

REPORT

MAPPING OF THE LGBTIQ AND  
SOGIESC-INCLUSIVE STUDIES  
USING FEMINIST  
PARTICIPATORY APPROACH  
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



MARIO PRAJNA PRATAMA, FARAH AFRIANI  
PUBLISHED BY ASEAN SOGIE CAUCUS

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ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) is a network of human rights activists from Southeast Asia that dynamically engages diverse actors to collectively advocate for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer people, and gender-diverse persons in Southeast Asia. Its mission is to empower, develop capacities, and expand spaces for leadership of LGBTIQ and gender-diverse persons in defending their human rights.

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# Foreword

Advancing the human rights of persons of diverse yet maligned sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC) has always been a tall order. This requires a complex set of strategies aimed at changing norms and culture, creating empowering spaces for queer persons, reforming laws or policies, and generally transforming all social institutions that regulate lives and well-being. Integral in all change strategies is the need for reliable data and sound analyses to affect change.

Over the years, we have witnessed a growth of literature tackling the issues of violence and discrimination on the basis of SOGIESC. Fueled by the work of allies within the academe, civil society, and media, among others, there is cultivated interest to look at SOGIESC as a legitimate unit of analysis and how this impacts lives and social relations. Various academic and NGO reports tackled themes of gender-based violence, domestic violence, economic marginalization, among others, and how these interplay with a person's SOGIESC. We welcome this growth in literature as these widen and deepen the evidence base to inform our activism work.

However, part of the process requires empowering rights-holders and marginalized groups to make meaning of their lives and to define the desires for change. This is where a feminist participatory action research (FPAR) plays a key role. FPAR transforms maligned groups or communities into either agents or subjects of meaning-making and shifts their role from being merely sources of data into generators and co-owners of knowledge. FPAR offers a radically empowering potential to reposition queer folks from victims to agents, from objects of an expert's gaze into experts defining their own lives and being.

**RYAN SILVERIO**

Executive Director  
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# Introduction

Over a decade ago, South East Asia hosted a distinguished group of international human rights experts to outline a set of principles which addresses a broad range of human rights standards and their application in the context of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual characteristics. This came to be known as the Yogyakarta Principles. They promised a different future where all people who are born free and equal in dignity and rights can fulfill that precious birthright.

Unfortunately, the situation of LGBTIQ people in the Region itself remains challenging. The criminalization of homosexuality and transgender persons based on gender identity is a persistent reality in the region, while legal redress mechanisms for discrimination based on SOGIESC are absent. Harmful cultural norms and practices rooted in patriarchy and heteronormativity ideologies are rapidly proliferating, as shown in Indonesia and Malaysia. Conservative or extremist views of state and non-state actors deeply influence government policies.

In their report 'Revealing the Rainbow: The Human Rights Situation of Southeast Asia's LGBTIQ Communities and Their Defenders' (2018), Destination Justice recommends that LGBTIQ communities at the local and national levels collaborate with competent authorities to foster legal and policy change. It also suggests that civil societies and human rights defenders work at all levels, including internationally and regionally, using UN and ASEAN mechanisms. Also highlighted in the concluding recommendations is that although South-east Asian countries and the LGBTIQ communities living and operating within these countries are highly diverse, Destination Justice is convinced that to achieve recognition, equality, and non-discrimination, both the South East Asian governments and the LGBTIQ communities should work together and in complementarity at the local, national, regional, and international levels.

It is important for the LGBTIQ movement in Southeast Asia to create an inclusive learning system to share and spread inherent knowledge. However, to consider LGBTIQ oppression and its complexity rooted in patriarchal and cis-heteronormativity ideologies, it is essential to choose an approach wisely. It should avoid bias, and the LGBTIQ communities' voices should be prioritized.

Among many ways of data collection, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus believes that Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) is the most fulfilling and able to answer its needs. Participatory Feminist Action Research defines researches based on the experiential knowledge and empowerment of women and girls and it is characterized by the use of collective inquiry with targeted women and girls to generate knowledge and take actions that promote change to

their individual and collective conditions.<sup>1</sup> However, in order for FPAR to be authentic and transformative, it must be inclusive and couched within a feminist lens that appreciates the depth and intersectionality of human experience,<sup>2</sup> including the complexities of LGBTIQ oppression rooted in patriarchal and cis-heteronormative ideologies.

To serve its purpose in changing systems and structures to improve the lives of marginalized people, FPAR recognizes participants as knowledgeable parties and active subjects during every stage of the research process. The implementation of participatory feminist research requires, in fact, the establishment of new research processes that encourage the sharing of power and a redistribution of research roles. Concretely, participatory feminist research gives participants a central role in data collection and analysis. Conceptualizing research participants as co-researchers,<sup>3</sup> this research model explicitly values and recognizes the contribution of participants. In participatory feminist research, research participants are knowledgeable subjects and, as such, play an active role in the production of knowledge and in the analysis and dissemination of results.

It should be noted that participatory research, as developed by feminist researchers, is aimed at research done directly with the marginalized groups and should not be confused with collaborative research or partnership research conducted by institutional actors (university actors in association with the community sector). However, some elements of FPAR may inspire the practice of collaborative research or partnership research with a feminist perspective. Conducting participatory feminist research requires that, for each project, the researcher reflects on how to conduct the research (implementation of an adequate research process or protocol) and determines its usefulness (to whom the research must benefit).

By conducting this scoping study, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus aims to identify emerging themes derived from SOGIESC-inclusive research using feminist participatory approach and understand the extent of the use of feminist participatory research among studies carried out within South East Asia as well as the challenges and good practices in using feminist participatory approach. The findings will be used to generate recommendations for future SOGIESC-inclusive studies using feminist participatory approach.

<sup>1</sup>Sharlene Nagy and Patricia Leavy. (2007). *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. India: SAGE Publications.

<sup>2</sup>Wendy Frisby, Patricia Maguire, and Colleen Reid. (2009). The 'f' Word Has Everything to Do with It: How Feminist Theories Inform Action Research. *Action Research*, 7(1): 13–29.

<sup>3</sup>Patricia Maguire. (1987). *Doing Participatory Research: A Feminist Approach*. Amherst (Mass), The Center for International Education, School of Education, University of Massachusetts, p. 269.

# Methodology and Limitations

## ● Methodology

To develop this scoping study, quantitative research needs to be conducted. Quantitative methods are done by collecting numerical data and processing them statistically. In this research, data is gathered through systematic observation. Quantitative analysis helps identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the data. Our focus lies in hypothesis testing and making generalizations about the population data in the form of journals, books, articles, and theses.

This research utilizes an objective approach and can generate numerically measurable data. Additionally, quantitative research methods can also produce data that can be statistically tested for validity. The advantages of quantitative research methods include their ability to produce objective data, enable in-depth statistical analysis, and facilitate population generalizations. However, this method also has limitations, such as a tendency to overlook broader contexts and meanings, as well as limitations in explaining complex social processes.

This study also includes a literature review. A literature review is a comprehensive summary of research conducted on a specific topic, aimed at showing readers what is already known about the topic and what remains unknown. It serves to find rationale for previous research or to generate further research ideas.<sup>4</sup> Literature can be obtained from various sources such as journals, books, documentation, the internet, and libraries. The literature review involves activities related to collecting literary data, reading and taking notes, as well as managing writing materials.<sup>5</sup> The author conducted this literature review after determining the writing topic and formulating the research questions before proceeding to collect the necessary data in the field.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew Denney and Richard Tewksbury. (2013). How to Write a Literature Review. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. 24. 101080/10511253.2012.730617.

<sup>5</sup> Hannah Snyder. (2019). Literature Review As A Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines. *Journal of Research*. Vol. 104. pp. 333-339.

<sup>6</sup> Arlene Fink. (2014). *Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From the Internet to Paper*. Fourth edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.



writing materials. The author conducted this literature review after determining the writing topic and formulating the research questions before proceeding to collect the necessary data in the field .

## ● Study selection criteria

**T**he first stage in the study selection process involves identifying research with an LGBTIQ theme, potentially related to psychology, religion, life stories or autobiographies, community support, etc. The data collected for this study includes journals, books, research papers, theses, and NGO reports. After reviewing these sources, we selected a total of 36 research papers that we assessed to have a basis in Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR). This selection includes 21 journal articles, 2 personal research papers, 4 books, 6 NGO reports, and 3 theses. Examples of journal titles used in our study include "Social Networks of LBT Organizations," "Being LGBT in Asia: The Philippines Country Report," and "Being Gay and Lesbian in Malaysia." Examples of books used include "Intimate Assemblages" and "Living as a Lesbian in Indonesia."

We obtained these journals by searching various online media using keywords like "FPAR LGBTQIA+," "LBQ research," "Queer Theory," "LGBTIQ research," and "Feminism research." We accessed the journals from various platforms, including JSTOR and Academia.edu, while some were sourced from personal research conducted by a lecturer. For theses and books, we used search engines that led us to online publishing platforms associated with specific universities. NGO reports were acquired from contacts within organizations such as the Indonesian Transmen Network, Arus Pelangi, and the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus.

## ● Study selection process

**T**he process of categorizing data in this scoping study was conducted using a literature review method. We read each obtained research one by one, employing skimming and scanning techniques to expedite the process, and recorded relevant keywords. Before fully engaging with the data, we categorized the subjects based on their main focus and highlights. For example, the journal "Being Gay and Lesbian in Malaysia" had the main keywords "gay and lesbian," so we categorized that research under the topic of Gay and Lesbian. We applied the same approach to other journals and books.

In addition to obtaining these categories, this research presents an overview that serves as the main requirement for this scoping study: the inclusion of the FPAR criteria. We differenti-

ated the research studies by identifying which ones focused on feminism, had a broader Queer theme, and utilized participatory research methodologies. We also considered the publication years, ranging from 2012 to 2022. Furthermore, we assessed authors known for their Queer perspectives based on their other writings. For example, Hendri Yulius, an Indonesian writer, has long been writing about Queer topics in essays and short stories. We carefully scrutinized supportive data and eliminated non-supportive data to minimize bias.

## ● Limitation

One of the objectives of conducting research is to identify anomalies within socio-cultural phenomena. These anomalies are then systematically analyzed and compared against relevant theories. However, when socio-cultural phenomena are highly common and broad, research often encounters barriers that render it ineffective and irrelevant. In this study, socio-cultural phenomena were examined across six Southeast Asian countries --- Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Laos, and Cambodia. Each country has its own national language, which posed significant challenges. A major hurdle in understanding the content of the research was the researchers' limited knowledge in these languages. As a result, the scope of research included was limited to studies conducted in Indonesian and English only. Furthermore, another significant limitation was the lack of continuity in communication between the researchers and the original authors of the data. This gap hindered the researchers' ability to access further correspondence and conduct in-depth data exploration.

## ● Data extraction and synthesis

The data extraction method used in this study is designed to categorize four key barometers:

1. feminism theory immersion;
2. anti-objectification stance towards the LGBTIQ community;
3. empowering community participation; and
4. addressing real community issues.

# Summary of Peer-Reviewed Studies

<b>1. Title</b>	: Jaringan Sosial Organisasi Lesbian, Bisexual, dan Transgender: Studi Kasus Organisasi Ardhany Institute di Jakarta
<b>Author</b>	: Sri Setiawati
<b>Year</b>	: 2017
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Indonesia

**T**his paper explores the social networks fostered by the Ardhany Institute, an LBT (Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender) women's organization based in Jakarta. It operates under the premise that, despite Indonesia's generally unsupportive and adversarial stance towards the LGBT/LBT community, this organization has courageously managed to "come out." This accomplishment, it argues, could not have been achieved without the support of an enabling environment facilitated by its social networks. The discussion describes how the organization has established social relationships ranging from actors/individuals to both international and domestic institutions, as well as mass media connections. As an anthropological study, the focus is mainly on providing a descriptive account of these social networks rather than an analytical critique. The methodology deliberately refrains from using quantitative measurement in favor of intensive observation, in-depth interviews, and participatory observation. The paper employs a feminist ethnographic approach, positing that global relationships can only be fully appreciated when examined through the lens of "real materials interlocked closely in the everyday encounters." It highlights actions and daily practices as the primary subjects of ethnographic research, and provides a nuanced understanding of how the Ardhany Institute navigates and cultivates its social networks amidst a challenging societal context.

Conclusions: 1) The Ardhany Institute fosters its social network through relationships between individual actors and LBT/LGBT organizations within the region, as well as through collaborations with multiple domestic and international agencies. Individuals within this organization play crucial roles as motivators, facilitators, and inspirers. These efforts have significant implications, bolstering the momentum of other LBT organizations across Indonesia; 2) The organization is actively expanding its network by collaborating with other women's organizations, crisis centers, healthcare providers, safe houses, legal aid entities, and the National Commission for Women. It also establishes working relationships with law enforcement agencies to offer support to victims of LBT violence.

<b>2. Title</b>	: A Research Report on the Lives of Lesbian and Bisexual Women and Transgender Men in Timor-Leste
<b>Author</b>	: Iram Saeed and Bella Galhos
<b>Year</b>	: 2017
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Timor Leste

**T**his report is the culmination of a small research project undertaken in two districts of Timor-Leste: Dili and Bobonaro. The research sheds light on some of the concerns and challenges faced by LBT women. It stands as a pioneering study, considering the scarcity of research done on LBT women in Timor-Leste. The study covered 57 respondents, comprising young lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, with 9 from Bobonaro and 48 from Dili. More than half of the respondents are under 30 years old and are financially dependent on families and parents. While all respondents were assigned female at birth, more than 52% identify as men. Additionally, 61% identify as lesbian while 39% identify as bisexual. The researchers were unable to interview older LBT women as they are often settled and may be hesitant to disclose their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) due to fears of being disowned by their families and communities. Most of the respondents expressed a desire to attain financial independence in order to lead autonomous lives. Furthermore, all respondents expressed strong support for the rights of LBT women.

<b>3. Title</b>	: Integrated Safety and Security Mechanism for Indonesian Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer (LBQ) Women and Transgender Men Activists
<b>Author</b>	: Vica Larasati
<b>Year</b>	: 2019
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Indonesia

**D**efending the rights of LBQT communities in Indonesia is a challenging and oftentimes daunting task, especially for activists identifying themselves as lesbian, bisexual, or queer (LBQ) women or transgender men. There are no laws that recognize and protect LBQ women and transgender men activists at work and they are not even entitled to the fulfillment and enjoyment of rights as other Indonesians. LBQ women and transgender men activists face greater risks due to the inherent discrimination against those identifying as women as well as the lack of recognition of their activism. The results predominantly reveal discriminatory acts and violence directed towards LBQ women and transgender men activists. These actions are often perceived by society as means to coerce LBQ women and transgender men activists into conforming to traditional norms, social standards, and religious interpretations of morality in order to return to what is considered a “normal” life. Research was conducted through personal conversations with fellow activists and observa-

tions of their daily work lives in women and LGBTQ communities in Banda Aceh, Surakarta and Jakarta.

The researcher encountered numerous situations of varying levels of risk, each demanding distinct responses through security and protection mechanisms. LBQ women and transgender men activists in Indonesia tend to face security and protection issues caused by exposure to trauma, enormous workloads, and limited appreciation which often leads to high levels of chronic stress.

Despite this, there are only small support systems available, found in their personal lives, within society (including fellow activists and LGBTQ communities/organizations they are affiliated with or working for), and at the state level. The analysis shows that integrated security and protection mechanisms are urgently needed to guarantee that LBQ women and transgender men activists are able to enjoy their lives without sacrificing their emotional and physical wellbeing.

<b>4. Title</b>	: Melihat Lebih Dekat Situasi Transpria di Indonesia: Aktualisasi Diri, Tantangan, dan Harapan
<b>Author</b>	: Transmen Indonesia
<b>Year</b>	: 2020
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Indonesia

**T**he transgender movement is a new color within the broader queer movement. As a very young movement, transgender individuals and communities still need to pursue their visibility in terms of knowledge, experience, and existence. Limited access to information regarding transgender identities poses a significant constraint. Additionally, as a new movement, the transgender community still has much to learn to grow and cultivate resilience in the face of various challenges. This situation has an impact on the comprehensive fulfillment of transgender rights. Consequently, transgender individuals are vulnerable to experiencing discrimination and physical, verbal, and sexual violence in both domestic and public realms, further worsening the quality of life for the transgender community in various aspects.

Discrimination and persecution faced by the queer community, especially the transgender group, are often based on various reasons, including religious intolerance. The queer movement, including the transgender movement, is undoubtedly affected by the growing conservatism in Indonesia, particularly concerning how religious conservatism contributes to limiting the rights of minority, vulnerable, and marginalized groups. Such transgender realities are what Transmen Indonesia (TI), one of several transgender collectives/communities/organizations in Indonesia, seeks to explore and examine more comprehensively.

Through a focus group discussion (FGD) held by TI on August 21 and 24, 2020, we reached out to transgender individuals in 15 regions in Indonesia which we classified into four zones: red zone, green zone, yellow zone, and blue zone.

A total of 56 transgender individuals attended and shared their experiences during the emotional four-session gathering. Most of the transgender individuals present expressed that the forum was their first transgender gathering. This highlights the scarcity of safe spaces for transgender individuals, making such meetings joyful spaces where they can feel safe and free to share their stories. The FGD also served as an effective space to build and strengthen solidarity among transgender individuals for future efforts to advocate for their justice and rights in Indonesia, where their needs and visibility are still lacking.

The results of the FGD were then analyzed, examined, and summarized into a report entitled "Taking a Closer Look at the Transgender Situation in Indonesia: Self-Actualization, Challenges, and Hopes." The report contains various stories of experiences, struggles, acceptance and rejection, wounds and hopes, as well as the diverse challenges faced by transgender individuals and the emerging hopes for a better future. This narrative is the result of our qualitative research using a life story approach, examining the experiences we observed and studied from the aforementioned FGD. It was approached with interpretative analysis in the form of a structural narrative.

<b>5. Title</b>	: Mapping Discrimination Experienced by Indonesian Trans* FTM Persons
<b>Author</b>	: Danny Gordon and Mario Prajna Pratama
<b>Year</b>	: 2016
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Indonesia

**T**his work sought to document how Indonesian trans\* FTM individuals experienced discrimination across various interlinked domains: social networks, religious and educational institutions, employment and the workplace, and health/healthcare institutions. The objectives were twofold: 1) to map the discrimination experienced by trans\* FTM individuals in Indonesia, and 2) to identify the specific priorities of the Indonesian trans\* FTM community. In-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation were conducted involving 14 respondents. The findings revealed that respondents experienced othering through rejection, misidentification, harassment, "correction," and bureaucratic discrimination across the five pre-established domains. Healthcare and a lack of information emerged as areas of particular concern for respondents. This work underscores the need for healthcare that is sensitive to the needs of trans\* FTM individuals, coupled with high-quality information, in order to break the cycles through which discrimination is sustained.

<b>6. Title</b>	: Being LGBT in Asia: The Philippines Country Report
<b>Author</b>	: Michael David C. Tan
<b>Year</b>	: 2014
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Philippines

The report titled "Being LGBT in Asia: The Third Philippine National LGBT Community Dialogue" presents an overview of the legal and social environment faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals in the Philippines. This report is a result of the Third Philippine National LGBT Community Dialogue held in 2013 in Manila, bringing together representatives from 50 LGBT organizations. The dialogue was jointly convened by UNDP and USAID as part of the broader initiative called "Being LGBT in Asia." This initiative focuses on eight Asian countries, including the Philippines, and aims to analyze the legal and social environment for LGBT individuals from a development and rights perspective. It encourages networking among LGBT communities, knowledge sharing, and capacity building for LGBT organizations to engage in policy dialogue and community mobilization.

Key findings and themes in the report include:

- 1. Legal Environment:** While same-sex activity is not criminalized, the absence of an anti-discrimination bill at the national level remains a significant issue. Some local governments have passed anti-discrimination ordinances.
- 2. Education:** LGBT individuals in educational institutions still face discrimination and abuse, despite there being positive developments in some campuses such as pride events and the election of LGBT individuals to student councils.
- 3. Health:** HIV remains a significant challenge for gay men, MSM, and transgender women, with barriers to accessing testing and information on hormone replacement therapy.
- 4. Employment:** LGBT individuals face employment discrimination, harassment, and exploitation, with concerns about potential discrimination based on HIV status.
- 5. Family Affairs:** LGBT individuals do not have the right to marry someone of the same sex. Moreover, a single LGBT individual is permitted to adopt, but two individuals identifying as a domestic couple, both of whom are LGBT, are not allowed to adopt.

<b>7. Title</b>	: Against All Odds: Communication Privacy Management of a Lesbian Couple in a Conservative Society
<b>Author</b>	: Vidi Sukmayadi, Wan Norbani Wan Noordin, Eri Eka Pratiwi, Sufian Hadi Ayub
<b>Year</b>	: 2020
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Malaysia and Indonesia.

**T**his study explores the complex process of disclosure and negotiation of stigmatized identity among female homosexuals (lesbians) in Indonesia, a socially conservative and religiously influenced country. The research involves in-depth interviews with a lesbian couple, focusing on their experiences and self-disclosure strategies as sexual minorities in a challenging social context. The analysis of their experiences is guided by the Communication Privacy Management theory and an idiographic approach, with a particular focus on how these lesbians coordinate the disclosure and concealment of their identity within their social interactions. This study seeks to shed light on how LGBT individuals navigate and integrate their sexual identity in a socially conservative society like Indonesia and Malaysia.

The study highlights the significance of identity management processes, particularly for the LGBT community, given that sexual preference is often a concealed identity. In many countries, including Indonesia, there are laws against LGBT practices and social stigma surrounds homosexuality. This stigma is further exacerbated by the conflict between official Islamic doctrine and LGBT identity. Unlike some personal identities that individuals feel comfortable expressing, Indonesian LGBT individuals are deeply involved in a negotiation process that involves stigma, emotional distress, and the challenge of being different. Discrimination, stigma, and prejudice can lead to stress and the tendency to conceal one's identity, as individuals anticipate rejection.

The study aims to explore the nuances of privacy communication management within the context of multiple stigmatized identities. Indonesian lesbians, in particular, are of interest because male homosexuality is more strongly condemned within Islamic cultural and religious contexts, whereas female homosexuality is often considered a unique phenomenon. The primary research questions of this study delve into how the informants feel about being part of both the LGBT community and the Muslim faith, and how Indonesian lesbians negotiate privacy communication management in personal and relational contexts. The study collects the life stories of two Indonesian lesbians to critically examine their experiences of personal, relational, and social alienation, as well as acceptance, in a society where homosexuality is deemed sinful and illegal within an Islamic-majority country.

<b>8. Title</b>	: Being LGBT in Asia: The Cambodia National LGBT Community Dialogue
<b>Author</b>	: Vicente S. Salas and Sathaboramana Kheang
<b>Year</b>	: 2014
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Cambodia

**T**he report titled "Being LGBT in Asia: The Cambodia National LGBT Community Dialogue" provides an extensive review of the legal and social environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals in Cambodia. This report is the outcome of the



Cambodia National LGBT Community Dialogue, held in Phnom Penh in January 2014, and was co-hosted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme Asia-Pacific Regional Centre (UNDP APRC) in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The larger initiative, "Being LGBT in Asia: A Participatory Review and Analysis of the Legal and Social Environment for LGBT Persons and Civil Society," was launched in December 2012. This initiative focuses on understanding the experiences of LGBT individuals in eight Asian countries, including Cambodia, from both a development and human rights perspective. The primary objectives of "Being LGBT in Asia" are to facilitate networking among LGBT individuals, build a knowledge base, enhance the capacity of LGBT organizations for policy engagement and community mobilization, promote understanding of the human rights of LGBT people, and outline steps for LGBT-inclusive development efforts for various stakeholders, including UNDP, USAID, and other development partners.

The report provides a historical context for sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) issues in Cambodia, highlighting the emergence of discussions around these topics, the celebration of Pride events since 2003, and the growing visibility of the LGBT community in the country.

Findings from the report cover various aspects of LGBT rights in Cambodia:

- 1. National Laws and Policies:** Cambodia lacks explicit laws and policies addressing LGBT rights. While same-sex activities are not criminalized, there is no anti-discrimination legislation or specific provisions for LGBT individuals' rights. Local authorities and police sometimes misuse existing laws to infringe upon the rights of LGBT people.
- 2. Social and Cultural Attitudes:** Cambodian society has relatively flexible views on gender and sexuality. Many LGBT individuals define themselves based on their gender norms rather than sexual orientation. While there may be disapproval based on gender norms, there is no overt persecution of LGBT individuals. Some same-sex couples are accepted within their communities.
- 3. Religion:** The dominant religion in Cambodia, Theravada Buddhism, does not distinguish between heterosexuality and homosexuality in its precepts about sexual activity. It emphasizes respectful, affectionate, and pleasurable behavior, with no explicit condemnation of homosexuality. The report also discusses differences in the acceptance of LGBT individuals across Cambodia, highlighting variations based on gender identity.
- 4. Family Affairs:** LGBT individuals in Cambodia often encounter negative treatment within their families, including forced marriages, attempted "cures," rejection, and controlling behavior. These challenges lead to issues like running away, mental health problems, depression, and suicidal thoughts.

- 5. Education and Schooling:** LGBT youth in Cambodia experience higher dropout rates due to bullying by peers and economic hardship resulting from family rejection. Grade school environments tend to reinforce traditional gender roles, but some universities have initiated awareness-raising activities about LGBT issues.
- 6. Employment and Work:** LGBT Cambodians are hesitant to openly discuss their sexual orientation at work due to discrimination and limited job opportunities. Employers have not been extensively educated about SOGI issues. Transgender individuals often face harassment due to their appearance and work in entertainment or sex industries.
- 7. Community and Society:** Homophobic attacks and abuse occur in public places and community settings. However, some same-sex couples find acceptance at the village level.
- 8. Health, Including HIV:** HIV is a significant health concern for MSM and transgender women in Cambodia. Stigma and discrimination persist within the health sector towards these populations. Transgender individuals require attention to health issues beyond HIV, such as gender-affirmation surgery and hormone therapy.
- 9. Media, Including ICT:** Cambodia's media tends to portray LGBT people negatively, particularly transgender women. There is a lack of information and training on human rights issues and SOGI among media professionals. However, the production of some LGBT films is a positive development.

The report concludes by addressing other issues, such as domestic and sexual violence experienced by LGBT individuals, self-stigma among young gay men and transgender females, and the need to focus on the needs of older LGBT persons. It also examines the organizational capacity of Cambodian LGBT organizations, highlighting variations in organizational focus and financial capacity among these organizations.

<b>9. Title</b>	: Making It Work: Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Women's Economic Empowerment In The Philippines
<b>Author</b>	: Moizza Binat Sarwar, Abigail Hunt and Soumya Chattopadhyay, with Maroz Ramos
<b>Year</b>	: 2020
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Philippines

**T**his report highlights the critical importance of women's economic empowerment for achieving women's human and economic rights, as well as gender justice. It specifically focuses on lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LBT) women in the Philippines, a group that has largely remained invisible to policymakers due to a lack of attention to their voices, priorities, and needs. The absence of official statistics disaggregated by sexual orientation,

gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE) further contributes to this invisibility.

The report aims to address this gap by providing insights into the current socio-economic situation of LBT women in the Philippines, with the ultimate goal of informing future advocacy, programming, and policymaking in the country. The research draws on various data sources, including a literature review, focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in both urban and rural areas of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, key informant interviews (KIIs), and an online survey with 159 respondents. The findings shed light on what economic empowerment means to LBT women and the key actions required to support their individual and collective economic advancement.

Key findings and areas of concern include:

1. **Legal and Policy Frameworks:** At the national level, there is no law explicitly protecting citizens from discrimination based on SOGIE. Advocates have been working on a national Anti-Discrimination Bill (ADB), also known as the SOGIE Equality Bill, since 1999. While policy frameworks at the local level appear to be progressing more quickly, local anti-discrimination ordinances (ADOs) guaranteeing protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation exist in limited areas and are not consistently implemented nor enforced.
2. **Economic Insecurity:** Economic insecurity is a common experience among LBT women. Despite a significant percentage of them being employed full-time, a substantial portion frequently worries about financially supporting their dependents. Coping strategies, such as engaging in various livelihoods simultaneously, are used to maintain adequate income.
3. **Employment Sectors:** LBT women are engaged in several key sectors of employment, including education, government, private sector office work, micro or subsistence enterprises, and creative and service industries. The informal loan system, known as 'Five-Six' or 'Torko,' is relied upon for financial support due to limited access to formal financial services.
4. **Discrimination:** Discrimination experiences vary among LBT women, with transgender women reporting higher levels of discrimination. Dress code restrictions in the workplace are a common form of discrimination, leading to occupational segregation. Bullying and discrimination in the education system also persist despite anti-bullying legislation.
5. **Family and Social Protection:** The heteronormative concept of the family in the Philippines poses a barrier to LBT women's enjoyment of social protection rights. Older LBT women, in particular, face challenges, as they may not have partners or children to provide for them in their later years.
6. **Lack of Targeted Initiatives:** Few initiatives specifically target LBT women, and they are often excluded from policies and programs aimed at women or marginalized populations more broadly. Civil society activity and advocacy for lesbian and

bisexual women are comparatively weaker, making them the least visible among LGBT groups.

The report emphasizes the need to support organizations at the forefront of advancing LBT women's economic rights and empowerment, particularly women's rights and LGBT organizations. It calls for an approach that responds to individual and structural enablers and constraints to economic empowerment, leaving no one behind and ensuring support reaches even the most marginalized LBT women.

<b>10. Title</b>	: Feminist Interventions and Emerging Issues in Southeast Asia in the Time of COVID-19
<b>Author</b>	: Lainie Yeoh
<b>Year</b>	: 2020
<b>Country(ies)</b>	: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines

**T**his Scoping Paper provides an overview of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted feminist movements in Southeast Asia (SEA). It serves as a valuable resource for two distinct audiences: those seeking a broad understanding of the pandemic's effects on feminist activism in the region and those interested in shaping future strategies and discussions within the feminist movement.

#### Key Points:

- 1. Geographical Context:** The study covers countries in South East Asia, including Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam. These nations are interconnected through geographical proximity, trade interests, and cross-border mobility among their citizens, facilitated by ASEAN agreements.
- 2. Diversity and Challenges:** Southeast Asia is characterized by diverse governance structures, languages, levels of progress in feminist advocacy, and disparities in power, wealth, and influence. The region's political institutions often limit freedom of expression and suppress activism, especially when it is perceived as being influenced by "Western influences."
- 3. COVID-19 Response:** Initially, South East Asian countries earned praise for their effective public health responses. However, vaccination challenges and the emergence of new variants later posed significant difficulties. Some governments exacerbated existing socio-economic issues and curtailed democratic processes during the pandemic.
- 4. Feminist Movements Go Digital:** Lockdown measures drove many individuals and organizations, including feminist activists, to digital spaces and services. However, disparities in digital access, literacy, and infrastructure created variations

in responses and activism across the region.

- 5. Feminist Interventions:** Feminist responses to COVID-19 included digital events, mutual aid fundraisers, and advocacy efforts to address gender inequalities and rising gender-based violence exacerbated by lockdowns. Activists often faced burnout, especially in high-conflict zones or areas with high COVID-19 infection rates.
- 6. Challenges and Responsibilities:** Feminists, who were already involved in broader activism and community care projects, took on additional unpaid domestic duties during the pandemic. For some, these responsibilities became long-term commitments, making it challenging to focus on broader activism issues.
- 7. Research Design and Limitations:** The paper employed qualitative research methods, including interviews with feminist activists, desk research, and analysis of reports in English and local languages. The participants came from diverse advocacy backgrounds, including gender and sexuality, labor rights, sexual health, and climate justice. Notably, the paper highlights the lack of inclusivity of activists with disabilities in mainstream feminist online organizing.
- 8. Not Exhaustive:** The Scoping Paper acknowledges that it does not cover every issue or nuance of feminist movements across SEA but aims to provide insights into how specific issues have manifested in the region. It encourages a deeper exploration of the vibrant feminist movements in South East Asia.

This report offers a snapshot of how feminist movements in South East Asia have responded to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, providing valuable insights for those interested in understanding and supporting these movements in the region.

# Results of the Study

Based on the Guide to Participatory Feminist Research,<sup>7</sup> there are 4 kinds of participatory approaches in research. The first one is action research, which is a research conducted by researchers or by researchers with local actors, with or without a feminist perspective, to solve a particular problem. The second type is collaborative or partnership research, which involves researchers working either independently or in conjunction with local actors. This research may or may not incorporate a feminist perspective and aims to document and co-construct knowledge with participants on a specific issue. The third type is participatory research, which is conducted by researchers either independently or in collaboration with oppressed groups or community members. This approach acknowledges the significance of participants' practical knowledge and lived experiences (without differentiation by gender) and seeks to emancipate them by empowering them through research. And the last one is participatory feminist action research, which is grounded in the experiential knowledge and empowerment of girls and women. It is characterized by the use of collective inquiry with targeted girls and women to generate knowledge and take actions that promote change in their individual and collective conditions.

This scoping study aims to identify emerging themes derived from SOGIESC-inclusive research using a feminist participatory approach. Hence, the experiential knowledge and empowerment used as a basis are not limited solely to girls and women, but also include people oppressed based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

We read thoroughly through the 36 studies, from the methodologies to the results, to see whether feminist participatory approaches are used. Some studies specifically mentioned that they are using feminist and/or participatory approach. These studies are "A Research Report on the Lives of Lesbian and Bisexual Women and Transgender Men in Timor-Leste," "Integrated Safety and Security Mechanism for Indonesian Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer (LBQ) Women and Transgender Men Activists," and "*Melihat Lebih Dekat Situasi Transpria di Indonesia: Aktualisasi Diri, Tantangan, dan Harapan.*"

For those who did not mention it, we analyzed them using the FPAR guidelines developed by Dr. Tesa Casal de Vela, which were presented to the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus in June 2023. These guidelines include the following:

1. **Asking new questions:** an openness to the shifting context and fluid intentions; new questions that give rise to new understandings;
2. **Choice of methods:** appropriateness of a method for a particular question;
3. **Research for the marginalized:** not research about the marginalized;
4. **Tending to issues of difference:** challenging essentialist / generalized notions;

<sup>7</sup> Myriam Gervais et al. (2018). Guide to Participatory Feminist Research: Abridged Version (English). Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (IGSF). Montreal: University of McGill.

5. **Focus on lived experiences:** listening and access to voices that are traditionally ignored or silenced;
6. **Awareness of power dynamics and practicing strong reflexivity in the research process:** sensitivity to the power relations between the researcher and research collaborators participants; and
7. **Social transformation:** "...the move towards emancipation... knowledge building does not bend towards dominant interest groups but towards democratic ends."

Table 1 shows the results of the scoping process:

	Participatory	Collaborative	Feminist Research
2 studies	No	No	Yes
15 studies	No	No	No
3 studies	Yes	No	No
3 studies	No	Yes	Yes
10 studies	Yes	No	Yes

Table 1. Distribution of studies according to type of research.

Three studies are participatory and recognize the roles and voices of research partners. These partners, formerly known as research 'subjects' in non-participatory research, were involved in a peer-review process upon the publication of the research, demonstrating shared power. However, these research endeavors lack a feminist perspective.

The other three (3) studies used feminist perspective and collaborative approach. Two (2) studies came from Malaysia and one (1) from Indonesia. In these researches, participants do not play a central role in design, data collection, and analysis though to some degree they may have contributed in providing ideas or technical support.

Two (2) studies used feminist perspective, but not collaborative nor participatory approach.

Fifteen (15) studies did not use any feminist perspective, collaborative, and/or participatory approach.

So, among the 36 peer-reviewed studies, only 10 of them used feminist participatory approach.

The figure below shows the focal population of those 10 studies. Only one study covers the trans feminine population. Some studies address more than one population, such as "Being LGBT in Asia: The Cambodia National LGBT Community Dialogue," "Making It Work Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Women's Economic Empowerment In The Philippines," *"Jaringan Sosial Organisasi Lesbian, Bisexual, dan Transgender: Studi Kasus Organisasi Ardhanyar Institute di Jakarta."*

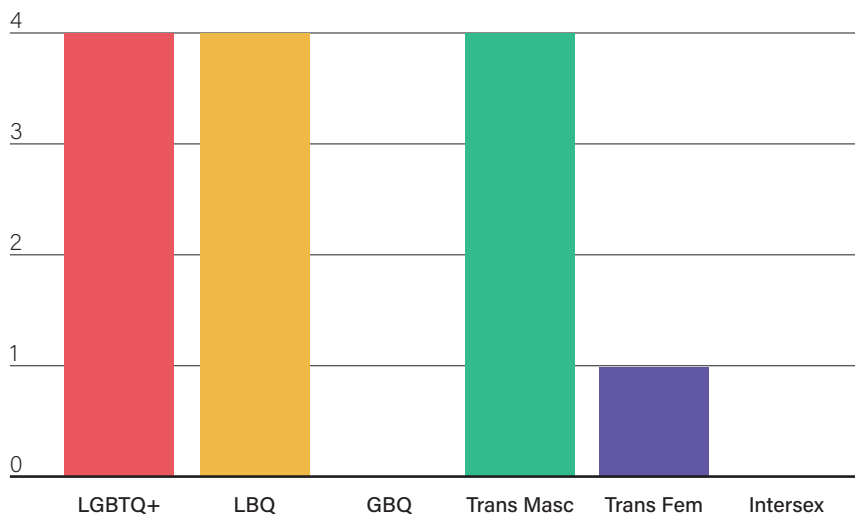


Figure 1. Distribution of feminist participatory research studies according to focal population.

This scoping only covers studies published in the year 2012-2022. The research began in 2012 because the LGBTQIA+ movement is relatively new in the region, and there was a lack of data before that time. During the period of 2012-2015, only one (1) feminist participatory study was published. However, from 2016 to 2019, five (5) were published, and there were four (4) studies in 2020-2022. This demonstrates an increasing trend in the use of the feminist participatory approach among LGBTIQ or SOGIESC inclusive studies over the past seven years.



2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
0	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	1	1

Looking at the countries of origin, 60% of the studies were done and published in Indonesia. This might be related to a limitation of this study, wherein one of the major challenges in understanding the research content was the researchers' limited knowledge of languages. Consequently, the research included was limited to studies published in Indonesian and English. The study did not find any feminist participatory research that covers South East Asia as a region.

Malaysia	SOGI Change Effort, criminalization, <b>violence &amp; discrimination</b> , SOGI policing
Philippines	Economic empowerment, labour, <b>discrimination</b> , LGBT movement, LGBT activism
Indonesia	Youth, Religion & belief, Access to Justice, Safety & Security, support system, <b>violence &amp; discrimination</b> , LGBT movement
Timor Leste	<b>violence &amp; discrimination</b> , family, well-being

Most studies used qualitative methods, including interviews such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and literature reviews. Two studies employed surveys and yielded quantitative data, while one study incorporates case documentation. All ten studies resulted in written reports, either as papers (40%) or NGO reports (60%). None of the studies utilized unconventional or creative methods such as photovoice or artistic installations.

# Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the research gaps identified in previous sections of this scoping study, below are some recommendations for the future studies carried out by organizations and researchers on LGBTQIA+ issues:

## 1. *Population*

- a. Feminist participatory approach must be used in the broader LGBTQIA+ population especially GBQ and trans feminine people, as well as in understudied populations such as intersex people;
- b. While it is important to acknowledge the shared oppression faced by LBQ and trans masculine persons, it is encouraged to also develop specific research for each group; and
- c. Consider studying the youth and elderly population.

## 2. *Themes*

- a. Emerging issues that need more evidence in the region such as SOGIESC policing and criminalization, human rights of LGBTQIA+ persons in shrinking civic spaces, state-sponsored conversion practices and the promotion of SOGIE change effort, LGBTQIA+ and the relation with freedom of religion & belief, and the rise of anti gender movement;
- b. Strategic policy initiatives around anti-discrimination laws in the region;
- c. Economic inclusion and economic status of the LGBTQIA+ population in the region;
- d. State-sponsored pathologization and legal gender recognition in South East Asia; and
- e. Effect of violence and discrimination toward safety and security, including mental health.

## 3. *Methods*

- a. Case documentation; and
- b. Unconventional, creative, and inclusive methods including photography, audio visual, story-telling, and other forms of art.

- ## 4.
- Feminist Participatory Action Research should have an 'action' component in it. Therefore, this study also recommends future researchers to incorporate action plans from the start of designing research agenda. The actions that could be done include, among others, developing policy briefs, preparing and submitting alternative reports through the UN Mechanism, conducting follow-up research, and launching public campaigns.

# About ASEAN SOGIE CAUCUS

The ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) is a network of human rights activists from South East Asia that works for the inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) into the human rights work in ASEAN. Advocating for the human rights of all persons regardless of SOGIESC is at the heart of ASC's mission.

ASC is a regional network that dynamically engages diverse actors to collectively advocate for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer people, non-binary and gender-diverse persons in South East Asia. It works toward the following goals:

- All human rights mechanisms impacting the ASEAN region adopt and implement frameworks and plans of action that promote and protect the rights of LGBTIQ, non-binary, and gender-diverse persons.
- Domestic laws, policies, and programs in South East Asian countries include the protection and promotion of the rights of LGBTIQ, non-binary, and gender-diverse persons.
- LGBTIQ, non-binary, and gender-diverse civil society are empowered to engage state and non-state actors to adhere to human rights standards.

Our roots go back to the courageous action of activists from eight (8) ASEAN countries, namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Our founders ensured the visibility and meaningful engagement of LGBTIQ voices in ASEAN civil society spaces, especially the annual ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC/APF). Since 2010, our founders have ensured that LGBTIQ issues are addressed in ASEAN civil society actions and reflected in outcome documents.

In 2011, ASC was formally established during a meeting of LGBTIQ activists held in Jakarta, Indonesia in preparation for the ACSC/APF of that year. This meeting was organized jointly by Arus Pelangi, Indonesia for Humans, and iSEE. ASC recognizes that its birth and evolution occurred alongside the expanding spaces for regional civil society's engagement with ASEAN.

In 2014, ASC began setting up its Secretariat in Quezon City, Philippines and eventually gained legal registration as a non-stock, non-profit organization the following year. Since then, it has pushed for LGBTIQ human rights through engagements in civil society platforms and human rights mechanisms; supported local LGBTIQ activists through mentorship,

technical assistance, and relationship-building; and reimagined activism as a creative process anchored on a vision of South-South solidarity.

In 2021, ASC was granted a Special Consultative Status by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

## REPORT

# MAPPING OF THE LGBTIQ AND SOGIESC-INCLUSIVE STUDIES USING FEMINIST PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



"The best way to learn FPAR is by actually experiencing it yourself. This will make it easier when they have to go to the community and do the process with them."

- Lorna Israel



ASEAN SOGIE  
CAUCUS

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