

TRANS  
VISIBLE



# TransVisible

A professional guide to labour inclusion and  
economic empowerment of trans women.

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# Introduction

This guide seeks to improve the labour market situation of trans women<sup>1</sup> and is intended to serve as a practical resource for professionals, political leaders, advocates and activists. It was developed in the framework of the *TransVisible* project ([www.transvisible.org](http://www.transvisible.org)), an initiative funded by the European Commission's Erasmus + programme, led by the [SURT Foundation](#) (Catalonia, Spain) and with the participation of [Transgender Equality Network Ireland](#) (TENI), [Háttér Society](#) (Hungary), [Bundesverband Trans\\*](#) (Germany) and the research group on interseccionalidad and sexual and gender diversity from [University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia](#) (Spain). The proposals in this guide have been developed in the European context, and more specifically are contextualised in the reality of large European cities.

Trans women face several obstacles when accessing the labour market, especially those who are visibly trans and those working in sex work. For this reason, this guide seeks to tackle this situation and promote resources to improve the labour integration and the economic empowerment of this group. In the following sections, we propose strategies that focus on the different factors involved in this process: the empowerment of trans women, the transformation of companies' visions, the leadership of public administrations and the training of professionals in the field of labour integration.

It is essential to develop programs for working with businesses and organisations to get them committed to creating open and inclusive workplace cultures. Raising awareness among Human Resources (HR) staff or those in charge of managing individuals is important for the visibility and recognition of the benefits of a workforce where equality and diversity are clearly present. Raising awareness should also be promoted among other relevant agents in the world of employment, such as labour union representatives, management, organizations or administrations. For this to be truly effective in eliminating inequality, it needs to do away with the prejudices and stereotypes that affect trans individuals and impede their professional development.

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<sup>1</sup> Trans is an umbrella term that refers to different trans realities and it includes trans women and trans feminine people. In this guide, for understanding purposes, both will be called trans women.

This introduction is followed by a first chapter on the importance of the workplace in the life of trans people. The second chapter is dedicated to reflecting on the strategies of empowerment of trans women in labour integration processes. The third section tackles the question of liaising with companies and also proposes tools to work on raising awareness about trans people in the human resources sector. In a fourth chapter a set of proposals are developed with a view to ensuring that work settings are more inclusive in various aspects. Lastly, the guide concludes with a selection of good practices from Spain, Germany, Ireland and Hungary and specific resources in relation to improving the employment situation of trans women.





# Chapter 1

THE WORKPLACE IN  
THE LIFE OF TRANS

**Written by University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia**

**UVIC**

In this chapter we explain why it is crucial to tackle the subject of the labour market and employment opportunities for trans women. To do this, we explain the importance of the workplace in the life of trans people and share the findings of the main studies in this field. In addition, we tackle the mechanisms that exclude trans people from the labour market and examine how to incorporate an intersectional perspective. Lastly, we focus on the main situations in which trans women encounter difficulties in the workplace.

The workplace plays a key role in the lives of all individuals for financial reasons, and it also affects their personal development due to the obstacles, opportunities and challenges it entails. In this resource, we will outline these issues and highlight some of the relevant research.

The labour market and the ability to function within it, not just for financial subsistence, have specific relevance for trans people. The workplace is one of the main areas of socialisation in our daily lives and for this reason social recognition in the workplace is an essential aspect in the gender transitions trans people undertake.

Gender transition processes can be essentially thought of in three aspects: social, medical and legal. The social aspect consists of living socially with a different gender identity than that assigned at birth. The main steps in a social transition involve requesting that you be addressed using different gender pronouns, choosing a new name, and in some cases adopting a new appearance that is more fitting with the gender with which the person identifies. The medical aspect refers to the physical changes that some trans people go through by accessing hormonal and surgical treatments and finally, the legal aspect is linked to the change of name and sex on official documentation. These three aspects combine in many different ways and weave a multitude of possible life paths that makes the trans population very diverse. Some trans people will do them in a different order, or just do some of them, or maybe none of them.

In general, the social transition tends to be the backbone of transition and also often tends to be the most complex space as regards social relationships. When trans people begin to transition, what they essentially want are other people to recognise them as the gender with which they identify. Returning to what we stated earlier; since the workplace is one of the main areas of socialisation in our daily life, it is a space where trans people fight for recognition and the freedom of gender identification.

Historic attitudes towards trans people (linking trans identities to criminality and/or illness) can still influence how trans people are perceived today. Due to this, for a long time, trans people

have abandoned the recognition of their gender identity to access a work position (with all the personal development limitations this entails). Furthermore, some trans people who decided to be open about their identity have received a negative response in the workplace. In general, the area of employment has been slow to embrace trans inclusion or to proactively take steps to encourage diversity. Lack of access to the labour force has fuelled a vicious cycle of poverty, marginalisation and stigmatisation with negative consequences for many trans people.

This tension between the need for recognition and the need for survival is what makes the workplace such an important space in the life of many trans people. In recent decades, as a result of the empowerment of many trans people, a huge desire to transform the workplace so that it is inclusive of gender diversity has emerged.

## 1.1 REVIEW OF THE MAIN STUDIES ON THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF TRANS PEOPLE

Although employment is one of the main obstacles in the lives of trans people, there is very little data available that provide a detailed overview of the problem on a European level. However, the few studies that do exist provide us with many clues as to the main trends explaining the professional integration difficulties of trans people.

As regards discrimination, a FRA survey (2020) in the European context revealed that 35% of people declared having felt discriminated against for being trans during the job-seeking process and 36% had been discriminated against in the past year. These high levels of discrimination directly affect trans women (Whittle et al., 2007; FRA, 2020). As we will see below, this inequality must be tackled specifically.

Furthermore, the workplace is experienced as a hostile environment by the majority of the trans population and leads to many people deciding to postpone their gender transition or to live a double life out of fear of losing their job. In this regard, according to FRA (2014) only 16% of people reveal themselves to be trans in their workplaces compared to 46% who often or always hide their trans identity. Hiding their trans status has relevant consequences on their professional and personal development in the workplace.

## 1.2 KEY FACTORS IN THE EMPLOYABILITY OF TRANS PEOPLE

This section covers the relationship existing between labour market exclusion and being trans and the factors that facilitate or hinder the labour market integration processes of trans people.

With a view to combating the labour market integration difficulties of trans people it is essential to understand the mechanisms at play in this process. It is important to point out that the trans experience is not homogeneous; not all trans people encounter the same difficulties. There are trans people who develop successful professional careers and others who cannot even find a job. This phenomenon proves that although being trans can entail difficulties in labour market integration, it is not a factor of labour market exclusion on its own, but it interacts with other factors.

Below we propose performing an intersectional analysis of the professional careers of trans people to discover the main factors driving labour market exclusion.

As noted, it is essential to determine which factors are at play in the labour market integration difficulties of trans people beyond the difficulties involved in having gone through a gender transition. Below we analyse the main factors that intervene in this mechanism: gender, passing, age, generation, health, support received, country of origin, socioeconomic position and sex work<sup>2</sup>

### Gender

Trans women generally have many more difficulties finding work than trans men. That is why this guide and the majority of policies and campaigns addressed at combating the labour market exclusion of trans people focus on the experiences of trans women. This can be explained by how transitioning as a trans woman is considered socially, compared to transitioning as a trans man. In the social imagination, deciding to live as a woman often involves a loss in social status due to the sexism governing our society. In contrast, some trans men experience the opposite: the same work that they did before transition is valued more, and their voice is taken into account more (Schilt, 2006 and Schilt and Wiswall, 2008).

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2 This selection of main factors is based on the article by Coll-Planas, G. and Missé, M. (2018) "Identificación de los factores de inserción laboral de las personas trans. Exploración del caso de la ciudad de Barcelona" *OBETS. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 13(1): pp-pp-45-68

## Passing

Passing is a trans slang concept pointing to socially being perceived or not as the gender you identify as, which depends on factors such as physical appearance or documentation.

Passing is a very problematic concept as it implies there are a standard set of characteristics that define someone looking “male” or looking “female”, however for some trans people passing can be seen as a means of survival.

Passing can be a key factor in the workplace, since those trans people who are not out as trans experience fewer situations of discrimination for the simple reason that they are not identified as trans in their setting. Passing depends on many elements: whether they have had certain medical or surgical interventions, whether they can afford the financial costs of these treatments, whether they want or can change their name and their gender in legal documentation.

## Time Considerations

Firstly, the age at which a person transitions is a key element. Those who begin their transition as an adult have often been able to develop professionally without the tension of transphobia, while those that transition at an earlier age might face exclusion during their education, resulting in early dropout and entering the labour market with fewer qualifications. At the same time, people who begin their transition at a younger age can often be seen not as visibly trans due to the increased efficacy of hormonal and surgical treatments.

Secondly, the generation is an important aspect because it determines the historical era in which the person began transitioning. Without a doubt, the social meaning of being trans 50 years ago (criminalization, pathologization, etc.) cannot be compared with that of today (where trans rights are gaining increasing recognition in many European countries).

Thirdly, the moment of transition in which a person finds themselves when seeking a job is also relevant in relation to employability. Regarding this factor, the most delicate moment is the beginning of the transition, when the majority of people may need to invest a lot of money (to afford medical transition, especially in countries that do not provide public funding for these treatments), and energy in educating the people in their immediate setting about being trans.

Lastly, the person’s age is also a factor to be considered, although it is not specific to trans

people. In sectors with less qualification needed, people aged 45 years or more are often penalised. Moreover, due to the intersection between gender and ageism, the impact of this factor for trans women may be even more pronounced.

## **Support Received**

The beginning of transition is a sensitive time for many people since it involves a huge effort from the trans person: deciding how to carry out the social, medical and legal transition, providing explanations to people in their surroundings, and in some cases, experiencing transphobic discrimination. As a result, it is very important to carry out the transition with as much support as possible, mainly from relatives. Unfortunately, in many cases this is not possible and it leads to trans people dropping out of their studies or postponing the decision to transition and often experiencing anxiety.

## **Country of Origin, Race and Legal Situation**

These factors can be an obstacle in relation to the labour market for many people in Europe regardless of their gender identity. In the case of trans people this worsens, especially because in many cases, trans women may experience many kinds of discrimination as well as transphobia and not having citizenship hinders the process of changing their name and sex on the documentation of their country of residence (in the case of gender recognition being possible for the country's legal citizens).

## **Socioeconomic Position**

Once again, this factor is not specific to trans people, but it undoubtedly has a very important effect on gender transition. Access to financial resources and social capital are crucial to be able to carry out a gender transition in optimum conditions: to access quality information, hormonal and surgical treatments that are not covered by the public health service, etc.

## **Education**

Closely related to the socioeconomic position; the level of educational attainment is especially relevant. In some cases, education is interrupted by episodes of stress that lead to some trans people dropping out of school; this in turn has an adverse effect on their possibilities in the labour market.

## Sex Work

Working in sex work is an ambivalent factor. On the one hand, it is and has historically been an occupation that many trans women have carried out as a means of survival because of the labour market exclusion they have experienced. On the other hand, for some trans women it is also a space where they feel recognised and valued.

In either of these cases, what is certain is that the context in which sex work occurs in the majority of European cities entails a lack of protection of the social and work-related rights of these people, in some cases police persecution, and in nearly all cases a strong social stigma and exposition to violence.

### 1.3 CAREER PATHS AND VULNERABLE PROFILES

Bearing in mind all the factors intervening in the labour market exclusion of trans people in general and of trans women specifically, we now consider three specifically vulnerable sub-groups of trans women: trans people whose visibility hinders them from finding work, trans people who begin transitioning at work, and trans sex workers.

#### Trans Visibility and Labour Market Integration

If we were to define the profile that generally has most difficulties integrating into the labour market, this would be visible trans women. Being a trans woman and visibly being a trans woman are two elements that themselves entail a particular vulnerability as regards the logics of the labour market. That is to say, they offset all the other factors explained above in such a way that, an unemployed, visible trans woman will encounter major obstacles when seeking to access the labour market even while having a comfortable economic position, a high level of studies, an advanced gender transition, and being an autochthonous, white person with fully regularised citizenship.

#### Transition In The Workplace

It is common to see that when people want to transition and have a job they often decide to postpone the beginning of the transition until another stage of life (retirement, for example)

or they leave their workplace to transition while unemployed with the idea of re-joining the labour market in their true gender.

This dynamic is essentially fuelled by the fear of experiencing discrimination. However, it is important to consider the need to promote initiatives for people transitioning in the workplace without having to leave their job. This strategy is based on the fact that, as noted above, they are more likely to transition and keep their job than find a new job as a trans person, especially if they are a trans woman.

## **Trans Sex Work**

Trans women working in sex work are particularly vulnerable on account of the stigmatisation and lack of work rights in this occupation. To tackle this situation, it is important to look at the diversity of needs these people have. The positions range from trans women who want to exercise sex work in conditions of equality in relation to other professions (social security contributions, unemployment benefit and pension, etc.), to trans women who want to exercise sex work while they also explore other career itineraries in the formal labour market, and trans women who want to abandon it definitively and need support to improve their employability.





## Chapter 2:

# EMPOWERING TRANS WOMEN TO ENTER THE LABOUR MARKET

**Written by SURT Foundation**

**SURT**

In this chapter we propose a methodology based on empowerment for the career guidance of trans women. The economic empowerment of trans women is promoted from a multidimensional approach that considers the structural, personal and competence factors that affect the employment opportunities of trans women.

## 2.1. WHAT FEMINIST EMPOWERMENT MEANS

Empowerment is a concept that comes from feminist theory and the feminist movement<sup>3</sup>. It refers to an individual and collective initiative through which individuals (in this case trans women) *become aware of their structurally unequal position, as well as their rights and the need to rectify this oppressive reality and modify power relationships* between individuals.

We now present the *main characteristics* of this approach applied to guidance of trans women:

### Recognising rights and interests

From a feminist perspective, empowerment means becoming aware of what it means to have rights. This includes the right to life, to freedom, to dignity and equality, as well as economic, social and cultural rights like the right to employment, health, education, housing, etc. Feminist empowerment involves trans women recognising their own authority, as well as the authority of other trans women. It means gaining confidence to pursue goals. In order to develop personal authority, trans women need to be confident, as well as to feel subjective security and legitimacy to be who they really are and to live life to the fullest.

### Becoming aware of subordination

Empowerment starts from within, through an individual and group process for raising awareness of power relationships involving gender, sexuality, class, race, origin, functional diversity, etc. This process helps with the identification of the structures and social relationships that condition our inequality and vulnerability as trans women.

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<sup>3</sup> Empowerment is a concept defined at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing. This term was originally created in the context of the feminist and female emancipation movement, but its meaning and use have since been expanded. It is a useful strategy that can be employed by any group facing inequality or vulnerability because of questions like gender, sexuality, social class, functional diversity, mental health, race, origin or religion.

## **Becoming aware of the possibility of transforming the current situation and establishing new power relationships.**

As an exercise in freedom and in order to strengthen personal capacities, it is essential to encourage individuals to make certain decisions, to take control over important matters in trans women's lives and to play a decisive role in defining and building the future.

At the same time, any empowerment process requires a collective dimension centred on interdependence and the construction of stable, healthy ties. Empowerment requires a series of elements such as solidarity, assistance and mutual support. It requires cooperation, respect and trust in others who are also impacted by inequality and discrimination (regardless of the type of violence they face), or who offer to serve as allies.

Therefore, any empowerment process needs to address simultaneously at least four dimensions, described below:

- › Personal empowerment (the cognitive and psychological dimension): understanding the conditions and causes of structural inequality. Strengthening our belief in ourselves and in our ability to act and transform situations of subordination and power relationships.
- › Economic empowerment (the material dimension): improving access and control over material and productive resources in order to obtain a certain level of material and financial autonomy.
- › Community empowerment: building and rebuilding solid, stable ties of affection and mutual support through our surroundings.
- › Social and political empowerment: building collective organizational structures that promote social and political action to achieve social change transform power structures and improve our living conditions.

## 2.2. GUIDING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROCESSES WITH TRANS WOMEN

### a. THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONALS

In feminist empowerment processes, the role of professionals is to accompany others. In other words, for interventions involving a gender-based perspective, paternalist, victimizing or custodial professional positions must be overcome, and autonomy and agency of participants must be preserved. Participants' decisions should be respected and their needs should be prioritized throughout the process. Participative, interactive and cooperative work that provides elements for reflection, action and transformation is key.

### b. PRIOR RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several basic principles that professionals working with trans individuals, should keep in mind in order to provide quality service that includes a gender-based perspective and is respectful of the reality of trans people.

Often, ignorance, a lack of preparation or transphobic prejudice among professionals make the trans individuals who look for assistance feel like they have not received quality service. They may even feel like they have been exposed to a new situation of discrimination or violence, what is known as secondary victimization. This drives many away from available services and resources, thus professionals should make their best to avoid such situations.

Below, a series of basic recommendations for professionals giving support to trans individuals - especially trans women - are provided.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFERING SUPPORT TO TRANS WOMEN

To question internalized gender-based prejudices, roles and stereotypes also perpetuated by professionals (often without meaning to).

For example, no behaviours, patterns, roles or responsibilities should be assigned to men or to women. Roles restrict diversity in ways of living, emotions and actions. Binary gender attitudes should be avoided. Human diversity cannot be crammed into two rigid categories.

The first step in any guidance process is to create an environment of trust and a trans-friendly space where individuals feel safe asking for help and are aware of their rights and of any available resources.

To address trans individuals using the name and gender they identify with, no matter where they are in the body transformation process or whether or not they have legally changed their name or gender.

No one is obligated to reveal their gender identity. Even if they share it with an individual or a group, that does not necessarily mean they want it to be visible to others.

If doubts arise regarding how to treat a participant, the best strategy is to ask them directly in a careful, respectful and honest way: "I'm sorry, how would you like me to address you?" This will make the individual feel their needs have been considered, and it might even help to create an environment of trust and security.

There is no correct way of being trans or of transitioning from one gender to another. All transitions are valid, and there are no first-class or second-class trans individuals. Some trans individuals seek to change their bodies (using surgery, hormones, etc.), while others do not. The gender identities of all these individuals have to be recognised, by the use of the names and genders they identify with.

Any quality assistance must be focused on the individual, their situation and their needs. Professionals should place the person, their needs, their agency, and their coping and survival strategies at the centre of the intervention. Helping them to build and develop their general skills is also necessary.

The trans community is heterogeneous. Being a trans man is not the same as being a trans woman. Some trans people can also identify as non-binary. A gender-based perspective helps us to remember that as a result of transphobia and machoism, trans women are more seriously affected by discrimination, violence and social exclusion.

Trans individuals do not just face discrimination because they are trans. Other causes of inequality, like race, origin, religion, administrative circumstances, mental health or functional diversity must be taken into consideration. All of these factors have simultaneous effects, and they might result in situations of vulnerability and social exclusion (see chapter 1).

Special attention must be paid to the situations of administrative irregularity faced by trans women. The social rejection caused by transphobia, the rootlessness caused by migratory processes and the institutional violence that is often caused by immigration laws all intensify the situations of isolation, the lack of a support network and the absence of emotional ties faced by the trans women who go to support services seeking for help.

## **Stereotypes and gender roles**

Both professionals and individuals providing guidance are influenced by a series of gender roles and stereotypes that are well-established in our society. These ascribe normative ways of being, acting and thinking, based on a person's gender.

For trans individuals, and women in particular, the pressure to fulfil these gender norms is more intense. In addition to this, medicine often treats trans people as disordered. The problem does not lie with an individual's 'transness', but with a binary, sexist and transphobic society that penalises diversity. As a result, it is essential to promote wider models of femininity and masculinity which are not linked to one's sex. Furthermore, not everyone identifies as a man or as a woman. The trans community is extremely diverse, and often strays quite a bit from social norms. This diversity and richness should be promoted as something inspiring.

Besides, trans women also need to deal with their own gender stereotypes (in relation to the workplace). For instance, some trans women may have extensive experience in a “masculine” sector or profession before the transition, but would reject to seek a job in that sector precisely for being “masculine”. To question these stereotypes, it may be crucial to help trans women with previous experience in a field to make the most of it.

### **Transpositive visibility**

The reality of trans individuals has to be made visible through positive, alternative points of reference that avoid negative or stereotyped representations, and that instead present the successful careers of trans individuals.

For example, references can be offered through art, cinema, literature or photography, valuing and promoting the diversity of trans experiences. The public imagination must be provided with a wealth of possibilities that can help make individuals freer.

### **Transpositive visibility in the workplace**

It is important to keep in mind that the trans women that suffer from discrimination or exclusion from the workplace and most of those who seek assistance from employment services are visibly trans.

As a result, strategies such as the blind CV (a CV that does not include the person’s photo, gender or age) that are valid for individuals with a high competence level might even be counterproductive for groups at risk of social exclusion. In this case, there is a risk that transphobic discrimination or even the threat of violence does not occur when employers are selecting CVs, but rather during the job interview, when the HR professional realises they have selected a trans woman.

Professionals should be prepared for this type of situation, which can place the individual at risk and which might be a step backwards in the empowerment process.

As a result, transpositive visibility, reinforcing gender diversity and the reality of trans individuals as a positive element should be central to the trans person’s empowerment process.

### c. STRUCTURAL, PERSONAL AND COMPETENCE FACTORS

There are different factors behind the social and labour inclusion of trans women, which should be considered in any empowerment process.

**Structural factors** are economic, political and social factors that are external to trans women, but that impact their possibilities for insertion and have a direct impact on the inequality and the risk of poverty, social exclusion and violence they face. Some examples of structural factors are the state of the job market or the local economic infrastructure, prejudices and stereotypes associated with trans individuals, the view of transgender people as disordered, the criminalisation of trans women and their stereotyped association with the world of spectacle, sex work or drug use.

On the other hand, **personal factors** have to do with the individual's characteristics, personal situation and behaviour. They serve as constraints, selection mechanisms or positive aids. Most can be modified; however, only the individuals themselves have the right and the capacity to do so.

Finally, **competence factors** or professional competence (which we will address later on) can be developed to benefit personal factors. This is the knowledge, abilities, skills and workplace behaviours that are necessary for a certain professional activity.

This model organizes **competences** into **3 main groups**:

- › **Technical competences** are those competences associated with the position or profession, such as customer support, hairdressing techniques or food preparation, etc.
- › **Basic competencies** are those necessary ones to realize any profession in the labour market such as reading and writing, computer use or language.
- › **Transversal competences** are needed to function in work situations under different circumstances, for example managing emotions, communication, teamwork, etc.

Identifying structural, individual and competence factors is a key strategy in the economic empowerment process. It is also crucial to avoid victimisation. The entire process must focus on recovering participants' capacity for action, valuing their coping strategies, and helping develop their skills.



STRUCTURAL FACTORS	PERSONAL FACTORS	COMPETENCE FACTORS
Status of the job market Stereotypes Social transphobia Stigma and exclusion Violence ...	Socioeconomic status (health, housing, education, etc.) Administrative situation Formal and hidden job experience Training Attitude towards work Health condition ...	Technical skills associated with the specific trade or professional profile. Basic skills: analogue and digital skills, language, etc. Transversal competence: awareness of resources, identifying and valuing personal characteristics, openness towards learning, adapting to circumstances, communication, etc. ....

### 2.3. KEY STEPS TO SUPPORT EMPOWERMENT PROCESSES

Any guidance model based on empowerment must take into account the personal, economic, community and political dimensions.

Individual or group sessions can be organized:

**Individual sessions** are useful for developing an individual's life project, detecting and identifying any violence and discrimination they may experience and working on its impact through non-custodial guidance.

If necessary, these sessions can also help to address questions like the regularisation of legal status, access to housing, access to healthcare, etc.

**Group sessions** seek to create an egalitarian space where participants can share coping strategies. These sessions can also help to promote critical thinking and collective proposals for action and transformation.

Taking into account the importance of working on all four dimensions in parallel, a methodological proposal for providing guidance in economic empowerment processes with trans women is provided in different steps:

### **a. LIFE PROJECT**

The life project is a support tool. Each participant has to define their life project by identifying their objectives and goals. Defining a life project is a tool that should be seen as a process; it begins with a diagnosis and evaluation involving the protagonist, and it includes indicators for evaluation provided both by the protagonist and the professional. This tool is meant to help the professional provide an initial case evaluation while the protagonist works on an initial identification of the resources, desires and needs present in different areas of their life: health, social and affective relationships, housing, training, employment, etc.

Some questions that might guide this intervention are: where am I/where would I like to be? What difficulties or fears influence me/what strengths do I have to deal with them? These questions can be applied to different areas of our lives.

### **b. PROFESSIONAL PROJECT**

Helping the person to clarify, plan and execute their professional project. The professional project is a support/intervention tool.

The professional project should also be seen as a process, and we should consider designing initial, intermediate and final indicators for evaluation, both by the protagonist and the professional.

Some of the actions to be included in the preparation of the professional project can be focused on the following aspects:

- › First, defining professional objectives using the individual's expectations, training, skills and experience (what do I have, and what do I need?)
- › Understanding the job market: an initial look at the reality of the job market (profiles, demand, types of jobs, etc.)
- › Preparing a plan for executing the professional project (what do I need to do, or what steps do I need to take to get what I want?)



### c. DEFINING OBJECTIVES

Working on the capacity to define viable objectives using the following elements:

- › Positive examples provided by trans or non-binary individuals in the person's fields of interest
- › Motivation
- › Specifying professional goals (what employment alternatives have I considered?)
- › Context (limitations of the circumstances)
- › Procedure (how to achieve it)

- › Chronology and working calendar
- › Future (more subjective; where do I see myself 10 years from now?)

#### **d. ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYABILITY**

This analysis should be prepared taking into account the characteristics of the job market and of the individual's employment possibilities, as all of this is dynamic, relative and variable. At the same time, we should consider factors such as:

- › Structural factors. Social inequality, feminisation of poverty, access to housing, immigration laws, etc.
- › Personal factors: effects of violence, the individual's mental and physical health, administrative circumstances, housing, food, training, professional experience, etc.
- › Competence factors (technical, basic and transversal competences): what skills does the person have?

#### **e. ENCOURAGING THE IMPROVEMENT OR DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

Expanding and improving an individual's range of professional skills (basic and technical competences) helps to improve their employability. It is important to provide guidance that helps the individual to access locally available resources and services in order to develop the most appropriate types of skills, in keeping with previously established objective.

#### **f. TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCE**

Just as basic and technical competence can be learned, transversal competence must be developed based on past experience in different areas of life, and transferred to the individual's professional life. In other words, working with the individual's life experience in different spheres, and with their professional life specifically is essential.

Transversal competence can be taken from any aspect of life, as well as from any past experiences, whether or not they involve oppression. The goal is to be able to apply them in a new context; specifically, in the workplace. In fact, this capacity to use them in different contexts is practically a meta-competence.

Assisting others from a gender-based perspective means that both the professional and the

person being assisted accept that skills have nothing to do with gender. Some trans women may be reluctant to promote and use skills that may be stereotypically associated with masculinity (capacity for negotiation, competitiveness, initiative, perseverance, leadership, etc.). As a result, it is necessary to work to overcome or reduce any potential self-loathing, and to take advantage of the skills developed in other areas or at other moments in the person's life in order to promote their economic empowerment.

In addition, just like any other group suffering from discrimination, trans individuals develop a series of strategies throughout their lives to overcome the obstacles created by transphobia and social exclusion. In the process of economic empowerment, being able to transfer these skills to one's professional life is essential.



## Chapter 3:

# KEYS FOR LABOUR INTERMEDIATION: BENEFITS OF AN INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE ORGANISATION OR COMPANY

**Written by Transgender Equality Network Ireland**



This chapter discusses the processes of liaising with organisations and companies on trans inclusion and proposes tools for raising awareness about trans women in the human resources sector. It also sets out the business and social responsibility cases for this work.

As explored in other areas of this resource, trans inclusive practices in the workplace make employment and life overall easier and of higher quality for trans people, with particular benefits for trans women. Beyond the major benefits for trans women, there are also benefits to other groups within and surrounding the workspace when positive working environments are built for trans people within organisations.

### 3.1. THE BUSINESS CASE

There is a growing understanding within the business community that being inclusive of LGBTI+ communities is hugely beneficial overall to workplace satisfaction for employees, to retention of LGBTI+ staff and to recruitment efforts overall. These benefits also spill out into wider society, with societal perception of inclusive organisations improving public image significantly compared to non-inclusive organisations.

#### **Public Image**

There are more data detailing how LGBTI+ inclusion is beneficial, but this concept also applies to trans inclusivity more specifically; where employers are inclusive and accommodating of trans women, they generally enjoy an improved public image compared to organisations that are not.

Particular for medium and large sized organisations with advertising presences, the benefits of trans inclusivity can be seen with increased population engagement and improved perception amongst the general population when this inclusivity is shown.

Examples of this work include presences at Pride events, inter-organisation equality, diversity and inclusion events, advertising featuring LGBTI+ persons or families and public engagement on LGBTI+ rights and equality, for example publicly supporting efforts for social and legislative reform to protect and promote LGBTI+ legal reform.

This work can be done by individual companies; examples of this are commonly seen across Europe from small organisations supporting their local LGBTI+ or Trans Pride events, to enor-

mous multinational companies providing public support to national or international human rights efforts.

This work can also be done within a larger umbrella framework where an organisation is supported by a collaborative body or pseudo-regulatory organisation which assists their progression and ensures their work is sustainable, suitable and responsible. Examples of this can be seen in several European countries, for example the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme in the United Kingdom<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted that at time of publication, trans inclusion in the workplace is developing quickly in many countries but is still significantly behind similar work on including lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people in the workplace; diversity networks and assistive organisations may not yet have best practice advice and guidance that specifically benefits trans women. If an organisation has an income stream, for example a business or charity, being known as an organisation which meaningfully works towards social inclusion and trans rights can have a significant benefit on fundraising or sales efforts. However, public engagement on trans inclusion should be a meaningful effort and not an empty gesture to bolster marketing campaigns.

## **Sector Collaborative Work**

When considering trans inclusion in a given organisation, there may be detailed examples of work activities or practices which require specific guidance.

In business and work sectors with existing equality and diversity activities or networks, becoming part of that work or joining those networks can be an accessible way to get advice and guidance from other professionals in that field, and can help address nuanced and sector-specific questions on trans inclusion.

In sectors without this existing framework, it is still useful to engage with resources produced by other sectors in the same jurisdiction as many fundamental issues surrounding the law, data collection, language and human resources are likely to be relevant to this practice.

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4 For more information, see: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/diversity-champions-programme>



## Improved Recruitment Experience

Organisations which meaningfully include trans women in their culture and activities also extend this inclusivity to recruitment processes. As laid out in chapter 4, trans women may require reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes and may have complicated legal records or references which require careful handling.

Where organisations are demonstrably inclusive and are known as such to the public, it is likely that more trans women will engage with hiring processes during recruitment and will be out as trans women to your organisation. Since trans women are a highly diverse group who span all sectors of expertise, this increases the pool of suitable candidates for your position, which is particularly useful in niche or specialised fields. Improved experiences in recruitment and on boarding of new staff also increase the likelihood that staff will continue with the organisation and will progress internally.

## Improved Staff Retention and Progression

A major reason for the high employment dropout rate for trans women is the implicit and explicit pressures upon them within organisations because of their trans status, as well as experiences of direct hostility from management, staff, volunteers and/or the general public.

Where trans women feel supported by their organisation and have access to culturally competent support and assistance when required, the likelihood of them continuing to work with the organisation and to progress their skills and performance internally increases substantially. This is particularly useful in niche or specialised fields.

Remember, in larger organisations, it is highly possible that trans staff already exist, though may not be out as such.

Improved policy, procedures and culture around trans inclusion also benefit these staff.

### Better Internal Expertise

In a world where trans inclusion is becoming more and more the norm, especially in workplace settings and in Europe especially, it is increasingly important to develop staff knowledge and

skills on trans inclusion and to be able to promptly on board and support new trans staff. The knowledge gained by recruitment, human resources and support professionals during training and diversity improvement work enables their work to be more culturally competent overall, and provides not only existing trans staff with improved support, but new trans staff with smooth and barrier-free entry to the workplace.

Having trans staff is also highly likely to improve knowledge of trans issues internally by default. However, unless it is relevant to their job description, it is usually inappropriate to require existing trans staff members to be the knowledge base for trans inclusion development. Not only are the needs of different trans women potentially very different, but this substantially increases the risk of internally “outing” the trans staff member. It is important to avoid making trans people over-responsible in favour of the company.

### **Better Data Collection**

When engaging with trans staff or potential recruits, or when engaging with the general population for market research, community engagement or other work, it is important to ask the right questions to get accurate demographic information, and to record it accurately.

If data on trans status within staff, volunteers or other groups is recorded, it should be done so only where relevant, in a way that protects privacy, and with a method that allows honest self-reporting without erasure. For example, asking if someone is “male, female OR transgender” is poor data collection, but asking what someone’s gender is followed by whether they are transgender gets two separate high quality data points. In many jurisdictions, data relating to trans status is considered sensitive data and should be handled as such. In addition to legal obligations to sensitive data, outing trans women accidentally or deliberately may be a criminal offence and often brings profound social consequences for those women.

## **3.2. THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CASE**

Where organisations have optional or legally mandated activities or cultures which promote social responsibility or diversity, trans inclusion can help measurably towards those goals. In general, inclusion of stigmatised marginalised groups within organisations assists the acceptance of those groups and of other marginalised groups in many cases. Combined with the

business case outlined above, the potential for social progress through organisational support for trans women is a significant benefit within and without organisations.

## Social Impact

Along the arc of social progress in Europe which has seen LGBTI+ rights progress substantially across many jurisdictions in the last decade, the impact to wider society of organisations of all sizes supporting trans inclusion is measurable and significant. Efforts for wider LGBTI+ rights issues have been helped substantially by businesses and organisations showing public support for those efforts, for example in Northern Ireland regarding public support for marriage equality legislative reform.<sup>5</sup>

Where organisations have visions and mission statements which align with social progression, human rights and quality of life for their staff, their local communities or the general population, trans inclusion efforts can effectively mark progress towards meeting those aims.

Although rare, where there are requirements for diverse hiring practices or quotas, trans inclusion work can help meet those, and can help embed good diversity practice. However, trans inclusion work should not be done as a “tick-box” exercise or as a quick way to reach those requirements without meaningful institutional change.

## Positive Visibility

Trans women experience high levels of social deprivation, isolation, hate crime and abuse throughout Europe, and as trans women come out more quickly and at younger ages, it is being experienced by more women and for a longer amount of time. One way organisations can assist with this is by directly representing trans women within their workforce, volunteer groups and customers; by demystifying the existence of trans women (and trans people as a whole), it subtly but significantly undermines the reasons why people commit abuse against this group of women. Where trans women are meaningfully represented, a place of safety for them can be established, and exposure to trans people as members of a community enables that community to recognise, understand and accept them as equal members thereof.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information, see: Businesses for Love Equality (Northern Ireland) - <https://loveequalityni.org/businesses-for-love-equality/>

The representation of trans women within organisations of all sizes also improves public support for this trans inclusive practice overall, and over time even improves social attitudes to trans people at a societal level. This can improve the likelihood of progression of legal rights and of increased social integration of trans women as a whole.

### **Liaising With Organisations**

Communication with other organisations regarding trans inclusion should be done on a basis which improves learning within those organisations while protecting the privacy and safety of trans people within them.

### **A Note On Data Protection**

As noted above, in many jurisdictions, data relating to trans status is considered sensitive data and should be handled as such. In addition, in some jurisdictions, the fact that a trans person possesses a gender recognition certificate, an amended birth certificate or other document specific to gender transition is also sensitive data.

For example, in the United Kingdom, trans status is sensitive data covered by general data protection legislation, but a trans person with a gender recognition certificate has additional, specific protections relating to that certificate and its award.

It is important to become aware of your jurisdiction's data protection and trans rights legislation, and that of any other jurisdictions your organisation operates in or transfers data to/through.

## **3.3. SECTOR LEARNING**

Where it is relevant to contact competitors or partners about trans inclusion, whether to ask for or offer advice, it is good practice to communicate that individual trans people should not be outed, or used as the source of knowledge unless relevant. It should also be set out what is intended to be progressed.

For example, it may be useful to contact an organisation which works in a highly-regulated sector regarding their approach to data protection or criminal records screening for trans staff in a recruitment process. Advice sought or offered should provide guidance to trans inclusion

generally, and should not be based on the specific requirements of a single or small group of trans women. For example, a timescale of coming out within a work environment should not be based on an example of a trans woman who has already medically transitioned, because a high number of trans women would find that incompatible with their own situations.

Advice should provide for flexibility, respect individual trans women's realities and should not be able to be used to out someone. For example, giving a specific case of successful inclusion work but removing the name of the trans woman concerned may still out them if they are the only trans woman in that organisation.

Where an organisation has a regulator, advice from the regulator should be sought.

## 3.4. COMMUNICATIONS

### **Communications Regarding Individuals**

It may, on occasion, be relevant to disclose someone's trans status to another organisation, for example within a charitable organisation where a staff member has asked for assistance with their new employer in another organisation. However, it should be carefully executed to ensure that sensitive data is controlled and contained, that communication is sensitive, and that communication is done in the appropriate ways over appropriate channels.

For example, it may be relevant to disclose a trans woman's prior name to a criminal records disclosure screening organisation or to a healthcare provider. Many organisations used to receiving this data may have specific protocols or channels for doing so; disclosing organisations should ask if this is available before using general protocols or channels.

Where a disclosure is made, it must usually be done with the express consent of the trans person(s) involved and must always be in accordance with relevant data protection and/or gender recognition legislation.

Where consent is not required, for example between youth organisations where a safeguarding incident is communicated across sector partners via approved channels, disclosure of trans status should only be made if specifically relevant to the issue at hand.

## Communications Involving Human Resources

Where it is relevant to make communications to a human resources department or professional regarding trans inclusion work or about a specific trans person, it should also be done in a way that protects privacy, acknowledges the social standing of trans women within the organisation and allies with your wider trans inclusion work. For example, it is not unheard of for human resources complaints to be made on the basis of a woman's trans status, for example a complaint relating to her use of bathrooms or inclusion in a women's professional organisation. Communication around this should be carefully handled to ensure privacy and dignity is protected while also addressing any underlying conflicts or risks, in line with human resources good practice.

### 3.5. TRANS INCLUSION IN HUMAN RESOURCES WORK

In organisations with an established human resources structure, whether this is a department, sub-committee or single named individual, staff members within that structure should be provided access to suitable and relevant training on trans inclusion as soon as practical, especially not only if trans women are expected to join the organisation in the near future.

#### Training

Training for human resources professionals on trans inclusion should be based on the local, national and regional legal and cultural context of trans women within your organisation. For example, resources aimed at a global audience may be suitable for some cultural good practices, but are highly unlikely to be suitable for addressing legal requirements and specific language-related issues within your organisation.

Training should include cultural competency elements including trans-inclusive language and terminology in any operational languages of your organisation, an explanation of the legal system for trans people in your jurisdiction(s), and education on best practices for organisations like yours to address human resources grievances and other issues involving trans staff members.

#### Policy And Procedure

It is important to regularly review internal and inter-organisational policies and procedures to

ensure they are suitable for your organisation today, and this also applies to ensuring they are suitable for trans people within your organisation.

Performing an audit of your policies and procedures, for example ensuring documentary evidence requirements are inclusive of the specific needs of trans women, or ensuring disclosure practices don't inadvertently out or victimise trans women, is a useful practice to engage with. This ensures that the majority of work on trans inclusion within human resources activities is done in a proactive way in a calm and rational timescale, and not as a rushed and urgent response to a basic issue for which the organisation is ill prepared.

Trans inclusion may be specifically covered in equality and diversity policy, but should also be mainstreamed in other areas of policy and procedure as identified elsewhere in this resource, for example in dress codes, documentary evidence requirements and safeguarding protocols.

## **Grievances**

As described above, it is possible that an organisation receives a complaint regarding a trans woman on the basis of her trans status from a staff member or other individual, which is not compliant with the organisation's ethos of inclusion or the law.

It is important to ensure that complaints based in hostility, transphobia or homophobia are not upheld on the basis of their intent, and where otherwise not substantive should not be the basis for mediation or disciplinary action. Where instances of hostility or bigotry occur, it should be named as such, and human resources professionals should be supported by their organisations and managers to proceed on the basis of their inclusive outlook.

## **Harassment and Abuse**

Where trans women have customer- or public-facing roles, or where they engage with a large number of other staff members, it is possible that they experience harassment and/or abuse on the basis of their trans status. This should be dealt with in line with other instances of harassment or abuse, and should not be seen as a less severe or more acceptable instance simply because of its motive.

It is important to recognise what can constitute harassment for trans women. In addition to widely recognisable forms, harassment can entail:

- Refusing to address a trans person by their name and/or refusing to use the correct pronoun.
- Referring to a trans person as 'it'.
- Inappropriate questions about genitals and surgery.
- Sexual harassment, which may look different towards trans women than other women.
- Ignoring or excluding someone because they are trans.
- Commenting on how 'convincing' a trans person is in their gender expression.
- Refusing to acknowledge that a person has transitioned or is transitioning.<sup>6</sup>

## Other Issues In Human Resources

As explained in other areas of this resource, it may be required for trans women to arrange sick leave or other forms of leaves of absence to access gender-affirming healthcare. As this is recognised as essential care, where this interacts with human resources professionals, those professionals should treat the request along the same lines as other forms of essential healthcare leave. In some jurisdictions, a refusal to do this may constitute a form of sex discrimination or discrimination on the basis of gender identity or trans status.

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<sup>6</sup> Transgender Europe, see: TransInclusive Workplaces - [https://tgeu.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/TGEU\\_transinclusiveworkplaces\\_web201806.pdf](https://tgeu.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/TGEU_transinclusiveworkplaces_web201806.pdf)





## Chapter 4:

# RECOMMENDATIONS AND TOOLS FOR AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

**Written by Bundesverband Trans\***



In this chapter, we have a look at the following topics: why a trans inclusive workplace is required, what the meaning of that term is, how to achieve it, what benefits a trans inclusive workplace could bring to the employees, the employer and in consequence to the clients. While this guide focuses on the needs of trans women, reviewing the procedures and applying recommend tools will not only benefit trans women but also people whose bodies do not conform to the expected norms and other people affected by multiple forms of discrimination.

## **4.1. WHAT IS A TRANS INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE AND WHY IS IT NEEDED?**

As described in the previous chapters trans people and especially trans women and other feminine presenting trans people face strong pressure at the workplace. The feeling of not presenting feminine enough or the felt need of following gendered beauty standards is a constant reminder for those that are undergoing transition. Known trans women face all kinds of problems related to the workplace. Those who have transitioned in the past and are not known and avoid being identified as trans, may have the constant threat of being discovered. This can lead to a very high level of stress. A trans inclusive workplace can reduce this stress and protect the needs of trans women.

### **a. EXPLANATION OF DIFFERENT SCENARIOS, ORGANISATION AND SECTIONS**

In this subchapter different scenarios will be examined that show aspects that need to be considered to create a trans inclusive workplace. The following information will not be complete, since the topic is highly complex, and only a specific analysis of the present situation could lead to a specific solution. The following suggestions are meant to be a guideline on which you can find similarities to your situation to create a possible solution.

### **b. SIZE AND TYPE OF THE ORGANISATION**

Depending on the size of your organisation, the requirements and the resources vary strongly. While a "Euro Stoxx 50" company has the resources to do more and different approaches, it is also more complicated if not impossible to get in direct contact with all employees, suppliers and consumers to inform them about your policies and the changes they might experience.

That on the other hand would not be a problem for a small family owned businesses or a start-up company.

## **Large and Medium Organisations that already have a Diversity Department**

Talk to your department about possible solutions that they already have and inform them about this guide and how it is possible to implement the contents to your own procedures. Depending on the size of your workforce, it is likely that you have at least a few trans women in your organisation. If they live stealth it is very likely that you do not know about them. Even if they are known to be trans it is possible that they are not known to the diversity department, since a lot of trans people do not consider themselves as part of the group that is targeted by the diversity department or LGBTI+ groups within the workforce. Often only the immediate surrounding colleagues, superiors and HR know of the change.

## **Large/Medium Organisations**

As mentioned above a diversity department is not by itself a way to a trans inclusive workplace, but it is a place to coordinate the efforts implemented to make a workplace inclusive for trans women. The diversity department should be created with a staff function, so it will not be bound by the established hierarchy and can give feedback as well as advice outside the usual workflow.

## **Small Organisations**

Depending on the size of the organisation and the local regulations, there might not be a dedicated diversity department or staff member.

In this case it is also possible for management or the HR department to directly implement the changes needed to create a workplace that is inclusive for trans women. For small organisations, public employment diversity offices can be good partners to support you in your undertakings.

## 4.2. WORKPLACE SCENARIOS

To underline the importance of a trans inclusive workplace, the following examples will explore different scenarios that might occur in your organisation.

### New Employee

The first scenario will be focusing on new employees: from the job advertisement to the application process, documentation, and possible medical examinations.

If your goal is to create a space where trans women will feel welcome and valued, it is not enough to decide you will be open to them. That decision is merely the first step, and while it is very important it is only the place from where to start. The most important part is to create from this first step a truly trans positive climate within your organisation. Achieving that requires honest effort. The following points are possible parts to achieve a trans inclusive culture within your organisation.

### Job Advertisement and Organisation Representation

Before creating job advertisements it is important to evaluate the public perception of your organisation and to review if you are known to be LGBTI+ supportive.

While preparing a job advertisement it is important to keep in mind that most women tend to only apply to a position if they feel they are (officially) qualified and have faith in their own abilities. Most men, however, see a challenge and apply to meet it, even if they may not meet all requirements. This aspect applies to trans women as well, and they might have additional fears if the new workplace will be accepting of them. Therefore it is of great importance that the job advertisements will be about the real requirements and, if wished for, only put additional bonus skills clearly marked as such in a separate section. For a lot of trans women, medical leave and benefits are of great importance. As mentioned your open support for the LGBTI+ community and especially for trans applicants will be a large part of your trans positive climate. If you have applied some of the methods described within this guide, be open about them, write a short paragraph about it and add a link to the methods you have already implemented. Also add a statement that you are welcoming and open for applications of trans women, and that you are open for additional requests.

## Application Process

Some trans female applicants will officially go by a different name than the one they use in daily life. This leads to a fear to apply or to pain while applying with the assigned name and photos that possibly do not reflect their self-image.

To avoid this issue you can accept applications with chosen names and not request photos. Again, it is very important that you state this information clearly in the job advertisement. A trans woman's curriculum vitae (CV) might be more complex than those of other applicants. While unexpected episodes might differ from the usual "norm", there might be longer missing periods, unemployment or under qualified work. These times are not lost, and they might be unexpected but they were important to get the person to where she is now and it might have been a time for great personal growth. Therefore, openness to these episodes in a CV is an important part in the recruitment of trans women.

## Medical Examinations

If a medical procedure is part of the employment process, it also needs to be reviewed concerning the expectations of bodies. You should consider making it possible that the medical examination can be done by a doctor of their choice. Trans health is a very specific field of expertise and a lot of trans women have had negative experiences with medical staff in the past. This point remains of course valid throughout the whole employment, if there are future check-ups.

## Coming-out

In case a trans women wants to come out, it is important to plan this process together with her individually. Every trans woman has their own wishes and their own timing how it should happen. It is important for the employer to respect them, and to support them with the process. It is useful to create a transition plan, in which a stakeholder analysis and the definition of the needed action to inform them are considered. If asked to, the employer should inform the other employees who work closely with the trans woman, and possible continuous clients about the agreed actions. An alternative solution could be the use of the organisation's already implemented gender transition protocol.

While in the coming-out phase, it is imperative that all actions that will be taken have been coordinated between the employee and the employer, and every action has to be agreed to by the trans woman.

Another essential aspect is that at every point of the agreed transition, the trans woman has the possibility to halt, to slow down or to stop the process. As often described before, it is of great importance that this aspect is clearly agreed with the trans woman, so that she knows she is always in control of what is happening.

### **4.3. SITUATIONS WHERE AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE IS NEEDED AND TOOLS FOR IMPROVING IT**

Additional to the scenarios in the last sub chapter, the following situations are part of the usual working procedures that will challenge your understanding of a trans inclusive workplace.

#### **Dress Codes**

If there are dress codes in place within your organisation, it is important to revise them concerning the rights of trans people and people that do not fit established gender norms. Dress codes should be modified to avoid gender stereotypes and should apply consistently to all employees. With the aim to ensure gender-neutral dress codes and avoid binary dress codes, it is important to review the selection offered by your suppliers and ensure that transgender employees can dress consistently in accordance with their full-time gender presentation.

The access to dressing/changing rooms and toilets is a sensitive matter and denying the access of trans women to any of them is highly discriminatory.

If there are gender separated dressing/changing rooms on your local sites, it is important to reflect on their usage concerning the needs of trans women, as well as the requirements of other employees and state based regulations. Often the needs of trans women are considered less important than the presumed needs of their cisgender co-workers. It is important to have a consistent policy based on best practice and not on individual experiences and opinions.

Talking to a person whom they can trust and who will if asked present their wishes to other

colleagues can improve the feeling of safety and appreciation that is hard to achieve with different approaches.

## **Documentation and Acting In Advance**

There are different parts of an officially documented identity that may take a long time to be changed. If you do not see a possibility to act on a request to do a complete change, it might be for administrative or legal reasons, but there are other possibilities than changing the whole identity at once. Often changing name badges, business cards, email addresses (alias), entries on the business's website and in the contact lists will not interfere with the procedures you have established, but allow the employee to communicate without having to use legal names, and/or wrongly assigned gender, and therefore recognising their gender identity.

Another important part of documentation procedures is to review them regarding gathered information about the employee. Often a name change will be visible in the record, or a change of the gender marker might not even be possible, since the gender marker is locked and can only be changed directly in the connected database. Usually the software provider for your employee documentation system can do the required changes directly. Depending on your country's regulations, there might be policies about the required actions to keep those changes a secret. Nevertheless, it is important that this information is only used for required purposes and that only the persons who are required to work with it are able to view it. A few remarks to this section: often a name and gender change is a retroactive change, therefore all contracts and signatures are valid even if they are issued under a name no longer used. Often information is gathered that seemingly is important, but is only collected because this information is collected as standard.

A possible danger is that often even if changed parts of entries stay in the old form, like usernames or the URLs that are shown in the browser.

## **Being Respectful**

The early stages of transition are often hard for trans women, when they feel especially sensitive about their appearance. It is important to not make remarks about their appearance or the impact their transition may have on others. Some trans women might say that comments about their transition or appearance are not that important for them, and while that may be

true for some, a lot who make that statement will feel that saying anything else might lead to severe consequences.

#### 4.4. ADDITIONAL ASPECTS OF A TRANS INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

While a trans inclusive workplace is of great importance and a huge benefit to the trans employee, it is important to emphasise that it doesn't imply to come out as trans to the public, or the organisation's staff. While some want to share their stories to be an example for others, and therefore will be happy to be an example of diversity, others will simply want to do their work as before, after all that is why they chose the employment they are working in.

It is also important to mention that being trans will not automatically make you an expert on all trans related topics. The experiences of trans women might be as different as those of cis women, for example the experiences of white trans women might be completely different of a trans women of colour who is wearing a hijab (see chapter one).





## Chapter 5:

# GOOD PRACTICES

**Edited by Háltér Society**



## WHAT MAKES A GOOD PRACTICE?

When collecting good practices, it is essential to define what makes a good practice. The TransVisible project has constructed good practices from a variety of practical examples in line with the [European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)'s approach to good practices](#). Employing EIGE's selection criteria for good practices, we define our criteria on three distinct levels:

1. **General Criteria**, that provide criteria applicable to practical examples in any field;
2. **Common Criteria**, that set out the goals the identified good practical examples need to contribute to; and
3. **Specific Criteria**, that set out practical criteria the practical examples need to align with.

### General Criteria

The practice...

- must work well;
- must be embedded within a wider strategy to promote the human rights and social inclusion of trans people;
- must be transferable and encourage employers to act more appropriately towards trans people.

### Common Criteria

The practice...

- increases the chance of trans people to be employed in long-term jobs in line with their qualifications and professional experience;
- ensures equal access of trans people to vocational training, promotion, and improved working conditions;
- creates a welcoming environment for trans people free of discrimination and harassment.

## Specific Criteria

The practice...

- is individualised, flexible and tailored, providing due regard for individual preferences for how support can / should look;
- targets a wide variety of trans people with different identities and socio-economic backgrounds;
- is developed with the participation of trans people and/or trans organizations;
- protects the privacy of trans clients, and does not put pressure on them to be out about their trans status;
- focuses on preventing discrimination, harassment, rather than simply punishing those violating policies;
- is in line with existing initiatives to address sex/gender discrimination in the labour market;
- takes the form / promotes the use of written policies accessible to all stakeholders, resulting in consistent and reliable procedures;
- mainstreams the concerns of trans people to every aspect of the organization's operation, and is not an isolated policy or practice;
- is communicated to all stakeholders in all stages of service provision or employment, including the recruitment of applicants / clients.

It is important to recognize that there is no such thing as a definitive “good workplace trans experience,” and that the experiences and needs of trans women are different and vary on an individual basis. Therefore, supportive measures taken should always be flexible and tailored to serve the differing needs trans women might have in order to achieve their inclusion in a workspace ([Supporting trans employees in the workplace](#), ACAS).

Although there is no universal recipe for eliminating the barriers that trans women face, the good practices offered below have been selected for their attention to personalized, situation and context-specific considerations, while bearing in mind the individualized needs of those for whom they are constructed.

Below we will offer nine good practices for ensuring the inclusion of trans women in the labour market:

1. Specialized Labour Market LGTBI Device by the Ripollet City Council (Barcelona).
2. "Sororitat Trans\*", an initiative from Barcelona,
3. "Creando", a project from Canary Islands.
4. "TransOcupació", a social and labour inclusion programme from Barcelona
5. "They can be anything?": a research on employment and workplace discrimination against LGBTQI people in Hungary.
6. "WeAreHere" workshops for HR professionals about LGBTI employees in Hungary.
7. The Dublin Bus Workplace Gender Transition Policy and Guidelines, Ireland
8. Gender Identity and Expression Policy for RCSI Staff and Students (Dublin), Ireland.
9. Trans\* Job Mentoring in Germany.

These practices are derived from a variety of practical examples which include, but are not limited to equal opportunities policies and strategies, training and research.

We found 4 key indicators of a good practice:

1. It responds to harassment and discrimination
2. It contributes to creating an inclusive
3. It betters workplace culture
4. It provides support through transitioning

These indicators will be explored through the below case studies across Spanish, Hungarian, Irish and German contexts.

## GOOD PRACTICE NO. 1

### SPECIALIZED LABOUR MARKET LGTBI DEVICE BY RIPOLLET CITY COUNCIL (BARCELONA)

*"In this space lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people can express themselves freely. Discriminatory acts against LGBTI people are not allowed<sup>7</sup>."*

#### Project Context::

In 2018, the first local equality plan for sexual and gender diversity in Ripollet (Barcelona) was presented. This plan was drafted with the support and coordination of the Office of Women and LGTBI of Barcelona Provincial Council (Diputació de Barcelona). It included a diagnosis, a state of affairs regarding the inequalities experienced by LGBTI people in the municipality and the policies of equality and sexual and gender diversity promoted by Ripollet City Council (Barcelona). The equality plan identified different strategic goals and proposed an action plan with specific measures to be carried out between 2018 and 2022 for each of the goals identified.

According to Article 21 of the *Catalan Act 11/2014 to ensure LGBTI rights and eradicate homophobia, transphobia and biphobia*, public administrators in the sector of labour market intervention are obliged to take steps to guarantee the equal rights of LGBTI people in the labour market. This includes both promoting and strengthening the labour rights of LGBTI people, as well as ensuring that adequate training is provided to promote equality for LGBTI people in the labour market.

#### Project Description:

The **Specialized Labour Market LGTBI Device** is a project that was created to address the needs of the LGBTI community generally, and trans people specifically. The project aims to create a space for labour intermediation between different entities/companies and the LGBTI community in the interest of facilitating access to labour and improving labour experience. The project is also interested in deploying active employment and occupation policies and training to assist LGBTI people in situations of unemployment.

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<sup>7</sup> Ripollet City Council sent a letter to all the companies in the municipality explaining the implementation of its new trans-inclusive policies and explaining the project accompanied by a poster to be placed in workspaces.

This project complies with the above mentioned Act 11/2014, whereby public administration has to ensure adequate training for professionals in the world of work to promote the equality of LGBTI people in the labour market. The project showcases the essential importance of raising awareness and training actors across the employment sector in order to promote specific measures aimed at eradicating mechanisms, behaviours and attitudes that discriminate against and/or exclude people on the basis of their gender identity and/or expression.

### **Project Objectives:**

Bearing in mind that the work environment constitutes a fundamental sphere in people's lives as a space where social relations are formed and maintained, the objectives of this project (including facilitating trans people's equality in the labour market) are crucial to ensuring the employment rights of LGBTI people. It encourages the creation of an inclusive infrastructure and workplace culture through training, empowerment and developing strong trans specific policies.

The project's specific objectives are as follows:

5. To explore and understand the situation of LGBTI people at the municipal level.
6. To increase legal awareness in the LGBTI community.
7. To provide training for technical and human resources personnel.
8. To foster capacity building and provide affected communities with resources.

### **Project Timeline:**

01/01/2019 - 31/12/2019

### **Project Financing:**

The project was financed by the Barcelona Provincial Council and Ripollet City Council.

### **Project Implementation:**

The implementation of the project included the following activities:

1. Data collection on and analysis of indicators, 1. such as: the percentage of unemployment, the needs for work environment improvement, availability of training, workplace-related

discrimination suffered by LGBTI people in order to gain an accurate picture on workplace inclusion.

2. Analysing local policies and their implementation, 2. providing information on data and organizing community discussions to show the reality of the labour market at research workshops and trainings.
3. Training human resources professionals at companies and members of the LGBTI community.
  - a. The training created for human resources personnel is divided into two sessions, of three hours each. The first session is a general training on LGBTI and specifically trans people and their respective needs in the employment sector, the second focuses specifically on anti-discrimination protocols at the workplace.
  - b. The training developed for the LGBTI community is a fourteen hours long training course the aim of which is to establish strategies to overcome labour discrimination and to apply different techniques to tackle stereotyping, prejudices and discrimination throughout the job search process.
4. Promoting joint actions with local companies to multiply impact. The project aimed at detecting which companies utilize good practices and approached them to offer cooperation regarding training, public communication, etc. so that they can serve as examples for other companies.
5. Offering individual counselling and coaching sessions to improve the employability of LGBTI and particularly trans people by means of developing skills and work search techniques, and counselling.
  - a. Creating individual plans to enhance competence. As clients are most often trans people with difficult socio-economic situations who have most likely experienced discrimination in labour market, it is important to design actions according to their individual needs.
  - b. Monitoring to ensure that objectives are reached.

## **Results, impacts and barriers:**

The project carried out a total of twenty hours of training; 6 addressed to companies and 14 to the trans people. In the training addressed for companies, managers and HR staff from seven different companies participated.

The project proved most useful to facilitating equality and inclusion in the labour market for trans people due to its outputs:

1. report on the needs of the LGBTI community on a local level;
2. interviews with stakeholders;
3. training sessions on job search techniques and strategies;
4. training on LGBTI issues, specifically the situation of trans people;
5. training sessions for HR professionals;
6. training for trans people.

The most substantial barrier throughout the project was that Ripollet City Council faced difficulties in identifying and reaching out to trans people in order to carry out the project.

## **Why we consider this project a good practice:**

This project was a good first step for the implementation of trans inclusive policies. Its aim to align public administration and companies within the municipality with LGBTI community members, specifically trans people seeking employment, proved rather successful. The project was successful in promoting a workplace culture where the needs of trans women were taken into account and where harassment and discrimination against them were not tolerated. These successes have an essential impact on the formulation of strong policies.

The project is also applicable well beyond its original context.



## GOOD PRACTICE NO. 2

### “SORORITAT TRANS\*“, AN INITIATIVE FROM BARCELONA

#### Project Context:

Experiences of discrimination undermine the opportunities of trans women for social and labour participation, hinder their use of social resources, health and legal aid services, and also have a tremendous impact on their overall emotional health. The participation of trans women is essential to any project that seeks to support them across the employment sector.

#### Project Description:

Trans\* Sorority (“Sororitat Trans\*”) is a peer socialization and mutual support group to promote the empowerment of trans women. It is a free group open to trans women. The group provides trans women with social, emotional and informational support. It helps them gain self-confidence and self-awareness in their processes of empowerment.

Trans\* Sorority is a project run by Surt, a women’s organization in Barcelona that operates occupational programs. Trans\* Sorority identified several challenges that trans women repeatedly face across the employment sector. The following areas of concern were identified:

- exclusion
- human rights violations
- discrimination
- various forms of violence

Participants and facilitators of the Trans\* Sorority group created a project to address these barriers. The activity began with a small group of trans women and new participants were recruited to join as it was underway. The support group is led by a professional facilitator, who is a trans woman.

#### Project Objectives:

The Trans\* Sorority project seeks to create a space of socialization among equals and aims to develop participants’ communication skills while also increasing trans visibility.

Specifically, the project seeks to achieve the following:

1. To deal with the discrimination experienced by participants.
2. To shed light on the social and political context of discrimination in order to raise awareness and transfer negative experience into positive political action.
3. To spread information about the social, legal and health services available for trans women.
4. To educate participants on the services offered by local, regional and national institutions which might support their needs.
5. To advocate for trans rights, contributing to visibility of trans women.
6. To sensitize participants and facilitate mutual learning.

### **Project Timeline:**

Since 2017, ongoing (2020).

### **Project Financing:**

This project is funded by the Government of Catalonia and Barcelona City Council. It takes place in Surt's offices and does not require any specific materials or resources.

### **Project Implementation:**

Three hours long meeting sessions are organized two times a month.

The project has five areas of work:

1. personal empowerment
2. information and legal advice
3. technical aspects related to job searching
4. community action
5. liaising with companies

### **Results, impacts and barriers:**

The most notable impacts of the project are the following:

1. Enhanced individual and group agency.
2. Increased ability to identify homophobic and transphobic discrimination.
3. Improved knowledge of the individual and collective rights of LGBTI people, particularly trans women.
4. Increased ability to assertively defend these rights by using a variety of mechanisms and resources. .

### **Why we consider this a good practice:**

The primary aims of this project are directly connected to one of the indicators listed under 'specific criteria' in the Introduction of this chapter: responding to harassment and discrimination. This response can and ought to be directed not merely towards harassment and discrimination (e.g. by tackling harmful policies), but also apply a more systemic approach that supports trans women by empowering them.

The knowledge and skills gained by trans women participating in this project have substantial implications for their likelihood to defend their rights in the face of discrimination and harassment. Empowerment via self-confidence and self-esteem will also have lasting positive effects for the participants, which ultimately serves to address the underlying and systemic causes for their negative experiences.

The project also showcases the need for trans specific workplace policies. Efforts for enhancing empowerment have created a culture for trans women to effectively make informed responses to discrimination and/or harassment.

The Trans\* Sorority project is also transferable in the European context. It is important to recognize that trans people often experience isolation and have scarce community spaces, events and advocacy initiatives bringing them together. In many regions, it can be very challenging for trans women to locate safe spaces providing free support services. This project demonstrates the essential importance of having mentors and training facilitators who are themselves trans women with relevant skills and competences to support others with due regard for their needs related to the employment sector.

## GOOD PRACTICE NO. 3

### “CREANDO”, A PROJECT FROM CANARY ISLANDS

#### Project Context:

From 2017-2019 Gamá, an LGTBI organization in the Canary Islands, developed a project with the objective to aid unemployed LGTB people from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. The project was funded by the Social Cohesion and Equality Department of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria City Council under the Programme to Promote the Employment and Integration of LGTB people.

#### Project Description:

Gamá launched a self-employment initiative in the Canary Islands, called “Creando” (Creating), and organized an internship program for vulnerable trans women. After detecting that the group facing the most severe difficulties regarding labour market integration were older trans women, the initiative selected four trans women aged 45 to 65 who had worked or were still working as sex workers. They had poor support networks, no training or professional experience, and had not been employed. The internship provided them with an opportunity to gain skills and work experience in dressmaking.

#### Project Objectives:

The general objective of the project was to promote and facilitate a self-employment initiative among highly vulnerable trans women.

The project’s specific objectives were:

1. To train the group of beneficiaries in dressmaking.
2. To educate beneficiaries on self-employment.

#### Project Timeline:

September 2017 - December 2019

**Project Financing:**

Public funding for this project was granted on a competitive basis by the Department of Social Cohesion and Equality of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria City Council in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

**Project Implementation:**

In 2017 the dressmaking internship took place via an external company located in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. In 2018 the project took place at the headquarters of Gamá association, where a room was fitted for the participants' needs and equipped with all the basic machinery needed (i.e. sewing machines, irons, tables, lighting, etc.).

Three participants received a monthly stipend and transport allowance throughout the project. Participants came to the workshop from 10am to 2pm each workday, and received additional training in customer service, design, social skills and administrative tasks. The project also aided the participants in selling the goods they created in order to generate income and develop their practical skills for sustainable self-employment.

After the dressmaking internship for the four trans women concluded, three of them asked for the training to be extended for an additional six months (the fourth woman got a separate job contract elsewhere). For their convenience, one of the rooms in the main office of Gamá was turned into a sewing workshop called "Transmano" with basic machinery and materials available for the participants. Participants received a monthly stipend for their work. They also learned business-related skills. Their mentors also cooperated with social workers operating as employment counselors in post-project follow-up processes. There was also a coordinating technical team from the organisation Gamá composed of an administrative staff person, a psychologist, a journalist and a social worker.

During the third year of the project, 2019, two of the three women continued to participate in the program. The other two participants successfully joined the workforce through an employment project offered by another local organization.

## Results, impacts and barriers:

Upon concluding their participation in the project, all four of the women received a certification of completion, acquired professional skills, and utilized the internship as an opportunity to practice such skills linked to employment.

The skills gained throughout the project included:

- responsibility
- commitment
- teamwork
- conflict resolution
- rules
- routine

Other results of the project were participants' growing self-esteem and improved personal relationships.

Of course, this project did not come without barriers and challenges:

1. Limited economic, technical and infrastructural resources of the organization.
2. Lack of experience: Gamá is not an organisation specialised in employment and this project was the first of its kind which meant the entire process was a constant learning experience for the organization.
3. Profile of the participants: they had known each other for several decades, and had unresolved conflicts. As a result, group cohesion, non-competitive behaviour, mutual respect and conflict resolution were constantly at play throughout the project.
4. Hiring and benefits scheme: Gamá did not have the resources to hire a third party.

## Why we consider this a good practice:

The goal of the project was to provide workplace skills to the participating trans women, so that they might use them in self-employment or any other workplace environment.

One of the primary aims of the project was to create an inclusive work culture that was espe-

cially empowering for the participants. All of the staff working with the participants were either experts or were trained on trans issues to enhance empowerment.

Although some details of this practice are very specific, the underlying idea of the project is transferable: supporting trans women in gaining professional skills and the knowledge they need to find and maintain steady employment.

The project could be replicated in many different ways across a variety of contexts. Internships such as the one offered in this project could be administered through local or state government sources, particularly in regions where political actors support creating trans-inclusive and equal employment labour policies. Similar projects may be conducted by companies of different size, creating opportunities for trans women in their own sectors. Civil society actors, e.g. LGBTI+ or women's rights organisations might also be involved.

## GOOD PRACTICE NO. 4

### **“TRANSOCUPACIÓ”, A SOCIAL AND LABOUR INCLUSION PROGRAMME FROM BARCELONA**

#### **Project Context:**

In the interest of drawing attention to the prevalent exclusion and discrimination facing trans people in the labour market, Barcelona City Council published a report entitled Guia Translab: Diagnòstic de la situació laboral de les persones trans a la ciutat de Barcelona (“Translab Guide: A Diagnosis of the Labour Situation of Trans People in the City of Barcelona”). The reports main conclusions were that diversity within a company improves talent retention and inclusivity increases productivity. Following the report, the program called “TransOcupació” was developed by Barcelona Activa, a public organization responsible for promoting economic policy and local development.

#### **Project Description:**

“TransOcupació” is a social and labour inclusion programme for trans people from the city of Barcelona who want to join the labour market and/or improve their employability.

#### **Project Objectives:**

“TransOcupació” is an initiative that seeks to provide individualized responses to the barriers unemployed trans people encounter when trying to join the labour market.

The project’s objectives are:

1. Enhancing participants’ employability and autonomy.
2. Responding to the added difficulties trans people encounter when job-seeking.
3. Facilitating access to the labour market through suitable resources and job-seeking processes.
4. Raising awareness in companies of the problems trans people face (e.g. discrimination).
5. Promoting the workplace inclusion of trans people.



**Project Timeline:**

September 2019 - June 2020

**Project Financing:**

The programme was funded by the Department of Laws for Citizens, Culture, Participation and Transparency of the Barcelona City Council granted to Barcelona Activa. The funding scheme includes both the “TransOcupació” program and the setting up of a Technical Office to manage the ABITS Employment Plan, a comprehensive model to improve the employability of sex workers from the city of Barcelona.

The budget for this program was €99,000.

**Project Implementation:**

As an integral part of the programme, individualized action plans were created to meet the specific needs of each participant. These were explored by way of an initial interview and making a professional diagnosis. The individualized itinerary was flexible and adapted to the needs of individual program participants. Action plans included the following elements:

1. Gaining cross-disciplinary skills.
2. Guidance in job-seeking.
3. Technical trainings.
4. Professional intermediation.
5. Follow-up of the professional integration to secure maintaining the job.

The programme promoted a close working connection between the technical staff member and the participants. It thus fostered referrals to local resources, such as programmes and services provided by Barcelona Activa, and it worked with companies to raise their awareness and encouraged them to include trans people among their staff.

**Results, impacts and barriers:**

Between 2013 and 2015, 25 of the 36 trans people involved in the programme completed every step of the itinerary set out. A new phase of the programme was realized in 2019.

The programme's implementation raised several considerations. These fall into three categories:

## **1. Employability Improvement Process**

### **Difficulties**

- Deep feelings of psychological vulnerability, fear and confusion that trans people may have, especially during the initial phases of their transition (the person may not feel prepared to work on professional integration).
- Need for a change in professional direction.
- Differences between name and documents, e.g. documents related to training and work experience.

### **Related Challenges and Opportunities**

- Working with a tutor, personalised accompaniment.
- Technical team trained in trans issues and perspectives.
- Detailed diagnosis required at the initial stage of working with the client, and the development of a work plan adapted to their situation.
- Work based on skills.
- If a change in direction is required, aspects such as age, gender, passing, skills level and educational background must be considered.
- Key skills are: self-esteem, empowerment, assertiveness, stress management, communication skills.

## **2. Working with Companies and Professional Inclusion**

### **Difficulties**

- Deeply rooted gender stereotypes
- Prejudices
- Intermediation needs
- Cases in which the profession clashes with major gender stereotypes

## Related Challenges & Opportunities

- Focus on the requirements of the workplace, skills and competences
- Working with companies to eliminate stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination
- Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility
- Promoting the social clauses in public hiring to foster the incorporation of trans people
- Personalised follow-up of workplace inclusion
- Considering entrepreneurship outcomes

### 3. Participation in the Programme

#### Difficulties

- Some trans people do not have the motivation to participate in programmes, or are afraid of approaching them.

#### Related Challenges & Opportunities

- Dissemination of the programme as one addressed to trans people, promoting connections between public administration / organizations and the trans community.

#### Why we consider this a good practice:

A key element to the success of this program is that each participant is assigned a staff member specifically trained in trans labour issues who can provide personalised support.

The project also demonstrated that while working with companies must include raising awareness about the inclusion of trans people into their workforce, companies and project coordinators must also be encouraged to undertake personalised follow-up activities and ensure effectiveness.

This programme is transferable to those organisations in the public, private and third sectors that are interested in providing comprehensive programs assisting trans people's inclusion into the labour market.

## GOOD PRACTICE NO. 5

### **“THEY CAN BE ANYTHING?”: A RESEARCH ON EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBTQI PEOPLE, HUNGARY**

*“This is where the queer and non-queer world meet on a daily basis.”*

#### **Project Context:**

A study published in 2015 by Háttér Society (the largest and oldest currently operating LGBTQI organization in Hungary) on the social exclusion of transgender people in Hungary, summarising the relevant results of the LGBT Survey 2010 contains data on the workplace and employment discrimination of trans people. Of the 2,755 respondents who answered employment-related questions, 166 were trans people, and they represented a wide range of professions from carpenters to doctors, project managers and shop assistants.

The study found big differences between the responses provided by trans people and all responses taken together. For example, more than twice as many trans respondents were unemployed (12%) than LGB people (5%). After these results, Háttér decided to work on a new, more qualitative focused research in 2015.

#### **Project Description:**

Between June 2015 and July 2016, Háttér Society conducted a new research project entitled “Stories beyond the data: Documentation of discrimination in the field of employment.” The workplace is a meeting point: one of the major shared spaces of LGBTI+ and heterosexual and cisgender people. Háttér wanted to map the situation of LGBTI+ people at work, as well as existing policies that have an impact on their lives.

#### **Project Objectives:**

The objective of the project was to supplement the existing (mostly quantitative) data with the results of new, primarily qualitative research.

The purpose of conducting the research was twofold:

1. First, the researchers wanted to map problems with regards to the employment discrimination of LGBTI+ people; that is, to reveal the mistreatment of a group of people in an environment that takes up a significant proportion of the life of adults.
2. Second, the researchers wanted to map solutions; that is, to expose how workplaces can be inclusive, treating LGBTI+ people as fully equal members of society. The key objective of the research is to form the basis of future projects aimed at eliminating the employment discrimination of LGBTI+ people.

### **Project Financing:**

The research project was implemented with the support of ILGA-Europe within its Documentation and Advocacy Fund.

### **Project implementation:**

During the fieldwork, several longer interviews were made with trans people on their work experiences. Later, these interviews were published in a separate volume (“Faces of exclusion: the labour and workplace discrimination of trans people”).

Researchers also made special effort to reach out to the highest possible number of trans respondents regarding the filling of an online survey. Háttér contacted Transvanilla, a Hungarian trans organization to ask for their help in distributing the survey.

The published research maintains a substantial trans-specific component. The report contains two trans-specific chapters as well, entitled: “Transgender Employees - Transition - Gender Expression” and “Good Practices and Minimum Standards for Trans-Inclusive Treatment at the Workplace.”

### **Results, impacts and barriers:**

Two chapters of the report (one analysing interviews with non-LGBTI+ colleagues and one on the results of an online survey filled by human resources personnel) explore how both colleagues of Hungarian LGBTI+ people and Hungarian HR personnel (the people who mediate between employers and employees) often do not recognize discrimination and / or do not

know the legislation prohibiting workplace discrimination properly. This is especially true for HR professionals when they were asked about discrimination based on gender identity.

### **Why we consider this project a good practice:**

The principle of the project is connected to all of the indicators, as the research report identified many problems related to the employment discrimination of LGBT+ and trans people, and important key findings regarding the possible solutions with thorough recommendations about how workplaces can be truly inclusive.

The final publication contains reference to trans-focused analysis: results are often compared with reference to LGB and trans people.

## GOOD PRACTICE NO. 6

### **"WEAREHERE": WORKSHOP SERIES, CONFERENCE, TRAININGS AND A PUBLICATION FOR HR PROFESSIONALS ABOUT LGBTI+ EMPLOYEES IN HUNGARY**

#### **Project Context:**

Between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019 Háttér Society, the Hungarian LGBT Alliance, the Rainbow Mission Foundation and Szimpozion Association carried out a joint project entitled *WeAreHere: Improving the social acceptance of LGBTQI People in Hungary via community empowerment and awareness raising*.

Among other tasks, Háttér Society carried out different activities connected to the labour market situation of LGBTI+ people, which included the training of HR personnel at companies, organizing sensitizing workshops at companies and a campaign promoting workplace inclusion.

#### **Project Description:**

In the frame of this project in 2019, cooperating with the [Hungarian Employers' Forum on Equal Opportunities \(MEF\)](#), Háttér Society held seven workshops for Human Resources professionals from mostly multinational companies but also including publicly owned companies.

Háttér was also the co-organizer of MEF's annual conference taking place on [2nd October 2019](#). During the workshops and the conference Háttér took special care to always include trans people's workplace and employment experiences, involved a trans expert who took part in training Human Resources professionals, and employed trans people at the "Living Library" session as part of the conference, where participants could have discussions with LGBTI+ employees. The video interviews made for the campaign promoting workplace inclusion also include trans employees.

#### **Project Objectives:**

A major objective of the workshops, training, conference and campaign undertaken by Háttér Society was to involve as many companies as possible and raise their awareness, competence and commitment to creating LGBTI and trans inclusive workplaces, and to provide tools for ongoing use.

## Project Financing:

The *WeAreHere* project was funded by the European Commission.

## Project implementation:

The workshops, training and online campaign were implemented in 2019. Háttér also made print materials to be used in other events beyond the project, when companies tend to communicate more on LGBTI+ inclusion. Posters and flyers containing information on coming out at work, workplace discrimination and the positive role colleagues can play were produced.

The main themes of the workshops held between January and September 2019 were:

- Why should we think about LGBTQI employees and the work environment?
- Hungarian and international research results on workplace discrimination and fostering equal opportunities.
- Mapping problems: the situation of LGBTQI employees.
- Workplace discrimination and its impact on productivity.
- Minority stress.
- Barriers to companies' work supporting diversity.
- Unconscious bias, explicit and implicit prejudice.
- From unconscious bias to workplace harassment.
- Equal treatment and equal opportunities.
- Legal background: the Equal Treatment Act, partnership, benefits, transition, etc.
- What is an inclusive workplace environment like?
- Developing an action plan: thinking about what can be realized at our company. Concrete steps, possible action
- Tasks and experiences of human resources professionals (related to LGB and T employees).
- Creating and running LGBTQI + allies support groups at work.
- PR and the company image: inclusive workplaces.

As human resources professionals expressed their need, Háttér and MEF also issued a publication entitled [“Why And How to Create LGBTQI-Inclusive Workplaces”](#).



## Results, impacts and barriers:

The series of activities managed to deepen Háltér's cooperation with companies, and as a result, several workplace training programmes were also held in 2019 and 2020: some specifically for human resources professionals, some for employees in general, and some for LGBTI+ allies employee group members.

Barriers:

- › Committed HR professionals cannot always persuade company leaders about the importance of inclusivity and new diversity and inclusion or anti-harassment policies.
- › Some companies are held back by homophobic and transphobic government declarations.
- › It is difficult to get on companies that have not yet worked extensively on diversity and inclusion in board.

## Why we consider this project a good practice:

As the workshops and other activities had the broad but profound aim of enhancing the labour inclusion of LGBTI+ and trans people, the principle of the project is connected to all of the indicators listed in the 'Introduction' section above. The project was built on direct contact with human resources professionals, raising their legal and social awareness and sensitizing them to the needs of LGBTQI employees in many different ways.

Although parts of the project could be geographical context dependent, the main ideas behind cooperating with companies and organizing workshops (partly to create space for mutual exchange) and training as well as the implementation scheme is generally applicable, and therefore transferable.

## GOOD PRACTICE NO. 7

### THE DUBLIN BUS WORKPLACE GENDER TRANSITION POLICY AND GUIDELINES

#### **Project Context:**

Dublin Bus, as part of its Equality, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Strategy, is committed to managing a workplace that integrates, benefits from, and achieves equality for its diverse employees, as well as promoting an inclusive workplace that celebrates and supports diversity.

#### **Project Description:**

As part of its Equality, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Strategy, Dublin Bus launched its Workplace Gender Transition Policy and Guidelines. They include recommendations for employees, managers and the Human Resources Department on how to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for employees transitioning.

Dublin Bus has a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Office and provides a free and confidential counselling service, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), for all employees. As one of the largest employers in Ireland with over 3,500 employees and the largest transport company, Dublin Bus is considered to be one of the most progressive for inclusivity and supporting diversity among its workforce. Its work to date in this area has been put forward as a case study for best practice in relation to workplace diversity by the European Commission in Europe, and the IMI/CIPD in Ireland.

#### **Project Objectives:**

The gender transition guidelines were created to help foster dialogue and understanding of trans issues in the workplace and to underpin Dublin Bus's position as an employer committed to ensuring a workplace that celebrates and supports a workplace of diversity and equality. They include recommendations for employees, managers and Human Resources on how to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for employees transitioning in Dublin Bus.

Dublin Bus resources for employees and managers:

- › Job-Related Planning for a Gender Transition (see [Workplace Gender Transition Policy and Guidelines](#), Appendix A).
- › Human Resources representatives.
- › CIÉ (Irish Transport System) Welfare Scheme.
- › Occupational health nurse or medical employees within CIÉ.
- › Medical Department.
- › Employee Assistance Program.

Resources used to create this project included consultation internally with LGBT staff, the expertise of human resources staff, and the Dublin Bus leadership team.

### **Project Implementation:**

The Policy and Guidelines provide advice for both employees and managers/Human Resources on how trans employees can be supported through their transition and included in the workplace.

- › A step-by-step Job-Related Planning for a Gender Transition is provided for drafting and executing a plan for an on-the-job transition.
- › Workplace supports for trans employees, such as human resources representatives, occupational health nurse or medical employees within CIÉ Medical Department, the CIÉ Welfare Scheme, and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) are explicitly made inclusive of transgender employees.
- › In addition, the document is a resource for peers and colleagues of trans employees to promote an inclusive pronoun, e.g. guidance on correct pronoun usage, etc.

### **Results, impacts and barriers:**

The Policy and Guidelines increased engagement and dialogue between employees, the company and the human resources department. Trans employees have been empowered by the policy to come out in the workplace, while managers have been able to more confidently support their trans employees.

It has influenced the future business strategy through the consideration of opportunities for trans inclusion, e.g. to include gender neutral bathrooms in any buildings being constructed

going forward. As this was a new policy, Dublin Bus did not have internal expertise on trans issues. This challenge was addressed by engaging externally with TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland). However as a result of the policy, the fact that trans employees have been able to come out within the company and engage with the human resources department there is now a greater level of internal expertise available.

### **Why we consider this project a good practice:**

This practice primarily connected to the indicator support through transitioning as a part of the Equality, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Strategy, what targeted to make a more extensive change at Dublin Bus. It shifted perceptions of Dublin Bus within the company. As a public transport organisation, a semi-state company, and a male-dominated workplace it would have been seen as slow to change. However, the process showed the company that they can be at the cutting edge of change, and demonstrated an openness to change within the organisation. Other organisations might be seen in similar terms, or fear that there will be a backlash to trans inclusion. For Dublin Bus it was the opposite, so one transferable lesson might be: Don't be afraid, and that projects like this can promote positive dialogue both internally and externally.

## GOOD PRACTICE NO. 8

### GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION POLICY FOR RCSI STAFF AND STUDENTS IN IRELAND

#### Project Context:

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following RCSI (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland) policies along with any other policies applicable to the employee:

- › [Equal Opportunities Policy](#)
- › [Dignity at Work Policy](#)
- › [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)

This document constitutes the current Gender Expression and Gender Identity Policy of the RCSI Dublin, published in conformity with the requirements of the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, the Equal Status Acts 2000-2015, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, and the Gender Recognition Act 2015.

The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and the Equal Status Act 2000-2015 prohibit direct and indirect discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and victimisation in relation to nine equality grounds including gender. The gender ground protects transgender persons from sex discrimination, that is, discrimination arising from gender identity and gender expression.

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 introduced the concept of the Public Sector Duty, an obligation on public sector bodies, in the performance of its functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and to protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

The Gender Recognition Act 2015 provides a process enabling transgender people to achieve full legal recognition of their preferred gender and allows for the acquisition of a new birth certificate that reflects this change. It allows all individuals over the age of 18 to self-declare their own gender identity.

## **Project Description:**

This policy sets forth guidelines to address the needs of transgender and gender non-conforming employees and clarifies how the law should be implemented in situations where questions may arise about how to protect the legal rights or safety of such employees. This policy does not anticipate every situation that might occur with respect to employees, and the needs of each transgender employee must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, the goal is to ensure the safety, comfort, and healthy development of trans employees while maximising workplace integration and minimising stigmatisation.

## **Project Objectives:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance to staff and managers and to ensure staff feel supported at RCSI and that transphobia is prevented, while ensuring RCSI remains compliant with legislation.

## **Project Financing:**

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a foundational principle of RCSI's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. Prior to launching the Gender Identity and Expression Policy, an EDI Unit was established (July 2017) to support the development and adoption of the policy. To raise awareness and support, a Staff Pride Network was launched in January 2018. A representative from the Senior Management Team acts as the Pride Network Champion.

## **Project Implementation:**

The Policy provides guidance for staff and management on:

- › Providing education and training for staff to ensure the implementation of the Policy (e.g. annual mandatory unconscious bias training).
- › Confidentiality and privacy of a trans employee's trans status.
- › Rights and procedures regarding change of name and pronouns on official forms.
- › Procedures for handling complaints (e.g. harassment, forced outing, etc.).
- › A checklist of steps to be taken as part of coming out at work, for both employees and RCSI staff supporting an employee or colleague when transitioning at work (including social, legal and medical transition).
- › A review of the policy and its impact on transgender staff and students every 3 years.

## **Results, impacts and barriers:**

Since Launching the Gender Identity and Expression Policy, RCSI has held more than 25 Trans 101 trainings reaching 300+ staff and students, as well as hosted TENI's pre-Pride parade parties in 2018 and 2019 with more than 400 attendees supported by 40 RCSI staff and student volunteers (cumulatively). To date, one staff member has transitioned at work.

After the launch of the policy, sustained awareness and visibility is important, but can be challenging. In addition to sharing the policy online, active dissemination, such as during new staff induction activities can be helpful.

Awareness of the policy and take-up of related training and events among RCSI Staff and Students can be tracked in annual consultation (e.g. surveys and focus groups).

To have an effective Gender Identity and Expression Policy, complementary "Trans 101" training for staff and students have been essential. Feedback on training as well as additional opportunities for staff and student consultation helps ensure that supports remain fit-for-purpose. Training was initially provided to front line staff (porters, security, estates, cleaners, library services, student services, communications, IT and human resources). Training was then expanded to be open to all staff.

## **Why we consider this project a good practice:**

This project is a great step in order to create and also implement trans inclusive policies on a daily basis at the workplace. Together with its strategy, the training is feasible to make a wide impact on the workplace culture, and start to make a real (even if slow) change. Therefore this practice complies with all of the indicators. It is also easily transferable in the European context, particularly for multinational or bigger companies.

## GOOD PRACTICE NO. 9

### TRANS\* JOB MENTORING IN GERMANY

#### Project Context:

Trans people experiences exclusion from the labour market in large scale despite their often higher than average job qualifications. This affects the period of training and qualification, career entry, promotion prospects as well as the entire period of the transition. The Trans\* Job Mentoring seeks to counteract this process and thus wants to enhance career opportunities for trans persons. The US human rights movement developed the method of mentoring as an alternative draft to the so called “old boys networks”. Those networks had a massive impetus on career opportunities in individual job biographies, whereas those networks were inaccessible for marginalized people.

#### Project Description:

Following already implemented mentoring programs in administration and companies that are part of the German Chamber of Commerce (IHK), the pilot project Trans\* Job Mentoring was carried out over a period of 15 month in Berlin. It's aimed at becoming a model for similar projects in other parts of Germany. The program is a cooperation of Sonntags Club e.V. and TransInterQueer e.V.

Mentoring is an approved method of human resources development to improve the chances in the labour market and in social life for structurally disadvantaged groups. The method is based on the bond of a – usually younger – junior employee with a more experienced person regarding career goals who also has distinct social skills. As an instrument of human resources development, mentoring describes the practice of passing on professional competence and know-how from a more experienced mentor to a less experienced person. It aims at supporting the “mentees” in their personal and professional development. Mentoring takes a look at the fields of training, career, reconcilability of family and job, and also personal development. Trans\* Job Mentoring also broaches all topics around transition and the labour market.

Participants in the project: 12 mentees and 12 mentors, project staff (8 people) of Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer, 1 external consultant from Helmholtz Association of German Research Centers e.V.



**Project Objectives:**

Supporting trans people concerning access and continuance in the labour market as well as career opportunities. Individual support through experienced mentors with employment challenges and networking.

**Project Timeline:**

May 2015 – Aug 2016

**Project Financing:**

Funded by Magnus Hirschfeld Foundation.

**Project Implementation:**

Usually mentoring happens within an organisation. In this case Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer acted as mediators to find the matching mentors for the mentees who applied individually for the mentoring program. It was essential to the project that the project staff at Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer could draw from a broad network of potential mentors from different professional fields. The goals each of the applicants wanted to achieve at the end of the project were very different: getting an apprenticeship in a craftsmanship, starting a PhD, changing the working sector or the field of work within the same industry. They aimed at working in very different fields like health care, computer science or academia.

**Steps:**

Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer wrote a call for applications and then reviewed the incoming applications. Then they tried to find suitable mentors in regard to working area and experiences. For all applications somebody could be found. Before the mentoring started, a workshop was held to prepare the mentors for the task. After that mentees and mentors met to find out if they were a match.

After that the project was implemented along the following clusters:

- › Frequent meetings between mentee and mentor;

- › 4 mentee meetings;
- › 3 job application workshops;
- › Intermediate and final evaluation.

The project team decided on 12 mentees, contrary to the 10 places the program had planned to provide. To ensure a binding collaboration in the program from both sides, the following measures were taken:

- › a daylong kick-off workshop for the mentees to get to know each other, check on the expectations, getting accustomed with the mentoring from the perspective of a mentee;
- › the mentees who were not able to participate in the kick-off meeting got offered one-on-one interviews with members of the project team;
- › as an outcome of the meeting or the interviews the mentees signed a mentee-contract;
- › a kick-off workshop (half day) for the mentors to get to know each other, check on the expectations, getting accustomed with the mentoring from the perspective of a mentor.

The mentees and other interested trans people attended the three job application workshops. They worked out a job application, did exercises in self-presentation and held a fictional job interview.

### **Results, impacts and barriers:**

Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer were very happy to see that many mentees reached the goals they had set together with their mentors. The program worked really well to bring people into education, work and new industries, because the mentors knew the task and their field really well. In some cases long-term support relationships have been established that still exist years after the mentoring program officially ended.

Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer have learned in the process that, to match mentor and mentee, it is not only important to have a mentor from the relevant field of work, but also a shared perspective on certain topics (academical vs. holistic approach in health care for example) and a general liking for each other. If the matching fits, a lot can be created. Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer were surprised by the good effects.

Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer benefitted from their broad network to acquire different mentors which they think is essential for running a mentoring project.

A crucial aspect for the participation of each mentee was the review of expectations that Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer did previous to the mentees entry to the program. Some of the mentees expectations were too ambitious and needed a reframing of what was actually achievable within the framework of the mentoring program.

Some of the mentors were trans, other mentors were cis. Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer agree that for the cis persons it is crucial to not only be sensitized but to understand themselves clearly as an ally to trans people.

After evaluating the project Sonntags Club and TransInterQueer agreed that better results could have been achieved if the mentoring project would have been embedded into an overall concept. For some of the places the mentees wanted to enter, further training in sensitization about trans people would have been recommended.

### **Why we consider this a good practice:**

It supported the participating trans people in reaching their goals. It created long lasting support relationships. One mentor-mentee pair is still meeting in 2020. In the evaluation of the program the participating trans persons pointed out a shift in their perspective. Prior to entering the mentoring program they thought of their transness as a disadvantage that needed to make up for. But during the mentoring they realized that transitioning equipped them with a set of skills that is helpful for their careers: navigating the medical and law system helped them develop endurance, assertiveness or persistence. As an effect of the mentoring program they became more self-confident in general.



# Glossary

## **Cisgender**

A person whose gender identity and gender expression is aligned with the sex assigned at birth. The term cisgender acknowledges that everyone has a gender identity (i.e. a non-trans identity is not presented as normal or natural which stigmatises a trans identity as abnormal or unnatural).

## **Gender expression**

The external manifestation of a person's gender identity. Gender can be expressed through mannerisms, interests, physical characteristics, social interactions and speech patterns.

## **Gender identity**

Refers to a person's deeply-felt identification as male, female, or some other gender. This may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth.

## **Intersectional perspective**

Intersectionality refers to a way of seeing how people's experiences of overlapping identities, including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, etc., impact the way they experience oppression and discrimination.

## **Non binary**

An umbrella term for gender identities that fall outside the gender binary of male or female. This includes individuals whose gender identity is neither exclusively male nor female, a combination of male and female or between or beyond genders. Similar to the usage of transgender, people under the non-binary umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms (E.g., Androgynous, Gender Fluid, Genderqueer, Gender variant).

## **Sex**

The designation of a person at birth as male or female based on their anatomy (genitalia and/or reproductive organs) or chromosomes and/or hormones.

The phrase "sex assigned at birth" (replacing "biological sex") is a more accurate and respectful way to acknowledge the process of sex assignation that occurs at birth through a perfunctory look at external anatomy. It might not be possible in all cases (e.g. intersex) to identify an indi-

vidual as male or female at birth. For trans people, assigned sex may differ considerably from gender identity (see definition of Transgender).

### **Sexism**

Sexism is prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender. Sexism can affect anyone, but it primarily affects women and girls.

### **Sex work**

Sex work is the exchange of sexual services for financial or other material compensation. Sex work is an umbrella term covering all types of sexual services, for example escort services, dominant services, webcam services, sugaring, pornography, erotic dancing, etc.

### **Sexual orientation**

Refers to a person's physical, emotional or romantic attraction to another person. Sexual orientation is distinct from sex, gender identity and gender expression. Transgender people may identify as lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual, queer or asexual.

### **Transition**

A process through which some transgender people begin to outwardly live as the gender with which they identify, rather than the one assigned at birth. Transition might include social, physical or legal changes such as coming out to family, friends, co-workers and others; changing one's appearance; changing one's name, pronoun and sex designation on legal documents (e.g. driving licence or passport); and medical intervention (e.g. through hormones or surgery).

### **Trans/gender**

Refers to a person whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. This term can include diverse gender identities.

Not all individuals with identities that are considered part of the transgender umbrella will refer to themselves as transgender. For some, this may be because they identify with a particular term (such as transsexual or genderqueer) which they feel more precisely describes their identity. Others may feel that their experience is a medical or temporary condition and not an identity (for example they feel they have gender identity disorder but are not transgender).

The use of transgender or trans as an umbrella term is currently the most inclusive and respectful term to describe diverse identities. However, we acknowledge and respect each individual's right to self-identify as they choose.

**Trans man**

A person who was assigned female at birth but who lives as a man or identifies as male. Some trans men make physical changes through hormones or surgery; others do not.

Trans man is sometimes used interchangeably with FTM (female-to-male). However, some trans men don't think of themselves as having transitioned from female to male (i.e. because they always felt male). Some people prefer to be referred to as men rather than trans men while others will refer to themselves as men of transgender experience.

**Trans woman**

A person who was assigned male at birth but who lives as a woman or identifies as female. Some trans women make physical changes through hormones or surgery; others do not.

Trans woman is sometimes used interchangeably with MTF (male-to-female). However, some trans women don't think of themselves as having transitioned from male to female (i.e. because they always felt female). Some people prefer to be referred to as women rather than trans women while others may refer to themselves as women of transgender experience.



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