

**Stonewall**

# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

**This resource is produced by Stonewall, a UK-based charity that stands for the freedom, equity and potential of all lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people.**

At Stonewall, we imagine a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live our lives to the full.

Founded in London in 1989, we now work in each nation of the UK and have established partnerships across the globe. Over the last three decades, we have created transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK, helping win equal rights around marriage, having children and inclusive education.

Our campaigns drive positive change for our communities, and our sustained change and empowerment programmes ensure that LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout our lives. We make sure that the world hears and learns from our communities, and our work is grounded in evidence and expertise.

To find out more about our work, visit us at [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

**Registered Charity No 1101255 (England and Wales) and SC039681 (Scotland)**

Stonewall is proud to provide information, support and guidance on LGBTQ+ inclusion; working towards a world where we're all free to be. This does not constitute legal advice, and is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter.

**Stonewall**

**SIDE**

**BY SIDE**

**A GLOBAL GUIDE TO BUILDING BUSINESS  
AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS**

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# FOREWORD



**NANCY KELLEY**  
**STONEWALL CEO**

We are excited to share this guide with you. It features voices from civil society organisations and businesses across the world, who are working to advance the rights of LGBTQ+ people in some of the most difficult and demanding environments. We hope you'll benefit from the best practice examples we share, and that you gain an understanding of how effective business and civil society partnerships operate. My sincere hope is that this guide will help you to form truly impactful partnerships that can improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people and their communities.

Why is working in partnership so important now? Every day in our work at Stonewall, we witness how some LGBTQ+ people's freedoms and dignity are celebrated, while others' rights are under threat and being rolled back. In many countries, governments are actively working against LGBTQ+ people. It is left to civil society to take on the often dangerous, but pivotal, role to protect and improve the lives of LGBTQ+ communities.

However, the picture is not all bleak and we should be inspired by recent victories. In 2021, new protections introduced in the USA to prevent and combat discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity came after sustained campaigns from civil society organisations such as the Human Rights Campaign.

In Bhutan, same-sex sexual activity was decriminalised thanks to the work of groups such as Rainbow Bhutan. And, after a campaign led by Movimiento Nacional por el Matrimonio Igualitario, bringing together 25 LGBTQ+ organisations, Costa Rica became the first country in Central America to introduce equal marriage. These are just a few recent examples of the incredible change instigated by civil society.

Civil society organisations play a vital role supporting those targeted by hostile governments, and in campaigning to restore rights that have been curtailed. In Poland and Hungary, where rights to gender recognition and adoption were taken away, and so-called 'LGBT-free zones' created, civil society has been pivotal in advocating for vulnerable LGBTQ+ people at home and globally.

In meeting many of these challenges, businesses have a crucial part to play in sustaining positive change for LGBTQ+ people – not just in the workplace, but on a national and international level. Our **Business Advocacy Guide** and the **UN Global LGBTI Standards of Conduct for Businesses** outline how businesses can effectively harness their power and advocate for change in the public sphere.

We also know from many years of experience that partnerships often result in the most transformative societal change. In order to make real, meaningful change for LGBTQ+ communities, civil society organisations and global business must work together in harmony. Successful partnerships are mutually beneficial – they allow businesses to learn from local LGBTQ+ communities, and to use their sizeable platforms to drive lasting change.

I want to end by thanking all the organisations that contributed to the creation of this guide – your work is invaluable. With your help, this resource has been made all the more powerful for organisations just setting out on their partnership journeys.

# INTRODUCTION

This three-part guide invites organisations to recognise the importance of business and civil society partnerships in advancing LGBTQ+ rights and to understand how to form partnerships which are balanced, impactful and sustainable.

## 01.

**PART 01.** outlines the **business case** for establishing civil society partnerships. We explore the benefits a partnership can have for your organisation, as well as for wider social and legal change. This section of the guide explores the initial planning stages of a partnership and features a worksheet to help you develop your own business case.

## 02.

**PART 02.** details the **first steps** of establishing a civil society partnership. We include an example mind map and worksheet, guiding you on all the key considerations when establishing a civil society partnership. This section also features interviews with civil society organisations on what they look for from a partnership, and a detailed case study on developing a civil society partnership in Russia.

## 03.

**PART 03.** explores the **delivery and evaluation** of a civil society partnership and how to navigate challenges and consider next steps. This section includes two case studies, which showcase civil society partnerships in action, an overview of seven core principles to any civil society partnership, and a template evaluation framework.

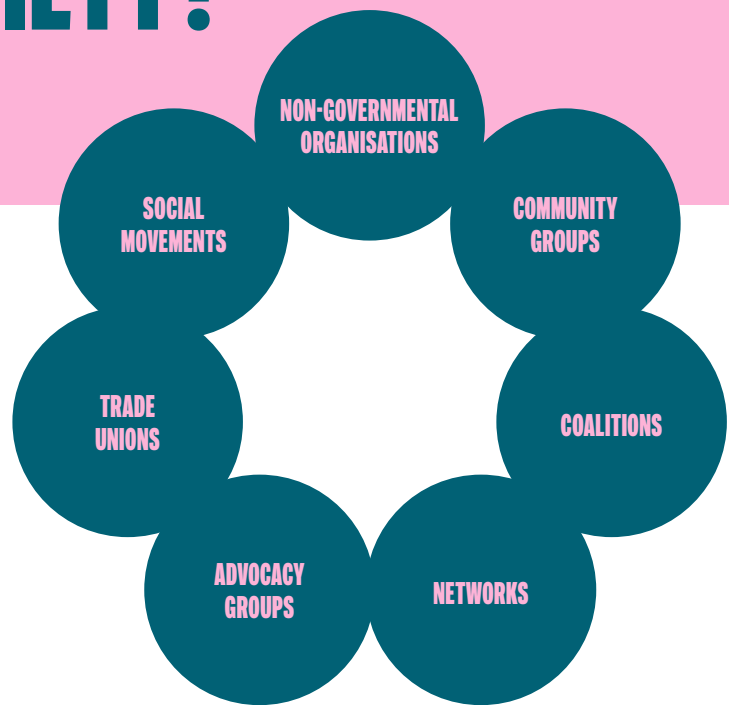
**The guide features case studies and examples from civil society organisations and committed global employers, showcasing best practice and first-hand accounts of partnerships.**

### A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY:

Our use of the acronym LGBTQ+ may differ across our interviews and case studies from civil society and employers as we seek to reflect the language that they use to represent their communities.

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CIVIL SOCIETY?

**When we use the term ‘civil society’ we refer to the space for collective action outside government and businesses. It includes:**



The role of civil society is diverse and constantly adapting. Some of the many activities that civil society organisations engage in include: holding institutions to account and promoting transparency; raising awareness of societal issues; delivering services to meet education, health, food and security needs; implementing disaster management, preparedness and emergency response; bringing expert knowledge and experience to shape policy and strategy; giving power to the marginalised; and encouraging citizen engagement.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the progress in LGBTQ+ rights around the world has been driven by civil society. However, LGBTQ+ civil society organisations face a unique set of challenges.

As of December 2020, there are at least 51 UN Member States with known legal barriers to the registration or operation of civil society organisations working on Sexual and Gender Diversity Issues.<sup>2</sup>

In practice, this can mean that organisations are denied access to funding and are forced to operate discreetly, or even “illegally”, limiting the support they can offer. Some organisations may also seek official registration through a focus on specific issues which affect the LGBTQ+ community, such as healthcare for people living with HIV, without explicitly referencing sexual orientation or gender identity. Approaches to working with civil society in challenging environments for LGBTQ+ people will be discussed in part three of this guide.

<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum report, The Future Role of Civil Society, [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_FutureRoleCivilSociety\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FutureRoleCivilSociety_Report_2013.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> ILGA World: Lucas Ramon Mendos, Kellyn Botha, Rafael Carrano Lelis, Enrique López de la Peña, Ilia Savelev and Daron Tan, State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020: Global Legislation Overview Update (Geneva: ILGA, December 2020)

# BALANCED PARTNERSHIPS

**It is important when developing partnerships between business and civil society to actively address the imbalance of power and resources as well as the legacy of colonialism, discriminatory laws, racism, poverty, violence, and discrimination. If these imbalances are not addressed, they can undermine trust, limit success and ultimately do harm to local communities.**

Western global businesses specifically must understand that some power imbalances stem from historical factors such as the impacts of colonialism, including the legacy of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. The racist, sexist and anti-LGBTQ+ laws, policies, and practices of colonialism are well known and well documented, and have had a devastating impact on the lives of millions of global citizens for centuries.

Businesses should look to balance and share power by letting local communities lead any LGBTQ+ advocacy work, and ensuring effective communication and transparency in all civil society partnerships. Most importantly, businesses should be led by the principle of 'do no harm',<sup>3</sup> and should ensure their advocacy efforts do not negatively impact staff or local communities. This should be the absolute minimum standard when working to advance LGBTQ+ equality.

It is the responsibility of businesses to use their leverage and share their power to create change that benefits local communities, and working in partnership with civil society can help to achieve this.

<sup>3</sup> M. B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Contribute to Peace – or War*, 1999

**PART**

**01.**

**THE BUSINESS CASE  
FOR ESTABLISHING  
CIVIL SOCIETY  
PARTNERSHIPS**



## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ESTABLISHING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS

# WHY PARTNER WITH CIVIL SOCIETY?

## Local input in local workplaces

When it comes to changes in workplace culture and practices, there is no one better to inform your developments than the local experts. In-country civil society organisations know the local context best, and can help to create an authentic inclusive workplace which reflects local LGBTQ+ community life, laws and policies, and experiences.

Our global diversity and inclusion values across the whole organisation are ‘our people, our culture, our clients and our community’, and partnerships with civil society really help us to stand by these values and allow us to change the culture we are in.

**Mickey van Helden**

EMEA Diversity & Inclusion Specialist  
at Baker McKenzie

The aim of our global diversity and inclusion strategy is that everybody in the firm feels like they can bring their whole self to work, no matter where they work. Even in jurisdictions where LGBTQ+ identities aren’t protected, we want the workplace to be an environment where all employees can be themselves. In doing this, it’s important that we recognise the differences across our offices and that many countries are at different points when it comes to LGBTQ+ inclusion. By partnering with local organisations in each country, we can learn from their expertise and they can provide us with local guidance.

**Sarah Harris**

Diversity & Inclusion Manager APAC at Allen & Overy

Working closely with in-country organisations helps us to understand country-specific challenges. It’s essential not to have a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach when it comes to LGBT+ inclusion because it depends on each local context. This approach allows for regional flexibility in different jurisdictions and also strengthens our Global Pride+ Allies Network.

**Fabienne Ruopp**

Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing Manager EMEA at Hogan Lovells

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ESTABLISHING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS

### Strengthen advocacy work

Advocacy can include any activities undertaken, either by a group or individual, with the aim of influencing decisions within political, economic and social systems and institutions to advance LGBTQ+ rights. Advocacy can take many forms: from public statements to quiet diplomacy and supporting other organisations to advance LGBTQ+ equality.

A key principle of LGBTQ+ advocacy is to 'let local communities lead'. A partnership with an in-country NGO or community group will ensure that the local LGBTQ+ community has agency, with their needs and ways of engaging their community at the heart of your advocacy.

Partnerships with civil society are important to our business because they are a great way for our staff to become more aware of the diverse communities that we are part of and serve. Staff feel welcomed in the workplace because they can see that their employer is inclusive and promotes diversity, in keeping with our corporate values.

In Bermuda we have enjoyed working together with OUTBermuda, the island's only LGBTQI+ focused registered charity. Our partnership has helped provide us with visible signals of support for the LGBTQI+ community, such as providing guest speakers and rainbow flags for events. OUTBermuda has also benefitted from its partnership with us, appreciating the opportunity to hear how business teams are tackling diversity, equity and inclusion on the ground.

**HSBC Bank Bermuda Limited**

#### READ

our [Agents of Change](#) guide to learn more about LGBTQ+ advocacy for businesses.

Collaborating with civil society allows us to better understand and serve our colleagues and customers, pushes us to improve our inclusion practices, and empowers us to advocate in the communities where we operate. We also recognise the importance of local context and local expertise when it comes to LGBTQ+ inclusion. We strive for our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts to be fully embraced by our teams, so it's vital that the work is led by in-country colleagues and experts.

**Mark Crawford**  
Senior Vice President of Diversity at bp

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ESTABLISHING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS

### Action the United Nations frameworks

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights highlight the responsibility of businesses to respect and protect human rights.

The UN Global LGBTI Standards of Conduct for Businesses build on the Guiding Principles

and set out a clear framework, calling for global employers to work closely and in collaboration with local civil society.

Collaboration with local civil society can help businesses to deliver on their commitments to all five standards:

## 1. RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

## 2. ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION

## 3. PROVIDE SUPPORT

## 4. PREVENT OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

## 5. ACT IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality (PGLE) is a coalition of organisations committed to leveraging their individual and collective advocacy to accelerate LGBTI equality and inclusion globally and drive positive change. Collaboration between business and civil society is central to the way we operate, and PGLE believes that such multi-stakeholder approaches are the only way to effectively create long-lasting change.

The UN Standards of Conduct provide a much-needed framework for collaboration between the private sector and civil society, among others, to advocate for changes to regulatory frameworks that impact LGBTI communities around the world. Civil society plays a crucial role in pushing companies on important changes, trends, and impacts on LGBTI communities by monitoring corporate activities and facilitating collective efforts.

**Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality**

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ESTABLISHING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS

# HOW CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS BENEFIT YOUR ORGANISATION

## Understanding the local context for LGBTQ+ employees

Researching relevant information on laws and policies in different contexts is an important step for global employers working on LGBTQ+ inclusion. However, it's important to assess the actual implementation of laws and policies to get an accurate reflection of people's lived experience. The life of the LGBTQ+ community could be better, or sometimes worse, than it may seem on paper. Therefore, this work should always be completed alongside the gathering of information on other key factors.

Local and regional LGBTQ+ civil society is well positioned to provide information on a wide range of other factors which can have a daily impact on the lives of LGBTQ+ people, such as societal attitudes, levels of hate crime, visibility of LGBTQ+ people in public life, application of laws, availability of community support, and experiences of discrimination based on multiple identities. The ways in which the experiences of the LGBTQ+ community intersect with other marginalised identities will differ across countries and regions. Civil society organisations may also have resources and research available to help employers understand the situation for LGBTQ+ people in their country.

It's vital for global businesses to understand how the laws around LGBTIQ identities operate in all the countries in which they have offices. Sometimes businesses are scared by the law on paper, and don't think they can do LGBTIQ inclusion work, that it's too much of a risk, but they haven't asked us how it actually operates in practice.

**Rosanna Flamer-Caldera**

Founder & Executive Director  
at EQUAL GROUND (Sri Lanka)

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ESTABLISHING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS

### Consultation on internal workplace initiatives

Partnering with local and regional civil society organisations when developing and implementing internal LGBTQ+ workplace initiatives will help to ensure that your content and approach is relevant and authentic, while platforming the voices and experiences of members of the local community.

Not all LGBTQ+ civil society organisations will have specific workplace support functions, but their expertise could still support your business. For example, an organisation that specialises in LGBTQ+ healthcare could review your health insurance policy to ensure that it is inclusive, or an organisation which focuses on trans rights could support the development of local guidance on transitioning at work.

In all of the examples on the following page, businesses must consider budgeting to ensure that civil society organisations are paid for their time and expertise.

Baker McKenzie's Employee Resource Group in Sao Paulo helped to establish a partnership with Transempregos, a local civil society organisation which helps companies to identify and hire trans employees. Key elements of the partnership included the development of an inclusive language guide for hiring managers and management awareness and culture training. The Sao Paulo office has also successfully advertised internship and apprenticeship opportunities through the Transempregos website.

**Baker McKenzie**

We have two offices in Hungary and over 2,000 employees, and we've had clear diversity and inclusion ambitions since these offices opened. We set up Business Resource Groups (BRGs), and our Pride BRG has played a key role in forming partnerships with local civil society in Hungary. We started collaborating with We Are Open, a workplace diversity and inclusion organisation, as well as the organisers of Budapest Pride. We then partnered with Háttér Society, Hungary's largest LGBTQ+ organisation, to deliver a number of training sessions across our offices on LGBTQ+ identities, including specific sessions on trans identities.

These sessions, and our wider collaborations with civil society, have had clear positive impacts on our workplace, and have helped to create a safe environment where more employees feel able to come out. The external visibility of our partnerships, for example marching at Budapest Pride, has also had a positive impact on recruitment, and demonstrates our genuine commitment to supporting the LGBTQ+ community.

**Kristóf Mészáros and Dora Szabo**

BP Hungary, Pride Business Resource Group

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ESTABLISHING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS

### Areas where businesses should engage with civil society:

#### 1. DEVELOPMENT OF ALL-STAFF TRAINING ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Consultation with in-country civil society can help inform the content of all-staff training, ensuring it is sensitive to the local context and uses the most appropriate language.

#### 2. DELIVERY OF ALL-STAFF TRAINING ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Some civil society organisations will be able to deliver in-house training where it is safe to do so. Taking this route will help ensure the training is relevant to the local context, as well as supporting local organisations working to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people.

#### 3. COLLECTING SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY EMPLOYEE DATA

Data on sexual orientation and gender identity tells an organisation about the number of LGBTQ+ employees and how their experiences compare to those of their colleagues. Capturing this data across an organisation's global operations enables employers to compare results in different countries and regions.

Civil society organisations can provide support on language and cultural sensitivity and advise on the appropriateness or safety for individuals to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity in data monitoring exercises. A legal assessment is an essential first step to ensure you can proceed with data collection as there could be legal restrictions on collecting LGBTQ+ data.

#### 4. REVIEWING INTERNAL POLICIES

Organisational policies around areas such as diversity and inclusion, bullying, harassment and discrimination, and family leave and benefits should be inclusive of everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Local civil society organisations can review these policies and ensure they are inclusive and sensitive to the local context.

#### 5. ENSURING YOUR RECRUITMENT IS INCLUSIVE

Some civil society organisations play a key role in increasing access to employment for LGBTQ+ people. Collaborations on recruitment campaigns or consultation on specific guidance for hiring managers can support your business to attract, retain and engage LGBTQ+ talent.

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ESTABLISHING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS

# HOW CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS EFFECT WIDER CHANGE

Partnering with LGBTQ+ civil society organisations drives impactful change. Through research, advocacy, campaigning and lobbying, civil society can influence governments and citizens, building acceptance and protection for marginalised communities.

Many civil society organisations also offer vital support services to the LGBTQ+ community across a wide range of key issues including health, education, housing, personal security and violence, economic wellbeing, and civic and political participation. They often do this in challenging circumstances and face significant risk to their personal safety.

As a global business, the support you provide civil society through partnerships can have an important impact on these organisations and the work they do. Financial support can help LGBTQ+ civil society organisations to remunerate staff and continue running key services. Sharing knowledge, skills, expertise and resources can also provide much-needed support to organisations.

Acting in the public sphere and advocating in the field of global LGBTQ+ rights has the power to improve the lives of millions, and through partnerships with civil society you can ensure you are approaching this in the most meaningful, impactful and authentic way possible.

Stonewall's Business Advocacy Guide demonstrates the benefits of advocacy, alongside a variety of different advocacy approaches for global employers. The key theme that should run through every advocacy strategy is engagement, collaboration and consultation with local civil society.

As a global law firm, one of the best ways we can support local LGBTQ+ communities is through pro bono legal support. In Hong Kong we have used our legal expertise to lead an extensive research project into the impact of a person's legal relationship status, which has supported subsequent LGBTQ+ rights claims. We are also a proud supporter of Equal Love, a collaboration of civil society and businesses working together to advocate for equal marriage in Hong Kong.

**Lauren Bishop**

Senior HR Manager at Allen & Overy

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ESTABLISHING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS



From the early days of LGBTIQ advocacy in Sri Lanka, we felt that it was important to form partnerships with the business community. Businesses have a bigger voice than us, and they are an important cog in the wheel of changing government legislation, especially moving towards decriminalisation of same-sex sexual activity in Sri Lanka.

Partnerships with business can also be hugely beneficial for LGBTIQ access to employment, creating job opportunities for the community, breaking the cycle of poverty and ensuring that workplaces are inclusive for everyone. As a civil society organisation, it's important for us to recognise the business case for LGBTIQ inclusion, we have lots to offer economically.

**Rosanna Flamer-Caldera**

Founder & Executive Director at EQUAL GROUND, Sri Lanka



# PART

## 01.



# WORKSHEET

## Developing your business case for a civil society partnership

Once you've read part one of this guide, use the following worksheet to start developing the business case for your partnership with civil society.

As part of the initial business case for a civil society partnership, you should aim to set clear objectives early on. Objectives can be internal and external, and can cover a range of workplace-specific goals as well as objectives which impact the wider LGBTQ+ community.

Think about setting SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound. These objectives will guide the development of your partnership as you begin to map out the first steps in part two of this guide.

As development progresses, you may discover that your business and the civil society partner have different sets of objectives, and your goals might have to change and adapt as a partnership agreement is reached. Remember, it's important to let local communities lead, and you should balance your objectives with those of your partner in order to reach an agreement about the key aims of your partnership.

Clear objective setting can also help with the development of an evaluation framework for the partnership – this is a key principle which is covered in greater detail in part three of this guide.

# PART 01. → WORKSHEET

**What are your organisational values?**

**What is your global diversity and inclusion strategy?**

**How will a civil society partnership contribute towards these values and your strategy?**

## **Key partnership objectives**

Internal partnership objectives could include delivering training on LGBTQ+ identities, ensuring data monitoring is inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity, forming local chapters of your staff network in global locations, or engaging senior leaders. External objectives could include promoting your organisation externally as LGBTQ+ inclusive, providing pro bono work to local organisations, or advocating for legal change in regions that criminalise LGBTQ+ identities.

# PART 01. → WORKSHEET

## Cost and resources

Consider the budget needed for this partnership as well as the resources, including staff time and capacity.

## Use research to strengthen your business case

A business case for a civil society partnership will vary greatly depending on the local context of your chosen market. Use research from a range of sources, including those listed below, to demonstrate the current experience of LGBTQ+ people, the legal and social challenges they may face, and how your proposed partnership can improve this.

- [Stonewall Global Workplace Briefings](#)
- [ILGA World State Sponsored Homophobia Report](#)
- [ILGA World Trans Legal Mapping Report](#)
- [TGEU Trans Rights Europe & Central Asia Index & Maps](#)
- [Williams Institute Social Acceptance of LGBT People in 174 Countries](#)

# PART

# 02.

# FIRST STEPS

## FIRST STEPS

# MAPPING OUT THE PARTNERSHIP

There are lots of reasons why you might consider developing a partnership in a certain country or region. You could be creating or reviewing your global diversity and inclusion strategy, your organisation could be expanding globally and opening offices in a new location, or there could be political change in a country affecting the local LGBTQ+ community. Whatever the driving factor, an initial mapping exercise is a crucial first step when developing partnerships with civil society organisations.

If you're looking to focus on particular issues such as healthcare, trans inclusion or support for young LGBTQ+ people, aim to engage with organisations that work specifically in this area. You could also partner with multiple groups to ensure a plurality of voices from the LGBTQ+ community are heard.

There are many important factors to consider in the initial stages. Here we have provided an **example mind map** based on a global business looking to establish a civil society partnership in India.

At the end of part two, you'll find a blank template of this mind map which you can use to plan your own partnerships.

## KEY PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES

LIST YOUR OBJECTIVES  
FROM THE BUSINESS CASE.

### EXAMPLE: ESTABLISHING A CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP IN INDIA

#### 1. DEVELOP AND DELIVER

in-house training on  
LGBTQ+ identities.

#### 2. DEVELOP AND PUBLISH

a support policy for  
trans employees.

#### 3. INCREASE RECRUITMENT

of LGBTQ+ staff.

#### 4. SUPPORT CIVIL SOCIETY

with the development, launch and  
delivery of a new support service for  
the local LGBTQ+ community.

FIRST STEPS

LOCATION

Think about your different markets, perhaps there are regions where you haven't started LGBTQ+ inclusion work, where this needs to be developed, or where you are soon to start operating.

*We already have civil society partnerships in Germany and Australia, both countries which have employment protections on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.*

*We have five offices across India and a recently established LGBTQ+ staff network chapter, but we haven't yet attempted partnerships with civil society.*

RESOURCES YOU CAN SHARE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

Think about particular expertise, skills and resources you can share as part of a partnership.

- Data and systems support: we can offer guidance and consultation for a small civil society organisation
- Meeting space: we can share bookable meeting space if needed for events or community groups
- Promotion: we can share the work of a civil society organisation across our social media platforms
- Sponsorship and funding: we can sponsor specific resources and events developed by a civil society organisation
- Mentoring: we can develop a mentoring programme to develop skills in specific areas

INSIGHTS YOU WANT TO GATHER FROM CIVIL SOCIETY

A partnership is an opportunity for your organisation to learn from the local LGBTQ+ community. Consider where you have knowledge gaps, and what you could learn.

- How can we best support trans employees in the workplace?
- Learn new ways to promote recruitment opportunities among the LGBTQ+ community in India
- Where is there scope for business advocacy, what campaigns can we support?

RESEARCH THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Use resources such as Stonewall's Global Workplace Briefings, ILGA World's State Sponsored Homophobia Report and Trans Legal Mapping Report to research what the legal and social situation is like for LGBTQ+ people in your chosen location.

*In India, there is no comprehensive employment anti-discrimination law in force that protects LGBTQ+ people. Same-sex relationships are not recognised by law, same-sex marriage is not legal, and consensual same-sex sexual acts were only recently decriminalised in 2018.*

*The recent Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 gives trans people the right to change their legal name or gender.*

CONSIDER HISTORICAL FACTORS

Explore the history of relationships between your organisation and the countries in which you're looking to establish partnerships, and how the legacy of historical factors might continue to impact LGBTQ+ rights.

*Section 337 of the Indian Penal Code was implemented under British colonial rule of law. Having repealed this legislation, Indian civil society is now striving to undo the resulting systematic homophobia, biphobia and transphobia that is woven into its institutions, at societal, cultural, and economic levels. There is a responsibility for our organisation to share its expertise and resources generously with civil society movements overseas, specifically in a manner that is empowering rather than paternalistic and neo-colonial.*

*We should support civil society efforts to dismantle legacies of white supremacy, specifically through partnership principles and behaviours that always respect and are informed by the authority and determination of in-country communities.*

ESTABLISHING A CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP

EXAMPLE MIND MAP

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

List out your key stakeholders for this partnership.

- India chapter of staff LGBTQ+ network
- Senior leaders in India
- Global head of D&I

INTERSECTIONAL AWARENESS

Think about the local context you have chosen and how the experience of other marginalised groups could intersect with LGBTQ+ identities. Ensure this is based on research rather than cultural assumptions.

*India is very diverse in terms of different religions and languages spoken, and there is a complex class system. Gender stereotypes in society can limit social mobility for women. Stigma against single parents exists and colourism is prevalent. All of these considerations, and more, will lead to different experiences for LGBTQ+ people in India dependent on a range of factors.*

## FIRST STEPS

## Making initial contact as a business

Having completed your business case and mapping exercise, you'll now know which locations you're looking to establish partnerships in. Not all civil society organisations will have had workplace partnerships previously, so be mindful of your approach. This could be a completely new area of work, and some organisations may be uncertain about working with global businesses.

There are a number of ways to explore the range of LGBTQ+ civil society organisations in your chosen locations. Don't forget that even though some organisations may not have specific workplace programmes, they may have services, expertise and resources which can support your LGBTQ+ employees. When researching civil society organisations to partner with, it's important to ensure your organisational values and beliefs align, and that their work aims to include everyone in the LGBTQ+ community.

Utilise established relationships with civil society. Your business may already have a civil society partnership in a different region, and you could ask if they have any global contacts with other civil society groups in your chosen location.

ILGA World, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, is a worldwide federation of more than 1,600 civil society organisations from over 150 countries and territories. You can view [the list of member organisations](#) online to find those that operate in your chosen locations.

You can explore our [Global Workplace Briefings](#), which include interviews with leading national civil society and signpost to a range of LGBTQ+ organisations and support services.

# CASE STUDY:

## HOGAN LOVELLS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN RUSSIA

Stonewall spoke to **Maria Kazakova**, Senior Associate and Diversity Champion for Russia at Hogan Lovells, about how a successful partnership with the Russian LGBT Network was formed.

Russia has a long history of anti-LGBT+ views in society and in politics, and this has been exemplified in recent years through the 2013 'gay propaganda law' and further anti-LGBT+ legislative attempts to protect 'traditional family values'.

Hogan Lovells' LGBT-inclusion work in Moscow first started in 2015. Considering the cultural and political context, this was a significant first step for a business in Russia. No one in the office was out as LGBT+, and LGBT+ identities weren't discussed at all.

The first goal was to create an environment at Hogan Lovells in Moscow where LGBT+ people and allies felt comfortable. We weren't aware of other businesses in the region doing this work at the time, so it was difficult to know where to start.

We understood that civil society should play an important role in LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace. As a first step we engaged with civil society contacts outside of Russia through relationships that had been built globally across the business. The Human Rights Campaign in the USA and the Civil Rights Defenders in Sweden both supported this first stage of LGBT+ inclusion by visiting the office in Moscow and speaking about the experiences of the LGBT+ community, raising awareness and starting to develop a more comfortable environment.



# CASE STUDY:

## HOGAN LOVELLS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN RUSSIA (CONTINUED)

After initial engagement with external civil society organisations, we were then at a stage where the conversation on LGBT+ rights had started, and we could look to form a strong partnership with a local civil society organisation in Russia. At the time, there wasn't any culture of businesses and civil society working together in Russia, and it was difficult to reach out and try and form a partnership. Civil society organisations were initially cautious about replying and engaging with businesses, and didn't know what to expect from working together. We continued to utilise our civil society contacts outside Russia to put us in touch with internal organisations, and then we heard back from the Russian LGBT Network.

After meeting with the Russian LGBT Network and hearing about their work, there was no doubt that we would work in partnership with them. Learning about what life can be like for LGBT+ people in Russia was really important for employees in our office, and we were grateful that the Russian LGBT Network shared their experiences and expertise with us.

The partnership between Hogan Lovells and the Russian LGBT Network is collaborative, and we both help each other. Our understanding of the lived experience of LGBT+ people in Russia has really improved, which in turns helps us to ensure our workplace is authentically LGBT+ inclusive. We can also ask for support on things like gender-neutral language or using the right terms in our local context. We use our expertise to provide their organisation with legal support, and we also collaborate on running events for the community, including an event on LGBT+ parenting and an event on hormone treatment for the trans community which will involve doctors and politicians. We can also support with fundraising campaigns by spreading the word among our contacts, although this may often have to happen discreetly. Collecting feedback from participants at the joint events we run is a useful way for us to evaluate the partnership and learn ways to improve, ensuring it remains impactful.

## FIRST STEPS

## First meeting and partnership agreement

Consider these key areas when planning an agenda for your first partnership meeting and putting together your initial partnership agreement:

### REVIEW AND AGREE OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES FOR BOTH PARTIES

It may be necessary to compromise and balance your needs as part of a partnership agreement. Ensure there are specific, measurable goals to work towards and achieve.

### WHAT IS IN SCOPE AND OUT OF SCOPE OF THE PARTNERSHIP

As well as discussing the key objectives, it's important to discuss what is out of scope of this partnership, setting boundaries and realistic expectations.

### RISK ASSESSMENT

It is often impossible to engage in LGBTQ+ advocacy without any risk, and this can vary significantly based on the local context. Complete a comprehensive risk assessment and create a risk management strategy to ensure risk can be addressed effectively. Consider potential risk to reputation, risk to staff, legal risk, and risk to local LGBTQ+ people or to wider local communities. You can find more information on addressing risk in our Business Advocacy Guide.

### AGREE WAYS OF WORKING

A contracting activity to create a safe and accessible space may be helpful. This should include discussions on confidentiality and personal safety, which could be necessary depending on the local context. These discussions should include all team members across your organisation who will work on the partnership. You should also set out the best means of communication for the partnership going forward.

### DISCUSS DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

The first meeting and partnership agreement are good opportunities to clearly lay out which party is responsible for various outcomes of the partnership.

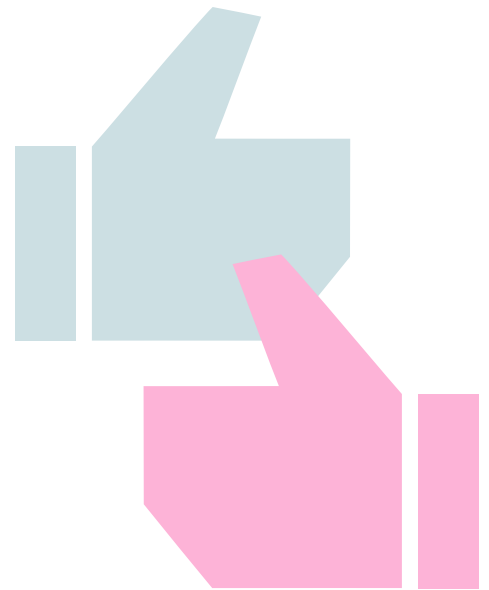
### SET OUT AN INITIAL TIMELINE AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Agree on an initial length of partnership with key milestones. Milestones should include dates for evaluation, and discussions on renewal which could depend on success criteria and mutual agreement.

### BUDGET AND PAYMENT

Set aside the necessary budget for the partnership and associated projects, and agree terms of payment.

## FIRST STEPS



When developing a partnership, it's important to outline the mission statement, define the interest and determine the roles of both parties.

Compromise is key to building mutual agreement, and there should be a clear outline of what is in scope and what is out of scope, ensuring any agreement fulfils the interests of both parties.

**HSBC Bank Bermuda Limited**

PRIDE Employee Resource Group

Employers should remember that collaborating with civil society, and taking clear steps to ensure their workplace is inclusive, can change people's lives. If somebody can't be out as LGBTQ+ in their family or in society, having a safe and open workplace can be hugely beneficial.

There is so much to do to ensure that workplaces are safe and welcoming places for LGBTQ+ employees and people belonging to other marginalised communities. Through our training sessions, we provide examples and recommend concrete steps to take in order to create LGBTQ+ inclusive workplaces. This includes policies, surveys, training, and broadening companies' Corporate Social Responsibility. Through this, employers can also deal with the specific intersections of LGBTQ+ identities and other marginalised communities. These intersections aren't generally visible in public discourse, and identities are often seen as separate issues. For example, the LGBTQ+ Roma community in Hungary face distinct challenges, especially in relation to coming out.

Háttér Society (Hungary)

# CASE STUDY:

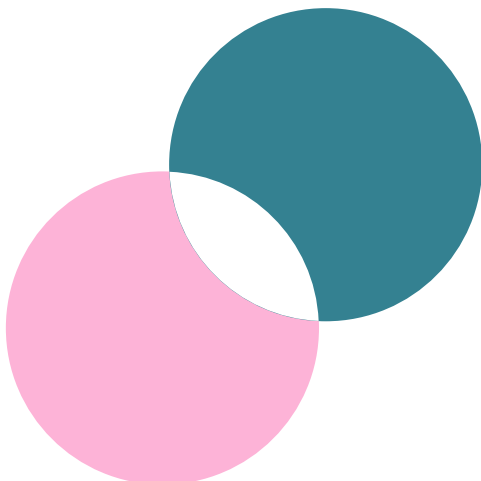
## A VIEW FROM CIVIL SOCIETY

We spoke to a range of **LGBTQ+ civil society organisations** about working in partnership with businesses. These examples aren't exhaustive, and it's important that you speak directly to potential partners about their needs and expectations.

### What do you look for in a partnership with a business?

In return for providing staff with training, and supporting businesses with diversity and inclusion policies and initiatives, we want them to engage with us regularly and continue with training programmes. Sometimes a business will invite us to deliver training to their head office as a one-off session, but this doesn't trickle down to branches or local offices. Regular engagement across all locations is important when working in partnership with civil society, and it has a bigger impact.

**EQUAL GROUND**, Sri Lanka



# CASE STUDY:

## A VIEW FROM CIVIL SOCIETY (CONTINUED)

When working in partnership with businesses, we expect them to develop a Diversity and Inclusion policy, with our support, that includes SOGIE, if they do not already have one in place. We also expect them to ensure the implementation of such policies and be ready and open for follow-up training and monitoring.

We expect businesses to support our programmes, include LGBT friendly programmes as part of Corporate Social Responsibility, and to refer or connect other businesses to our trainings so that these policies trickle down to their supply chain.

**Bisi Alimi Foundation, Nigeria**

We have not worked in partnership with businesses yet. When we have the opportunity to work with businesses, we will look out for commitment from Senior Leadership around the work we are doing together. Creating an ally at Senior Management level who will support the work being done and provide the space and resources for the partnership is a good way to approach working together.

**Solace Initiative, Ghana**

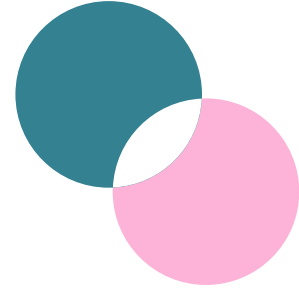
When considering partnerships with business, we would look for the following commitments: an inclusive gender and sexuality policy that protects the rights of LGBTI employees and strong action if anyone faces harassment and discrimination due to their gender and sexual identity; regular orientation training for all employees on LGBTI issues and how to communicate respectfully with people from the LGBTI community; creating employment opportunities for the people from the Hijra and the transgender community.

Businesses can play a key role in forming an inclusive work culture within their workplace, as well as sharing best practice among their networks so that the business community as a whole can become an ally for the LGBTI community.

**Anonymous LGBTI Rights Organisation, Bangladesh**

# CASE STUDY:

## A VIEW FROM CIVIL SOCIETY (CONTINUED)



### Can you share examples of working in partnership with businesses?

We worked in partnership with one of the biggest businesses in Sri Lanka, and it was a great success story. We pitched the partnership to the Chair of the board and executive staff and at the end they offered us money, because that's what they thought we were after. However, on this occasion it wasn't what we wanted, and instead we asked if we could offer sensitisation training to their staff and review their HR policies to ensure they accept and protect LGBTIQ people.

Over the next year and a half, we delivered training to over 5,000 staff across Sri Lanka and we made sure their policies were inclusive. It's been a great initiative. The business has been able to promote its workplaces as inclusive and they have also helped to dispel any myths about being openly LGBTIQ inclusive for other businesses. Working with us isn't detrimental to your business – it's an advantage!

**EQUAL GROUND, Sri Lanka**

We work with a lot of businesses to enable and advance their journey of LGBTI+ inclusion. There's a lot that goes into understanding where the organization is currently, their overall D&I plan and strategy and how ready they are for LGBTI+ inclusion. That might involve actively hiring LGBTI+ talent, sensitizing the employees, having visible and vocal allies, buy-in from the senior leadership, setting up their ERG, or building inclusive policies.

We've partnered with a lot of organizations to help audit their existing policies – ensuring they are gender neutral and cater to all employees. We've also helped several organizations build inclusive policies from scratch, as well as helping set up ERGs and assisting in planning their LGBTI+ inclusion roadmap for the year. Pride Circle has also conducted sensitization trainings for various organizations. This training is open to all employees and covers terminology, definitions, role-based scenarios and more.

**Pride Circle, India**

# 02.

## WORKSHEET

### Mind map for a civil society partnership

Once you've read part two of this guide, use this blank template to map out your civil society partnership

#### KEY PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES

LIST YOUR OBJECTIVES FROM THE BUSINESS CASE.

1.

2.

3.

4.

# PART 02. WORKSHEET

## LOCATION

Think about your different markets, perhaps there are regions where you haven't started LGBTQ+ inclusion work, where this needs to be developed, or where you are soon to start operating.

## RESEARCH THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Use resources such as Stonewall's Global Workplace Briefings, ILGA World's State Sponsored Homophobia Report and Trans Legal Mapping Report to research what the legal and social situation is like for LGBTQ+ people in your chosen location.

## CONSIDER HISTORICAL FACTORS

Explore the history of relationships between your organisation and the countries in which you're looking to establish partnerships, and how the legacy of historical factors might continue to impact LGBTQ+ rights.

## RESOURCES YOU CAN SHARE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

Think about particular expertise, skills and resources you can share as part of a partnership.

## INTERSECTIONAL AWARENESS

Think about the local context you have chosen and how the experience of other marginalised groups could intersect with LGBTQ+ identities. Ensure this is based on research rather than cultural assumptions.

# ESTABLISHING A CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP

## TEMPLATE MIND MAP

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

List out your key stakeholders for this partnership.

## INSIGHTS YOU WANT TO GATHER FROM CIVIL SOCIETY

A partnership is an opportunity for your organisation to learn from the local LGBTQ+ community. Consider where you have knowledge gaps, and what you could learn.



**PART**

**03.**

**DELIVERY  
AND EVALUATION**

## DELIVERY AND EVALUATION

# LAUNCHING AND PROMOTING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS

Launching a partnership with civil society is a brilliant opportunity to promote your values as a business internally and externally, and it can also be a chance to platform the voices of the local LGBTQ+ community.

**Internally communicating your work** with civil society is an important element of creating an inclusive workplace environment. It can be beneficial for staff to see their organisation live their values, and it can also be an opportunity to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and the experience of the local community.

**Externally promoting your partnerships** can help to attract a diverse range of employees who believe in LGBTQ+ equality and it can help to make your brand more attractive to clients and customers, showing that your support for the community is authentic and your work is in collaboration with local groups.

You can use the launch of a partnership to **give a platform to civil society**. For example, you could hold a panel event or roundtable with speakers from your partner organisation, or introduce them to your clients, suppliers and stakeholders.

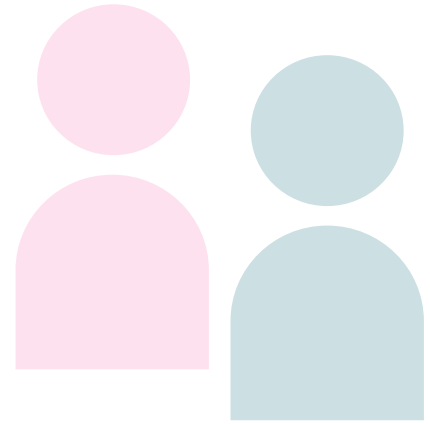
As the partnership develops, you should continue to **celebrate successes** with communications, promotion and events.

It's important to note that promoting your civil society partnership won't always be possible, and may even pose a risk to partners, staff and the wider LGBTQ+ community, depending on the local context. As with all elements of the partnership, ensure that you are led by the local community, and that civil society has core agency when it comes to potential promotion of your partnership.

## DELIVERY AND EVALUATION

In the US, Baker McKenzie's Chicago office partnered with Equality Illinois, supporting their annual gala event which included lending office space to host a pre-gala, bringing together local politicians and civil society organisations, and providing pro bono legal support. Baker McKenzie attorneys drafted proposed changes to the Illinois School Code, as well as a legislative memo in support of the changes for a bill that includes LGBT history as part of the curriculum in Illinois public schools. They also ensure that textbooks are non-discriminatory on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and all other bases protected under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

**Baker McKenzie**



We make sure to communicate all our civil society partnerships internally, raising awareness and showing employees how we live our values as an organisation.

**Mickey van Helden**

EMEA Diversity & Inclusion Specialist  
at Baker McKenzie

As a global organisation, if all our LGBTQ+ inclusion work was to come out of our UK headquarters, it wouldn't feel like it applied to everyone and it would be harder for all of our global employees to see themselves reflected in this work. When we partner with local organisations, our diversity and inclusion work becomes authentic: we can learn about challenges that the local community face and it's more powerful for our LGBTQ+ staff.

**Lauren Bishop**

Senior HR Manager at Allen & Overy

# CASE STUDY:

## IBM - ESTABLISHING IMPACTFUL GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Stonewall spoke to **Marijn Pijnenburg**, Global Business Development Executive at IBM, about IBM's approach to civil society partnerships across the world.

**As a business, why are partnerships with civil society important to you?**

Working with civil society is, and always has been, an important part of our corporate strategy at IBM. Civil society organisations can provide in-depth knowledge of the local community, allowing us to really understand what the issues and challenges are for LGBTQ+ people. Civil society can help companies like ours, with a big global footprint, understand what we could and should do in the local environment, and most importantly it enables us to build a relationship with the community. IBM currently has dozens of partnerships with civil society across the world.

# CASE STUDY:

## IBM - ESTABLISHING IMPACTFUL GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS (CONTINUED)

### What is your advice for businesses and civil society organisations looking to work together in partnership?

We believe that the key criteria for successful partnerships with civil society are trust, collaboration, sharing values and behaviours, and learning together. A long-term and successful partnership should be an open relationship in the sense that you're regularly communicating, developing, learning and supporting each other's goals.

At IBM, one of our key aims is to help civil society organisations grow and continue to be effective, so it is important to be

led by their aims and objectives. We also have to understand where we can do our bit and help, and where the work should be led by civil society, not businesses. For example, IBM has worked closely with civil society on campaigns for same-sex marriage across Northern Ireland, Taiwan and the Czech Republic. In such important advocacy campaigns, it's necessary for each party to understand each other's roles and responsibilities and who should lead in which areas in order to be most effective.

### What can a business do if they operate in a location where there isn't any active LGBTQ+ civil society?

This is a challenge that IBM has faced in the past. In some jurisdictions, there have been opportunities to support the development of local LGBTQ+ civil society. A good example of this is in Slovakia, where IBM had an active LGBTQ+ staff network. In collaboration with diplomats and other corporations in the region, we held a successful LGBTQ+ business forum marketplace event.

The success of the event encouraged the formation of Diversity Pro, a non-governmental organisation which raises awareness of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion. In other challenging environments for the LGBTQ+ community, we've held roundtables or diversity events to start the conversation, sometimes behind closed doors if this is necessary. The safety of LGBTQ+ people in the country is always our primary concern.

# CASE STUDY:

## IBM - ESTABLISHING IMPACTFUL GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS (CONTINUED)

### What is the internal workplace impact of IBM's external partnerships with civil society?

Our external partnerships with civil society have had a really excellent impact on the internal workplace. When we advocate in the public sphere in collaboration with civil society, we are being seen externally as a leader, our core values and objectives are being demonstrated, we stand out in the marketplace, and this energises our employees.

We believe that an important part of being a leader in our field is to address equality topics which are important for us, our employees and their families, and we like our values to be seen externally. This work helps to make our organisation more attractive as a workplace for anyone who believes in inclusion.

### How do you evaluate your partnerships with civil society?

We have a clear evaluation mechanism for all of our partnerships, allowing us to review each partnership in regard to how effective it is, its impact internally at IBM, and its impact externally on the community. Using this mechanism allows us to understand where to provide our support. Regular impact evaluation also allows businesses to be flexible with where and how they can best engage. It's important to align the local and

global priorities when working with civil society organisations. When, for example, there has been great impact overall already and the civil society organisation has grown and developed, we might shift resources to regions where it is more needed. The evaluation process allows us to make these informed decisions, but however partnerships may change, the strong relationship which we have built on trust doesn't come to an end.

## DELIVERY AND EVALUATION

## Navigating challenges

A range of challenges may present themselves during various stages of a business and civil society partnership. It's important to consider how you would navigate potential challenges, ensuring the most impactful outcomes, efficient use of resources and sustainability of the partnership.

### OPERATING IN CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS FOR LGBTQ+ PEOPLE

The situation for the LGBTQ+ community will be different in individual jurisdictions, and it could potentially change rapidly due to factors such as political change, legal change and civil unrest. Regular communication with your local civil society partner will help you to keep up to date and to prepare for any negative impacts on the LGBTQ+ community that may come as a consequence of political, legal and social changes.

Your civil society partnerships may become more important than ever in challenging environments, but they may also have to quickly adapt in order to protect vulnerable communities. Take your lead from civil society and keep a flexible approach, ensuring you are prepared for any potential changes. Our [Business Advocacy Guide](#) includes key considerations for businesses when responding in a crisis.

### COMMUNICATION

Regular communication is key to successful partnerships. If this breaks down, reassess your communication channels and your approach, identifying any barriers that have led to poor communication.

### SHARED GOALS

During the course of a partnership, individual objectives for your business and the civil society organisation may change. Therefore, you may need to realign your shared strategy and goals to ensure that these are still clear, feasible and measurable.

### LGBTQ+ CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS DO NOT OPERATE IN YOUR LOCATION

There may be barriers for civil society participation, LGBTQ+ organisations may have to operate discreetly, or they may not exist at all. The framework set out by the [UN Global LGBTI Standards of Conduct for Businesses](#) provides opportunities and guidance for businesses to engage in LGBTQ+ inclusion work, even in jurisdictions where civil society organisations do not operate.

## DELIVERY AND EVALUATION

## Navigating challenges: practical example

**Company X forms a new partnership with civil society organisation Y** in a country where consensual same-sex sexual activity is legal, broad employment protections exist on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and there is legal gender recognition for trans people.

**The key partnership objectives are:**

- train employees internally on LGBTQ+ identities
- campaign together externally for equal marriage

Six months after the launch of the partnership, a new government is elected, and it is made clear they have no intention to support equal marriage. Instead, they plan to ban legal gender recognition and adoption by same-sex couples.

Reports of hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people increase, civil society organisation Y receives threats, and their office building is vandalised.

**Company X reaches out to civil society organisation Y** and meet to review the partnership objectives and realign the strategy. **Company X are led by the recommendations of civil society,** and ensure that all actions prioritise the safety of LGBTQ+ staff and the wider community.

**Company X provides a venue** to host a roundtable of local businesses in collaboration with civil society, and **an open letter is written to the government** from the business community in support of LGBTQ+ people.

**Company X also promotes a fundraising campaign for the civil society organisation** with clients and stakeholders, raising money for support services, legal claims and repair costs for their office space.

The internal training for employees continues with the aim of ensuring all offices are welcoming and inclusive environments. The external partnership objectives are adjusted to focus on advocating for protections for trans people and LGBTQ+ parents.



# CASE STUDY:

## CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

The State Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Trans and Bisexuals (FELGTB) is a non-governmental organisation that groups together more than 50 LGTBI entities from all over the Spanish territory. They have more than 25 years of experience of campaigning for LGBTI people in Spain.

Stonewall spoke to **Carmen Fernández-Vivanco** and **Carmen Sanchez** at FELGTB, about the 'YES, WE TRANS' programme<sup>4</sup> which is run in partnership with businesses and aims to improve inclusion for trans people in the workplace.

### What do you see as the benefits of working in partnership with businesses?

For us at FELGBT, one of the main benefits of partnering with businesses is that it helps to ensure our programmes are sustainable. Partnerships also open the door to connections across the business world, helping us to reach out to more companies that might want to work with us.

We also think there are key benefits to businesses when they work in partnership with us. They can link their brand with our values as a recognised human rights organisation, ensure their corporate social responsibility work addresses the biggest current issues for the LGBTI community, increase their public visibility on these issues with promotion through our channels, and gain access to training workshops for Human Resources departments. In summary, working with us can give businesses a competitive advantage and increase employee motivation, talent attraction and retention, corporate reputation and customer and supplier loyalty.

# CASE STUDY:

## CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION (CONTINUED)

### Can you tell us more about the YES, WE TRANS programme and why it was created?

Unfortunately, we found that there was a general lack of awareness across business networks of the realities for trans people accessing employment. 85% of trans people in Spain are unemployed, and 77% of trans women have suffered discrimination when looking for work.

That is why we set up 'YES, WE TRANS', a pioneering national initiative in

collaboration with private sector companies and public bodies which seeks to increase employment opportunities for the trans community, with a specific focus on trans women. The programme connects trans job seekers with businesses, and we also offer training and awareness-raising resources to HR and Diversity & Inclusion teams on the realities of trans experiences, ensuring workplaces are inclusive environments.

### What are the key things you look for when partnering with a business?

Signing a partnership agreement is important for us. In the 'YES, WE TRANS' programme this allows us to form an official and sustainable relationship with the business, during which we can meet with them and analyse their current position in detail, ultimately allowing us to offer them the best possible guidance when it comes to employing trans people and creating the right workplace environment. We see these partnerships as alliances with businesses. Not only does this benefit people and companies, it also benefits the wider culture. We want to transform society and the labour market so that the dignity and worth of the trans community is recognised.

## DELIVERY AND EVALUATION

## KEY PRINCIPLES TO CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS

P

**PLAN:** Use our mind map template to establish your plan for the partnership. Develop clear success criteria and shared objectives and think about location, local context, historical factors and what you can share with civil society.

A

**AGENCY:** Efforts to advance global LGBTQ+ rights should be led by local communities, and it is vital to ensure that civil society organisations have core agency in your partnerships. This means that civil society should be fully and directly involved in any advocacy efforts through consultation and feedback processes and their unique, direct understanding of the issues affecting them should be respected.

R

**RISK:** When forming partnerships to advance global LGBTQ+ rights, you must consider risk to local LGBTQ+ people or to wider local communities as well as potential risk to reputation, risk to staff and legal risk. Complete a comprehensive risk assessment and create a risk management strategy to ensure risk can be addressed effectively.

T

**TALK:** Ensuring regular and open communication between businesses and civil society is integral to sustainable and impactful partnerships. Internal and external promotion of partnerships, where it is safe to do so, can also help to create an inclusive workplace environment, show authentic commitment to the LGBTQ+ community, and platform the work of civil society.

N

**NAVIGATE:** A flexible approach can help you overcome stumbling blocks which may arise during various stages of a partnership. Your approach to business and civil society partnerships must also recognise intersectional identities and the diversity of lived experience within the LGBTQ+ community. Work closely with local civil society to understand the local context, ensuring meaningful prioritisation of the most marginalised populations within the LGBTQ+ community.

E

**EVALUATE:** Regularly reviewing and evaluating your civil society partnerships allows you to assess the progress towards your shared objectives and ensure your partnerships remain impactful. Use our evaluation framework to consider partnership efficacy and future plans.

R

**RECOGNISE:** Actively recognise and address the imbalance of power and resources between business and civil society. Businesses should look to balance and share power by letting local communities lead any LGBTQ+ advocacy work and should be led by the principle of 'do no harm'.

# PART

# 03.



# WORKSHEET

## Evaluation framework

Use this template to regularly evaluate your civil society partnerships

## PART 03. → WORKSHEET

Objective	Has the objective been completed? (scale of 1-10)

Outstanding actions to complete objectives	Timeframe

Partnership efficacy	✓
Is communication between partners efficient and timely?	
Are partnership meetings productive, focused and successful?	
Are outcomes of the partnership balanced for both parties?	
Is the partnership making a difference and having an impact on the lives of LGBTQ+ people?	

## **PART 03.** → **WORKSHEET**

### **Future plans**

**Where do you see the partnership in a year's time?**

**What external factors could affect the partnership?**

**Do the current partnership objectives need to be amended or realigned?**

# CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS FEATURED IN THIS GUIDE

## More information on the civil society organisations that have kindly provided case studies for this guide

### BISI ALIMI FOUNDATION NIGERIA



The mission of the Bisi Alimi Foundation is to advance the social acceptance of LGBT people in Nigeria by cultivating change in hearts and minds through research, training and engagement.

<https://www.bisialimifoundation.org/>

### PRIDE CIRCLE INDIA



Working with over 150 Indian and multinational companies across India, Pride Circle offers diversity and inclusion consulting with a mission of social equity by affirmative action for the LGBTI community in India.

<https://www.thepridecircle.com/>

### FELGTB SPAIN



The State Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Trans and Bisexuals (FELGTB) is a non-governmental organisation that groups together more than 50 LGTBI entities from all over the Spanish territory. They have more than 25 years' experience of campaigning for LGBTI people in Spain.

<https://felgtb.org/>

### HÁTTÉR SOCIETY HUNGARY



Háttér Society is the largest and oldest LGBTQI organisation currently operating in Hungary. The organisation provides support services, legal aid, training, organises cultural and community events, and conducts research and advocacy for the community.

<https://en.hatter.hu/>

### EQUAL GROUND SRI LANKA



Founded in 2004, EQUAL GROUND is a non-profit organisation seeking economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning/Queer (LGBTIQ) community of Sri Lanka.

<https://www.equal-ground.org/>

### SOLACE INITIATIVE GHANA



Established in 2012, Solace Initiative is a non-for-profit, non-governmental organisation committed to working for the promotion and protection of the human rights of all persons specifically Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) people in Ghana.

<https://solaceinitiative.org/>

# STONEWALL PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCES

**Civil society partnerships should always be part of a wider inclusion strategy. Stonewall has a range of programmes and resources that empower organisations to support LGBTQ+ people inside and outside of the workplace.**

## STONEWALL GLOBAL DIVERSITY CHAMPIONS

The Global Diversity Champions programme is Stonewall's best practice forum for global businesses who are committed to providing inclusive workplaces for LGBTQ+ employees worldwide.

Our team can support organisations looking to engage in advocacy and can connect businesses with LGBTQ+ groups in over 90 countries as well as other leading businesses working on LGBTQ+ advocacy.

For more information about Stonewall's Global Diversity Champions programme, visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/globaldc](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/globaldc)

## EQUAL WORKPLACES, EQUAL RIGHTS E-LEARNING COURSE

The Equal Workplaces, Equal Rights eLearning Course is a free online-learning resource designed to empower business and civil society across the Commonwealth to work together to increase access to employment for LGBTQ+ communities. The course contains information, best practice, and practical advice to aid you in your efforts to further workplace inclusion and advance LGBTQ+ employment rights. For more information about the Equal Workplaces, Equal Rights eLearning Course, visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/equalworkplaces](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/equalworkplaces)

## GLOBAL WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX

The Global Workplace Equality Index is Stonewall's comprehensive annual benchmarking exercise. To assess your organisation's achievements and progress on LGBTQ+ equality across your global operations, visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/workplace/global-workplace-equality-index](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/workplace/global-workplace-equality-index)

## OTHER STONEWALL RESOURCES

This guide is part of a series of Stonewall resources to help you create an inclusive workplace for your LGBTQ+ staff. To download your copies, visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/best-practice-toolkits-and-resources](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/best-practice-toolkits-and-resources)

**Also in the series of global workplace guides:**

- [Agents of Change: A guide to LGBT advocacy for businesses](#)
- [Do Ask, Do Tell: A guide to capturing data on sexual orientation and gender identity globally](#)
- [GDPR: Capturing data on sexual orientation and gender identity under the GDPR in the European Union](#)
- [Trans Inclusion in the Global Workplace](#)
- [Safe Travels: Global mobility for LGBT staff](#)
- [Global Workplace Briefings: Practical guidance on how to support LGBT staff in 38+ countries](#)



# Stonewall

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