

DRAFT

OVER-POLICED, UNDER-PROTECTED

Experiences of Trans and Gender Diverse Communities in the Caribbean



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OutRight Action International works at a global, regional and national level to eradicate the persecution, inequality and violence lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) people face around the world. From its offices in seven countries and headquarters in New York, OutRight builds capacity of LGBTIQ movements, documents human rights violations, advocates for inclusion and equality, and holds leaders accountable for protecting the rights of LGBTIQ people everywhere. OutRight has recognized consultative status at the United Nations.

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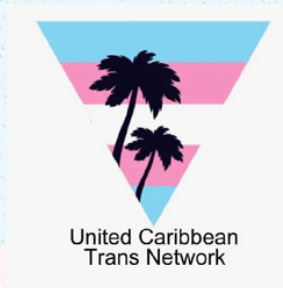
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The United Caribbean Trans Network (UCTRANS) was established in February 2018.

Over the past two years of existence, the network has been collaborating with Trans organizations all across the Caribbean.

It has a strong membership of 13 Trans organizations in the region. UCTRANS' mission is to build the capacity of transgender organizations and those working with Trans people regionally while providing regional technical support in order to advance human rights, promotion of sexual and reproductive health, rights and well-being.

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Focus group in Haiti



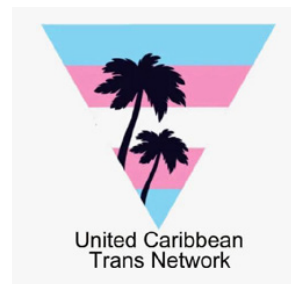
Focus group Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

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United Caribbean
Trans Network



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Photo: Focus group in Haiti.



Executive Summary

“It is beyond hormones; we need legal recognition and documents.”

– Yaisah Micaela Mehu Val, Haiti

In 2020, UCTRANS and OutRight Action International launched the first holistic survey to look at trans and gender diverse lives in the Caribbean. In total 119 survey responses were collected from 11 countries, supplemented by interviews and focus groups, in order to help provide context to trans and gender diverse realities in the Caribbean. This research found that trans and gender diverse individuals identified the following on-going challenges to their well-being:

- Legal and social discrimination related to the inability to change one’s gender marker;
- Employment discrimination leading to higher rates of unemployment for trans and gender diverse people;
- Lack of access to or discrimination in health services contributing to self-medication and no subsequent medical monitoring; and
- A lack of political will to recognize or end discrimination on the basis of gender identity.

The most significant and glaring challenge trans and gender diverse individuals struggle with on a daily basis is discrimination, stigma, or violence related to the inability to legally change their gender marker to align with their gender identity or expression. Every aspect of a trans and gender diverse person’s social life – including their access to education, employment, housing, and comprehensive, competent trans-specific health services – depends on the ability to show a valid identity card or documentation that aligns with their gender identity and expression.

Other factors continue to affect trans and gender diverse people’s lives in the Caribbean. Religion still has a stronghold on social attitudes and can exert a strong influence on political will to recognize or deny the human rights of trans and gender diverse people. Many Caribbean

countries still implement laws that directly criminalize or negatively impact trans and gender diverse people's lives today. There are wide discrepancies between the national unemployment rate and the unemployment rate among the LGBTIQ¹ community: 42 % of respondents to the survey in this research indicated that they were currently unemployed, compared to an average unemployment rate under 10% for countries in the region. Discrimination, lack of workplace and social protections, and the inability to legally change their gender markers all contribute to the high rates of unemployment among trans and gender diverse people in the Caribbean.

There are wide discrepancies between the national unemployment rate and the unemployment rate among the LGBTIQ community.

Trans and gender diverse people continue to experience higher rates of depression and anxiety, likely driven by their experiences of isolation, rejection, discrimination, and violence. Of those participants who replied that they accessed mental health services, only 31.5% said that it was trans-affirming or at least trans-competent care. We found a lack of access to health services on the whole, not just related to mental health but also to physical and gender affirming health care. Hormone therapy is hard to come by in the Caribbean and in most cases our data shows that trans and gender diverse people self-medicate, placing them at greater health risks.

¹ OutRight Action International uses the acronym LGBTIQ to denote the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex community. We believe this acronym is inclusive of a broad range of people across our community. It is not exhaustive, nor is it universally accepted or used. Where interviewees have used a different version of the acronym, or where quoting sources which use a different acronym, we have opted to use the version used by the source.

While trans and gender diverse people continue to face socio-economic and legal challenges across the Caribbean, our research also identified areas where progress has been and is being made. Activists are using the courts, public awareness campaigns, sensitization, and continuous dialogue with the aim of increasing social and political will to recognize gender identity, and making progress in securing the rights of trans and gender diverse people in the Caribbean. These strategies, with renewed focus on the crucial ability to change gender markers, access gender affirming health care, and be protected from harassment and discrimination in policing and in seeking employment, inform our recommendations for ongoing advocacy in the region.



Certification of training of trainers in cakes and pastry making in Guyana



Introduction and Background

In most countries in the Caribbean, there is no legal recognition of trans and gender diverse people's affirmed gender identity. Research and evidence from global settings indicates that without official documents that recognize their gender identity, trans and gender diverse people are often denied access to basic rights, including their rights to health, education, justice, and social welfare.² This often results in exclusion from social and civic participation, harassment and stigmatization, limited access to protection, justice and redress, and the inadequate provision or discrimination in healthcare. Trans and gender diverse people are also more often subject to violence, including physical and sexual violence, than their cisgender peers.³ Yet data on trans and gender diverse lives remains scarce and rarely collected.

To address this gap, the United Caribbean Trans Network (UCTRANS) and OutRight Action International (OutRight) designed the following research to collect more data on the contextual factors that impact trans and gender diverse people in the Caribbean and their ability to affirm their identity and enjoy their basic human rights. In total, 195 trans and gender diverse persons from the region participated in the research through a survey, individual interviews, and focus groups. The responses collected deliver much-needed information on the experiences and lived realities of trans and gender diverse people across the Caribbean region in order to inform and advance advocacy goals.

...without official documents that recognize their gender identity, trans and gender diverse people are often denied access to basic rights, including their rights to health, education, justice, and social welfare...

² UN General Assembly. *Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity*. A/73/152. 12 July 2018. <https://undocs.org/A/73/152>

³ UN Human Rights Council. *Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity*. A/HRC/38/43. 11 May 2018. <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/38/43>

Methodology

The research was conducted by utilising a mixed method approach. The researchers collected primary data through a combination of three approaches: a survey, individual interviews, and focus groups. We disseminated a survey in English, Creole, and Spanish and collected responses using Survey-Monkey from 12 November through 22 December, 2020. Data from the surveys was imported to Excel and manually analysed. There were 120 respondents to the survey, of which 108 were English speaking, 11 French speaking and 1 Spanish speaking. Unfortunately, data from the Spanish speaking respondent was incomplete and excluded during data analysis, therefore the overall total included was 119.

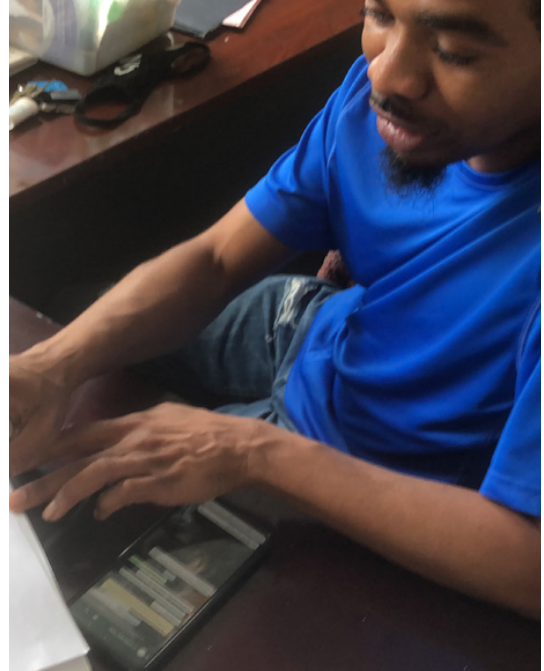
UCTRANS conducted focus groups with a total of 70 participants in the Bahamas, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti concurrently with the survey, and we conducted individual interviews with trans and gender diverse activists from the Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago in January 2021 (see Figure 1). Each interview participant consented to participate in the research and none required anonymity. To build on a Caribbean trans and gender diverse canon, we supported and contextualised our findings from the primary data through a supplementary desktop review of data from previously conducted studies and online media, both mainstream and organizational.

Sampling was made possible by employing a snowball method. UCTRANS and OutRight disseminated flyers through their networks and social media.

FIGURE 1: PARTICIPANTS BY COUNTRY AND APPROACH

Country	Surveys completed	Individual Interviews	Participants in Focus Groups
Trinidad and Tobago	29	1	
Jamaica	28		
Bahamas	20	1	16
Guyana	17	1	
Haiti	11	1	15, 26
Barbados	5	1	
Suriname	3	1	
Dominican Republic	2		6
Saint Lucia	2		
Aruba	1		
Belize	1		
Cuba	0		7
Total	119	6	70

Figure 1 - Participants by Country and Approach



UCTRANS program officer in the Bahamas

Limitations

Throughout the Caribbean we found mixtures of known terminology (such as gay, lesbian, transgender) and colloquial language and terms. The responsibility remains that of the researcher to not introduce language and terminology in the absence of the local community using terms, such as “transgender” or “gender diverse”, for example, that does not already exist in the given community as a way of self-identification.⁴

Due to the limited participation of Creole, French, and Spanish speaking participants, the researchers are somewhat limited in our ability to draw comparisons between the different countries within the region. The French-speaking participants, all from Haiti, help give an understanding of a completely different context and we assume that an increase in Spanish-speaking participants would create similar insight into the experience of trans and gender diverse people in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.⁵ The majority of Spanish-speaking participants came from Cuba, which has a unique political and legal context which may impact the health system serving trans and gender diverse people, and therefore the findings from this research should not be generalized to all Spanish-speaking countries in the Caribbean. While the majority of respondents [n=108]⁶ were English-speaking, the data is limited, with most respondents representing one of four countries: the Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, the survey sample is under representative for the region; however, we drew on literature (organizational reports, research and mainstream media) to expand on the contextual information on other countries. We hope that this initial research will contribute to and inspire others to take on additional research and data collection in the region.

4 Carrillo, Kennedy and Liesl Theron. *From Fringes to Focus – A Deep Dive into the Lived Realities of Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women and Transmasculine Persons in 8 Caribbean Countries*. COC Netherlands. 2020.

5 “While Spanish, French, or Dutch-speaking countries in the Caribbean have no laws specifically criminalizing non-normative gender or sexuality, the majority of countries in the English-speaking Caribbean still maintain laws that criminalize same-sex intimacy, either through gross indecency, serious indecency, or buggery criminal law provisions.” Arcus Foundation and Synergia. *The Safety, Legal Protections, and Social Inclusion of LGBTQ People in the Caribbean in 2018*. Arcus Foundation. 2020. <https://www.arcusfoundation.org/publications/the-safety-legal-protections-and-social-inclusion-of-lgbtq-people-in-the-caribbean-in-2018/>

6 Throughout this paper, figures and charts will quantify data collected from the survey respondents, while information from interviews and focus groups will be used to add context.



Context in the Caribbean for Trans and Gender Diverse People: Findings and Discussion

Our combined findings from the quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interviews and focus groups) data collection, along with the contextual information gathered in the literature review, provide guidance on trends and key issues for trans and gender diverse people in the Caribbean. We have organized and presented our data, findings and context under two over-arching topics: Socio-economic and Legislative, followed by general conclusions and recommendations for further research and advocacy. The sections listed below have sub-themes, as they emerged from selected academic papers, organizational research reports, the interviews and focus groups, and through the survey respondents.

Socio-economic context in the Caribbean for trans and gender diverse people

- **Social:** Estimating trans and gender diverse populations, religion, visibility and being out, stigma and discrimination
- **Economic:** Education, poverty, unemployment and employment, housing, sex work
- **Health:** Access to health care, hormones, mental health

Legislative context in the Caribbean for trans and gender diverse people

- **Gender markers and legal name change**
- **Policy and Law:** Laws that criminalize same-sex relations or cross-dressing, workplace protection and labor discrimination

Socio-Economic Context in the Caribbean for Trans and Gender Diverse People

Social

Across the Caribbean the trans and gender diverse community is estimated to be approximately 130,000 people,^{7,8} but a lot is unclear. In many countries, religion, culture and interpretation of terminology all play a role in how people self-identify and therefore makes estimating the size of the trans and gender diverse population challenging. Along with different understandings of the ways people may choose to express their gender, gender identity and self-identity, spoken language in the Caribbean varies as well. Most countries do not conduct a trans-inclusive census (see Figure 2). Population-based surveys, national censuses or mainstream surveys used by researchers to generalize statistics are in general exclusive of gender identity and render estimating the trans and gender diverse population size⁹ ineffective. It poses a particularly great challenge to come forward as trans or gender diverse and self-report in national surveys, especially those conducted by the State, because there is a fear of being stigmatized, of losing housing, being ostracized or being outed to the people with whom they live. In some places this also risks opening the person up to criminal liability.

Religion is an important influence on trans lives and many people in the Caribbean consider themselves religious, religious. Over 90% identify as Christian, while Judaism,¹⁰ Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism are also practiced in the region albeit at lower levels. Besides the major religions in the Caribbean, a great variety of indigenous, or spiritual practices and alternative belief systems are followed too, including Vodou in Haiti, Rastafarianism, Revivalism, Kumina, and Convince cults in Jamaica, Shango in Trinidad, the Black Carib of Belize and the Shakers of Saint Vincent, to mention a few.¹¹

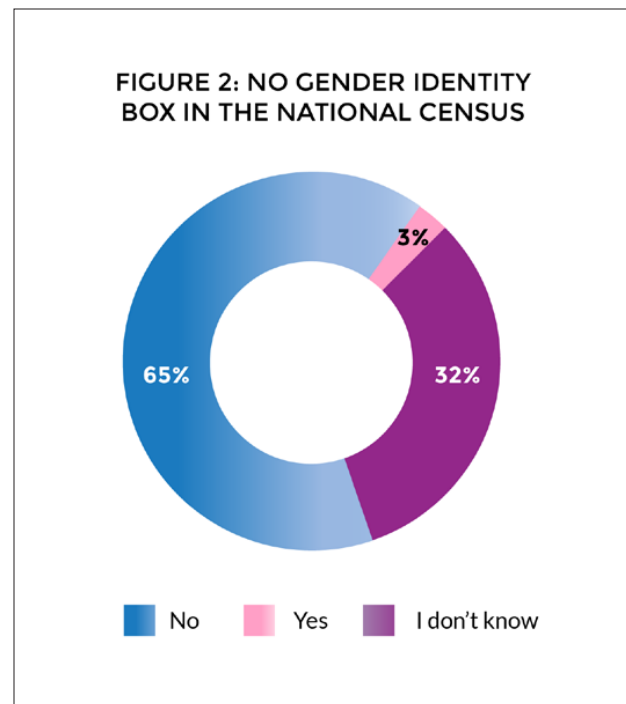


Figure 2 – Survey Responses: National Census and gender identity option

7 Based on a calculation employing statistics from the 2019 Revision of the World Population Prospects, and the CDC's Behavioural Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

8 The full extrapolation can be viewed in Long, Monique and Neish McLean. "Policy Brief on Gender Markers and Gender Identity." CVC and UCTRANS. August 18, 2020.

9 Flores, Andrew R., Jody L. Herman, Gary J. Gates, and Taylor N. T. Brown. *How Many Adults Identify as Transgender in the United States*. The Williams Institute. 2016.

10 Blumenthal, Betsy. "The Unlikely Legacy of Judaism in the Caribbean." *Conde Nast Traveller*. March 29, 2018. <https://www.cntraveler.com/gallery/the-unlikely-legacy-of-judaism-in-the-caribbean>

11 "Caribbean Religions: Afro-Caribbean Religions." *Encyclopedia.com*. Oxford University Press, Columbia University Press, and CENGAGE. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/caribbean-religions-afro-caribbean-religions>.

The survey also found in the option “other” Deism, Ifa, Taíno and Orisha. In comparison, a previous regional study found among the LGBTIQ community only 55% indicated that they are Christian, and 30% reported that they are not religious at all,¹² while among respondents to this survey, 44% indicated they are Christian, while 22% said they are not religious, 12% stated agnostic, and 5% said atheist.

Religions or faiths manifest differently and can create tension for LGBTIQ persons. In particular for trans and gender diverse people, because they challenge the religious, or rather, Biblical notions of men and women, notions of men and women, male and female and the gender roles that go with these notions. The belief that the biological concept of man and woman is God-given and cannot be questioned or changed contributes to religious discrimination against trans and gender diverse people. The situation is aggravated due to the strong influence of religion on Caribbean politics. Often the State and the church concur or influence each other, and the lines are blurred.

A recent example of religion influencing politics can be seen in Belize. The Equal Opportunities Bill, with the aim to “provide protections from discrimination in public life, to promote equal opportunities and address inequality”¹³ was tabled for Parliament to review, then withdrawn due to mounting public pressure encouraged by religious leaders. While the Equal Opportunities Bill’s objectives were wide ranging, including equality in accommodation, land ownership, education, employment, and access to HIV prevention and care,¹⁴ pastors Scott Stirm¹⁵ and

12 Carrillo and Theron 2020.

13 Simplis Barrow, Kim. “What the Equal Opportunities Bill is NOT About.” [Transcript] Jan 21, 2020. <https://edition.channel5belize.com/archives/197185>

14 “Belize’s Equal Opportunity Bill intends to enhance quality of life.” [Press Release] PANCAP. January 31, 2020. <https://pancap.org/pancap-releases/belizes-equal-opportunity-bill-intends-to-enhance-quality-of-life/>

15 Southern Poverty Law Center. (2013). Dangerous Liaisons:

Luis Wade called on Belizeans to act against the Bill¹⁶ as they claimed it was an effort to pave the way for same-sex marriage in Belize.

Christianity, Politicians and Vodou

“In Haiti we have Senators who were Protestant pastors, who proposed criminalizing LGBT people, [...] they need to understand that as a politician, you are a politician to the citizens, not to Christians, and your document is the constitution and not the Bible. [...] Haitians, as the culture, we’re very spiritual, Vodou. And, you know, Vodou, does not have a problem, traditionally. You’ll go to the places in the North of Haiti where the hold of Christianity is not so strong, and trans people circulate and there’s not so much pushback. So, the main pushback comes from the Protestant churches and, the missionaries – that biblical condemnation. And being that they associate transness with sexual orientation, so it becomes a conglomerate in people’s heads, [...] the influence is strong, and the spirit. They use the fear tactics, the fear of hell, the fear of being demonized, [...] all over the Caribbean, and it’s not only endemic to Haiti, it’s the same story over Africa, Latin America, India. It’s a colonization mentality.”
– Yaisah Micaela Mehu Val, Haiti

While several Caribbean countries share similarities in how religion interferes with the State or influences public and political dialogue, a recent mapping indicated that advancements are being made in the efforts between various faith-based organizations and

sons: The American Religious Right and the Criminalization of Homosexuality in Belize.

16 “Fires of Righteousness on the Highways?” Luis Wade interview with Plus TV News Belize. September 15, 2020. <http://www.7newsbelize.com/sstory.php?nid=54736>

members of the LGBTIQ community.¹⁷ One example of progress comes from Cuba, where the Matanzas-based Cuban branch of the international Metropolitan Community Church made history in 2017 with its first transgender Mass. It was the first time a trans pastor held a Holy Communion in Cuba.¹⁸

Amerindian Toshias (Chiefs) and Trans and Gender Diverse People in Guyana

“In the Amerindian region, because Amerindians are our native people, they cannot present their selves as trans. Not even trying to be on the female side or trying to be on the male side if you’re a female, because the Toshao, or the Chief, will cut your hair off and expel you from that village or that community. And we still have that practice. [...] I had one of my members who was going back home, she came out from Region 1 to Region 3, and Region 3 is more of a rural community, when she was going back, she had to cut her hair like a boy. Otherwise she would not be allowed into the village. She only went back, because she had her grandparents there, and she had her mother and all the siblings living there, and she wanted to see them. So, she had to dress like a man, cut her hair and go, and then when she came back, she said she will never go back, she doesn’t care, she doesn’t care if she doesn’t see her family, but she wouldn’t go back to the village.”
– **Millie Milton, Guyana**

17 Arcus Foundation. *Faith-Based Efforts in the Caribbean to Combat Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*. 2020. <https://www.arcusfoundation.org/publications/faith-based-efforts-in-the-caribbean-to-combat-discrimination-based-on-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/>

18 Marsh, Sarah and Anett Rios. “Communist-ruled Cuba hosts first transgender Mass.” *Reuters*. May 7, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cuba-lgbt-church/communist-ruled-cuba-hosts-first-transgender-mass-idUSKBN1830EZ>

Religion and culture are separate issues and operate independently, however, culture employs religion regularly and vice versa to preserve its hold on a society.

Being out, claiming your own space, and living an authentic life is a luxury not afforded to all, but is particularly important for self-determination. Stigma, discrimination, and transphobia lead to multiple consequences for trans and gender diverse people. Isolation often drives trans and gender diverse people into thinking that they are “the only one who is like this” and frequently under-report or choose not to report when they encounter harassment, hate speech and violence, which in turn can lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression.¹⁹ Social exclusion, inability to access services and institutions, and feeling powerless to fully participate in citizenry leads to conditions that prevent trans and gender diverse people from being fully integrated in society, unable to live autonomous lives.²⁰

Visibility is one strategy to counter stigmatization. As an activist and the founder of Colours Cayman expressed, the mere thought of coming out was “an overarching fear of just being seen.” She continues, explaining that “We’re the ones who are most vulnerable. We’re fighting the patriarchy, we’re fighting racism, we’re fighting homophobia, transphobia. We’re fighting all these things.”²¹ Advocacy efforts, sensitization and

19 I am One, Darcelle Lewis, Liesl Theron, Rae Alibey, and Kennedy Carrillo. *From Fringes to Focus – A Deep Dive into the Lived Realities of Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women and Trans Masculine Persons in 8 Countries in the Caribbean*. Trinidad Report. COC Netherlands. 2020. https://unibam.org/wp517/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Trinidad_Tobago_Report_Caribbean_0812-1.pdf

20 Espín, Mariela Castro. “The Social Integration of Transgender People in Cuba.” *The Italian Journal of Gender-Specific Medicine* Vol 6: Issue 1, pp. 34-40. January -April, 2020. https://www.gendermedjournal.it/r.php?v=3297&a=32672&l=339462&f=allegati/03297_2020_01/fulltext/34-40_Special_article.pdf

21 Cayman Compass interview with Billy Bryan. “Trans in Cayman: ‘We have to fight for our lives.’” *Cayman Compass*. July 5, 2020. <https://www.caymancompass.com/2020/07/05/trans-in-cayman-we-have-to-fight-for-our-lives/>

awareness raising all contribute to increased visibility and respect towards trans and gender diverse individuals, which can lead to changes at the policy level. In the Bahamas, through activism, the trans organization D’Marco Foundation was invited to join local decision makers, like the Office of the Attorney General, in the drafting of a policy document that could end discriminatory practices against trans Bahamians.²² Similarly, the upsurge of visibility in Belize and the increase of LGBTIQ organizations in general in the past few years, led to a great interest not only from LGBTIQ groups but also from human rights organizations and other stakeholders to learn more and collaborate with trans organizations.²³

With dedicated efforts to increase visibility and awareness over the long term, ultimately societal attitudes will change. Stigma and discrimination will decrease alongside structural and legislative changes to Constitutions, anti-discrimination laws, and policies. While there is still a long road ahead to advocate for acceptance and full integration in all or most religious denominations, strategies can be developed to engage in dialogue with religious leaders.

Economic

Navigating life through the education system as a trans and gender diverse person is challenging. Some trans and gender diverse students get in trouble with regards to school uniforms, school activities such as sports, or other clubs or activities which are often gender segregated or gender specific. They face bullying not only from other students, but also from teachers. When trans and gender diverse students complete their education, their certification is also issued with

22 Wells, Ricardo. “There’s been a vast improvement in treatment of transgender people.” *The Tribune*. April 9, 2019. <http://www.tribune242.com/news/2019/apr/09/theres-been-vast-improvement-treatment-transgender/>

23 PETAL, Ifáşínà Efunyemi, Kennedy Carrillo, and Liesl Theron. *From Fringes to Focus: A Deep Dive into the Lived Realities of Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women and Trans Masculine Persons in 8 Caribbean Countries*. Belize Report. COC Netherlands. 2020.

a name and gender that does not align with their gender identity and gender expression.

Our findings show that 21% of survey participants were age 10 – 14 when they identified as trans, while 42% were ages 15 – 19, and 5% realised at age 5 – 9 (see Figure 3). That is a combined 68% of trans and gender diverse people becoming aware of their identity at school-going age. Several trans and gender diverse respondents in research²⁴ in Guyana shared a range of experiences of being bullied, the moment the other students realised they are trans or gender diverse.

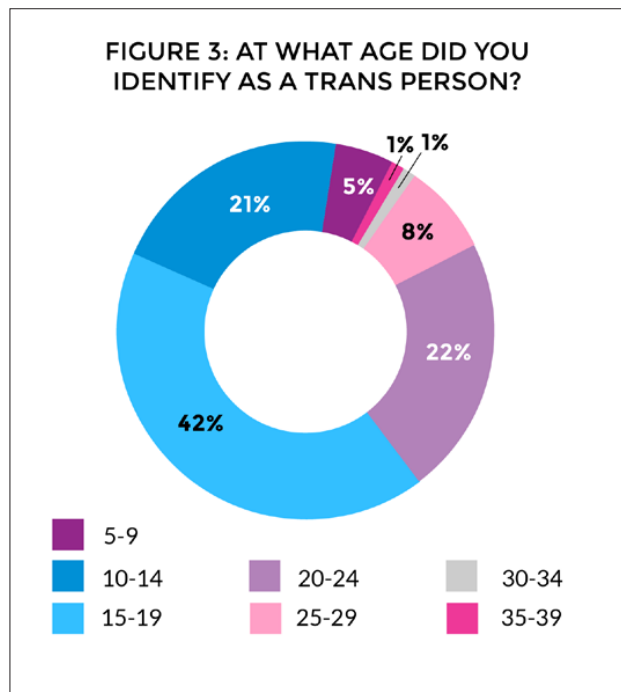


Figure 3 – Survey responses: Age identified as trans

It is not uncommon for trans and gender diverse youth to leave school early due to bullying, rejection, and other challenges. Without a record of having completed their formal education. Moreover, trans and gender diverse people may be forced to leave their homes or find themselves experiencing homelessness, and may

24 Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute. *Trapped: Cycles of Violence and Discrimination Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons in Guyana*. Georgetown University Law Center. 2018.

face challenges in finding formal employment, often forcing them into them into informal employment or sex work.

Bullying a Hindu Trans Student

“It happens regularly. When I was going to school, my headmaster just sorted me out, in a sense, he picked me to go to a meeting every Monday, and he was trying to convert me to a man. Sending me to a church. I went to a school that had its own church in the yard, but I’m a Hindu, I’m not a Christian, and he’s forcing down [religion]. So, I had to really, really be strong to complete my high school. When it came to high school, I passed with good grades, I could have gone to a university because I know that I had the potential, but I was fearful to continue my education. But some of us, some of my sisters leave school at a very, very early stage...”

- Millie Milton, Guyana

The research found that 42% of respondents have no income at all, while a further 21% earn between \$1 – \$300 USD monthly. The international poverty line is defined by the World Bank as an income of \$1.90 USD per day (average at USD \$57 per month),²⁵ incomes below that figure are considered to be extreme poverty. We can conclude from our findings that a disproportionate number of trans and gender diverse people in the Caribbean live below this line. There are wide discrepancies between the national unemployment rate and the unemployment rate among the LBTIQ community,²⁶ however when comparing this research data (trans and gender diverse, with 46% trans women) to the data collected for *From Fringes to Focus* (lesbian, bisexual, queer

25 The World Bank Group. *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020: Reversals of Fortune*. 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/poverty-and-shared-prosperity>

26 Carrillo and Theron 2020.

and trans masculine) and the United Nations’ global statistics,²⁷ which represents general citizens (with assumption that the majority are heterosexual and cisgender), there is a clear indication that trans and gender diverse people face a bigger chance of unemployment (see Figure 4).

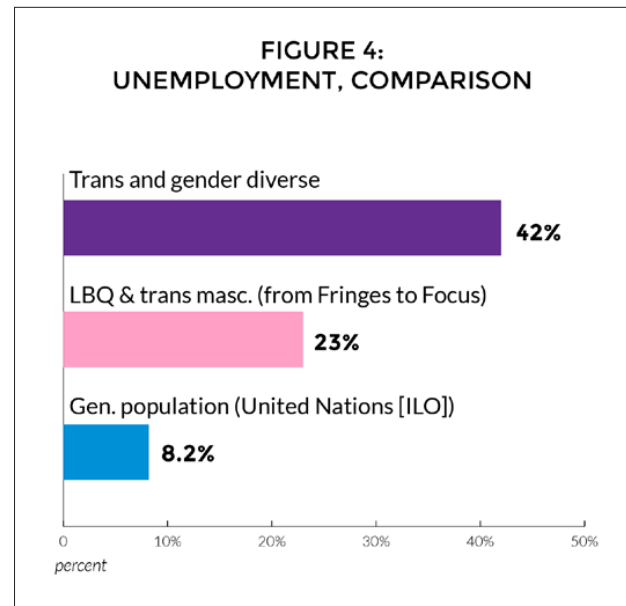


Figure 4 – Unemployment comparison between citizens in general, LBQT and exclusively trans²⁸

Caribbean people, in general, still view gender in a very binary manner with specific expectations of attire and behavior associated with each gender. Women, in particular, are expected to wear feminine, sexualized attire in public and to work.²⁹ Transgender people have found it difficult to seek formal employment as they are not always able to fall neatly into these

27 Calculated for the countries included in this study from publicly available statistics via International Labour Organization. “Statistics on Unemployment and Supplementary Measure of Labour Utilization.” Updated August 24, 2020. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/unemployment-and-labour-underutilization/>

28 General population average unemployment rate for 10 countries in the Caribbean included in this study. Aruba and Haiti did not have publicly reported unemployment statistics and were excluded from this average. Public data reporting years range from 2015 to 2019 and data should not be considered reflective of changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

29 Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute 2018.

categories. Workplace discrimination remains a constant issue for those who are able to secure employment. TransWave Jamaica embarked on a project in 2019, the Workplace Conversation Series, to reach out to the corporate sector to create a platform for dialogue between employers and members of the gender diverse and trans communities. Only four businesses took part, although 17 were contacted. However, all four indicated that they would be willing to employ trans and gender diverse persons once they are qualified.³⁰ Yet trans and gender diverse persons have a higher likelihood to have left education early due to bullying and therefore more often do not have the qualifications to fill vacant positions.

As a consequence of lower educational attainment, employment discrimination,³¹ homelessness, and other socio-economic factors, some trans and gender diverse persons are left with limited options to generate income other than sex work.³² Being transgender or gender diverse per se, is not the reason for people to resort to sex work, but rather sex work is frequently the best option for people without recorded qualifications, identity cards, or other markers that match their gender identity and expression.³³ 54% of the trans and gender diverse persons in our study indicated that trans people who engage in sex work are prone to arrest or being detained. In a similar question 42% of respondents said that trans and gender diverse people were placed in prisons, jails, or detention centres due to their engagement in sex work.

30 TransWave Jamaica and Stonewall. "Trans Economic Survivability in Jamaica." TransWave Jamaica. 2019. https://issuu.com/transwaveja/docs/issuu_-_stonewall_transwave_trans_economic_surviva

31 TransWave Jamaica and Stonewall 2019.

32 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). *Report on Trans and Gender Diverse Persons and Their Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights*. IACHR. 2020. <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/TransDESCA-en.pdf>

33 Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute 2018.

Sex Work and the Police

"[...] And then there are other instances where, one of the police stations is also in the same area, like, 5 minutes' walk from where the sex workers operate. And sometimes the police go there, and they harass the sex workers, sometimes the policemen actually engage in sex with the sex workers, and then turn around and chastise them. So, the help from the police is not as prevalent as it could be, and why I say as prevalent as it could be, because we've done at least two to three sensitization trainings with the police, so it's not like they're not aware of the community and the area that they operate. However, attitudes based on social biases, cultural differences, religion, all these play a factor with regards to stigma and discrimination, especially in the trans narrative specifically, so it's always a gamble. You're not sure who you are going to meet, how the interaction is going to go, and this always is a big point of contention when you're seeking services, protection."

- Raven Gill, Barbados

Being engaged in sex work, itself frequently stigmatized and criminalized,³⁴ increases the risks to trans and gender diverse people of verbal abuse, violent hate crimes, and contracting HIV and other STIs,³⁵ and adds to the reasoning for their rejection by religious

34 Amnesty International. *Body Politics: A Primer on Criminalization of Sexuality and Reproduction*. Amnesty International. 2018. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL4077632018ENGLISH.PDF>

35 Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Commission (CVC), El Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN), and the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP). *Diversity and Commonality. A look at Female and Transgender Sex Workers in Three Caribbean Countries*. CVC and COIN. 2012. http://www.cvccoalition.org/sites/default/files/SEX_WORKERS_BASELINE_STUDYsmall-pdf_com.pdf

groups. Sex work, violence, drug use, and the police often have a toxic cycle of collusion and misuse of power. 36% of transgender and gender variant sex workers in a study in the Dominican Republic acknowledged that they exchange sexual favours with the police to avoid arrest.³⁶

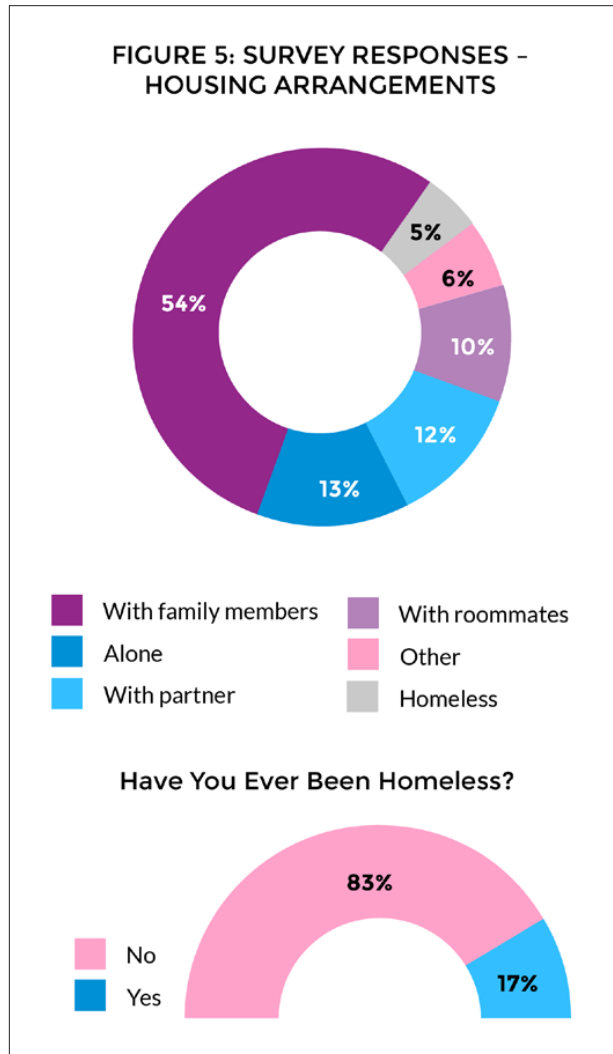


Figure 5 – Survey responses: Housing arrangements

It is difficult to draw strong conclusions on housing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, many LGBTIQ people were forced to move back with often unsupportive and unaccepting family members.³⁷ It

36 Ibid.

37 OutRight International. *Vulnerability Amplified: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on LGBTIQ People*. 2020.

is unclear how many participants who indicated that they currently live with family members, responded as such due to COVID-19. Our data indicates that 54% of trans and gender diverse participants indicated that they currently live with family members (see Figure 5). Our data also indicates that 46% of respondents report that their family do not know about their gender identity, and 17% said their family intentionally use their dead names.

Health

There is a lack of trans-specific health care service provision throughout the region. Trans and gender diverse people in our survey indicated that testing for STIs is the most prominent health service available to them (44%), though this is not a trans-specific health service, but an indication of the lack of more trans-specific health care. Only 21% of respondents said hormone replacement therapy is available to them (see Figure 6).

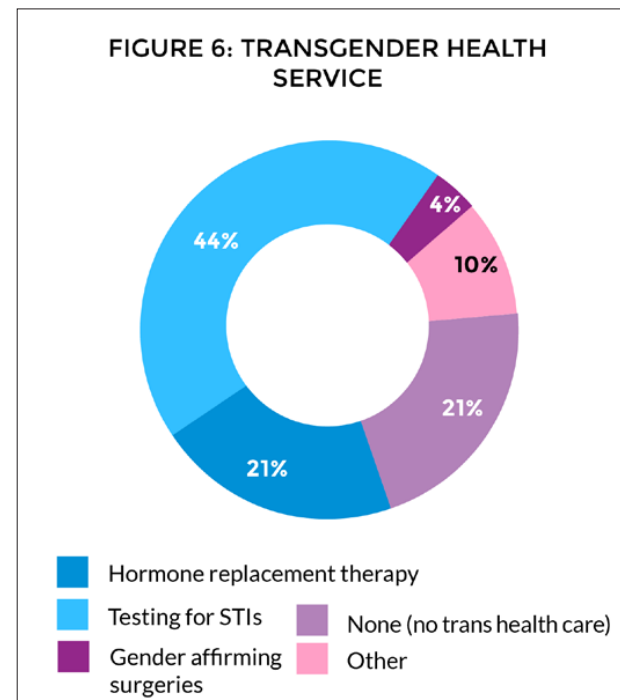


Figure 6 – Survey responses: Access to trans health services and hormone use: Gender Identity (GI)

https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/COVIDsReportDesign_FINAL_LR_0.pdf

COVID-19 and Housing

“It used to be that even if you lived with family, you could be the only one at home. But now, with the restrictions, there’s no school, people work from home, so everyone is there, and who do they take it out on? The most vulnerable. And there is no other place for trans people to be. There are so many cases of abuse - verbal, psychological and physical.”
- Brandy Rodriguez, Trinidad

Looking more closely at access to hormones reveals that the trans and gender diverse people in this study who indicated that they do use hormones [n = 58] utilized a variety of methods in accessing hormones, many not in consultation with medical practitioners (see Figure 7).

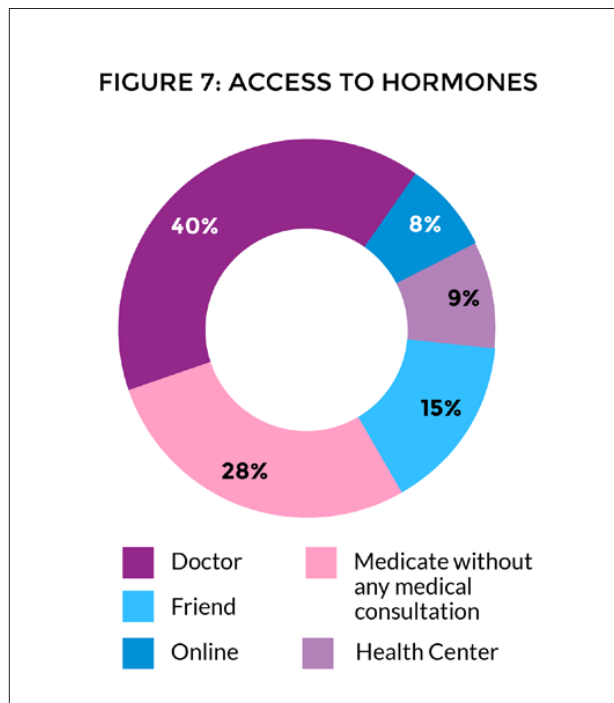


Figure 7 – Survey responses: Access to hormones

Hormone Information Request and Uptake

“A lot of women, instead of seeing a doctor for getting hormone therapy, take it underground. So, I felt that educating trans people about hormone therapy and the proper way of doing it is important - dealing with a healthy lifestyle, and so forth - because hormones do have side-effects like blood clots. [...] I have girls call me all the time, asking how do I get hormone treatment, how do I do this? I give them a doctor’s information, to go through the proper channels to get to hormone treatment, but because it’s such a barrier for trans women to even walk into a private office or a clinic. 9 out of 10 times they might go somewhere else to get it under the table, or try other means of getting it. There are doctors willing to work with trans people, and so forth, but once again there are a lot of self-barriers. Is this person brave enough to walk into the office and say hey, this is something I want to do. I want to transition. It’s a fear factor, going into the doctor’s office, yeah.”
- Tori Culmer, the Bahamas

Gender-affirming health care is not officially available in Caribbean countries.³⁸ Persons who use hormones frequently source them from overseas or self-administer without the guidance of medical professionals.³⁹ One of the consequences of not having access to trans

38 Berredo, Lukas, AR Arcon, Amaranta Gómez Regalado, Carter Honorée, Neish McLean, Islèm Mejri, Simran Shaikh, Timofey Shenker, and Vaito’a Toelupe. Global Trans Perspectives on Health and Wellbeing: TVT Community Report. Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide Project. Transgender Europe. 2018. https://transrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/TvT-PS-Vol20-2018_EN.pdf

39 Rambarran, Nastassia and Alessandra Hereman. *Desires for care and access to services among transgender persons in Guyana*. SASOD Guyana. 2020. https://www.academia.edu/43064863/Desires_for_care_and_access_to_services_among_transgender_persons_in_Guyana

health care, specifically when hormones are administered without guidance from a medical service provider, is that the person may not get regular blood tests or laboratory work. Without regular testing, trans and gender diverse people using hormones may have no idea of the impact of the hormones on their other bodily functions, including cholesterol, bone density, liver, kidneys or any other potential contraindications or side effects. There is clearly a lack of knowledge about the significance of baseline laboratory tests and that they should be carried out along with considerations of family history, age, concomitant illnesses, sexual activity, and other relevant risk factors.⁴⁰ 71.6% of the participants who use hormones indicated that they never test their hormone levels or do any lab tests (see Figure 8).

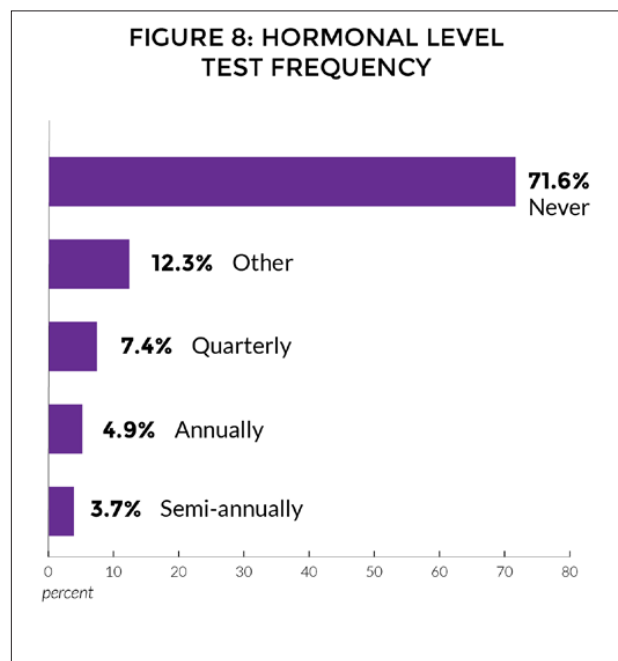


Figure 8 – Survey respondents who use hormones (n=58): Frequency of hormonal or any lab tests

40 Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), JSI, and World Professional Alliance for Transgender Health. *Blueprint for the Provision of Comprehensive Care for Trans Persons and their Communities in the Caribbean and Other Anglophone Countries*. JSI. 2014. <https://www.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2014/2014-cha-blueprint-comprehensive-anglo-countries.pdf>

We asked the participants why they do not test their hormone level, nor receive any other lab work. Their responses show challenges including lack of information about medical concerns, lack of access to services, and fear of discrimination (see Figure 9).

FIGURE 9: TRANSGENDER HEALTH SERVICE



Figure 9 – Selected responses from the open-ended survey question.

Alexus Mya Royale D'Marco noted on the UCTRANS website that:

"In the case of Transgender persons, oftentimes the stigma inflicted by health care workers is rooted in the belief that one is "tampering with God's creation" by transitioning to live as the sex or gender not assigned at birth. The resulting discomfort, which many Trans and Intersex people face, will result in a reluctance to seek medical attention unless it is absolutely unavoidable, such as in a life-or-death situation."⁴¹

41 D'Marco, Alexis. "Policy, Advocacy, and Research: A Word from the Executive Director." UCTRANS. 26 July 2020. <https://uctrans.org/policy-advocacy-and-research/>

Mental health is also a challenge for many trans and gender diverse people. 78% of trans and gender diverse respondents to our survey indicated that they suffered at some stage of their life from depression and anxiety. While 66% said that their gender identity directly contributed to their mental health issues, a clear qualifier needs to be noted, as being trans or gender diverse per sé does not account for experiencing depression and anxiety, but rather continuous rejection, stigma, discrimination, fear of targeted violence, economic stress, and other social factors that are heightened among trans and gender diverse people.⁴² 51% of respondents had access to mental health services, but of those participants who replied that they had access to mental health services, only 31.5% said that it was trans affirming or at least competent care (see Figure 10).

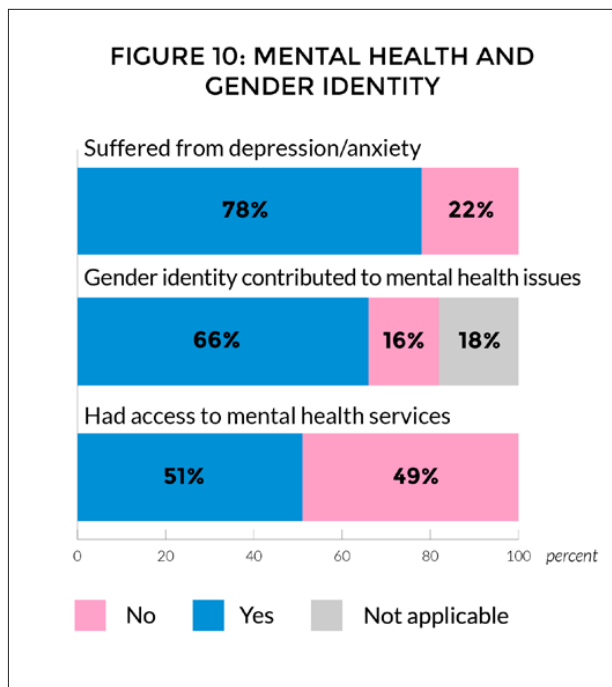


Figure 10 – Survey responses: Mental health and gender identity

Mental Health and Trans-Affirming Care

“Dealing with the mental health issues as far as your body, your mind and soul while you’re going through this therapy treatment is hard. You have to know you have side-effects of being unstable, with the different emotions that you’ll be going through, so I try to focus on that as well with the mental health. Mental health is very important for us in our community. So, I try to focus on the body, the mind so we can transition properly. [...] Having access to healthcare or mental healthcare is not as easy, because we don’t have too many doctors here in the Bahamas that know about trans issues, [...] that try to work with trans people. My personal belief is, if you want to work with people, you get the training for it. Though you might have psychological training, you still need to understand our community.”
 – *Tori Culmer, Bahamas*

The critical need for better health outcomes for trans and gender diverse people in the Caribbean will require strategies for ensuring health practitioners are trained and competent to provide comprehensive, trans-inclusive care.

⁴² Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute 2018.

Legislative Context in the Caribbean for Trans and Gender Diverse People

Gender Marker and Legal Name Change

There are several Caribbean countries where trans and gender diverse people can legally change their names, for example Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia,⁴³ Belize,⁴⁴ Suriname,⁴⁵ and Trinidad and Tobago.⁴⁶ To enable a person in Belize to legally change their name, a Deed Poll must be completed, and the request needs to be accompanied by the original birth certificate. The change will, however, only affect the person's name and not their legal sex.⁴⁷

In Cuba, gender marker change has been possible since 2008 with proof of gender reassignment surgery. The request is taken to the National Commission for Integral Attention to Trans Persons along with the medical certification that the petitioner has undergone gender reassignment surgery. The local tribunal where the request was originally submitted orders the amendment of sex and name in identity documents. After this, the civil registry issues a new birth certificate.⁴⁸

43 ILGA World, Zhan Chiam, Sandra Duffy, Matilda González Gil, Lara Goodwin, and Nigel Timothy Mpemba Patel. *Trans Legal Mapping Report 2019: Recognition before the Law*. 3rd edition. ILGA World. 2020. https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_World_Trans_Legal_Mapping_Report_2019_EN.pdf

44 PETAL et al 2020.

45 Interview with Marten Colom, Suriname. February 2021.

46 Interview with Brandy Rodriguez, Trinidad. February 2021.

47 PETAL et al 2020.

48 ILGA World et al 2020.

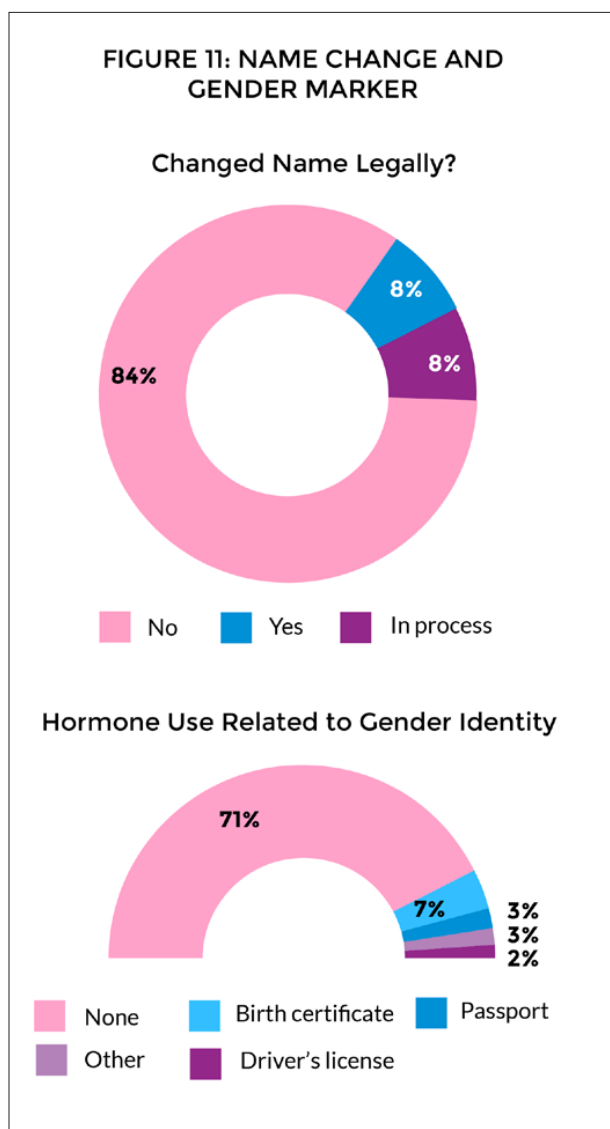


Figure 11 – Survey responses: Name change and gender marker – legal changes made

Legal gender recognition is crucial for trans and gender diverse people. Not having documentation matching their gender identity and gender expression can have consequences that range from inconvenience, to being suspected of fraud, to being arrested or harassed, to potential violence. For example, being asked by a traffic officer to produce a license or identification card when driving can put trans and gender diverse people at risk of entering the criminal system or, in some cases, facing harassment or extortion

by officials.⁴⁹ The inability of trans and gender diverse people to change their gender markers contributes to the barriers in access to jobs, education, and opening of bank accounts, all of which are linked to poverty.⁵⁰

Case Study on Legal Name Change and Gender Markers

“What is possible? it is possible that my name is Marten Colom, and I can change it as long as I can afford a lawyer. But that’s only my name, but not my gender marker. It’s not possible to change that on your documents. But your name can be changed on all official documents. [...] I know a transgender person who did the surgery. Despite that she still had to fight for the gender marker. And she didn’t win. She even challenged it in court. The court ruled that she has the right to change the gender marker, but the section where they do this said, no, she is not a woman. [...] She left the country because of the situation.”

- Marten Colom, Suriname

Only 12% of the survey respondents indicated that they think there is sufficient political will in their countries to recognize gender identity (see Figure 12). Progress towards the recognition of the rights of trans and gender diverse people too often depend on the political, social, and religious climate.

One example is the case of Yvanna Hilton, a trans woman from Suriname, who took the Census Office to court after it refused to amend her gender in the register after she underwent gender affirmation surgery in 2009. When the judge ruled in her favor, a

49 Theron, Liesl. *Report on Poverty: Impact on Trans and Gender Diverse Communities*. GATE. 2020. <https://gate.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Report-on-Poverty.pdf>

50 *Ibid.*

range of religious leaders opposed the decision. The Association of Pentecostal Churches in Suriname held a protest, with thousands of people attending, and the Suriname Islamic Association also objected.⁵¹ According to activist Mikel Haman, the favorable judgement was significant advancement in the rights of trans and gender diverse people in Suriname despite the religious objections.⁵² The judgement opened multiple options for Hilton, who now can legally marry, form a family, and pursue employment of her choice.⁵³

FIGURE 12: THERE IS POLITICAL INTEREST TO RECOGNIZE GENDER IDENTITY IN YOUR COUNTRY

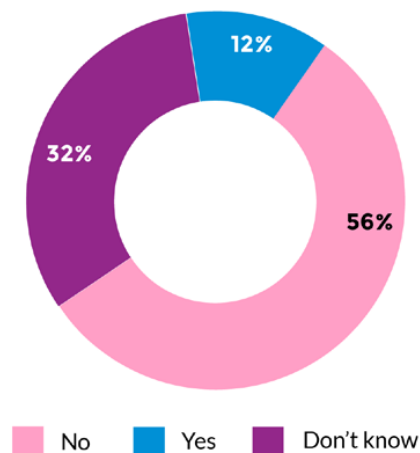


Figure 12 – Survey responses: Political will to recognize gender identity

Although trans and gender diverse people can legally change their names in most Caribbean countries, without the ability to change their gender marker to match they are still exposed to harassment, discrimination, and potential for violence. The best solution would be to develop and implement gender recognition

51 “Transgender wins case for sex change recognition.” *The Daily Herald*. January 12, 2017. <https://www.thedailyherald.sx/regional/transgender-wins-case-for-sex-change-recognition>

52 “Surinaamse transgender wint rechtszaak: nu kan ik eindelijk trouwen.” NOS. January 12, 2017. <https://nos.nl/artikel/2152685-surinaamse-transgender-wint-rechtszaak-nu-kan-ik-eindelijk-trouwen.html>

53 *Ibid.*

laws that progressively prioritize the principle of self-determination and establish that medical pre-conditions, including the surgical alteration of genitalia, removal of internal sex organs, feminisation or masculinisation of external characteristics, sterilisation, and hormone replacement therapies, blanket age limitations, and requirements that discriminate against married trans persons are incompatible with human rights principles.

Policy/Law

The most common laws used to target trans and gender diverse people include prohibitions on cross-dressing or consensual same-sex relations between adults, and laws that (directly or indirectly) criminalize sex work, morality laws, public space regulations, drug laws, laws about loitering, and police identity control laws.

Direct Criminalization

According to our survey results, 30% indicated that there are **laws that criminalize or target trans and gender diverse people** and 38% were not sure if there are such laws (see Figure 13). The 30% of respondents who indicated that trans and gender diverse people are targeted or criminalized in their country were from the Bahamas, Guyana, Haiti, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Laws which directly criminalize trans and gender diverse people can be overturned, as in the case of Guyana, where in 2018 the court ruled that a section in the Constitution forbidding cross-dressing is vague and fulfils no legitimate purpose.⁵⁴ With the *Quincy McEwan et al. v. AG of Guyana* case, September 2013, the Guyanese High Court confirmed that “it is not a criminal offence for a male to wear female

54 OutRight Action International. “Caribbean Court of Justice Declares Guyana’s Cross-Dressing Law Unconstitutional.” November 13, 2018. <https://outrightinternational.org/content/caribbean-court-justice-declares-guyana%E2%80%99s-cross-dressing-law-unconstitutional>

attire and for a female to wear male attire in a public way or place, under Section 153(1)(xlvi).

Country	I don't know	No	Yes	Total	% Yes
Bahamas	4	8	3	15	15%
Barbados	1	1	2	4	40%
Belize		1		1	0%
Dominican Republic			1	1	50%
Guyana	4	2	8	14	47%
Haiti	6	3		9	0%
Jamaica	8	5	7	20	25%
Saint Lucia		1	1	2	50%
Suriname		2		2	0%
Trinidad and Tobago	12	6	5	23	17%
Total	35	29	27	91	

Figure 13 – Survey Responses: Laws that criminalize or target trans and gender diverse people

It is only if such an act is done for an improper purpose that criminal liability attaches.” The judgment of the Court of Appeals in February 2017 re-affirmed the High Court’s view that s.153(1)(xlvi) did not violate Constitutional anti-discrimination protections and proposed that the vaguely worded requirement of “improper purpose” should simply be judged on a case-by-case basis.⁵⁵ An appeal of the ruling was heard at the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) in June 2018. The appellants – four trans individuals and the Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD) – argued that the mere existence of Section 153(1)(xlvi) still left them open to arrest, as the meaning and scope of ‘improper purpose’ had

55 Human Dignity Trust. *Injustice Exposed: The Criminalisation of Transgender People and its Impacts*. Human Dignity Trust. 2019. <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/Injustice-Exposed-the-criminalisation-of-trans-people.pdf>

not been elucidated in the initial ruling. In November 2018, the Caribbean Court of Justice ruled in favor of the appellants, determining that the law was “unconstitutionally vague, violated the appellants’ right to protection of the law[,] and was contrary to the rule of law.” It was accordingly declared null and void.⁵⁶

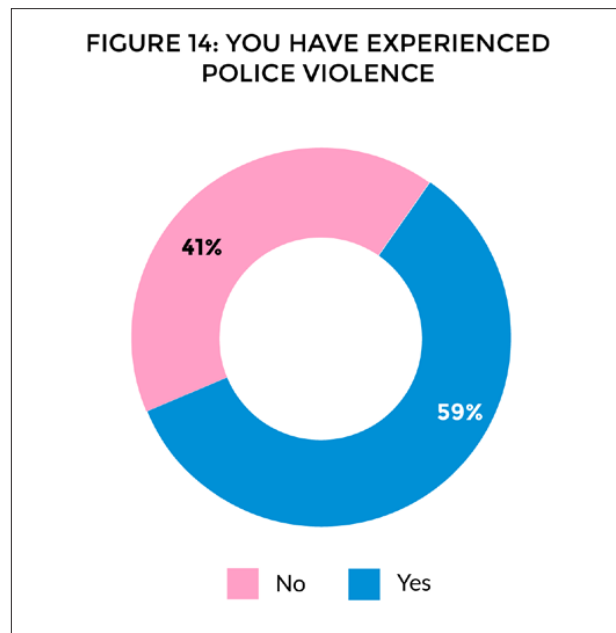


Figure 14 – Survey responses: Experience of police violence

Indirect Criminalization

Laws that target trans and gender diverse people across the Caribbean remain, even in the absence of laws that directly criminalize. The English-speaking Caribbean maintains laws, implemented during colonization, that criminalize same-sex intimacy, cross dressing, and trans and gender diverse identities.⁵⁷ Spanish, French, or Dutch-speaking countries in the Caribbean have no laws directly criminalizing non-normative gender or sexuality,⁵⁸ though many countries, including Cuba and

56 “Highest Caribbean Court Strikes Down Guyana’s Crossdressing Law.” Joint Press Statement from GTU, U-RAP and SASOD. November 13, 2018. <http://www.u-rap.org/web2/index.php/component/k2/item/77-joint-press-release-on-mcewan-v-ag-of-guyana-nov-13-2018>

57 Arcus Foundation and Synergia 2020.

58 *Ibid*

the Dominican Republic, weaponize vagrancy laws, regulations against loitering, and the criminalization of “gross indecency” against trans and gender diverse people.^{59,60}

In the case of Cuba, the Ministry of the Interior carries out police raids to prevent trans and gender diverse persons from being in areas considered “prone to prostitution.” The detainees are taken to the nearest police station and fined. The next day, they are released under threat of re-arrest and ordered not to “dress as women.” Multiple arrests can lead to being classified under a “danger index for antisocial behaviour.”⁶¹ Under pre-criminal security measures of the Penal Code, the person could then be placed in a designated work or study location for the control and orientation of the subject’s behaviour.⁶²

Vagrancy Laws used to Target Trans People and Police Extortion

“We have vagrancy laws on the books, still, and with that comes loitering. We are street-based sex workers, so we hang out on the street waiting for clients. Claiming that we are loitering is often used against us by the police. We don’t want to go to prison or be locked up, so we have to bribe them all the time. They are fond of that, so whenever they see us, they come pick us up.”

– Millie Milton, Guyana

A human rights defender from the Dominican Republic reported that although trans persons are not directly criminalized, trans sex workers are the principal target of drug laws⁶³ and

59 ILGA World et al 2020.

60 Amnesty International 2018.

61 ILGA World et al 2020.

62 *Ibid*

63 Being found with controlled drugs carries a fine and correctional term of 6 months to 2 years. If the amount found in a person’s possession is deemed by the court sufficient to

police abuse such as arbitrary searches, intimidation, and mistreatment. 80% of trans sex workers reported being arrested at least once under this law.⁶⁴

Lack of Legal Protections

According to participants, protections for trans and gender diverse people by means of punishment for crimes motivated by prejudice and hate speech is limited (see Figure 15).

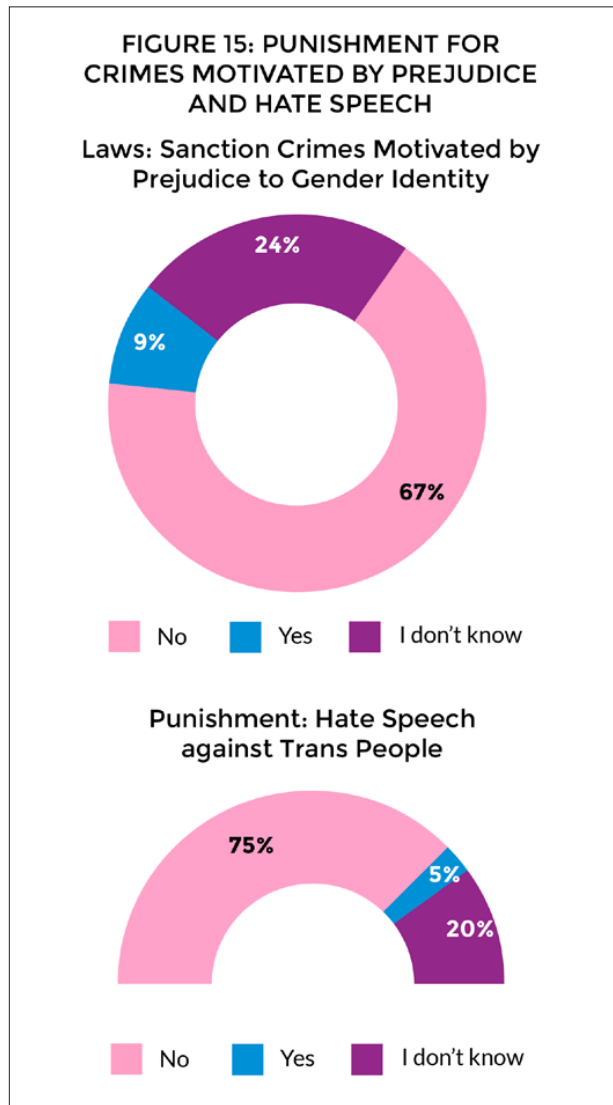


Figure 15 – Survey Responses: Punishment for crimes motivated by prejudice and hate speech

sell or transfer, the imprisonment term can be increased to 3 to 10 years.

64 ILGA World et al 2020.

Trans and gender diverse people also usually do not benefit from any labor-related legal protections, though there are also cases pursuing changes to these laws. One example is Alexa Hoffmann of Barbados, who took her former employer to court for unfair termination on the basis of gender identity. The case has progressed to the Employment Rights Tribunal.⁶⁵ If successful, Hoffmann hopes the decision will set a precedent for the local LGBTIQ community.

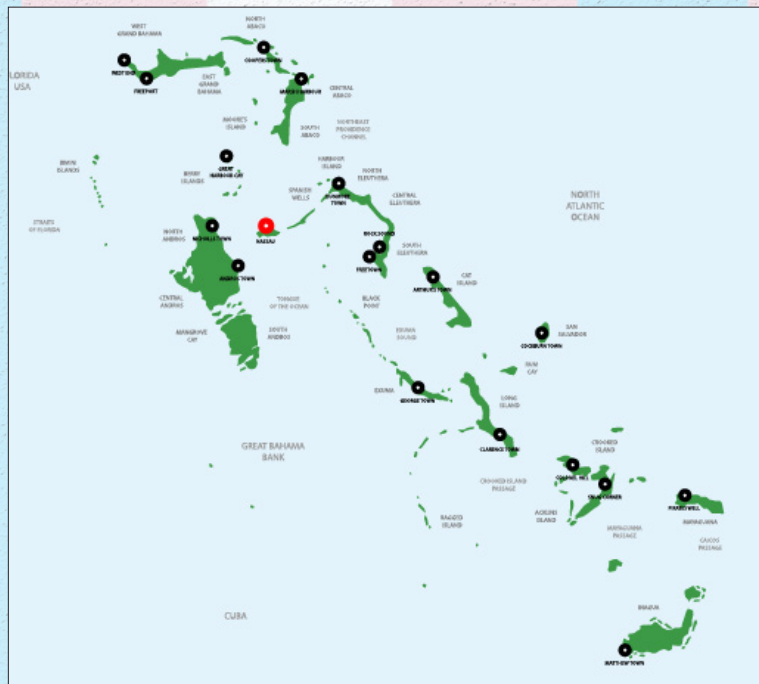
Case Study on Medical Transitioning while Employed

“No, there’s no protection or laws or anything. Last year we had someone who was working with the government, and when they decided to medically transition, they couldn’t afford to wear the male clothing anymore because of the transition, and they were told they had to go home. They didn’t employ them, they didn’t employ ‘her’, they employed ‘him.’”

– Brandy Rodriguez, Trinidad and Tobago

65 Smith, Kareem. “Landmark Transgender ‘discrimination’ case filed.” *Barbados Today*. February 14, 2020. <https://barbados.today.bb/2020/02/14/landmark-transgender-discrimination-case-filed/>

Case Studies



Bahamas

Country name:	Bahamas
Survey participants:	20
Interview:	Tori Culmer
UCTRANS member organization:	D M A R C O Organization, Bahamas Trans Intersex United (BTIU)
Other trans organization/s in the Bahamas:	No other known
Trans-specific health services available:	Hormone replacement therapy and gender-affirming surgeries (according to survey).
Gender marker change possible:	No
Name change possible:	Yes

Survey Highlights

- 26% have zero income and 21% fall into the lowest income group (at or below poverty level)
- 32% unemployed

- 60% experienced police violence
- 50% indicated that verbal assault/harassment is their main challenge related to gender identity, followed by “not being hired” at 45%

Interview Highlights

Quote 1: Passing Privilege and Employment

“When you are able to pass in public, you are able to cope more. And when you are not able to pass and you want to live a full life, someone might be picking on you and that could be very stressful. You could have that fear factor of even catching a bus and worrying about that someone might say to you, “Are you a girl or are you a guy?” That is the type of stress that an individual goes through on a daily basis trying to live their life. The other challenge is trying to find a job as a trans woman. Because here in the Bahamas, they will work with you more if you are passable as a woman, that’s why I say passability is the biggest thing here. Because if you’re not passable, you’re living below the poverty line.”

Quote 2: Gender Markers and Legal Documents

“Well, say for instance for me, I’m a passable trans woman here in the Bahamas, so my anxiety comes up when I have to present my license, or my passport, because my gender markers does not match the way I look. So that becomes very stressful for me, when I am asked for documents that show male instead of female.”

Quote 3: Mental Health

“I give kudos to the person who wants to step up and try to deal with our mental health issues, but if you don’t want to take that extra step and get that extra training for this community, I see that point as muted, that’s my personal opinion. I talk to a lot of girls, I know a young one who is 18, who has serious dysphoria, gender dysphoria, where she feels she wants to go as far as giving birth, that’s how bad she has it. And the result of that, what we have is not equipped to deal with her mentality, because she could just totally break down at any moment, and you know, try to kill herself, because she has it so bad, and society here is not willing to accept her, and on top of that she’s an immigrant where she has no document to even work. So, she has so many things going on at once that is very difficult for her, I could see it. I could see it in her face, I could see it in her eyes.”

Bahamas has a vantage point for advocacy, 33% of survey participants feels the political climate is somewhat positive.



Guyana

Country name:	Guyana
Survey participants:	17
Interview:	Millie Milton
UCTRANS member organization:	Proud to Be Trans
Other trans organization/s in Guyana:	Guyana Trans United (GTU)
Trans-specific health services available:	Hormone replacement
Gender marker change possible:	No
Name change possible:	Yes

Legal and Policy Context

Criminalization of crossdressing scrapped from the books. A 2018 judgment of the Caribbean Court of Justice ruled in favor of the appellants, determining that the law was “unconstitutionally vague, violated the appellants’ right to protection of the law and was contrary to the rule of law.” It struck out section 153(1)(xlvii) of Guyana’s Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act, which until recently sanctioned anyone who “being a man, in any public way or public place, for any improper purpose, appears in female attire; or being a woman... for any improper purpose, appears in male attire.”⁶⁶

The Discrimination Act does not include grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. HIV+ people continue to be discriminated against, and there are no workplace protections. If someone’s

66 Laws of Guyana, Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act, Chapter 8:02, Section 153(1)(xlvii). Available at: http://www.oas.org/juridico/pdfs/mesicic4_guy_summ.pdf.

HIV+ status is known, the person may be demoted to positions that are not in contact with the public, which often leads to a decrease in salary. This practice is continuously being used to target trans and gender diverse people. LGBTIQ and trans and gender diverse people are specifically targeted through buggery and vagrancy laws. Sex workers, and trans sex workers are specifically targeted through subsections of the vagrancy law for soliciting sex. Police use laws to search suspect persons for drugs or weapons and specifically target trans and gender diverse people. There are reports of an increase in police searches after the cross-dressing law was overturned.

Survey Highlights

- 44% have zero income and 19% fall into the lowest income group (at or below poverty level)
- 35% unemployed
- 86% experienced police violence
- 65% indicated that verbal assault/harassment is their main challenge related to gender identity

Interview Highlights

Quote 1: Gender Markers on Documents Prohibit Movement and Opportunities

“My documents say male, not female. And that’s a problem. It restricts you from many things, like travel, work, access to public spaces, public bathrooms, and all these things.”

Quote 2: Trans Sex Workers – Over-Policed, Under-Protected

“It’s higher for trans sex workers because, at the same time, before we had the cross-dressing law was repealed, they used to use that as an offence, but now they cannot use that, so now they find different things to use as an offence. [...] And the thing is, the police are so aware of the spot that we normally line, that they frequent it more often than other places. We’re being over-policed. But if a crime is committed against us, they are nowhere to be seen, even if we file a report.”

Quote 3: Depression – Stress, Trauma, Increased Suicide

“I witness it first-hand, because many of my girls are being bullied by their parents, they’re being displaced from their homes, we don’t have meals or nutrition on a regular basis, we are being told by the police we cannot access public spaces. Every time you walk on the road, somebody insults you, somebody traumatizes you, they discriminate you, so we go into a state of depression. Many of us who suffer depression do not seek, or we do not have the power in our hands to seek medicines or professional treatment. Many of my friends have committed suicide.”



Haiti

Country name:	Haiti
Survey participants:	11
Interview:	Yaisah Micaela Mehu Val
UCTRANS member organization:	Community Action for the Integration of Vulnerable in Haiti (ACIFVH)
Other trans organization/s in Haiti:	Organisation Trans d'Haiti (OTRAH)
Trans-specific health services available:	None
Gender marker change possible:	No
Name change possible:	Yes

Legal and Policy Context

There is no clear specific gender recognition law, however, there is a pending presidential decree allowing for change of name on national ID. Although this decree is a step in the right direction, there are concerns related to ambiguous wording and the lack of trans and gender diverse community input. The LGBTIQ community is not explicitly criminalized, however religious doctrines and biblical guidelines are used to demonize the community and incite public violence and rejection.

In June 2020, President Moïse decreed a new penal code, distinct from a draft code submitted to parliament in 2017. It will become law 24 months after its publication. The new penal code makes any crime motivated by the real or perceived sexual orientation of the victim an aggravated offense. The code also punishes with up to life imprisonment any murder motivated by a victim's

sexual orientation, and with higher sentences for many other crimes when they are motivated by a victim's sexual orientation.⁶⁷

Effective 2022 (Decreed in New Penal Code)

- Anti-discrimination laws in employment
- Anti-discrimination laws in the provision of goods and services
- Anti-discrimination laws in all other areas (including indirect discrimination, hate speech)

Survey Highlights

- 82% have zero income and 9% fall into the lowest income group, (at or below poverty level)
- 55% unemployed
- 67% experienced police violence
- 64% indicated that verbal assault/harassment is their main challenge related to gender identity, followed by the fear of family rejection and the fear of loss of social group at 55% each

Interview Highlights

Quote 1: Police Refusal to File Assault Cases

“Trans people suffer discrimination and abuse on a daily basis, and they are often unreported and unpunished even when they are reported. A 19-year-old transgender girl living at Kay Trans Ayiti (a shelter for transgender people in the capital of Haiti) was physically assaulted and verbally insulted and threatened by a group of motorcycle drivers because she was deemed too effeminate. I had her return to the scene while I was ready to film their reaction, they assaulted her for a second time, I had them on film and also confronted them, with the filmed evidence I went to the police to report the incident and the police refused to file the report”.

Quote 2: Police Rape Trans Sex Workers

“Transgender sex workers are often harassed, arrested and raped by police officers as well as the clients they service.”

Quote 3: Families Disown Trans and Gender Diverse People

“Coming out as trans can be very detrimental in Haiti, it often leads to being disowned by family and community ending up homeless and vulnerable to violence and hate crimes.”

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch. “Haiti: Events of 2020.” World Report 2021. Human Rights Watch. 2021. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/haiti#e81181>



Jamaica

Country name:	Jamaica
Survey participants:	28
Interview:	Renaë Green
UCTRANS member organization:	TransWave Jamaica
Other trans organization/s in Jamaica:	No other known
Trans-specific health services available:	Hormone replacement therapy, gender-affirming surgeries (according to survey)
Gender marker change possible:	No
Name change possible:	Yes
Other documents with name change:	2 Drivers license changes, recorded

Survey Highlights

- 30% have zero income and 33% fall into the lowest income group, (at or below poverty level)
- 28% unemployed
- 65% experienced police violence
- 61% indicated that verbal assault/harassment is their main challenge related to gender identity
- 83% suffered from depression/anxiety
- 12% get their hormones from a health center and the remaining 88% from “other”. (There were options for: online, friend, medicate without medical consultation – which were not selected)

Context: Access to Health Care

- 51% of Jamaican transwomen tested were living with HIV.⁶⁸
- 9% reported lack of health insurance, 16% reported lack of financial resources, totaling 25% with financial challenges in access to health care.
- 24% reported lack of public health knowledge about trans issues, 21% reported lack of adequate trans related services, totaling 45% reporting lack of knowledge or support as a barrier to health for trans and gender diverse people.
- 27% are challenged by the fear of violence or apprehension about discrimination when accessing health services.

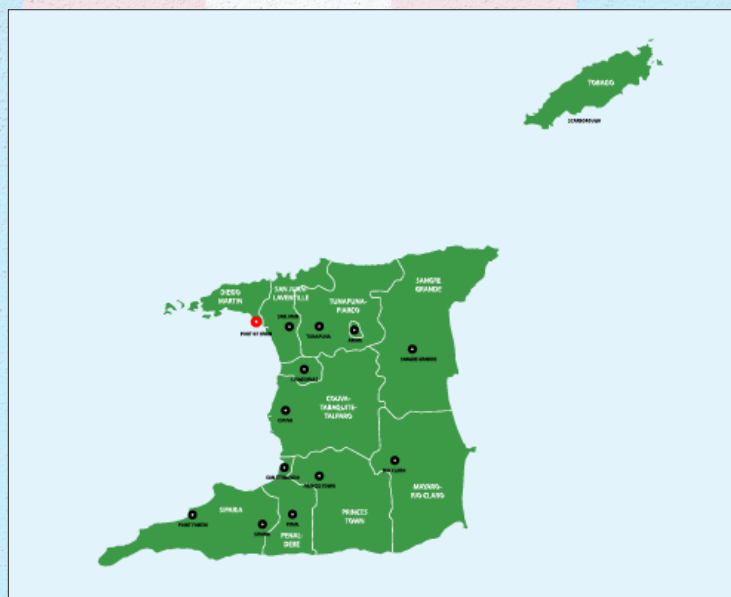
Interview Highlight

Quote 1: Living with HIV

“Many are aware that they are HIV-positive but don’t seek treatment. They are just waiting to die. People cannot stomach not being able to live their lives as their real selves and won’t put themselves through the distress of going to a clinic”⁶⁹

68 “The Power of Transgender Visibility in Jamaica.” UNAIDS. November 12, 2019. https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2019/november/20191112_power-transgender-visibility-jamaica

69 Ibid.



Trinidad & Tobago

Country name:	Trinidad
Survey participants:	29
Interview:	Brandy Rodriguez
UCTRANS member organization:	Trinidad and Tobago Transgender Coalition (TTTC)
Other trans organization/s in Trinidad:	No other known
Trans-specific health services available:	Hormone replacement therapy, gender-affirming surgeries (according to survey)
Gender marker change possible:	No
Name change possible:	Yes

Survey Highlights

- 52% have zero income and 18.5% fall into the lowest income group, (at or below to poverty level)
- 31% unemployed
- 39% experienced police violence
- 11% indicated gender affirming therapy
- 92% suffered depression / anxiety
- 85% feel that their gender identity contributed to their depression/anxiety

- 4% are of the opinion that there is political interest to recognize gender identity in their country (lowest among the 5 case study countries).

Interview Highlights

Quote 1: Discrimination at Work

“There’s no protection or laws or anything. Last year we had someone who was working with the government, and when they decided to medically transition, they couldn’t afford to wear the male clothing anymore because of the transition, and they were told they had to go home. They didn’t employ them, they didn’t employ ‘her’, they employed ‘him.’”

Quote 2: COVID-19, and the Need for Mental Health Support

“I think the mental health aspect is what we need to focus on. Because, dealing with it all in such isolation, and the COVID-19 protocols and social distancing, and having to stay home, and not work, and not have the access to funds that you are accustomed to. I think we have to really find a way to help the trans women who will be looking for some kind of mental support, because it’s a lot.”

Quote 3: HIV and the Need for Continuous Support

“We need to not forget the HIV development, we need to continue funding for HIV, because I navigate for 22 persons right now, and my list has increased between 2019 and 2020. I have 12 more persons, and I also have newly-diagnosed cases that I am currently navigating for. Navigation is support. Sometimes they get a little funding for travel, food and fuel and the COVID response. You need to continue doing some of that, because obviously, I don’t think this is going to go away overnight.”

Quote 4: Sex Work

“We at TTTC encounter a number of safety issues that arise during sex industry transactions such as violence, sexual assault, the risk for HIV, poor condom negotiation, police brutality, and lack of laws and policies that protect sex workers and transgender persons.”



Conclusions and Recommendations

There are three overarching domains that impact trans and gender diverse people's lives: colonial and outdated laws, religion's interpretation and strict views on gender, and the lack of political will to acknowledge and include gender diversity. All three domains strongly influence societal behaviours, stigma, and discriminations, and create barriers to critical services in health, education, and access to the labour market.

The repercussions of criminalization and discriminatory laws, and binary views of gender, gender identity and expression today continue to impact the lives of LGBTIQ people at large and more specifically of trans and gender diverse people in the Caribbean. The inability to change their gender markers underscores how trans and gender diverse people are excluded and forced navigate their lives with limited access to the benefits of full citizenship. Starting with education, employment, housing, access to health, opening of bank accounts, and extending to harassment and violence; the inability to choose their gender markers impairs and violates the fundamental human rights of trans and gender diverse people.

To break it down: not having a gender marker – that aligns with how a person identifies – leads to challenges such as an inability to open a bank account or rent an apartment, very limited work opportunities, and consequent poverty. An additional significant challenge is not being able to access competent and comprehensive trans-specific health care. No access to health care and regular check-ups leads to poor health outcomes.

Finally, criminalization and legal discrimination against trans and gender diverse people must be replaced by progressive, gender affirming laws that protect the trans rights and gender diverse communities. A legal framework grounded in social justice must be implemented to ensure equality for the transgender Caribbean community. Such a framework must extend beyond the elimination of violence and discrimination against the trans and gender diverse community and must allow

trans and gender diverse people in the region to maximize their full potential and to contribute to nation building.⁷⁰ While strides to advance the conditions for trans and gender diverse people being taken, many are made by activists and groups within the communities interviewed for this research. Their work needs additional support within the region and from the international community to speed progress towards a better world for trans and gender diverse people in the Caribbean.

Based on the interviews, survey data and literature shared in this report, we have compiled the following advocacy, funding, and programming recommendations.

Local and National Policy Change

- In consultation with CSOs for trans-inclusive input, develop and enact gender recognition laws that progressively prioritize the principle of self-determination.
- Review laws to include protections for gender identity and expression in the face of workplace discrimination, hate speech, harassment and other crimes motivated by prejudice towards trans and gender diverse people.
- Adopt anti-discrimination policies for health, education, housing, employment, and social services, and implement diversity policies throughout government.
- Improve service delivery through public institutions, conduct a legal audit of laws and policies, including policies and regulations stipulating criteria in the processing of birth registers, administration documents and application forms to alter, update and apply for IDs, passports, social security and all other related documents.

Strengthening the Trans Movement and Peer Support Mechanisms

- Secure and ensure funding and programs are trans-inclusive (especially if not a trans specific CSO), prioritize the leadership of trans and gender diverse people and organizations for trans specific projects, research and activities.
- Support local CSOs and other stakeholders, in partnership with trans and gender diverse community, to provide education and awareness for trans-identified persons to better understand the process of transitioning and increase accessibility to related medical services and supplies.
- Compile a list of trans and gender diverse inclusive healthcare providers and locations that provide access to trans health and civil services.
- Create peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing platforms, accessible to various service providers

70 Lanham, Michele, Kathleen Ridgeway, Robyn Dayton, Britany M. Castillo, Claire Brennan, Dirk A. Davis, Dadrina Emmanuel, Giuliana J. Morales, Clifford Cherisher, Brandy Rodriguez, Juana Cooke, Karin Santi, and Emily Evens. "We're Going to Leave You for Last, Because of How You Are": Transgender Women's Experiences of Gender-Based Violence in Healthcare, Education, and Police Encounters in Latin America and the Caribbean." *Violence and Gender* Vol 6: Number 1. 2019. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6442261/>

such as medical practitioners, lawyers and other professionals working with trans and gender diverse communities (such as psychologists, therapists, endocrinologists, physicians, CSO and health service management, national committees and mechanisms, journalists, and other relevant stakeholders).

Use of International Human Rights Mechanisms

- Support trans and gender diverse organizations to make submissions to the Universal Periodic Review and provide shadow reports to UN bodies. Where trans and gender diverse organizations lack capacity to take active roles in submissions, support collaboration with other CSOs or international partners.

Relationships with Religious Institutions

- Support continued engagement with religious leaders to properly balance religious freedom with SOGIE rights, specifically with the aim to be trans and gender diverse sensitive and inclusive.

Regional Collaboration – Trans Focus

- Develop a regional trans legal mapping and evaluate political will and climate to lobby and advocate for trans inclusive laws, with a focus on increasing access to gender marker change.
- Consider regional platforms to prioritise for elevating domestic advocacy through strategies linked to regional bodies, such as the Organization of American States, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the Caribbean Court of Justice and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).
- Create regional peer-to-peer knowledge sharing platforms.



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Annex 2: Survey

CARIBBEAN TRANS SURVEY

In most countries in the Caribbean, there is no legal recognition of transgender people's affirmed gender identity. Without official documents that recognize their gender identity, transgender people are often denied access to basic rights, including the right to health, education, justice, and social welfare. This often results in exclusion from social and civic participation, harassment and stigmatization, limited access to protection, justice and redress as well as inadequate provision of healthcare services. Transgender people are also more susceptible to violence, including physical and sexual violence.

The United Caribbean Trans Network (UCTRANS) and OutRight Action International (OutRight) created this survey to research the contextual factors that impact trans people in the Caribbean and their ability to affirm their identity and enjoy their basic human rights. The responses collected from this survey will be used to inform initiatives to be put in place to improve lives of trans people across the Caribbean. UCTRANS, with support from OutRight, will focus its work on legal gender recognition, safety and security, and trans affirming healthcare and social support mechanisms. To this end, better, more comprehensive data on the experiences and lived realities of transgender and gender diverse people across the Caribbean region is needed in order to inform and advance advocacy goals.

All information recorded is strictly confidential and will be stored within a protected database. By proceeding, with the survey you give your consent to collect data based on your responses. This survey is for trans and gender non-conforming persons, 18 and over, who reside in the Caribbean.

We thank you in advance for your contribution.

Age: _____

Country of Residence:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Cayman Islands
- Curacao
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Sint Maarten
- Suriname
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Turks and Caicos

What are your pronouns? (Select all that apply)

- She/her
- He/him
- They/them/theirs
- All/Any
- Other _____

Select your sex assigned at birth:

- Male
- Female
- Intersex

Select your gender identity:

- Trans man

- Trans woman
- Non binary
- Genderqueer
- Other _____

What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Asexual
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Other _____

At what age did you identify as a trans person? _____ (using intervals)

Background Information

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP

What is your relationship status?

- Single
- Partnered
- Civil Union
- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Other _____

(Skip pattern if select Partnered, married or CU)

Do you have multiple partners?

- Yes
- No

In general, how does your family (outside of your chosen family) feel about or respond in regard to your gender identity?

(Select all that apply)

- They are supportive
- They intentionally misgender me
- They intentionally use my deadname
- They don't know that I am trans
- They don't talk to me anymore
- Other _____

Do you have children?

- Yes No

(Skip pattern if no)

Do your children live with you?

- Yes No

What is your highest level of educational attainment?

- No formal education
- Finished primary school
- Incomplete high school
- Completed high school
- Vocational training/Technical certification
- Incomplete university/college
- Completed university/college
- Post-graduate degree
- Other _____

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

What is your employment status? (Select all that apply)

- Unemployed
- Part Time
- Fully employed
- Student
- Retired
- Other _____

What is your monthly income/earnings (standardized in US dollars)?

- 0
- 1-300
- 301-500
- 501-800
- 800- 1000
- 1001-1500
- 1501-2000
- 2001-2500
- 2501-3000
- 3001-4000
- Over 4000

Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?

- Black/Afro Caribbean
- Indo-Caribbean
- Chinese
- Indigenous
- White
- Other _____

Which of the following best describes your religious beliefs?

- Christian
- Muslim
- Agnostic
- Atheist
- None
- Other _____

(Skip pattern)

If applicable, what is your comfort level publicly practicing your religion or faith as a trans person?

- Very comfortable
- Comfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Not applicable

Do you have a disability?

- Yes No

(Skip pattern if selected no)

What is the nature of your disability/ disabilities? (Select all that apply)

- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Physical
- Other _____

HOUSING

With whom do you live? (Select all that apply)

- Alone
- With roommates
- With Family members
- With partner
- Homeless
- Other _____

(Skip if select homeless above)

Have you ever been homeless?

- Yes No

HEALTHCARE

What type of insurance coverage do you have? (Select all that apply)

- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- Final expense insurance
- None

What transgender health services are available in your country? (Select all that apply)

- Gender affirming surgeries
- Hormone replacement therapy
- Testing for sexually transmitted infections
- None
- Other _____

Are there any endocrinologists in your country who see trans patients?

- Yes No I don't know

Are there any primary care physicians in your country who specialize in trans-affirming healthcare?

- Yes No I don't know

Have you ever taken hormones related to your gender identity?

- Yes No

(Skip pattern if no)

Are you currently taking hormones related to your gender identity?

- Yes No

(Skip pattern if yes)

How long have you been taking hormones?

How do you access hormones?

(Select all that apply)

- Doctor
- Online
- Friend
- Health center
- Medicate without any medical consultation
- Other _____

How often do you get your hormone level tested

- Quarterly
- Semi-annually
- Annually
- Never
- Other _____

(Skip pattern if selected never)

What is the main reason you've never had your hormone level tested?

What are the main challenges you face related to accessing healthcare due to your trans-gender identity? *(Select all that apply)*

- Lack of health insurance
- Lack of public health knowledge about trans issues
- Lack of financial resources
- Fear of violence/Apprehension about discrimination
- Lack of adequate trans related services
- I face no challenges
- Other _____

What programs do you think can be put in place to improve the health of trans people in your country?

Are there any therapists or mental health professionals in your country who specialize in trans-affirming healthcare?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Have you ever suffered from depression/anxiety or other mental health issues?

- Yes
- No

(Skip pattern if no)

Has your gender identity contributed to your mental health issues?

- Yes
- No

Have you accessed mental health services?

- Yes
- No

(Skip pattern if no)

Were they trans-affirming or competent?

- Yes
- No

(Skip pattern if yes)

Was your gender identity a barrier to accessing care?

- Yes
- No

GENDER IDENTITY RECOGNITION

Do you have a passport/driver's license or other government-issued identification?

- Yes
- No

Which of the following government issued documents can trans people in your country update their gender markers on? *(Select all that applies)*

- Passport
- Driver's license
- Birth certificate
- National ID
- Voter's ID
- Other _____
- I don't know
- None of the above

In general, how comfortable are you presenting your identification when visiting a conducting business/receiving service from an institution or agency?

- Very comfortable
- Comfortable
- Neither comfortable or uncomfortable
- Uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable

(Skip pattern for very comfortable, comfortable or neither comfortable or uncomfortable)

Has this discomfort ever prevented you from visiting or seeking services at a business, institution, or agency?

- Yes
- No

Does your country's Constitution list gender identity as a protected category?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Does your country have procedures in place to regulate legal gender marker changes for trans people?

- Yes
- No

Have you changed your gender marker on any of your legal documents?

- Yes
- No

(Skip pattern if no)

Which of your legal documents has your updated gender marker (Select all that applies)?

- Driver's license
- Passport
- Birth certificate
- Other _____

Have you changed your name legally?

- Yes
- No
- In process

What are the main barriers to updating your name on your legal documents?

(List all that apply)

- Won't match my gender marker
- Won't match the name on my certifications/academic qualifications
- Lack of family support
- Lack of financial resources
- Unaware of the process
- This is not a priority for me
- No barriers - I've already changed my name
- No barriers - I don't wish to change my name
- Other _____

When your country conducts a national census/study, is there a box (separate from sex) for gender identity?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Are there any policy makers/government officials who have shown interest in gender identity recognition in your country?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

To the best of your knowledge, how is gender identity referenced in the Constitution of your country?

CRIME, VIOLENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Are there laws that punish hate crimes on the basis of gender identity in your country?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Are there laws that punish hate speech against trans people in your country?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Are there any laws that directly criminalize or target trans people in your country?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Have you ever directly experienced police violence

(e.g., harassment, verbal taunts, excessive force)?

- Yes No

Is sex work legal in your country?

- Yes No I don't know

Are trans people who engage in sex work routinely detained/arrested in your country?

- Yes No I don't know

Are trans people placed in prisons, jails, or detention centers due to their engagement in sex work?

- Yes No I don't know

Regardless of the reason for arrest, are trans people assigned to prisons, jails, or detention centers based on their current gender identity?

- Yes No I don't know

Are trans people housed alone in prison, jails, or detention centers based on their gender identity?

- Yes No I don't know

Have you ever been incarcerated?

- Yes No

(Skip pattern if no)

Have you ever experienced violence while in a prison or detention center due to your transgender identity?

- Yes No Not applicable

What are the main challenges you have faced related to your transgender identity? (Select all that apply)

- Family rejection
- Loss of friends
- Loss of romantic relationships
- Forced to leave school
- Not accepted into school
- Forced to leave home/community
- Verbally assault/harassment
- Loss of a job
- Not being hired
- Forced to leave job
- Denied housing
- Denied healthcare
- Denied other social support services
- Being arrested
- Physical violence
- Sexual assault
- Breach of confidentiality
- Blackmail
- Cyber abuse
- Denied entry into a public space
- Denied access to practice religion/faith
- Being outed
- None of the above *(Skip pattern)*

From the list above, what was the earliest incident you remember experiencing?

Can you describe the incident in a few sentences?

How old were you when this first incident occurred?

What was the setting where the first incident occurred?

- School/Campus
- Church/Place of Worship
- Home
- Neighbourhood/Community
- Workplace
- Private Business
- Healthcare facility
- Law enforcement site
- Government agency
- Social Media
- Email
- On the street/On public transportation
- Other _____

Which of these issues need more attention in the transgender community in your country?

- HIV/AIDS
- Mental health
- Substance use and abuse
- Violence and victimization
- Discrimination
- Access to Trans-affirming healthcare
- Gender identity recognition
- Employment
- Housing
- Access to safe spaces
- Other _____

Which of the following trans-affirming supports are available in your country?

- Inclusion of gender identity on human resource forms
- Trans-inclusive health insurance
- Gender-affirming therapy
- Single occupancy or gender-neutral bathrooms
- Other _____
- None
- I don't know

What are some trans-affirming supports that you or other trans people could benefit from in your country? (Select the things that are not currently being practiced)

- Inclusion of gender identity on human resource forms
- Trans-inclusive health insurance
- Gender-affirming therapy
- Single occupancy or gender-neutral bathrooms
- Other _____

What should policymakers in your country put in place to improve the lives of person in the transgender community?

Is there anything else you want me to know, or you think is important about your experience as a trans person in your country?

##



Distribution of COVID-19 relief to community members in Guyana

Annex 3: Tools to Support Health Advocacy in the Caribbean

Information in this Annex is geared to give inspiration and background information when planning an organizational or regional/ network strategic plan towards health advocacy: A number of Caribbean based resources were previously developed with regards to trans health care and trans health advocacy recommendations. These sources provide a great foundation and offer excellent guidance towards health advocacy, and considerations for better health outcomes for trans and gender diverse people in the Caribbean.

- Desires for Care and Access to Services among Transgender Persons in Guyana. 2020.
- SASOD Guyana in collaboration with Guyana Trans United. https://www.academia.edu/43064863/Desires_for_care_and_access_to_services_among_transgender_persons_in_Guyana
- Blueprint for the Provision of Comprehensive Care for Trans Persons and their Communities in the Caribbean and Other Anglophone Countries. 2014. Pan American Health Organization. <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/31360>
- Suggested guidelines for the provision of comprehensive healthcare for trans women in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2017. Latin American and Caribbean Network of Trans People (Red-LacTrans). https://issuu.com/redlactrans/docs/guia_de_salud_regional_ingles__3___
- The SDGs & Trans Engagement: A Toolkit. The trans and gender diverse community & SDGs 1 & 3. 2020. GATE. <https://gate.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SDGs-and-Trans-Engagement-Toolkit.pdf>
- Implementing comprehensive HIV and STI programmes with transgender people: practical guidance for collaborative interventions. 2016. United Nations Development Programme. https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/UNDP-et-al_2016_transgender_practical_guidance_collaborative_interventions_en.pdf



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