

Pride Guide | Tanzania



The Australian Volunteers Program strives to provide a safe, supportive and equitable environment for LGBTIQ+ volunteers, approved accompanying dependents, partner organisations and all program staff. The Australian Volunteers Program has supported volunteers with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in all program countries and has ongoing connections with community organisations in almost every country we work in.

Diverse SOGIESC program participants must be aware of the country context before undertaking an assignment. This guide is designed to introduce some key issues related to people with diverse SOGIESEC and their participation in the program.

If you are a volunteer with diverse SOGIESC, you will need to:

- Do your own research. You will be required to follow the local laws, even if you disagree with them.
- Understand what the local law says you can and can't do when in-country;
- Be aware of what the legal protections are for LGBTIQ+ people in your destinations;
- Consider whether or not you are comfortable living and working in a place where you may be discriminated against and unable to live as openly as you can in some parts of Australia.

Language

Terminology may differ across urban and rural contexts, and across provinces or ethnic and cultural groups. Information sourced online can be outdated or inaccurate. For current and accurate information, please confirm with an appropriate diverse SOGIESC Civil Society Organisation (CSO) or ask your in-country team.

Legal and policy context

Same-sex sexual acts are criminalised in Tanzania with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and up to five years imprisonment for "gross indecency". There have been cases of enforcement in recent years, including in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam where authorities have conducted violent raids, coercing local communities to target people with diverse SOGIESC.

In 2016, the Tanzanian Ministry of Justice suspended the registration of any organisation that supported homosexuality. In 2017, police in Zanzibar raided the meeting of a CSO that was conducting work with LGBTIQ+ communities, arresting twenty on the grounds of "promoting homosexuality".¹ In 2019 the government de-registered CSO Community Health Education and Advocacy Services (CHESA), accusing the organisation that supporting diverse SOGIESC health and rights is "promoting unethical acts".²

Discrimination

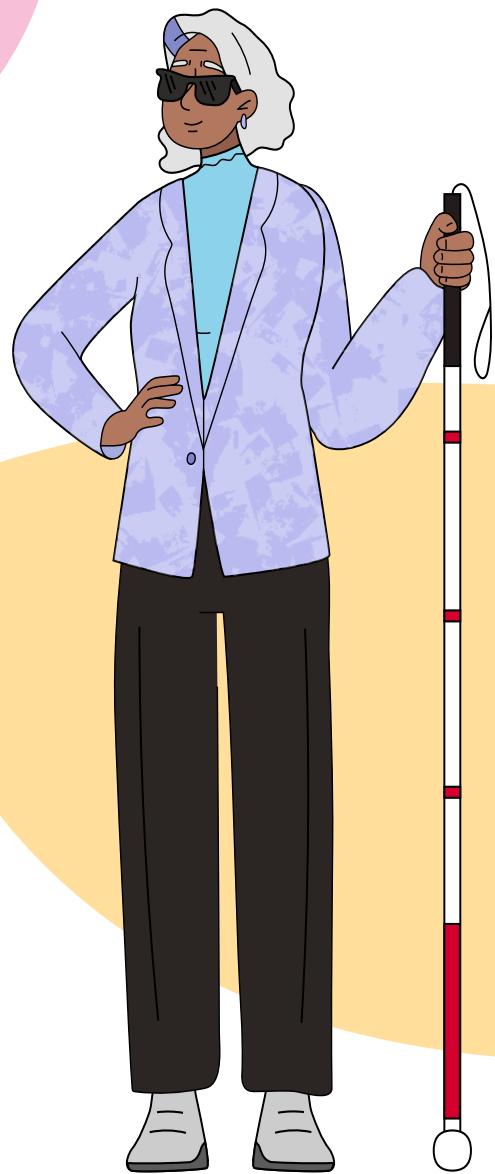
Almost no legal protections exist for people with diverse SOGIESC in Tanzania. This includes a lack of constitutional protections and national laws that protect against SOGIESC discrimination, laws that protect against SOGIESC discrimination in employment, and laws that protect against hate crimes, violence or discrimination based on one's SOGIESC.

In 2018, the government prohibited incitement through banning "content which advocates hate propaganda... or hatred against an identifiable group".³

¹ Ibid., 169.

² Human Rights Watch, "If We Don't Get Services, We Will Die: Tanzania's Anti-LGBT Crackdown and the Right to Health," Report, published February 3, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/02/03/if-we-dont-get-services-we-will-die/tanzanias-anti-lgbt-crackdown-and-right>.

³ Government of Tanzania, "Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations, 2018," Government Notice, published March 16, 2018, <https://tanzlii.org/node/17753>



Cultural and societal attitudes

In Tanzania, people with diverse SOGIESC conceal their identities because of the negative attitudes held towards them. Authorities conduct arbitrary arrests and largescale raids to find, violate and imprison people with diverse SOGIESC, acting largely with impunity. A politics of division is prevalent, where authorities ask civil society members to work with them in 'outing' their neighbours and local community with diverse SOGIESC. During regime crackdowns on diverse SOGIESC communities, activists have been forced into hiding.

Sex and gender are viewed as binary, with non-conforming gender identities and non-heterosexual relationships strongly discouraged. The socialist concept of ujamaa, or familyhood, was a principle fostered by President Julius Nyerere (1964-75), and is still prevalent today. During these years, boys and men were expected to lead a militant revolution in the countryside, to create ujamaa villages based on principles of security and self-reliance. Women and girls were expected to protect the welfare of the nuclear family.

Health and wellbeing

Diverse SOGIESC communities face barriers to receiving basic healthcare, including stigma, ill-treatment by healthcare workers and the Tanzanian Government denying the basic health rights of the community. In some instances, authorities request healthcare workers to conduct forced anal examinations to find proof of homosexual conduct.

HIV/AIDS is an epidemic in Tanzania, with 1.7 million people living with HIV in 2019. Despite being disproportionately impacted, men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender communities have been omitted from HIV research and programming. In 2016, the Health Ministry shut down community-based HIV programs that served MSM.

"Because of government, LGBT people don't have a place to get training [on sexual health]. People don't get lubricants, they don't get condoms, they don't get services. In short, we are dying."

The dire treatment of diverse SOGIESC communities contributes to driving the community underground, away from health services. There are no diverse SOGIESC-specific mental health services provided by the government, and CSOs and private health clinics that provided mental health assistance to people with diverse SOGIESC have been banned.

Sexual education is not explicitly taught in schools, but is mainstreamed into other subjects such as social studies, civics and morality and biology. Since the government-mandated closure and banning of CSOs that support diverse SOGIESC populations, it is difficult for youth with diverse SOGIESC to seek assistance, learn about sexual and reproductive health or connect with their community.

Media

Social media has been used as a weapon by the State against people with diverse SOGIESC. During one crackdown and raid in 2018, an activist recounted that it was "open season on gay people" because a list of names was published on social media to 'out' people with diverse SOGIESC.

4 Human Rights Watch, "If We Don't Get Services, We Will Die'. Tanzania's Anti-LGBT Crackdown and the Right to Health."

5 Jason Burke, "Hundreds in hiding as Tanzania launches anti-gay crackdown."