

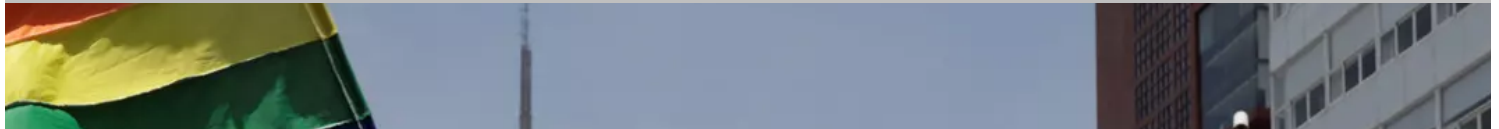


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LGBTI INCLUSION

LGBTIQ people have been hit hard by COVID-19. Here's how we can provide support

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Tiernan Madorno

Business Program Manager and Worldwide Pride Co-Director, Microsoft

Elise Colomer-Cheadle

Director of Corporate Engagement, OutRight Action International

Salah Hussein

Associate Director, Human Rights, BSR

- **The world's LGBTIQ communities have been hit disproportionately hard by the COVID-19 crisis.**
- **A new emergency fund has been launched in response to the pandemic's impacts on LGBTIQ people.**
- **Here are the details - and how companies can help.**

In 2019, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) communities around the world filled city streets for LGBTIQ Pride. They were celebrating the incredible – though incomplete – progress achieved in reclaiming the equal rights of LGBTIQ people since the Stonewall Riots, 50 years previously.

In stark contrast, this year's Pride festivities were canceled or moved to virtual platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and **LGBTIQ communities, like other vulnerable groups, have been hit hard by the crisis.** Despite the milestones achieved and celebrated during Pride, it is critical to recognize that **LGBTIQ communities around the world remain as vulnerable as ever.**

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- [Great Reset: Why LGBT+ inclusion is the secret to cities' post-pandemic success](#)
 - [3 ways businesses can protect LGBTIQ rights in the face of COVID-19](#)
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COVID-19 has exposed many of the structural and systemic issues disproportionately impacting marginalized populations, including people of colour, LGBTIQ people, older people, refugees, migrants and more, who have been hit hardest by both coronavirus and the associated social distancing measures. The LGBTIQ community, for example, has suffered from limited access to and de-prioritization of healthcare services, stigma and discrimination, violence and abuse, and a decrease in access to work during this crisis, [as highlighted by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#). These barriers existed prior to the pandemic, but were quickly exacerbated as LGBTIQ people sought protections and support in what has amounted to a full-blown humanitarian crisis for our communities.

In response to the severe impact of COVID-19 on LGBTIQ communities around the world, and the inequalities it has exposed, the [Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality \(PGLE\)](#), a collaborative initiative of [BSR](#) in partnership with the World Economic Forum (WEF) and UN Human Rights, along with our NGO partner [OutRight Action International](#), launched the [COVID-19 Global LGBTIQ Emergency Fund](#). Established by OutRight with support from founding partner Microsoft, the Fund supports LGBTIQ organizations and groups on the frontlines of the pandemic in the global South, addressing a range of humanitarian needs such as emergency food and/or shelter, access to safe and competent healthcare, safety and security, and financial stability.

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Throughout Pride Month and beyond, the Fund will continue to mobilize private sector support, giving companies, including WEF members, an opportunity to reallocate resources in light of cancelled or streamlined Pride events, and corporate commitments to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, including LGBTIQ and racial justice. Prioritizing financial support to diverse, global LGBTIQ communities and advocating with and on their behalves are concrete steps that the business community can take to empower LGBTIQ movement leaders in the countries in which companies operate, which can ultimately ensure the survival and long-term viability of local partners leading grassroots efforts to tackle discrimination against LGBTIQ people. Such action is in line with the principles outlined in the [UN Standards of Conduct for Business Tackling Discrimination Against LGBTI People \(the UN Standards\)](#), which established the framework for PGLÉ's activities. Companies interested in becoming supporters of the UN Standards can [visit the PGLÉ website to learn more](#).

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The private sector currently has a unique opportunity to drive impactful change for LGBTIQ people around the world, particularly during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. We have an opportunity to mobilize a different kind of Pride campaign this year, one focused on fulfilling the vision of the UN Standards and providing essential financial support at a time where LGBTIQ communities and nonprofits are facing an acute threat to their health and well-being. For millions, Pride has always been a celebration of survival from persecution and discrimination. This year, the sentiment is even more urgent, and we all must come together to strengthen our collective commitment and act towards a more inclusive, tolerant and supportive world for all.

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