

**Project PRISM — Promoting Rights and Improving Safety Measures: Addressing
Gender-Based Physical Violence against LGBTQ+ Filipinos**

Gender & Society

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A. TARGET AUDIENCE

According to HRV Foundation (2022), “LGBTQ+ women, trans people and non-binary people are equally as likely, if not more so, than their cisgender and heterosexual peers to have experienced IPV at some point in their lifetimes.”

This group faces significant challenges related to gender-based physical violence, and advocating for them directly addresses their immediate safety and well-being. Through Project PRISM, LGBTQ+ individuals are both the primary beneficiaries and the focus of advocacy, receiving support in the form of awareness, resources, and policy influence to reduce violence and promote inclusivity.

LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines encounter persistent challenges regarding safety and equality, primarily attributable to gender-based violence. This advocacy underscores the issue's importance and aims to address its fundamental causes to encourage a safer and more inclusive society.

According to (UNDP & USAID, 2014), LGBTQ+ Filipinos are a vulnerable population facing disproportionate levels of gender-based violence, making them the primary target audience for this advocacy. Their experiences of violence stem from deeply rooted cultural stigmas, discrimination, and the lack of comprehensive legal protections. LGBTQ+ Filipinos frequently face societal discrimination and restricted access to fairness, thereby worsening their vulnerability. This discrimination not only subjects them to increased instances of physical violence but also hinders their capacity to seek assistance due to fear of additional victimization. The advocacy aims to address these systemic obstacles while promoting a safer and more accepting atmosphere for the LGBTQ+ community.

Project PRISM seeks to advance inclusivity, safety, and equality by concentrating on this group of individuals. This advocacy will also benefit the entire Filipino society by promoting a more tolerant and equal community, where addressing violence against one marginalized group generates a chain reaction leading to increased acceptance of the LGBTQ community.

The LGBTQ+ community in the Philippines remains vulnerable to various forms of gender-based discrimination and violence. Despite strides in promoting gender equality, societal attitudes and a lack of protective legislation continue to put LGBTQ+ Filipinos at risk. This advocacy project focuses on addressing these issues, recognizing the urgent need for greater protection and support for LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies in the face of ongoing challenges.

Abesamis and Alibudbud (2023) highlight the ongoing issues faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines, noting a persistent presence of negative attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals despite advancements in gender equality. The study explores the conversations around the SOGIE Equality Bill, brought into the national spotlight following a case of discrimination against a transgender woman in 2019. The research examines the perspectives of various groups, including LGBTQ+ organizations, allies, politicians, and religious institutions. Supporters of the bill emphasize identity-based rights, while opponents frame their arguments around behavior-based rights. Abesamis and Alibudbud suggest future advocacy should aim to locate middle ground between the LGBTQ+ community and opposition, campaign for local anti-discrimination ordinances, and enhance SOGIE-related knowledge among policy implementers to improve societal understanding and support for LGBTQ+ rights in the Philippines.

The LGBTQ+ community in the Philippines faces systemic discrimination and marginalization, making them a vital group for advocacy efforts aimed at promoting rights and equality. This project seeks to empower LGBTQ+ Filipinos by raising awareness of their struggles and advocating for legislative protections that address their unique vulnerabilities. Beyond the immediate focus on LGBTQ+ individuals, this advocacy also benefits allies, families, and the broader community by fostering an inclusive society that champions equality for all.

Manalastas and Torre (2023) highlight the ongoing struggle for equality among Filipinos who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, particularly in the wake of significant political events that brought these issues to national attention. Their research underscores the importance of collective action in advocating for LGBT human rights, emphasizing that social change is essential for achieving legal empowerment. Through qualitative interviews with LGBT human rights defenders, the study reveals insights into their motivations for activism and the broader implications of their work. By focusing on the narratives of these activists, we see how their efforts not only strive for equality but also create a ripple effect, encouraging societal support and understanding, thereby benefiting not just the LGBTQ+ community but society as a whole. The advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights is ultimately about cultivating a more equitable society where all individuals can thrive free from discrimination.

The LGBTQ+ community is a primary focus of this advocacy campaign to reduce gender-based physical violence in the Philippines. According to the Human Rights Watch study (2017), LGBTQ+ students in the Philippines frequently experience extreme violence and discrimination in schools because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. These young

people are especially vulnerable because the research details cases of bullying, harassment, and even physical violence that have occurred in schools.

By addressing issues of discrimination and violence against LGBTQ+ youths, this advocacy seeks to build safer school environments and promote a culture of acceptance and understanding. The campaign benefits not just LGBTQ+ students, but also their families, peers, and educational institutions by increasing understanding and minimizing conflict.

In advocating for the rights and protection of LGBTQIA+ individuals, especially in the context of humanitarian crises, it is critical to identify both primary and secondary target audiences. LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly those living in resettlement sites or disaster-affected areas, are disproportionately affected by systemic discrimination, lack of access to essential services, and heightened vulnerabilities during emergencies. Other key stakeholders, such as policymakers, humanitarian organizations, and community leaders, stand to benefit from efforts to address these disparities by fostering safer, more inclusive spaces for marginalized groups. Addressing the specific needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals contributes to broader societal resilience and equality, benefiting entire communities by promoting inclusivity and equity.

Arturo Golong's experiences, as shared in the 2016 forum "Boses Bahaghari," illustrate the unique vulnerabilities LGBTQIA+ individuals face in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan. Despite being a respected community leader, Arturo faced substantial barriers in accessing services, livelihood opportunities, and equal treatment. He reported that LGBTQIA+ individuals, including gay men like himself, were deprioritized during disaster rescue operations, and faced ridicule and exclusion in training sessions at resettlement sites. This ongoing discrimination, which extends to law enforcement and social services, underscores the critical need to target

LGBTQIA+ individuals as a key audience for inclusive policies and advocacy efforts (Golong, 2016).

Arturo's story further highlights that secondary audiences, such as police, military, and disaster response personnel, are in need of sensitization and training to address their biases. His experiences with biased rescue prioritization, ridicule in training, and police neglect when LGBTQIA+ individuals reported crimes point to institutional biases that exacerbate the marginalization of LGBTQIA+ individuals in crises. By targeting these secondary audiences for training and awareness initiatives, advocacy efforts can promote a more equitable distribution of services and safety measures in humanitarian contexts (Golong, 2016).

Project PRISM focuses on LGBTQ+ individuals and communities as its primary audience, as they are the direct victims of gender-based violence. By engaging with this community, the campaign can provide essential resources, education, and safety awareness to those at risk. Additionally, law enforcement officers are a crucial target audience because their understanding and sensitivity toward LGBTQ+ issues are pivotal in ensuring that cases of gender-based violence are handled with respect and efficacy. Educators and school administrators are also key, given that schools are foundational institutions in shaping societal attitudes.

By equipping educators with tools to promote inclusivity, they can actively contribute to reducing discrimination and intervening in violence in school environments. Secondary beneficiaries include families of LGBTQ+ individuals, whose awareness and support are essential in creating safe, accepting environments, as well as healthcare providers, who, through targeted training, can better recognize and address signs of gender-based violence. These

audiences together form a multi-level approach to advocacy that supports victims, sensitizes law enforcement, and fosters inclusivity within schools.

B. CAUSES OF PROBLEM

The main cause of the violence is the perpetrator him or herself: it is very important to keep in mind that a person who has been affected by gender-based violence is never responsible for the perpetrator's actions. (Council of Europe, n.d.) Violence is a choice. While cultural, social, or economic factors may influence behaviors or attitudes, they do not remove personal accountability. When a perpetrator commits violence, they actively choose to harm another person, and this decision is rooted in their own agency. Recognizing this reinforces that individuals are accountable for their own actions and cannot justify harming others based on external factors.

Gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines is influenced by a confluence of cultural, legal, and social factors. These factors are interrelated and sustain an environment in which LGBTQ+ individuals encounter significant risks and challenges. Human Rights Watch (2017) identifies several critical factors contributing to this issue, including societal norms, legal deficiencies, and insufficient support systems for victims.

The primary reasons that cause gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ people in the Philippines are established in social and cultural standards, wherein discrimination and diversity sustain harmful perceptions regarding LGBTQ+ individuals. Furthermore, insufficient legal frameworks intensify the problem, as the lack of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation renders LGBTQ+ individuals vulnerable to physical violence. A further contributing factor is the lack of education, as insufficient gender sensitivity training in educational institutions and

workplaces encourages ignorance and intolerance. In the end, poor reporting mechanisms prevent victims from pursuing justice, as the fear of retaliation or rejection from society deters LGBTQ+ individuals from reporting acts of violence.

The LGBTQ+ community in the Philippines faces significant challenges due to systemic discrimination rooted in societal biases against diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. The absence of national anti-discrimination laws further exacerbates the vulnerability of LGBTQ+ individuals, often leaving them without legal protection against harassment and prejudice. This systemic issue has created a climate in which discrimination and violence against LGBTQ+ individuals are unfortunately prevalent.

Abesamis (2023) discusses the rising incidence of harassment faced by LGBTQ+ Filipinos, linking it to deeply ingrained societal prejudice related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE). The lack of a national anti-discrimination law places the burden of responding to such harassment on the LGBTQ+ community and its allies. Abesamis' study, which included in-depth interviews with Filipino university students, highlights that bystanders who share an empathetic connection, or *kapwa*, with LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to intervene. This recognition of shared identity encourages intervention by challenging the dehumanizing treatment often directed at LGBTQ+ individuals.

The prevalence of physical violence among LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines can be attributed to a complex interplay of societal norms, cultural attitudes, and systemic discrimination. Deep-rooted beliefs about gender and sexuality contribute to the marginalization of LGBTQ+ individuals, often resulting in hostility and aggression towards them. This violence is not limited to a single setting; rather, it manifests in various environments, including homes, schools, workplaces, and communities.

According to a national survey conducted by Ramiro et al. (2022), approximately 80% of young people aged 13-24 reported experiencing some form of violence, with LGBTQ+ individuals facing the highest rates of physical violence compared to their heterosexual peers. This disparity underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions and support systems that address the unique vulnerabilities of LGBTQ+ youth. Factors such as familial rejection, peer bullying, and inadequate institutional protections exacerbate their risk of experiencing physical violence, indicating a critical need for comprehensive strategies to combat this pervasive issue and foster safer environments for all youth.

Several factors contribute to gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines. One of the main causes is the strongly ingrained religious and cultural traditions that support conventional ideas about gender and sexuality. Catholicism, which has a big impact on Filipino culture, frequently teaches that relationships and identities that are not heteronormative are immoral. Human Rights Watch (2017) states that this can create a hostile atmosphere in which LGBTQ+ people are targeted for violence because they are perceived as unnatural or abnormal. Additionally, Ildefonso (2022) emphasizes that the lack of effective legal protections leaves LGBTQ+ individuals vulnerable to violence and discrimination.

LGBTQIA+ students in the Philippines face numerous forms of discrimination and violence that stem from entrenched cultural and religious norms, as well as a lack of protective legislation. Despite a reputation as a generally "gay-friendly" country, prevailing conservative attitudes continue to marginalize LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly within educational, familial, and religious contexts. This systemic discrimination not only exacerbates vulnerabilities among LGBTQIA+ youth but also contributes to high rates of mental health challenges and

social isolation. Understanding these root causes is essential to developing effective interventions and advocacy efforts.

Tang and Poudel (2018) explore the societal and institutional barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ students in the Philippines, emphasizing the impact of religion and conservative cultural values in perpetuating discrimination. Their study highlights that many Filipino LGBTQIA+ students experience bullying and exclusion within educational settings, often encountering discrimination from peers and faculty alike. This hostile environment is further exacerbated by familial rejection and stigmatization in religious communities, which reinforce negative stereotypes and discourage open expressions of LGBTQIA+ identities (Tang & Poudel, 2018).

The authors also point out the psychological effects of this discrimination, noting that many LGBTQIA+ students suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and, in extreme cases, suicidal ideation. These issues are compounded by the limited support systems available for LGBTQIA+ individuals, as existing social and educational structures fail to provide affirming resources. The study emphasizes the importance of anti-discrimination legislation, arguing that legal protections are critical to improving the safety and well-being of LGBTQIA+ students and fostering a more inclusive society (Tang & Poudel, 2018).

The causes of gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ Filipinos are interlinked. Above all, they are entrenched in cultural and societal prejudices; often these are sanctioned by conservative religious beliefs that in turn further exacerbate unfavorable attitudes toward non-heteronormative identities and relationships. In addition, there are anti-discrimination laws in the Philippines, yet these laws do not comprehensively enforce and lack clarity in addressing

specific needs unique to the LGBTQ+ and leave a crucial gap in protective legislation. Adding to this is the absence of sensitization and training in law enforcement agencies where cases of gender-based violence are most likely to be downplayed or not addressed appropriately because of a lack of knowledge and sensitivity towards LGBTQ+ issues. Lastly, the way the LGBTQ+ community is portrayed in the media does little to help overcome these stereotypes, perpetuating the stigma, and thus making discrimination and violence against them acceptable within society.

C. EFFECTS OF PROBLEM

Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LBT) women face discrimination not just because they are women, but also because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This means they experience both sexism and anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice. When these forms of discrimination mix, it creates extra challenges and risks for LBT women, making them more likely to be targeted or hurt by others. Because they face unfair treatment from multiple angles, they often end up in more dangerous situations and are at a higher risk of experiencing violence. “Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women face disproportionate levels of violence at the hands of both strangers and intimate partners.” (Thapa, 2015)

Gender-based violence significantly affects LGBTQ+ individuals, influencing their physical, mental, social, and economic health. These effects are extended beyond individual challenges and include considerable social consequences that sustain discrimination and marginalization. Based from Outright Action International (2016), it is stated that it asserts that violence against LGBTQ+ individuals worsens various negative results. The effect of the problem is discussed below:

The physical and mental health consequences of gender-based violence are severe, with victims frequently enduring trauma, depression, and anxiety. This results in significantly elevated suicide rates among LGBTQ+ individuals. Social isolation often ensues because many LGBTQ+ individuals perceive their communities as unsafe or unwelcoming which results in exclusion and marginalization. Discrimination and violence economically limit employment opportunities, increasing poverty among LGBTQ+ individuals. The continuation of shame due to the absence of accountability for offenders reinforces societal presumptions, creating an environment favorable to impunity.

Gender-based violence has severe consequences on the mental and emotional well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines. LGBTQ+ Filipinos often face significant psychological distress due to homonegativity and prejudice, which can lead to long-term effects on mental health and quality of life. The impact is even more pronounced for those who experience heightened levels of internalized shame and pain.

Cabral and Pinto (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study showing a strong link between gender-based violence and negative mental health outcomes among LGBTQ+ individuals, including increased rates of depression and anxiety. Their findings reveal that internal shame can exacerbate the impact of violence, particularly among LGBTQ+ women, who report higher levels of both shame and discrimination than heterosexual peers. Notably, social support was found to buffer these negative effects, helping reduce internal shame, depression, and anxiety. The authors suggest that fostering social support networks and addressing internalized shame are crucial for promoting resilience and mental health within the LGBTQ+ community, especially when considering the intersection of gender and sexual orientation.

The effects of gender-based violence on the LGBTQ+ community are both profound and damaging, manifesting in various physical and psychological ways. Members of the LGBTQ+ community often face unique vulnerabilities due to societal stigma, discrimination, and a lack of protective legislation.

Castronuevo-Ruga (2019) highlights that individuals who experience gender-based violence encounter a range of psychosocial issues, including trauma, depression, and anxiety, which can significantly impair their quality of life. The study emphasizes that LGBTQ+ individuals endure multiple forms of violence—physical, emotional, and sexual—leading to increased feelings of isolation and mental health challenges. These experiences of violence not only hinder their ability to engage in society fully but also perpetuate cycles of discrimination and marginalization. As such, addressing gender-based violence within the LGBTQ+ community is crucial for promoting mental health and fostering an inclusive environment where all individuals can thrive without fear of violence or discrimination.

The effects of gender-based violence on LGBTQ+ individuals extend beyond physical harm, leading to long-term psychological, social, and economic consequences. According to Human Rights Watch (2017), victims of gender-based violence often suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. Additionally, Meyer (2003) points out that stigma and discrimination contribute to higher rates of mental health disorders among LGBTQ+ individuals compared to heterosexuals, underscoring the need for effective support systems.

Violence and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ individuals in humanitarian contexts often arise from systemic issues, such as cultural biases, legal exclusions, and insufficient inclusion practices. In regions prone to natural disasters and conflicts, like the Philippines, these factors are intensified, creating conditions where LGBTQIA+ individuals are especially

vulnerable during crises. Pre-existing social stigmas and institutional neglect often lead to inequitable access to support and protection, further marginalizing LGBTQIA+ communities. Understanding the causes behind this discrimination in humanitarian settings is essential to fostering inclusive and effective support for these groups.

Abesamis and Hryn timer (2024) examine the distinct challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Philippines, a country frequently affected by humanitarian crises. Their study emphasizes that LGBTQIA+ communities are often excluded from humanitarian planning and response initiatives, largely due to systemic oversight and lack of understanding about the unique needs of sexual and gender minorities in these situations. The authors highlight that social, economic, and legal factors often prevent LGBTQIA+ individuals from receiving equitable assistance, which exacerbates their vulnerability during emergencies. This exclusion, driven by social stigma and institutional neglect, reinforces barriers to basic needs and protection, particularly in crisis situations where resources are limited and marginalized communities are deprioritized (Abesamis & Hryn timer, 2024).

The brief also underscores the importance of bridging immediate crisis response with long-term efforts toward inclusive humanitarian practices, stressing that overlooking LGBTQIA+ needs results in increased health risks, reduced access to shelter, and a lack of safe spaces during crises. To address these disparities, the authors advocate for LGBTQIA+-inclusive strategies at all stages of humanitarian action. This includes planning, implementation, and evaluation processes that recognize and address the specific vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and resilient humanitarian system (Abesamis & Hryn timer, 2024).

This leads to tremendous psychological, economic, social, and physical consequences due to gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ people. Psychologically, most of the victims develop trauma, depression, anxiety, and sometimes suicidal thoughts because of constant threats and experiences of violence. Economically, job loss, decreased productivity, and problems accessing resources cause a setback to their financial stability and independence. Socially, most LGBTQ+ individuals hide their identities to avoid conflict and are isolated from community support. Physically, the harm can range from minor injuries to severe risks of physical health, and most victims fear going to the doctor for fear of discrimination in the healthcare system. In combination, these effects create a cycle that severely impacts the well-being and integration of LGBTQ+ individuals in society.

D. ADVOCACY PARTNERS

Collaborating with essential advocacy partners is crucial for effectively dealing with the gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines. Numerous governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can assume vital roles in this effort aimed at contributing to the establishment of a safer and more equitable environment for the LGBTQ+ community. The Commission on Human Rights (2020), it is stated that the participation of these partners can substantially help to improve the efficacy of advocacy initiatives for the LGBTQ+ community. Possible advocacy partners will be discussed in the paragraph below:

Government agencies like the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) can promote enhanced legal safeguards and furnish vital resources for victims of violence. The Gender Ombud is essential in safeguarding the rights of marginalized groups, including LGBTQ+ individuals, and advocating for the implementation of gender-sensitive policies. The Philippine

National Police (PNP) is committed to enhancing its management of gender-based violence cases by enhancing gender sensitivity training and establishing improved reporting mechanisms for incidents involving LGBTQ+ individuals (Philippine National Police, 2021). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) endorses efforts that encourage inclusive policies and carry out programs aimed at minimizing discrimination and violence.

To effectively address gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ Filipinos, collaboration with government agencies and advocacy organizations is essential. These partnerships can help develop and implement policies that promote LGBTQ+ rights and provide crucial support for individuals facing violence. By combining the resources and expertise of various stakeholders, we can create a comprehensive approach to combat discrimination and enhance community safety.

Daguio et al. (2023) conducted a study that assesses gender equality metrics within selected Philippine government agencies, examining dimensions such as Human Capital, Economic Empowerment, Voice and Rights, and Gender Capacity Building. This research highlights the importance of these dimensions in informing policies and practices aimed at enhancing gender equality. The findings suggest that by leveraging these metrics, government agencies can implement more effective strategies to combat gender-based violence and discrimination.

Furthermore, engaging with organizations focused on LGBTQ+ rights, such as GALANG Philippines, can complement governmental efforts by providing grassroots support and advocacy. Collaborations with local health services and educational institutions can also foster community awareness and mobilization, creating a comprehensive approach to address the issues faced by LGBTQ+ individuals. By aligning the goals of these agencies and organizations, it is

possible to create a more robust framework for promoting LGBTQ+ rights and reducing violence in the Philippines.

Addressing the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines necessitates a unified approach that engages both government agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs). Discrimination and harassment against LGBTQ+ individuals are not just social issues; they are deeply rooted in cultural attitudes and systemic inequalities that have persisted for decades. Effective support systems are crucial for fostering an environment where LGBTQ+ individuals can thrive without fear of violence or discrimination. These systems must encompass legal protections, mental health resources, and community outreach programs. By collaborating, government entities can implement policies that protect LGBTQ+ rights while NGOs can provide vital grassroots support, advocacy, and education to combat stigma. Such collaboration can amplify voices within the LGBTQ+ community and promote societal acceptance, which is essential for achieving true equality.

The study by Arizabal, Aspa, and Manalo (2023) underscores the critical role of local government units (LGUs) in the implementation of Anti-Discrimination Ordinances, which are essential for protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals. Cities like Marikina, Manila, and Mandaluyong exemplify successful initiatives where local governments have taken proactive steps to establish legal frameworks that address discrimination. These ordinances not only prohibit acts of violence and harassment but also serve as a formal acknowledgment of LGBTQ+ rights within the legal system. The study highlights how these LGUs can serve as models for others by demonstrating the effectiveness of strong enforcement mechanisms and the allocation of dedicated resources for monitoring complaints related to gender-based violence. By establishing clear procedures for reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination, LGUs can

foster a safer and more supportive environment for LGBTQ+ individuals, encouraging them to come forward and seek help without fear of reprisal or further victimization.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is a key partner in this advocacy campaign. The DSWD aggressively advances the rights and welfare of marginalized groups, including LGBTQ+ people, as a major government body tasked with social justice and welfare. Recent efforts by the DSWD, like holding forums on gender identity, sexual orientation, and expression, demonstrate the agency's dedication to promoting inclusivity and increasing public understanding (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2023). The DSWD can carry out initiatives to offer essential support services, such as shelters, counseling, and legal aid, to victims of violence by working with LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations.

Addressing violence against LGBTQIA+ individuals requires collaboration with government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and NGOs that are active in gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, particularly in the Philippines' disaster-prone regions. These partners bring essential resources and experience in addressing the underlying social norms that perpetuate violence and discrimination. Collaborating with organizations that specialize in GBV prevention, mental health, and community support can create a more inclusive and resilient approach to protecting LGBTQIA+ communities.

Molin (2018) identifies humanitarian actors, local NGOs, and community-based organizations as key partners in efforts to prevent GBV, with a specific focus on engaging men and boys in prevention efforts. These partners have experience in creating safe spaces, peer support networks, and mental health services that can benefit LGBTQIA+ individuals facing discrimination and violence. Molin's study emphasizes that these organizations can play a pivotal

role in fostering gender-inclusive and non-violent coping mechanisms by helping communities to adopt more flexible gender roles and reduce harmful stereotypes. Humanitarian actors, particularly those active in the Philippines, can serve as advocacy partners by providing training on gender-sensitive approaches and strengthening the capacity of staff to apply a norm-critical perspective in their work, thereby creating a safer and more inclusive environment for LGBTQIA+ individuals (Molin, 2018).

To address gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ successfully, Project PRISM targets to collaborate with government and non-governmental organizations. Its two key partners are the Philippine Commission on Women and the Commission on Human Rights, which have mandates of addressing violence against marginalized communities.

The PCW may help in policy advocacy; CHR can provide legal assistance and public awareness. The DSWD, for instance, can avail counseling and crisis intervention service for the immediate needs of the victims. Among these NGOs, LGBTQ+ advocates like Bahaghari and Metro Manila Pride are the most valuable because of its established community networks and the experience in grassroots-level advocacies. International human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International Philippines, can really amplify the message of Project PRISM to help raise more awareness beyond the local level.

Last, Gabriela Women's Party, since focused on women's rights, can be supportive to the legislation and advocacy expertise that could be added in the campaign. Each of these partners brings unique resources and capabilities to the campaign, expanding Project PRISM's reach and impact.

According to Hapal (2023), in the Philippines, where most people are Catholic, LGBTQ+ individuals may not always find support within their immediate communities due to prevailing

conservative beliefs. However, social media platforms provide a valuable space for connection and support, even though they are not traditional government agencies or NGOs. These platforms allow queer individuals to find like-minded people, communicate openly, and build supportive networks online.

Social media gives LGBTQ+ people a way to find friends, share their stories, and get helpful information about their rights, mental health, and staying safe. This is especially important for those who don't feel accepted by the people around them. Even though it isn't a government agency or an organization, social media can still support LGBTQ+ causes by spreading awareness, bringing people together, and filling in the gaps where other support systems might be missing.

E. PROPOSED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES

The UN Free & Equal Campaign Impact Report 2020 establishes critical strategies for addressing violence and discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines, emphasizing the crucial requirement for proactive measures (UN Free & Equal Campaign, 2020). This report is a vital resource for identifying effective strategies for enhancing the safety and rights of LGBTQ+ Filipinos. This will be tackled in the paragraph below.

Project PRISM is closely aligned with the campaigns, initiatives, and activities stated in the UN Free & Equal Campaign's report. These initiatives advocate the carrying out of specific educational campaigns to enhance awareness of LGBTQ+ rights, which is essential for building a more welcoming community. Furthermore, the operation of safer space projects can provide critical support and resources to LGBTQ+ individuals, promoting interactions with companions and access to essential services free of discrimination. Project PRISM intends to solve the

systemic issues highlighted in the report by integrating these approaches, eventually aiming to reduce gender-based violence and create a secure and open environment for LGBTQ+ Filipinos.

Addressing gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ Filipinos requires comprehensive strategies that target societal norms, strengthen protective policies, and offer supportive services. By implementing programs that focus on education, community engagement, and policy reform, Project PRISM aims to reduce instances of violence and support victims in finding safety and justice.

Bott, Morrison, and Ellsberg (2021) outline various approaches to addressing gender-based violence, highlighting initiatives across the justice, health, and education sectors. Their review suggests that successful interventions often involve community mobilization and institutional reforms to challenge gender norms and reduce violence. The authors identify promising strategies, such as implementing educational programs that address gender inequalities, enforcing laws against gender-based violence, and establishing health services to support victims. They also emphasize the need for multisectoral approaches that combine legal, health, and educational efforts to promote long-term behavioral and societal change. For the Philippines, similar initiatives could be adapted to support LGBTQ+ communities, particularly by promoting science-based evaluations of programs, encouraging public-private partnerships, and investing in evidence-based prevention and support initiatives.

By fostering supportive communities and creating awareness around healthy relationships, these initiatives can empower LGBTQ+ individuals, enhance their understanding of their rights, and ultimately reduce the incidence of violence. Promoting rights and safety measures is critical for creating an environment where LGBTQ+ individuals feel protected and

valued. These proven initiatives can be adapted and applied within the Philippine context to address the pressing issue of violence against LGBTQ+ Filipinos.

Crooks, Jaffe, Dunlop, Kerry, and Exner-Cortens (2018) highlight that numerous initiatives developed over the past 25 years have proven effective in preventing intimate partner violence (IPV) among adolescents and young adults. Their review emphasizes the importance of school-based programs and bystander interventions on college campuses, which can educate youth on recognizing and addressing dating violence. However, significant gaps remain in our understanding of effective prevention strategies for marginalized groups, particularly LGBTQ+ youth, who are at an elevated risk for experiencing violence. This underscores the urgent need for tailored interventions that acknowledge and address the specific vulnerabilities of LGBTQ+ populations. Implementing these strategies in the Philippines would not only promote their rights but also improve safety measures against gender-based violence, contributing to a more inclusive and supportive society.

Gender-based physical violence against LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Philippines is a critical issue that demands immediate action. Establishing 24/7 crisis hotlines tailored specifically for LGBTQIA+ individuals is essential for providing immediate support. These hotlines should be staffed by trained professionals who can address the unique challenges faced by the community, including hate-motivated violence and domestic abuse. Research indicates that LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines frequently encounter discrimination, contributing to heightened risks of violence and mental health issues (Human Rights Watch, 2017). A dedicated hotline would empower survivors to explore their options for safety and recovery in a compassionate and supportive environment.

The Trevor Project emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive resources to effectively

support LGBTQ+ youth in the Philippines, as many face significant barriers in accessing mental health care and safe spaces (The Trevor Project, 2024). Implementing such initiatives is vital to fostering a supportive environment where LGBTQIA+ individuals can thrive and feel safe.

To address the systemic exclusion and marginalization of LGBTQIA+ individuals in education and healthcare, it is essential to advocate for inclusive policies and programs that specifically address the unique needs of Filipino LGBTQIA+ youth. The study by Abesamis and Siddayao (2021) provides valuable recommendations for improving Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) in the Philippines, which could serve as a model for developing inclusive educational programs that reduce stigma and discrimination. Implementing these programs requires close collaboration with local LGBTQIA+ organizations and community groups to ensure the curriculum is relevant, inclusive, and sensitive to the diverse experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Abesamis and Siddayao (2021) recommend that CSE in the Philippines be revised to include content specific to LGBTQIA+ experiences, moving beyond heteronormative frameworks to better represent the diverse realities of Filipino youth. This inclusion would involve expanding the CSE curriculum to address topics relevant to LGBTQIA+ youth, such as safe sexual practices, mental health resources, and anti-bullying strategies. The authors also suggest collaboration with LGBTQIA+ organizations, not only as consultation partners but as expert advisors in policy development. This partnership model aims to empower LGBTQIA+ youth by providing them with accurate health information in a supportive environment, ultimately fostering a more inclusive educational system and helping reduce discrimination-related health disparities (Abesamis & Siddayao, 2021).

Project PRISM has designed a series of programs for education, support, and systemic change to address and mitigate gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ individuals. Educational campaigns will include seminars and webinars that will create awareness about LGBTQ+ rights, gender-based violence, and legal protections. Schools and universities will be engaged in educating young people and future leaders. Training for law enforcement capacity in terms of high responsiveness and sensitivity toward the needs of LGBTQ+ would be given top priority. A network of verified and accountable businesses and community safe houses would provide a safe venue accessible to all LGBTQ+ on and off the streets. Free professional legal assistance would be instituted jointly with CHR and allied LGBTQ+ advocacies for the victims of Gender Based Violence. Trained counselors and social workers will develop community support groups that would offer safe space for victims to go for psychological services and to discuss their experiences. Project PRISM will partner with the local media to come up with stories and documentaries that could challenge stereotypes and engender feelings of empathy and understanding. All these proposed initiatives provide immediate responses, increase public awareness, and bring about change in attitude and institutional response.

Pushing for the SOGIE (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression) Bill is important because it aims to protect everyone's rights, regardless of who they are or who they love. "No matter what their circumstances, everyone has the right to respect and protection because they are human beings, not things." (Ralb Law, n.d.)

By promoting equal rights, the SOGIE Bill helps guarantee that no one is treated as less than another person because of who they are. Additionally, it encourages society to learn more about LGBTQ+ issues, fostering understanding and acceptance while providing legal support for

victims of discrimination or violence. Ultimately, the SOGIE Bill is about recognizing that everyone deserves dignity and respect, contributing to a safer and fairer society for all.

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