

# COMPASS SERIES



## Finance Inc

Developing a LGBTQI Inclusive Approach for the Asian Development Bank



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## COMPASS: Finance Inc

The Compass series highlights the main features of APCOM's programmes. This edition focuses on the Finance Inc - The new initiative helping financial institutions focused on international development in the Asia Pacific region to be more inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people.

## Why APCOM is implementing the project

**DONOR: VOICE (Influencing Grant)**

**NAME OF GRANT: Finance Inc**

**PRINCIPAL RECIPIENT: APCOM**

Narratives of stigma and discrimination based on sexual orientations and gender identities of LGBTQI people abound. These narratives are replete with experiences of challenges and issues in accessing basic economic, social and cultural rights including employment, education, health care and access to financial resources.

According to the World Bank, LGBTI people continue to experience discrimination and stigma related to their sexual orientation and gender identity in many countries around the world. This, even as there have been some legal and social advances in the past two decades. These widespread experiences of stigma and discrimination result in invisibility and exclusion which negatively affect the lives of LGBTI individuals, in particular, and the communities they are situated in, in general.

The World Bank further said that *'increasing evidence indicates that LGBTI persons suffer lower (or no) education outcomes; higher unemployment or underemployment rates; and a lack of access to adequate and comprehensive health services, due to discrimination, bullying, violence and a miscomprehension of a person who has an alternative sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression (SOGIE)'*<sup>1</sup>.

Evidence presented by Prof. Lee Badgett's 2014<sup>2</sup> "The Economic Cost of Stigma and the Exclusion of LGBT People: A Case Study of India" suggests the many disadvantages of not protecting the LGBTI population, not only for the individual, but for the countries' economy.

Financial inclusion, according to the World Bank *means that individuals and businesses have access to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs – transactions, payments, savings, credit and insurance – delivered in a responsible and sustainable way*<sup>3</sup>.

Even with the presently limited available data on the relationship between SOGIESC based discrimination being experienced by LGBT people, and the link of stigma and discrimination to accessing their economic rights, this link cannot be ignored. LGBTQI remain to be vulnerable. Exclusion based on SOGIESC negatively affects people's dignity and their chances at better opportunities.

Financial inclusion of LGBTQI people and communities is aligned with APCOM's vision of *'a world where all gay men, other men who have sex with men and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics can fully participate in and achieve sustainable development in all aspects of their health, rights and wellbeing.'*

### Acknowledgements:

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Cover Photo: APCOM and Finance Inc country partners with CSPF resource speaker Yuli Rostinawati of Arus Pelangi after the APCOM and GayA Nusantara session at the World Bank Civil Society Policy Forum

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>

<sup>2</sup> Lee Badgett, The Economic Cost of Stigma and Exclusion of LGBT People: A Case Study of India. October 2014. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/527261468035379692/pdf/940400WPOBox380usionOofOLGBTOPeople.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Financial Inclusion. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/financialinclusion/overview>

About Finance Inc

Activities

Finance Inc is anchored on the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination as expounded in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments which recognize that ‘all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.’ Further, it is also anchored on The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals by the United Nations, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity, goals to be achieved by 2030. The SDGs, even without specific mention of LGBTQI has the principle of ‘leaving no one behind.’ Finance Inc. is a three year (2018-2020) multi-country initiative which is being implemented in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and the Philippines.

Research

Research on the status of LGBTI inclusion/exclusion in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and The Philippines. The research will also identify possible areas for integration of SOGIESC in the Asian Development Bank. The research results will be integral to other project components including capacity strengthening and sensitization workshops.

Development of ADB SOGIE Strategy

Drawing from lessons learned and results from other project components including the research, sensitization trainings, and capability strengthening, Finance Inc. aim to facilitate the development of an ADB SOGIE Strategy which can be considered for LGBTQI integration of ADB.

Sensitization Workshops with ADB

Sensitization workshops with ADB staff and personnel on SOGIESC will contribute to raising awareness of the institution on issues experienced by LGBTQI in relation to financial and economic inclusion/exclusion. These workshops can also be venues for ADB to identify possible steps towards being more LGBTI inclusive.

APCOM, Country Partner Representatives, and Resource Speakers during World Bank Civil Society Forum Session of APCOM and GayA Nusantara.



APCOM and Finance Inc country partners with World Bank Independent Panel Member Imrana Jalal during the Inception Meeting

Capacity Strengthening of LGBTI Organizations

Aimed at strengthening capacities of LGBTI organizations in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and the Philippines to engage with the finance and private sectors, Finance Inc. will conduct one workshop per country with LGBTI participants. These workshops will be informed by the research, sensitization, advocacy and other project components. These workshops envision to result in increased engagement between LGBTI organizations and the finance and private sector in their countries.

Pilot Projects

The pilot projects aim to deliver the insights and highlight experiences of LGBTI inclusive finance and economic projects. Aside from being basis for learnings, challenges and success, the pilot projects will also aim for future scale up. The insights from these pilot projects will inform other project components including advocacy with private sector during conferences and other related venues.

Conference Participation and Private Sector Advocacy

Regional conferences are important venues to showcase the work being done and leverage on the project to build partnerships with banking and finance sector players. Participation by APCOM and its partners can result in increased LGBTI inclusion and efforts at diversity.

Regional Meetings

As a project culminating activity, Finance Inc. will have one regional meeting to bring a wide variety of stakeholders together. This regional meeting aims to involve country partners, institutions around the region. This will be an opportunity to learn and share between the country partners working in the project to engage important institutions like the ASEAN. This activity aims to contribute to the LGBTI inclusion at the ASEAN.

Regional meetings will also be convened with country partners to draw on their lessons learned, challenges, and successes to come up with a regional perspective on financial inclusion.





## Envisaged Goals and Outcomes

SOGIESC to financial resources and services specifically health and education, and citizenship and participation.

Building on the experience of World Bank which has initiated inclusion of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in their management and operations, Finance Inc. aims to engage with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to have an LGBTQI-inclusive approach.

This is aligned with ADB's vision of 'a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty in the region.' ADB's operational focus are addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequality, and accelerating progress in gender equality .

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As a major multilateral development player in the Asia Pacific region, ADB can influence governments and the private sector standards to becoming aligned with its commitment to pursue inclusion and to the Sustainable Development Goals which is guided by the principle of 'leaving no one behind.

APCOM and Finance Inc country partners with Jeremy Kadden of Human Rights Campaign during the Inception Meeting.



4 Asian Development Bank website. <https://www.adb.org/about/our-work>

## Partners

### Micro Rainbow International-Cambodia (Cambodia)

Micro Rainbow International's (MRI's) vision is to create a world where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people are free from discrimination, persecution and have equal opportunities in life, including in accessing employment, training, education, financial services, healthcare, housing, places of faith, and public services. MRI's mission is to create tools, programmes, and policy recommendations that enable LGBTI people to step out of poverty, everywhere. MRI believes that many LGBTI people across the world are more vulnerable to poverty because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity or intersex status. Since 2012 run poverty reduction programmes exclusively for LGBTI people.

### Suara Kita (Indonesia)

Suara Kita is an LGBT organization who works for LGBT rights in Indonesia. The organization was founded in 2007 in Jakarta. Then, It was registered in 2009, and got acknowledgement by the Law and Human Rights Ministry in 2013. Suara Kita's vision is to attain LGBT equality and emancipation as Indonesian citizens. The vision statement is embodied into three mission statements: (1) Developing public education on LGBT-related issues through medium of information, culture, and policy change, (2) Developing professional, transparent, and accountable organizational capacity, (3) Strengthening network to advocate pro-LGBT public policy.

### Lao Postive Health Action (Lao PDR)

LaoPHA is community-led HIV, health and gender advocacy and services organization. It has been operating as a community-based organization since the year 2000 and became officially registered as a local nonprofit association in 2012, according to the Prime Minister's Decree on Associations (115/PM) on 29 April, 2009. LaoPHA's vision is to inspire inclusive communities where all key populations are equally empowered and comfortable to access the health and social services and to reach their true potentials. LaoPHA aims to support key population and questioning them by offering vital programs, fostering unconditional acceptance, and creating platform for self-support group and self-expression through leadership, community support and advocacy.

### Babaylanes Inc. (Philippines)

Babaylanes, Inc. is the alumni organization of the pioneering student LGBT organization from the University of the Philippines, UP Babaylan. Officially established in 2008, it envisions a society free from discrimination and homophobia where LGBT individuals can enjoy their rights and attain their fullest potentials in the spirit of equality, justice, and equity. Its mission is to work for the strengthening and consolidation of LGBT communities towards achieving the collectivization of efforts against discrimination and homophobia and advocate for LGBT rights and welfare.

Babaylanes, Inc. is the convener of the National LGBT Students Network, composed of the different LGBT student organizations that Babaylanes, Inc. has worked with. It is also the current Secretary General of LAGABLAB Network, a broad coalition of LGBT organizations in the Philippines focused on passing legislation that are SOGIE-sensitive and responsive.



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*We are united in advocating for issues around HIV and those that advance the rights, health and well being of people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.*



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