MY SECURITY OUR RESPONSIBILITY

The LBQ security Survey Report

On Rural LBQ Organizing in Western Kenya

by

VOWWEK

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

LBQ	LESBIAN BISEXUAL QUEER
COVID	CORONA VIRUS
LGBTQIA+	LESBIANS,GAY,BISEXUALS,TRANSGENDER,QUEER,INTERSEX,ASEXUA
FGDS	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS
VOWWEK	**VOICES OF WOMEN IN WESTREN KENYA**
KIIS	KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS
Boda-Boda	Motorcycle rider – public transport

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The security situational survey was implemented by VOWWEK and funded by UHAI EHSRI, the overall objective of this survey was to assess the current gaps and opportunities around Security for Rural LBQ Persons in Western Kenya. Findings from this assessment will be used to inform the organizational strategic direction (including the Strategic Plan framework) as well as act as a measurement to monitor the security situation for Rural LBQ organizing in Western Kenya. More specifically, the assessment will seek to answer who are the active Rural LBQ organizing in Western Kenya and what are some of the mitigation mechanism towards Strengthening referral pathways that are already existing.

A total sample of 80 LBQ Person's aged 18 and above 45 years were selected and interviewed in 8 counties i.e. Kisumu, Siaya, Migori, Kakamega, Kisii, Homabay, Vihiga and Busia. Qualitative data was gathered from LBQ organising through focused group discussions with key informant interview guide administered with LBQ CSO leaders.

1.0   BACKGROUND

Due to continued reporting by LBQ organizing on violence that is meted on them and the fact that there is very minimal evidence that is documented to inform multi-dimensional interventions to address security threats and risks, VOWWEK through the support of UHAI ESHRI commissioned a survey to understand the Diverse Security Threats and Risk the Rural LBQ in Western Kenya experience. Findings from organizational community work in Western Kenya has noted that basic needs and safety, housing security, Community connection, Social life and Civic engagement need to be enhanced to form an effective referral Pathways in case of any form of Violations.

Throughout survey and in keeping with VOWWEK's policies the assessment pays particular attention to the needs of the most marginalized segments of the LGBTQ community. It also assessed how LBQ access services and resources in the Western Kenya, identifying gaps between needs, security and available services.

2.0   METHODOLOGY

2.1   Survey Objectives and Design

Objectives

The overall objective of this survey was to assess the current gaps and opportunities around Security for Rural LBQ organizing in the context of Violations, capacity building, accesses to support and care, laws and policies and cultural and religious practices. Findings from this assessment will be used to inform the organizational programming as well as act as a measurement to monitor the security situation for Rural LBQ organizing in Western Kenya More specifically, the assessment will seek to address the following objectives:

1) **To Identify active LBQ organizing in rural western Kenya**
2) **To inform the development of a Training manual which will be used to build the capacity and mitigate Security Challenge's Contextualized to the Threats and Risks in Western Kenya.**
3) **To Strengthen existing Referral Pathways and mechanisms at the Community level**
4) **To Identify the Security gaps and Challenges amongst LBQ organizing**
5) **Advocate for Inclusive intervention in the counties to address security challenges amongst LBQ organizing.**

Survey Design

A mixed method of data collection was used for the survey. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were applied using participatory techniques. Qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) with members of LBQ organizing, aged 18 to 42 years; Key Informant interviews (KIIs) was conducted with 16 Field leaders and Coordinators of LBQ CSO's. Quantitative data was collected through survey questionnaires targeting 64 LBQ women at the community.

2.2 Sample Size Sampling Procedure

2.2.1 Sample Size

A sample size of 80 respondents was proposed for both quantitative (64) and qualitative data with FGDs being done 1 per-site. In both FGDs and KIIs sample size 8 was purposively proposed to cover all stakeholders.

2.3 Data Collection Tools

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected using different data collection tools and at different levels. For quantitative data, questionnaires were administered directly to the respondents and supported by a translator incase a respondent required one. Qualitative data was collected through focus group discussion guides and in-depth interview guides. The tools were adapted and developed by the evaluation team to ensure that all the necessary indicators were captured.

2.4 Informed Consent and Confidentiality

The following measures were taken to secure informed consent and assent of the respondents: explaining the objective of the assessment, the kind of information required and the intended use, and above all, providing reasons for choosing the respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed. Overall, the team ensured that all data was coded and stored safely with limited access at VOWWEK offices.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the security situational survey based on the objectives. The most of the objectives required qualitative responses hence the first section covers the question by objectives followed by the descriptive statistics presenting the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, the knowledge attitude and practice on security threats, risks and opportunities

3.1 Qualitative Response to the Survey Questions

The survey had five Objectives with answers provided under each question.

OBJECTIVE 1: Identify the active Rural LBQ organizing in western Kenya

Even though LBQ Persons have identified various platforms as safety nets for them to express their right to association as envisaged for all citizens in the bill of rights Kenyan constitution chapter 4 Article 36, criminalization of LBQ rights through the penal code articles 162 and 164 has hindered the registration and the ability of those that have registered to openly operate as LBQ organizing for fear of being harassed and prosecuted. A total of 12 LBQ CSO's were found to be active within the 7 participating counties however, there could have been others that are active but operating in fear such that other themes are given prominence as opposed to LBQ agenda. The active CSO's are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Active LBQ CSO's in 7 Counties within western Kenya

Name of the CSO's	County
• MIGORI LBQ • HOMABAY LBQ FEMINIST FORUM • UDADA LBQ ORGANIZATION • ELITE ORGANIZATION • SIAYA LBQ CBO • UJAMI BORA • USAWA JAMI CBO • BUILDING LIVELY HOOD • VOWWEK MEMBERS • MAGARIBI LBQ	• MIGORI • HOMABAY • KISII • BUSIA • SIAYA • KAKAMEGA • KAKAMEGA • KAKAMEGA • KISUMU • VIHIGA

One of the CSO leaders noted that they are normally harassed by Boda-boda operators at the community level, *"There many groups like ours which are active at grassroots level however the operations of our Groups are limited and at times forced to work while disguising the LBQ agenda, this has been due to fear that villagers can organize themselves and violate us. Boda-Boda are the worse in terms of perpetrating violence ",* she further added.

Objective 2: To inform the Develop a Training manual to be used to build the capacity and mitigate security challenges Contextualized to the Threats and Risks in Western Kenya.
Even though there are manuals that focus on improving safety and security of Human Rights Defenders, these manuals do not necessarily focus on the security challenges that LBQ face that result in stigma, discrimination and social exclusion which has a direct impact on their Mental Stability. The respondents noted that it was important to have a Contextualized Training manual that is holistic focusing:
 (i). Personal Security: Living Environment, Digital, Human Rights Trainings, Social Life and Behavioral Intervention
(ii). Self-Care and Wellness Security: IPV dispute and Counseling Sessions, Sexual Rights and Pleasure Security and Mental Health Security
(iii). Organizational Security: Security Plan for the Organization and Systems
(iv). Stakeholders Security Training: To Create Ally Building fir effective Referral Pathways

Objective 3: To Strengthen an effective Referral Pathways and mechanisms
There are no effective referral pathways or mechanisms at the county level to complement the existing interventions and cater for the LBQ organizing within the counties. According to Hera, many LBQ members in the rural areas of Migori would rather access justice in Kisumu which is 2-3hrs away, yet they have trained paralegals amongst them. "I hosted a friend with her partner at my house, the next day my friend left her partner who was a man at my house stating that she would be back only for her not to return and the man refuse to leave my house threatening to kill me. I went to report the matter to the police unfortunately they only made jokes about my situation '*'wewe ushapata bwana shida iko wapi?'* meaning 'You **have already Gotten a husband Where is your Problem?'**. She went to Kisumu and got assistance through paralegals. The respondent was concerned that referral as currently available in not friendly to LBQ women. The judiciary, Police, medical services and even community leadership needs to be have an integrated Training Sessions on inclusivity, Value issues, Clarifications and Attitude Transformation Training (VCAT) to enhance and strengthen effective Referral Pathways towards Access to Justice.

Objective 4: To Identify the Security gaps and Challenges amongst LBQ organizing

LBQ organizing within Western Kenya experience violations that perpetrated by individuals within the community whose perception and attitude towards LBQ is considered sin and taboo as influenced by their religion and cultural beliefs. LBQ members indicated that they have been raped, chased from home, and dropped out of colleges due to sustained insecurity. Discrimination and gender based violence is reported to be on the rise among LBQ, harassment, such as verbal abuse is common especially by Boda-boda and Public transport operators within the community. LBQ Persons are not able to access Justice when they have been violated because of Criminalization of Same Sex Relations and Also Self Stigma limiting LBQ from reporting cases. Due to religious and cultural beliefs family members have forced LBQ women to be married as a correctional measure. The respondents also reported that intimate partner violence among LBQ women was on the rise and leading to increased insecurity, for instance if partners disagree and one decided to separate the other party would out the separating partner to the public leading to attacks. Being a LBQ organizing in Rural Areas and seeking support from the community is difficult as stated by Atieno , "**I was visited by my girlfriend for two days on the 3rd day I got summoned by my landlord who was told there were women sexual noises coming from my house, my neighbors had demanded that I vacate the house since I was a bad example or else they threatened physical harm to me and my partner**"

Objectives 5: **Advocate for Inclusive interventions in the counties to address security challenges amongst LBQ organizing.**

The LBQ organizing leaders noted that counties have had GBVRC Centre's recently sensitized on handling SGBV cases and the COVID-19 call center up-graded to receive emergency alerts on SGBV cases and forward them to police for immediate action, however these services are discriminatory to LBQ women who are forced to report cases as Hetero-sexual in-order for them to receive any services. This has made it hard for the LBQ to even report cases at the police station due to stigma and fear of being persecuted for LBQ. The intervention at the County level as reported only focus on women generally while Persons who identify as LBQ are discriminated and not able to access services freely. There is equally need to have Safe Space for LBQ which is friendly and offers Comprehensive Services including linkage with Police and the judicial system

3.2 Socio-demographic Characteristics

The respondents were varied in educational level thus providing different experiences on matters related to security and recommendations. Majority of the respondent at 60% were of Tertiary level of education while 30 % were O Level and 10 % hand not gone to school. The table below shows the education distribution of the respondents;

Table 2: Educational Level of the respondents

EDUCATION LEVEL

Legend: VIHIGA, KAKAMEGA, KISUMU, SIAYA, BUSIA, KISII, HOMABAY, MIGORI
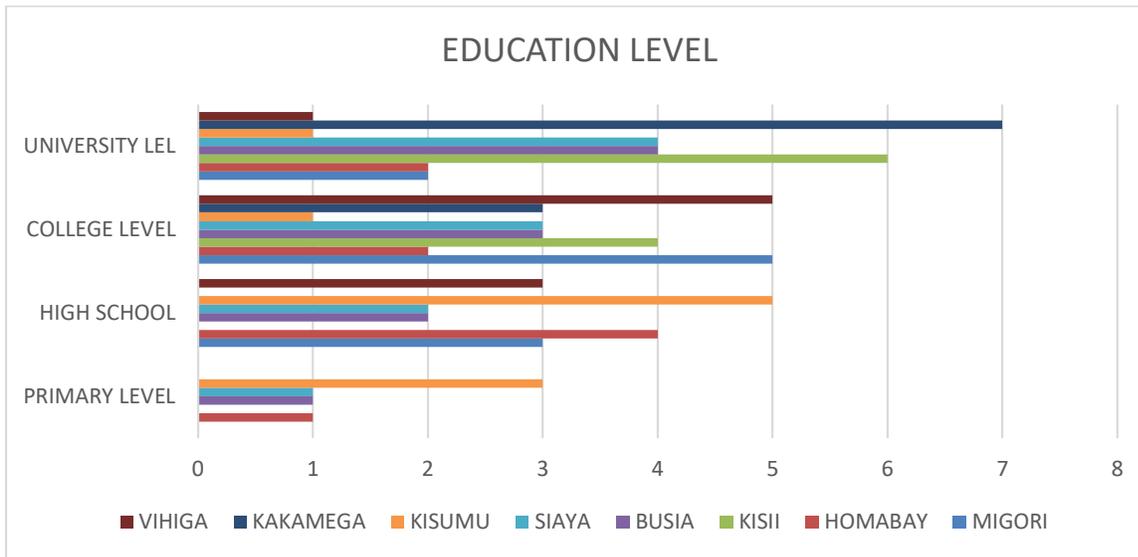
3.3 Sexual Orientation

Finding from the survey also noted that some who identified themselves as LBQ did not Really understood much about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Which Created Self Stigma as Most through the Cultural Beliefs take it as a Taboo, as a result it's a recommendation that LBQ members should be sensitized and trained in order for them to understand Gender, rights, and Sexuality. Respondents indicated that biasness within the movement i.e. LGBTQIA+ is towards LBQ as a result there is need to facilitate a shift of priorities in practice, policy and Funding to Develop effective interventions to support Equal Opportunities.

Table 3: sexual Orientation with Age

SEXUAL ORIENTATION WITH AGE

Legend: Below 20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-36, 37-42
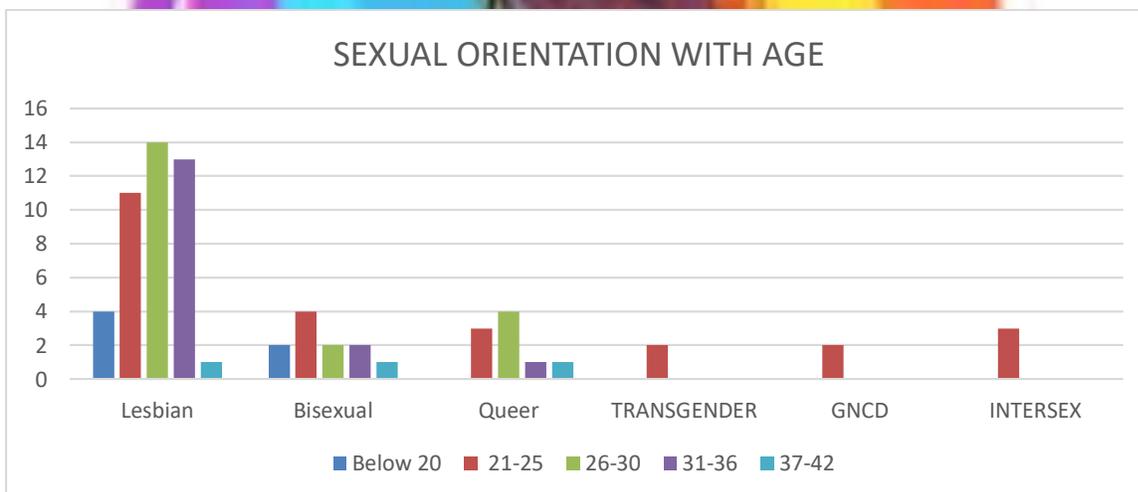
3.4 Risk factors for

Respondents cited laws that criminaliz... ...al sa... ...ations as the primary reason why violations and Harassment have been on ... ...ding ... ...nd intolerable environment for LBQ

individuals. Whereas such punitive laws have been found by international and national courts to violate human rights, including the rights to equality, privacy and non-discrimination, they continue to affect the enjoyment and fulfillment of rights. From desk review, Human rights reports have also emphasized the link between criminalization and homophobic hate crimes, police abuse, torture, family and community violence faced by LBQ Persons. Some of the Risks mentioned by the respondents include the following: -

Specific Risks Factors Faced by the LBQ

- Physical and sexual violence, including beatings, Domestic Violence corrective rape, often to make LBQ individuals conform to society's gender roles and to intimidate others by setting "an example".
- Criminalization of consensual same-sex relations and associated risks of arrest, detention, prosecution and punishment.   Elevate the risks of abuse
- Being compelled to conceal their sexual orientation and / or gender identity, due to fear of abuse, violence and loss of assistance.
- Discriminatory laws and practices relating to employment, housing, healthcare, education and family law and child custody, resulting in severe difficulties accessing basic services as A Kenyan.
- Family and community rejection, lack of support networks, and vulnerability to violence.
- Lack of access to safe and appropriate housing for at- risk individuals, which may further increase the risk of physical and sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Forced marriage.
- Dependence on abusive same sex relationships for protection, shelter or food
- Evictions from homes due to land lords and others discovering their sexuality
- Severe psychological after -effects (e.g. PTSD, depression or anxiety) relating to past and ongoing physical and sexual violence, exclusion, and other harms flowing from ones Sexuality.
- Corrective rape has been witnessed this year and a lot face threats from boda-boda operators within their area.
- No Comprehensive SRHR Healthcare to Support the LBQ Individuals in case of any Violations that needs Medical Attention to support access to Justice
- Poor justice systems

Table 3: Influencers of threats and risk

LBQ Women's security is dependent on the way they carry themselves around the communities they live in and with fellow peers as we noted some of the influencers were brought about by the colonial beliefs of it being unreligious forcibly taken for prayers to remove the demons of Homosexuality. Other influenced by the mere fact that its un-African leading to families disowning and throwing out their LBQ daughters. This made us realize that security is dependent on security in the home, as well as protection from violence and sexual harassment in public spaces and work places.

"one of my ex-partner was drunk in a club and we were a group of LBQ we always go to social places together, once drunk my ex-partner shouted loudly after some altercation with a man that we were all her wives and she has "" HAD" us all." This sent a bad message to the men there that led to us being threaten and asked never to go that club again.

Action by various state entities, such as _____ stic _____ ealth systems, to put into place concrete actions to address security nee _____ dispa _____ that affect the LBQ rural women. In this context, these are some of the Inf _____ o acc _____ of threat and risks to security of LBQ women within Western Kenya.

INFLUENCERS OF THREATS AND RISKS FOR LBQ WOMEN
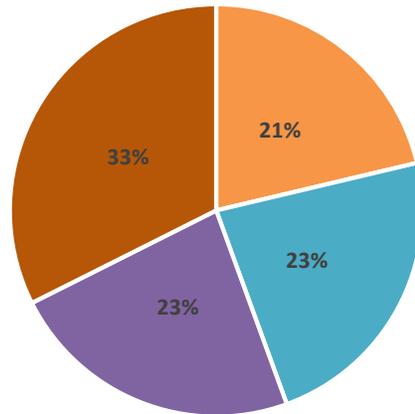
Pie chart legend: RELIGION AND CULTURE, FAMILY, IPV LBQ, SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR LBQ
Values: 21%, 23%, 23%, 33%

Table 2: Perpetrators of Violence

Analysis from the FGDS and questionnaires including KII reported Boda-boda, Police and intimate partners within the LBQ community as some of the perpetrators of violence promoting insecurity among LBQ women. Stigma and discrimination that is mostly the root cause of the insecurities is further enhanced by religious and cultural beliefs, while the police have taken advantage of the penal code 162 to harass LBQ women.

PERPETRATORS
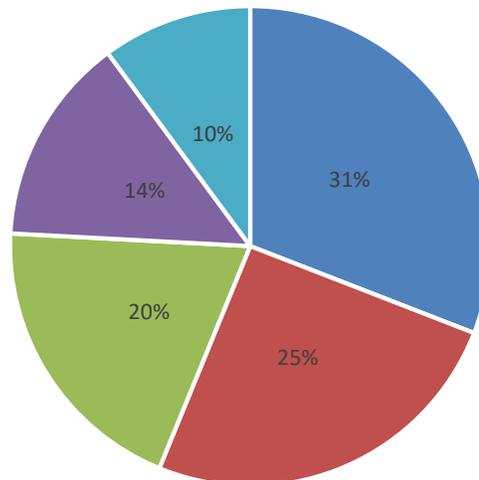
Pie chart legend: IPV, NEIGHBOURS, POLICE, BODA-BODA, CHIEF AND NYUMBA KUMI
Values: 31%, 25%, 20%, 14%, 10%

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Recommendations

In order to effectively address insecurity among LBQ its important to note that stigmatization and Oppression faced by LBQ can take different forms, ranging from daily low-level harassment to immediate threats to life and freedom. It is also important to consider that LBQ Sub-groups may experience persecution and discrimination in distinct ways as reported during the assessment. For instance, a lesbian woman may face particular risks due to being lesbian but may also share risks in common as Heterosexual Women. The Following are some of the Key recommendations: -

- Movement Leaders need work together to heal the pain of class, tribe, Education level, Personal Conflict divisions within the LBQ Community, build relationships Across Western Kenya LBQ Organizing ensure there is a Stronger and experienced Movement.
- Organizations Working with LBQ to incorporate Protection Skills Classes
- Expand and support programming that: builds community, fosters connection among and outside of the LBQ community, provides opportunities for community members to support each other, encourages inter-generational connections, and celebrates culture.
- Need to have Wellbeing Programing in LBQ Organizations which will Support the Mental and Psychosocial Well Being of Members.
- LBQ organizing to do more of Research and Documentation to support Advocacy of Inclusivity.
- Support intersectional movement building of the LBQ through Life Skill Training to ensure Sustainability and economic Wellbeing of the Community to create a Healthy and Strong LBQ Movement that can take care of itself.
- Expand funding support towards Different Grassroots strategies that will Support Up Coming Organizations to expound on their Goals, Niche and Objectives Through Organizational Development
- Strengthen the Existing Referral Pathways that will help ensure there is comprehensive access to Justice in any Violations mated on the LBQ through creation of ally Networks and creating strong conflict resolution committee or group that will aid in setting inner disputes and wrangle's.
- Develop a Security Training Manual that is Contextualized in the Local Lens

4.2 CONCLUSION

As a result of the Security risks LBQ individuals experience and out of fear of the consequences of exposure, many seek to conceal their sexual orientation and/or gender identity from others. LBQ individuals may therefore fear approaching police, or not be able to immediately inform Human Rights Defenders about the nature or true extent of their insecurity claim and/or resettlement needs. They may live in isolation and in the first instance approach a local LBQ organization or NGO rather than go directly to police. LBQ are more marginalized due to Culture and Religious Patriarchal beliefs

VOWWEK calls for collaborative approaches that are intersectional to address these disparities and strengthen the LBQ Community and the Network of organizations serving this community in Western Kenya

APPENDICES

SECURITY ASSESMENT FORM

KINDLY FILL THE ANSWERS IN BLOCK

SEX-HERE REFERS TO SEX ASIGNED AT BIRTH

GENDER-REFERS TO WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF AS A MASCULINE OR FEMININE OR QUEER OR CIS

SEXUAL ORIENTATION- WHO YOU ARE ATTRACTED

ALL INFORMATION GATHERED WILL BE HANDLED IN CONFIDENTIALITY AND WITH FULL DISCREATION.

INTRODUCTION

VOWWEK is conducting a security assessment with LBQ organizing to help assess the security risk each face and by the end come up with a manual that will support in training on Security for the respondents and the LBQ organizing.

VOWWEK noted that neither the existence of national laws, nor the prevalence of custom can ever justify the abuse, attacks, torture and indeed killings that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons are subjected to just because of who they are or are perceived to be. Because of the stigma attached to issues surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity, violence against LGBT persons being frequently un reported, undocumented or goes ultimately unpunished thus the assessment to help us close the gap in LBQ security.

PERSONAL DATA

1. SEX ORIENTATION; _____
2. GENDER IDENTITY; _____
3. PRONOUN; _____
4. AGE; _____
5. RELATIONSHIP STATUS; _____
6. EDUCATION; _____
7. LOCATION; _____
8. HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED ANY POSITIVE/NEGATIVE INCIDENT BECAUSE OF YOUR ORIENTATION; _____
   EXPLAIN;_____
   _____
   _____

SECURITY ASSESMENT QUISTIONS

There is no widely accepted definition of risk, but we can say that risk refers to possibility of being harmed because of the we do, who we are and the degree to which we are visible as a member of the LGBTI community. Kindly answer the bellow with reference to the past 6 months;

1. Have you experienced any negative incident the past 6 months?
   a). Physical Harassment or violence
   b). Social Harassment or violence
   c). Threat of Physical or Social Harassment or Violence
   d). Verbal Harassment, insults or hurtful comments
   e). Outing of one's privacy or Identity
   f). Exclusion from Events
   Any other_____

2. In case of an Incident where do you first report?
   _____

3. Who are the perpetrators of these incidents Mostly;
   a). Police
   b). Community members
   c). Community members within the LBQ
   d). Family
   e). Religious Leader
   f). Friends
   Answer:
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Is the Community you live in Safe?
   _____

5. Does the community you live in know your Orientation
   _____

6. Does your family know your Orientation?
   _____

7. Is your work environment safe enough to carry out your work?
_____
_____

8. Have you experienced any Negative Incident within your work environment?
   _____
   _____

9. As an LBQT, what are the security risks you face?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

10. Do you consider yourself to be _____ o_____vironment?
    _____
    _____

11. As a Means to ensure your securi_____acit_____u like to have/ be equipped with?

_____

_____

12. The 2022 elections are coming, what are your views and recommendations on security matters?

_____

_____

_____

_____