobic. Their overall aim is not only to undermine gender equality and human rights but, more broadly, to target democratic advances and bring about a return to antiquated hierarchies that primarily benefit already privileged white, cis, heterosexual, wealthy men (Brett, 2022).

Many activists from the Global South note that it is important to mention that this holds predominantly true in the Global North and manifests a varied impact in the Global South. It is crucial to acknowledge this distinct impact and its intersection with colonialism. For instance, the success of this movement in Africa or Latin America is not primarily attributable to the perpetuation of privilege among white, cisgender, heterosexual, affluent men. In these regions, the discourse is entangled with regional and national values that purportedly come under threat with the advancement of certain rights. In Africa, such discourse includes labeling LGBTIQ+ rights as 'Un-African' and a Western imposition. In both Latin America and Africa, anti-gender movements postulate that LGBTIQ+ rights allegedly 'assault' social structures like the nuclear family, claiming an imposition of risk to children's and women's rights, and local cultures and traditions.

The backlash against women's rights and the very concept of gender and gender equality puts in jeopardy many of the hard-fought gains that women, LGBTIQ+, and other groups fighting for gender equality have achieved, particularly in the area of sexual and reproductive health, gender equality education, and even gender-based violence (Radačić & Facio, 2020). Thus, studying the impact of the anti-gender movement on TGDI communities is crucial to understanding the challenges and opportunities for promoting equality and human rights. It is essential to learn from successful strategies, develop new narratives, and frame and test messages before dissemination to counter attacks and respond to the anti-gender movement effectively (ILGA-Europe, 2020).

"Anti-gender movements have not emerged in isolation; they are part of an international web of extremism targeting gender and sexual diversity. Their anti-gender attacks are not coincidences; they follow a playbook developed and implemented internationally. We must develop a comprehensive infrastructure for tracking anti-gender movements and collecting data to better understand their strategies."

Fae Johnstone, Executive Director and Co-Owner of Wisdom2Action (W2A)

# A Global Overview: The Role of Various Actors in the Growth of Anti-Gender Movements

Anti-gender movements are connected across different regions and countries and frequently share strategies and tactics, funding, and a common goal to return to a conservative, hierarchical political and social order. Anti-gender movements are a relatively recent phenomenon, beginning in the early 2010s, linking organizations worldwide (Pető, 2021). These movements use fear-based tactics to destabilize human rights and democracy (Hemmings & Madhok, 2023).

"We're seeing the impact of anti-gender movements, and it's impacting communities on an everyday level. This opposition often happens on the local level, in local languages, making it challenging to track internationally." Urooj Arshad - Senior Program Manager, Dignity for All

# Africa

In Africa, anti-gender movements have gained momentum. In Nigeria, where no law criminalizing same-sex sexual activity existed prior to colonization, legislation criminalizing same-sex relations and promoting 'traditional' gender roles has been introduced recently with the involvement of evangelical movements from the United States (Sogunro, 2017). In Uganda, conservative religious groups, also supported by the US evangelicals, have opposed comprehensive sex education and LGBTIQ+ rights and pushed for the recent Anti-Homosexuality Act (Okereke, 2024; Moore et al., 2022). In South Africa, which was one of the first countries in the world to introduce legislation that protects LGBTIQA+ people, the anti-gender movement is aiming to obstruct the introduction of comprehensive sexual education in schools and undermine initiatives to enhance inclusivity, particularly in provisions for transgender and gender diverse youth, such as restroom facilities.

Funding from both the US and European governments was found to have gone to anti-LGBTIQ+ groups in Ghana that have been pushing for a repressive bill (Provost & Darkoa Sekyiamah, 2023). In addition, a study found that anti-gender movements from the West have influenced local groups in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Senegal (ISDAO, 2022). These examples indicate its transnational dimension. Feminist movements in the region have faced conservative anti-rights attacks. Still, despite this, feminist achievements in the region include extending women's political rights, enacting laws against gender-based violence, and designing reproductive health programs, among other reforms. The women's movement was central to the passing of the 2004 family law in Morocco. In Tunisia, women were at the forefront of the revolution in 2010-11. Women's and youth participation in Algeria was particularly notable during the historic revolution in February 2019 (Kimani, 2008).

## SWANA<sup>1</sup>

In South West Asia and Northern Africa, religious groups have opposed women's rights and gender equality, often distorting religious teachings as justification (Equality Now, 2020). In Iran, homosexuality is criminalized and punishable by death. The Iranian government has defended its anti-LGBTIQ+ laws as being per religious teachings, and religious leaders have publicly condemned homosexuality as a sin (Ahmady, 2021). Another example is Saudi Arabia, where homosexuality is also illegal and punishable by flogging, imprisonment, or even execution (Caspani, 2015). Religious leaders in Saudi Arabia have similarly condemned homosexuality as a sin and opposed any efforts to promote LGBTIQ+ rights. Member States in the region have coordinated to oppose references to gender and sexual orientation at the UN and other international levels. This opposition has been driven by the belief that 'family values'' are under legal and intellectual assault (Blitt, 2018).

# Latin America & The Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean, conservative politicians and religious groups have opposed reproductive rights, comprehensive sex education, and LGBTIQ+ rights, often using a religious or moralistic framework to justify their positions. In Brazil, conservative groups mobilized against a proposed anti-discrimination Bill that would protect LGBTIQ+ individuals and promote gender equality (Gregis Estivalet & Dvoskin, 2022). In Colombia, military, paramilitary, and guerrilla groups have actively targeted LGBTIQ+ individuals (Sardiña, 2022). Many of these groups were closely aligned with anti-gender rhetoric, aiming to eradicate LGBTIQ+ people and imposing their moral orders through targeted killings and forced displacements (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2015). During his term in office, the former President of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, was a vocal critic of gender ideology and sought to restrict sex education in schools (Cabrera, 2022). In Argentina, the legalization of abortion sparked opposition from anti-gender groups who viewed it as a threat to 'traditional' gender roles (Arguedas Ramírez et al., 2021). In many countries of the region, there is no proper legal protection for trans and gender diverse people, with same-sex sexual activity still criminalized (Berreta, 2018).

# **Asia-Pacific**

In Asia-Pacific, religious groups have played a significant role in opposing LGBTIQ+ rights. Conservative governments have often used 'traditional' values and cultural norms to justify restricting women's rights and gender equality (Bartlett-Imadegawa & Imahashi, 2022). Countries like Indonesia and India have seen a rise of conservative groups opposing gendersensitive education and LGBTIQ+ rights. In Indonesia, the LGBTIQ+ community has faced increasing persecution, while in India, the decriminalization of homosexuality faced opposition from conservative religious groups (Knight, 2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> SWANA is a decolonial term for the South West Asian and North African (SWANA) region that is used in place of terms such as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Middle Eastern, Near Eastern, Arab World or Islamic World, which have colonial, Eurocentric, and Orientalist origins.

# Australia

In Australia, a conservative religious lobbying organization is involved in several antigender efforts, including opposing the Safe Schools program, which aimed to provide a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTIQ+ students in schools, and opposing the Gender Recognition Act in Australia, which would allow trans individuals to change their legal gender without undergoing surgery (Winsor, 2016). Some politicians, such as former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, have been vocal opponents of same-sex marriage and have aligned themselves with conservative religious groups (Hurst, 2015). Additionally, there have been attempts to restrict access to abortion and contraception, with some conservative politicians and groups pushing for more restrictive laws.

## **Europe**

The UK has seen an extreme increase in anti-trans activism that has influenced sentiments in the USA, South East Asia, and further abroad. The rise in transphobia has damaged the UK's progress toward LGBTIQ+ equality. Between 2019 and 2020, anti-trans hate crimes increased by 16%, according to the UK's Home Office (Nast, 2021). Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary hosts and participates actively in anti-gender conferences, such as the CPAC Hungary conference, which has been described as an 'anti-LGBTIQ+ cesspit' (Spike, 2023). Orban has used COVID emergencies to restrict trans and gender diverse rights in Hungary, passing an anti-trans law that erases trans and gender diverse people's legal rights and introducing a policy that, in effect, banned universities from teaching gender studies (Walker, 2020). Slovakia has inconsistent requirements for legal gender recognition, and a new bill threatens to outlaw it entirely (Boffey, 2023).

# **North America**

Trans and gender diverse people are the most persecuted community in anti-gender rhetoric, and recent years have seen increased mobilization of trans-exclusionary radical social movements and political campaigns challenging women's rights and LGBTIQ+ equality across North America. In September 2023, competing protests sprouted up in cities and communities across Canada as opposing groups loudly clashed on how schools address issues of gender identity and how teachers refer to transgender youth.

In the United States, in just two years, at least 19 states governed by the Republican Party have enacted or are in the process of passing laws that ban gender-affirming care for minors. In particular, trans and gender diverse children are being targeted through a range of bills across the United States focused on denying them access to sports, bathrooms, and public accommodations (Nakajima & Jin, 2022). Conversion therapy has been widely condemned by major medical and mental health organizations in the United States, including the American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Despite this, conversion therapy is still legal in many states in the US (GLAAD). In some places, such as Florida, state authorities have also limited access to such care for adults. Florida has also banned drag shows, although a federal court has temporarily blocked its enforcement, with a push for similar legislation in other states (Alfonseca, 2023). Since the beginning of 2023, at least 417 anti-LGBTIQ+ bills have been introduced in state legislatures across the United States, more than twice as many as were introduced during the previous year (Ceron, 2023).

STEP 1 Recognizing & Contextualizing Anti-Gender Movements

# Understanding your Landscape, the Emergence and Development of Anti-Gender Movements

Literature suggests that anti-gender movements are a transnational phenomenon using narratives that remain consistent across borders but adapted to national and local contexts (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2017). These movements exhibit similar discourses, tactics, and styles of action. It is important to note that in many contexts, their operations are not understood or observed as a distinct movement, instead falling under the umbrella of other movements, e.g., extreme right-wing populism or misinformation and disinformation movements. Conducting a landscape analysis is essential in understanding the context within which you are operating to maximize the impact of your work.

#### TAKE ACTION

Start by identifying and evaluating primary human rights challenges the TGDI community faces and reflect on the key institutions and individuals involved in shaping the anti-trans agenda.

#### FOR A DEEPER ANALYSIS

Examine relevant laws, policies, and strategies contributing to this hostile environment to assess your broader human rights landscape comprehensively.

#### RESOURCES

Landscape analysis: What we know on anti-gender movement measures and actors targeting trans people across Europe and Central Asia

#### by TGEU

This report examines the rise of anti-gender movements targeting trans communities in Europe and Central Asia, highlighting trends, tactics, and gaps in research. Structured into two parts, it offers insights into the movement's patterns and variations by national context, empowering trans-led organizations and activists in their response efforts.



#### Impact of Anti-Gender Opposition on TGD and LGBTQI Movements: Global Report

#### by GATE

The report exposes the harmful impact of anti-gender actors on global TGD and LGBTQI communities, emphasizing challenges like political inertia and deceptive communication tactics. It calls for urgent action to counter false narratives perpetuated by these groups through traditional and social media, aiming to mitigate escalating human rights violations.



#### Homophobia in Christian Africa: How the Church Affects LGBT Repression

by Religion News Service on HuffPost

The article discusses repressive laws in Uganda and Nigeria targeting LGBTQ individuals, noting support from African Christian leaders and the historical role of Western missionaries in perpetuating homophobia. It emphasizes the importance of progressive African Christians' efforts to promote contextual Bible study and urges Western Christians to take action in solidarity against homophobia in Africa.



# STEP 2 Identifying Anti-Gender Actors

The transnational anti-gender movements comprise three categories: (i) 'established actors' such as some religious and right-wing institutions, (ii) 'new actors' such as groups who engage in protests and produce anti-feminist and anti-LGBTIQ+ content with a specific goal of combating 'gender ideology,' and (iii) 'gatekeepers' that includes some academics, politicians, corporations, and media outlets. These movements mobilize support by promoting hate speech, politicizing issues by portraying them as a threat to 'traditional' values, leveraging divides within the feminist and LGBTIQ+ movements, and using traditional and social media for distribution (Korolczuk, 2020). The movement's common ground is the rejection of feminism and gender equality and diversity, leading to collaborations between some religious groups and conservative campaigners.

At the organizational level, key actors promoting 'traditional' family values bring together anti-rights activists at international conferences and annual summits. In the US, organizations with this purpose play significant roles in attacking the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, women, and minorities (Llywelyn, 2022). These US-based actors influence the global spread of the movements through operations in other countries and financing of other organizations and networks. In Europe, anti-gender movements have been active in opposing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and LGBTIQ+ rights. Funding for the movements comes from religious institutions, wealthy private individuals, public mobilization, and other sources.

Overall, the role of these actors cannot be underestimated in the growth of anti-gender movements across different regions, and understanding their motivations and strategies is crucial to developing effective responses to these movements. Below are some examples:

# **Religious and Conservative Groups**

Conservative faith groups and religious leaders in Florida and across the US have pushed to eliminate transgender rights, contradicting overarching religious teachings to treat all people with dignity and respect (Kolakowski, 2022). Well-known anti-gender religious actors with close ties to Russia predominantly support anti-gender movements in Georgia. The role of the Church was critical in Uganda for the adoption of the recent Anti-Homosexuality Act (Soita Wepukhulu, 2023).

# **Financial Supporters**

An indication of the strength of their alliance and strategizing, between 2013-2017, LGBTIQ+ movements worldwide received \$1.2 billion, while the anti-gender movement received \$3.7 billion (GPP, 2020).

# **Politicians and Political Parties**

In Brazil, right-wing politicians have jumped on the issue of trans and gender diverse rights as a way to attack progressive lawmakers. They have proposed Bills that set back hard-won community gains. In many countries, including Italy and Georgia, anti-gender actors are represented by populist political parties (Kirby, 2022; Gegeshidze & De Waal, 2021).

## Governments

The Russian parliament is considering passing a proposed Bill that will outlaw genderaffirming procedures, thus denying access to health rights recognized by the United Nations (Blanco & García Baroja, 2023). The Russian government is one of the most prominent antigender actors on the global stage, both in terms of narrative and ideological export, as well as its financial support to anti-gender groups elsewhere, especially in the US and former Soviet Union countries (Edenborg, 2023). The Ugandan government signed a Bill into law that criminalizes same-sex conduct, which carries the death penalty for those convicted of 'aggravated homosexuality' (Budoo-Scholtz, 2023).

# Academia & Think Tanks

Some academics and think tanks are promoting anti-trans views, arguing that gender studies and intersectional, queer feminist activism represent systems of repressive regulation and control that threaten neoliberal ideals of freedom (McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023).

# **TERFs**

TERFs, or trans-exclusionary radical feminists, express views aligned with right-wing, patriarchal positions on trans and gender diverse persons and bodily autonomy, ascribing to essentialist views of sex (Bassi & LaFleur, 2022).<sup>2</sup> The feminist movement as a whole is critical of the views of TERFs, which cause harm to both cis women and trans and gender diverse people, and their opposition to trans rights that are particularly prominent in the UK and the US, where they have a mainstream platform. TERFs encourage discrimination against trans and gender diverse people by promoting transphobia on a variety of platforms, including social media (Turner, 2023).

# **Public Figures**

Posie Parker is a British anti-trans activist who has been promoting harmful narratives about trans people. She has been involved in a number of controversial campaigns, including the "Let Women Speak" tour, which aimed to challenge transgender rights, and the creation of a billboard that defined "woman" as "adult human female" (Let Women Speak; Ali, 2023). J. K. Rowling, the author of the Harry Potter series, has also been an active anti-trans public figure. In 2020, she sparked controversy when she tweeted about "people who menstruate," apparently taking issue with the fact that the term did not use the word "women" (Rowling, 2020). She has since made several other statements that have been transphobic, and she has been using her platform to spread misinformation about transgender people.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The belief that 'human nature', an individual's personality, or some specific quality (such as intelligence, creativity, homosexuality, masculinity, femininity, or a male propensity to aggression) is an innate and natural 'essence' (rather than a product of circumstances, upbringing, and culture). The concept is typically invoked where there is a focus on difference, as where females are seen as essentially different from males. The term has often been used pejoratively by constructionists; it is also often used synonymously with biological determinism. https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095507973

In 2022, the UN special rapporteur on violence against women and girls fed into transphobic arguments by claiming that a Scottish bill for gender recognition reform "could endanger women." The UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity disputed this claim, stating that the legislation would bring Scotland in line with international human rights standards (BBC, 2022).

## Media

Some mainstream publications are following the lead of anti-trans agitators, portraying fundamental human rights as a semantic 'debate.' These opinion pieces fixate on terminology and medical minutiae and fail to recognize the humanity of trans and gender diverse people and their experiences. Op-ed columnists trafficking in anti-trans views use these platforms to dominate discussions, uncritically promoting debunked science and promoting anti-rights agenda-driven views (John, 2021).

#### RESOURCES

<u>Understanding the Resourcing of the Global</u> <u>"Anti-Gender Ideology" Movement - Executive Summary</u>

by Global Philanthropy Project

This document explores the emergence of a global "antigender" movement, its strategies, funding sources, and impact on human rights and authoritarianism. It emphasizes supporting LBQ, trans, and intersex-led organizations to counter conservative anti-rights movements and calls for more inclusive funding frameworks for gender equality. UNDERSTANDING THE RESOURCING OF THE GLOBAL "ANTI-GENDER IDEOLOGY" MOVEMENT Executive Summary GPP



#### Progressive cash for the anti-LGBTQI backlash?

by the Institute for Journalism and Social Change

This report examines how international aid donors inadvertently support conservative religious organizations in Uganda, known for opposing LGBTQI rights and advocating extreme legislation, including the death penalty. It reveals significant financial flows, raising questions about aid distribution and accountability. Progressive cash for the anti-LGBTQI backlash? tow aid decors and 'feminist' governments have funded backers o April 2023 "The anti-gender movement in Russia was not extremely active on its own before this year. It was part of a big anti-feminist, anti-queer agenda. But it became the mainstream theme with the beginning of discussions on the new anti-gender law in May and in the summer of 2023."

Robert Lebedev, PR Manager, Deputy Head, Delo LGBT+

# **Research, Mapping & Analysis**

Utilize research tools such as surveys, interviews, and data collection to identify the presence and growth of anti-gender actors in specific regions or communities and analyze their ideologies, tactics, and strategies.

#### TAKE ACTION

Begin by mapping anti-gender actors to represent visually all actors relevant to your context. Identify governmental bodies, parties and politicians, NGOs and social movements, media outlets, activists, religious leaders and institutions, and other organizations or individuals with anti-gender positions.

#### FOR A DEEPER ANALYSIS

Analyze their power (resources), positions, tactics, and levels of influence on trans and gender diverse rights. This analysis can be a helpful starting point to build your alternative narratives and responses. Evaluate the level of their opposition. Consider factors like their reach, resources, and networks. This level of detail will help you monitor these actors better, know what to expect, and prepare you to respond effectively.

**Remember:** This is an ongoing (monitoring) process and will require substantial (human) resources. By creating and regularly updating the database, you can better understand the nature and tactics of those involved, evaluate possible threats, and make more informed and strategic decisions.

# Identifying the Methods Used to Mobilize Support and Disseminate Anti-Gender Ideologies

By understanding and highlighting practices employed by anti-gender movements, it becomes possible to develop effective counter-strategies, promote accurate information, foster dialogue, and advance LGBTIQ+ rights and gender equality initiatives. The anti-gender movement employs strategies to rebrand old discourses into young and dynamic ones, presenting arguments that gender equality and diversity pose a threat to reproduction, the nation-state, society, children, and democracy. It mobilizes against political initiatives and educational efforts that aim to promote the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity.

Identifying anti-gender movements on a national level can be challenging, as they are multifaceted. However, some signs that may indicate their presence at the local level include:

# **Spreading Hateful Discourses**

Anti-gender actors use derogatory language, stereotypes, and dehumanizing narratives to foster public hostility towards the LGBTIQ+ community, targeting human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, sexual education, and gender studies.

## Opposition to 'Gender Theory,' Questioning of 'Traditional' Gender Roles and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Education

In many countries, anti-gender actors actively oppose gender equality and diversity and argue against the idea of gender as a social construct, instead advocating for strict adherence to binary norms that propagate the idea that gender is fixed and should align with biological sex. Misinformation and disinformation are some of their most frequently used strategies. Their opposition spans from removing queer books from public libraries to protesting drag shows.

# **Resistance to Gender Equality Policies and Legislative Efforts**

In their rhetoric, anti-gender movements may target specific legislation or policy initiatives related to sexual and reproductive health, legal gender recognition, or comprehensive sexuality education.

# Challenging Women's Rights and LGBTIQ+ Equality

Anti-gender movements mobilize public support by framing their opposition as protecting 'traditional' values, family structures, and cultural identities. This mobilization spans diverse regions, from West Africa to Central and Eastern Europe, South Asia to North America. In some contexts, anti-gender actors publicly position themselves as protectors of women and

LGB rights. Sometimes, they may be active in or represented by certain women and LGB activist circles.

# Dissemination of False, Misleading, and Harmful Information

Anti-gender movements frequently spread false and harmful information, promoting debunked claims about the supposed dangers of gender-affirming healthcare or perpetuating harmful stereotypes about TGDI and wider LGBTQI+ communities.

## **Coordination with Anti-Gender Movements from Other Regions**

Anti-gender movements often collaborate and coordinate efforts with similar movements in other regions. They may share tactics, strategies, ideological frameworks, and financial resources to amplify their impact.

# Politicizing the Issue

Anti-gender movements politicize their issues by framing the adoption of international agreements such as the Istanbul Convention as a threat to 'traditional' values and principles. They construct the notion of 'gender ideology' as a supposed gateway to the erosion of societal norms and moral frameworks.

# Alliance Building - Involvement of Conservative Groups, Politicians, and Governments

Anti-gender movements often form alliances with religious and conservative groups that oppose progressive gender norms, aligning their agendas to promote policies that roll back progress on gender equality.

# **Exploiting Existing Divisions**

Anti-gender movements fuel new or exploit existing divisions within LGBTIQ+ and feminist movements to sow discord and hinder progress. They strategically exploit disagreements or differing priorities within these movements. For example, they pose the human rights of trans people as a threat to cis women. They employ a 'zero-sum' strategy and promote funding scarcity arguments and the false notion that recognition of the rights of one group detracts from the rights of another (Michaels, 2010).

# **Using Social and Traditional Media**

Anti-gender movements effectively utilize both social and traditional media platforms to disseminate their ideologies and mobilize support. They leverage these channels to spread their messages, recruit followers, and create echo chambers reinforcing their narratives.

# **Media Monitoring & Discourse Analysis**

Monitor media sources, social media, and other online platforms to identify instances of anti-gender rhetoric, hate speech, or misinformation. Analyze speeches, publications, and manifestos of anti-gender activists and organizations to identify their topics, ideological underpinnings, and messaging strategies.

## Caveat

Doing this type of work can quickly become very distressing, so before getting started, it would be helpful to to reflect on an organizational level and establish mitigation strategies to protect the mental health of involved staff.

#### TAKE ACTION

- Partner with ally organizations so that allies can undertake some of the monitoring to mitigate potential community mental health issues resulting from doing this research.
- Create a media diary. This can be a simple document where you monitor and track relevant media articles. Suggested trends to track include overall narrative, sentiment analysis (whether the articles are positive, negative, or neutral), actors/entities involved, and media sources.
- Go through the news daily in the morning to see anything that might need a response.
- Set up Google Alerts with keywords (e.g., your organization's name and other key entities, sentiment pattern, and specific topics) to support your regular media monitoring work. Remember to adjust your keywords and alerts as needed so that you can refine and optimize your monitoring over time.
- Subscribe to relevant newsletters and social media accounts.
- Utilize existing resources to enhance critical media literacy among relevant individuals within your organization. This empowerment can enable a discerning analysis of media content, the identification of misinformation, and adept navigation of discussions pertaining to gender and sexuality.

#### FOR A DEEPER ANALYSIS

Explore Natural Language Processing Techniques such as word clouds, topic modeling, sentiment analysis, and summary of coverage (SOC). Some tools to try are Google Ngrams, KeyHole, and Google Trends. Tools like social media listening can also help track online discussions and public sentiments toward specific topics.

## RESOURCES

## Anti-Gender and Anti-LGBTQI Mobilization in Georgia

#### by Media Development Foundation

The 2023 report analyzes the rise of anti-Western, anti-liberal, sexist, and homophobic discourse in Georgia, examining its politicization by authorities to incite anti-Western sentiment and pro-Kremlin influence. It identifies actors using manipulative gender-related messages to mobilize public opinion, presenting quantitative and qualitative analyses of hate speech.

# Monitoring gender and human rights

#### by IPAS

Ipas monitors the global rise of extremist groups threatening sexual and reproductive health, gender justice, and LGBTIQ rights. Over a decade, they've analyzed diverse anti-rights actors across religious and political spectrums, aiming to counter these movements by sharing strategic information and advocating for international human rights.

# **Gendered Discrimination 2023**

#### by Media Development Foundation

This report analyzes gendered disinformation in Georgia and Russia from January to June 2023, focusing on false and manipulative content related to gender identity. It highlights tactics used to incite anti-Western sentiments and infringe on individual rights, utilizing data from fact-checking platforms and social media monitoring tools.







MD



#### What is Public Narrative and How Can We Use It?

#### by Narrative Arts

The article addresses public narrative, a leadership practice by Marshall Ganz, aimed at mobilizing others for a shared purpose. It emphasizes storytelling, listening, and reflection, highlighting three main components: the story of self, us, and now. These narratives are developed, shared, and linked to inspire action and build grassroots power, as demonstrated by examples like campaign videos and personal speeches.

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#### <u>The Narratives We Need: Strengthening the stories that</u> <u>unite us</u>

#### by Public Interest Research Centre

The article addresses framing challenges in European social movements and emphasizes the importance of positive messaging and collective action. Key lessons include appealing to people's better selves, promoting collective responsibility, and demonstrating trust in institutions. It encourages collaboration, engagement with framing techniques, and experimentation in communication strategies for social and environmental change.



## 

#### Journalism, 'Fake News' & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training

#### by UNESCO

The report offers a curriculum to combat misinformation in journalism, providing insights and practical lessons. Split into two parts, it contextualizes the issue and suggests responses, focusing on understanding misinformation formats and the impact of digital technology on the news industry.



#### The Anti-Gender Mobilization: A European Issue

#### by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

The report summarizes a research project on conservative groups mobilizing against gender equality in various European countries. It also highlights key discussions on anti-gender mobilizations held in Budapest and Brussels, facilitated by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

#### The Gender Social Media Monitoring Tool

#### by UNDP

The initiative monitors social media conversations related to gender-responsive policymaking, detecting harmful content and hate speech against women. Piloted on Twitter in Colombia, the Philippines, and Uganda, it aims to provide insights for policymakers and civil society to address online gender violence and backlash against gender equality, with plans for expansion.



#### -----

Global Study: Gender Equality and Media Regulation



#### **Global Study: Gender Equality and Media Regulation**

by Fojo Media Institute, Linnaeus University

The report explores the link between freedom of expression and gender equality, highlighting challenges and solutions. It stresses the need for both media regulation and self-regulation, as well as sex-disaggregated data on the media. Access to official documents is essential for research and journalistic scrutiny. Ultimately, the report aims to address gender equality in freedom of expression.

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#### Anti-Gender Hate Speech in Populist Right-Wing Social Media Communication

by project "Hate speech, gender, social networks and political parties" (GENHA)

The research delves into the utilization of social media by radical right-wing groups, focusing on the perilous impact of hate speech on democratic principles. It underscores these groups' disruption of liberal political frameworks and advocates for additional inquiry into their strategies and implications.



# STEP 3 Documenting & Addressing Anti-Gender Attacks

# The Impact of Anti-Gender Movements on Individuals and Organizations

GATE's recent survey data highlights the impact that anti-gender opposition has on groups and organizations that support LGBTIQ+ human rights. These include limiting respondents' access to finance (64%), which hinders their ability to perform their jobs effectively, and exposing organizations to legal threats (33%), which forced a change in the organization's legal/registration status (13%). Of those affected by threats, 25-30% reported operational difficulties, including the need to relocate, with 33% reporting physical harm to volunteers or employees. Additionally, 73% of respondents had experienced psycho-emotional stress and burnout, with 61% noting fewer options for ally participation and advocacy. This data emphasizes the importance of combating anti-gender discrimination, as it not only impairs organizations' ability to serve their communities but also poses severe psychological and practical difficulties to the community as a whole.

#### "We need to start documenting these attacks and seek more funding for research into the consequences of anti-gender movements."

Manu Kosciuszko, Saplinq

Recording anti-gender attacks serves as crucial supporting evidence for determining ongoing advocacy strategies. Moreover, it serves as a means to monitor developments on local, regional, and global scales.

"We conduct systematic monitoring of queerphobic and transphobic harassment and abuses of our beneficiaries. This sociological study helps us understand the change in tendencies of such actions. We have a special chat where we collect and share all the links and screenshots of online attacks. We also monitor specific websites and social groups."

Activist, Delo LGBT+

#### TAKE ACTION

- Create a referral database to connect victims of anti-gender attacks with legal aid organizations and resources.
- Establish incident reporting systems that allow individuals to report anti-gender attacks, discrimination, or harassment anonymously if necessary. These systems can be online/ web-based and/or phone-based, and can be as simple as Google Forms or more refined software solutions on your website. Focus on collecting information that is

relevant to your context and your advocacy plans, such as (but not limited to) location, time, description of the perpetrator(s), description of the survivor(s), such as their identities (be careful not to collect sensitive data that may put the person at a higher risk and discourage them from reporting), nature of the incident, pre-existing context/ relationship between parties, what did the survivor do after the incident (did they go to the police or no, if not - why), what was the reaction from the law enforcement and why, etc. Do not collect data that is not relevant or needed or may further jeopardize the safety of the survivor. You must ensure that this information is protected. Based on the context in which you operate, consult with digital security and safety specialists on how to collect and store this information securely.

- Encourage witnesses to report incidents that they observe and provide testimony. Ensure they understand how to do so safely and effectively.
- Provide psychological support or linkages to services for community members making reports.
- Use secure data collection apps such as <u>Tella</u> and <u>ProofMode</u> that enable human rights defenders to document incidents, collect evidence (photos, videos, audio recordings), and securely store data.

#### FURTHER STEPS

- Further training on reporting skills and creating a comprehensive list of legal aid resources.
- ▶ If needed, apply for emergency funding. You can consult <u>GATE's Urgent Resources page</u>.

# Strategies to Address Anti-Gender Attacks: Countering and Debunking Misinformation

Effectively communicating the impact of anti-gender movements is crucial to raising awareness, countering anti-gender rhetoric, and amassing public support. Tailor these communications to each country's specific cultural, social, and political contexts and engage with local communities and media outlets to maximize impact. Below are outlines of strategies to communicate about the impact of anti-gender movements.

# **Education and Awareness Campaigns**

Develop educational materials, workshops, and public awareness campaigns to raise awareness about the harmful consequences of anti-gender movements and to promote inclusive values.

#### TAKE ACTION

- Amplify personal stories and share lived experiences of trans and gender diverse individuals and allies to counter stereotypes and draw attention to the real-life inhumane impact of anti-gender movements. Protect the identity of persons sharing their stories, such as using a pseudonym instead of their legal name, removing identifying data, and using illustrations instead of photos (or get creative with photos and take a picture of the back of their head, hands, or a silhouette).
- Frame the human rights discourses in simple language and culturally relevant concepts (i.e., love, equality, compassion, justice, solidarity), emphasizing all individuals' fundamental rights and dignity, regardless of gender identity.
- Emphasize the intersections between gender identity, race, class, and other relevant social factors to showcase the multiple dimensions of discrimination faced by trans and gender diverse individuals.
- Provide accurate information to the public by presenting evidence-based arguments to counter misinformation and debunk common false claims propagated by anti-gender movements.

#### **FOR A DEEPER ANALYSIS**

- Develop a Campaign and Communication Strategy. You can use the resources provided below. Include situation analysis and define clear goals and target audiences. Develop clear and impactful messages that address the harmful nature of anti-gender attacks and use language that resonates with your target audience and emphasizes the importance of equality, respect, and understanding. Encourage a positive and inclusive discourse that fosters understanding and empathy. Develop a media relations strategy to ensure your message reaches a broad audience. Develop a crisis plan in case of negative reactions or unexpected events. Be prepared to address misinformation and respond to criticisms constructively.
- Conduct community dialogues and focus group discussions to understand the local perceptions and impact of anti-gender movements, engaging with affected communities to gather firsthand accounts
- Partner with organizations that specialize in creating campaigns that are effective and impactful
- Allocate sufficient resources to create high-quality campaign materials and target these towards effective distribution channels (these will vary based on your local context).
- Test campaign messaging with the audiences you hope to reach before launching campaigns. Ask family, friends, and allies to review materials while under development to ensure the campaign is accessible, easy to understand, and effective before developing visual materials

#### **Framing Equality Toolkit**

by ILGA-Europe and the Public Interest Research Centre

This toolkit offers strategic communication guidance, drawing from global research and activist insights. It's designed to prompt questions rather than provide solutions, serving anyone involved in communication work. While geared towards European LGBTI activists, it aims to benefit those with similar goals worldwide.

# framing equality toolkit>

ILGA-Europe & PIRC

#### **Communications toolkit: campaigning for trans rights**

#### by TGEU

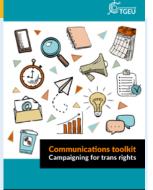
The toolkit offers guidance for trans activists to improve communication and campaigning skills for advocating trans rights. It emphasizes effective communication's role in movement building and provides insights on campaign strategies and media engagement. It aims to empower trans rights advocates despite limited resources, inspiring impactful campaigns and community strategies.

#### <u>Trans Rights are Human Rights: Dismantling</u> <u>misconceptions about gender, gender identity, and the</u> <u>human rights of trans people</u>

by GATE, ILGA-Europe, and TGEU

The paper aims to debunk false arguments opposing trans rights and provide resources for policymakers and activists. It addresses misconceptions regarding trans rights' supposed opposition to women's and children's rights and emphasizes that protecting trans rights does not infringe on others' rights. The paper offers talking points and references to counter anti-trans narratives.

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**Trans Rights** 

are Human Rights

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#### <u>Messages that build support for transgender rights: a</u> <u>toolkit for effective communications strategies</u>

#### by TGEU

The toolkit tackles the lack of accurate information about trans people, targeted by anti-trans actors. It offers strategies for educating the 'moveable middle' to garner support for trans rights, emphasizing accessible language and tested communication approaches. Clear examples of narratives and messages are provided.

#### Messages that build support for transgender rights

**C**TGEU

#### Our media Toolkit: Creating messages and stories

by IMiX

The toolkit looks at the principles of story-telling, how to persuade people, get good stories and case studies in order to support organizations in better understanding how to get across their message via the media and digital channels.

#### LGBTQI+ Asylum: Belief Gaps and Overlaps

by Maya Bhardwaj

This resource highlights gaps in understanding LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and suggests strategies for change, advocating for a more compassionate asylum system and emphasizing principles of dignity, human rights, and diversity.



#### **Bridges to Justice: Case Study of LGBTI Rights in Nepal**

by Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice

The report examines Nepal's LGBTI rights movement, detailing its evolution amidst political instability, NGO activism, legal milestones, and societal impact. It focuses on key moments like a landmark Supreme Court ruling in 2007 and the election of an openly-gay politician in 2008, highlighting the movement's evolution within Nepal's complex political landscape.



# <u>5 Things You Can Do To Respond to The Anti-Gender</u> Discourse

#### by ILGA-Europe

The article offers strategies to counter the rhetoric of the anti-gender movement opposing LGBTI rights. It emphasizes understanding the narratives behind anti-gender discourse and proposes five strategies: appealing to people's best selves, finding common ground, discussing change and solutions, making LGBTI experiences visible, and avoiding reinforcing stereotypes through non-inflammatory language.

#### <u>"Love is Love" and Other Stories: The Role of Narrative</u> in Winning the Freedom To Marry

#### by The Forge

The interview with Evan Wolfson discusses his pivotal role in achieving marriage equality for same-sex couples. He employed a strategic approach focused on building public support, winning state-level battles, and ending federal discrimination. Through narrative work, public opinion shifted from 27% to 63%, leading to the landmark Supreme Court ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges.



# **Engaging with Allies**

Collaborate with allies from diverse sectors, including parents and family members of TGD people, feminist, anti-racist, climate justice, migrant rights, worker rights, disability rights, and other social justice and human rights groups. Seek allies in professional associations (medical/legal associations, teachers, social workers, journalists, etc.) to counter antigender narratives collectively. Their voice may have a more substantial impact on their constituencies and mainstream society overall.

"We have been challenging anti-gender actors as a community, mostly with the support of allies and partners; they are the ones actually who are more at the forefront. They are willing to work with us and support us."

Jay Mulucha - Ugandan LGBT activist

#### TAKE ACTION

- Create opportunities for cross-movement dialogues to identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership and to connect with broader narratives linked to human rights.
- Conduct stakeholder mapping to identify who has an interest, power to influence, and capacity to engage. You can use a priority matrix with each stakeholder to determine your engagement (e.g., inform, consult, collaborate). It might also be useful to consider any challenges and prior history of engagement with each stakeholder.

#### RESOURCES

#### **Successful Partnerships: A Guide**

by OECD LEED Forum for Partnerships and Local Governance

This guide provides practical insights for practitioners and policymakers involved in partnerships formed globally over the past two decades. It covers various partnership types, challenges they face, and offers adaptable strategies for success.



#### **Collaboration Mapping**

#### by USAID

The collaboration map is a tool developed by USAID/Rwanda to visually depict relationships with key stakeholders, aiding in understanding their levels of interaction and influence. It helps in strategizing engagement efforts and can be used by USAID, implementing partners, and other development actors.

#### Engaging with local faith actors and communities: a toolkit

by ACT Alliance EU, Caritas Europa, EU-CORD, and Islamic Relief Worldwide

The toolkit advises EU decision-makers on involving local religious leaders and faith communities in pandemic response and recovery, stressing their vital role in providing support and promoting inclusion, particularly for women and youth. It suggests actions like facilitating dialogue, ensuring representation in decision-making, and supporting training activities.



COLLABORATION MAPPING

LEARN

Engaging with local faith actors and communities a toolkit

## Engaging with the Media and the Public

Engage with the media to respond to anti-gender narratives, clarify misconceptions and assert the importance of trans and gender diverse rights and gender equality.

#### **TAKE ACTION**

- Research journalists and establish working relationships with them. When you issue press releases and statements, share them with your database of media contacts.
- Engage in interviews and opinion pieces with mainstream media to share perspectives, raise awareness, and counter anti-gender rhetoric. Bring statistics and evidence-based information to support your message, be prepared for common attacks and sticking points, and communicate a clear message.

- Use human-centered storytelling, as this is most effective at appealing to the audience's empathy, putting a face to numbers, making abstract issues more relatable, and influencing the change of hearts and minds.
- Work with the media to expose anti-gender actors, their tactics, and affiliations through investigative journalism in collaboration with the media, which can act as a deterrent against future attacks. Some good examples of organizations and media exposing antigender actors are the 50.50 project by openDemocracy, Tip of the Iceberg: Religious Extremist Funders against Human Rights for Sexuality & Reproductive Health in Europe by European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights, Vice News articles pieces, e.g., Leaked Emails Reveal Just How Powerful the Anti-Trans Movement Has Become; UK Gave \$166k to Anti-LGBTQ Group in Uganda, Where Gay People Face Death Penalty.

#### FURTHER STEPS

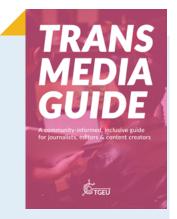
Launch media and online campaigns that challenge stereotypes, promote inclusive values, debunk misinformation propagated by anti-gender actors, and present the desired outcomes you are campaigning for. Instead of focusing on what the current problems are/how things should NOT be, offer a vision of a world where things are how they should be, where everyone can enjoy their human rights and live in harmony with one another.

#### RESOURCES

#### Trans Media Guide: A community-informed, inclusive guide for journalists, editors, and content creators

#### by TGEU

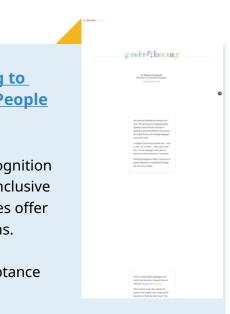
The guide offers practical tips for journalists, editors, and content creators on covering stories about trans and non-binary people ethically. It includes reliable data sources, contacts for relevant activist communities, and addresses common myths. Created in collaboration with TGEU members, it covers key themes, myth-busting, a glossary, and a quick checklist for inclusive journalism.



# From Numbers to Stories: how LGBTI activists can use data visualization

#### by ILGA Europe

This session focused on data visualization for LGBTI activists. The workshop covered tips for finding data, identifying stories, and creating visuals using tools like Tableau and Canva. Participants explored visualizing stories from ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Map.



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#### **Beyond Pronouns: How Languages Are Reshaping to Include Non-binary and Gender-nonconforming People**

#### by Reuters

The article addresses how the movement for gender recognition is reshaping languages globally. This involves adopting inclusive pronouns and modifying grammar. While some languages offer gender-neutral options, others embed gender distinctions. Resistance persists in some countries, reflecting societal attitudes. Efforts like neopronouns aim to promote acceptance for LGBTQ+ individuals.

# Strategies to Address Anti-gender Attacks: Supporting & Sustaining Volunteers, Staff & Activists

# **Risk Assessment and Safety and Security Plans**

Develop risk assessments and safety plans for individuals and organizations to follow when faced with threats or attacks. These should include steps for seeking immediate help, documenting incidents, and seeking legal recourse. "The safety and security of trans organizations is a top priority for us, and we are working on this area. Trans organizations need to have safety protocols and safeguarding measures in place."

Deekshitha Ganesan, Policy Officer, TGEU

## TAKE ACTION

- Develop an organizational safety, security, and well-being plan. You can <u>enroll in</u> <u>GATE's e-learning course</u> to learn about a wide range of safety, security, and well-being techniques for trans and gender diverse activists and organizations.
- Develop a risk assessment document that includes the risk impact, probability, and mitigation strategies.
- Establish policies and mechanisms, e.g., days off, relocation, etc., that promote rest and recovery to meet staff needs.
- Establish an emergency contacts list in case of an attack, with clear steps to follow.
- Share this information with your staff, but make sure that this information remains inaccessible to anti-gender actors.
- Provide guidelines for engaging with the media effectively to counter anti-gender narratives.

#### RESOURCES

# Safety, Security, and Wellbeing for Activists: e-learning course



#### by GATE

GATE and AKAHATÁ collaborate to train global trans activists on organizational safety and well-being plans. The course addresses structural violence and funding gaps, covering topics like violence reflections, security, feminist self-care, digital security, and organizational safety plans.

## Transgender Workplace Support Guide

by NHS Lothian Health Promotion Service and LGBT Health and Wellbeing

The guide is for transgender employees, employers, and HR staff, aiming to create a supportive workplace. It includes tips, legislation overview, policies, and practical advice. Additionally, it provides a directory of resources and definitions.

## Safety and Security in Human Rights Work training

## by FreedomLab

The training aims to equip participants with skills to protect themselves, their teams, and information from external threats. It covers key concepts like security culture, personal security, psychological well-being, and digital security. Completing it allows participants to obtain a OSCE training certificate after passing an online test.

## Wellbeing

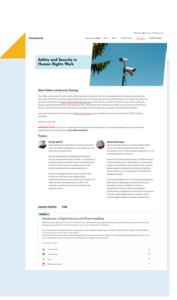
Prioritizing the well-being of those impacted by anti-gender attacks is vital. These initiatives collectively contribute to fostering a safer, more supportive, and sustainable environment for those affected by anti-gender attacks.

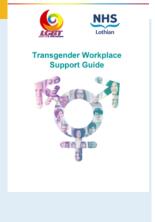
## TAKE ACTION

- Initiate well-being check-ins with staff to identify their needs and the required support.
- Provide a list of resources and services that can be accessed for further support and ongoing recovery.

## FURTHER STEPS

Establish counseling and support services for victims of anti-gender attacks, including mental health support and trauma-informed care. These measures can include demonstrating a commitment to staff welfare by allocating a budget to access these services.





Provide activists with safety, security, and well-being training (e.g., online security, self-care, and collective care strategies).

#### RESOURCES

#### Wellness Programs in Nonprofit Organizations: A Nonprofit HR Solutions White Paper

by Nonprofit HR Solutions

The article stresses wellness program significance in nonprofits. HR can sway leaders with cost-effective programs, vital for staff retention and showcasing commitment to employee well-being. It outlines development steps, crucial regardless of organization size or leadership interest.



## **Alliance Building**

Build alliances with organizations and groups that potentially share the same goal of combating anti-gender movements. Collaborative efforts can amplify impact, especially when under attack. In times of crisis, be ready to support other organizations and activists facing challenges. This reciprocity can strengthen your relationships and build trust within the alliance.

#### TAKE ACTION

- Establish relationships with other initiatives: research organizations and groups that (potentially) share similar goals or values in combating anti-gender movements and express your interest in collaborating and sharing your organization's goals and initiatives. Be open to discussing how you can support each other's efforts.
- Mobilize communities and allies to stand against anti-gender movements. Organize and/or participate in cross-movement campaigns, rallies, and public events to promote tolerance and acceptance and cross-movement solidarities.

#### FURTHER STEPS

- Offer education and training programs to raise awareness about anti-gender movements and equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to counter them effectively, such as media and campaign training for activists and organizations.
- Engage in legal advocacy efforts to challenge discriminatory laws and policies perpetuated by anti-gender movements. Work with legal experts to file legal challenges when necessary. For example, The Initiative For Equal Rights collaborated with Minority

Watch, an organization of lawyers and paralegals committed to protecting and enforcing the rights and dignity of LGBTQI+ persons in Nigeria. This strategic partnership led to a groundbreaking court ruling, wherein a Federal High Court Judge declared specific provisions of the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act 2014, which encroached upon fundamental rights, as unconstitutional (Minority Watch, 2023).

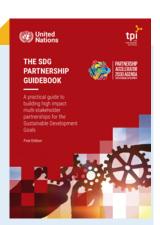
Advocate for comprehensive anti-discrimination laws and their effective enforcement.

RESOURCES

The SDG Partnership Guidebook: A practical guide to building high impact multi-stakeholder partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals

by United Nations and The Partnering Initiative

The guidebook demonstrates how country-level multistakeholder partnerships can achieve Sustainable Development Goals effectively. It provides concise guidance on establishing robust collaborations, outlining essential Building Blocks and processes from initial engagement to ongoing evaluation for maximum impact.



## Partnerships and Capacity Building: A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs

by The Peer Learning Programme for Small and Diaspora Organisations

This guide, designed for small and diaspora organizations as part of the Common Ground Initiative Peer Learning Programme, emphasizes the significance of partnerships in achieving organizational missions. It offers insights, tools, and practical advice to enhance collaboration and capacity building efforts for these organizations.



Partnerships and Capacity Building

November 2012

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# STEP 4 Reporting to National, Regional and International Mechanisms

## National Mechanisms

In most circumstances, it is advisable to exhaust local institutions as the initial approach in addressing anti-gender attacks. By engaging with local institutions first, such as law enforcement, relevant committees and commissions, national human rights institutions (i.e., Public Defender's office) and so on, trans advocacy groups can foster a more direct and contextually relevant response to the specific challenges faced within a given community. Subsidiarity encourages decision-making at the most localized level possible, recognizing that solutions are often more effective when tailored to the unique dynamics of a particular region. Working closely with local authorities and organizations may empower communities to take ownership of the issue and foster a collaborative approach that is more likely to result in sustainable change. As trans organizations navigate the complex landscape of combating anti-gender attacks, an emphasis on subsidiarity serves as a guiding principle to ensure that interventions are rooted in the local context and reflective of its nuances.

While the principle of subsidiarity underscores the importance of engaging local institutions in addressing anti-gender attacks, there are situations where this approach may not be advisable. In cases where local institutions are linked with anti-gender groups or lack the necessary expertise, resources, or commitment to effectively tackle the issue, relying solely on them might prove insufficient. Additionally, in regions where there is a pervasive culture of discrimination or hostility towards gender minorities, exclusively depending on local institutions may exacerbate the challenges faced by trans individuals. In such circumstances, organizations should carefully assess the capacity and willingness of local entities to address the issue sensitively and comprehensively. It becomes crucial to balance the principle of subsidiarity with the need for strategic intervention, potentially involving regional or national-level advocacy efforts to supplement local initiatives. Striking the right balance ensures that the response remains effective and adapted to the specific socio-cultural context, promoting the well-being and rights of trans individuals in the face of anti-gender attacks.

## **Regional Mechanisms**

Regional mechanisms can play a pivotal role in addressing anti-gender attacks by providing a broader framework for collaboration and coordination. By operating at a regional level, these mechanisms can bridge gaps between local initiatives, fostering a more unified and impactful response. Regional bodies can also serve as platforms for exchanging information and expertise, facilitating the development of standardized protocols and policies that promote the rights and protection of trans individuals across diverse communities within a given geographical area.

To review the available regional mechanisms, consult this page: <u>Websites Regional Human</u> <u>Rights Mechanisms and Arrangements | OHCHR</u>.

However, it's important to note that the effectiveness of regional mechanisms depends on the inclusivity and commitment of member States or entities. In some cases, regional dynamics may present challenges such as political resistance, cultural differences, or varying levels of prioritization for gender-related issues. To maximize the impact of regional mechanisms, it is crucial for trans organizations to actively engage with these structures, advocate for the incorporation of comprehensive anti-gender attack strategies, and work towards building consensus among diverse stakeholders.

## **Reporting to the United Nations Human Rights Bodies**

Should you desire to file a complaint to the United Nations, you have the option to do so through various channels, including the <u>Special Procedures</u> of the Human Rights Council, which involves independent human rights experts. Alternatively, you can approach the human rights <u>Treaty Bodies</u>, consisting of committees of independent experts, or submit your complaint directly to the <u>Human Rights Council</u>.

To understand the difference between these procedures, consult this <u>Reporting Violations</u> <u>page of the OHCHR</u>, which provides a table for an overview of the three main human rights bodies.

Reporting anti-gender attacks to the UN Human Rights mechanisms can be immensely useful for TGDI organizations and activists. The UN Human Rights Bodies serve as international mechanisms that uphold human rights principles and can bring significant attention to cases of discrimination, violence, and persecution based on gender identity. By reporting such attacks, TGDI organizations and activists can draw global awareness to the systemic issues they face and garner international pressure for their governments to act and for perpetrators to be held accountable for these abuses. The UN's involvement can help legitimize the struggles faced by TGDI communities, potentially leading to policy changes and legal protections on both national and international levels.

However, while reporting to the UN Bodies holds promise, there are also possible negative impacts to consider. Some governments or individuals may view this as interference in their domestic affairs, which could lead to a backlash against local TGDI communities. Reporting can also be a lengthy and bureaucratic process with no guaranteed outcomes. Therefore, it's crucial for TGDI organizations and activists to carefully analyze their context and possible outcomes of this action and avoid fostering unrealistic and overly optimistic hopes about the mechanisms' power. The OHCHR's intervention may raise awareness, but concrete change may take time and require persistent efforts at both national and global levels. TGDI activists should also be prepared for potential pushback, understanding that change is often incremental and requires sustained advocacy and international solidarity. The same applies to reporting to other UN human rights mechanisms described below.

## TAKE ACTION

- Create step-by-step guidance documents or manuals that walk individuals and organizations through the process of reporting anti-gender attacks to national and international mechanisms. Include contact information for relevant bodies.
- Consent and confidentiality are crucial for allowing TGDI persons to utilize these mechanisms. You should consult specific resources on how to handle sensitive

information responsibly. Consider consulting <u>Global Interagency Security Forum's Digital</u> <u>Security Kit</u>, which provides comprehensive details for navigating the digital landscape and securely storing participants' data and information.

Establish online forms that streamline the reporting process. These can facilitate the submission of incident reports to human rights bodies and authorities.

## **FURTHER STEPS**

Collaborate with legal support networks that specialize in handling cases related to anti-gender attacks. Provide them with the necessary documentation to advocate on behalf of victims.

## RESOURCES

## OHCHR Training Package on Reporting to the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies

#### by OHCHR

The training guide is part of a comprehensive program developed by the Treaty Body Capacity Building Programme. Divided into two parts, it offers detailed information on reporting procedures and facilitator's guides for training sessions.

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#### **Individual communications**

by Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

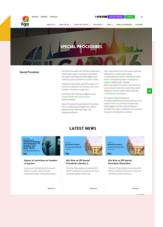
CEDAW accepts complaints alleging Convention violations by State parties under the Optional Protocol. The Committee publishes an annual list of received complaints, and a Working Group oversees ongoing communications.

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## **Special Procedures**

#### by ILGA World

Independent human rights experts focus on specific themes or countries. They make recommendations, conduct visits, and communicate with governments directly on human rights issues, presenting annual reports to the Human Rights Council or the UN General Assembly.



STEP 5 **Resilience and Pre-empting Anti-Gender Attacks**  Resilience for trans and gender diverse communities in the face of anti-gender attacks require the use of multiple tools, tactics and human and financial resources. While responding appropriately to prejudice and retaliation is important, our ultimate objective is to move away from reactive responses toward proactive actions. Striking a balance between reactionary and strategic work while being underresourced and overwhelmed by the current landscape is, in most cases, unfeasible. However, it is beneficial for organizations to start proactively implementing the systems suggested above to better support their work with a holistic approach.

## TAKE ACTION

- Recognizing the potential psychological impact of reactive responses on individuals experiencing anti-gender attacks is crucial. It is advisable that organizations integrate mental health support mechanisms, like counseling services or support groups, into their efforts to build resilience.
- Raise awareness about the challenges faced by TGDI individuals and the prevalence of anti-gender attacks. Collaborate with the media and influencers to reach broad audiences.
- Collaborate with lawmakers and policymakers to advocate for legal protections and antidiscrimination policies that specifically address anti-gender attacks and discrimination.
- Educate trans and gender diverse individuals about online safety and how to respond to cyberbullying and online harassment. Whenever possible, encourage positive online behavior while reporting abusive content, thereby weakening the impact of anti-gender actors' attacks.
- Empower the community, allies, and partners to ensure that they can provide support during anti-gender mobilization, demonstrating solidarity and strength, which can potentially demotivate attacks.
- Collaborate with non-trans and gender diverse allies, including LGBTQ+ organizations, civil rights groups, and social justice organizations, to amplify the message.
- ▶ If possible, collaborate with tech companies to address online harassment.
- Envision and illustrate ideal realities, extending the discourse beyond anti-gender talking points. Do not merely respond to anti-gender narratives.

## RESOURCES

# Make It Work: Six steps to effective LGBT human rights advocacy

by ILGA-Europe

The advocacy manual equips LGBT human rights defenders with methods and tools to leverage international and regional human rights instruments for effective advocacy in their domestic context. Available in English, Turkish, and Russian.



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Recognizing, Documenting, and Addressing Anti-Gender Opposition



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