

Final Report of:

**“STRENGTHENING THE INCLUSION OF LGBTIQ+ YOUTHS IN PLAN
INTERNATIONAL MALAWI’S KUUWA PROJECT”**

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PREFACE

This is a final report of a research project entitled; “Strengthening the inclusion of LGBTIQ youth in Plan International Malawi’s KUUWA Project (August 2020 – October 2020). Plan International commissioned the research project and engaged Art and Global Health Center Africa and Chancellor College consultants executed the study in Kasungu District.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights
KUUWA	Kulimbikitsa Ufulu ndi Umoyo wa Achinyamata
DEC	District Executive Committee
DHMT	District Health Management Team
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
MAM	Muslim Association of Malawi
PAR	Participatory Action Research
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ArtGlo	Art and Global Health Center Africa
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
UDHR	African Charter of Human and People's Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEDEP	Centre for the Development of People
CHRR	Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
HRNAP	Human Rights National Action Plan
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
LEA	Legal Environment Assessment
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
MHRRC	Malawi Human Rights and Resource Centre
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NAP	National AIDS Policy
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SOGIE	Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation
UNSDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strengthening the inclusion of LGBTIQ youth in Plan International Malawi KUUWA project study conducted a situation analysis of legal, social and security contexts for young lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer or questioning (LGBTIQ) persons and categorized different contexts, based on a level of enabling environment for LGBTIQ inclusion. The study was conducted in the Kasungu Program Area where the Kulimbikitsa Ufulu ndi Umoyo wa Achinyamata (KUUWA) project operates. The exclusion of LGBTIQ people from society violates their human rights; consequently, producing a harmful effect on both their well-being, on their society, and on a country's level of socio-economic development.

In Malawi, LGBTIQ people face discrimination. The marginalization and exclusion of LGBTIQ youth in society is so conspicuous to the extent that it makes them vulnerable to stigma, violence and discrimination based on their real or perceived Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE). Thus, LGBTIQ youth are given unequal or unfair treatment at work, school, health facility, church and society in general. In other words, society has a predisposition towards heterosexual people which is biased against LGBTIQ youth; consequentially, leading to exclusion and gross human rights violations.

Up to this point, little research has been conducted in Malawi to investigate the inclusion of LGBTIQ people, particularly using the KUUWA project as a pilot study. This study interviewed a cross-section of participants including: LGBTIQ people, chiefs, traditional leaders, religious leaders, District Executive Committee (DEC) members, Officials from various government ministries, staff of Plan International-Malawi, CSO representatives and representatives of Plan International Malawi KUUWA project partner organizations. A total number of 89 respondents drawn from the categories above were interviewed.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, we define "LGBTIQ" to mean sexual and gender minorities. On one hand, a sexual minority is a group whose sexual identity, orientation or practices differ from the majority of the surrounding society. Primarily used to refer to LGB or non-heterosexual individuals, it can also refer to transgender, non-binary or intersex individuals. On the other hand, gender minorities include anyone whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the gender norms associated with their sex assigned at birth.

The study employed the Umunthu participatory approach which affirms the humanity and dignity of every person regardless of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. "Umunthu" is a pan African philosophical concept of humanity often defined in a phrase 'I am because we are, or because we are, therefore I am'

The Umunthu participatory approach is designed to diffuse tension on sensitive and difficult subjects such as LGBTIQ issues and creates a safe environment for participants to amicably engage in an open and honest manner. The *Umunthu* approach begin with the premise of human equality; hence, it appeals both to LGBTIQ+ people and non-LGBTIQ+ people because all of them are human beings. Second, the *Umunthu* philosophy is non-aggressive in its nature; therefore, it does not trigger conflicts on a polarized issue like the LGBTIQ+ discourse but endeavours to build bridges of tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in society. Through the use of Umunthu participatory research workshops, participants were free to voice out their views in an open and honest manner, that assisted to unearth the

underlying attitudes, perceptions and practices that couldn't be easily voiced out if it wasn't for the enabling environment created through the Umunthu participatory approach.

The study employed five data collection methods in order to comprehensively and exhaustively grasp the construct of LGBTIQ youth's inclusion. The methods were: literature review, creative participatory workshops, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), key informant interviews, and on-line surveys.

FINDINGS

The study established the following major findings:

1. The study has revealed the existence of LGBTIQ people in Kasungu and that their presence is evenly distributed across the district. A sample of forty-six (46) LGBTIQ youth participants comprised of lesbian persons, gay persons, bisexual persons, transgender persons and gender nonconformist persons/queer were involved in the study and they were drawn from the following areas: Kasungu Central, Wimbe, Chiwengo, and Jenda. Mostly, the LGBTIQ youths' participants' ages ranged from 18 to 24.
2. The study has established that most LGBTIQ children and youth have to negotiate certain obstacles in their daily lives due to their Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE). For instance, most LGBTIQ youth have never disclosed their SOGIE to their parents, community and church leaders, teachers, and other influential people in the community for fear of homophobia. Hence, they live underground in hiding so that people in the community should not know that they are LGBTIQ people.
3. The study has also established that most of the LGBTIQ youths have been subjected to stigma, discrimination, marginalisation, denial of health services, police brutality, ridicule from friends and teachers at school, social exclusion ranging from being expelled from their church and some have been chased away from their homes.
4. The study has discovered the necessity of implementing LGBTIQ youth's inclusion programme that addresses the major themes of concern which were highlighted by LGBTIQ youths' participants as needing urgent attention. These include: safety and security, access to education, family rejection, microfinance empowerment, and access to health care services as well as mental health care.
5. The study discovered that traditional and religious leaders disapproves of same-sex relationships but are willing to accommodate and safeguard the rights of LGBTIQ people in their various spheres of influence.
6. The study established that youth CSOs working in Kasungu have not implemented any LGBTIQ youths programming in their various youths' interventions. However, study participants from various youth CSOs expressed their concern on the multiple exclusion of LGBTIQ children and youth in society. Moreover, they expressed willingness to be partners in any LGBTIQ programming that can be implemented in Kasungu.

7. The study found out that representatives from the District Executive Committee (DEC) in Kasungu unanimously disapproves of same-sex liaisons. They further mentioned of a DEC meeting which ended abruptly in commotion because it had an LGBTIQ agenda and members felt it was not worthy of discussion. However, some expressed profound knowledge concerning the experiences that LGBTIQ children and youth are undergoing in Kasungu. Moreover, they expressed the urgent need of initiating LGBTIQ youth inclusion programming in Kasungu district.
8. The study also established that there is a lack of knowledge, and information about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression amongst duty bearers, which in-turn culminates into ill treatment, negative attitudes, and perceptions of LGBTIQ people and sometimes denial of their existence.
9. The study established that the majority of LGBTIQ youth interviewed could freely open to Nongovernmental organisation workers, more than to any other group or leaders in their areas and school settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the major findings of the study, we make the following recommendations that could inform Plan International- Malawi's LGBTIQ youth inclusion programme interventions:

The social climate of LGBTIQ youths in Kasungu projects area shows a gloomy image in view of human rights violations and this necessitates LGBTIQ youth's inclusion programming by Plan International Malawi. Lack of knowledge and information by duty bearers is the main barrier to inclusion but could also be an opportunity for entry, addressing information and knowledge gaps could go a long way towards creating an inclusive environment.

1. Plan International Malawi KUUWA project could consider strengthening its working relationship with the gender, social welfare, health and victim support offices in the project district of Kasungu, by advancing the "Leave no one behind agenda," which is the United Nations' central transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Which also identify the recognition and inclusion of LGBTIQ children, adolescents and young people. (The leave no-one behind agenda represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole). This could be achieved by providing training about all groups of children, adolescents and young people that are at risk of being left behind, with special emphasis on LGBTIQ youths, and together formulate an action plan of how best they could be included.
2. Plan International Malawi and partner staff members need to be equipped with necessary skills and knowledge to ably identify predicaments LGBTIQ children, adolescents and young people are facing in KUUWA project area, and ensure that they are well included in the local structures and programming. Plan Malawi can achieve this through comprehensive orientation training of its staff and partners about Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and also soft approaches of facilitating difficult and highly sensitive conversations aimed at filling information gaps and sharing of knowledge with concerned stakeholders.

3. Many of the barriers in relation to LGBTIQ youth's inclusion work will either be alleviated or eradicated if Plan International-Malawi makes its commitment to LGBTIQ youths' inclusion and rights as more core, clear, and consistent. However, this needs to be collaborated with a dynamic and a more wholistic approach to LGBTIQ youth's inclusion focusing on the following factors: continuous learning of LGBTIQ youth's social environment, policy changes, and supportive senior leadership approach, organisational cultural change, developing networks, and partnerships with SCOs that are already implementing LGBTIQ inclusion and rights in Malawi.
4. Plan International-Malawi could consider partnering with competent organisations or projects with the same agenda of inclusion of LGBTIQ people programming in Malawi, mainly those that use soft approaches and expound the premise of human equality in a non-aggressive in its nature; that could not trigger conflicts on a polarized issue like the LGBTIQ+ discourse but endeavours to build bridges of tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in society.
5. Plan International-Malawi needs to put in place strategies that can aid project implementing staff to become aware of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, the existence of such youth and how best they can be included. Participatory workshops, using creative approaches could culminate into the formulation of collective and personal action plans by project implementers themselves, taking into consideration their context and their level of influence. In so doing, there will be sufficient interest and ownership of the action plans.
6. Plan International-Malawi should embrace a paradigm shift that involves changing the view that LGBTIQ youth's inclusion and rights are just a mere additional aspect rather than part and parcel of Plan International-Malawi's work. In order to achieve this, Plan International-Malawi needs to make its commitment to LGBTIQ youth inclusion and rights as more core, clear, and consistent. However, this needs to be collaborated with a dynamic and a more wholistic approach to LGBTIQ youth inclusion focusing on the following factors: continuous learning of the LGBTIQ construct, policy changes, and supportive senior leadership approach, organisational cultural change, developing networks, and conducting more research initiatives on the LGBTIQ topic in order to build an evidence base for the organisation.

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Plan International Malawi commissioned a research study entitled: “Strengthening LGBTIQ youth Inclusion in Plan International Malawi’s KUUWA programme.

A case of the “Kulimbikitsa Ufulu ndi Umoyo wa Achinyamata” (KUUWA) project was used as a pilot study. KUUWA is a five-year child protection and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) project being implemented in all the 31 traditional authorities in Kasungu District.

However, it has been observed that the KUUWA project does not adequately address the question of LGBTIQ+ inclusion. This has motivated Plan International- Malawi to recognise the need for strengthening opportunities in addressing the exclusion of LGBTIQ individuals based on their Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE). It is further recognised that LGBTIQ youth inclusion is the key for development of effective SRHR services, prosperity, and well-being in Africa.¹ Such knowledge can furnish critical actions and entry points for grasping where the greatest prospects for transformation rest, for underscoring areas where change is needed, and for forging alliances and partnerships to foster change at scale. Opportunities may take a variety of forms, including extant and new policies, discourses, or even data for supporting LGBTIQ persons or providing them with potential options to live better; technological developments that could benefit advocacy and networking; or new grassroots and global movements for boosting public engagement and communication.² Formal legislations could also offer policy and programmatic opportunities to more clearly focus on the multiple needs and concerns of LGBTIQ persons, including their access to healthcare, education, employment, etc.³ Also, LGBTIQ youth inclusion mitigates the negative impact of homophobia such as: verbal abuse, physical harm, and widespread discrimination and hostilities from social institutions i.e. the family, school, community, religious spaces, and government.⁴

Therefore, in view of the afore-mentioned, this research study was aimed at facilitating the inclusion of LGBTIQ youth by ensuring that their needs are addressed and they are able to claim their rights.

¹ Ndashe, Sibongile. "Seeking the protection of LGBTII rights at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights." (2015).

² Izugbara, Chimaraoke, Seun Bakare, Meroji Sebany, Boniface Ushie, Frederick Wekesah, and Joan Njagi. "Regional legal and policy instruments for addressing LGBT exclusion in Africa." *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters* 28, no. 1 (2020): 1698905.

³ Poku, Nana K., Kene Esom, and Russell Armstrong. "Sustainable development and the struggle for LGBTI social inclusion in Africa: opportunities for accelerating change." *Development in Practice* 27, no. 4 (2017): 432-443.

⁴ Msosa A. et.al (2019) Under Wraps: A Survey of Public Attitudes to Homosexuality and Gender Non-conformity in Malawi; 21 November, Lilongwe, Malawi.

1.1 CONTEXT



Age Distribution (P 2020)	
0-9 years	261,945
10-19 years	218,013
20-29 years	150,871
30-39 years	103,506
40-49 years	68,165
50-59 years	42,562
60-69 years	23,424
70-79 years	11,752
80+ years	5,385

Religion (C 2018)	
Christian	730,493
Muslim	18,769
Traditional	2,632
Other religion	79,174
No religion	11,885

Kasungu District

Demographic Information

Kasungu is a district in the Central Region of Malawi. The district covers an area of 7,878 km², borders Zambia and has a population of 842,953⁵

The LGBTIQ youth social climate in Kasungu district can be described as intolerant to some extent as it is characterised by incidents of homophobia especially by the duty bearers. There is seemingly lack of knowledge and sensitivity about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, which in turn exposes LGBTIQ people and their allies to stigma, discrimination, violence, and blackmail from health service providers, the police, and other government officials. 86.7 % of government heads of department interviewed didn't know about the exact meaning of LGBTIQ, and 60.9% described LGBTIQ people as those who have sex with same sex persons, against the true description of having sexual and emotional attraction to same sex people.

Kasungu is one of the few districts in Malawi that has no official LGBTIQ running project as the District Executive Committee meeting held in November 2019 refused to grant permission

⁵ "2018 Population and Housing Census Main Report" (PDF). Malawi National Statistical Office. Retrieved 25 December 2019.

to one of the organisations that wanted to implement a project aimed at addressing the health needs of LGBTIQ. One of the DEC members commented that:

“We didn’t want to hear anything that was to do with LGBTI people. This organisation, before even they finished their presentation, they were told to stop and go, Kasungu was not ready for a project of that kind, and almost everyone rose to protest their presentation, we chased them out of the DEC meeting and told them never to come back to Kasungu again.”

This is in line with what Human Right Watch Report said on Malawi LGBTIQ social climate that;

“LGBTIQ people in Malawi continue to face multiple stigma and discrimination that include persecution through mob justice by hostile societies, denial of the right to housing and health care services⁶, blackmail, police brutality or other security forces⁷, being bullied in schools⁸ and being forced to remain invisible.” And what T Johnstone said that there is a lack of knowledge and sensitivity about sexual orientation and gender identity, which exposes LGBT people to numerous social ills in Malawi.⁹

This sends two important messages, it signals unspoken agreement about duty bearers' actions to the perpetrators of violence, discrimination, marginalisation and ill-treatment of LGBTIQ people and cannot hold them accountable for their actions. This is evidenced by what this research learned that within 3 months prior to its commencement, 2 LGBTIQ youths aged 19 and 23 respectively, who both identified themselves as gay men committed suicide, and 1 more attempted suicide in Kasungu district alone.

But, interestingly, the Senior Chiefs and Local traditional leaders interviewed were more tolerant, knowledgeable and accepting, and were able to inform the research of specific examples of LGBTIQ people living in their areas of jurisdictions. They reported that LGBTIQ people they know are able to express themselves freely and associate with everyone, only that they are called feminist names but they seem to have normalised it.

MALAWI CONTEXT

Recently there has been concerns that the new government is intending to reverse all the strides the country has made towards granting of security, health and other social services to LGBTIQ people. Malawi’s response to the Third Cycle of Universal Periodic Review, just noted all recommendations aimed at guaranteeing human rights for sexual minorities, including those that were adopted in the 2nd cycle which were;

- A - 110.126 Guarantee that people of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities have effective access to health services, including treatment for HIV/AIDS (Honduras), and;
- A - 110.93 Take effective measures to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and intersex persons from violence and prosecute the perpetrators of violent attacks (Austria)

⁶ Human Rights Watch Report, Let Posterity Judge. 2018. pg 21

⁷ Human Rights Watch Report , Let posterity Judge. 2018. Pg 15 and 18

⁸ Southern Africa Litigation Centre and Nyasa Rainbow Alliance. 2020. Pg 13

⁹ Johnstone T (2015)

During the review, Malawi's non-committal response to the UPR recommendations, and the subsequent statements of the same by the president, the following concerns have been noted;

- That the new government, led by Dr. Chakwera is intending to reverse all the strides that has been made over the years as far as guaranteeing of freedom and provision of security, health services and other essential social services to sexual minorities are concerned
- That Government is forging ahead with subjecting human rights of LGBTI people to public decision by referendum.¹⁰ This is a well calculated political move that was started by the previous government and later shelved aside after immense pressure from local and international human rights organisations.

The “*Afrobarometer Tolerance Index*” claimed that only six out of every hundred Malawians would tolerate an LGBTIQ person as their neighbour.¹¹

A 2018 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report entitled: “Let Posterity Judge: Violence and Discrimination against LGBT People in Malawi” confirmed that “discrimination against LGBTIQ people is rife in Malawi ... creating an atmosphere in which some of its most vulnerable citizens are afraid to seek out police assistance or potentially life-saving medical care.”¹² It further made the following observation concerning the social climate of LGBTIQ people in Malawi:

In Malawi, a nation that criminalizes same-sex conduct, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people face routine violence and discrimination in almost all aspects of their daily lives. Police often physically assault, arbitrarily arrest and detain them, sometimes without due process or a legal basis, at other times as punishment for simply exercising basic rights, including seeking treatment in health institutions. Several transgender individuals told Human Rights Watch that the combination of criminalization of adult consensual same-sex conduct and social stigma has had an insidious effect on their individual self-expression, forcing them to adopt self-censoring behaviour because any suspicion of non-conformity may lead to violence or arrest. Several gay men in the capital city, Lilongwe, married women because of the nation's anti-homosexuality laws, to conform to society's expectations, and avoid suspicion and arrest.¹³

The above-mentioned sentiments were echoed by a 2019 study entitled: “*Under Wraps: A survey of public attitudes to homosexuality and gender non-conformity in Malawi.*” This was the first nationally representative survey of attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning (LGBTIQ) people in Malawi. It revealed that Malawi has a comparatively high LGBTIQ population that is known by a significant number of ordinary Malawians, but this reality remains hidden in Malawi's social consciousness. The study also revealed that attitudes towards same-sex sexuality and transgender identities

¹⁰ <https://www.nyasatimes.com/same-sex-marriages-to-be-decided-by-malawi-citizens-chakwera/>

¹¹ Rex Chikoko, “Malawi Ranked Second on Tolerance Index,” *The Nation*, (8.3.2016).

¹² <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/26/let-posterity-judge/violence-and-discrimination-against-lgbt-people-malawi>, (2.10.2020).

¹³ Ibid.

remain much less accepting. It further confirmed that large majorities believe same-sex sexuality and transgender identities are morally wrong or culturally unacceptable, while the proportion of Malawians who oppose same-sex marriage is four times higher than in South Africa.¹⁴

Same-sex relationships are deemed immoral by cultural norms and religious ideologies in Malawi, and overall Malawians are not tolerant of non-heterosexual sexualities. In a recent survey among Malawians, almost nine out of ten respondents (89%) said they would not accept a gay man in their family, and nearly three quarters said gay men should not be accepted in Malawian cultures or take part in Malawian traditions.¹⁵ When asked if communities should be encouraged to protect gay men, more than two thirds of Malawians said they should not. Around the same number said the protection of gay men's rights should not be included in the Constitution.

Widely made homophobic statements by the media, religious groups, NGOs, and the government contribute to high levels of fear among Malawians who identify as LGBT.¹⁶

The findings of this study has made at least four contributions. First, it has streamlined the strengthening of LGBTIQ inclusion in Plan International Malawi KUUWA programme. Second, it has advanced knowledge on the topic of LGBTIQ+ inclusion in Malawi. Third, it has contributed towards the creation of networks with various stakeholders who will champion the cause of LGBTIQ rights. Fourth, the study findings can be used to inform policies and interventions for NGOs and the public sector's inclusion of LGBTIQ youth and adolescents in Malawi and other similar contexts.

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Kulimbikitsa Ufulu ndi Umoyo wa Achinyamata (KUUWA) is a five-year child protection and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) project being implemented in all the 31 traditional authorities in Kasungu District. The project is funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) through Plan International Swedish National Office (SNO). The project goal being "Children, adolescents and young people (CAY) have the attitude and confidence to raise concerns on incidences of child marriage and teenage pregnancies and challenge underlying norms in society. " The project will cover the following aspects; Child Protection, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, inclusion in SRHRs and building the capacity of Civil Society Organizations and is premised on the following outcomes; 1) Children, adolescents and young people (CAY) have the attitude and confidence to raise concerns on incidences of child marriage and teenage pregnancies and challenge underlying norms in society; 2) Formal and non-formal child protection mechanisms (such as Child Protection Committees, Victim support Unit) at the community level effectively prevent and

¹⁴ Msosa Allan. et.al (2019) Under Wraps: A Survey of Public Attitudes to Homosexuality and Gender Non-conformity in Malawi; 21 November, Lilongwe, Malawi.

¹⁵ The Other Foundation (2019).

¹⁶ Singini, G. (2016) Malawi Times.

respond to sexual and gender based violence against children particularly girls are in place; 3) Children, adolescents and youth, in particular girls, have access to comprehensive sexual education and adopt safe and protective SRHR practices and 4) Civil society, including child and youth led networks and platforms, monitor and hold duty bearers accountable for commitments on children's rights to SRH and protection. Through trainings and orientations girls will have the confidence, knowledge, skills and agency to prevent and respond to child marriages, CSOs capacity will be strengthened to implementing laws and bylaws that prevent and respond to child marriages, family protective environment will be strengthened through positive parenting so too community child protection mechanisms on initiatives addressing gender-based violence. The project targets adolescents and youths aged 10-24 years with and without disability, adolescents and youths aged 10-24 years living with HIV (APLHIV) and sponsored children. These plus Youth-led organizations, namely Good Health and Sopani Youth Organization are direct beneficiaries of the project while Health workers such as YFHS providers, SWO, Police, DYO Parents/ guardians, Community based child protection workers, Traditional and religious leaders including influential people within the target communities and organizations working with people with disabilities are indirect beneficiaries.

1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research study is to assess the LGBTIQ youth's social climate and explore opportunities for inclusion in KUUWA project and other Plan International Malawi programming.

1.2.1 OBJECTIVES

In line with the aim of the research study, the following four objectives will be achieved. These are:

1. To conduct a situation analysis of legal, social and security contexts for young LGBTIQ persons in the project area and categorise different types of contexts.
2. To understand the needs of the young LGBTIQ persons and how KUUWA project and Plan International in Malawi can integrate the LGBTIQ inclusion into its programming to create a greater understanding of the challenges the LGBTIQ youths are faced with.
3. To identify entry points for integrating LGBTIQ youth inclusion in the communities where KUUWA project work for localised support structures.
4. To work with and learn from non-governmental organisations working with LGBTIQ youth social inclusion and rights in Malawi.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a literature review pertinent to the broad topic of LGBTIQ people discourse by focussing on four areas: (i) current state of research in Malawi on the topic of LGBTIQ discourse, (ii) legal status of homosexuality in Malawi, (iii) homophobia in Malawi, and (iv) the inclusion of LGBTIQ people.

2.1 CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH IN MALAWI

- The research team consulted local literature with the intention of identifying knowledge gaps to be addressed by this study. For instance, Chiwoza Bandawe's study entitled *A Survey on Alternative Sexual Reproductive Health Services available in Three Districts of Malawi*.¹⁷ The survey explored alternatives available for LGBTIQ persons if Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services are not provided by government facilities.
- Southern Africa Litigation Centre and Nyasa Rainbow Alliance's "we get traumatised in different ways, 2020" Key issues to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression in Malawi.
- The research team also consulted a book entitled: *The Homosexuality Debate in Malawi*.¹⁸ The author presents a detailed account of the homosexuality debate in Malawi looking at the socio-political, legal, religio-cultural, and human rights perspectives.
- And also, Allan Msosa's study entitled: *Under Wraps: A survey of public attitudes to homosexuality and gender non-conformity in Malawi*,¹⁹ is the first nationally representative survey of attitudes towards LGBTI people in Malawi.

2.2 LEGAL STATUS OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN MALAWI

The Malawi Penal Code has the following provisions in connection with homosexuality: Section 137A, Section 153, Section 154, and Section 156.²⁰ It should be noted that the Malawi Parliament amended the Penal Code in December 2010 to include section 137A on "Indecent practices between females". The section reads:

"Any female person who, whether in public or private, commits any act of gross indecency with another female person ... shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to imprisonment for five years."²¹

¹⁷<https://www.rutgers.international/sites/rutgersorg/files/SDTools/DEF%20Survey%20on%20Alternative%20SRH%20services%20for%20LGBT%20in%20Malawi.pdf>

¹⁸ Mawerenga, J.H., 2018. *The Homosexuality Debate in Malawi* (No. 28). Mzuzu: Mzuni Press.

¹⁹ Msosa Allan. et.al (2019) *Under Wraps: A Survey of Public Attitudes to Homosexuality and Gender Non-conformity in Malawi*; 21 November, Lilongwe, Malawi.

²⁰ <https://www.icrc.org/ihl-nat.../Constitution%20Malawi%20-%20EN.pdf> (15.12.2015)

²¹ Malawi Penal Code of 1930 (as amended) Cap 7:01 Laws of Malawi.

Ralph Kasambara, Malawi's former Justice Minister and Attorney General suspended the laws criminalizing homosexuality on 5th November 2012. He said that there is a moratorium on all such laws, meaning that police will not arrest or prosecute anyone based on these laws. These laws will not be enforced until the time parliament makes a decision.²² Samuel Tembenu, former Justice Minister, reiterated the moratorium on anti-gay laws in December 2015.²³

2.3 HOMOPHOBIA IN MALAWI

Mawerenga argues that extreme examples of homophobia in Malawi can be found in the various calls for the execution of LGBTIQ people. First, Apostle Samuel Chilenje of the Jesus Pentecostal Church called for the execution of gays in Malawi. Second, Sheikh Dr. Salmin Omar Idrussi, the former Secretary General of the Muslim Association of Malawi (MAM), called for the execution of gays in February 2014. Third, Sheikh Dinala Chabulika, the spokesperson of the MAM reiterated the call for the execution of gays in September 2017. Fourth, Ken Msonda, a Malawian politician, posted inflammatory remarks against the LGBTIQ+ community on his Facebook page. The post was entitled: "Kill the Gays."²⁴

In December 2016, thousands of Malawians participated in protest marches against abortion and homosexuality organised by religious leaders. The protest marches were against alleged proposals by the government to legalise abortion and homosexuality in the country. Various religious groups participated in the protest, which also attracted members of the Rastafari faith. Numerous images of the protest shared on social media show people carrying pro-life placards and anti-gay banners.²⁵

2.4 INCLUSION OF LGBTIQ PEOPLE

Mills argues that social exclusion of the LGBTIQ populations based on sexual orientation and gender identity can be identified in seven development priority areas: (1) poverty; (2) health; (3) education; (4) gender equality and women's empowerment; (5) economic growth and opportunity; (6) safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements; and (7) justice and accountability.²⁶

In 2015, all United Nations member states adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are rooted in human rights principles with the aim of fighting poverty and inequality and promoting inclusive development, "leaving no one behind." LGBTIQ people have worked within their countries and globally to raise awareness about their experiences of persistent discrimination and exclusion. However, LGBTIQ people have had very little data or research about their lives to draw on to inform policies, legislation, programs, and

²² Godfrey Mpondera, David Smith, "Malawi's Lawyer's Group Questions Legality of Suspending Anti-Gay Laws," *The Guardian*, (8.11.2012).

²³ Mawerenga, J.H., 2018. *The Homosexuality Debate in Malawi* (No. 28). Mzuzu: Mzuni Press.

²⁴ Mawerenga, J.H., 2018. *The Homosexuality Debate in Malawi* (No. 28). Mzuzu: Mzuni Press.

²⁵ <https://thisisafrica.me/politics-and-society/malawians-participate-protest-marches-abortion-homosexuality/>

²⁶ Mills, Elizabeth. 'Leave No One Behind': *Gender, Sexuality and the Sustainable Development Goals*. No. IDS Evidence Report; 154. IDS, 2015.

investments to advance LGBTIQ youth's inclusion and respect for their rights. Thus, the current need for such knowledge greatly outstrips the current supply.²⁷

In view of the afore-mentioned study findings, heightened global concern about the human rights of LGBTIQ people has called attention to the lack of adequate research on their lives and situations.

Jeffrey O'Malley reports that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) convened a workshop in April 2019 in Johannesburg, South Africa, with a broad cross-section of relevant stakeholders. The workshop was designed to discuss and develop a strategic framework for advancing social inclusion and human rights for sexual and gender minorities in sub-Saharan Africa as part of the effort to achieve the SDGs. Most importantly, a vision emerged from the workshop that the countries of sub-Saharan Africa will enable equal, inclusive, just, affirming, safe, productive, and fulfilling lives for all their people by 2030, irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.²⁸

The UNDP workshop identified and elaborated six, mutually reinforcing pathways to build on progress already achieved and to advance the vision of a truly inclusive society. These are:

1. The social pathway. Unequal power relations lie at the heart of prejudice. The attitudes and actions of friends, family members, community members, community leaders, and cultural influencers all play important roles in challenging (or perpetuating) prejudice, stigma, and marginalization. Social progress requires moving a critical mass of these social actors toward not only tolerating but also understanding and accepting sexual and gender diversity.²⁹
2. The legal pathway. Laws punishing consensual same-sex relationships between adults or denying or curtailing the rights of gender nonconforming people lead directly to harassment, state homophobia, extortion, and violence. They reinforce and are used to rationalize wider social discrimination and stigma. They also limit access to health, education, jobs, social protection, and other government services. Winning legal recognition of sexual or gender nonconforming people is therefore the foundation of action against discrimination.³⁰
3. The public services pathway. Public services are perhaps the most direct pathway to including and protecting the rights of sexual and gender nonconforming people in the SDGs. Both the SDGs and the African Union's Agenda 2063 are multi-sectorial and cross-sectorial. They recognize the importance of simultaneously making progress in poverty reduction, health, education, sustainable and inclusive cities, decent work, environmental sustainability, good governance, and more. Similarly, efforts to

²⁷ Badgett, MV Lee, and Philip Crehan. "DEVELOPING ACTIONABLE RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR LGBTI INCLUSION." *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 7, no. 1 (2017).

²⁸ [https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/07/strategic-pathways-inclusion-rights-lgbti-people-sub-saharan-africa/\(20.8.2020\)](https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/07/strategic-pathways-inclusion-rights-lgbti-people-sub-saharan-africa/(20.8.2020))

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

promote inclusion of sexual and gender minorities, as well as of other marginalized and excluded populations, must be multi-sectorial and cross-sectorial. Driven by the response to HIV, the health sector in many African countries is progressively becoming inclusive of and responsive to LGBTIQ people.³¹

4. Health pathway. More progress is still needed in providing health services for sexual and gender minorities, including mental health services, suicide prevention, and support to gender transition. Beyond the health sector, very little has been done. Priorities in other sectors include designing social protection programs to respond to LGBTIQ youth's families and households; challenging bullying and stigmatization of gender nonconforming children in schools; and addressing disproportionate poverty and unemployment among LGBTIQ people who have been driven out of school, rendered homeless, or suffered violence.³²
5. Strengthening democracy and governance pathway. The role of the state goes beyond enacting and enforcing laws; it also includes ensuring public access to basic services in different sectors. In terms of human rights, the state is the most important duty bearer, with an obligation to respond to "rights holders." Political leaders set the tone for either inclusion or exclusion. Strong democratic processes and institutions must include and protect minorities while simultaneously being accountable to the public with reference to, and the inclusion of (wherever possible), the right to state protection and the principles of do no harm.³³
6. Strengthening the LGBTIQ movement, its sub-components and allies. It is essential to increase their strength, diversity, and geographic and linguistic coverage and to promote intersectional approaches and mutual support and respect. Organized civil society groups, activists working alone and with others, and networks of such people and groups are all important actors to drive and influence progress along other pathways as well. Many social movements are relevant: those working across the spectrum of LGBTIQ (or sexual and gender minority) issues; those working for rights and inclusion of individual components of that broader movement (such as for trans people or lesbian/bi/queer women); and the many other movements that intersect with LGBTIQ issues, including the feminist movement, movements for decolonization, and movements for young people, linguistic or ethnic minorities, differently abled people, the poor and landless, and migrants.³⁴

2.5 CONCLUSION

The literature review has demonstrated that unless deliberate steps are taken by development actors at an international and national level, millions of people will be excluded from the benefits of international development because of their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the report presents a detailed research methodology that was used in the research study.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this study comprised of both desk and field research. The desk research was aimed at collecting data from secondary sources while field research was aimed at collecting data from primary sources through questionnaires, key informant interviews and Umunthu participatory research workshops.

3.2 UMUNTHU PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Recruitment of Participants

First, the researchers conducted research workshops organising visits. Meetings were held with KUUWA project staff and its partners, The Kasungu Director of Planning and Development, The Kasungu District Environmental Health Officer and the LGBTI Peer Leader for Kasungu central cluster. The research team, with the assistance from Plan International Area Development Manager for Kasungu and the KUUWA project management team and its partner organisations mapped out the roll out the plan that comprised of grouping traditional authorities' area of jurisdiction into five strategic centres.

The research team identified key link LGBTIQ persons, through local partners LGBTIQ peer educators in these strategic centers that were contacted and later visited to assess the possibility of mobilising LGBTIQ people within the said areas and also build rapport, and discuss about the feasibility according to the laid objectives. The second purpose was to understand the local context and also to build trust and iron out all areas of anxieties that might arise during the mobilisation process and hinder the progress of the research. Five strategic centers were later visited and meetings held in Wimbe traditional Authority, Jenda area, Santhe trading center, Chiwengo area and Kasungu Boma.

The research team was so impressed with the well knit network of LGBTIQ community in Kasungu that made the mobilisation easier than anticipated.

The mobilisation of Kasungu government departmental heads was done through the office of the Director of Planning and Development. The following heads of department were invited and confirmed; The director of health and social services, the District Gender officer, The District Social Welfare Officer, The Director of planning and Development, The District Education Manager, The Kasungu Police Officer in Charge, The Care Malawi District Coordinator, The KUUWA Project Manager, The District Labour Officer and the Kasungu first grade Magistrate.

The research team also secured an appointment with Traditional Authority Wimbe and Traditional leaders and Religious leaders in Santhe.

Plan international KUUWA project partners were invited by Good Health director that comprised of 15 youth focussed organisations within Kasungu area.

3.2.2 The Umunthu Action Research Participatory Workshops

Thus, the study used the Umunthu participatory action research methodology. Participatory action research (PAR) is a qualitative research approach that integrates the methods and techniques of observing, documenting, analyzing, and interpreting characteristics, patterns, attributes, and meanings of human phenomena under study.³⁵

3.2.3 Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative data from all the groups mentioned above was collected through Umunthu action research participatory methodology. Umunthu is a pan African philosophical concept of humanity, often defined in a phrase "i am because we are". Umunthu celebrates the interconnectedness and the interdependency of humanity with emphasis on love, unity, co-existence, diversity and togetherness. It is with the spirit of this philosophy, that is well known and respected within african communities that different people are brought together to celebrate what is common in people - our humanness, and downplay what is uncommon – our differences.

Umunthu action research participatory methodology started in all the workshops with icebreakers, aimed at ironing out power dynamics and bringing in the energy of playfulness, openness, trust and honesty. A safe space where there was no facilitator and facilitated, where



Figure 1: A research participant creatively introducing the other as himself

there was no right or wrong answer, everything was regarded as an opinion, where disagreements were encouraged – because umunthu believes that where two parties disagree, a new idea is born.

Before commencement of the workshop, the quantitative survey questionnaires are administered, followed by the ice breakers and energizers.

After the icebreakers and the sharing of objectives, the participants were assessed on the level of knowledge in sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, all gaps in knowledge were filled through a presentation. The purpose was to make sure that the process started from the same page as far as acronyms and abbreviations are concerned, that the data collected reflect the real opinions, perceptions, beliefs and experiences of respondents, not marred by any kind of misunderstandings.

³⁵ MacDonald, Cathy. "Understanding participatory action research: A qualitative research methodology option." *The Canadian Journal of Action Research* 13, no. 2 (2012): 34-50.

The first qualitative data collection activity was called “the Problem tree” activity. Participants divided in groups drew a tree from roots, trunk and fruits. Each root represented a particular problem they face; the trunk represented the causes and the fruits, effects. In most workshops with LGBTIQ people,



Figure 2: Group work, discussing about the problem tree

they stated the problems they face

at school, church community, police station and hospital. They pointed out ridicule in most of them, reluctance to be helped by police officers and health service providers, being chased from their communities and some being suspended from schools and churches. All these problems led to them shying away from public service centres, depression and self-stigma/isolation.

The results included rapid spreading of diseases and sometimes death, suicidal thoughts and suicides, being ignorant, joblessness, lack of association and being homeless.

The last but one activity was Focus group discussion. They were divided into 2 groups. The issues were then discussed at length. They commented on the need for their parents, teachers, pastors, police and community leaders to understand who they are and be able to protect them if there is any harm being projected to them. They



Figure 3: The facilitated focus group discussion

recommended that the projects targeting them as LGBTIQ people be extended to all stakeholders at community and national level.

Research assistants documented all the qualitative data presented, observations and argument for triangulation and better interpretation of the collected data.

The philosophical underpinnings of Umunthu participatory action research are congruent with “postmodern tradition that embraces a dialectic of shifting understandings” whereby “objectivity is impossible” and “multiple or shared realities exist.”³⁶ Also, Umunthu participatory action research philosophy embodies “the concept that people have a right to determine their own development and recognises the need for local people to participate meaningfully in the process of analysing their own solutions, over which they have (or share, as some would argue) power and control, in order to lead to sustainable development.”³⁷

Therefore, the Umunthu Participatory Action Research method was appropriate for this study, aimed at developing a consistent and comprehensive knowledge of the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in Plan International- Malawi’s projects.



Figure 4: Happy faces, having provided the space to share their concerns

³⁶ Kelly, Patricia J. "Practical suggestions for community interventions using participatory action research." *Public Health Nursing* 22, no. 1 (2005): 65-73.

³⁷ Mason, Jennifer. *Qualitative researching*. Sage, 2017.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE

A total of 88 participants were involved in the study comprised of 46 LGBTIQ youths participants, 10 religious and community leaders, 13 CSO representatives, 12 Government Sector Heads of Departments, 5 Plan International Malawi Country Management team members and 2 Government ministry officials.

Key informants participants comprised of the following:

- The Director in the Ministry of justice
- The Director in the Ministry of health
- Country Director – Plan International Malawi
- Programs Manager – Plan International Malawi
- Senior Gender Influencing Specialist – Plan International Malawi
- Education Manager – Plan International Malawi
- Risk and Internal Controls Manager – Plan International Malawi
- 1 Kasungu Traditional Authority
- District Gender Officer
- District labour officer
- District Medical officer
- District Social Welfare Officer
- District Health Officer
- KUUWA Program Manager
- District Education Manager
- Director of Planning and Development
- Community leaders (Local and Religious)
- KUUWA Partner CSOs representatives

Below is the demographical breakdown table of the LGBTIQ youths interviewed

Age	Gay people	Lesbian people	Bisexual people	Transgender	Intersex	Queer
18 years	9	1	0	2	0	0
19 years	11	2	3	2	0	0
20 years	4	0	2	1	0	0
21 years	2	0	0	0	0	0
22 years	3	0	0	0	0	0
23 years	0	1	0	1	0	0
24 years	1	0	1	1	0	0

The research only targeted the LGBTIQ youths aged 18 and above because those below 18-year-old youths are regarded as minors and cannot legally provide consent for research on

their own behalf, permission by at least one parent or legal guardian is required before a minor is enrolled in a research study. Research involving no more than minimal risk requires permission from at least one parent/guardian. Since LGBTIQ youths do not disclose their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression to their parents and guardians, seeking consent could have meant disclosing their SOGIE to parents, thereby putting them at risk.

There are so many LGBTIQ youths and adolescents in Kasungu district below 18 years of age that the research was not able to interview because of the legal and social implications outlined above.

3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The study used two sampling techniques: purposive and Snowball.

First, after the meeting with the KUUWA project management team and partner organisations, and also the LGBTIQ youth peer leader in Kasungu district, the research team conducted stakeholder analysis and divided the stakeholders into four main groups, the first group comprised of stakeholders that have more influence and more interest in the LGBTIQ social environment, the second group comprised of stakeholders that have more influence but less interest, and the third group comprised of stakeholders that have less influence but more interest, and the last group comprised of stakeholders that have less influence and also less interest in LGBTIQ social environment. Then the research team analysed the level of influence and particular interest of the first group and divided them into 3 major groups to be reached separately. The first group comprised of government heads of departments in Kasungu district that are responsible for the provision of public social services, and are major players and partners as far as youth psycho-social, economic and mental wellbeing is concerned. The second group comprised of community and religious leaders who are influential in safeguarding cultural, moral and religious values and public opinion is mainly shaped by their influence. The third group comprised of partners that are working with KUUWA project in Kasungu district. So, the above 3 groups were purposively identified and invited to take part in the study.

The second technique that was used in the study was snowball. We first identified one peer leader in Kasungu district, he happened to have a well-knit network with several peer educators across the whole district. Together we reached the peer educators who assisted to mobilise LGBTIQ people under their network.

3.5 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The study and the researchers involved strictly followed the guidelines which are stipulated in Plan International's child protection policy.

3.6 COVID-19 PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In view of the current COVID 19 global pandemic, the research team strictly adhered to the Ministry of Health laid down Covid-19 preventive measures.

At each and every workshop and public engagement, we did the following:



Figure 5: Participants queuing up to wash their hands

- We provided hand washing pails and sanitisers and enforced the washing of hands regularly
- The venues of the workshops were chosen in regard to space that aided the observance of safe distance recommended by the ministry of health
- We provided, and enforced mandatory wearing of face mask all the time
- We reminded participants before each workshop of basic principles of conduct in line with covid-19 prevention

3.7 LIMITATIONS

The following are limitations that the research encountered during the study

- The study was not able to interview some of the government officials from key government ministries due to conflicting schedules and in some instances, there was no response.
- There was less female representation almost in all categories of groups interviewed, despite putting in deliberate measures to recruit more female respondents
- The study was not able to interview LGBTIQ youths aged below 18 years of age, because they are minors and cannot legally provide consent for research on their own behalf, permission by at least one parent or legal guardian is required before a minor is enrolled research study. Research involving no more than minimal risk requires permission from at least one parent/guardian. Since LGBTIQ youths do not disclose their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression to their parents and guardians, seeking consent could have meant disclosing their SOGIE to parents, thereby putting them at risk.

Having presented the study's research methodology, the next chapter four presents a discussion of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter of the draft report presents a discussion of the findings of the research study entitled: “The Strengthening of LGBTIQ Youth’s Inclusion in Plan International’s KUUWA project.

The overall objective was to assess the barriers and opportunities to strengthen LGBTIQ youth inclusion in the intervention areas the KUUWA project focuses on, and understand the different environments in which Plan International operates in. The study had particular focus on the legal, social, economic and security contexts for young LGBTIQ persons in the KUUWA project area and the implications for using LGBTIQ inclusive approaches in child protection and SRHR programming which form the core focus of the project.

The discussion groups experiences into thematic areas and contextualises them against the socio-legal realities of Malawi. It further compares and contrasts these experiences against existing literature and research. In doing so, it aims to provide an analysis of the ways in which sexual orientation and gender identity and expression influence individual life chances and social inclusion. The research discussion then analyses the lived experiences of LGBTIQ youths in Kasungu district against the obligations of the Malawian Constitution and international treaties, and the rights inherent to all citizens of Malawi. At the end, the discussion put forward opportunities available for inclusion of LGBTIQ youth in KUUWA project interventions and main stakeholders that are key to its success.

4.1 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The presentation of the major findings of the study has been subdivided into the following sections: (a) religion and culture, (b) access to health, (c) harassment and violence (d) social climate (e) rejection from family (f) opportunities, and (g) capacity of Plan International Malawi in implementing LGBTIQ programming.

4.1.1 RELIGION AND CULTURE

1. The study discovered that most religious leaders disapprove of gender non-confirming identities and behaviours because they are considered to be a clear violation of God’s created order. This disapproval was reflected in their responses on how they would treat a member of their congregation or a person seeking spiritual help who disclosed to them that he or she or them is LGBTIQ person. The following were the responses:
 - *Same-sex behaviour is wrong and should not be tolerated in society because God created a man and a woman and if it was a proper behaviour God would have only created a single same-sex gender. So i would give him counselling and pray for him to deliver that demon, but he or she would not be allowed to congregate with the church until they have completely changed their sexual orientation.*³⁸
 - *I would not tolerate it, i I will advise him or her that he or she should not dare to join our church. Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed because of the sin of homosexuality*

³⁸ Religious leader in Santhe, Kasungu district during focus group discussion

*and, and most christians will be so unhappy with him or her congregating with them, they could either leave the church or they could sexually and violently abuse him causing bodily harm and psychological torture. Therefore, a good way of ensuring his own safety and health is for them to stay away. I would consider counselling and praying for them, but what would people say if they see me with them.*³⁹

This finding also confirms DW Media report on Malawi 2018. The report said religious influence would appear to stand in the way of social inclusion in Malawi. In December 2016 the Episcopal Conference of Malawi and Evangelical Association of Malawi held a protest march asking the government to enforce laws that criminalize same-sex relationships and homosexuality, arguing that they threaten traditional family values.⁴⁰ In most churches, if sexuality of LGBTIQ is known or is just suspected, they end up being excommunicated from church, and in that case, anyone associating with them is considered a sinner.⁴¹

The study discovered that both traditional and religious leaders disapprove of gender non-confirming identities and behaviours because they are considered to be a clear violation of God's created order and cultural norms. This disapproval was reflected in their responses on how they would treat a member of their congregation or a resident of their village who disclosed to them his or her LGBTIQ+ status.

But traditional readers who said they know 1 or 2 LGBTIQ people from their area of jurisdiction were more tolerant and accepting and had different views concerning LGBTIQ youth and children, excerpts;

- *I know 2 LGBTIQ people, 1 is from my village, we call him Nabanda, a feminine name and he is okay with that. He is a good person and loves associating with other people or just others, and most people like him. He does small businesses to earn his living, and every morning he would seat and wear make-up, do household chores that are considered feminine.*

A Traditional Authority (T/A) who was interviewed for the study said that he knows only one who was living in his area, he just suspect that he could be gay because of the way how he expresses himself. When asked how would he take it if a member of his village disclosed their sexual orientation, he had this to say;

- *I would take it as an opportunity and also an honour for him to trust me to disclose. And would ask for further assistance on how best to assist him or her from relevant non government organisations conversant with these issues, so that we may see how he/she would be helped without infringing their rights of being a human being, irrespective of his/her sexual behaviour, he needs to be protected.*

2. The findings of the study above confirms the quantitative results from 46 LGBTIQ youths, when asked "which of the following people would you not want to open up to about your sexual orientation, gender identity and expression?" 24% of the 46 LGBTIQ youths

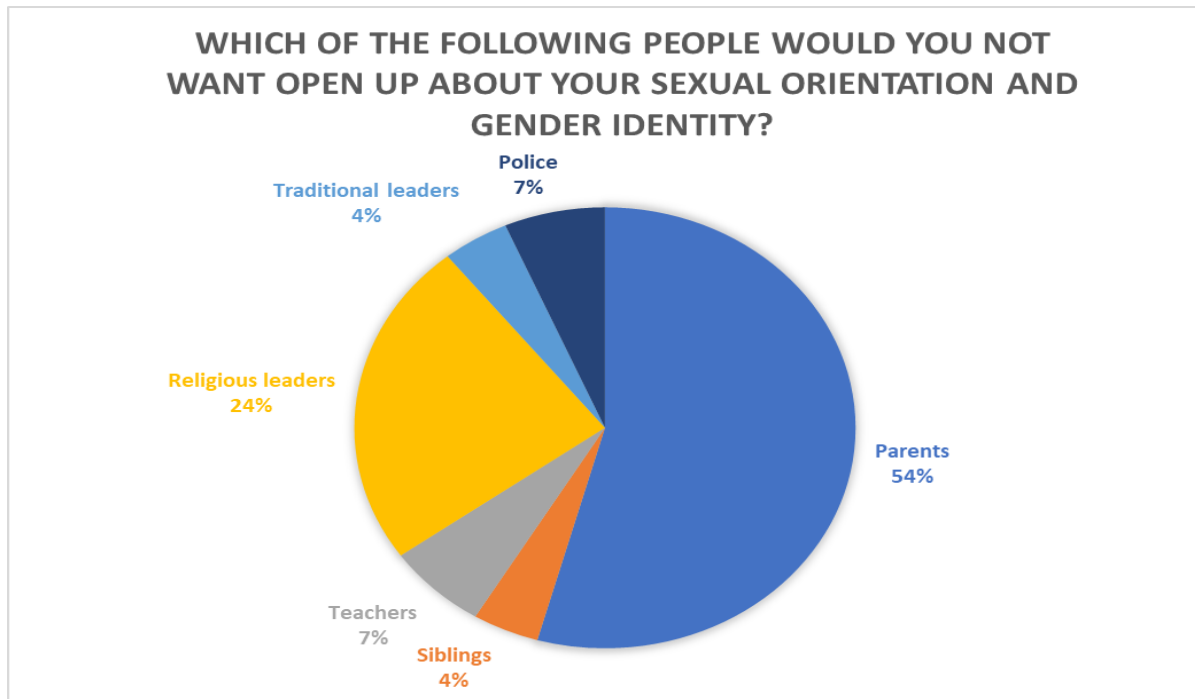
³⁹ Religious leader in Santhe, Kasungu district during focus group discussion

⁴⁰ <https://www.dw.com/en/malawis-lgbt-battle-for-health-care/a-37280415>

⁴¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/malawis-lgbt-battle-for-health-care/a-37280415>

respondents mentioned Religious leaders, as the second most category they would not want to open up about their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Most respondents, 54% of 46 LGBTIQ youth respondents mentioned their parents. Interestingly, only 4% of the respondents mentioned traditional leaders.

The chart below represent the responses of 46 LGBTIQ youths interviewed in the study.



- In addition, when asked to describe the social climate of LGBTIQ youth in the country, 91% of the 31 respondents from Plan International Malawi country management team and partners of KUUWA program said its hostile, with 87.9% citing religion and culture as the main influencing factors, while 11.3% mentioned the legal environment as not allowing for same sex relationships.
- The study established that all traditional leaders and religious leaders made a unanimous agreement that LGBTIQ+ persons have human rights. Despite the fact that their behaviour is considered as a malpractice or sin, they do have rights like anyone else. This finding of the study is in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) whose fundamental message lies in the following statement: "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."⁴² This is consistent with Huamusse's finding who argues that the protection of sexual minorities should be considered in the light of the international human rights instruments which are binding on all member states of the United Nations. Thus, pro-gay rights campaigners use human rights instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR), European

⁴² Universal Declaration, preamble, paragraph 1.

Charter of Human Rights (ECHR), International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Yogyakarta Principles to advance the inclusion of LGBTIQ people in society.⁴³

One important point that the study noted is the description of gays and lesbians. The local leaders who reported to the study that they know someone living in their area of jurisdiction referred to a gender non-conforming person rather than a gay person. Visibility of gender non-conforming youth make them more vulnerable to discrimination, public ridicule and stigma, unlike other categories in the LGBTIQ spectrum, they can conceal their identities without any suspicions unless if they are outed or decide to disclose.

LGBTIQ participants who took part in the study echoed traditional and religious leaders stand points and had this to say;

They say that we are destroying their culture and tradition. Therefore, they consider being an LGBTIQ+ person to be a taboo, or a social outcast.

Conclusion

This study findings revealed that there seem unacceptance and intolerance of LGBTIQ youth by religious and traditional leaders that have less or no exposure and no knowledge or prior experience of LGBTIQ people before. Those that agreed that they know and have lived with 1 or 2 LGBTIQ persons were more accepting and tolerant. This could be an opportunity for entry for future interventions aimed at achieving inclusion of LGBTIQ youth in KUUWA programming, by engaging the community and religious leaders through provision of right information, exposure to real life LGBTIQ people's lived experiences, ideally shared by LGBTIQ people themselves, will be a sure way of putting a human face to their narratives in order to impact on the prevailing attitudes, perceptions and beliefs.

The meaning of homosexuality or LGBTIQ depends on the interpretation according to each individual's localized imagination. As such, the meanings of homosexuality vary for different Malawians. Most Malawians associate homosexuality with non-consensual anal sex involving at least one adult male. It is rarely associated with consensual conduct, love or non-sexual activities. However, sexualities that transgress the heterosexual norm in Malawi are complex. Some LGBTIQ people have relations with people of the same sex. Some have no relationships at all. Some live a heterosexual sexual life but prefer to live as someone of an opposite gender. Some have relationships with people of male and female genders. Some transgress heterosexual norms. Some transgress such norms due to biological or medical reasons (e.g. intersex people).⁴⁴

4.1.2 ACCESS TO HEALTH

⁴³Luis Edgar Francisco Huamuse, "The Rights of Sexual Minorities under the African Human Rights Systems," LLM, University of Western Cape, 2006.

⁴⁴ <https://outrightinternational.org/content/lgbtiq-rights-debate-malawi>

The findings of the study discovered that there are widespread health access disparities against LGBTIQ people in Kasungu due to stigma and discrimination, mainly perpetrated by health service providers. A study participant said that the LGBTIQ community in Kasungu has a well-knit network, that when violence or ill-treatment has been perpetrated against one member, the rest of the LGBTIQ people get hold of it and they react accordingly. The study participant in TA Kaluluma shared the following:

"I went to the hospital, in the consultation room, before I explained about my health problem, the clinician asked why my health passport indicated that I am male while I looked and talked like female, I told him that I am male, and when I told him about my anal infection, he asked me if I am gay, I disclosed that I am because I really wanted to be assisted. He went out, and then one by one of his fellow clinicians started coming into the consultation room and going out, then he came back with a nurse and told me that they don't assist gay people, I deserve the infection and should die of it, he said it's a punishment from God, he threw at me my health passport and told me to leave. I never wanted to go back to the hospital because of that experience."

This confirms Art and Global Health, Umunthu baseline study findings. Consultations with health workers, district health management teams, and LGBTI respondents highlighted the significant levels of discrimination faced by LGBTIQ populations when seeking health services. Project stakeholders supported the view that homosexuality and sexual 'deviance' are viewed as an external, western, imposition on Malawian culture and norms⁴⁵ Attitude, perceptions and beliefs, that are usually influenced by religion and culture play a big role in deciding whether to treat or not to treat patients.

Another study found that some healthcare service providers report sexual and gender minority people to law enforcers under section 153 of the Penal Code, despite the fact that there is no legal obligation to do so.⁴⁶ And other health service providers violate the privacy and confidentiality of LGBTIQ youth by disclosing to other community members.

Several LGBTIQ respondents highlighted the need for (1) non-disclosure and confidentiality, (2) non-discriminatory health services and (3) relevant care⁴⁷

When asked if they have a chance to speak to health service providers, the LGBTIQ study participants had this to say:

They should welcome us with love whenever we are seeking for health care services. Sometimes, as LGBTIQ+ people we fail to explain the exact health problem we are experiencing for fear that we will be judged by the medical personnel. Therefore, healthcare workers should create a free, safe, private and confidential atmosphere to ensure that LGBTIQ+ people can fully be assisted.

This confirms the 'Are we doing alright?' study findings, which interviewed 197 Malawians who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, confirms that LGBTIQ people living in Malawi experience discrimination when accessing healthcare services. One third of the study participants (34%) had been denied healthcare because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression. Almost half of LGBTIQ study participants (47%) had been

⁴⁵ Art and Global Health Center Africa, Umunthu Baseline Study

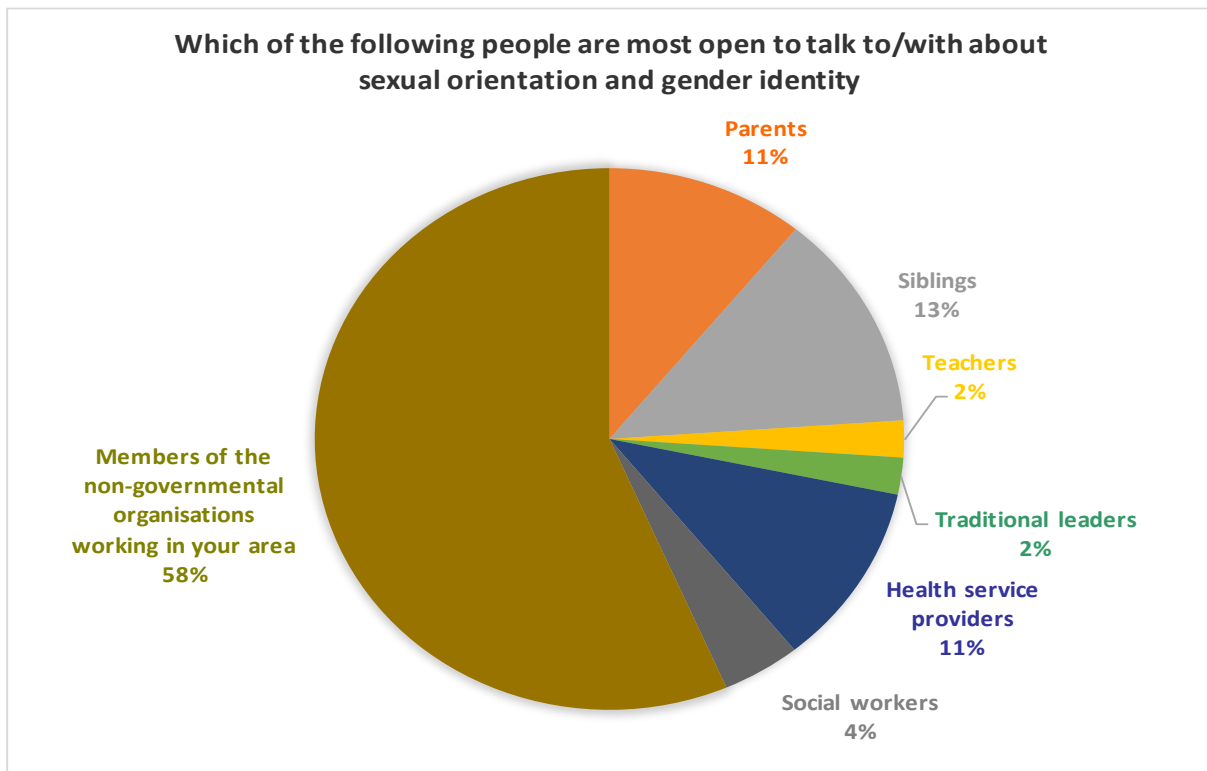
⁴⁶ Müller, A., Daskilewicz, K., Langen, B., Odumoso, O. (2017). These are the topics cannot run away from

⁴⁷ Art and Global Health Center Africa, Umunthu Baseline Study

treated disrespectfully in healthcare facilities because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression, and two in five had been insulted or been called names (41%).⁴⁸

When the LGBTIQ youth study participants were asked about which of the following people are most open to talk to/ or talk with about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, surprisingly 11% of the 46 LGBTIQ youth study participants mentioned health service providers, tied on third position with parents.

The chart below represents the responses of 46 LGBTIQ youths interviewed in the study



They justified that when it comes to health seeking, they have no choice but disclose in order to be assisted properly.

Conclusion

As already discussed above, health service providers' lack of information, knowledge and specific sexual orientation, gender identity and expression health needs fuels discrimination, stigma and marginalisation of LGBTIQ youth, which is usually manifested in ill-treatment, ridicule and imposition of their morals on the LGBTIQ health seekers. There is a great need for frontline health service providers to be engaged, ideally in a participatory way for them to voice out their areas of anxiety, and then fill in the information gaps that will culminate into formulation of health facility action plans that the KUUWA project will follow through its implementation process.

⁴⁸ Müller, A., Daskilewicz, K. and the Southern and East African Research Collective on Health (2019).

More than half 58% of the LGBTIQ youth respondents mentioned members of non-governmental organisations as the ones that are most open to talk with or talk to about their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. This places KUUWA project staff at an opportune position that if they can design initiatives to reach out to LGBTIQ youth and young adults, the community is ready and will be free to participate in any intervention.

The project can take advantage of Malawi Ministry of Health's progress health policies like the Malawi National HIV Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025, that listed LGBTIQ people as key population that need concerted effort to be reached with strategies and messages of HIV prevention and management in order to achieve the national UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals.

Also, numerous international legal instruments that Malawi has ratified a number including regional treaties relating to the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law in general, and LGBTIQ people in particular.

Several of the international and regional human rights treaties that have been ratified include human rights protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. The following international treaties should be put into consideration:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified in 1993, and its Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified in 1996.
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), ratified in 1993, as well as its General Comments, which operationalize some of the rights laid out in the Covenant.
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified in 1987.
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), ratified in 1989, including Resolution 275 on Protection against Violence and other Human Rights Violations against Persons on the basis of their Real or Imputed Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity.

All of these international treaties prohibit any form of discrimination. CEDAW, ICESCR, and ICCPR, have been interpreted by the United Nations Human Rights Council as including protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity⁴⁹

Malawi is a dualist country, which means that courts must interpret the Constitution, statutes and all other laws in a manner that, as far as possible, avoids conflict with international law.⁵⁰

The Gender Equality Act defines sexual harassment as engaging in “any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.” The Act criminalises sexual harassment with a penalty of a fine or 5 years' imprisonment.⁵¹

⁴⁹ See the report on “Discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity” (2011) para 15

⁵⁰ *Gondwe v Attorney General* [1996] MLR 492 (HC), 496.

⁵¹ Section 6(1) of the Gender Equality Act, 2012.

4.1.3 HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

The study discovered that LGBTIQ youth in Kasungu district have been subjected to violence and harassment due to their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Much of the violence and harassment has been perpetrated by duty bearers, law enforcers and members of the community. A study respondent reported during the interviews that;

- *Life is not easy, we are frequently tortured, the problem is that people think when you are an LGBTIQ+ you have sex with every man you see on your way, or being an LGBTIQ+ is only about sex, which is not the case, I feel different and want to express as such, thats all. Even my friends who associate with me have often times unjustly accused me of flirting with them, I feel and express as feminine and its not something that I chose, I was born that way. My parents when they heard a rumour that I could be a bisexual, because I express as a transgender, they called the police to arrest me on charges that I was making violence at home. From that moment, they stopped paying me school fees and or helping me financially. Then, I decided to leave my parents' home and went to stay with friends elsewhere. Life has been hard ever since.*
- *I have been tortured in many ways, harassed even called obscene names because they perceive me of being gay. They frequently threatened that I will be burned into ashes for being gay, sometimes I could threaten them that I will report them to the police, even though I know its not possible, I could just get myself arrested. I and my fellow friends who are LGBTIQ+ agreed that if we are physically assaulted by any member of community we should revenge against them, we mobilised and send them a message. They stopped their threats but I don't feel safe anymore, I dropped out of school.*

This is confirmed by a recent report by Human Rights Watch documents and details that LGBTIQ people experience violence in public spaces, and that such violence is usually not reported to authorities. The 'Are we doing alright?' study provides a statistical analysis of LGBTIQ Malawians' experiences of violence and shows that violence against LGBTIQ Malawians is widespread: 66% of LGBTIQ people in Malawi had been verbally harassed or insulted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. 41% had been physically assaulted, and 42% had experienced sexual violence. People who identified as transgender or gender non-conforming were at higher risk: 78% of transgender people had been verbally harassed, 49% had been physically assaulted, and 46% had experienced sexual violence.⁵²

Another recent study with transgender Malawians also showed that three quarters (73%) said they had been verbally harassed in the previous year.⁵³

- *Life goes even though we face a lot of problems, we fail to participate in the community development, school and church due to discrimination, we just accepted that we are outcast.* Said another LGBTIQ youth study respond

⁵² Human Rights Watch (2018). "Let Posterity Judge": Violence and Discrimination against LGBT People in Malawi

⁵³ Umar, E., Jumbe, V., Bandawe, C. (2018). Baseline study: Improving the Lives of Transgender People in Malawi Project

These findings demonstrate that traditional leaders, the law enforcers and local office bearers have a role to play in advancing the inclusion of LGBTIQ people in their communities and also resonates with Jones Mawerenga's study which demonstrated that the LGBTIQ existence is not only a conceptual or theoretical issue but it is a practical issue present in contemporary Malawian society.⁵⁴

Malawi government, during the 2nd Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in 2015 adopted 2 recommendations listed below;

- A - 110.126 Guarantee that people of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities have effective access to health services, including treatment for HIV/AIDS (Honduras), and;
- A - 110.93 Take effective measures to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and intersex persons from violence and prosecute the perpetrators of violent attacks (Austria)

When the LBGTIQ youth were asked what messages, they would give to the police if they have a chance, they had this to say

- *I would explain about my sexuality and the problems I face. When I do that they will accept me as a human being and assist me accordingly. They should tell the community that it is normal and they should understand us that we are born this way and there is nothing we can do about it.*
- *The police should be defending us whenever we are being attacked by other people. They should not discriminate against us because we are LGBTIQ+ people but we should be fairly treated like any other citizen of Malawi.*

Conclusion

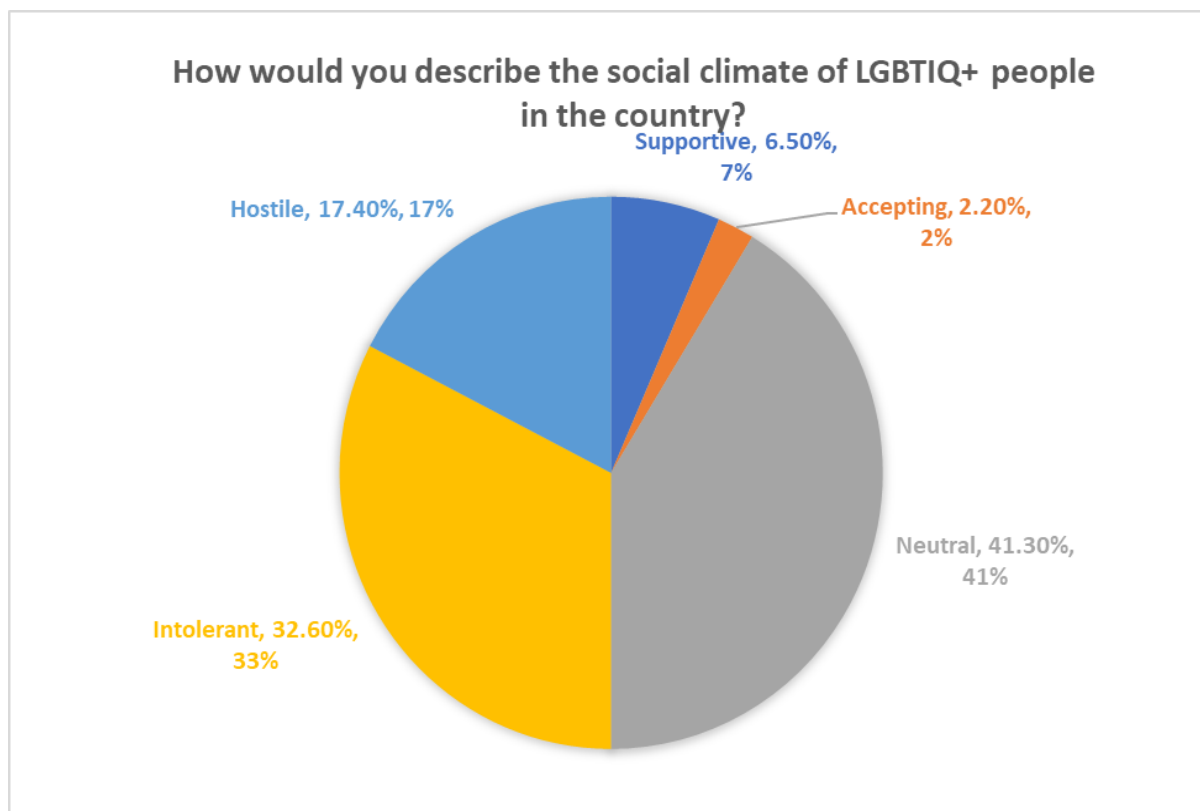
Whatever initiative that is put in place should not leave out the duty bearers and the law enforcers. Inadequate knowledge is more dangerous than no knowledge at all. Malawi is signatory to numerous international and regional instruments and has rectified several of them, this is the information that is needed to be passed to the right audience in order to lessen or completely end violence and harassment being perpetrated by both the community members and the duty bearers. Is it imperative for KUUWA project to design workshops targeting the police and other law enforcement agencies to make them aware of the rights of all children including LGBTIQ youth and the instruments that are in place or that have been rectified in this regard.

4.1.4 THE SOCIAL CLIMATE

Over 50% of LGBTIQ youth interviewed in the study described the social environment in the country as intolerant and hostile, while 41.3% described it as neutral and only 7% described it as supportive followed by 2% who said its accepting.

⁵⁴ Mawerenga, J.H., 2018. The Homosexuality Debate in Malawi (No. 28). Mzuzu: Mzuni Press.

The chart below represents the responses of 46 LGBTIQ youths interviewed in the study



The findings above resonate with qualitative findings from Plan International Management team, government ministry officials and partners of KUUWA project interviewed. Out of 21 participants who were asked about how they could describe the social climate for LGBTIQ people, 57.7% described it as either intolerant or hostile. Excerpts;

- *The social climate is intolerant; you can see the people out there (the LGBTIQ people) cannot come out to reveal themselves*
- *The climate is hostile because all institutions from church, law and community are not that supportive*

This confirms the Afrobarometer round 18 survey of 2020 findings that discovered that same-sex relationships are deemed immoral by cultural norms and religious ideologies in Malawi, and overall Malawians are not tolerant of non-heterosexual sexualities. Afrobarometer-Malawi data shows that 94% of Malawians said that they would dislike having a homosexual neighbour.⁵⁵ In another recent survey among Malawians, almost nine out of ten respondents (89%) said they would not accept a gay man in their family, and nearly three quarters said gay men should not be accepted in Malawian cultures or take part in Malawian traditions.⁵⁶ When asked if communities should be encouraged to protect gay men, more than two thirds

⁵⁵ Tsaka, M. and Chunga, J. (2020) Afrobarometer Round 8 Survey in Malawi

⁵⁶ The Other Foundation (2019).

of Malawians said they should not. Around the same number said the protection of gay men's rights should not be included in the Constitution⁵⁷

The same survey by the Other Foundation found out that widely made homophobic statements by the media, religious groups, some faith based non-governmental organisations, politicians and the government officials contribute to high levels of fear among Malawians who identify as LGBTIQ. There is a lack of knowledge and sensitivity about sexual orientation and gender identity, which exposes LGBTIQ people to stigma, discrimination, violence, rape, and blackmail from members of the police, the judiciary, the health services, and other government officials.

An LGBTIQ youth participant in Kasungu who identifies herself as a transwoman and she was born male lamented public perceptions that whenever one expresses himself or herself as the other gender, they are viewed as men who sleeps with other men in the society.

I think non-governmental organisations and human rights organisations are not doing enough as far as shaping public knowledge and perceptions are concerned, to be gay is not to be sleeping with another male whenever, wherever, it is just a sexual and emotional attraction towards your fellow man. I am just a trans person, I feel natural when I am expressing myself as a woman but I am not gay, it is just my gender identity which is different and my sexual orientation is heterosexual. The general public is just ignorant or doesn't want to know about us.

Lack of knowledge and information has been underscored as the main factor that fuel discrimination and stigma by the general public in general and service providers, duty bearers and leaders in particular. Malawi school curriculum, from primary school to tertiary is silent about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, it's just recently in the primary school curriculum under life skills subject, in standard 5 that it is briefly mentioned. People would pass through so many years in medical, nursing and other social tertiary colleges in Malawi without any kind of exposure to SOGIE information. In that kind of a context, where information about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression are only heard from the members of the clergy and as one of the sins, public opinion takes only that line of thought and judges whoever they meet accordingly. Sexual behavior is confused with sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and whenever a lesbian, gay, transgender, intersex or queer person has been met, they are viewed as people who have sex with people of the same sex only.

Conclusion

There is a great need to design strategies that will engage the duty bearers, community leaders and service providers aimed at providing the right information. Let the key personnel is key service provision areas know that there is no such thing as LGBTIQ rights, we only have human rights and every person by the virtue that he or she is human is intitled to enjoy such rights, because the major borne of contention has been the phrasing, that LGBTIQ people have special rights. Whenever we are talking about the rights of children and youth is accessing SRHR services, these rights shouldn't exclude other groups.

KUUWA project don't need to design a different project altogether to address the needs of LGBTIQ youth, it just needs to use the already existing structures, strategies and messages,

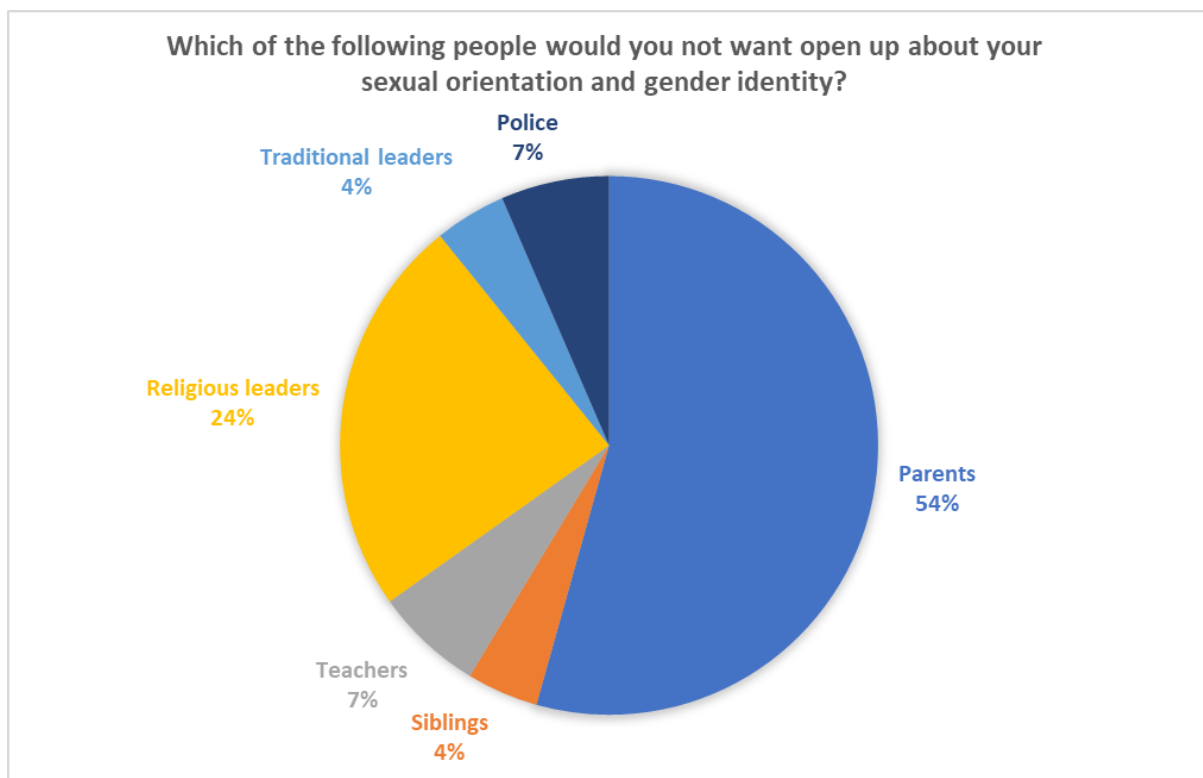
⁵⁷ The Other Foundation (2019).

tactically expound then substantially to incorporate the special LGBTIQ SRHR and other health needs into its programming. For sustainability of any initiative it will devise, the public social service providers will need to be incorporated and move along with the changes.

4.1.5 REJECTION FROM FAMILY

When the LGBTIQ youth were asked about which of the following people would you not open up about your sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, most respondents, up to 54% mentioned parents, followed by religious leaders at 24%.

The chart below represents the responses of 46 LGBTIQ youths interviewed in the study



The same sentiments were also echoed in the qualitative findings. When asked about what they could say to their parents if given a chance, LGBTIQ youth had this to say:

- i. *It's not easy to disclose my sexual orientation to my parents but they might be wondering why I am not in a relationship with a woman or girl but I'm always around men. I hope to tell them one day about my sexuality and make them understand but it will not be easy for them accept me the way I am. I will wait till i am independent that i won't feel the impact if they will choose to disown me.*
- ii. *It is not easy to tell parents that you are either gay or lesbian because this brings shock to the parents and it does not fit with their expectations. Parents would like to see their children growing up and being involved in a heterosexual marriage so that they can*

have grandchildren (dzidzukulu) so to disclose to them that you are a gay it's not easy. Some of my gay friends who tried to disclose to their parents about their sexuality were disowned and chased from their homes and ended up being homeless. I think parents should also be taught about SOGIE issues so that they are able to deal with these issues in a fair way when it involves their children.

These study findings correspond with a 2015 study by Emilie D'amico which examined the contribution of parental reactions to their child's identity development and psychological adjustment following their child's coming out as an LGBTIQ person. The study find out that parent's reaction to their child's LGBTIQ sexual orientation ranged from outright rejection to mild acceptance. It further revealed that parents' support of their child's sexual orientation, parents' attempts to control their child's sexual orientation, and that parents' struggles with their child's sexual orientation were significantly associated with dimensions of youths' identity and psychological adjustment.⁵⁸ These findings are further buttressed by Katz-Wise who argues that levels of family acceptance and rejection may have implications for sexual minority youth's identity development.⁵⁹ These findings also agree with a Lesley University report which singled out homelessness as one of the factors that constitutes the cost of coming out for LGBTIQ youth. It states that: "LGBTIQ youth who are homeless must face these challenges [typical to homeless youth] on top of social stigma, discrimination, and frequently rejection by their families. The failure of critical family and social safety nets to support these youth has catastrophic consequences on their economic stability, educational attainment ... economic future, and life expectancy."⁶⁰

Within the period prior to the data collection exercise in Kasungu, the research team conducted a stakeholder's analysis to identify LGBTIQ peer educators from strategic points to conduct the workshop. The research team found out that the peer educator from one of the areas committed suicide due to being outed by his friend to the parents, and a month prior to that, September 2019, another LGBTIQ youth also committed suicide due to similar circumstances. The gravity of LGBTIQ youth need to have their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression concealed from their parents is huge, they fear the implications, in which the worst could be being chased away from home or not being paid school fees, coupled with the social need to belong and be protected the family. Social, emotional, psychological, spiritual and physiological growth and wellbeing is hampered by the thought of "if it's not now, maybe later they will learn about my SOGIE". The negative implications of such environment have a far-reaching effect to other youth in the particular community as well, because these youths come up with coping mechanisms like alcohol and drug abuse and the recruit other peers as well.

In the recent study of 2020 by University of Leslie, these findings were further buttressed by Katz-Wise who argues that levels of family acceptance and rejection may have implications

⁵⁸ D'amico, Emilie, Danielle Julien, Nicole Tremblay, and Elise Chartrand. "Gay, lesbian, and bisexual youths coming out to their parents: Parental reactions and youths' outcomes." *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 11, no. 5 (2015): 411-437.

⁵⁹ Katz-Wise, Sabra L., Margaret Rosario, and Michael Tsappis. "LGBT youth and family acceptance." *Pediatric Clinics of North America* 63, no. 6 (2016): 1011.

⁶⁰ <https://lesley.edu/article/the-cost-of-coming-out-lgbt-youth-homelessness>, (15.9.2020).

for sexual minority youth's identity development.⁶¹ These findings also agree with a Lesley University report which singled out homelessness as one of the factors that constitutes the cost of coming out for LGBTIQ youth. It states that: "LGBTIQ youth who are homeless must face these challenges [typical to homeless youth] on top of social stigma, discrimination, and frequently rejection by their families. The failure of critical family and social safety nets to support these youth has catastrophic consequences on their economic stability, educational attainment ... economic future, and life expectancy."⁶²

Conclusion

Community members respect duty bearers, public service providers and, community and religious leaders. Several factors should be put into consideration in the designation of an intervention to reach parents of LGBTIQ people, because 2 or 3 things could happen in the process, it will mean outing their child, and being responsible of the outcome, that could be very difficult to manage and also putting the project's aims into disrepute. The project and the implementers safety and security could also be compromised. The best role that the project could play is that of referral if further counselling or understanding is needed when the parents have been faced by disclosure of LGBTIQ status by their child. Therefore, providing training to duty bearers, social public service providers and community leaders will go a long way in addressing family and community understanding, knowledge, acceptance and eventually support for LGBTIQ youth.

If duty bearers, public social service providers and community and religious leaders have the right information, those will be sufficient to trigger conversations about inclusion of LGBTIQ youth and children in their particular spheres.

4.2 LGBTIQ+ participants in the study described the various opportunities that exists for their inclusion in society.

- b. The anti-gay laws moratorium in Malawi has given us a sigh of relief because we are not arrested by police on same-sex charges as was the case before. Our hope is that there will be total decriminalisation of same-sex behaviour in Malawi so that everyone should be considered equal before the law. This finding of the study concurs with Amnesty International's observation:

The statement by Malawi's Justice Minister that laws criminalizing same sex sexual conduct are suspended pending a decision on whether or not to repeal them is a historic step in the fight against discrimination in the country.

And in Addition, the adoption of 2 recommendations during the 2nd Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review that included the State's commitment to provide safety and security to LGBTIQ people and also to ensure the provision of health services and resources to LGBTIQ people.

⁶¹ Katz-Wise, Sabra L., Margaret Rosario, and Michael Tsappis. "LGBT youth and family acceptance." *Pediatric Clinics of North America* 63, no. 6 (2016): 1011.

⁶² <https://lesley.edu/article/the-cost-of-coming-out-lgbt-youth-homelessness>, (15.9.2020).

- c. Participants explained that the availability of organizations like CEDEP that deals with LGBTIQ persons and has deployed peer educators to be looking after their welfare is a positive development towards their inclusion in society.
- d. The participants added that health service organizations like FPAM who are concerned with the health of LGBTIQ persons and ensures that LGBTIQ youths easily access condoms and lubricants offers hope for them, they see that there are other organizations who cares for their health.

These study findings harmonises with Ashley Currier's study which highlighted on how an LGBTIQ social movement organization (SMO) in Malawi, the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP), has metamorphosed from an organization focused only on public health and HIV/AIDS to one that advances social justice for gender and sexual dissidents due to a constellation of four socio-political factors, including: (1) state-sponsored homophobia, (2) resource availability, (3) international visibility of LGBTIQ rights in Malawi, and (4) the population density of LGBTIQ SMOs in Malawi.⁶³

4.3 The Capacity of Plan International Malawi to implement inclusive programming for LGBTIQ youth

All Plan International staff participants in the study, described the staff capacity to implement inclusive LGBTIQ youth programming as very low. Most of the participants mentioned mindset towards LGBTIQ youth and same sex practices and exposure to information concerning the LGBTIQ community as major barriers that can hinder development of such programming, excerpts;

- *It's a strange way of doing programming and we do not have the capacity. Some staff members will have resistance and that will inhibit the success of the project. The results will be affected by internal resistance.*
- *We need a mindset change among Plan International Malawi staff in order to engage in LGBTIQ+ programming.*
- *We have only a few who are "for" it but the rest need capacity building. In percentages I will put it at 20-30%. They need a mindset change. It will take time for them.*
- *On a scale of 1-10, I will give it a 4 because we need more orientation, capacity building, mindset change to be specific in order for us to understand who these people are and be able to deliver efficiently. We need to change our mindsets first.*

The findings above resonates with The Other Foundation's 2019 "Under Wraps" a survey of public attitudes to homosexuality and gender non-conformity in Malawi. The survey discovered that people's personal knowledge of LGBTIQ people is one of the strongest determinants of their level of acceptance of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Almost all staff interviewed acknowledged that they have no known LGBTIQ person, only met one or two during one of the project development consultations. Without mindset

⁶³ Currier, Ashley, and Tara McKay. "Pursuing social justice through public health: Gender and sexual diversity activism in Malawi." *Critical African Studies* 9, no. 1 (2017): 71-90.

change, it is difficult for one to competently speak for a community in which he or she doesn't believe in.

It is imperative for Plan International Malawi in general, and KUUWA project in particular to make a concerted effort to create LGBTIQ inclusive sensitivities within its ranks first, before it starts engaging external stakeholders. Developing and implementing effective LGBTIQ inclusion programs needs a broader understanding of LGBTIQ identity, gender, sexual orientation and different sexual characteristics, and also how they manifest in children and adolescents, including behaviour traits culminating from coping mechanism, knowledge of the legal, social and specific needs, and their interplay with overall objectives and goals of Plan International. For this to happen, staff needs to undergo capacity building initiatives in basic Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) issues.

Building staff capacity for engagement with LGBTIQ issues may also involve dispelling of myths and stereotypes through diversity training.

Diversity training can play an important role in increasing awareness, dispelling myths and stereotypes, and encouraging dialogue about diversity and inclusion, which is beneficial to all employees. Different sources of information can be incorporated into diversity training, programs grounded in research may also introduce stories from individuals in ways that bring the information to life.⁶⁴

Here it should be noted that Plan International has a rich heritage of working with the LGBTIQ community globally. For instance, LGBTIQ issues, alongside other exclusion issues, were addressed at the level of organisational change as part of Plan International's "Strategic Inclusion Review" in 2012. A 2013 position paper "Putting Children and Young People's Rights at the Heart of the post-2015 Agenda," recommended the repeal of discriminatory laws which criminalise same-sex relationships. In 2020, Plan International rolled out the "Walking Talk: Supporting Young LGBTIQ People in our COVID 19 Adaptation and Response". Thus, Plan International has demonstrated leadership in advocating for the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ rights. Therefore, Plan International Malawi can be informed by Plan International's programmatic models and contextualise them in order to properly address the particular needs of the LGBTIQ children and youths in Malawi.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we present the conclusion and implications of the study on: “Strengthening of LGBTIQ+ youth Inclusion in Plan International Malawi’s KUUWA project” This is a ground-breaking study which endeavoured to interrogate the inclusion of LGBTIQ children and youth in the programming of KUUWA project and its partners in Malawi.

This chapter has the following divisions: (a) summary of findings, (b) contributions of the study, and (c) a template for a proposed project which demonstrates an action plan with roles and responsibilities, relevant resources and stakeholders for the advancement of LGBTIQ youth inclusion in KUUWA project.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study has revealed the existence of LGBTIQ youth in Kasungu and that their presence is evenly distributed across the district. A sample of forty-six (46) LGBTIQ+ comprised of lesbian youths, gay youths, bisexual youths, transgender and gender non-conforming youth participants were involved in the study and they were drawn from the following areas: Kasungu Central, Wimbe, Chiwengo, and Jenda.

The study has established that most LGBTIQ children and youth have to negotiate a lot of obstacles in their daily lives due to their Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE). For instance, most LGBTIQ strive so hard to conceal their SOGIE to their parents, community and church leaders, teachers, and other influential people in the community for fear of homophobia. Hence, they live underground in hiding so that people in their communities should not know that they are LGBTIQ persons. The marginalization and exclusion of LGBTIQ youth in society is so conspicuous to the extent that it makes them vulnerable to stigma, violence and discrimination based on their real or perceived SOGIE. Thus, LGBTIQ youth are given unequal or unfair treatment at work, school, hospitals, when seeking protection and redress from law enforcement agencies, in the communities they live, in religious spaces of worship, etc.

The study has discovered the necessity of implementing LGBTIQ inclusion programming that addresses the major themes of concern which were highlighted by LGBTIQ participants as needing urgent attention. These include:

1. Safety and security. This will be achieved by creating networks with the police, community police, chiefs, religious leaders, the judiciary, human rights organisations, etc.
2. Access to health care services. This will be achieved by networking with the Ministry of Health (MoH) at District Health Office (DHO) level. The study has pointed out that most LGBTIQ children and youth have several challenges in accessing SRHR services and information. Therefore, interventions in this area entails training health care workers in how they can effectively and efficiently handle the health conditions of LGBTIQ people with confidentiality, privacy, and human dignity (Umunthu).

Also, the study has established that in most cases access to health care services for LGBTIQ persons is construed to mean physical conditions while neglecting their mental health aspect. This finding was uncovered in Jenda where an LGBTIQ peer leader committed suicide as a result of prolonged negligence of his mental health issues by the

general public and the health fraternity in particular. Thus, mental health interventions should be one of the components of a vibrant health care pursuits for LGBTIQ children and youth.

3. Most of the LGBTIQ children and youth face rejection by their families and some of them are disowned due to their SOGI. This leads to homelessness and school drop-out of LGBTIQ children and youth. Therefore, this entails the implementation of programs aimed at providing shelter and bringing back to school for LGBTIQ children and youth.
4. The study also revealed that LGBTIQ children and youth have a low economic status as a result of family rejection and difficulties in finding and maintaining employment based on their SOGIE. Therefore, this entails the implementation of micro-level empowerment for small scale and medium business enterprises. Also, technical skills development for LGBTIQ people could help in ensuring their financial independence and sustainability.

The study discovered that traditional and religious leaders disapproves of same-sex relationships but are willing to accommodate LGBTIQ people in their various spheres of influence. All traditional and religious leaders who participated in the study expressed their commitment to ensure the well-being of LGBTIQ children and youth in two ways: (i) ensuring their safety and security is safeguarded in the community, and (ii) ensuring that their human rights are respected.

The study established that youth CSOs working in Kasungu have never implemented any LGBTIQ+ programming in their various youth interventions. However, study participants from various youth CSOs expressed their concern on the multiple exclusion of LGBTIQ children and youth in society. Moreover, they expressed willingness to be partners in any LGBTIQ programming that can be implemented in Kasungu.

The study finds out that representatives from the District Executive Committee (DEC) in Kasungu unanimously disapproves of same-sex liaisons. They further mentioned of a DEC meeting which ended abruptly in commotion because it had an LGBTIQ agenda and members felt it was not worthy of discussion. However, some expressed profound knowledge concerning the experiences that LGBTIQ children and youth are undergoing in Kasungu. Moreover, they expressed the urgent need of initiating LGBTIQ inclusion programming in Kasungu district.

5.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has contributed to the existing body of knowledge in three ways. First, it is a ground-breaking study on the topic of LGBTIQ youth inclusion in Malawi. Some previous studies conducted on a similar topic failed to engage with the LGBTIQ community to capture their experiences. Hence, they fail to bring a wholistic picture of the real-life situation of LGBTIQ youths in Malawi. On the contrary, this study put the LGBTIQ youths on the centre and this influenced the entire process of the study from its conceptualisation, implementation, and conclusion. Therefore, this study will enable future researchers on the topic of LGBTIQ inclusion in Malawi to have a solid reference in constructing their respective studies.

Second, this study has contributed to the existing body of knowledge on the topic of LGBTIQ youths' inclusion in Malawi. The various stakeholders of the LGBTIQ discourse in Malawi: the Malawi Government, Civil Society Organizations, human rights organizations, Western diplomatic community, donor or developmental agencies, the religious fraternity,

traditional leaders, and the LGBTIQ community will be informed of the various dynamics regarding LGBTIQ inclusion. It is hoped that based on this body of knowledge the Malawian society will make informed decisions in the pursuit of LGBTIQ inclusion in the country.

Third, this study has advanced the existing body of knowledge by moving from mere theoretical propositions on the topic of LGBTIQ youth's inclusion to incorporate real life experiences of LGBTIQ children and youth in Malawi. In this way, it has made the voice of LGBTIQ youths in Malawi to be heard. Therefore, all stakeholders in the LGBTIQ discourse in Malawi should be aware that they are dealing with real human beings and not just mere statistics or points of arguments in a debate. The study has put a human face to the LGBTIQ discourse in Malawi.

Forth, the study will specifically inform Plan International-Malawi as the commissioning organization for the study on LGBTIQ youth inclusion and overcome the main challenge of ensuring that this work is operationalized, scaled-up, and sustainable. Through this study, Plan International-Malawi has demonstrated both a brave and safe response to the exclusion of LGBTIQ children and youth in Malawi. Even where LGBTIQ people's rights are being jeopardised, something can be done in order to support their well-being.

THE STUDY MAKES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS TO PLAN INTERNATIONAL-MALAWI:

In view of the major findings of the study, we make the following recommendations that could inform Plan International- Malawi's LGBTIQ youth inclusion programme interventions:

The social climate of LGBTIQ youths in Kasungu projects area shows a gloomy image in view of human rights violations and this necessitates LGBTIQ youth's inclusion programming by Plan International Malawi. Lack of knowledge and information by duty bearers is the main barrier to inclusion but could also be an opportunity for entry, addressing information and knowledge gaps could go a long way towards creating an inclusive environment.

1. Plan International Malawi KUUWA project could consider strengthening its working relationship with the gender, social welfare, health and victim support offices in the project district of Kasungu, by advancing the "Leave no one behind agenda," which is the United Nations' central transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Which also identify the recognition and inclusion of LGBTIQ children, adolescents and young people. (The leave no-one behind agenda represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole). This could be achieved by providing training about all groups of children, adolescents and young people that are at risk of being left behind, with special emphasis on LGBTIQ youths, and together formulate an action plan of how best they could be included.
2. Plan International Malawi and partner staff members need to be equipped with necessary skills and knowledge to ably identify predicaments LGBTIQ children, adolescents and young people are facing in KUUWA project area, and ensure that they are well included in the local structures and programming. Plan Malawi can achieve this through comprehensive orientation training of its staff and partners about Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and also soft approaches of facilitating

difficult and highly sensitive conversations aimed at filling information gaps and sharing of knowledge with concerned stakeholders.

3. Many of the barriers in relation to LGBTIQ youth's inclusion work will either be alleviated or eradicated if Plan International-Malawi makes its commitment to LGBTIQ youths' inclusion and rights as more core, clear, and consistent. However, this needs to be collaborated with a dynamic and a more wholistic approach to LGBTIQ youth's inclusion focusing on the following factors: continuous learning of LGBTIQ youth's social environment, policy changes, and supportive senior leadership approach, organisational cultural change, developing networks, and partnerships with SCOs that are already implementing LGBTIQ inclusion and rights in Malawi.
4. Plan International-Malawi could consider partnering with competent organisations or projects with the same agenda of inclusion of LGBTIQ people programming in Malawi, mainly those that use soft approaches and expound the premise of human equality in a non-aggressive in its nature; that could not trigger conflicts on a polarized issue like the LGBTIQ+ discourse but endeavours to build bridges of tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in society.
5. Plan International-Malawi needs to put in place strategies that can aid project implementing staff to become aware of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, the existence of such youth and how best they can be included. Participatory workshops, using creative approaches could culminate into the formulation of collective and personal action plans by project implementers themselves, taking into consideration their context and their level of influence. In so doing, there will be sufficient interest and ownership of the action plans.
6. Plan International-Malawi should embrace a paradigm shift that involves changing the view that LGBTIQ youth's inclusion and rights are just a mere additional aspect rather than part and parcel of Plan International-Malawi's work. In order to achieve this, Plan International-Malawi needs to make its commitment to LGBTIQ youth inclusion and rights as more core, clear, and consistent. However, this needs to be collaborated with a dynamic and a more wholistic approach to LGBTIQ youth inclusion focusing on the following factors: continuous learning of the LGBTIQ construct, policy changes, and supportive senior leadership approach, organisational cultural change, developing networks, and conducting more research initiatives on the LGBTIQ topic in order to build an evidence base for the organisation.

5.3 A PROGRAMMING TEMPLATE FOR LGBTIQ+ INCLUSION PROJECT

Introduction

Inclusion of LGBTIQ people is imperative if we are to deliver on the pledge of the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind. The principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the five most important dimensions of human freedoms that include: health, economic well-being, education, political and civic participation, and personal security and violence. While other areas of knowledge were identified as important for LGBTI communities, there was widespread agreement that these five dimensions were the highest priorities.

To ensure that diversity and inclusion are supported in SRHR projects and development programs, officers and staff need to have a comprehensive understanding of gender and

sexual diversity (GSD) concepts and terminology. The findings above have revealed that lack of understanding and knowledge of implementing personnel from government and development agencies, has led to stigma and discrimination and so there is little or no motivation to design or implement inclusive programmes and policies.

1. As one senior official participant in the study narrated his personal experience as follows:

- *I am greatly displeased with the LGBTIQ people but said that it's not proper to neglect them since they have rights too. However, their inclusion also brings problems since I already told you that to me this is disgusting, that means they have put me already at an awkward place automatically because I even want to protect myself from being associated with anything to do with LGBTIQ people. This is the reason why we keep on asking you if you are going to publish it or where are you going with the audio recordings from this workshop. It's all because on this topic everyone has their own interest, and it will never be an easy ride but we need to face it, and this topic will never be a win-win game, some will win and others will lose in the process.*
- a. *And another echoed;" These people are sick people. How can a man marry a fellow man and how do they look on the issue of child-bearing? God granted procreation as His gift for us and how can one deny that. It shows that these people are mad."*

5.3.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Stigma is a mark or sign of disgrace usually eliciting negative attitudes to its bearer. If attached to a person with a different sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or a different sex characteristic, it can lead to negative discrimination. It is sometimes but not always related to a lack of knowledge about the condition that led to stigmatization. Stigma can therefore be seen as an overarching term that contains three elements: problems of knowledge (ignorance), problems of attitudes (prejudice), and problems of behaviour (discrimination).

There has been an underlying pessimism that stigma is deeply historically rooted and difficult to change. This has been one of the reasons for the reluctance to use the results of research in designing and implementing action plans, and stigma theories have de-emphasised cultural factors and paid little attention to issues related to human rights, social structures and social development.

Studies have revealed that discriminatory behaviour has caused devastating effects upon personal relationships, parenting and childcare, education, economic, and psycho-social development that have ripple effects on the development of well-being of the whole of community. Indeed, these voices have said that the rejecting behaviour of others may bring or have brought greater disadvantages than the primary condition itself. Stigma or rejection of a minority group usually involve not just negative thoughts but also emotions such as anxiety, anger, resentment, hostility, distaste or disgust. In fact, it's a double edged sword that cuts both the victims and the perpetrators.

5.3.2 PROPOSED PLAN OF ACTION

To effectively address the issues of attitudes, beliefs and perceptions, the good project design should first focus on filling the information gaps of project implementers, Plan International staff are key to any successful implementation of a project designed to achieve inclusion. One does not give out something one doesn't have, there is a need for staff to be trained and exposed to issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and also different sexual characteristics before they could ably and competently engage project stakeholders on the same. The use of soft approaches like creative participatory activities could be effective in this area, as opposed to confrontational or top down informational provision or top down address systems. The implications of leaving others behind, and of avoidance of reaching the least ignored should be emphasized, that it is not only for the other but for the whole of community in particular and the nation in general. Global health principles have overemphasized the need of leaving no one behind and of taking any individual health threat as the threat of the whole of man-kind. Outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics started with only one mismanaged case, and their eradication were only declared when the last case was dealt with.

The use of locally embedded philosophies, like that of Umunthu, that celebrates the interconnectedness and the interdependency of humanity could be a strong tool in driving these messages home, that we are intertwined in unescapable labyrinth of life, and what affects one, affects all.

Targeting duty bearers to have knowledge and understanding, through a process of involvement, participation and discussion, whereby each thought and standpoint could be built up until a positive way of dealing with a particular issue is found, and participants take full ownership of the points agreed. Motivation to implement self-developed action points will need less outside support because the points agreed will be wholly owned by the participants who will also become the implementers.

The main stakeholders to target that have been mentioned repeatedly during the study are the health service providers, police, social welfare, the judiciary, the local leaders, the religious leaders and local non-governmental organisations working in KUUWA project implementation areas, as the LGBTIQ respondent said below:

- *I would do a project that specifically targets the empowerment of various key stakeholders in government i.e. the police, teachers, medical personnel, social welfare, and various government departments so that they understand LGBTIQ+ issues and that they should be able to help us accordingly when we visit their offices for services.*

The study has revealed that there is little or no knowledge of LGBTIQ+ community, that every time that discussion is introduced, participants referred to same sex activities, as opposed to being emotionally and sexually attracted to a member of a particular sex. Gender identity, expression and sex characteristics is another area that respondents in the study showed little or no knowledge of. That everyone in that particular category was referred as being either gay or lesbian and the description of the categories being only about sex, not a way of being. The plight of intersex youth in this context has also been overshadowed by this narrative, this leaves no room for other sex characteristics.

The study has revealed that the youths and adolescents express themselves in ways that do not match their assigned sex at birth, face the risk of stigma, violence, and discrimination,

regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, because they are viewed as being gays or lesbians

There is also a great need to address the understanding of sex characteristics in great detail. Sex characteristics refer to biological aspects that relate to sex and are divided into primary and secondary sex characteristics. Primary sex characteristics are those that are present at birth – chromosomes, gonads, hormones, outer and inner genitalia.

Secondary sex characteristics are those that develop at puberty, such as breasts, facial and pubic hair, the Adam's apple, muscle mass, stature and fat distribution. A person is considered intersex if they are born with, or during puberty develop, sex characteristics that do not fit the typical binary understandings of male or female categories. Some people with such characteristics explicitly identifies as "intersex," while others do not, but we include both types of people under the "intersex" term in LGBTI

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APPENDIX 1: REPORT OF FIELD WORK

STRENGTHENING OF LGBTIQ+ INCLUSION IN PLAN INTERNATIONAL MALAWI'S KUUWA PROJECT

Research Activities Summary

Kasungu Research Organizational Visit

The Strengthening LGBTIQ+ Inclusion in the KUUWA Project research team conducted research organizational visit and mobilization of research subjects from in Kasungu district from 24st to 29th August, 2020. The organizational activities comprised of the following:

- Mobilization of over 50 LGBTIQ+ respondents in 4 sites across Kasungu's 31 traditional authorities
- Mobilization of Traditional and religious leader's respondents in the area surrounding T/A Santhe
- Booking of an interview with local Traditional Authority
- Invitation of SCO leaders working with Plan International and those implementing youth focused projects in Kasungu districts
- Invitations of Government sector heads from various ministries in Kasungu district.

Research Workshop Activities

The following is the brief summary of the data collection workshop, using PAR methodology that were conducted from 1st September, 2020 to 10th September 2020 across all clusters in Kasungu district.

1st September 2020 - LGBTIQ+ Workshop

Venue: Mundawanga Lodge

Participants: 10

The workshop started off in good time. After welcoming remarks, the participants were made aware of the purpose of the workshop which was to unearth barriers to inclusive social services and learn on what is to be done to differently to achieve an ideal inclusive social programming. After which, consent was sought after taking them through the consent form and they signed.

The first activity was a pair's game whose utmost objective was to introduce the concept of Umunthu and also to break the ice, create a warm and open atmosphere and deal away with power dynamics. The importance of participation and of giving open and honest information was emphasized

The second activity was bordered on making them aware of sexual orientation and how broad it is. For many of them, as per observation, were not aware of how broad the spectrum of sexuality is. The participants were made to understand what Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and expression mean. This was done to cast the net wider so that they speak for others who were not represented in the room. These included, the intersex, transgender/transsexuals, queer and the gender non-conforming peers, etc.

Problem tree activity followed. During this activity, the participants drew a tree from roots, trunk and fruits. The roots represented problems they face; the trunk represented the causes and the fruits, the effects. During the activity, they stated different problems they face from school, church, community, police, hospital etc. They linked the problem with what significant changes they bring in their lives and the effects of such changes in their psycho-social and health wellbeing.

The last activity was facilitated Focus group discussions. The participants were divided into 2 groups. The issues were probed and discussed in greater detail, recorded and were transcribed at a later stage. They recommended that the projects targeting them as LGBTI's be extended to all stakeholders at community and national level as well for concerted efforts.

In their closing remarks they appreciated the initiative and stated that they believe and hope that this will bring out the change it is promising in their livelihoods. And like the approach used, said they learned so much and hope it was a full workshop where they could learn and benefit more.

2nd September 2020 - LGBTIQ+ Workshop

Venue: Wimbe Primary School

Participants: 15

The workshop started off a bit late because the venue was far. The participants were energetic from the start. After welcoming remarks, the participants were made aware of the purpose of the workshop which was to unearth barriers to social inclusion at all levels, including SRHR and programming activities.

The activities were very much similar to the previous workshop. The first activity was a pair's game whose utmost objective was to introduce the concept of Umunthu. The second activity was bordered on making them aware of sexual orientation and how broad it is. For many of them, as per observation, were not aware of how broad the spectrum of sexuality is. Problem tree activity followed. They highlighted problems and challenges faced by them at school, police, hospital and community. The challenges were very much similar to those that were highlighted at Mundawanga.

The last activity was Focus group discussions. They were divided into 2 groups. The issues were then discussed at length. They also commented on the need for their parents, teachers, pastors, police and community leaders to understand who they are and be able to protect them if there is any harm being projected to them. They recommended that the projects targeting them as LGBTI's be extended to all stakeholders at community and national level as well for concerted efforts. "Our community leaders need to be aware on what is happening so as to have concerted effort in doing away with the challenges, one of the participants commented.

In their closing remarks they appreciated the initiative and stated that they believe and hope that this will bring out the change it is promising in their livelihoods.

3rd September - LGBTIQ+ Workshop

Venue: Chiphaso Primary school

Participant: 9

This particular group was both well knowledgeable and was active in participation. They had extensive knowledge on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

Their problem trees were very much similar to those that were presented during the 1st and 2nd workshops, but a little detailed and comprehensive.

Focus group discussions also revolved around the same problematic areas that were highlighted in the previous workshops. However, they did make a suggestion of LGBTIQ role models that will encourage them by also sharing their experience and how they dealt with the problems they are facing. They hope to learn from them how to tackle setbacks and how to deal with ridicule, rejection etc.

4th September 2020 - Community Leaders Workshop

Venue: Santhe TDC

Participants: 2 Group Village heads, 4 Village heads, 1 Female Pastor, 3 Male pastors; F=6, M=4

The workshop started with welcoming remarks. Since there were prominent people in the room, recognitions were done. An energizer was done. It was a religious song just so to make the religious leaders comfortable. The consent form was distributed to each of the participants and it was translated to them page by page until they signed it and the survey workshop commenced.

The first activity was a pair game each participant got a name of an animal and were asked to voice out the sound that the animal produces and find their partner. After which the participants introduced each other. This led to the discussion of what Umunthu is. It was discussed that because we are all human beings that is what puts each one at equal footing thus one should be accorded the same respect and highly regarded despite having differences.

SOGIE presentation followed through which they were enlightened on who the people under discussion were. They had to understand first who an LGBTIQ+ person were so that they contribute from an informed standpoint. Mostly, there were mixed responses as to who the people are. For some, being gay was synonymous with just sex. As such, they were enlightened that being gay has to do with sexual and emotional attraction and sex is only a part of it just like it is with heterosexual people otherwise termed "straight" people.

The day ended with Focus group discussions. The Community Leaders were in one group and Religious leaders in one group as well. It was encouraging to see how the majority of the

leaders were receptive to the LGBTIQ+ people. "I know one of them from my community, I wouldn't mind helping them. They deserve the same rights as everybody else." Most of them gave in suggestions that they be included in safeguarding LGBTIQ+ people's lives and gave themselves up as allies in any programming that could come into their communities. It was also encouraging to note that one of the pastors was one of the advocates for SRHR messaging in their community and shared a lot on what KUUWA and any other programming might learn from for a successful project.

5th September 2020 - LGBTIQ Workshop

Venue: Faza's Lodge

Participants: 16

The workshop's outline was very much similar to previous LGBTIQ+ workshop. The workshop was patronized by a lot of LGBTIQ+ people but had only 2 Lesbians.

During the discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity it was observed that many of the participants didn't have an ascertained identity in that, they didn't know who they really are, despite being sure that they were LGBTIQ people, but whether they were transgenders, queer or gender non-conforming, they were identifying themselves as either gays or lesbians.

The issues that were raised during the problem tree centred on the same problems that were raised in the previous workshops. They stated, Seclusion, ridicule and being disowned by parents as other challenges they face.

During the focus group discussions, they stated stakeholders that will aid in their full enjoyment of their SRHR. These included Police, parents/guardians and community leaders and pastors as well. They justified the inclusion of people in influencing positions citing the influence they can have if they are to advocate for something either at community or national level.

07th September 2020 - Partners Workshop

Venue: Mundawanga Lodge

Participants: 16

The workshop started later than scheduled because the some of the participants came in late. After welcoming remarks and an energizer, participants were introduced to the concept of Umunthu. This was linked to the objective of the workshop. Participants were made to understand that, because an effect on one person implies an effect on all humanity they, project implementers, owe it to the LGBTI's to include them in the implementations of projects for all inclusive and sustainability. As such, there contribution will advance the objective of leaving no one behind in developmental projects.

The concept of sexual orientation and gender identity was explored together with the participants. This was done to make them understand who LGBTIQ+ people are so that they have a clear picture as the survey continues. The participants were in two extremes, those that knew everything about the group and those that had little knowledge.

Later on, they drew problem tree. This was a twisted one in that they were presenting problems, there causes, effects and the solutions. This was done to draw in otherwise unspoken solution from third parties to problems being faced by the LGBTI community in the district. This was also done to solicit entry points of KUUWA and other initiatives in its inclusion of the LGBTI community in their programming.

The last activity was Focus group discussions. The CSO's shared their experience in working with youths and the challenges they have been facing. They also shared their personal experiences with the LGBTIQ+ youths and how they can be included in upcoming programming. They also aided in drawing out stakeholders to liaise with in implementing LGBTIQ+ inclusive programming. The stated stakeholders included, themselves CSO's, parents/guardians, Community leaders, religious leaders and Member of Parliament.

They commended the initiative and iterated their readiness in lending a hand if such an inclusive project is to come into their community.

8th September 2020 - Stakeholders Workshop

Venue: Chikho Hotel

Participants: 14

The workshop started off with the reading and signing of survey consent forms. After which the objective of the workshop was stated. Pair's game was introduced with an aim of introducing each other. This activity led to the discussion of what umunthu is.

SOGIE presentation followed through which participants were made aware of whom an LGBTI person is. This sparked discussion in the room because for most of them, they didn't know what makes one an LGBTI.

Focus Group Discussion followed. This platform invited a healthy and learning point. The participants were free and they let out their fears, experiences and laid out entry points in LGBTI inclusion for projects. One participant commented that, "I personally don't like gays and I am disgusted by them," but if there is a chance of me helping LGBTI people, I will be willing to do so. For some, they mentioned that their jurisdiction might prevent them from being all inclusive in their all-inclusive service delivery. "I for one, they said, it's really hard to make known my stand on this, things, bad things, are happening in our country, people are practicing homosexuality in prisons, but we are turning a blind eye, Malawian policies are not accommodative enough and as such, programs are not reaching out to the LGBTI's. They concluded by saying that "Policies should be revised; there is a lot that needs to change in our country for her to move forward."

In their closing remarks they commended the workshop for providing a platform for unearthing the challenges faced by the LGBTI youths and at the same deliberating on what needs to be done to encourage full reach out to all youths, LGBTI's inclusive.

APPENDIX 2: RESAERCH TOOLS

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

1. Do you know any LGBTIQ person who lives in your village? If yes, how do you know them?
2. Since occupying your position, have you ever come across any LGBTIQ person?
If yes, of those you have come across, how many have you assisted or failed to assist in line with your job? And why?
3. Has any LGBTIQ person ever complained to you about maltreatment stemming from their sexual orientation and gender identity? If yes, please explain;
4. Have you ever presided over a case in your village involving an LGBTIQ+ person? If yes, please explain

5. How would you take it if a member of your congregation or village disclosed their sexual orientation to you? Why?
6. What type of counselling can you give to the resident of your village or congregation member who is a self-proclaimed LGBTIQ+ person?
7. Have you ever seen or heard incidents of stigma or discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people in your village or church? If yes, please explain.
8. Explain the vernacular names that are used to describe LGBTIQ+ persons in
 - a) Chichewa
 - b) Tumbuka
 - c) Any other Malawian language.....

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

1. If you are given a chance to design and implement a project to address the issues LGBTIQ young people face, what would that project be like?
2. If given a chance to address the following office bearers about the plight of LGBTIQ people in your community, what would you say?
 - To the local chief
 - To the pastor of your local church
 - To the healthworker at your local clinic
 - To your parents
 - To the member of parliament of your local area
 - To the local police chief of your area police station
 - To your teacher
 - To your councillor
3. Please describe how living as an LGBTIQ person is like in your community.
4. Describe an ideal community, how it would look like living as an LGBTIQ person, from your personal perspective.
5. What threats do you think are there that can stifle LGBTIQ people inclusion in your context?
6. What opportunities do you think are there that can enhance LGBTIQ people inclusion in your context?
7. Have you ever experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence, or bullying in your community in regard to your sexual orientation, gender identity and expression?
8. Have you ever disclosed your identity to friends and family, intentionally or accidentally? If yes, how did they respond?
 - If intentional, what prompted the coming-out?
 - If accidental, what happened?
9. Has there been any interventions in the past that tried to rectify the challenges you face as an LGBTIQ person?
 - Could you describe the intervention as successful? If yes, what made it successful?
 - If no, why do you think they were unsuccessful?

10. From your community or national level, who do you think would help in ensuring that you are enjoying your rights as a human being? And why?
11. What would you expect from any LGBTIQ inclusion project to do differently that would help you as an LGBTIQ+ person?
12. At what age did you realise that you are different? What happened?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. How would you describe the social climate of LGBTIQ people in the country?
 - Supportive [1]
 - Accepting [2]
 - Neutral [3]
 - Intolerant [4]
 - Hostile [5]
2. My personal attitude towards LGBTIQ people is mainly influenced by
 - National Laws
 - My religion
 - My culture
 - My social and professional position
 - Other _____ (please _____ specify)
3. If I had a choice, I would prefer not to assist an LGBTIQ person in my line of duty
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Not sure
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
4. People in my community will judge me negatively if I speak in favour of LGBTIQ people
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Not sure
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
5. Are you aware of any legal instruments or policies in force that protect LGBTIQ persons in Malawi? If yes, please state them.
6. What are your main sources of exposure to LGBTIQ issues and information (select up to 3)
 - Church
 - TV
 - Newspaper
 - Radio
 - Family
 - School
 - Courses, Trainings, Workshops
 - Friends
 - Social media
 - Books
 - Internet
 - Work

- Other (please specify) _____
7. Since occupying your position, have you ever come across any LGBTIQ person?
- If yes, of those you have come across, how many have you assisted or failed to assist in line with your job? And why?
8. Which one of the following reasons is closest to your view about why some people have same-sex relationships?
- Some people just choose to live that way [1]
 - Some people are just born that way [2]
 - It just feels natural to them [3]
 - They are confused [4]
 - It's an illness [5]
 - It's a result of a person's upbringing [6]
 - Some people are sinners [7]
 - It's ancestral spirits [8]
 - Don't know [888]
 - Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

9. Of the LGBTIQ+ people that you know, how many would you consider to be friends and family?
- None [1]
 - One or two [2]
 - Three to five [3]
 - Between six and ten [4]
 - More than ten [5]
 - Don't know [888]
 - Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

10. If a family member said they were LGBTIQ+ person, I would accept it.
- Strongly agree [1]
 - Agree [2]
 - Neither agree nor disagree [3]
 - Disagree [4]
 - Strongly disagree [5]
 - Don't know [888]
 - Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

11. Learners should be taught about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in school.
- Strongly agree [1]
 - Agree [2]
 - Neither agree nor disagree [3]
 - Disagree [4]
 - Strongly disagree [5]
 - Don't know [888]
 - Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

12. There should be community-based education to make people aware of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

- Strongly agree [1]
- Agree [2]
- Neither agree nor disagree [3]
- Disagree [4]
- Strongly disagree [5]
- Don't know [888]
- Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

13. What opportunities do you think are there that can enhance LGBTIQ+ people inclusion in your work area?

14. What threats do you think are there that can stifle LGBTIQ+ people inclusion in your work area?

15. From your own perspective, what do you think could be the impact of LGBTIQ+ exclusion, especially for children and the youths in your department?

16. Have you ever encountered an LGBTIQ+ person in the process of discharging your duties? If yes/ please describe the context

17. Have you ever come across an initiative or programming that was designed to address the issues of LGBTIQ+ people?

- a. If yes, could you describe the initiative as successful?
- b. Please explain your answer.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PLAN INTERNATIONAL STAFF

1. How would you describe the social climate of LGBTIQ people in the country?

- Supportive
- Accepting
- Neutral
- Intolerant
- Hostile

2. Are you aware of any legal instruments or policies in force that protect LGBTIQ persons in Malawi? If yes, please mention all of them that you know.

3. Since occupying your position, have you ever come across any LGBTIQ person?

- Yes
- NO

If yes, of those you have come across, how many have you assisted or failed to assist in line with your job? And why?

4. Which one of the following reasons is closest to your view about why some people have same-sex relationships?

- Some people just choose to live that way [1]
- Some people are just born that way [2]
- It just feels natural to them [3]
- They are confused [4]
- It's an illness [5]
- It's a result of a person's upbringing [6]
- Some people are sinners [7]
- It's ancestral spirits [8]
- Don't know [888]
- Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

5. Of the LGBTIQ+ people that you know, how many would you consider to be friends and family?

- None [1]
- One or two [2]
- Three to five [3]
- Between six and ten [4]
- More than ten [5]
- Don't know [888]
- Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

6. If a family member said they were LGBTIQ+ person, I would accept it.

- Strongly agree [1]
- Agree [2]
- Neither agree nor disagree [3]
- Disagree [4]
- Strongly disagree [5]
- Don't know [888]
- Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

7. Please describe the level of stigma and discrimination to the following groups of adolescent and young people in your work area; 5 being the most and 1 the least

	1	2	3	4	5
Young people living with disabilities					
Young people living with albinism					
Young people from economically disadvantaged families					
Young people on life prolonging medication or chronic diseases					
Orphaned children					
LGBTIQ youth and adolescents					

Young offenders					
Young people with mental health problems					
Other (please specify)					

8. What opportunities do you think are there that can enhance LGBTIQ+ youth and adolescent inclusion in your work area?

b. What threats do you think are there that can stifle LGBTIQ+ youth and adolescent inclusion in your work area?

9. From your own perspective, what do you think could be the impact of LGBTIQ+ person's exclusion, especially for children and adolescents?

10. Briefly describe the staff capacity to create an inclusive environment in relation to

LGBTIQ+ issues.

11. Explain the current status of Plan International Malawi's programmes and strategies on LGBTIQ+ issues.

12. Does plan international Malawi have an official position or policy regarding LGBTIQ+ issues? If Yes, please explain

13. Are you anxious and uncertain in implementing LGBTIQ+ programming? Please explain your answer.

Thank You!

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE LGBTIQ+ PARTICIPANTS

1. How would you describe the social climate of LGBTIQ people in the country?
 - Supportive [1]
 - Accepting [2]
 - Neutral [3]
 - Intolerant [4]
 - Hostile [5]
2. Which of the following people are most open to talk to/with about sexual orientation and gender identity?
 - Parents
 - Siblings
 - Teachers
 - Religious leaders
 - Traditional leaders
 - Health service providers
 - Police
 - Social workers
 - Members of the non-governmental organisations working in your area
3. Please explain your answer in question 2.
4. Which of the following people would you not want to open up to about sexual orientation and gender identity?
 - Parents
 - Siblings
 - Teachers
 - Religious leaders
 - Traditional leaders
 - Health service providers
 - Police
 - Social workers
 - Members of the non-governmental organisations working in your area
5. Please explain your answer to question 5.
6. How do you perceive your masculinity or femininity as an LGBTIQ person?
7. How does your family perceive your masculinity/femininity?
8. How does the larger community perceive your masculinity/femininity?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO TRADITIONAL/RELIGIOUS LEADERS

9. How would you describe the social climate of LGBTIQ people in the country?
 - Supportive
 - Accepting
 - Neutral
 - Intolerant
 - Hostile
10. My personal attitude towards LGBTIQ people is mainly influenced by

- National Laws
- My religion
- My culture
- My social and professional position
- Other _____ (please _____ specify)

11. People in my community will judge me negatively if I speak in favour of LGBTIQ people

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. What are your main sources of exposure to LGBTIQ issues and information (select up to 3)

- Church
- Tv
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Family
- Courses, Workshops, Trainings
- Friends
- Social media
- Books
- Internet
- Other (please specify) _____

13. Which one of the following reasons is closest to your view about why some people have same-sex relationships?

- Some people just choose to live that way [1]
- Some people are just born that way [2]
- It just feels natural to them [3]
- They are confused [4]
- It's an illness [5]
- It's a result of a person's upbringing [6]
- Some people are sinners [7]
- It's ancestral spirits [8]
- Don't know [888]
- Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

14. A person who is gay or lesbian should still be allowed to be part of my culture and traditions.

- Strongly agree [1]
- Agree [2]
- Neither agree nor disagree [3]
- Disagree [4]
- Strongly disagree [5]

- Don't know [888]
 Refuse to answer [999]
15. If a family member said they were gay or lesbian, I would tell them to hide it from others in the community to keep them from being hurt.
- Strongly agree [1]
 Agree [2]
 Neither agree nor disagree [3]
 Disagree [4]
 Strongly disagree [5]
 Don't know [888]
 Refuse to answer [999]
16. Learners should be taught about Sexual orientation and Gender Identity at school.
- Strongly agree [1]
 Agree [2]
 Neither agree nor disagree [3]
 Disagree [4]
 Strongly disagree [5]
 Don't know [888]
 Refuse to answer [999]
Expects a single option response (required)

17. There should be community-based education to make people aware of Sexual orientation and Gender Identity.
- Strongly agree [1]
 Agree [2]
 Neither agree nor disagree [3]
 Disagree [4]
 Strongly disagree [5]
 Don't know [888]
 Refuse to answer [999]
Expects a single option response (required)

18. Please describe the level of stigma and discrimination to the following groups of adolescent and young people in your context; 5 being the most and 1 the least

	1	2	3	4	5
Young people living with disabilities					
Young people living with albinism					
Young people from economically disadvantaged families					
Young people with on life prolonging medication or chronic diseases					
Orphaned children					
LGBTIQ youth and adolescent					
Young offenders					
Other (please specify)					

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUTH FOCUSED CSO LEADERS

1. How would you describe the social climate of LGBTIQ people in the country?
 - Supportive
 - Accepting
 - Neutral
 - Intolerant
 - Hostile
2. Are you aware of any legal instruments or policies in force that protect LGBTIQ persons in Malawi? If yes, please state them.
3. Since occupying your position, have you ever come across any LGBTIQ person?
 - Yes
 - No

If yes, of those you have come across, how many have you assisted or failed to assist in line with your job? And why?

4. Which one of the following reasons is closest to your view about why some people have same-sex relationships?
 - Some people just choose to live that way [1]
 - Some people are just born that way [2]
 - It just feels natural to them [3]
 - They are confused [4]
 - It's an illness [5]
 - It's a result of a person's upbringing [6]
 - Some people are sinners [7]
 - It's ancestral spirits [8]
 - Don't know [888]
 - Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

5. Of the gays and lesbians that you know, how many would you consider to be friends and family?
 - None [1]
 - One or two [2]
 - Three to five [3]
 - Between six and ten [4]
 - More than ten [5]
 - Don't know [888]
 - Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

6. If a family member said they were gay or lesbian, I would accept it.
 - Strongly agree [1]
 - Agree [2]
 - Neither agree nor disagree [3]
 - Disagree [4]
 - Strongly disagree [5]
 - Don't know [888]
 - Refuse to answer [999]

Expects a single option response (required)

7. Please describe the level of stigma and discrimination to the following groups of adolescent and young people in your context; 5 being the most and 1 the least

	1	2	3	4	5
Young people living with disabilities					
Young people living with albinism					
Young people from economically disadvantaged families					
Young people with on life prolonging medication or chronic diseases					
Orphaned children					
LGBTIQ youth and adolescent					
Young offenders					
Other (please specify)					

8. What opportunities do you think are there that can enhance LGBTIQ people inclusion in your context?
9. What threats do you think are there that can stifle LGBTIQ people inclusion in your context?
10. Briefly describe the staff capacity to create an inclusive environment in relation to LGBTIQ+ issues.
11. From your own perspective, what do you think could be the impact of LGBTIQ+ exclusion, especially for children and the youths?