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PFIP Executive Report 2024 LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion Survey



PHILIPPINE FINANCIAL &
INTER-INDUSTRY PRIDE

2024 LGBTQ+ WORKPLACE INCLUSION REPORT

In partnership with



Kingdom of the Netherlands

S&P Global Foundation

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PHILIPPINE FINANCIAL &
INTER-INDUSTRY PRIDE

2024 LGBTQ+ WORKPLACE INCLUSION REPORT

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Table of Contents

About the PFIP	2
Executive Summary	3
Introduction	6
DEI as framework	7
DEI in the Philippines	8
PFIP 2021 Workplace Inclusion Survey	9
Method	10
Participants	11
Materials	11
Procedure	12
Profile of Participating Organizations	13
Findings & Discussion	16
Inclusive Policies	17
Inclusive Benefits	19
Organizational Support	21
Technology for Inclusion	23
Education and Enablement	24
Social Responsibility and Thought Leadership	26
Inclusive Future of Work	28
The interplay among inclusivity facets for LGBTQ+ inclusion	29
Other information	30
Recommendations	31
References	33



PHILIPPINE FINANCIAL & INTER-INDUSTRY PRIDE

About the Philippine Financial & Inter-Industry Pride

The Philippine Financial & Inter-Industry Pride (PFIP) traces its beginnings to a casual lunch meeting in 2013 among executives and Pride leaders representing five organizations (Thomson Reuters, HSBC, Deutsche Bank, ANZ and Wells Fargo). Then called Philippine Financial Industry Pride, the organization targeted multinational companies with DEI or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion already embedded in their values. The challenge was to align their DEI practices with Philippine culture.

LGBTQ+ movements in the Philippines have typically been represented by “activists in the streets.” PFIP’s leaders, less recognized until now, are the “activists in the boardroom,” shifting cultures and consciousness in business discourses. While the local business community has started to support their own Pride networks, the focus was mostly on activities and events for visibility. PFIP recognized opportunities to move beyond optics, with a thrust towards capacitating organizations towards meaningful inclusion, starting with assisting companies as they institute partner benefits for LGBTQ+ employees to facilitating sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) training.

PFIP’s mission to consolidate proven best practices of Pride communities in the workplace has been continuously sustained by its earnest members, and through their energy and enthusiasm has persisted to consistently create and evolve programs and practices that support its growing number of LGBTQ+ talents within its roster.

As of publication, PFIP has more than 80 membership organizations and functions under an all-Filipino board of trustees.



Executive Summary

In the Philippines, LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace remains limited, largely due to the absence of mechanisms and policies mandating companies and institutions to provide equal opportunities to LGBTQ+ persons and to address SOGIE-based stigma and discrimination in the workplace. Globally, however Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have taken over workplaces, creating more safe spaces for LGBTQ+ talents to thrive and introducing more LGBTQ+ inclusive programs. Many studies have shown evidence of higher profitability and performance for inclusive companies^{2,3} while traditional and less progressive organizations bear the economic costs of discrimination¹.

To assess the state of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion in the Philippines, the Philippine Financial & Inter-Industry Pride (PFIP) launched its first LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion survey in 2021. Stemming from the survey's learnings, the organization launched the PFIP Playbook in 2023. The Playbook foregrounds the best practices and serves as a self-learning and training tool for PFIP member and non-member companies in fostering inclusion and equity for LGBTQ+ employees.

This year's study updates and expands our knowledge and understanding of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion in the country. To update, we characterize the efforts of companies across key facets of inclusivity three years after the first wave and then highlight the relevant changes in their LGBTQ+ programming. To expand, we examine the interplay among the different components of an inclusive workplace, because we now consider *inclusive future of work* as a key facet of inclusivity. Through this study, we provide companies with entry points in transforming their workplaces to be more LGBTQ+-inclusive.

A total of 103 multinational companies, major Philippine private employers, small and medium enterprises in the country, and select government offices participated in this year's (2024) Philippine LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion Survey. While the survey may not represent the entirety of workplace practices in the country, this year's participating companies represent a diverse set of institutions. These companies have their headquarters in the Philippines and in other countries, are from different industries, have different company sizes, and are PFIP and non-PFIP members. Companies answered a survey comprising 83 items that covered seven key facets of inclusivity including: (1) *inclusive policies*, (2) *inclusive benefits*, (3) *organizational support*, (4) *technology for inclusion*, (5) *education and enablement*, (6) *social responsibility and thought leadership*, and (7) *inclusive future of work*.

Our analysis yields the following insights:

- ▶ 84.5% of our respondent companies have an LGBTQ+ inclusion or anti-discrimination policy. 86.4% have existing grievance procedures that allow LGBTQ+ employees to raise concerns if they experience any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination in the workplace.
- ▶ 77.7% of the companies polled provide equivalent medical benefits for married different-sex couples and same-sex domestic partners, while 63.1% provide equivalent group life insurance benefits.
- ▶ 62.1% of participating companies consider same-sex domestic partners as immediate family members for purposes of other benefits such as emergency and parental leaves. When compared to the data gathered in 2021, current data shows an increase in the number of companies that grant the following benefits to LGBTQ+ employees: equivalent medical benefits for same-sex domestic partners (+8.7%), equivalent life insurance benefits (+13.0%) and consider same-sex domestic partners as immediate family members (+15.2%).

- ▶ The 2024 poll also showcases the increased number of companies that now promote the inclusion of transgender employees by recognizing lived names and pronouns as part of workplace culture (75.7%), providing gender-inclusive facilities such as restrooms and sleeping quarters (72.8%), and having a gender-inclusive dress code (55.3%). There is an especially marked increase in the percentage of companies with gender-inclusive dress code (+91.3%), those that adhere to a policy on recognition of lived name and pronouns (+19.6%), companies that provide gender-inclusive facilities (+17.4%), and those that support medical transition (+10.9%).
- ▶ 92.2% of respondent companies have executive allies and inclusion champions. Particularly, 80.6% have leaders on the executive level pushing for LGBTQ+ inclusion, 84.5% have visible and vocal ally executives who serve as role models to employees, and 65.0% have openly LGBTQ+ executives.
- ▶ 72.8% of respondent companies report having LGBTQ+ employee resource groups (ERGs) for their employees in the Philippines. This number is a substantial increase of around 21.7% when compared to the results of the 2021 survey. LGBTQ+ ERGs often organize LGBTQ+-related activities, act as support groups for LGBTQ+ individuals, and play an advisory role when it comes to LGBTQ+ inclusive policies, HR programs and benefits. Thus, LGBTQ+ ERGs are pivotal in developing DEI strategy that responds to the needs of the employees.
- ▶ 78.6% of respondent companies provide employees with the option to declare their pronouns and 63.1% of the same allow the use of lived name instead of legal name in internal communications and systems such as e-mails. In those that allow such, lived names are also listed in the company directory.
- ▶ Almost half of the companies that participated in the poll have reported implementing a program that enables the voluntary self-identification of LGBTQ+ employees (44.7%). Of the same, 40.8% have a gender-inclusive HR system that is enabled for LGBTQ+ self-identification and declaration of lived names and pronouns. Based on the 2021 and 2023 polls, there is a 32.6% increase in the percentage of companies choosing to provide employees with the option to declare their pronouns in systems such as e-mails and company directories, a 15.2% increase of companies which have a program for voluntary LGBTQ+ self-identification and a 10.9% increase in companies that have a gender-inclusive HR system.
- ▶ 85.4% of respondent companies conduct training on general DEI topics that employees can take, 82.5% embed inclusion topics in their leadership and management training, and 70.9% offer LGBTQ+-specific training to all their employees.
- ▶ An overwhelming majority of respondent companies make an effort to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion even outside their organizations (93.2%). 78.6% publicly express their support for LGBTQ+ inclusion through social media, mainstream media or other channels, and 75.7% partner with LGBTQ+ groups outside their organizations.
- ▶ 66.0% of respondent companies offer an inclusive flexible work arrangement that is inclusive of diverse demographic groups including LGBTQ+ employees. 55.3% have an inclusive formal mental health strategy, and 50.5% have a representative from the LGBTQ+ community in committees or groups where future of work decisions are made.
- ▶ Our research has conclusively found that companies in which inclusion topics are embedded in leadership training are 9.3 times more likely to have LGBTQ+ employee resource groups.

Companies with a career development program for their LGBTQ+ employees and allyship learning program are 4.4 times and 6.0 times, respectively, more likely to have LGBTQ+ employee groups.

- ▶ Companies that conduct general training programs on DEI are 5.9 times more likely to have executives championing LGBTQ+ inclusion, and 3.4 times more likely to have out LGBTQ+ executives. Companies with LGBTQ+-specific training modules are 7.9 times more likely to have leaders on the executive level driving the priorities for LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- ▶ Companies are 3.8 times and 5.3 times more likely to have LGBTQ+-inclusive policies if they have an LGBTQ+ employee resource group and executives championing LGBTQ+ inclusion, respectively.
- ▶ Companies are 3.5 times and 4.1 times more likely to have comprehensive benefits for same-sex domestic partners if they have LGBTQ+ employee resource groups and inclusion champions at the executive level, respectively. Companies with openly LGBTQ+ executives are 3.2 times more likely to have key benefits for transgender employees.

Given these insights, we suggest the following pathways toward a transformational workplace for LGBTQ+ Filipinos.

- ▶ Continue implementing LGBTQ+ inclusive anti-discrimination policies and equal benefits for same-sex domestic partners.
- ▶ Start providing benefits that support transgender employees including but not limited to medical transitioning, social transitioning, and access to gender-neutral facilities.
- ▶ Continue providing LGBTQ+-related educational and skill-building sessions for employees and DEI leadership such as general trainings on DEI, SOGIESC and allyship. Inclusion topics are also recommended to be incorporated in leadership trainings.
- ▶ Strengthen career development programs specifically designed for minority groups such as LGBTQ+ employees.
- ▶ Intensify support to LGBTQ+ employee resource groups by providing resources and organizational assistance from the company's leadership and HR team.
- ▶ Improve technologies and systems to further enable data-driven LGBTQ+ inclusion strategies.
- ▶ Extend public support for a national anti-discrimination law such as the SOGIE Equality Bill and other related legislations by providing technical and financial support to lobbying organizations, educating employees on the legislation, and influencing partner suppliers and other stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Since pre-colonial times, LGBTQ+ identities have been recognized as useful and productive members of Filipino society. However, as history unfolded, events led to the eventual marginalization of LGBTQ+ Filipinos in the workplace and in Filipino society in general.

Workplace discrimination, in particular, has insidious effects on an individual's way of life, and through research and testimonials, we can show proof of how stigma and discrimination based on perceived or actual SOGIESC continue to persist⁷⁻¹⁰. In the 2018 study conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labor Organization (ILO)¹⁰, it was reported that 33% of Filipino respondents experienced harassment and discrimination in the workplace due to their SOGIESC.

Discrimination can occur at all stages of an individual's professional life, and could even start at the recruitment level^{7,8}. Although there are already notable workplaces claiming to be equal opportunity providers, the culture and human resource processes within these spaces can remain discriminatory. Trans employees can still be coerced into repressing their gender identities and expressions with threats of termination and can be barred from accessing facilities that are often gendered⁸. In some cases, LGBTQ+ Filipinos are hired based on their lack of rights and legal entitlements—with companies seeing them as more desirable as the company no longer needs to provide them with benefits and considerations often afforded to employees with spouses and families (e.g., maternity leaves, spouses as beneficiaries)⁷. This is because although the Labor Code of the Philippines mentions that the state shall ensure equal opportunities for all employees in its Declaration of Basic Policy, the same does not include SOGIESC as protected attributes¹¹.

For this reason, advocates have been pushing for a national anti-discrimination law recognizing discrimination based on perceived or actual SOGIESC and containing provisions on workplace and employment⁵. This is in the form of the SOGIE Equality Bill that has been lobbied for more than two decades now. While a bill on protecting LGBTQ+ Filipinos from discrimination is still languishing in Congress, the same advocates are working on lobbying at the local level through local anti-discrimination ordinances¹². Some of these ordinances explicitly recognize SOGIESC as protected attributes while some are more general in terms of framing¹³. However, these ordinances function more as guidelines and the people and organizations that violate these mandates are rarely, if ever, prosecuted.

It is important for LGUs to work closely with private organizations and employees in order to be able to give weight to these guidelines and enforce mandates. Thus, lobbying for inclusive policies within workplaces through the language of DEI¹⁴ is more vital than ever.

DEI as a framework

As a framework for catering to employees of vulnerable backgrounds¹⁵, DEI has been around since the 90s as a result of the civil rights movement in the USA. This movement has become global, achieving many milestones for LGBTQ+ persons in workplaces across the world.

As a consequence of the recent advances in DEI, there is now an economic cost to exclusion¹. Given this fact, an increasing number of employers are now paying attention to LGBTQ+ employees as a specific target of their DEI strategies.

Introduction

In a study assessing the performance of over 600 firms in the United States from 2003 to 2016, those with inclusive corporate policies and diversity management showed “higher profitability and higher stock market valuations”². Another study found that having LGBTQ+ inclusive policies leads to a 25% higher profitability for non-R&D companies and a 13% increase for R&D companies³.

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation even shows that among those in the Fortune 500, 90% explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity in their non-discrimination policies and 73% even offer transgender-inclusive health insurance coverage¹⁶. DEI policies and programs are now being recognized as beneficial as they strengthen innovation, expand markets; attract a more diverse workforce; increase employee engagement, retention, and well-being; and boost workforce performance¹⁷.

From the point of view of LGBTQ+ employees, these DEI policies are seen as beneficial as they create a safe and accepting workplace environment that sanctions stigma and discrimination, provides psychological safety, and encourages support from coworkers¹⁸⁻²⁰.

In a survey conducted by Accenture in 2020, 71% of LGBTQ+ employees say that seeing support coming from non-LGBTQ+ colleagues is important for them to enjoy being at work, and 71% also say that seeing people like themselves in senior leadership positions helps them thrive²¹. With this type of environment, these employees report being able to put more focus and energy into their work^{18,20}.

Like any policy, DEI policies and programs vary, depending on the level of commitment of employers and the wider legal and cultural context. Generally, they include equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination policies on the basis of SOGIESC; transgender-inclusive institutional practices and insurance coverage schemes; equal benefits for LGBTQ+ domestic partners; internal LGBTQ+ ERGs and networks; SOGIESC diversity training for staff and management; networking and mentoring programs for LGBTQ+ employees; internal Pride events or LGBTQ+ awareness campaigns; and public philanthropy and commitment to LGBTQ+ rights²².

DEI in the Philippines

There is still a dearth of quantitative data measuring the extent and benefits of DEI for companies in the Philippines, but PFIP in its 2021 LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion Report and Babaylanes in their 2023 study²³ surfaced themes identified by LGBTQ+ employees on how DEI programs and policies can help constitute organizational development. Employees feel safer in their workplace when DEI policies are in place, allowing them to work without worrying about stigma and discrimination that goes unsanctioned. Moreover, pushing for DEI initiatives can help build a company's social reputation, as these companies are more commonly perceived as more socially responsible than their non-diverse counterparts.

Lastly, employees of companies with DEI initiatives feel that they are more productive as a result of the organizational attention being given to their well-being. This attention, coupled with on-the-job benefits on the personal level, has convinced these employees to stay longer in their companies²³. This aligns with Deloitte's 2022 study²⁴ that reveals how LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to remain in inclusive workplaces.

AXA Asia conducted a survey in 2021²⁵ on Filipino employees and found that 76% reported valuing DEI education and promotion. Sharing the same principles and commitments with their companies, employees are then connected to their work, colleagues and the overall organizational mission that can contribute to their overall satisfaction²³.

From our cursory review of quantitative research on DEI in the Philippines, we found two studies that comprehensively examine LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion in the country: a study by the Philippine LGBT Chamber of Commerce (PLCC) in 2018²⁶, and a study by the PFIP in 2021²⁷, with the latter updated and expanded by this survey conducted in 2024.

PFIP 2021 Workplace Inclusion Survey

In 2021, 104 companies across 22 industries participated in PFIP's Workplace Inclusion Survey. Among the participants were PFIP's then more than 50-strong roster of member organizations.

The survey measured six key facets of inclusivity²⁷. These are:

- **Inclusive Policies;**
- **Inclusive Benefits;**
- **Organizational Support;**
- **Technology For Inclusion;**
- **Education & Enablement; And**
- **Social Responsibility & Thought Leadership.**

The results were promising as majority of the participant organizations declared having initiatives towards meaningful inclusion to ensure that every team member can work without fear of stigma and discrimination in the workplace. **The study found the following key insights²⁷.**

- **86% of their participant workplaces had anti-discrimination policies.**
- **75% had equal medical benefits.**
- **82% had executive allies and DEI champions driving inclusion.**
- **71% recognized the lived names through their technology systems.**
- **80% offered general DEI trainings.**

Stemming from the survey's learnings, the organization launched the PFIP Playbook in 2023. The Playbook foregrounds the best practices and serves as a self-learning and training tool for PFIP member and non-member companies in fostering LGBTQ+ inclusion for employees.

PFIP once again conducted the Workplace Inclusion Survey from 2023 to 2024 to see how inclusive Philippine companies are now. Aligned with this objective is to monitor if there have been changes since 2021, examine the interplay among the key facets of inclusivity, and inform companies on entry points in transforming their workplaces to be more LGBTQ+-inclusive.

METHOD

Method



PARTICIPANTS

Multinational companies in the Philippines, major Philippine private employers, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the country, and select government offices (all referred to as companies) were invited to participate in the study. Through the professional networks of PFIP, the invitation was extended to both PFIP members and non-members. Companies were selected through quota sampling. Data collection stopped when we reached more than 100 valid responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

MATERIALS

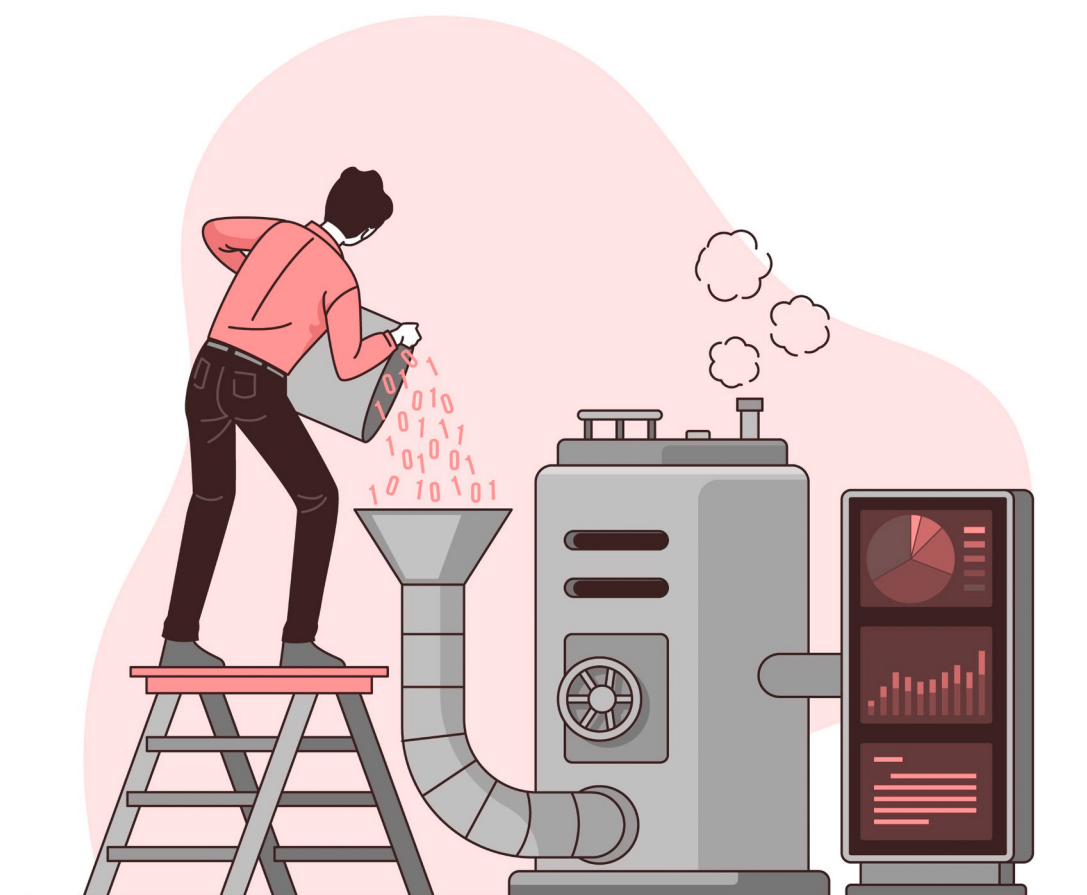
The survey instrument was a set of **83 items** developed by PFIP, covering *seven key facets of inclusivity*:

- **INCLUSIVE POLICIES** (eight items);
- **INCLUSIVE BENEFITS** (eight items);
- **ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT** (19 items);
- **TECHNOLOGY FOR INCLUSION** (six items);
- **EDUCATION and ENABLEMENT** (12 items);
- **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY and THOUGHT LEADERSHIP** (13 items);
- **INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK** (5 items)

An additional seven items about basic company information and five items about other information were asked. To ensure comparability with the first wave of the survey, the instrument was adapted from the survey questionnaire used by PFIP for its 2021 LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion Survey.



Method



PROCEDURE

This study used a cross-sectional design to describe and understand LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion in the Philippines.

The participating companies answered a survey through their representative who consulted their human resources (HR) team as well as the company's diversity council and/or LGBTQ+ employee resource group whenever present. To give companies sufficient time to respond, the data collection started in June 2023 and ended in January 2024. Among the responses we received, we removed the duplicate responses (n = 17) and invalid or incomplete responses (n = 1).

To characterize the state of LGBTQ+ inclusion in workplaces in the Philippines, data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. To describe the changes in LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion from 2021—in which the first wave of the survey was conducted—to 2024, we identified those who participated in both the 2021 and 2024 surveys and matched their responses. Descriptive statistics were obtained from these participants. To explore the interplay among key facets of inclusivity, we employed ANOVA-like logistic regression modeling to measure the association of one facet with another. In our modeling, we qualified company size in terms of number of employees, and company type in terms of whether a company was multinational or exclusively local.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Profile of Participating Organizations

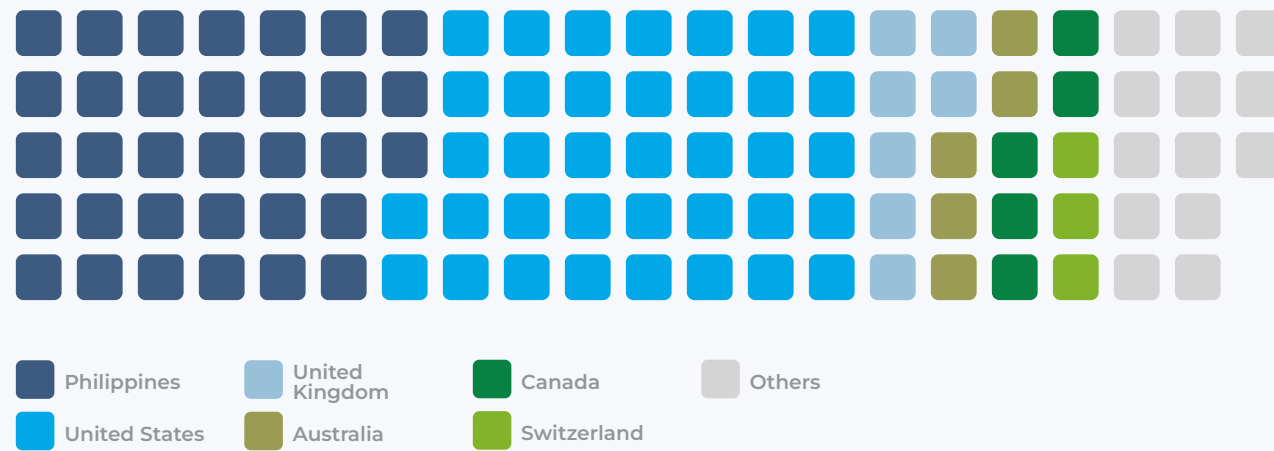
In total, 103 companies participated in the second wave of PFIP's LGBTQ+ Inclusion Survey. While the survey may not represent the entirety of workplace practices in the country, this year's participating companies represent a diverse set of institutions.

These companies have offices across various regions in the Philippines. Of which, 77.7% have offices in Metro Manila, 24.3% in Northern Luzon, 14.6% in Southern Luzon, 30.1% in Visayas, and 16.5% in Mindanao. Among the participating companies, 32.0% have their main operations or headquarters based in the Philippines and 35.9% in the United States. Several companies have their headquarters in countries such as the United Kingdom (6.8%), Australia (4.9%), Canada (4.9%) and Switzerland (2.9%).



Figure 2

Distribution of countries where companies' headquarters are located



The majority of participating companies are multinational (70.9%), while 13.6% are local large enterprises, 4.9% are local small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and 10.7% are government organizations.

Using the updated Philippine Standard Industrial Classification (PSIC) by the Philippine Statistical Authority²⁸, companies are classified as being in the information and communication industry (PSIC J; 23.3%), the finance and insurance industry (PSIC K; 22.3%), in the public administration and defense industry (PSIC O; 10.7%), the professional, scientific, and technical industry (PSIC M; 9.7%), and the administrative and support services industry (PSIC N; 8.7%).

Regarding sizes of the participating companies, majority are large enterprises with 1,000 or more employees (56.3%). Around 10.7% have 500 to less than 1,000 employees, and 33.0% have less than 500 employees.

Among the 103 companies, 74 (71.8%) are PFIP members. Among those 29 who are not PFIP members, 11 are interested in becoming PFIP members, and 10 are possibly interested. This should be considered while going over the findings given that membership to PFIP entails commitment to DEI.

Out of the 103 companies that participated in the 2024 survey and the 104 companies in the 2021 survey, 46 participated in both. Their responses in both surveys were used to determine the changes in the state of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion in the Philippines. With respondent profiles remaining unchanged, this facilitated a more straightforward and robust comparison between 2021 and 2024 responses..

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Findings & Discussion

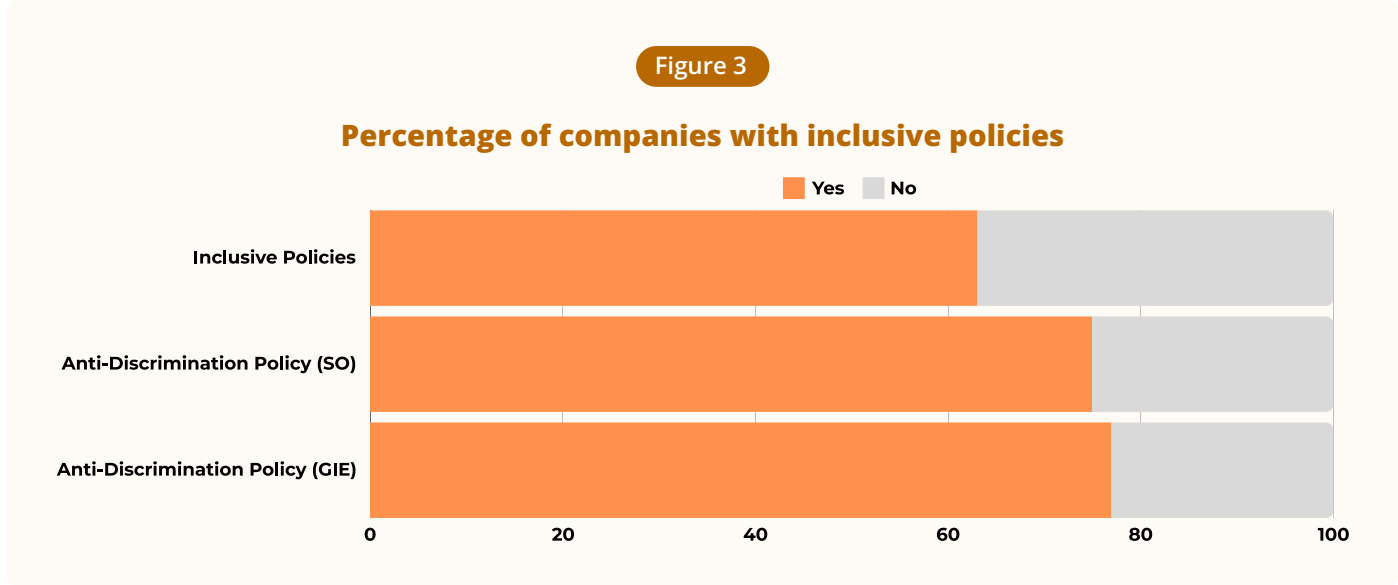
In the succeeding sections, we present and discuss our key findings from the second wave of the PFIP LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion Survey for each of the seven key facets of inclusivity, and highlight notable changes compared with the findings of the first wave.

INCLUSIVE POLICIES

One of the key facets that is being investigated is having inclusive policies. This questions whether companies are implementing LGBTQ+-inclusive policies in their respective workplaces—particularly policies which include as protective attributes or make mentions of SOGIESC.

Findings for 2024

In total, 84.5% of the respondent companies have an LGBTQ+ inclusion or anti-discrimination policy. In particular, almost a third have policies that are explicitly inclusive of LGBTQ+ employees and their



Findings & Discussion

families (64.1%), and more than three quarters have policies protecting employees against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (SO; 75.7%) or gender identity and/or expression (GIE; 76.7%).

Of these companies with inclusive policies, 92.0% are already implementing their inclusion or non-discrimination policy in the Philippines. The remaining few said they have yet to fully implement their policies on LGBTQ+ inclusion and anti-discrimination in the country.

Among those with existing policies on LGBTQ+ inclusion or anti-discrimination, 69 (79.3%) publicize such policies through internal sites (e.g., SharePoint, Intranet, Workday) accessible to employees, 61 (70.1%) by including such policies in onboarding documents shared to new hires, and 70 (80.5%) by asking employees to review and acknowledge that they will abide by their company’s policies or code of conduct regarding LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Moreover, 89 companies (86.4%) have existing grievance procedures that allow LGBTQ+ employees to raise concerns if they experience any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination in the workplace.

Among those organizations with grievance procedures in place, 54 (60.7%) have a trained grievance officer who is trained in LGBTQ+ inclusion and assigned to handle LGBTQ+-related grievances. In some companies, their trained grievance officer is part of their HR or DEI team. Other companies have ethics or complaints helplines and non-retaliation policies to ensure confidentiality in reporting and to protect employees who report harmful, discriminatory, or unethical behaviors of others.

This is a crucial component of securing LGBTQ+ rights, seeing that as of the time of publication of these findings, the Philippines still has not enacted a national anti-discrimination law.

The participants of this survey belonging to companies without SOGIE-inclusive policies also expressed that they have no LGBTQ+ employees or that no discrimination takes place against their LGBTQ+ employees—implying that there is currently no need to enact these policies. However, regardless of whether companies have openly LGBTQ+ employees or not, having these policies in place remains important.

In Deloitte’s study²⁴, it was found that LGBTQ+ people are more likely to remain in inclusive workplaces. Similarly, participants of the study of Babaylanes in 2024²³ shared that having policies in place allowed them to feel safe and supported and said they would rather remain in companies wherein DEI is institutionally upheld. Having codified policies provides employees with a general feel of how inclusive their workplace is¹⁴. These policies also ensure inclusive policies are sustained as they are institutionalized, whereas personnel who contribute to making safe spaces may come and go¹⁴. It’s essential to emphasize this point, especially with the increasing diversity of the Filipino talent pipeline driven by a growing number of young Filipinos embracing their LGBTQ+ identities³¹.

Comparing 2024 and 2021 Findings

Comparing companies who participated in both the 2024 and 2021 Philippine LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion Surveys (n = 46 companies), we saw a slight increase in the percentage of companies that now have anti-discrimination policies based on sexual orientation (+2.2%). The general increase of companies adopting inclusive policies parallels the increase of anti-discrimination ordinances in the Philippines.



INCLUSIVE BENEFITS

This facet questions whether companies provide benefits to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ employees. This looks into the benefits often received by non-LGBTQ+ employees and their partners and whether they are extended to LGBTQ+ employees and their partners. This includes medical benefits, insurance, and other related ones.

Findings for 2024

Inclusive benefits for same-sex domestic partners

Among the reporting companies, 80 (77.7%) provide equivalent medical benefits for married different-sex couples and same-sex domestic partners. Likewise, 65 (63.1%) provide equivalent group life insurance benefits.

There are also 64 (62.1%) companies that consider same-sex domestic partners as immediate family members for purposes of other benefits. Among these 64 companies, 38 (59.4%) explicitly define families and parents to include LGBTQ+ parents in their policies for benefits.

Table 1

Frequency of companies with family-related benefits

Family-related Benefits	Frequency	Percentage
Emergency Leave	44	42.7%
Mental Health Coverage	40	38.8%
Employee Assistance Program	37	35.9%
Parental Leave	33	32.0%
Emergency Loan	20	19.4%
Adoption Leave	16	15.5%
Relocation Benefits	11	10.7%

As of writing, having equivalent benefits for same-sex domestic partners is still not mandated by the law. Most of the legalities that safeguard LGBTQ+ rights come from autonomous third parties that enforce an internationally recognized set of rules.

One such governing body is the Insurance Commission of the Philippines (IC). In 2020, IC was obliged to clarify that Filipino same-sex domestic partners can be beneficiaries of their partner's life and health insurance as long as the requirements for insurability are met. This came about after LGBTQ+ advocates posed an inquiry to as to the legality of same-sex partners being excluded from the use of this financial tool.

This highlights the importance of advocates working hand in hand with corporations and institutions to enact change within the structure of the same to provide inclusivity through the language of DEI.

- It is commendable how companies proactively explore arrangements that can accommodate the needs of LGBTQ+ employees. This also indicates that there is a demand from businesses for a national law to provide equal benefits.

“To the extent that we can provide benefits to same-sex partners and children, we make arrangements to ensure that is given. We are limited by government policies.... As a medium-sized firm, our HMO does not include LGBTQ+ families in the definition of beneficiaries although we have been able to extend HMO [benefits] to LGBTQ+ family members through other arrangements.”

ON PROVIDING LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE BENEFITS

Inclusive benefits for transgender employees

Majority of the companies promote inclusion of transgender employees by recognizing lived names and pronouns as part of workplace culture (75.7%), providing gender-inclusive facilities such as restrooms and sleeping quarters (72.8%), and having a gender-inclusive dress code (55.3%). There is still no legal gender recognition for transgender Filipinos, but this does not stop companies from recognizing the gender identities of transgender and non-binary employees. There are even those who would go as far as supporting their medical transition. Companies also recognize that by allowing transgender employees to be recognized at work as their lived names, pronouns, and to come to their workplace in the attire that affirms their gender, they cultivate a safe space for everyone—a space that also pays attention to employees' mental health needs²³.

Comparing 2024 and 2021 Findings

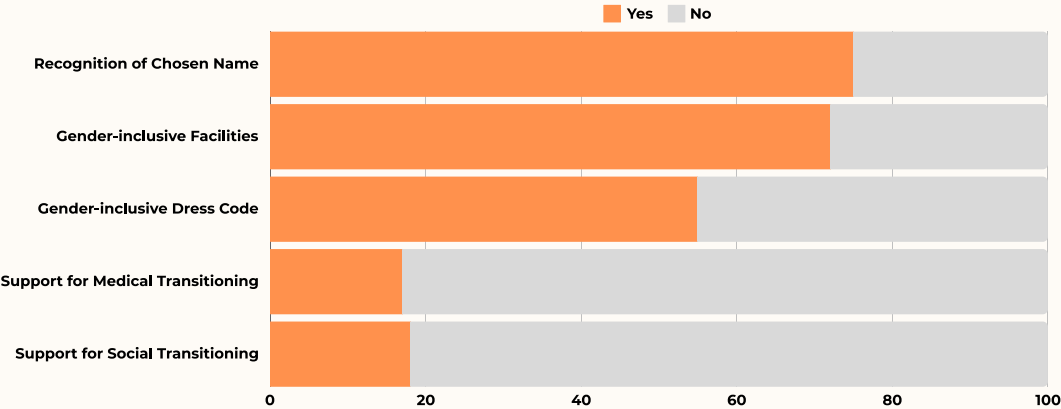
There have been considerable increases in the percentages of companies providing various benefits to LGBTQ+ employees from 2021 to 2024. More companies are providing equivalent medical benefits for married different-sex couples and same-sex domestic partners (+8.7%), providing equivalent life insurance benefits (+13.0%), and considering same-sex domestic partners as immediate family members for purposes of other benefits (+15.2%).

Regarding trans-inclusive policies and benefits, great increases are observed in the percentage of companies with gender-inclusive dress code (+91.3%), policy on recognition of lived name (+19.6%), gender-inclusive facilities (+17.4%), and support for medical transition (+10.9%).



Figure 4

Percentage of companies with inclusive benefits for transgender employees



ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

This facet looks into organizational support for DEI initiatives by investing in initiatives of executive allies, inclusion champions and LGBTQ+-related employee resource groups. This means having dedicated DEI leaders, proactive support from executives and management, and LGBTQ+ networks that take an active role in companies to meet strategic DEI goals.

Comparing 2024 and 2021 Findings

Executive allies and inclusion champions

Almost all companies have executive allies and inclusion champions (92.2%). A large percentage of the participating companies have a dedicated DEI leader who is accountable for the overall DEI programming (77.7%), leaders on the executive level championing LGBTQ+ inclusion (80.6%), and visible and vocal ally executives who serve as role models to employees (84.5%). About two-thirds have openly LGBTQ+ executives (65.0%). In about three-quarters of the companies, business leaders are held accountable to deliver DEI targets for LGBTQ+ inclusion (73.8%).

Companies that prioritize inclusion can come in the form of an individual or a team. LGBTQ+ and DEI leaders can be tasked with integrating inclusion into the company's core operations. They can collaborate closely with employee-led LGBTQ+ groups to devise strategies for fostering inclusion. This avoids treating DEI efforts as occasional endeavors which may overlook numerous opportunities that could be realized with dedicated LGBTQ+ personnel or teams consistently focused on advancing inclusion¹⁴.

LGBTQ+ employee resource groups

Among the 103 companies, 72.8% have LGBTQ+ networks for their employees in the Philippines. While a lot of the companies already have employee resource groups for their LGBTQ+ employees, prevailing negative attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people in the country may have restricted some LGBTQ+ employees to come out and publicly associate with LGBTQ+-specific groups²⁹. As stated by one of the participants, "LGBTQ+ employees are not yet comfortable being labeled just yet...more so getting into a formal organized group."

It is true that not every employee would be comfortable in being labeled as part of or being affiliated with the LGBTQ+ community. However, it must be mentioned that the goal of inclusivity is to create a truly inclusive and safe environment, where equality is par for the course and identification is not required, and where coming out should be done or not on an employee's own terms.

Groups are also of importance as DEI becomes easier to promote by having a local LGBTQ+ network, or what is more commonly known as an employee resource group (ERG). An ERG is simply a group of employees gravitating toward each other because of a shared interest such as photography as hobby, identity such as being a pet owner, or goal such as creating an inclusive workplace. In order to navigate the dilemma of being associated to LGBTQ+ groups, various organizations name their ERGs creatively such as "Diversity ERG" or "Pride and Allies ERG."

Most of these 75 LGBTQ+ networks or LGBTQ+ ERGs organize LGBTQ+-related activities (89.3%) and act as support groups for LGBTQ+ individuals (82.7%). A lot of these LGBTQ+ ERGs also play an advisory role when it comes to LGBTQ+ inclusive policies, HR programs and benefits (73.3%). Additionally, many LGBTQ+ ERGs directly impact their business and organizational objectives (42.7%). These activities done by LGBTQ+ ERGs help achieve diversity and inclusion for their companies. In fact, the objectives of 92.0% of the groups align with the overall DEI strategies of their companies.

"Our Pride Community leads programs for amplifying the voices of our LGBTQ+ community members and celebrating their uniqueness. They partner with HR and sponsors in continuously educating leaders and employees of everyone's role in creating an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression."

ON THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

Many LGBTQ+ ERGs meet at least once a quarter, with 50.7% meeting more than once per quarter and 32.0% meeting around once per quarter. The remaining LGBTQ+ ERGs meet twice a year at most, commonly meeting during Pride month.

"Our LGBTQ+ [employee resource group] needs more structure and attention. Employees who are [part of the group] are all volunteers and—though very interested and concerned—do not have the bandwidth to do this role as seriously as they want to."

ON THE NEEDED SUPPORT OF EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

Around three-quarters of LGBTQ+ ERGs have documented charter or purpose (73.3%). 88.0% of the LGBTQ+ ERGs have formal roles such as officers, a board and a steering committee. Others also have budget specifically granted for the group (66.7%) and have senior management and executive leaders actively participating in the LGBTQ+ ERGs. Of these groups, a participant stated that "there was help from HR on organization and structuring."



- LGBTQ+ ERGs have emerged either organically with a group of people realizing that they have a role to cultivate a safe and inclusive workplace, or formally through a structure organized by management. Once ERGs have been organized, having a documented charter and purpose that align with corporate DEI strategies helps ERG leaders plan their activities.
- In the long run, a strong, mature and experienced LGBTQ+ ERG plays a crucial role in organizational evolution because they also serve as collaborators in achieving business goals. This also helps in ensuring that the ways that DEI will be implemented in the workplace are employee-led and therefore grounded to what the employees need¹⁴.

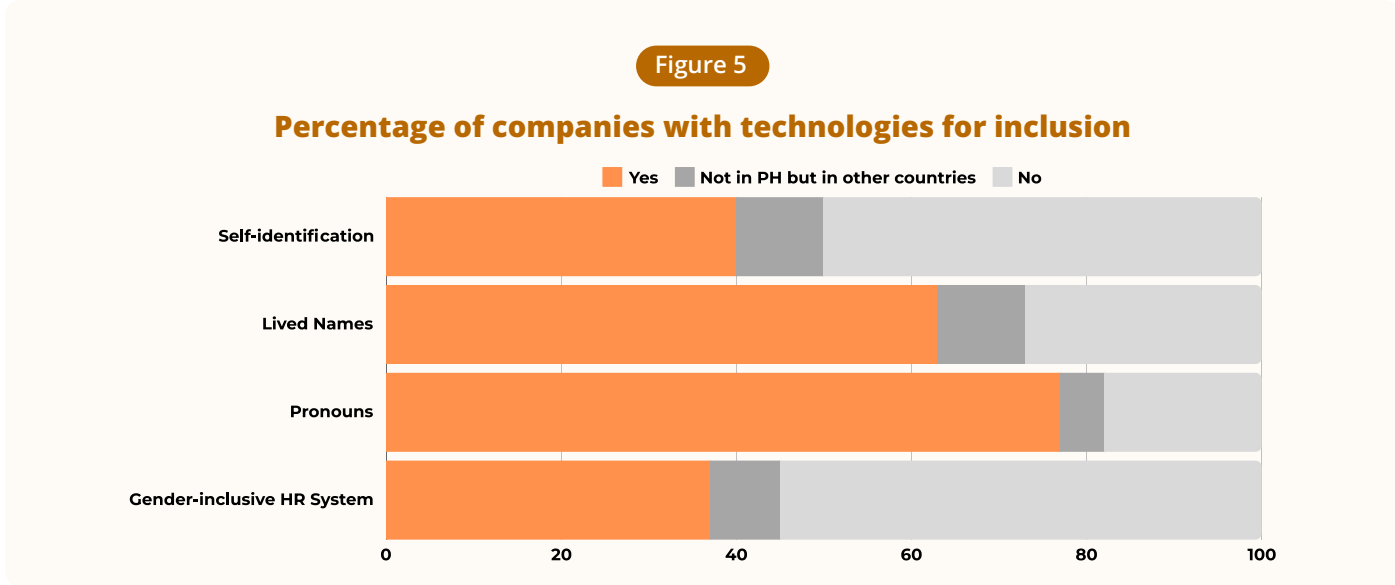
Comparing 2024 and 2021 Findings

While the percentage of companies with a dedicated DEI leader remained unchanged since 2021, the study saw an increase in the percentage of companies with leaders on the executive level driving the priorities for LGBTQ+ inclusion (+6.5%) and with executives and leaders who are visible and vocal LGBTQ+ allies who serve as role models to their employees (+6.5%).

There has been a large increase in the percentage of companies with LGBTQ+ ERGs for their employees (+21.7%). Even PFIP’s roster of member companies has increased, and this 2024 survey showed that among the 29 participating companies who are not yet members, 11 expressed interest in joining. Companies are seeing the significance of having dedicated groups and are investing in them to ensure that DEI developments in their companies are employee-led and respond to the needs of their employees.

TECHNOLOGY FOR INCLUSION

This facet questions whether companies institutionalize diversity and inclusion within their technologies and systems. In particular, human resource systems are looked into to see if they enable LGBTQ+ self-identification and use data to drive LGBTQ+ inclusion strategies.



Findings for 2024

Majority of the companies provide the option to employees to declare their pronouns (78.6%) and lived names instead of their legal names (63.1%) in systems such as e-mails and company directory. Some multinational companies that do not have these technologies enabled in the Philippines have them in other countries.

Even the recognition of the diversity in employees’ identities should be well integrated not just in company policies, but also in information management systems. This strongly indicates how well a company is committed to inclusion, which in turn, builds the company’s integrity from the point of view of LGBTQ+ employees.

“All employees are encouraged to update their pronouns, gender identity, and sexual orientation in our main HR [information system]. This is a confidential and optional program where everyone is encouraged to participate to help the organization understand better the diversity of its people and be able to improve policies accordingly.”

ON LGBTQ+-INCLUSIVE HR INFORMATION SYSTEM

Another participant stated that: “We have a dedicated internal website for all DEI related items, including resources that drive workplace inclusion (LGBTQ+, Women, differently abled, etc.).”

Integrating these practices within the companies’ systems facilitates deeper understanding among their employees of diversities and improves implementation of DEI in workplaces. Among the participating companies, more than half use data they collect over time to impact their LGBTQ+ inclusion strategy (59.2%). Lastly, taking these steps communicates to prospective consumers, clients, and partners that the company fosters a sense of diversity and inclusivity which appeals to individuals and organizations sharing similar values¹⁴.

Comparing 2024 and 2021 Findings

Compared with 2021 data, more companies have utilized technologies to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion. We observed a significant increase in the percentage of companies providing an option to employees to declare their pronouns in systems such as e-mails and company directories (+32.6%). There are also increases in the percentages of companies that have a program for voluntary self-identification of LGBTQ+ employees (+15.2%), and gender-inclusive HR system (+10.9%). Furthermore, more companies are employing data-driven LGBTQ+ inclusion strategies compared to 2021 (+16.2%).

EDUCATION AND ENABLEMENT

Training courses that educate employees and career opportunities that enable workplaces are at the heart of DEI. In this facet, the survey asked participating companies about their LGBTQ+ inclusion training programs for their employees.



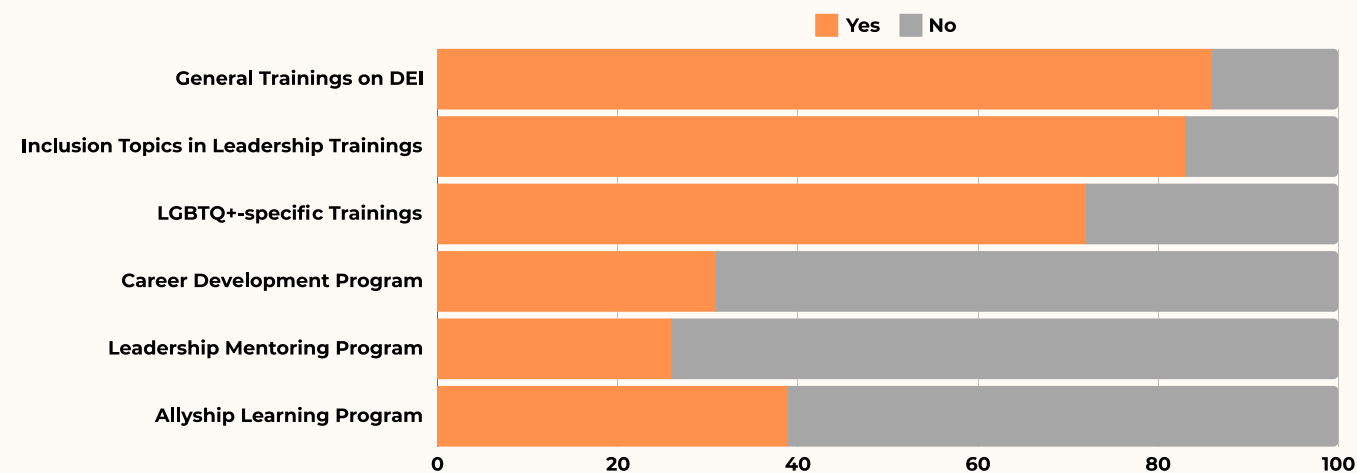
Findings for 2024

Most of the companies have training on general DEI topics that employees can take (85.4%) and embed inclusion topics, such as unconscious bias and inclusive leadership, in their leadership and management trainings (82.5%). A lot of the companies also offer LGBTQ+-specific trainings to all their employees (70.9%). Such trainings include basic workshops and forums on gender and sexuality (e.g., SOGIESC) and LGBTQ+ leadership.

Almost all of the companies employ at least one strategy to promote inclusion in onboarding and hiring (81.6%). Many include discussion of workplace inclusion policies and practices during onboarding (61.2%) and use inclusive and gender-neutral language for job descriptions (67.0%).

Figure 5

Percentage of companies providing trainings and programs on LGBTQ+ inclusion



Training is an essential and integral backbone of DEI. Without it, it will not be feasible to implement inclusive policies and programs. PFIP even provides certification for companies doing training on SOGIE 101 (The Business of Inclusion) and 102 (Focus on the Transgender Experience). While all DEI initiatives normally commence through training, these courses should run on a more regular basis to ensure employees are continuously educated and integrated into the desired company culture. They are also ideally conducted by a trainer who is not only well versed in the technicalities of the material, but can also provide perspective acquired from lived experience, i.e. someone from the LGBTQ+ community.

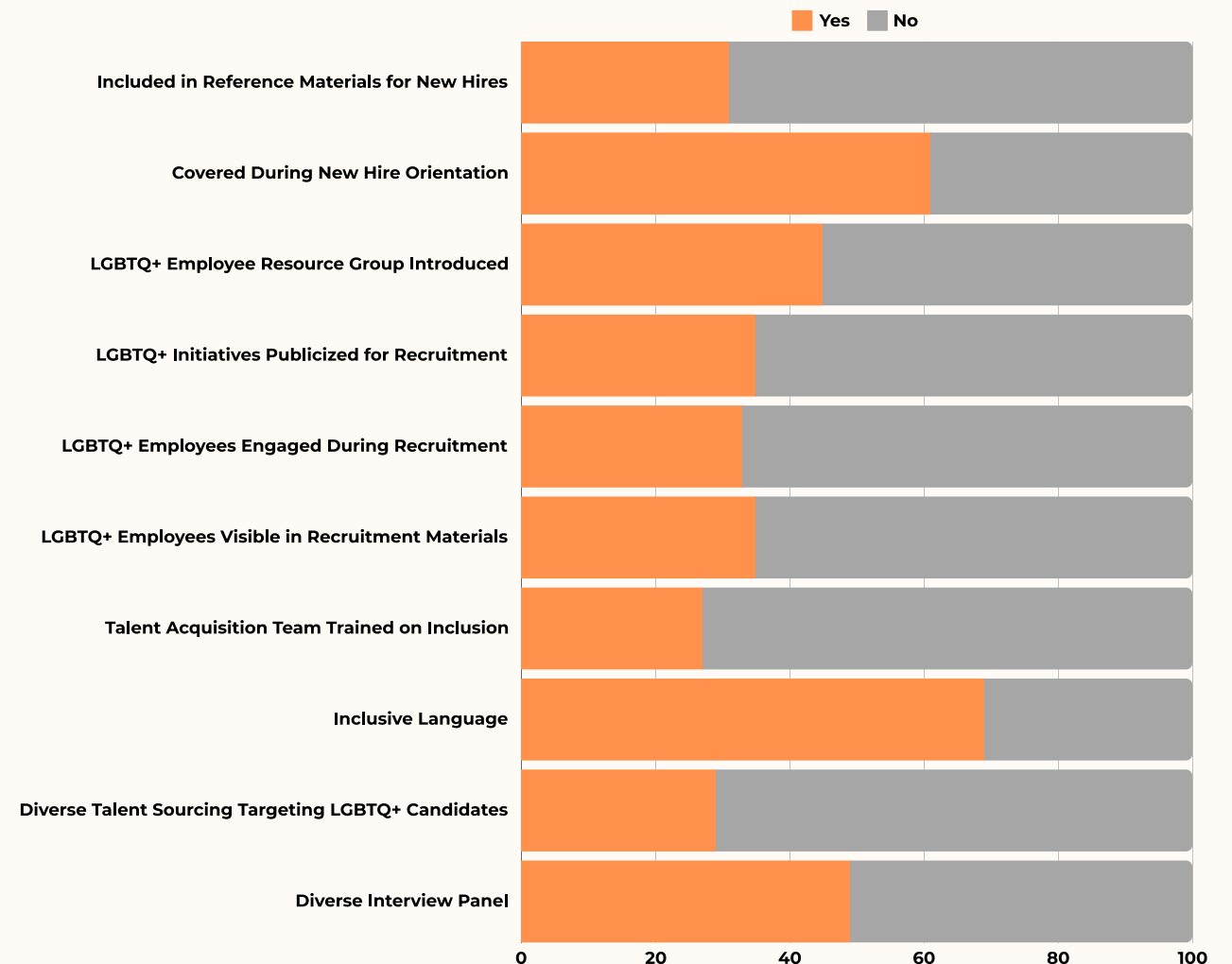
Sustained and consistent training programs ensure that companies' efforts are sincere and not tokenistic. These will also create an image that allyship is not just something employees should comply with on a one-time basis, but rather something that they should actively live by on a day-to-day basis^{14 23}.

Comparing 2024 and 2021 Findings

More companies now have available training on LGBTQ+ inclusion in 2024. There has been an increase in the percentage of companies with LGBTQ+-specific training (+17.4%), as well as those with general training on DEI (+8.7%) and inclusion topics in leadership trainings (+8.7%).

Figure 6

Percentage of companies employing inclusion strategies during onboarding and hiring



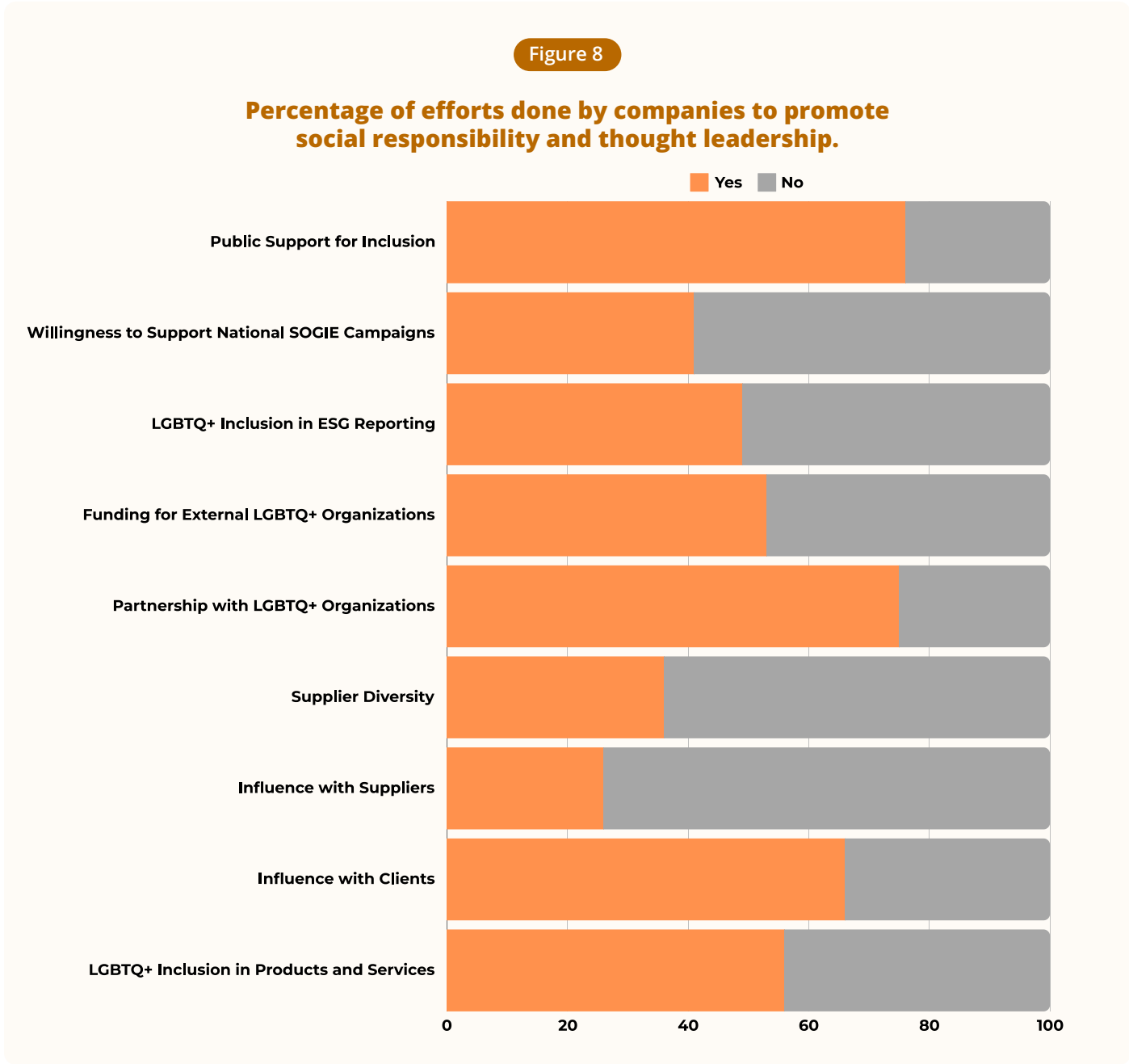
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

The survey asked participating companies about their social responsibility and thought leadership practices that ensure DEI programs by companies are not just confined within their workplaces. This involves public support for LGBTQ+ advocacies, allocation of resources to support LGBTQ+ communities through corporate social responsibility, and even influencing clients, partners and stakeholders on the importance of DEI.

Findings for 2024

Almost all of the companies that participated in the 2024 survey reported efforts to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion even outside their organizations (93.2%). Most companies do this by publicly expressing their support for LGBTQ+ inclusion through social media, mainstream media, or other channels (78.6%). Many of the companies also partner with LGBTQ+ groups outside their organizations (75.7%). The majority of the same promote inclusion by providing funding to support external corporate social responsibility activities for the LGBTQ+ community (57.3%), and through efforts to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion in the products and services that they sell or provide (54.4%). Many also signify their willingness to support national SOGIE

campaigns such as the SOGIE Equality Bill or a national anti-discrimination law (43.7%), and take LGBTQ+ inclusion into account in their environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting (49.5%).



As an increasing number of leading global companies adopt DEI initiatives³⁰, it has become prestigious for other businesses to emulate and receive recognition for their efforts. Implementing DEI practices enhances a company's external eminence or reputation, which may manifest through training certification, accolades, or through high rankings in surveys. These achievements enable companies to differentiate themselves from competitors²³.

Corporate policies and company culture make a significant social and humanitarian difference. Aside from working actively with community-based LGBTQ+ organizations, companies can also work directly with government institutions. Such was the case of an advertising agency that partnered with the Quezon City government for the Right to Care Card³².



Comparing 2024 and 2021 Findings

Compared with the 2021 findings, we find considerable increases in percentages of companies that provide funding to support external corporate social responsibility activities for the LGBTQ+ community (+23.9%), and influence their corporate clients to enable their LGBTQ+ inclusive workplace cultures (+15.2%).

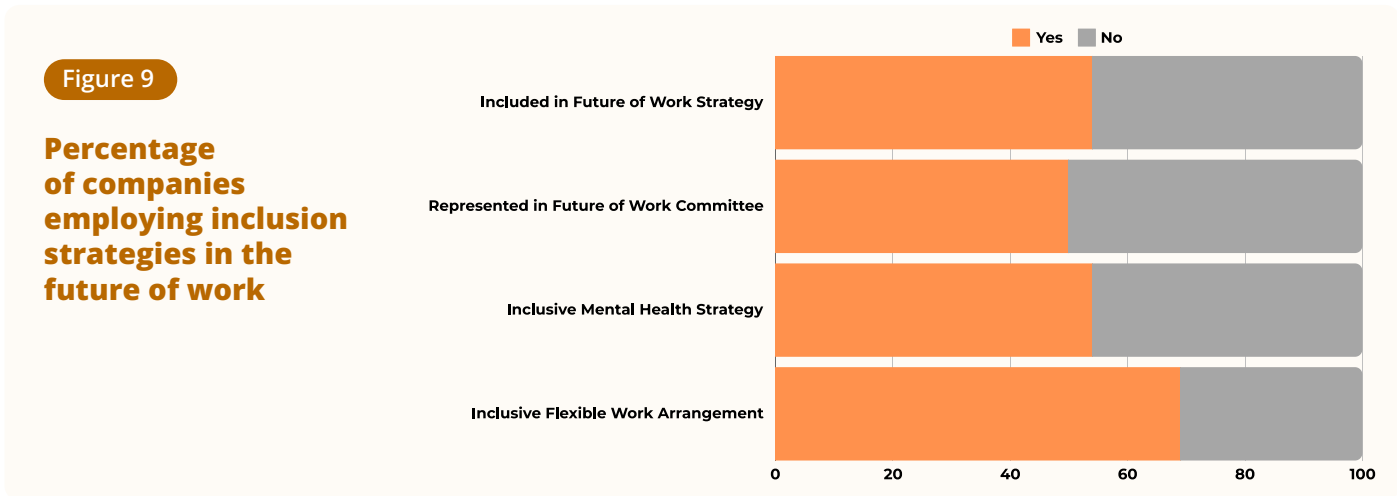
INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

The inclusive future of work is a new facet being introduced in this 2024 survey. The survey asked participating companies whether they recognize LGBTQ+ employees as an important element in strategizing the future of work. The facet also measures the inclusion of LGBTQ+ as companies establish agile workplaces that are able to respond to future challenges of work.

Findings for 2024

Majority of companies ensure that LGBTQ+ employees are considered in the overall future of work. They do this by offering flexible work arrangements that are inclusive of diverse demographic groups including LGBTQ+ employees (66.0%), having a formal mental health strategy that considers the intersectional needs of diverse demographic groups such as LGBTQ+ people (55.3%), and having an LGBTQ+-inclusive future of work strategy (55.3%). Meanwhile, others have a representative from the LGBTQ+ community in committees or groups where future of work decisions are made (50.5%).

The drive for a more inclusive future of work can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, there is the emergence of a younger generation of the Filipino workforce, who embraces the fact that LGBTQ+ individuals are entering the workforce. This is on top of how the Philippine social structure is already more accepting of LGBTQ+ identities compared to other Asian countries³¹. However, with the growing number of companies delving into or actively adopting technology solutions to deal with the future of work, workforce and workplace, there is also a need to exercise caution. While artificial intelligence and other technologies are being utilized to improve efficiency, several studies³³ have already shown potential biases against minorities including LGBTQ+ people. This further highlights the need for companies to loop in LGBTQ+ ERGs and representatives in decision-making processes regarding the future of work. This inclusion helps safeguard companies against the risk of losing a diverse and highly skilled talent pool.



THE INTERPLAY AMONG INCLUSIVITY FACETS FOR LGBTQ+ INCLUSION

In this section, we explore how key facets of inclusivity interrelate with each other toward a transformational and inclusive workplace for LGBTQ+ employees. We look into associations among several key facets of inclusivity to surface the dynamics among them. Particularly, we examine two relationships.

Figure 10

Framework for interplay between facets for LGBTQ+ inclusion.



We recognize that companies operate under various circumstances that enable or restrict them in promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion either through policies or benefits afforded to their employees. Because of this, we take into account the effects of two crucial variables that may affect whether companies have inclusive policies or benefits: size of the company in terms of number of employees, and type of company in terms of whether they are multinational or local.

The role of education and enablement

Overall, we found that having trainings on LGBTQ+ inclusion support the formation of LGBTQ+ networks and groups for employees. Considering company size and whether a company is multinational or local, we found that companies in which inclusion topics are embedded in leadership trainings are 9.3 times more likely to have LGBTQ+ employee resource groups. Likewise, companies with a career development program for their LGBTQ+ employees and allyship learning program are 4.4 times and 6.0 times, respectively, more likely to have LGBTQ+ employee groups.

Conducting trainings on LGBTQ+ inclusion may also impact inclusive leadership. In particular, our data suggest that companies that conduct general trainings on DEI are 5.9 times more likely to have executives championing LGBTQ+ inclusion, and 3.4 times more likely to have out LGBTQ+ executives. Additionally, companies that incorporate inclusion topics in leadership trainings are 4.4 times more likely to have executives championing LGBTQ+ inclusion, and 5.1 times more likely to have out LGBTQ+ executives. Likewise, specific trainings on LGBTQ+ topics also translate to more inclusive leadership. We found that companies with LGBTQ+-specific trainings are 7.9 times more likely to have leaders on the executive level driving the priorities for LGBTQ+ inclusion.

The role of inclusive leadership and LGBTQ+ employee resource groups

Lastly, we need to understand how inclusive leadership and LGBTQ+ employee resource groups advance inclusive benefits and policies for LGBTQ+ employees. Our findings suggest that these two key facets of inclusivity sustain tangible results for LGBTQ+ employees.

Specifically, companies are 3.8 times and 5.3 times more likely to have LGBTQ+-inclusive policies if they have an LGBTQ+ employee resource group and executives championing LGBTQ+ inclusion, respectively. This means that those with inclusive leadership and LGBTQ+ networks or groups are likely to have all their policies explicitly mentioning the inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees and their families. LGBTQ+ employee resource groups serve not only to bring a sense of belongingness but also to show LGBTQ+ employees that they can work with champions in the executive level to make substantive changes in their workplaces.

Additionally, companies are 3.5 times and 4.1 times more likely to have comprehensive benefits for same-sex domestic partners if they have LGBTQ+ ERGs and inclusion champions at the executive level, respectively. Comprehensive same-sex benefits include equivalent medical benefits, insurance benefits, and other family-related benefits.

On key trans-inclusive benefits, we included recognition of lived names and pronouns, gender-inclusive facilities including restrooms and sleeping rooms, and gender-inclusive dress code. Our data show that companies who have out LGBTQ+ executives are 3.2 times more likely to have key benefits for transgender employees. This emphasizes the importance of visibility of LGBTQ+ executives in promoting a more supportive workplace for LGBTQ+ employees.

OTHER INFORMATION

Out of the 103 participating companies, almost all find it useful to participate in an LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion Index (91.3%). Companies also suggested various ways on how PFIP can support them in strengthening their work on LGBTQ+ inclusion. These include sharing of best practices, resources and data on LGBTQ+ inclusion, support in conducting trainings and implementing inclusion programs such as LGBTQ+ leadership program, diversity in hiring, and certification, support in developing and implementing inclusive policies for LGBTQ+ employees, and support in establishing LGBTQ+ employee resource groups. In general, people are interested to learn about what companies can do to support national campaigns such as the SOGIE Equality Bill.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the 2024 Workplace Inclusion Survey, we suggest the following pathways toward a transformational workplace for LGBTQ+ Filipinos.



For the Philippine government

- Pass and implement LGBTQ+ responsive laws such as the SOGIE Equality Bill that will require and guide all companies to abide with providing equal benefits and opportunities and putting a stop to discrimination in the workplace.



For companies and workplaces

- Continue implementing LGBTQ+ inclusive anti-discrimination policies and equal benefits for same-sex domestic partners.
- Start providing benefits that support transgender employees; including but

not limited to medical transitioning, social transitioning, and access to gender-neutral and/or trans-inclusive facilities.

- Continue providing LGBTQ+-related educational and skill-building sessions for employees and DEI leadership. Such learning sessions may include general training on DEI, specifically basic SOGIESC training and allyship learning programs. Inclusion topics are also recommended to be incorporated in leadership training modules.
- Strengthen career development programs specifically designed for minority groups such as LGBTQ+ employees.
- Intensify support to LGBTQ+ employee resource groups by providing financial resources and organizational assistance from the company's leadership and HR team and establish a properly structured support system to reduce reliance on volunteer efforts
- Improve technologies and systems to further enable data-driven LGBTQ+ inclusion strategies.
- Extend public support for a national anti-discrimination law such as the SOGIE Equality Bill and other related legislations by providing technical and financial support to lobbying organizations, educating employees on the legislation, and influencing partner suppliers and other stakeholders.

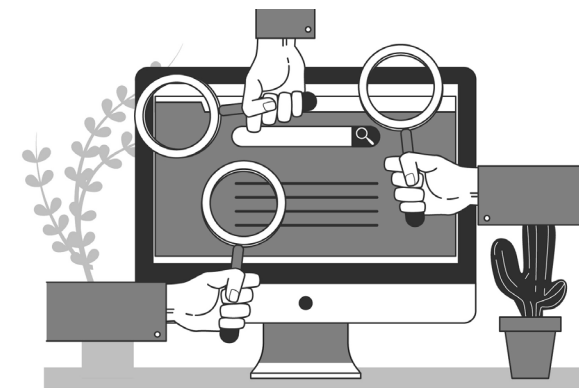


Recommendations



For civil-society and non-governmental organizations

- Maximize companies' corporate social responsibility and interest in expressing public support to strengthen national and local campaigns for LGBTQ+ rights.



For researchers

- Work with LGBTQ+ employee resource groups and community organizations to continue generating new knowledge and insights about LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion in the Philippines.
- Further explore the dynamics among dimensions of inclusion to surface entry points for companies and community organizations to advocate for an inclusive workplace for LGBTQ+ Filipinos.
- Perform more extensive research on the social and economic benefits of DEI in the Philippines to provide stronger evidence for LGBTQ+ inclusion as well as research on the economic power of the pink peso and the economic cost of the lack of inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines.

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