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# TRANS\*, NON-BINARY AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING WORKERS IN *INTERNATIONAL GENEVA*

Obstacles to the full realisation of the  
employment rights of workers with diverse  
gender identities and expressions

Dr. Mira Fey and the TRANSVIS-RLS team


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**TRANS\*, NON-BINARY AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING WORKERS IN  
INTERNATIONAL GENEVA – OBSTACLES TO THE FULL REALISATION OF THE  
EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF WORKERS WITH DIVERSE GENDER IDENTITIES AND  
EXPRESSIONS (TRANSVIS-RLS)**

Report, Geneva, June 2022

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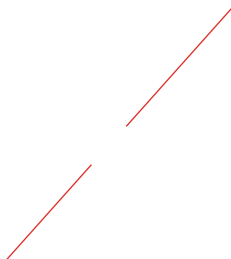
We express deep gratitude to the trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants who trusted us to share their workplace experience within *International Geneva*. Hopefully the report represents your words, thoughts, and sentiments as intended. We are also very grateful to the LGBT focal points, UN-GLOBE representatives, DEI specialists, and HR representatives who participated in this study. Thank you for sharing your experiences on the current state of the employment situation faced by trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within the UN, CERN, and other international organisations and on the main institutional obstacles that hinder change. Finally, a big *thank you* goes to UN-GLOBE for advising us in designing this study and for distributing the call for participants.

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## Executive Summary

The employment situation of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people working at different UN agencies, CERN, and other international organisations within *International Geneva* leaves much to be desired. Compared to private companies and other employers, these international organisations are lagging and do not ensure the full realisation of the employment rights of gender-diverse people. The main obstacles negatively affecting their everyday workplace experiences are substantive knowledge gaps on gender identity and expression, outdated forms, badges, and titles, and the lack of gender-neutral bathrooms. Key recommendations include targeted internal trainings on SOGIESC issues, an overhaul of data entry and storage systems, and adequate all-gender facilities.

The study at hand applies an intersectional anti-oppression lens to identify key obstacles that hinder the full realisation of the employment rights of gender-diverse people. As described in [chapter 1](#), the key data used in the analysis was collected between late February and late April 2022. Mira Fey conducted 19 interviews with 23 individuals in total, ten interviews with 14 LGBT focal points, UN-GLOBE representatives, and DEI and HR personnel, and nine interviews with nine trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within *International Geneva*. The transcribed interviews were analysed in MAXQDA using qualitative content analysis which allowed the identification of common themes and categories.

Before delving into the findings from the interviews, the TRANSVIS-RLS study starts off with a summary of the progress towards SOGIESC inclusion within the UN. [Chapter 2](#) reviews recent programmatic and strategic changes within International Geneva which show progress towards incorporating activities that highlight the most serious forms of discrimination and violence faced by trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people worldwide. However, as highlighted in [chapter 3](#), when it comes to the internal situation within UN agencies and entities, international and non-governmental organisations, and research centres and think tanks in Geneva, the participating trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers face specific obstacles: substantive knowledge gaps regarding gender identity and expression among their co-workers, leading to microaggressions, invisibilisation, and non-acceptance; outdated binary forms, and badges and titles that potentially result in daily deadnaming and misgendering; the lack of gender-neutral bathrooms which increase discomfort and harassment among gender-diverse people. Additionally, trans\*, non-binary, and gender non-conforming professionals fear that they might harm their career when living according to their gender identity and expression and by vocally demanding equal rights. Health care access gaps remain and other systemic inequalities hinder the majority of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people from accessing positions within *International Geneva* in the first place.

[Chapter 4](#) discusses the two most common strategies mentioned to address the general inequalities faced by gender-diverse employees within *International Geneva* (and the UN system more broadly). First, the participants highlight that organisation leadership support



for SOGIESC rights is crucial to feel safer and to raise awareness within and outside of the organisation. Second, adequate, organisation-wide trainings on SOGIESC issues need to be developed to ensure that all employees have the same baseline knowledge about the correct use of terminologies and pronouns and about the everyday lived experiences of SOGIESC people, with the aim of avoiding related discrimination and work-place harassment. Unfortunately, similar trainings do not currently exist, very few specialists with relevant expertise able to develop such trainings work within the participating international organisations, and DEI as well as HR personnel often are unable to prioritise the needs of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees as they face competing demands of various minoritised, disadvantaged groups.

[Chapter 5](#) gives the study participants the opportunity to explain the slow progress on SOGIESC employment rights within the UN. Accordingly, HR departments are not tasked with changing rules and regulations, but with implementing and safeguarding them; additionally, UN-GLOBE representatives lack the administrative expertise on suggesting implementable changes. Overall, the main reason is that internal reform aimed at improving the situation of SOGIESC workers often fails due to funding gaps and political opposition from member states.

The concluding [chapter 6](#) ties the findings together and makes 15 practical, actionable, and implementable recommendations to assist organisations advocating for the full realisation of the rights of their trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees. Additionally, future research suggestions are included.

## Definitions of essential terminology

### Clocked

*Being clocked* indicates the moment when a (usually cis) person realizes the gender identity of a trans\* person. This might lead to a change in body language or tone, non-verbal resentment, or even overt harassment and violence. Due to the potential threat this situation might involve for trans\* people, they might try to avoid this and instead attempt to be *stealth*.

### Cis

A *cis* person is someone whose gender identity and expression as well as sexual characteristics are in line with the ones assigned at birth. This person is not trans\*. In this report, we consider it essential to use the adjective “cis” to indicate people who are not trans\* to move away from normative understandings that being trans\*/nonbinary/gender non-conforming is a non-standard or deviant gender identity and expression. Instead, by using “cis person”, we can specify that this person benefitted from a certain privilege linked to growing up and being raised in their gender identity and expression. This does not mean that they did not suffer from structural forms of oppression that are inherently linked to the patriarchal system such as sexism, misogyny, or hegemonic masculinity.

### Deadname

A *deadname* refers to the name a trans\* or nonbinary person was assigned at birth by their family that they no longer use after coming out as a gender differently to the one they were assigned at birth. Being referred to by one’s deadname can be painful and bring back traumatic memories for trans\* and nonbinary people. This counts as a *microaggression* – if done intentionally, misgendering and deadnaming someone should be seen as trans/nonbinary-phobic harassment.

### Gender-diverse

*Gender-diverse* is used as an umbrella term in this publication to refer to people whose gender identity and/or expression does not correspond to what is perceived as the gender norm – this includes trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people.

### Gender non-conforming

*Gender non-conforming* people might be trans\*, nonbinary, or cis – they do not conform to societal gender expectations and stereotypes and thus fall out of the norm.

## Microaggression

*Microaggression* refers to verbal and non-verbal negative actions and reactions, largely directed towards groups that are marginalised, subordinated, and vulnerabilised compared to the dominant groups within society. This includes, among others, racist, sexist, misogynist, transphobic, homophobic, classist, and fatphobic comments. Microaggressions can be perpetrated intentionally and unintentionally. Sometimes, they might be phrased as a joke and the person uttering them might not be aware that a person targeted by the comment is present. Moreover, also nonverbal actions such as a negative facial expression, scoffs, and dismissive looks fall under the umbrella of microaggressions. Refuting and fighting against microaggressions at work is difficult, as they are not normally covered under harassment policies. Moreover, the person committing the microaggression might not be aware of the effects their behaviour can have, as they might perceive it as both a short and unique instance. However, the person targeted by the microaggression might suffer similar behaviour on a daily basis.

## Nonbinary

A *nonbinary* person does not fall into the binary categories of “men” and “women” but expands this understanding and is situated somewhere along the spectrum of gendered identities and expressions.

## Passing

*Passing* indicates whether a trans\* person is perceived by others as their respective gender. If a trans\* woman *passes well*, this means that other people likely do not realise that she is trans\* and regard her as a cis woman. This is perceived as a privilege by many trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people because it reduces the risk of trans\*/nonbinary-phobic harassment and violence. Additionally, some trans\* people might aim to integrate into the gender binary to overcome gender dysphoria – at the same time, other trans\* people might not desire to assimilate and adjust to stereotypical societal gender roles and expectations.

## Stealth

Being *stealth* refers to a trans\* person who is perceived and presents as cis. One of the reasons for this is to avoid transphobic harassment and violence, but also a desire to just get on with life and avoid potentially harmful discussions with cis people that might include unintentional microaggressions.

## Trans\*

A *trans\** person is someone whose gender identity and expression are different to those the person was assigned at birth – this could be a trans woman, a trans man, a nonbinary person, and other people who identify differently. Here, we use the \* to encompass the spectrum of trans experiences, including those trans people whose gender expression is in line with societal expectations as well as those who are not conforming to these expectations and whose gender expression might be considered outside of societal norms and standards. It is important to use trans\*/nonbinary as adjectives, not as nouns – someone is a trans\* person, not just simply “a trans” or “transgender” – this is commonly perceived as derogatory.

## List of abbreviations

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>CERN</b>        | European Organisation for Nuclear Research, the name is derived from <i>Conseil européen pour la recherche nucléaire</i> |
| <b>DEI</b>         | Diversity, equity & inclusion  |
| <b>ED</b>          | Executive Director   |
| <b>GoF IE SOGI</b> | Group of Friends of the SOGI Mandate   |
| <b>HRC</b>         | Human Rights Council   |
| <b>HRW</b>         | Human Rights Watch   |
| <b>LGBTQIA+</b>    | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and other   |
| <b>ICCPR</b>       | International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights  |
| <b>IDAHOBIT</b>    | International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia  |
| <b>IE SOGI</b>     | Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity   |
| <b>ILGA World</b>  | The International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association  |
| <b>ILO</b>         | International Labour Organization  |
| <b>IO</b>          | International Organisation   |
| <b>IPI</b>         | International Peace Institute  |
| <b>NGO</b>         | Nongovernmental Organisation   |
| <b>OHCHR</b>       | United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights   |
| <b>SOGIESC</b>     | Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sexual characteristics   |
| <b>UDHR</b>        | Universal Declaration of Human Rights  |
| <b>UN</b>          | United Nations   |
| <b>UNDP</b>        | United Nations Development Programme   |
| <b>UNGA</b>        | UN General Assembly  |
| <b>UNHRC</b>       | UN Human Rights Committee  |

## Rationale for the TRANSVIS-RLS report

Since the early 2000s, the United Nations (UN) and other international organisations (IOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) situated in Geneva have progressively paid more attention to various the forms of discrimination and violence faced by people based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics (SOGIESC). Several joint statements made by UN Member States as well as Human Rights Council resolutions have started highlighting *violence and discrimination against LGBTI<sup>1</sup> people*. In 2016, the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) created the mandate of the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity (IE SOGI). However, as pointed out repeatedly by UN-GLOBE, the internal employment situation still leaves much to be desired for LGBTQIA+ people. Trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees are especially disadvantaged compared to cis workers and continue to struggle with administrative, protocol- and human resource-related issues, safety and security-related challenges, health-related matters, and concerns linked to the absence of gender-neutral bathrooms. Here, we further explore the divergence between, on the one hand, official statements demanding an end to discrimination based on SOGIESC and related programming, and one the other hand, the internal everyday employment situation faced by trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers. The focus of this report is to interrogate how visible trans\* employees within the UN in Geneva are – for instance, do they feel comfortable transitioning publicly in their workplace, what labour protections are offered to them, and is specialised health care provided for them?

A central goal is to close the gap between what we know about external commitments and programming for human rights protection based on SOGIESC by UN entities and other international organisations globally and how they behave internally – as employers themselves, are they able to provide these protections to their employees? How can it claim to protect workers around the world, if it fails to protect minoritized groups working within its own institutions? These are the questions that this research asks.

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<sup>1</sup> LGBTI is short for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex. It is the commonly used acronym within UN statements and report. NGOs and activists more frequently use the broader acronym LGBTQIA+ which also includes queer and asexual people as well as others, indicated by the +.

# 1. Research questions and methodological approach

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The TRANSVIS-RLS study was developed through a participatory process, initiated in dialogue between Rosalux Geneva and the TRANSVIS research project at HETS Genève involving consultation of UN-GLOBE. The following research questions represent the focus of the study:

- Which institutional rules, regulations, and processes hinder, or, alternatively, further the full realisation of gender equality and access equity for trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers in International Geneva?
- To what extent do trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers in International Geneva feel seen and included at their workplace?
- Which changes are essential to improve the everyday employment situation for trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers in International Geneva?

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The study at hand applies a constructivist grounded theory approach rooted in a social justice framework. Social justice inquiry addresses “inequities and equality, barriers and access, poverty and privilege, individual rights and collective good, and their implications for suffering” – while also critically examining social structures and processes.<sup>2</sup> To address the different forms of inequity, inequality, access barriers, and gaps in the provision and protection of rights that trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers at the UN and related IOs and NGOs in Geneva face, we make use of an intersectional anti-oppression lens.<sup>3</sup> This specific terminology is applied to move away from the formulation *diversity & inclusion* (often also diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI)) that is widely used in UN agencies and related IOs. DEI generally signals progress, for instance regarding the representation of cis women in cis male-dominated thematic areas, of racialised minorities (for instance, Black, Asian, Latin American, or indigenous people), and of people with disability. However, such progress remains slow and is often more nominal than rooted in practice – for instance, while more low-paid employees of colour, with disabilities, or with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities might be hired, these changes do not affect the higher-paying positions with

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<sup>2</sup> Kathy Charmaz, ‘Grounded Theory Methods in Social Justice Research’, in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 4th ed. (Sage Publications, 2012), 291–336.

<sup>3</sup> Lisa Barnoff, ‘MOVING BEYOND WORDS: Integrating Anti-Oppression Practice into Feminist Social Service Organizations’, 2001, 21; Nisha Nath, Ethel Tungohan, and Megan Gaucher, ‘The Future of Canadian Political Science: Boundary Transgressions, Gender and Anti-Oppression Frameworks’, *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 3 (September 2018): 619–42, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423918000197>.

managerial responsibilities that continue to be predominantly occupied by white, able-bodied, cis men from a privileged background. Especially people with historically marginalised and excluded identities that represent intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression such as racialised trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people from low-income backgrounds are rarely the beneficiaries of DEI initiatives.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, this study does not subscribe to the DEI framework and instead applies an intersectional anti-oppression lens that takes intersecting forms of structural discrimination and oppression into consideration. As will be discussed in detail when analysing the findings of this study, the categories of discrimination and oppression at play in Geneva include commonly used ones such as race, class, gender - including diverse gender identities, sexual orientation, and the person's religious, social, cultural, and socio-economic background, but also the country of origin, contract type, and visa/permit type.

## DATA COLLECTION AND CONSTRUCTION METHODS

The research was carried out between January and April 2022. Mira Fey was responsible for research design, data collection, and analysis as well as for the conceptualisation, structure and writing of the report. The research was conducted through:

- A literature review of academic publications, policy documents, organisational output, and online media on LGBT programming, strategic work, and internal changes within the UN as well as of selected IOs and NGOs in *International Geneva*. The specific focus was on all external and internal programmatic, strategic, and administrative issues linked to trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people.
- Online consultation with UN-GLOBE in which the concept note was shared and the research focus discussed.
- Semi-structured interviews, conducted in two rounds. The first round focused on the official rules, regulations, and procedures that trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers face within *International Geneva* as well as on programmatic and strategic efforts in place to support trans\*, nonbinary and gender non-conforming people. This round included participants such as LGBT focal points, UN-GLOBE agency coordinators, and HR personnel of different UN agencies and related IOs and NGOs. The second round focused on the workplace experiences of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people themselves and was solely comprised of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within *International Geneva*. Overall, the study largely comprised respondents from Geneva, but some of the LGBT focal points are situated in the respective headquarters of the entities they work for or in duty

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<sup>4</sup> Sheryl Nance-Nash, 'How Corporate Diversity Initiatives Trap Workers of Colour', *BBC*, 14 September 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200826-how-corporate-diversity-initiatives-trap-workers-of-colour>; Carmen Morris, 'Anti-Racism: Why Your DEI Agenda Will Never Be A Success Without It', *Forbes*, 15 December 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carmenmorris/2020/12/15/anti-racism-why-your-dei-agenda-will-never-be-a-success-without-it/>; Krystal Jagoo, 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Are DEI Initiatives Working?', *Verywellmind*, 15 February 2022, <https://www.verywellmind.com/are-corporate-dei-initiatives-working-5215838>.



stations. All trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants were situated in Geneva.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

For the first round of the interviews, we contacted the LGBT focal points and some of the UN-GLOBE agency coordinators who work within 15 different UN entities present in Geneva. The first contact was established in early February. Some of the focal points referred us to the people responsible for DEI in their respective UN entity, who might be HR managers or part of a dedicated DEI team. Not all UN entities have those teams. Additionally, people working at related IOs and NGOs in Geneva were contacted. The focal points, agency coordinators, DEI policy managers and HR managers who did not respond to the initial email were recontacted several additional times, but most did not respond. Some indicated that they are not aware of any trans\*/nonbinary/gender non-conforming workers in their agency, that there are no specific rules, regulations, and processes for such workers that could be discussed in an interview, or that they do not have any availabilities for an interview. In total, we sent more than 80 emails to more than 60 people at 21 entities. Ten interviews with 14 participants with work experiences within at least eleven different entities including seven UN agencies, three international organisations, and UN-GLOBE were conducted between late February and late April. They held the following roles in their respective organisations:

| <b>Role (more than one possible)</b>                 | <b>Number</b> |
|--|---------------|
| Programmatic focus solely on LGBT issues             | 2             |
| UN-GLOBE agency coordinator with different main role | 3             |
| LGBT focal point with different main role            | 4             |
| DEI policy role                                      | 4             |
| HR manager   | 2             |

The LGBT focal points/UN-GLOBE agency coordinators and the people working on LGBT issues and DEI policy were largely cis lesbian, gay, or bisexual people. The HR managers described themselves as allies rather than members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

For the second round of the interviews, we created a call for participants in collaboration with UN-GLOBE (see annex) that was also translated into French and Spanish. The call for participants was shared multiple times between mid-March and early April via the Rosalux Geneva and the UN-GLOBE communication channels, as well as on social media pages for LGBT development workers. It was also sent to several individuals working within *International Geneva* who shared it with their network. Nine participants contacted us to take part in the study. In terms of their gender identity and expression, we asked for self-identification based on the understanding of gender as a spectrum. Four participants identified as binary trans\* women, among which one person prioritised her lesbian identity over her trans\* identity. Four people identified as non-binary. Among these four, one of the participants labelled themselves as both nonbinary and a trans\* woman, one as nonbinary and gender non-conforming, and two as nonbinary in an ongoing process of exploration of their gender identity. One participant specified that they are questioning their gender identity

but does not call themselves nonbinary or trans\*. No trans\* man responded to the call. The youngest participant was in their twenties, the oldest one in their 60s, and the majority between thirty and fifty.

| <b>Gender identity (more than one possible)</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|---|---------------|
| Trans* woman                                    | 5             |
| Nonbinary person                                | 4             |
| Gender non-conforming                           | 1             |
| Questioning their gender identity               | 2             |

To avoid identification of the trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants, their countries of origin will not be disclosed; however, we give an overview of their regions of origin. For one participant, this also includes the region of origin of their parents, as the participant discussed their migration background and associated challenges in detail in the interview. Most of the participants were White native English speakers from Western Europe and Northern America, with a few exceptions. It is important to note that their regions of origin are linked to a degree of privilege regarding the possibility of updating one's name and gender marker in official documents and accessing gender affirmative medical treatments.<sup>5</sup> As will be discussed below, the participants did not grow up or hold citizenship of a country in the Global North or whose parents migrated from another region also experienced additional forms of discrimination.

| <b>Region of origin (more than one possible)</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|--|---------------|
| Western Europe                                   | 3             |
| Northern America (anglophone)                    | 4             |
| Central-Northern America (Hispanic)              | 2             |
| East Asia  | 1             |

When it comes to their professional responsibilities, out of the nine participants, only one had worked directly on issues thematically linked to SOGIESC rights. The others worked in different thematic areas, including technical areas such as physics or engineering, or provided services to UN agencies and other organisations, including in finance and through communication- and public relations-related tasks. None of the gender-diverse participants was a UN staff member, and none of them worked on programmatic issues within a specific UN agency. This will be further discussed in the limitations at the end of this study.

## **DATA ON INSTITUTIONS CONTACTED**

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<sup>5</sup> To date, at least 16 countries recognize third gender options on passports (Katherine Fung, 'Which Countries Recognize Third Gender Option on Passports?', *Newsweek*, 27 October 2021, <https://www.newsweek.com/which-countries-recognize-third-gender-option-passports-1643167>). This changed most recently in the US where the third option X is possible since April 2022 (Antony J. Blinken, 'X Gender Marker Available on U.S. Passports Starting April 11', Press Statement (Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, 31 March 2022), <https://www.state.gov/x-gender-marker-available-on-u-s-passports-starting-april-11/>).

Due to the relatively low number of interviews overall, no list of participating entities will be shared to prevent the potential identification of the respondents by co-workers. Given the sensitivity of the topic at hand and the potential repercussions for the participants' employment security, we prioritise protecting our participants' privacy and safety. However, to give the readers an idea of the scope of what is included in *International Geneva*, we include a list of UN entities as well as other IOs and NGOs that were contacted initially and that reached out after receiving the call for participants. Initially, only UN entities/agencies and IOs that were listed as having a LGBT focal point or a UN-GLOBE agency coordinator were contacted due to the limited resources available for this study. Subsequently, some other structures with links to LGBT rights were contacted, and some people from other institutions reached out to us to participate in the second round of the interviews, having received the call for participants. Through this channel, one additional interview with a DEI team and an HR manager was conducted with an entity that was not originally contacted for the first round of interviews.

| <b>Category</b>                      | <b>Structure</b>  |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| UN entities and specialised agencies | IE SOGI; IOM; ITC; OHCHR; UNAIDS; UNDP; UNESCO; UNFPA; UNHCR; UNICEF; UNOG; UNRISD; UN Women; WHO; WIPO |
| UN inter-agency group                | UN-GLOBE  |
| IOs                                  | ICRC; World Bank  |
| NGOs, research centres, think tanks  | CERN; ILGA World; Sexual Rights Initiative; another research centre                                     |

## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

For both interview rounds, the interviews were conducted following a semi-structured interview guide addressing different issues linked to the three research questions (see annex for both topic guides). The interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Data was collected both online using Teams or Zoom and through in-person interviews, depending on the participant's location, preferences, and availability. The participants confirmed their informed consent and were guaranteed anonymity (see the consent form in the annex). Data collection, storage and transcription were ensured in a secure manner.

## THE DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

The study findings were coded in MAXQDA following a qualitative content analysis framework<sup>6</sup> and categorised according to the main themes identified. The first round of interviews was used to triangulate the findings from the literature review and to assess the awareness the dedicated LGBT focal points as well as DEI and HR managers have of issues affecting trans\*/nonbinary/gender non-conforming workers. Moreover, these interviews also gave some insights into the internal dynamics between specific agencies, funding structures, donors, and Member States. The second round of interviews yielded new insights into which specific barriers exist to access, inclusion, and acceptance, and which forms of discrimination and oppression were deemed most essential for the participating trans\*, nonbinary, and

<sup>6</sup> Philipp Mayring, 'Qualitative Content Analysis: Theoretical Foundation, Basic Procedures and Software Solution', no. free download pdf-version (2014), <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ss0ar-395173>.

gender non-conforming workers. The findings discussed below present a structured overview of the most mentioned, but also of the most severe access gaps and rights violations that currently hinder the full realisation of the inclusion, integration, and acceptance of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers in *International Geneva*. They do not necessarily represent the opinion or position of each research participant.

## 2. Review of external and internal progress towards SOGIESC inclusion

### 2.1. The path to including discrimination based on SOGIESC into UN strategies and programming

Since the late 1990s, UN bodies such as the UNHRC, the OHCHR and even the UNGA have progressively shown commitment to the protection of the universal human rights of all people, regardless of their SOGIESC. While sexual orientation was linked to a person's human rights in 1994, gender identity was first mentioned in this regard in 2006. Programmatic efforts targeting LGBTQIA+ people focus largely on the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, as well as of physical violence and on the protection of the right to life. The Independent Expert on SOGI has started shedding light on the strategies used by anti-gender movements and on the systematic violence endured by trans\* people in recent reports, but much remains to be done to prevent these actions and to ensure the realization of the human rights of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people worldwide.

#### TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AS GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

The United Nations system, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as well as the satellite network of civil society organisations that are based in Geneva to participate, monitor, and advocate in the system, exist to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as well as other international treaties and agreements that recognise and guarantee the dignity and rights of every individual. Neither the UDHR nor international human rights conventions such as the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) specifically included discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sexual characteristics (SOGIESC). After a long silence on the rights of LGBTQIA+ people, UN treaty bodies have in recent years repeatedly affirmed that all human rights are universal, and that sexual orientation and gender identity are grounds protected from discrimination under international law. The first decision to this effect was *Toonen v. Australia*, a landmark human rights case brought before the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) by Tasmanian resident Nicholas Toonen in 1994.<sup>7</sup> The result was the repeal of Australia's last

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<sup>7</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, 'Sexuality under the ICCPR - Human Rights Committee Communication No. 488/1992 (Toonen v Australia)', n.d., sec. Human Rights Explained: Case Studies: Complaints about Australia to the Human Rights Committee, <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/human-rights-explained-case-studies-complaints-about-australia-human-rights>.

sodomy laws, as the UNHRC held that **sexual orientation was included in antidiscrimination provisions as a protected status under the ICCPR**. Despite this historic ruling, the progress on LGBTQIA+ people's rights' protection through the UNHRC remained slow. The human rights body can even be described as inconsistent in its statements of support of people discriminated based on SOGIESC, and, consequentially, as lacking efficacy in protecting their rights.<sup>8</sup>

## AN AFTERTHOUGHT? INCLUDING GENDER IDENTITY UNDER NON-DISCRIMINATION

**Gender identity** was addressed more than 10 years later – and, differently to discrimination based on sexual orientation, it was first mentioned by states. In 2006, Norway presented a joint statement regarding human rights violations based on people's sexual orientation and gender identity at the Commission on Human Rights on behalf of 54 states.<sup>9</sup> Another joint statement presented by Argentina on behalf of 66 states in 2008 extended this understanding further and **clearly stated that the principle of non-discrimination applies equally to every human being regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity**.<sup>10</sup> Neither statement has been officially adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA), and the second statement was strongly opposed by the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic States, Russia, and other Member States. UN Member States are by no means united in their understanding of discrimination and acts of violence against individuals based on SOGIESC. Nevertheless, focusing on the gravest violations of human rights experienced on the grounds of SOGIESC, specifically state-sponsored, extrajudicial, or criminal killings and physical violence, has been relatively successful when framing LGBTQIA+ rights as falling under the broader umbrella of human rights. In 2008, the *UN LGBTI Core Group*, an informal cross-regional group currently consisting of 34 UN Member States,<sup>11</sup> the European Union, the OHCHR, and the non-governmental organisations Human Rights Watch (HRW) and OutRight Action International, was established with the goal “to work within the UN framework to ensure universal respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, specifically LGBTI persons, with a focus on protection from violence and discrimination”.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Baisley, 'Reaching the Tipping Point?: Emerging International Human Rights Norms Pertaining to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity', *Human Rights Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2016): 134–63, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2016.0009>.

<sup>9</sup> Wegger Christian Strømme, '2006 Joint Statement, 3rd Session of the Human Rights Council' (Ambassador and permanent representative of Norway to the United Nations Office in Geneva, 1 December 2006), <http://arc-international.net/global-advocacy/sogi-statements/2006-joint-statement/>.

<sup>10</sup> Argentina, '2008 Joint Statement on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity', 18 December 2008, <http://arc-international.net/global-advocacy/sogi-statements/2008-joint-statement/>.

<sup>11</sup> [See annex for a list of members](#). Members can only join in pairs, one from the Global North and one from the Global South, as a measure to counter the notion that LGBTQIA+ rights are a Western imposition, (Albert Trithart, 'A UN for All? UN Policy and Programming on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics', *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2021, 23, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3807458>).

<sup>12</sup> UN LGBTI CORE GROUP, 'UN LGBTI Core Group History', n.d., <https://unlgbticoregroup.org/history/>.

## INCLUDING SOGI INTO THE WORK OF DIFFERENT UN ENTITIES

***In the past ten years, several important steps have been taken for the inclusion of discrimination and acts of violence based on SOGI into the work of different UN entities.*** The first resolution *requesting the documentation of discriminatory laws, practices, and acts of violence against individuals based on SOGI* was brought forward at the Human Rights Council (HRC) by South Africa in July 2011.<sup>13</sup> It passed with 23 to 19 votes - again, speaking as much to the division within the HRC as to the support of LGBTQIA+ people. The first report of its kind was released in November 2011 and concluded that “*homophobic and transphobic violence has been recorded in all regions*” and should be understood as a form of gender-based violence as these acts are “*driven by a desire to punish those seen as defying gender norms*”.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the report highlighted rampant discrimination based on SOGI in employment, health care, education, and in the family and community, and stressed a severe lack of legal recognition for trans people’s identities. It was lauded by LGBTQIA+ human rights defenders *for unequivocally affirming that the protections guaranteed by the UDHR applies to all human beings*.<sup>15</sup> The UNGA first referenced gender identity in the resolution on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in 2012,<sup>16</sup> whereas sexual orientation was already included in 2002.<sup>17</sup> In 2015, 12 UN entities<sup>18</sup> released an “unprecedented joint statement calling for an end to violence and discrimination against LGBTI people”.<sup>19</sup> The UN Security Council released its first statement *acknowledging violence targeting the LGBT community* in June 2016 when condemning the Orlando nightclub shooting.<sup>20</sup>

***An important milestone for the better protection of LGBTQIA+ people through the work of the UN was the creation of the mandate of the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity (IE SOGI) within the OHCHR by a HRC resolution in July***

<sup>13</sup> Human Rights Council, ‘17/19 Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity’, Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council, 14 July 2011, <http://arc-international.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/HRC-Res-17-191.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, ‘Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General - Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, Discriminatory Laws and Practices and Acts of Violence against Individuals Based on Their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity’, Annual report (Human Rights Council, 17 November 2011), [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/A.HRC.19.41\\_English.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/A.HRC.19.41_English.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> ARC International, ‘United Nations Human Rights Chief Publishes Ground-Breaking Report on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity’, 15 December 2011, <https://arc-international.net/united-nations-human-rights-chief-publishes-ground-breaking-report-on-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/>.

<sup>16</sup> UN General Assembly, ‘Extrajudicial, Summary, and Arbitrary Executions: Resolution / Adopted by the General Assembly’, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20.12.2012, 15 March 2013, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/746169?ln=en>.

<sup>17</sup> UN General Assembly, ‘Extrajudicial, Summary, and Arbitrary Executions: Resolution / Adopted by the General Assembly’, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18.12.2002, 25 February 2003, [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/57/214](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/57/214).

<sup>18</sup> [See list in annex.](#)

<sup>19</sup> UN OHCHR, ‘Twelve UN Agencies Issue Unprecedented Joint Statement on Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex People’, *Press Release*, 29 September 2015, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2015/09/twelve-un-agencies-issue-unprecedented-joint-statement-rights-lesbian-gay>.

<sup>20</sup> Security Council, ‘Security Council Press Statement on Terrorist Attack in Orlando, Florida’, *Press Release, SC/12399*, 13 June 2016, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12399.doc.htm>.

2016.<sup>21</sup> The Independent Expert has since published a number of insightful reports on the current state of the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people worldwide, on specific issues such as “conversion therapies” and other hateful practices, and also undertook several country visits. Moreover, the *programmatic overview of the “role of the UN in combatting discrimination and violence against LGBTI people”* that is regularly published by the OHCHR provides a snapshot of programming by a range of UN entities, including activities that address health disparities, target LGBTQIA+ refugees and migrants and the education sector, and develop business standards and best practices to ensure equal conditions for LGBTQIA+ employees.<sup>22</sup> Much of these activities predominantly target discrimination based on sexual orientation; while gender identity is sometimes addressed, programming that centres trans people remains rare. As highlighted in a recent study on UN policy and programming based on SOGIESC by the International Peace Institute (IPI), many of the SOGIESC initiatives created by different UN entities are ad hoc and tied to individuals rather than to an institutional strategy, and, at least in early 2021, only three agencies have multiple people devoted to work on related full-time (World Bank, OHCHR, UNDP).<sup>23</sup> Historically, the individuals developing programming on SOGIESC within the UN have been lesbian, gay, or bisexual rather than trans or gender non-conforming which partially explains the lack of programming on gender identity and expression and/or sex characteristics.

## THE RECENT SHIFT TOWARDS GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION WITHIN UN ACTIVITIES

***The focus shifted toward gender identity quite recently***, for instance when the IE SOGI published two reports on gender in 2021: a first part, “*Law of Inclusion*”, which highlights that the concept of gender is enshrined in international human rights law (IHRL) and protected thereunder,<sup>24</sup> and a second part, “*Practices of Exclusion*”, which analyses backlash against the incorporation of gender frameworks in IHRL and concludes that such exclusionary narratives and actions contribute to the perpetuation of violence and discrimination based on SOGI.<sup>25</sup> The IE SOGI includes “the struggle of trans and gender-diverse persons” as one of the issues in focus on the website and provides comprehensive information about key factors responsible for the exclusion and marginalisation, violence and discrimination that gender-

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<sup>21</sup> UN OHCHR, ‘Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity’, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>.

<sup>22</sup> UN OHCHR, ‘The Role of the United Nations in Combatting Discrimination and Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex People - A Programmatic Overview’, 20 September 2019, [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/LGBT/UN\\_LGBTI\\_summary\\_2019.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/LGBT/UN_LGBTI_summary_2019.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Trithart, ‘A UN for All?’

<sup>24</sup> Victor Madrigal-Borloz, ‘The Law of Inclusion - Report of the Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity’ (Human Rights Council, 3 June 2021), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/123/16/PDF/G2112316.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>25</sup> Victor Madrigal-Borloz, ‘Practices of Exclusion - Report of the Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity’ (Human Rights Council, 15 July 2021), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/192/14/PDF/N2119214.pdf?OpenElement>.



diverse and trans people worldwide are subjected to.<sup>26</sup> In 2021, 27 Member States formed *the Group of Friends of the Mandate of the IE SOGI (GoF IE SOGI)*<sup>27</sup> to jointly support the mandate of the IE SOGI. In a first statement, they lauded the reports on gender and called on the UNHRC to “urgently protect the human rights of trans people, especially trans women”.<sup>28</sup> LGBTQIA+ and trans-specific non-governmental organisations highlighted this as “a historic step forward for the global trans community”.<sup>29</sup>

## MUCH WORK LIES AHEAD

This overview of key milestones undertaken by different UN entities toward the inclusion of SOGIESC into an international human rights law framework and into UN programming reveals that such progress has been slow and was met with resistance by different Member States.<sup>30</sup> **A chronological lag can be underlined between the inclusion of sexual orientation vis-à-vis that of gender identity and expression, or of sex characteristics** – the focus is still on SOGI today, SOGIESC is rarely used. As highlighted above, it took 12 years from the first ruling including sexual orientation as protected status under the ICCPR in 1994 until gender identity was discussed at the Commission on Human Rights in 2006, and ten years from the inclusion of sexual orientation in the UNGA resolution on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions to the integration of gender identity. A recently updated series of factsheets by ILGA World and ISHR highlight that the UN Special Procedures – Independent Experts, Special Rapporteurs, and Working Groups – are increasingly giving more attention to and raise concerns regarding people’s human rights related to SOGIESC.<sup>31</sup> However, this awareness is not evenly distributed across the different thematical Special Procedures. Unsurprisingly, the IE SOGI publishes by far the largest number of reports and communications mentioning SOGIESC issues, followed by the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of expression, human rights defenders, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and torture, and by the Working Groups on arbitrary detention and discrimination

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<sup>26</sup> IE SOGI, ‘The Struggle of Trans and Gender-Diverse Persons’, *UN OHCHR*, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/struggle-trans-and-gender-diverse-persons>.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Geneva, ‘JOINT STATEMENT LAUNCHING THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF THE SOGI MANDATE’, 25 June 2021, <https://geneva.usmission.gov/2021/06/25/joint-statement-on-the-interactive-dialogue-with-independent-expert-sogi-at-the-hrc/>.

<sup>28</sup> Group of Friends of the SOGI mandate, ‘Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the Protection against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity - Draft Joint Statement of the Group of Friends of the SOGI Mandate’ (Geneva, 24 June 2021), [https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/HRCDocuments/43/SP/37710\\_47\\_6c0cc481\\_7df8\\_4cfb\\_aff\\_209fdffa6179.docx](https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/HRCDocuments/43/SP/37710_47_6c0cc481_7df8_4cfb_aff_209fdffa6179.docx).

<sup>29</sup> TGEU, ‘Protect Trans Women’s Rights, 27 States Tell the United Nations in Historic First’, 29 June 2021, <https://tgeu.org/27-states-tell-the-un-to-protect-trans-women/>.

<sup>30</sup> This is also evident as, for example, LGBTQIA+ rights were – *deliberately* – not included within the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, as “for numerous governments, this is apparently an unacceptable subject for a human development policy” (Barbara Crossette, ‘No Room for LGBT Rights in the New UN Development Goals’, *PassBlue - Independent Coverage of the UN*, 17 May 2015, <https://www.passblue.com/2015/05/17/no-room-for-lgbt-rights-in-the-new-un-development-goals/>).

<sup>31</sup> ILGA World, ‘LGBTI RIGHTS: UPDATED FACTSHEETS ON UN SPECIAL PROCEDURES’, Factsheets (ILGA World, 5 April 2022), <https://ilga.org/updated-factsheets-UN-Special-Procedures-2022>.

against women and girls.<sup>32</sup> Several other Special Procedures still make no mention of SOGIESC within their reports or communications.

***Civil society organisations around the globe have fought tirelessly for decades to raise awareness, decrease stigma, and work towards acceptance, inclusion, and equality of all human beings regardless of SOGIESC and must be credited for the slow, but somewhat steady progress.***<sup>33</sup> As the creation of the UN LGBTI Core Group in 2008 and the GoF IE SOGI in 2021 highlights, several Member States voice their support for LGBTQIA+ rights at different occasions within UN entities and sessions. Nevertheless, living a decent life with equal opportunities and free from fear is not yet guaranteed for all people regardless of SOGIESC. As stressed in the “*Practices of Exclusion*”, increasing demands emerge by state actors as well as by “religious actors, in print and social media, at events of conservative secular groups and even in street demonstrations” to “*separate human rights-based approaches on sexual orientation from those on gender identity, ultimately seeking to exclude trans and gender-diverse persons from the protection of international human rights norms and standards, and to challenge legal recognition of gender identity based on self-identification*”.<sup>34</sup> A strong need to globally defend and protect the human rights of all people based on SOGIESC remains.

## 2.2. Striking gaps in the internal inclusion of SOGIESC workers

While UN bodies such as the UNHRC, the OHCHR and even the UNGA have shown commitment to the protection of the universal human rights of all people, regardless of their SOGIESC, internal policies protecting the employment rights of LGBTQIA+ workers are still lacking. Some progress has been made for lesbian, gay, and bisexual workers, notably when it comes to the recognition of same-sex partnerships, but trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers are still remarkably disadvantaged.

### RECOGNISING SAME-SEX PARTNERSHIPS – BUT ONLY SOME

Moving from an outward-looking focus on actions taken by different UN entities to protect the human rights of people based on SOGIESC globally toward a more inward-looking angle reveals that ***LGBTQIA+ employees within the UN system are still not offered the same protection and support as cisgender, heterosexual, gender-conforming employees***

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<sup>32</sup> Guillermo Ricalde, ‘LGBTI RIGHTS: UN SPECIAL PROCEDURES HAVE INCREASED THEIR ENGAGEMENT WITH SOGIESC’, *ILGA World*, 5 April 2022, <https://ilga.org/LGBTI-rights-UN-Special-Procedures-increased-engagement-SOGIESC>.

<sup>33</sup> For instance, ILGA World started a *dedicated programme, the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Programme*, in 2020 to advance the rights of trans\* and intersex people by strengthening work at the global and regional levels (ILGA World, ‘Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Programme’, 2022, <https://ilga.org/gender-identity-gender-expression-sex-characteristics>).

<sup>34</sup> Madrigal-Borloz, ‘Practices of Exclusion - Report of the Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity’.

**are.** To change this, UN-GLOBE, a UN-wide inter-agency group, was started by lesbian and gay UN workers in 1996 to advocate for the equality and non-discrimination of all employees in the UN system and its peacekeeping missions regardless of their SOGIESC. To date, the key achievement of UN-GLOBE's advocacy efforts has been when Ban Ki-moon formally *announced a landmark policy change in 2014*.<sup>35</sup> Since then, employees in legally recognised same-sex unions are eligible for equal partnership benefits. Nevertheless, opposing Member States introduced *a proposal to curtail the equal partnership benefits* which failed by a margin of nearly 2:1 in March 2015.<sup>36</sup> To date, these benefits are only reserved to couples in legally recognised partnerships, and do not extend to equitable parental leave time and equal pension benefits. These remain core advocacy priorities for UN-GLOBE.

## PREVIOUS SUGGESTIONS FOR A TRANS-/GENDER-DIVERSE-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

***Trans and gender non-conforming employees within the UN system are especially disadvantaged***, as highlighted by UN-GLOBE in 2018 in their *50 comprehensive recommendations for an inclusive workplace for trans and gender non-conforming staff members, dependents, and other stakeholders of the UN system*.<sup>37</sup> These recommendations highlighted a range of different aspects trans and gender non-conforming employees and their dependents continue to struggle with, including administrative, protocol-, and human resource-related issues (legal names/official records, dress code, recruitment), safety and security-related challenges (including during mobility), health-related matters (health insurance, medical travel, and transition support), aspects pertaining to discrimination and harassment, and concerns linked to gendered restrooms. The need to *make the UN “a safe and accepting workplace” for LGBTQIA+ people* is also underlined by IPI, with one of the top priorities focusing on inclusivity for trans and gender non-conforming people.<sup>38</sup> Very few UN entities have implemented concrete actions to increase workplace inclusivity based on gender identity and expression (a welcome example is the *OHCHR LGBTI Fellowship* started in 2019 that initially exclusively recruited trans/intersex candidates and has been broadened since<sup>39</sup>), most still lag behind. Currently, there is no UN system-wide training on SOGIESC, and staff still lacks awareness of the lived realities of and harbour resentments towards their LGBTQIA+ colleagues.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> OutRight Action International, 'UN SECRETARY GENERAL ANNOUNCES BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES IN LEGALLY RECOGNIZED SAME-SEX UNIONS', *Press Release*, 7 July 2014, <https://outrightinternational.org/content/un-secretary-general-announces-benefits-employees-legally-recognized-same-sex-unions>.

<sup>36</sup> Mark Leon Goldberg, 'A Victory for LGBT Rights at the UN', *UN Dispatch*, 24 March 2015, <https://www.undispatch.com/victory-lgbt-rights-un/>.

<sup>37</sup> UN-GLOBE, 'Recommendations for an Inclusive Workplace for Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Staff Members, Dependents, and Other Stakeholders of the UN System', *Recommendations* (Geneva, February 2018), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5367af22e4b0915380a1eb0a/t/5a86fcacf9619a7edf05abc5/1518795949343/UN-GLOBE+recommendations+for+inclusive+workplaces+for+trans+and+gender+non-conforming+staff%2C+February+2018.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> Trithart, 'A UN for All?'

<sup>39</sup> UN OHCHR, 'OHCHR LGBTI Fellowship Programme', 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/fellowship-programmes/ohchr-lgbti-fellowship-programme>.

<sup>40</sup> Some UN entities have developed or are currently training courses on different aspects of SOGIESC, but these are not targeting all UN employees in the same way. Trithart, 'A UN for All?', p. 20.

### 3. Obstacles to the full realisation of the rights of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within International Geneva

When talking about factors that hinder the full realisation of the rights of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within International Geneva, most participants of this study emphasised the lack of basic knowledge and awareness among cis, heterosexual colleagues regarding the specific needs of gender-diverse workers as well as on SOGIESC issues more generally, the outdated binary nature of formal administrative processes, and the absence of gender-neutral bathrooms. Additionally, the trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants mentioned a range of other experiences and difficulties such as the fear of harming their career due to their gender identity and expression, the persisting lack of visibility, in particular regarding nonbinary people, and other forms of discrimination that impact their workplace experiences.

#### 3.1. Substantive knowledge gaps regarding gender identity and expression

##### MISSING AWARENESS LEADING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS AND INVISIBILISATION

A crucial aspect highlighted by all participants is the substantial lack of awareness regarding persisting challenges linked to a person's gender identity and expression (and SOGIESC more generally) among cis, heterosexual colleagues. ***The participating trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people working within International Geneva emphasise that their co-workers often lack basic knowledge about gender identities that go beyond the binary.*** As a result, they claim not to understand nonbinary identities or the use of the pronouns “they/them” for one person. This lack of awareness prevents some people from disclosing their nonbinary gender identity. As one nonbinary participant describes, they felt invisible within their organisation for several years. Their tasks include textual work and language services on publications linked to gender mainstreaming. In this capacity, they criticised the continued use of binary language and other outdated terminologies repeatedly but were ignored by their cis colleagues. ***Consequently, they did not feel comfortable to bring up their own gender identity and ask their co-workers to use the correct pronouns and title for them, but instead faced being misgendered regularly.***

Another nonbinary participant also described a few situations in which co-workers demonstrated a lack of awareness that made them uncomfortable and prevents them from coming out not only as trans\*, but also as queer:

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*I think that there are some people who are really well-informed, and other people who really aren't. The majority of people like to think that they are well-informed, but really aren't. One of the more common conversations I have had with overall supportive colleagues is that they find out that I am trans\*, and then we get to talk about it for forty minutes where they have to try to establish that they are cool. I just kind of mentioned it like an off-hand thing, and they are talking about how the other trans person they know transitioned eight years ago, and they keep fucking up their pronouns while they are talking about this person. They are trying to be supportive but clearly aren't as well-informed as they think they are.*

*I sometimes feel really afraid to mention that I am queer, to mention the gender of my partner when I am talking, because that's a whole other can of worms and I wonder that it would just lead to another conversation of 45 minutes where they try to show how supportive they are, and in the process commit a bunch of microaggressions without realising it.*

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***This description illustrates how knowledge gaps and a lack of overall awareness increase the likelihood of committing microaggressions based on SOGIESC towards a person.*** While the colleagues in this example are perceived as “overall supportive”, they still lack the basic understanding of the correct use of pronouns when talking about a trans\* person, including when talking about them pre-transition. As a result, trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people might prefer to avoid such conversations to prevent related microaggressions by “well-meaning” colleagues. Furthermore, as a participant stressed, co-workers sometimes ask very intimate questions to find out details about their transition. While some cis employees might not see the harm in such intrusive questions, they can be harmful and traumatising, and are another reason why some trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people might prefer not to disclose or discuss their gender identity when engaging with colleagues. Additionally, as another participant highlighted, the missing knowledge and awareness of their colleagues made them lose respect in them which made collaboration and teamwork difficult. ***Increasing basic knowledge of pronouns, technical terminologies as well as of the lived realities of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people and raising awareness of what constitutes a microaggression is essential to improve the employment situation of gender-diverse people.***

## **MISSING KNOWLEDGE AND ITS LINKS TO NON-ACCEPTANCE**

Several respondents mentioned that, while they might not experience overt harassment, discrimination, and violence at the workplace, their co-workers also do not accept them or try to understand their gender identity and expression:

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*One of the main problems that I've had personally is that people don't understand pronouns which to me is unacceptable because they understand [complex technical issues], but they can't understand pronouns. I think it just comes down to a willingness to try, but there's no willingness to try.*

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One participant described that while she did not encounter any administrative issues or any discrimination during the recruitment process because her official documents had already been updated prior to her arrival, the same could not be said about her experience of engaging with her co-workers: *“From my perspective, coming from the UK to live and work in this local francophone region, it was like stepping back in time 20 years compared to what the situation was like in the UK.”* A participant from the US highlighted that they came to Geneva with the knowledge that it was much less progressive and accepting of gender-diverse places than specific places in the US would have been. However, they prioritized their career over their own comfort – a choice that should not be necessary, but one that they were used to. Another participant explained that their colleagues' behaviour improved over time when other trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming joined the same workplace: *“as soon as there is more than one trans person, they [the cis colleagues] become more accepting”*. Increasing knowledge and awareness among cis, heterosexual co-workers is crucial to improve the workplace situation for queer people. Additionally, hiring more trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people will also improve their experiences and make them feel less out of place.

## 3.2. Outdated Forms, Badges, and Titles

### **BINARY FORMS AND “PROVING” GENDER/NAME THROUGH PASSPORTS**

*Issues that disproportionately affect trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people working at the UN or other international organisations in Geneva often start with administrative rules and regulations.* Most organisations only list two binary options for gender (some still label it “sex”) without recognising diverse genders. They ask their employees to provide an official ID document that includes their name and

gendermarker.<sup>41,42</sup> Although several countries have now included third gender options,<sup>43</sup> this is not yet an option within most international organisations. This forces nonbinary and gender non-conforming to use the binary gender they were assigned at birth. Cis people might not fully grasp the emotional pain this can cause nonbinary and gender non-conforming workers, but the following quote by one nonbinary participant illustrates this well. When asked whether there were gender marker options beyond the binary in the employment forms, they said: **“Absolutely not. Everything is Madame or Monsieur. And you know, I just use whatever is I my legal things, which sucks. You know, it’s really unfortunate. It hurts every time I do it.”**

**Additionally, trans\* workers who have not yet aligned their official documents with their name and gender or whose country does not allow for this are also forced to fill in intake and other official forms using their deadname and the gender they were assigned at birth.** This can also be painful and traumatic. Moreover, this also has practical consequences, as the name used in official forms is largely also the name printed on the badge that workers need to enter their workplace and for official events. One trans\* woman who transitioned while already working for different UN bodies talked about her experiences with official forms and badges throughout the transition process:

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**Well, before transition, I obviously had a male ID and no problem there. Then when I started to transition, there was a period of time when I had a male ID and was obviously identifying and presenting as female. And this is actually my first let down with the UN: they did not accept any female ID or pass or anything without an official passport. So even though I was presenting and doing projects as [female name], the UN wouldn’t give me a contract or badge with that name, you know, without an official ID, which you know to me was very unfair. Personally, I felt like this because they talk about equality and transgender and LGBT safety in Geneva, Switzerland. [...] So, I think that was very unfortunate, also because when I did get my legal papers, my passport in my gender, then that was no problem, including contracts also. They just wouldn’t sign a contract in my female name without the right passport.**

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<sup>41</sup> ILGA represents a noteworthy exception here and on some of the following challenges and obstacles. According to several respondents, they ask their employees to self-identify – additionally, if they provide gender marker options to choose from, they typically provide a multitude, including not only nonbinary and gender non-conforming Western labels, but also indigenous options and others that are predominantly used in countries in the Global South.

<sup>42</sup> Additionally, UNAIDS also recently updated their internal forms which now also ask for the person’s preferred name, their pronouns, and their self-declared gender identity. This is not yet implemented for external candidates. As UNAIDS is currently undergoing a downsizing process, they do not advertise many positions this year. According to a participant, updated external forms will be available in 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Fung, ‘Which Countries Recognize Third Gender Option on Passports?’

## SWEET SECURITY PERSONNEL, DISCRIMINATORY BUREAUCRACY

As the participant above pointed out, she did not receive a contract or a badge with her correct name and title before those were also updated in her passport, although she already presented female. Consequently, she was forced to use a badge that displayed her deadname to enter her place of work. The participant specifically highlighted her disappointment when she noticed the contradiction between the UN which, as an organisation, talks about equality and safety for trans people, but, in their role as employer, does not ensure that trans\* people receive documents and badges with their correct name on it. Importantly, the participant underscored that she never felt in danger in Geneva – in fact, she highlighted that the security personnel at the UN has always been “very sweet”. Moreover, as she also underlined, ***“most people I encounter in the UN system are not necessarily transphobic, not necessarily discriminatory. It's the system that is discriminatory”***. This perception of the system – the bureaucracy – of international organisations within Geneva being the real challenge is a shared understanding among several participants. Another person described the bureaucracy as the “bottleneck” that stops progress and prevents trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people from being able to change their name and gender marker within the system. While UN agencies at least allow their workers to update the photo used for the badge, the same is not the case at CERN. According to some participants, their badge not only displays their deadname, but also an outdated photo that does not correspond to their current gender expression.

## POTENTIAL RISKS LINKED TO ADMINISTRATIVE HURDLES

A trans\* participant highlighted the potential risks and increased danger she could have faced in other locations with a badge and other official documents that include her deadname and the gender she was assigned at birth:

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***I've never felt threatened or, you know, I've never had any problems during transition. But I think Switzerland is a particularly safe place and the UN in Geneva, you know it's, ... it's very enlightened. So, I don't think that's a problem. But you know I think if I was transitioning in other countries which are possibly less safe. Due to this, I would be at risk because I was having to go into the office with the male ID and a male badge. You know, a physical pass which had my male name.***

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This description is in line with the concerns uttered by several LGBT focal points and UN-GLOBE agency coordinators. Accordingly, trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees whose ID documents do not align with their name and gender expression face substantial risks and challenges in several other locations. Moreover, some trans\* employees who were going *stealth* have previously been outed by other colleagues who had access to their official information. This report focuses on the situation in Switzerland; however, it would



be crucial to gain a better insight into the obstacles faced by trans\* employees across the UN system worldwide.

## INCREASED MISGENDERING AND DEADNAMING DUE TO BINARY IT ENTRIES

***Another effect of the archaic insistence of only recognising the name and gender marker included in a person's official documents to establish contracts and print badges is that this outdated information will likely also affect which pronouns and titles are included in their automatically generated email signature and in the organisation's virtual "phonebook".*** Changing these automatically generated titles and pronouns has proven difficult for several participants – additionally, as highlighted above, nonbinary and gender non-conforming workers generally do not have an option to choose from outside of the gender binary. Some organisations have started giving additional options for the email signature and for the phonebook, while others still lag behind. This administrative hurdle influences which pronouns co-workers use to talk to or about trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people. Cis colleagues might use the correct pronouns once they have been made aware of the disconnect between the person's actual name and gender and their entry in the phonebook or their email signature. Nevertheless, as highlighted above, they often lack awareness and knowledge of diverse genders and pronouns and will struggle to address the person in the correct way. Additionally, they might be trans-/nonbinary-phobic and refuse to use the correct name, title, and pronouns. ***This places the burden on trans\*, nonbinary and gender non-conforming workers to either come out every time they professionally engage with new people or to accept being misgendered and addressed by their deadname. This cannot be the norm in a professional environment where people should be able to focus on their work.***

The absence of nonbinary gender markers in official forms and the insistence on only recognising names and gender markers included in workers' passports might seem like relatively trivial issues for many of those predominantly cis, heterosexual employees responsible for these administrative issues. However, as highlighted above, ***these shortcomings hurt trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people and underline the disconnect and inherent contradiction between the presentation of organisations such as the UN as an institution advocating for SOGIESC rights while not providing the same rights for their own employees.*** Additionally, the insistence on only using the name/gender marker included in the passport on badges, in the organisation's phonebook and in the email address/signature has tangible consequences for the workplace safety of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people who have not yet or are unable to change the name and gender marker indicated in their passport because these processes do not exist in their home country. The latter are at a particular disadvantage – not only is their gender identity and expression not recognised and potentially marginalised, stigmatised, or even criminalised in their home country, but they also continue to be addressed by their deadname and with the wrong title and pronouns while working in Geneva. While these are arguably the most vulnerable trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-

conforming people within organisations in International Gender, they are least supported and protected by these institutions.

## DATA SECURITY: PROTECTION OR A PATERNALIST, PATRONISING RELICT?

Several of the LGBT focal points and UN-GLOBE agency coordinators as well as HR representatives are aware of the administrative issues linked to contracts, badges, and phonebook entries, and try to look for a way to change this. However, they emphasise the need to develop a system that better protects the data of people working at the UN and other international organisations, especially if they might face prosecution based on their SOGIESC in their home countries. Allegedly, the data systems at the UN and at CERN are not set up to do this. It is important to note that none of the trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants voiced those security concerns, and they also have not been mentioned by representatives of agencies and organisations that already allow their employees to indicate their *preferred* name and *self-identified* gender. Several participants had already undergone the official process in their home country to align their documents with their updated name and gender marker. As they predominantly come from regions in the Global North, they are likely less concerned about their home countries finding out about their gender identity and expression. Trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people from countries that do not recognise or criminalise diverse genders might be more concerned about these issues. However, as a whole, this aspect uncovers a distinct mismatch between the everyday struggles and concerns of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees and the concerns uttered by cis LGBT focal points, UN-GLOBE agency coordinators, and HR personnel. ***Data protection should be a top priority and ensure that trans\* workers are not outed to or by their colleagues, but guaranteeing that their badge, email address, and entry in the organisation's phonebook aligns with their name and gender expression is equally important and represents a protective measure rather than endangering them.*** Additionally, denying trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people the choice to select gender markers, titles, and pronouns that align with their own identity under the guise of data security is a paternalist and patronising measure. People should be free to choose those that they feel most comfortable with, as they are likely aware of the risks this choice might entail in their home country.

## 3.3. The lack of gender-neutral bathrooms

### INCREASED DISCOMFORT AND HARASSMENT DUE TO THE ABSENCE OF ALL-GENDER TOILETS

***A third important issue affecting the quality of life at work that trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants emphasise is the absence of gender-neutral bathrooms at the UN and at other international organisations such as CERN and at research centres.*** According to a nonbinary participant who regularly works for a number of

different UN agencies, UNAIDS is one of the only agencies they know of that has gender-neutral bathrooms. Additionally, the ILO has all-gender single-occupancy facilities in the new building and ILGA World also offers these.

As another nonbinary participant underlined, the absence of gender-neutral bathrooms is “a huge problem” and makes them feel like “not being in the right place” on a daily basis. As they put it: **“It would be great to have my own space, at least a toilet, but there’s no place for us.”** Several trans\* women emphasized that all-gender bathrooms would have been very useful when they started their transition, as they had to choose between being at risk when entering the men’s bathroom while being dressed in feminine clothing or receiving weird and potentially hostile looks and comments from cis women in the women’s bathroom because they were not yet *passing*. The majority of the trans\* women now feel comfortable using the women’s bathroom, but they also acknowledge that this might differ depending on someone’s gender expression and their *passing privilege*. The discomfort that can come when regularly facing verbal and non-verbal harassment and discrimination by cis women in the women’s bathroom was illustrated well by a nonbinary trans\* woman who responded to my question whether gender-neutral bathrooms are important for them:

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***Absolutely. That way, if I was worried about one of my co-workers being weird when I was using the bathroom, either for misogynistic reasons or for transphobic reasons, well transmisogynistic reasons, if I was worried about someone being weird to me in the bathroom, it would be nice to know that I have a place that I can go where I have to worry about that less. I think it’s also a little silly because most of the bathrooms at [...] are stalled, there are stall doors that go from floor to ceiling and are completely locked anyways. So, I think that it wouldn’t be too difficult to convert a lot of them to just gender-neutral bathrooms. Having a place that I can go without having to worry about people looking at me weirdly - that would be really good.***

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The statements by the two participants illustrate the feeling of being out of place, invisible, and ignored, or discriminated against that were uttered by several nonbinary respondents in the interviews. For some participants, not having access to a gender-neutral toilet has led to traumatic experiences in the past – a nonbinary participant who was assigned female at birth but does not conform to feminine stereotypical clothing and hairstyles describes having been thrown out of a women’s bathroom at an airport before, an event that left a mark and makes them feel uncomfortable when using the women’s bathroom. A trans\* participant was repeatedly subjected to hostile looks by her supervisor when she encountered her in the bathroom and subsequently changed the project she worked on to avoid having to interact with her regularly. This should not be a common experience for trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people working within international organisations in Geneva. As highlighted by several trade union organisations, employers need to “ensure that workers are granted

toilet dignity in the workplace”.<sup>44</sup> Not feeling safe or able to use the restroom when needed can have detrimental effects on the health and well-being of employers.<sup>45</sup> Every worker within *International Geneva* should be able to feel safe to use the restroom without fear of harassment or discrimination, regardless of their gender identity and expression – the organisations need to implement this basic employment right.

## OPPOSITION TO ALL-GENDER TOILETS: COSTS AND COMPETING DEMANDS

**Several participants highlight that their organisations might excuse the lack of all-gender bathrooms with additional costs this might entail.** However, as the previous quote illustrated, often, all it would take in order to transform a women’s toilet into a gender-neutral bathroom is a change in signage which comes at a neglectable cost for large organisations such as the UN, CERN, and other international organisations in Geneva. Unfortunately, in addition to facing resistance from administration and leadership, trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people who advocate for all-gender bathrooms while working at organisations that have an employees’ demographic consisting of up to 80% cis men – such as CERN – also encounter considerable opposition from colleagues who are cis women. These co-workers often feel similarly disadvantaged and marginalised and dismiss the demands of their gender-diverse colleagues by insisting that the ongoing underrepresentation of cis women in their field must end first before the needs of other marginalised groups can be considered. This creates a false dichotomy between sexism and misogyny experienced by *women* and the discrimination and harassment that trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees face. As one trans\* woman put it: **“It is frustrating to feel like I have to put my transness aside to fight against misogyny.”** Cis women fighting for equality and inclusion should not demand that trans\* women disregard one part of their identity to be able to join their fight. **Instead of creating and engaging in conflicts between cis women and trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people – two underrepresented and marginalised groups within (cis) male-dominated organisations – it would be more beneficial to join forces and demand rapid change towards the real inclusion for all.** This would also involve increased representation of people in leading or mid-level positions from the Global South and with disability, for instance.

## GENDER-NEUTRAL BATHROOMS AS A SAFE SPACE

**Oftentimes, cis people do not realise that gender-neutral bathrooms have the potential of constituting a safe space free for trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees who already feel out of place at work because of their gender expression.** Having access to a safe space free from trans-/nonbinary-phobic looks and comments at organisations that all too often ignore their existence and do not protect some of their basic employment rights is essential for the creation of a secure and comfortable work

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<sup>44</sup> Unite the Union, ‘Thousands of Workers Are Being Denied Toilet Dignity in the Workplace’, *Unite the Union*, 19 November 2018, <https://www.unitetheunion.org/news-events/news/2018/november/thousands-of-workers-are-being-denied-toilet-dignity-in-the-workplace/>.

<sup>45</sup> ETUC, ‘Time for a Break’, *European Trade Union Confederation*, 2022, <https://www.etuc.org/en/time-break>.

environment. Improving their situation even slightly by providing adequate toilets would be a great step into the right direction. To date, the only all-gender bathrooms that exist in most public buildings in Geneva (including at the UN and in other international organisations) are accessible toilets designed for people with reduced mobility. While these are frequented by nonbinary and gender non-conforming participants, they would prefer another solution that does not lump together people with disability and those with diverse gender identities. ***Responding to the need for gender-neutral bathrooms is an opportunity to recognise and embrace greater diversity by making more people feel accepted and included at work – a goal which the UN and other international organisations nominally subscribe to. It is time to put these words into actions.***

## 3.4. Additional obstacles

### THE FEAR OF HARMING ONE'S CAREER

***Several trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants underlined that they were afraid of harming their career due to their gender identity and expression, or by being too vocal and “too demanding” at the workplace.*** A nonbinary participant stressed that they are not courageous enough to be more visible than they are due to their gender expression which does not conform to the gender they were assigned at birth. They had negative experiences in the past with previous employers in private companies who eventually prevented them from engaging with clients, as these allegedly were “uncomfortable” with the participant’s gender expression. They further elaborate that they have not been offered the same career opportunities due to their gender expression. Another nonbinary, gender non-conforming participant dressed more masculine than they generally would when starting their position, as they did not want to harm their career by sticking out too much. Eventually, they began dressing more feminine every now and then, and their co-workers reacted in unwelcome ways:

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***I didn't want to alienate myself so that someone doesn't want to work with me. So, what I did is I just do what I thought is what they wanted to see, which is a male presenting person. I justified that to myself by saying, 'well, I have to get dirty anyway and get on the floor and do all sorts of things and it's better just to have, you know, bad clothing that are pants and shirts and that's it.' But little by little, whenever I know that I'm not gonna get dirty, I wear nicer things and my nicer things tend to be more female presenting. Surprisingly, people don't say very much, but there's a lot of glances, a lot of like nonverbal cues that tell me that, uh, something weird here. So sometimes I just don't want to deal with that, especially if I need to work with someone. Sometimes I do work by myself and no one else can tell me what to do. But sometimes I need to work***

*with people and when I do that, I decide what kind of presentation I want to bring.*

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These two examples show that trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within International Geneva (and beyond) are hesitant to present their gender expression as desired while at work as this might *alienate* their cis co-workers. As evidenced in the examples, presenting as a gender non-conforming person might prevent one's career progression because cis colleagues or clients feel uncomfortable, or it might lead to undesirable reactions that hurt the gender non-conforming worker. ***Therefore, nonbinary, gender non-conforming people might prefer to dress according to binary societal gender stereotypes or choose to not be vocal about their gender identity to avoid discrimination, harassment, and negative consequences for their career. As long as organisational dress codes are respected, institutions within International Geneva should ensure each worker's right to dress according to their gender identity and expression free from fear of harassment or microaggressions.***

Trans\* participants describe different fears and challenges linked to their gender identity: One trans\* woman explained how she and other trans\* women she knew were hesitant to come out and transition while working for a company or institution rather than being an independent worker, as they could not be sure that this would not have detrimental effects on their career overall, and more specifically on their job security. She only started her transition process after she started her own company. Luckily, she did not lose any contracts after transitioning: ***"I don't feel like I've had any discrimination against me in terms of employment or losing contracts. Since I was very open since [year of transition], I haven't felt like I have less contracts now."***

Another participant, a researcher in the process of transitioning, was concerned that people might not recognize her in the future when the name and gender expression she will use professionally will be female, so she is putting pressure on herself to come out to people she engages with at work:

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***This is lighting a fire under me to come out before I leave, so that I can say: 'Hey, you know who I am, this is me, this is my face. So that you know what kind of work I do if you ever see me in the future.' You never know what people will say or do though – you know, some people could be really nice to you, but then they don't bring up that job opportunity that you prepared for that they were gonna tell you about or something like that. I have a lot of anxiety about how much of the work I am doing right now is going to be wasted because it's not going to be transferrable.***

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***The fear of losing contracts or other work opportunities when professional contacts find out about their gender identity directly impacts trans\* workers. They might wait with their transition or with disclosing their gender identity before certain career milestones such as a degree of job security are reached.*** This can have harmful effects

on their mental health, as they are forced to present as the gender they were assigned at birth and use their deadname while at work until they feel comfortable to come out. Several participants described suffering from mental health issues such as depression and anxiety before their transition and/or coming out. Being able to present as their gender and use their name at work is crucial for their well-being. As a trans\* woman stresses, it would be detrimental if she was forced to hide her gender identity: ***“Although I think now, if I apply for jobs, I just wouldn't hide it [gender identity]. I just couldn't. You know, it's too much of a step for me to do that so.”*** No trans\*, nonbinary, or gender-nonconforming worker within *International Geneva* should be forced to go back into the closet or to hide their diverse gender identity. As another participant highlighted, ***“For those who have undergone transition and can go stealth, there is a lot of unseen pressure to go stealth.”*** Trans\* people should not feel like they need to hide who they are but be able to express their gender freely. The organisations within *International Geneva* should ensure that trans\* people can transition while working there, support them in this process, and embrace the existence of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender-diverse employees. Unfortunately, this is not the case yet.

## **THE LACK OF VISIBILITY OF NONBINARY PEOPLE**

Several nonbinary participants highlight the lack of visibility they experience daily within their organisations which lead to being misgendered. These microaggressions are typically hard to document or report:

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***There are issues of discrimination here and there. But to be honest, as it's microaggressions, it is hard to document. It's hard to bring up and be like, 'Oh yeah, this is the thing that happened to me.' Macro aggressions are quite rare. I think that for LGBTQ people, gender non-conforming people, the microaggressions come in the sense of just not recognizing who you are, and just calling you a man or a woman, depending on what it is that they see you as. I guess it all falls under 'undervisibility'.***

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The inability to report microaggressions as instances of discrimination and harassment was a sentiment shared by several respondents. Aforementioned lack of knowledge and awareness among other people working in their organisation, including in HR, further reduced the likelihood of their complaint being taken seriously. ***Increasing the visibility of nonbinary people and reducing their experience of microaggressions due to invisibilisation is intrinsically linked to raising awareness and improving the knowledge around SOGIESC issues within the organisations.***

### **Nonbinary (non-)representation in workplace satisfaction surveys**

***Further linked to the invisibilisation and non-representation of nonbinary employees, several participants highlight that official workplace satisfaction surveys do not or only very recently include gender marker options outside of the binary.*** According to a DEI specialist, including a third option has been difficult as they are concerned that cis people might cross this option “to make a point” which would skew the results. In a different

organisation, a third, nonbinary option was initially included in the survey, but later ignored during the presentation of the results due to the low number of responses. The data specialist stated that the third option had been “a problem” and suggested to alter the categories to “male” and “non-male” for the next survey. According to the participant, this experience was particularly violent, as their responses – and their identity – were erased retroactively after having been included first. Additionally, the suggested re-categorisation of women and diverse genders as “non-male” not only invisibilised nonbinary gender identities, but also meant that women would no longer be counted separately. While this example likely is likely an extreme exception, it illustrates not only the lack of visibility of nonbinary people well, but also their active invisibilisation through organisational processes such as incomplete data collection mechanisms. Another DEI specialist from a third organisation shared some of the results of the most recent surveys which allowed trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees to indicate their gender identity. Only a small fraction of responses used this option (around 0.3 %), so the results are difficult to compare with the rest. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that their level of satisfaction, particularly linked to job satisfaction, and of psychological safety and trust were significantly lower than those of their cis colleagues. This was also reported by another DEI specialist working elsewhere. These results also align with the qualitative findings from the interviews.

## HEALTH CARE ACCESS GAPS AND OTHER SYSTEMIC INEQUALITIES

***Interestingly, while UN-GLOBE included the need to ensure health care access for trans\* and gender non-conforming employees into their list of recommendations and ILGA World also stressed this aspect, only one of the trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants currently struggled with accessing trans\*-specific health care services such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT).*** The rest of the participants were either not interested in HRT or had access to it through their respective individual health insurance. It is important to note that only two participants within the second round of interviews were staff members, the rest was hired as independents with their own company or as consultants (often formally labelled “independent contractors”). As such, they do not have access to the same organisational health care services and support that staff members can access and have a lot less job security. One participant described this as “being in limbo”, as they are given one short-term contract after the other.

This highlights an aspect that affects employees at the UN and other international organisations in *International Geneva* more broadly: there is a strong divide between the services and the support enjoyed by staff members on the one hand, and by other employees hired as consultants on the other hand. While the first are eligible for the institutional health insurance and social services (pension etc.), pay no social contribution or tax to the state of Geneva, and generally have longer-term contracts, the latter must pay their own health insurance, social security contributions and taxes, and might have contracts for durations ranging from a week to several months. This status difference also affects the services and support available for their dependents. To date, minoritised groups are disproportionately represented in the latter category, including trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers, as indicated by this study. Moreover, depending on the status of the organisation,



third-country nationals (non-EU/EFTA)<sup>46</sup> are disadvantaged and much less likely of being hired. At CERN, a similar divide exists between staff members and so-called *users*. The latter are sent to CERN by universities and other research institutions and often employed by those organisations while also holding a work-contract with CERN for a certain percentage of employment. According to several participants, staff positions are almost exclusively reserved for EU nationals (nationals of CERN member states), but *users* are much more international. Due to their particular employment status, they often have not one structure that is administratively responsible for them, which makes filing complaints or accessing services more difficult. ***Transforming the structures that enable this system would be important, but the decision-making power lays with the privileged staff members which makes such internal reform more difficult.***

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<sup>46</sup> State Secretariat for Migration, 'Third-Country Nationals', *Confédération Suisse*, 14 September 2021, <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/kurzfristig/drittstaaten.html>.

## 4. Strategies to raise awareness on SOGIESC

Participants highlighted two main strategies to raise awareness on the everyday challenges experienced by trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers: The first tasks supportive leadership with enforcing principles of non-discrimination through leading by example, top-down orders, or the implementation of a new UN-wide internal and external LGBTQI+ strategy. Additionally, progressive Member States could put pressure on the system. Secondly, most participants suggested that specialised trainings on SOGIESC issues should be developed. Important challenges remain, as specialists with in-depth knowledge of terminologies used and of the rights and lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ people are lacking, and because SOGIESC issues remain one of many challenges that HR and DEI personnel try to address.

### 4.1. Enforcing non-discrimination through supportive leadership?

#### INCREASED AWARENESS THROUGH LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Vocal support of SOGIESC issues by institutional leadership was one strategy proposed by several participants to raise awareness on SOGIESC issues and to improve the situation of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees at international organisations. LGBT focal points, UN-GLOBE agency coordinators, and DEI specialists highlighted that the leadership of their respective entity has been openly supportive of SOGIESC rights. Accordingly, their Executive Director (ED) regularly speak at the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) and condemn such forms of discrimination on other occasions. One participant with years of experience in their organisation emphasises:

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***[Having supportive leadership that is vocal on SOGIESC rights] does impact the internal culture and prioritization of these issues and the ability and the desire of colleagues. The people think about it, and they integrate it into their work, even if they don't necessarily know always how it went. But they can reach out to us and we work with them to do that. So, I think, in a decade, it's definitely been on an upward trajectory. But I think that does come from the leadership and the voice at the top.***

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While some UN agencies have shown similar progress towards the realisation of SOGIESC rights to the one emphasised in the statement, this is not yet the norm across all UN bodies and agencies, let alone across all international organisations in *International Geneva*. Often,

these public forms of support do not translate into the implementation of internal policies and trainings that ensure the full realisation of SOGIESC rights. Moreover, as another participant highlighted, well-meaning leadership might make it better for individuals, but they cannot change the rules: ***“They can't get me a visa. They can't. They can't come and give me some money for IVF treatment. They can't change the rules around gender identity or bathrooms and reasonable accommodation.”*** This statement underscores the disconnect between the support that some EDs have voiced for SOGIESC rights over the last decade, and the lack of internal progress regarding administrative processes and the equal treatment of LGBTQIA+ workers. While publications by UN agencies explicitly stress the need to ensure the full realisation of the employment rights of all people regardless of their gender identity and expression,<sup>47</sup> trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees within *International Geneva* still face severe obstacles and discrimination.

## **PLACING THE EDUCATIONAL BURDEN ON THE LEADERSHIP**

Nevertheless, some trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants also emphasise that vocal support from the leadership of their organisation would be crucial. A trans\* participant highlighted that this kind of backing would make them feel more secure and less worried about workplace harassment. A non-binary participant also raised another point: accordingly, instead of placing the burden on trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers themselves to educate their co-workers concerning the correct use of pronouns, the organisational leadership could also institute policies that enforce their use across the institution:

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***The question is whether you're going to put that burden on people like me to fix the organisation as a whole, or whether this should be something that's passed from the top-down, like the Director General says, “everyone needs to use the right pronouns, or else you get suspended”. If you do something like that, I think people would follow. But you know there's no attempt from the administration to do something like that.***

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Although potentially effective, when considering aforementioned widespread lack of knowledge and awareness on SOGIESC issues among the workforce as well as other factors such as political opposition from several homo- and transphobic Member States, it seems unlikely that the UN or other international organisations in Geneva would be in the position to impose a similar directive.

## **DEVELOPING A UN-WIDE LGBTQIA+ STRATEGY**

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<sup>47</sup> UN OHCHR, 'Born Free and Equal - Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Sex Characteristics in International Human Rights Law' (New York and Geneva: UN OHCHR, 2019), [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Born\\_Free\\_and\\_Equal\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Born_Free_and_Equal_WEB.pdf).

A third aspect linked to leadership support worth mentioning here is the new UN-wide internal and external LGBTQI+ strategy that is being developed by a task team, consisting of a range of different UN agencies and departments. Regarding the inclusion of different agencies, it has been described in an interview as exhibiting *“a good participation rate”*. While several participants of the first round of interviews were either directly involved in the development of this strategy or had some information about the process, the contents of the strategy have not yet been disclosed. According to some participants, it is *“a mixture of both internal processes and a strengthening of our programming”*, presented as *“a really positive step”*. Several LGBT focal points seemed excited about the strategy and its future influence on UN programming, strategies, and internal policies linked to SOGIESC issues. It will be interesting to learn more about this strategy which will likely be released towards the end of 2022.

## POTENTIAL PRESSURE FROM PROGRESSIVE MEMBER STATES

Another potentially beneficial strategy that was mentioned by some participants working within DEI was increased collaboration with progressive Member States. Those could potentially push for progress within the UN through leading by example. For instance, countries such as Argentina which recently included a third gender category in official documents, the “X” designated recognise nonbinary identities,<sup>48</sup> might be able put pressure on the UN system to include a third gender option in their official forms. According to a participant, some UN agencies already work with more progressive Member States, including the UN LGBTI Core Group at UN Headquarters, but others could also benefit from such engagement. Another DEI specialist highlighted that she used the existence of third gender options in certain countries to argue that the current system *“actively discriminates against Member States, or nationals by Member States, by not allowing a third option”* and argue for a change of the forms.

## 4.2. Increasing knowledge and awareness through specialised trainings

### BASIC KNOWLEDGE IS NEEDED

Relying on leadership support to enforce the correct use of pronouns or to ensure basic rights is not a sustainable solution; instead, structural change is essential. This includes adequate trainings on SOGIESC issues and rights to guarantee that all employees of international organisations in Geneva have the same baseline understanding. ***The participants of both rounds of interviews underlined the need for adequate internal trainings to improve the awareness and knowledge of their co-workers on issues linked to SOGIESC.*** A DEI specialist working at a UN agency stressed that the trainings need to start at a very basic level. They were aware that several employees were not sure what the initialisms LGBTQIA+

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<sup>48</sup> Cristian González Cabrera, ‘Argentina Recognizes Non-Binary Identities - Decree Allows for Third Gender Option in Identification Documents’, *Human Rights Watch*, 22 July 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/22/argentina-recognizes-non-binary-identities>; Blinken, ‘X Gender Marker Available on U.S. Passports Starting April 11’.

or SOGIESC meant, let alone which obstacles their queer co-workers encounter daily. Accordingly, basic heteronormative assumptions need to be challenged to ensure that cis, heterosexual employees realise that it is not “normal” for their LGBTQIA+ colleagues to face increased hurdles regarding documents, health care access, family planning, and other basic rights. This observation is in line with the demands of the trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming participants and supported by the insights of the LGBT focal points and UN-GLOBE agency coordinators. According to one respondent, ensuring that all co-workers have the same baseline understanding on SOGIESC issues would substantially improve their quality of life and be very helpful when engaging with cis, heterosexual people at work:

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*I would love to not have to explain what being transgender is, what being gay is, and how it works to everyone. This would make it so much easier for me to be out. So far, you have to come out to every single person that you meet, and I sometimes don't even bother because I don't want to and don't have the time to explain all this shit to them. If I could know, if I could assume a base level knowledge that people have, that would make it so helpful.*

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## DESIGNING UN TRAININGS: A LACK OF SOGIESC EXPERTISE

**LGBT focal points and UN-GLOBE agency coordinators in particular expressed their dissatisfaction with the discontinuation of UN for All in 2020, the only UN-wide training that provided some basic knowledge of SOGIESC terms and issues.** Some UN entities such as IOM, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNCHR, UN Women, and the World Bank have developed internal trainings that touch upon similar aspects,<sup>49</sup> but these are not harmonised between different agencies and entities. The development of similar, but slightly different trainings by different agencies increases costs significantly. As highlighted by a representative of UN-GLOBE, it would be much more efficient both money- and timewise to task UN-GLOBE with the development of a new series of UN-wide SOGIESC trainings. Moreover, tasking UN-GLOBE might also be preferable for a third reason – **there are very few specialists familiar with SOGIESC issues within the different UN agencies that have the theoretical, empirical, and practical knowledge required to develop trainings that do not further perpetuate stereotypes or the use of outdated terminologies linked to SOGIESC.** Additionally, the participants working within DEI have largely not been formally trained on SOGIESC issues. While all of them identified as queer and had lived experience, they had received no standardised training. Consequently, this makes harmonising their practices across different agencies and organisations very difficult, as they are mostly “learning by doing”.

Unfortunately, as reported by one participant, other UN-wide trainings such as the mandatory training on the “Prevention of Workplace Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and the Abuse of Authority in the Workplace” to date do not include references to gender identity and

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<sup>49</sup> Trithart, ‘A UN for All?’, 20.

expression or sex characteristics. While sexual orientation is mentioned, sex and gender were conflated and used interchangeably within the same training, an indication that much work is needed to increase awareness and knowledge about diverse gender identities among UN workers, including those tasked with the development of such trainings. This is further supported by a participant who talked about mainstreaming LGBT into UN programming and strategy:

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***Mainstreaming can't be done in language only; it has to be done in implementation as well. The way that they mainstream is, well, currently you'll often see language around 'men, women, and LGBT'. It's like, 'hang on, men and women ARE LGBTI'. What you mean is 'men, women, and people of diverse gender identities'. So, it's all conflated. When they do do mainstreaming, they get it wrong.***

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This statement is a good example of the disconnect between intent and implementation regarding current attempts towards the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ issues into UN programming and trainings. The persistent lack of knowledge and expertise negatively affects existing mainstreaming initiatives and reveals them for what they are – largely cosmetic rather than structural changes.

## **THE LACK OF A PRIORITISATION OF SOGIESC ISSUES**

The situation at other international organisations such as CERN is not very different. The DEI and HR staff from different UN agencies and CERN who were willing to talk to me were aware of the knowledge gaps and lack of awareness on SOGIESC issues among the employees in their institutions. However, as they are not hired with the sole purpose of increasing such knowledge and awareness, it is one of many issues they are working on, and thus ***“a matter of prioritisation”***. Although they agreed that targeted trainings were needed, some questioned whether making these mandatory would have the desired result. According to a DEI specialist, mandatory trainings on SOGIESC aspects, including on the use of pronouns, could also have the reverse effect and lead to increased resistance:

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***“Particularly at an institution with excellence as the underlying concept in all that we do, people think that also reflects in behaviour, even if we know that there are many sub-excellent behaviours observed, but there is a high discomfort around being correct or being suggested that there is someone at less than an excellent manner.”***

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This statement highlights two interlinked problems that hinder trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees within International Geneva from being able to work free of fear of harassment, discrimination, and violence. First, as highlighted earlier, cis, heterosexual co-workers often think that their knowledge on SOGIESC issues is better than it is in reality.

As a result, they might not be aware of the hurtful effects of their statements which might be intended as neutral or even supportive but are experienced as microaggressions by their queer colleagues. Much like racism, sexism, and classism, homo-, trans-, and nonbinary-phobias are not necessarily expressed overtly, but through implicit biases. Just as white, well-educated men from the Global North are often unaware of their privileges in terms of race, class, and gender, at least as long as they lack repeated interactions with people of different backgrounds without those privileges, the same is the case for cis, heterosexual people who are not used to engaging with queer people. As stressed by another participant:

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*I think for me, what was mind-blowing were the conversations around unconscious bias, and how limited reflections people have about unconscious bias. Most people say: 'Oh no, I'm not racist. No, I I don't discriminate trans people.' But then, when you actually start unpacking 'What does that mean?', then a lot of ugly things come out. People don't realize how much stuff they have learned that is wrong. I think a lot of like a lot of training is necessary, especially on diversity and racism.*

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Being corrected and made aware of one's unconscious biases, stereotypes, and prejudices can be uncomfortable, perhaps particularly for people who consider themselves more educated, knowledgeable, and intelligent than the rest of the population. Unfortunately, the DEI specialist above attempts to avoid such discomfort – allegedly, to avoid backlash – over ensuring the increase of knowledge and awareness on SOGIESC issues. This reveals the second problem at play: Several of the participants were very engaged and tried what they could to improve the situation for their gender-diverse colleagues. However, as they also tried to combat racism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination in their organisation, this was one of many tasks. ***While DEI specialists and HR personnel are aware of the knowledge gaps regarding SOGIESC issues, the full realisation of the employment rights of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people to a safe workplace free of harassment, discrimination, and violence is not their only priority. Increased resources are needed.***

## 5. Explaining the slow progress on the rights of SOGIESC workers

The following findings largely focus on the UN but are also in part supported by statements made by participants working at CERN or at other international organisations. The participants of the first round of interviews emphasised several reasons for the lack of internal progress on the rights of SOGIESC workers. These are interlinked and include HR- and bureaucracy-related unwillingness, funding gaps for internal policy change and the development of adequate trainings, and political opposition from within the organisation as well as from the outside.

### ‘HR ARE NOT YOUR FRIEND’

UN-GLOBE have been trying to improve the internal situation of LGBTQIA+ people for almost three decades now. As highlighted earlier, while they achieved some progress with regards to the recognition of married same-sex couples, there is still a lot left to be done concerning the employment situation of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers. Accordingly, engaging with HR has been a big challenge, as their main task is rule implementation, not supporting minoritised groups:

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*Remember, you're doing negotiations. They're not your friends. They are not there to help you. They are there to implement the rules. That is very, very clear. Do never, ever, ever think HR are your friends – that is the biggest mistake. HR are there to implement the rules and show that the rules are implemented fairly and legally, because they are also working with our legal departments. HR can have discussions with you. You sit down and work with them in a professional, courteous manner to discuss the issues, and that's it. You cannot do advocacy with them. They can help you behind the scenes, but officially they are not there to help you. But there is a challenge working with them. They are not there for you. They're not your best friends. They're there to ensure and safeguard the interests of their business and their work.*

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To date, the advocacy work undertaken by UN-GLOBE representatives is carried out without any financial compensation. While leading individuals within the UN HR departments have made vocal commitments to changing this, it has not happened yet. As expressed in the statement above, HR staff might be able to find case-by-case solutions “behind the scenes”, but their official tasks are to implement the organisational rules and ensure the interests of the organisation are prioritised. This has been a major obstacle to improving the situation of SOGIESC workers within the UN and other international organisations.



To make matters worse, UN-GLOBE representatives largely do not have formal training and expertise on internal policies, rules, and regulations. In fact, UN-GLOBE agency coordinators and board members are not meant to work within DEI or HR teams to avoid potential conflicts of interests between their advocacy work for UN-GLOBE and their professional position. According to a participant, the advocacy work could harm their career prospects if they pushed too strongly for specific changes. While this makes sense, it also leads to a difficult situation when UN-GLOBE members are missing essential knowledge of the internal processes and regulations they are trying to change, and HR employees are unable to formally change rules and regulations. This conundrum has the potential to complicate the communication and collaboration between these entities.

## HR/DEI WILLINGNESS HINDERED BY KNOWLEDGE GAPS ON SOGIESC

The HR personnel who were willing to participate in this study were knowledgeable on SOGIESC issues and on most common challenges that trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people face at the workplace. However, as emphasised above, they are tasked with implementing the rules. While they can suggest amendments and find individual solutions, they are unable to change the rules and regulations in place at a UN agency or within other international organisations. As a participant stressed when explaining that their agency allows employees to use preferred names on their badge: ***“We don’t have a policy. We don’t have a process, but we make it happen.”*** This illustrates well that the willingness of HR and DEI personnel can improve the situation of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people without changing the rules and regulations of the organisations. Nevertheless, this is neither a sustainable nor the preferred solution.

Moreover, even the most aware and engaged HR and DEI representatives cannot singlehandedly change the organisational culture or the lack of awareness among their colleagues. One participant working with HR with trans\* family member highlighted that they were more knowledgeable on the best practices to support trans\* workers in a dignified way because of their personal experiences, but they were an exception within HR departments. Another participant expressed their shock when a colleague from HR made clear that they did not know what *cis* or *trans* referred to and were therefore unable to say which term they would use themselves. As long as the current knowledge gaps on SOGIESC issues among HR personnel remain, it is unlikely that the continuous inconsistencies and inequalities experienced by staff members of diverse gender identities and expressions will be rectified.

## THE UN, AN OLD-SCHOOL BUREAUCRACY

The challenges to changing the UN bureaucracy from the inside has been well-documented elsewhere.<sup>50</sup> UN reform has been stagnant at best, if not directly opposed by Member States. Several participants of both interview rounds pointed out their disappointment with the UN as an outdated organisation, especially for trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming

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<sup>50</sup> Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, ‘The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations’, *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (1999): 699–732, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081899551048>.

employees. A trans\* woman stressed that she would not recommend the UN as an employer for trans\* people: ***“The UN needs to get line with other organizations, because a lot of organisations are way more progressive than the UN. If you asked me about UN and LGBT and trans rights, I would put a very big black cross on them.”***

A nonbinary, gender non-conforming participant who works with the UN sometimes further supports this experience: ***“[The UN] is definitely not the friendly space. As far as I'm concerned, I always find it's very rigid, very cis, not very friendly to marginalised communities.”*** These statements highlight not only the negative experience of people working at the UN who are not cis, but they also further exemplify the need for internal change to *catch up* with other organisations. This is also stressed by a LGBT focal point: ***“It's very important to level the playing field and make the UN really inclusive and reflect the diversity of society. We need to be a beacon where countries that are not so supportive or inclusive. We should show illustrate how it should be.”*** While the focal point has hope for the UN to become a role model for countries that are not inclusive or progressive, the statement also underlines that this is not currently the case. Another specialist working on LGBT issues underscores yet again how far the UN is from being perceived as a frontrunner concerning the rights of trans\* people in the workplace:

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***It is a huge way to go. It will be important that the policy and strategy address these issues, but for me, that will be the beginning of the road. You know, policies that respect the dignity and rights of trans people in the workplace are still way behind where they should be in so many countries, even the most advanced countries, but as a UN system, I think we're definitely not at the forefront. The UN is an old school bureaucracy that is in human resource terms not at the cutting edge. So that's something that needs to change. I really hope that the policy will start this process of strengthening protection of trans\* people in the workplace, but there's a very long road ahead. It is an organization that's present worldwide. So, I think, if you're present in one country, maybe it's a country that has more advanced policies on protection – it's a bit easier. But we're working in all countries in the world.***

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It remains to be seen to what extent the new LGBTI+ strategy will provide the change and update needed to make the UN a leading example on SOGIESC employment rights.

## **FUNDING GAPS HINDERING INTERNAL REFORM**

Several of the LGBT focal points and UN-GLOBE agency coordinators underlined that funding gaps were one of the key issues that hinder internal reform linked to SOGIESC issues well as the development of external, programmatic items to further LGBTQIA+ rights. It is important to note that distinct parts within the UN are responsible for these two different aspects – internal reform and programmatic work – and that funding for these activities

typically comes from different sources. When it comes to internal reform, the Administrative and Budgetary Committee, otherwise known as the Fifth Committee, and its employees are responsible, while programmatic activities linked to SOGIESC are largely spearheaded by the Third Committee, responsible for Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues, and related agencies. Such programming can be funded by an agency's core funding or by extra-budgetary funding. The latter is often provided by donors, which could be Member States or private organisations such as companies, philanthropic foundations, and others. As a result of these distinctions, securing funding regarding potential internal changes has proven particularly difficult. As one participant put it:

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***UN reform is a very contentious issue. It means budget and funding. That's the challenge. The bigger geopolitical issue around that is how much funding is, what would it cost. The first question you always going to get is: 'Is there a cost associated to any of this? What is it?'***

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Internal reform is much less visible for outsiders compared to programmatic activities, so it is often considered less attractive. Another participant working for an international nongovernmental organisation explains: ***"We come with all the struggles of NGOs that need to get their work funded somehow. It's not always sexy to ask your donor for this kind of money to do this kind of stuff [improve internal policies]. Donors want to have activities."***

Internal reform and the development of inclusive policies for all, regardless of their SOGIESC, is crucial but also costly. To date, the financial resources are not easily available for aspects that would substantively improve the employment situation of LGBTQIA+ workers. This slows down or outright hinders the creation of an inclusive system to enter and store employee's data, the construction (or designation) of gender-neutral toilets, and the development of adequate trainings to raise awareness and establish a baseline knowledge on SOGIESC issues for all employees. As highlighted by a participant working for a small UN agency, an overhaul of the recruitment system would cost 20,000 US\$ - a sum that is currently not available, especially if they want to change other internal aspects. As the participant emphasised: ***"I went to my colleague in procurement and said 'hey, OK, so what can we do?' He quite frankly told me, 'Listen, you know you can get one thing from me this year, but you can't get it all'."*** This example underscores aforementioned challenge faced by DEI personnel: to choose between which of the various forms of discrimination experienced by different minoritised groups they will focus on next. If trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people are not the selected group, it is likely that funding to support their needs will be missing.

## **INTERNAL POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO SOGIESC RIGHTS**

A final aspect linked that affects funding and prevents both internal reform and the development of targeted programming to improve the rights of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people is political opposition to SOGIESC rights from within the organisation. As discussed in the review of external and internal progress towards the inclusion of

SOGIESC issues, a number of UN Member States have homo-/trans- and nonbinary-phobic legal frameworks that do not recognise the rights of LGBTQIA+ people. Some of these countries are also member states of CERN. For instance, Hungary fares badly when it comes to legal gender recognition and bodily integrity –there are currently no procedures that enable trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people to change their name and gender in their official documents.<sup>51</sup> Other countries continue to punish homosexuality and gender non-conforming people (including trans\* and nonbinary people) with imprisonment, physical violence, or even the death penalty. As a result, some UN agencies are afraid of negative repercussions if they were to develop programming specifically on SOGIESC rights. As highlighted by a participant:

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***“OHCHR can be vocal. This is their job, the defence of human rights. However, this is not the case for other agencies like [...] who need to cater to homophobic and transphobic countries”.***

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This concern is also linked to potential funding cuts – even agencies that have a bigger share of external financial donors are still reviewed by Member States and cannot afford to ***“piss them off”***, as stressed in an interview. Another participant goes even further when expressing discontent with the political influence that Member States have on internal progress and external programming: ***“Member States control everything and they're getting even more controlling.”*** While the global nature of an organisation such as the UN has its unique advantages, it can also be restrictive and prevent both internal reform and external programming when its members are not aligned concerning the recognition of the rights of all people, regardless of their SOGIESC.

According to a participant, one way out of this is for small agencies who do not need to have their internal policies to be signed off by Member States to pave the way. For instance, UNAIDS developed the most progressive parental leave policy which is formulated in gender-neutral terms and includes equal rights for people who become parents through adoption and surrogacy. Moreover, both parents receive the same amount of leave, four months – with the exception of the birth-giving parent, who will receive eight additional weeks for medical recovery. This policy has the potential to have a “ripple effect” across agencies which cannot easily develop their own internal policies without the approval of Member States.

Unfortunately, in addition to the presence of homo- and transphobic Member States, religious, and other conservative groups fund opposition to trans\* rights within the UN. A recent report highlighted that such anti-gender groups receive immense financial support – globally, they have at least three times of the financial resources available that LGBTQIA+ groups have at their disposal.<sup>52</sup> This explains also why these groups and their arguments have been successful in entering spaces such as the UN to spread their homophobic and

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<sup>51</sup> Rainbow Europe, 'Rainbow Map' (ILGA Europe, 2021), <https://rainbow-europe.org>.

<sup>52</sup> Global Philanthropy Project, 'MEET THE MOMENT: A Call for Progressive Philanthropic Response to the Anti-Gender Movement' (Global Philanthropy Project, 2020), <https://globalphilanthropyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Meet-the-Moment-2020-English.pdf>.

transphobic rhetoric. A participant labels this “**anti-gender infiltration**” – transphobic opposition by individuals from within the UN:

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***They target the UN. They are within the UN. They use the human rights language. So basically, everything we do, they're also doing, and they're heavily funded by Christian groups and orthodox groups. They have a lot of wealth and good strategies. We are in the battlefield right now around trans rights.***

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This aspect is continuously stressed in reports by the IE SOGI and by organisations such as ILGA World and OutRight Action International. The political pressure from homophobic and transphobic Member States and the presence of supporters of anti-gender movements within international organisations influences the ability of these organisations to institute such positive change. They also affect which issues are more likely to be prioritised by HR personnel. These aspects are important to keep in mind when trying to understand the sluggish progress regarding internal improvements to the employment situation of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers – while the bureaucracy might be a key obstacle, the ongoing political fight around the recognition of the rights of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people within international organisations is crucial and a significant impediment to funding internal reform, targeted training, and dedicated programming.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. Connecting the findings

As the previous three chapters show, the employment situation of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within *International Geneva* still leaves much to be desired. While UN entities such as the OHCHR advocate for an end to discrimination based on SOGIESC, queer employees within the organisation are still facing severe gaps when it comes to the full realisation of their employment rights.

This publication aims to give the participating trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within *International Geneva* a platform to express the main work-related obstacles they experience regularly ([chapter 3](#)). Subsequently, strategies to raise awareness on SOGIESC and to improve the employment situation of LGBTQIA+ employees are presented and analysed through a critical lens ([chapter 4](#)). Finally, LGBT focal points, UN-GLOBE representatives, and DEI and HR personnel explain the reasons they perceive for the slow progress on the rights of SOGIESC workers ([chapter 5](#)). These three parts together create a comprehensive overview of how the experiences of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees are connected to the efforts and challenges LGBT focal points, UN-GLOBE representatives, and DEI and HR personnel and how both are affected by organisation structures, funding gaps, and homo- and transphobic opposition.

To improve the internal situation of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within *International Geneva*, we cannot simply rely on DEI and HR personnel. Even if they are knowledgeable on SOGIESC rights and willing to fight for their implementation, they often do not have the time and financial resources available, let alone the decision-making power to change internal structures, rules, and regulations. Instead, a broad coalition of internal and external stakeholders including the individuals and teams working on SOGIESC rights within the organisations, UN-GLOBE and ILGA World, and Member States with progressive LGBT policies needs to come together to put pressure on Member States, senior leadership, and the main decision-making bodies. Unified demands by such a coalition should include: (1) bringing the organisational data entry and storage system into the present to allow for a third gender option and the use of one's current name and gender marker without having to provide official documents as "proof"; (2) ensuring that all buildings have gender-neutral bathrooms; (3) providing targeted trainings on SOGIESC issues to guarantee a baseline knowledge among all employees (see also [6.2](#) for fifteen practical, actionable, and implementable recommendations).

## 6.2. Fifteen recommendations for the full realisation of the rights of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers

In each of the interviews conducted for the TRANVIS-RLS study, the participants were asked for specific recommendations to improve the employment situation of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers within *International Geneva*. The focus for the following fifteen recommendations is on making practical, actionable, and implementable suggestions that positively affect trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees of the UN, CERN, and other international organisations.

### CORE RECOMMENDATIONS

- All forms that collect and display a person's identity details need to include at least a third gender option, in correspondence with recent changes in several Member States to avoid the discrimination of their nationals.
- Changing one's name and gender marker in the organisational data base needs to be possible without having to provide official documentation. Alternatively, additional fields for "preferred name" and "self-identified gender" need to be included.
- Targeted, organisation-wide trainings on up-to-date SOGIESC terminologies and rights need to be developed and implemented as soon as possible. This will ensure that all employees have a baseline understanding of what constitutes homo-/trans-/nonbinary-phobic microaggressions, how to use pronouns, and how to better support trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming co-workers.
- Gender-neutral toilets need to be available at each UN agency and in all other international organisations. This can be achieved by changing the signage of existing bathrooms. Ideally, buildings yet to be constructed will be designed with all-gender single-occupancy toilets.

### MEDICAL AND HEALTH-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

- Medical personnel need to be sensitised and guidelines need to be established that clarify what can be asked and what cannot be asked during examinations and other medical appointments. Any medical clearance procedure should be absolutely and solely linked to whether someone can perform the job they are selected for or that they are occupying.
- Access to gender affirmative treatments such as hormone replacement therapy or surgery needs to be covered by the employer for those trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers who desire such treatments. These treatments

need to be covered by the institutional insurance or reimbursed if the employee does not benefit from such insurance.<sup>53</sup>

## **NAME, GENDER MARKER, AND PRONOUN-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The induction training should include information on how to change one's name and gender marker in the data base, email signature, and the institutional phonebook. This would not only benefit trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers, but also anyone who changes their name after their wedding.
- Institutional databases, email signatures, and phonebooks should contain the option to include one's pronouns. This would not only be beneficial for trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming workers, but also for anyone trying to address a person with a name they are not familiar with.
- As an alternative to the person's passport, letters by psychologists or other professionals confirming that a trans\* person is undergoing gender affirmative treatments should be recognised as evidence to change that person's name and gender marker in the system – but they should never be required.

## **RECRUITMENT-AND POST-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Job advertisements, especially for positions in field offices, should include information on the LGBT rights situation in the respective country. This could be done by linking to reports by the OHCHR, the IE SOGI, or ILGA World.
- It needs to be possible to waive educational requirements for applicants with lived experience, including through community-organising, to increase the chances of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming applicants for positions where their experience is more beneficial than a formal degree would be.
- Fellowships supporting trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming community advocates for a limited time should be established. These would build and strengthen links to the community while avoiding brain-drain of highly educated gender-diverse advocates from their communities.

## **HR AND DATA-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Workplace satisfaction surveys need to include a third gender option and a question concerning whether the respondent is cis or trans\*. The results need to include these options, even if the numbers are very low.

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<sup>53</sup> It is important to note that gender affirmative treatments of staff members are covered at several UN agencies already. As highlighted in an interview, the cost is neglectable, but the impact on the well-being of those who will benefit from these services is huge. This is an important signal of support to trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees.



- Trans/nonbinary-phobic microaggressions and related workplace discrimination and harassment need to be recognised, and the perpetrators need to be held responsible and face consequences.
- The UN and other organisations should be represented at LGBTQIA+ job fairs and present themselves as an employer of choice.

## 6.3. Limitations and future research suggestions

### LIMITATIONS

The TRANSVIS-RLS study attempted to shed light on the first-hand workplace experiences of trans\*, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming employees within *International Geneva* while also providing an insight into the work of LGBT focal points, UN-GLOBE representatives, and DEI and HR personnel to improve the employment situation for gender-diverse people. The response rate of the organisations contacted for the first round of interviews was relatively low – out of 21 entities that were initially contacted, we only talked to representatives working at 10 of those, as well as with representatives of one additional international organisation that was not contacted initially. While the Call for participants was distributed repeatedly and shared across various channels (email lists, social media, websites, word of mouth), only nine trans\*, nonbinary, and gender-diverse participants reached out to us. It is important to note that none of these nine participants is a staff member of a UN entity, and only two of the participants regularly work within the UN, but not within programmatic teams. The other gender-diverse participants work for other organisations within *International Geneva*. We cannot claim to make any conclusive assumptions on why no staff member or a person working within a programmatic team inside the UN contacted us. Several participants of the first round of interviews indicated that they have trans\*, nonbinary, or gender non-conforming co-workers, but these did not reach out to us. As a result, the findings do not necessarily reflect the experiences of gender-diverse staff members within the different UN agencies. However, the three main obstacles described in [chapter 3](#) – knowledge gaps on SOGIESC issues among cis, heterosexual co-workers; outdated, binary forms; a lack of gender-neutral bathrooms – are generalisable. While some UN entities have developed trainings, updated their data entry forms, and provide all-gender toilets, this is not the standard across the UN system nor within *International Geneva* as a whole.

### FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

Next steps to learn more about the internal situation within the UN include an employee-wide survey on SOGIESC awareness as well as on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ employees not only in Geneva, but within the whole UN system. This would fill knowledge gaps that currently exist regarding the specific conditions within the different duty stations – crucial information to provide equal protection for all UN employees, including those working outside of Geneva

and New York, regardless of their SOGIESC. Such a survey would ideally also gather information about the experienced of racialised employees, those with disabilities, and other minoritised groups. While each agency and entity conduct regular workplace satisfaction surveys, these do not focus specifically on the experiences of minoritised, disadvantaged groups.

Another possible follow-up on the TRANSVIS-RLS study would be to expand the population within *International Geneva* and focus on the workplace experiences of LGBTQIA+ people more generally – additionally, as in the suggestion above, also the experiences of other minoritised groups such as people with disabilities and racialised employees should be considered.

## 7. Bibliography and additional resources

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## 7.2. Additional resources

In addition to the reports by the IE SOGI and material published by the UN OHCHR, UN-GLOBE and the IPI that were referenced in the TRANSVIS-RLS study and thus included in the bibliography, the following list includes additional resources that might be of use for anyone trying to find out more about SOGIESC rights globally. It is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all related resources.

- The recent toolkit provided by ILGA World on advocacy for trans liberation represents a useful resource that might help those who are trying to change the internal structures of international organisations within *International Geneva* and beyond:  
ILGA World: Chamindra Weerawardhana, Tristán López, Shalaka Pai, Towards Trans Liberation: Advocacy for Legal Gender Recognition, (Geneva: ILGA, December 2021), [https://ilga.org/downloads/TLMR\\_toolkit\\_Towards\\_Trans\\_Liberation\\_Advocacy\\_LG\\_R.pdf](https://ilga.org/downloads/TLMR_toolkit_Towards_Trans_Liberation_Advocacy_LG_R.pdf).
- Similarly, the practical guide by ILGA world on Advocating on Gender Identity and Expression is an excellent resource:  
International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association: Kirichenko, Kseniya & Nolan, Helen, *Advocating on Gender Identity and Gender Expression – The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Practical guide* (Geneva: ILGA World, October 2020), [https://ilga.org/downloads/CESCR\\_genderidentity\\_genderextrapression\\_ENG.pdf](https://ilga.org/downloads/CESCR_genderidentity_genderextrapression_ENG.pdf)
- If you are interested in the legal recognition of trans\* people globally, the ILGA World Trans Legal Mapping Report is very useful:  
ILGA World: Zhan Chiam, Sandra Duffy, Matilda González Gil, Lara Goodwin, and Nigel Timothy Mpemba Patel, *Trans Legal Mapping Report 2019: Recognition before the law* (Geneva: ILGA World, 2020), [https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA\\_World\\_Trans\\_Legal\\_Mapping\\_Report\\_2019\\_EN.pdf](https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_World_Trans_Legal_Mapping_Report_2019_EN.pdf).
- Focused on sexual orientation, the most recent report by ILGA World on state-sponsored homophobia provides an excellent insight in the legal situation faced by LGB people worldwide:  
ILGA World: Lucas Ramon Mendos, Kellyn Botha, Rafael Carrano Lelis, Enrique López de la Peña, Iliia Savelev and Daron Tan, *State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020: Global Legislation Overview Update* (Geneva: ILGA, December 2020), [https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA\\_World\\_State\\_Sponsored\\_Homophobia\\_report\\_global\\_legislation\\_overview\\_update\\_December\\_2020.pdf](https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_World_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_report_global_legislation_overview_update_December_2020.pdf).

- The Sexual Rights Initiative provides a database that includes information on Sexual Rights mentioned within the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council:  
<https://www.uprdatabase.org/recommendations>
- The SOGI UN Database contains material from the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) UN compilations on sexual orientation and gender identity in international human rights law:  
<https://www.icj.org/sogi-un-database/>

RESEARCH MATERIAL

**CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

**SOGIESC Workers in International Geneva & the UN**

**A focus on trans\*, non-binary, and gender non-conforming employees and their workplace experiences**

This study, conducted with the support of the UN-GLOBE Board and UN-GLOBE Geneva, addresses both positive and negative experiences of trans\*, non-binary, gender non-conforming, and questioning employees at the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva. We are interested in the recruitment process, your everyday work life, your experiences with going on missions, and the benefits (or lack thereof) your dependents receive.

**IF YOU ARE**

- Trans\*, non-binary, gender non-conforming, or questioning
- Employed at the UN or other International Organisations in Geneva (past, present, or future employment)
- Willing to participate in an interview about workplace experiences (in-person or online video interview possible)

If you are interested, please contact to **Dr Mira Fey** (mira.fey@hesge.ch), research lead, postdoctoral researcher at HETS and external consultant at Rosalux Geneva.  
For UN-GLOBE, contact: sandhu@ilo.org

*Find out more about the research project here*



**h e t s**

Haute école de travail social  
Genève  
Centre de recherche  
sociale (CERES)





# **SOGIESC Workers in International Geneva & the UN: A focus on trans\* employees & their workplace experiences**

Dr Mira Fey

Commissioned by *Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Geneva*

Consent to take part in the study.

More information on the research is available [here](#).

- I ... voluntarily agree to participate in this research project.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves a semi-structured interview on my experiences with the situation of trans\* employees at the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva. The interview will likely last between 30 and 90 minutes.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in conference presentations, publications (i.e. research articles and the final project report), and during public discussions of this research project.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in a password-secured digital location available only to the lead researcher Dr. Mira Fey until conclusion of the final report. It will then be deleted.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed might be retained until conference presentations and research publications are finalised.
- I understand that I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

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Dr. Mira Fey, Postdoctoral researcher at Haute école de travail social Genève and research consultant for Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Geneva. Contact via [mira.fey@hesge.ch](mailto:mira.fey@hesge.ch) or +41 76 242 68 30.

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***Signature of research participant***

Signature of participant

Date

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***Signature of researcher Dr. Mira Fey***

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

Date

**Interview guide round one**

- 1. Information about the person and their position within the UN/NGO they work in**
  - a. Can you tell me about your professional situation?
  - b. Which position do you currently hold? How long have you been working for ... [UN entity, NGO]?
  - c. What are your main tasks?
- 2. Relation to LGBTQIA+ rights/SOGIESC**
  - a. What is your role in relation to LGBTQIA+/SOGIESC? Did you receive any special training before taking on this position?
- 3. Focal point for LGBTI people**
  - a. In your role as focal point for LGBTI people, are you often faced with trans-specific questions/challenges/programmatic/policy requests?
  - b. How do you stay informed about the development of trans rights globally? Is this something you are specifically interested in? Why?
- 4. Organisational involvement in LGBTQIA+ rights defence and links to UN workplace**

- a. Your organisation is known as LGBTQIA+ rights defender. According to your experiences with the UN, what are the most urgent challenges trans and gender non-conforming employees or potential candidates face?
- b. What are concrete actions your organisation suggests addressing these challenges?

**5. Institutional challenges**

- a. Given that a number of Member States are opposing LGBTQIA+ rights, what would you suggest for UN entities that are dependent on project-based funding and want to carry out programmatic action on SOGIESC?
- b. Is this something that you think should be improved? Why?

**6. Questions, comments, suggestions for the interviewer**

**Interview guide round two**

**1. Information about the person**

- a. Can you tell me about your professional path – what brought you to Geneva?
- b. Where do you work, and in which position?
- c. Can you tell me which pronouns you use and what your gender identity is?

**2. Recruitment/hiring process**

- a. When you first applied to ..., how did you manage being open about or hiding your gender identity?
- b. As part of the recruitment forms, did you have to indicate your gender/sex? Which options were included?
- c. Were you able to use your name and gender identity, or did you have to use those you were assigned at birth? [Depending on whether these correspond to the person's passport]
- d. Did you get a badge that shows the name you are using, or did you have to use the name on your passport?
- e. Did you feel like your gender identity was accepted throughout this process?

**3. Experiences of everyday work life**

- a. In your everyday work life, which challenges/obstacles do you encounter?
  - i. Are these based on discrimination due to your gender identity?
  - ii. What kind of discrimination have you experienced?
- b. Are there gender-neutral bathrooms in your organisation?
- c. Do you have access to specialised health care services, for instance HRT or gender-affirmative surgery? Is this covered by your employer?
- d. Are you out at work?
- e. Are your colleagues aware of diverse gender identities? What about sexual orientation?
  - i. Are there trainings available? What kind?

**4. Links to the local LGBT network**

- a. Do you know about UN-GLOBE?
  - i. Are you a member?
  - ii. Do you feel represented by the organisation?
- b. Do you know any other LGBT organisations in Geneva? Which?

**5. Challenges/suggestions**

- a. Other than what we discussed already, what are the biggest challenges trans\*/nonbinary/gender non-conforming people encounter at your organisation?
- b. Which other challenges are worth mentioning?
- c. Is this something that you think should be improved? Why?

**6. *Questions, comments, suggestions for the interviewer***

## SUPPORT FOR SOGIESC RIGHTS AMONG MEMBER STATES AND UN ENTITIES

Table 1. Support for SOGIESC rights among Member States

| <b>Member States</b>                                     | <b><u>UN LGBTI Core Group</u></b> | <b><u>GoF IE SOGI</u></b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Albania  | X                                 |                           |
| Argentina  | Co-chair                          | X                         |
| Australia  | X                                 | X                         |
| Belgium  |                                   | X                         |
| Bolivia  | X                                 |                           |
| Brazil   | X                                 |                           |
| Cabo Verde   | X                                 |                           |
| Canada   | X                                 | X                         |
| Chile  | X                                 | X                         |
| Colombia   | X                                 |                           |
| Costa Rica   | X                                 | X                         |
| Croatia  | X                                 |                           |
| Denmark  |                                   | X                         |
| Ecuador  | X                                 |                           |
| El Salvador  | X                                 |                           |
| Finland  |                                   | X                         |
| France   | X                                 |                           |
| Germany  | X                                 | X                         |
| Greece   |                                   | X                         |
| Iceland  | X                                 | X                         |
| Ireland  |                                   | X                         |
| Israel   | X                                 | X                         |
| Italy  | X                                 | X                         |
| Japan  | X                                 |                           |
| Liechtenstein  |                                   | X                         |
| Luxembourg   | X                                 | X                         |
| Malta  | X                                 | X                         |
| Mexico   | X                                 | X                         |
| Montenegro   | X                                 |                           |
| The Netherlands  | Co-chair                          | X                         |
| New Zealand  | X                                 |                           |
| Northern Macedonia                                       | X                                 |                           |
| Norway   | X                                 | X                         |
| Portugal   |                                   | X                         |
| South Africa   | X                                 |                           |
| Spain  | X                                 |                           |
| Sweden   | X                                 | X                         |
| Switzerland  |                                   | X                         |
| The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | X                                 | X                         |
| The United States of America                             | X                                 | X                         |
| Uruguay  | X                                 |                           |

**Table 2. Support for SOGIESC rights among UN entities**

| <b>UN entity</b>     | <b><u>2015 joint statement</u></b> | <b><u>2018 programmatic overview</u></b> | <b>Focal points on LGBTI people (2019)</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| ILO                  | X                                  | X  | X  |
| IOM                  |                                    | X  | X  |
| OHCHR                | X                                  | X  | X  |
| UNAIDS (Secretariat) | X                                  | X  | X  |
| UNDP                 | X                                  | X  | X  |
| UNESCO               | X                                  | X  | X  |
| UNFPA                | X                                  | X  | X  |
| UNHCR                | X                                  |  | X  |
| UNICEF               | X                                  | X  | X  |
| UNODC                | X                                  | X  | X  |
| UNRISD               |                                    | X  | X  |
| UN Women             | X                                  | X  | X  |
| WFP                  | X                                  |  |  |
| WHO                  | X                                  | X  | X  |
| World Bank           |                                    | X  | X  |