



#WeBelongAfrica

STORIES OF CHANGE

from the #WeBelongAfrica Programme

From exclusion to empowerment

In sub-Saharan Africa and around the world, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) people and young key populations continue to face persistent and intersecting inequalities that put their health, rights and lives at risk. Criminalizing laws, stigma, discrimination and social exclusion drive vulnerability and limit access to essential services. These challenges are exacerbated by shrinking civic space and broader pushbacks on human rights and gender equality, undermining progress toward universal health coverage, HIV targets and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The [#WeBelongAfrica](#) programme was launched in response to this urgent context. A regional initiative led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it brings together two key projects – the Inclusive Governance Initiative and the Southern Africa Young Key Populations Inclusion Initiative – to support governments in sub-Saharan Africa to be more accountable, inclusive and responsive to LGBTI+ people and young key populations. The programme is made possible with support from Sweden and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Mozambique.

At its core, #WeBelongAfrica is about enabling change from within – through state and civil society partnerships that catalyse inclusive legal, policy and institutional reforms; improve the quality and accessibility of public sector services; and challenge harmful social norms. The programme helps build environments where the perspectives, needs and rights of marginalized populations are visible, valued and realized.

This collection of “stories of change” celebrates progress and persistence. It highlights community leadership, courageous partnerships and country-driven efforts that are paving the way toward a more inclusive and equitable future. These stories underscore the principle that sustainable development cannot be achieved if people are left behind – especially those who have long been pushed to the margins.

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Advancing LGBTI+ leadership and accountability through the Universal Periodic Review

The [Universal Periodic Review](#) (UPR) is a critical mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council that reviews the human rights records of all UN Member States every four and a half years. It provides a platform for countries to assess each other's progress and challenges in promoting and protecting human rights.

For civil society organizations (CSOs), participation in the UPR process is vital, as it allows them to share first-hand information, highlight issues faced by marginalized communities and influence the recommendations made to governments. Their involvement ensures that the voices of those most affected by human rights violations are heard and considered at the highest international level.

In Angola, LGBTI+ civil society organizations have increasingly engaged with the State in different sectors in the last decade. In parallel, LGBTI+ CSOs have explored the UPR process to enhance accountability and coordination with multiple stakeholders. The submission of their first shadow report in 2019 is part of this effort. This report was developed by a coalition led by Arquivo de Identidade Angolano (AIA), in collaboration with Associação Íris Angola and Mulheres do Coração. Among the contributors was Líria de Castro, a young activist affiliated with AIA, who played a pivotal role in the initiative.

Through the #WeBelongAfrica programme, UNDP has supported LGBTI+ CSOs and activists in Angola by strengthening their advocacy capacities. This support has included capacity strengthening in drafting recommendations, conducting midterm reviews and preparing for participation in UPR sessions.

After five years of sustained engagement, a significant milestone was achieved when Líria de Castro represented a coalition of Angolan LGBTI+ organizations at the 48th UPR Pre-sessions of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, in November 2024. This represented the first time LGBTI CSOs engaged throughout the UPR cycle, from beginning to end and discussing the recommendations for a new cycle.

Her participation marked a historic moment: a young Angolan LGBTI+ activist addressed the international community directly, shedding light on the status of human rights implementation in Angola in the context of LGBTI+ rights and inclusion, and influencing the formulation of recommendations by Member States.



While in Geneva, Mrs. de Castro held strategic meetings with the Permanent Mission of Angola to the United Nations and representatives of other international organizations. These engagements fostered a shared commitment to advancing the implementation of forthcoming UPR recommendations. She also met with the Permanent Missions of Germany and Mexico – then Co-Chairs of the Equal Rights Coalition – as well as with representatives from Belgium, Sweden and Norway.

“The experience of AIA was extremely positive – it was an advocacy space that connected us with various actors, including Member States, civil society organizations, human rights defenders and private sector representatives. It also allowed us to bring Angola’s context regarding LGBTI+ rights to the highest level. We are truly grateful for the overall support from UNDP and the #WeBelongAfrica team,” said Líria de Castro.

Following her return to Luanda, Mrs. de Castro convened LGBTI+ activists for feedback and mobilized partners to continue discussions on human rights for all. These engagements are opening new avenues for collaboration and accountability with national and international partners in the implementation of ongoing human rights initiatives.

UNDP, through the #WeBelongAfrica programme, is committed to enhancing the advocacy capacity of LGBTI+ organizations and young activists in Angola and beyond. By equipping them with the skills and platforms necessary for effective engagement, the initiative continues to foster inclusive participation in national and international human rights processes.

Creating belonging: The impact of #WeBelongAfrica on intersex lives



In Côte d'Ivoire, a movement is gaining momentum – one that places dignity, inclusion and human rights at the centre of governance. At the heart of this effort is the #WeBelongAfrica programme, a regional initiative under UNDP that is reshaping how governments engage with sexual and gender minorities. The programme is not only strengthening institutions but also empowering individuals to step into their power and advocate for change.

Brandon Die Delvac is one such individual. A young intersex person, Brandon grew up navigating the silence and stigma that often surround intersex identities. Intersex is an umbrella term that refers to people born with sex characteristics – such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns – that do not fit typical definitions for male or female bodies.

For years, their experience was marked by misunderstanding and marginalization. But through #WeBelongAfrica, Brandon found more than just support – they found a platform. The initiative offered access to advocacy training, medical expertise and strategic guidance that helped them understand their rights and how to defend them.

With this foundation, Brandon began to engage directly with national institutions. They met with members of parliament, participated in dialogues with the National Human Rights Council, and even

held discussions with diplomats – all in pursuit of one goal: the recognition and protection of intersex rights in Côte d'Ivoire. Their advocacy extended beyond policy reform; they collaborated with healthcare professionals to challenge harmful medical practices and promote affirming, rights-based approaches to intersex health. Together with fellow activists, they have helped to raise awareness and pushed for inclusive, non-discriminatory governance.

Yet the impact of #WeBelongAfrica on Brandon's life goes deeper than public engagement. It gave them something far more personal – a sense of belonging.

“Thanks to the IGI project, I’ve found a space to express myself, meet people with similar experiences and advocate for a more inclusive society. My wish is that we achieve full recognition of intersex rights,” Brandon says.

Brandon's story is a powerful reminder that inclusive governance is not just about laws and policies – it is about people. It is about creating spaces where everyone, regardless of their identity, can be seen, heard and valued. #WeBelongAfrica is helping to build those spaces, one voice at a time. And in doing so, it is laying the foundation for a future where everyone truly belongs.

Finding her voice: Olivia's journey to empowerment



CEDHUC convenes inclusive dialogue sessions that bring together police officers, magistrates, religious and traditional leaders, and members of the LGBTI+ community to foster understanding and build bridges with the wider public.

Growing up in Kinshasa, Olivia lived in a world that often demanded conformity. In a deeply religious household led by her father – a senior pastor – there was little room for self-expression, and even less for questioning the norms. For years, she kept her truth hidden, unsure if she would ever be accepted for who she was.

That changed when she discovered the #WeBelongAfrica programme. Through its partnership with Le Centre d'Expertise en Droits Humains et Criminologie (CEDHUC), the programme works to protect the rights of people living with HIV and members of the LGBTI+ community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. CEDHUC combines legal expertise, human rights advocacy and education to challenge stigma and promote inclusion.

Olivia first heard about CEDHUC's work through a friend in the LGBTI+ community. She reached out and was connected to psychosocial support services – an experience that marked the beginning of her transformation.

"I had suffered so much rejection," she says. "But for the first time, I felt seen."

In June 2023, Olivia attended her first open day hosted by CEDHUC. The event brought together police officers, magistrates, religious and traditional leaders, and members of the LGBTI+ community. It was a space for dialogue, understanding and courage.

"I watched people like me speak openly about their experiences and rights," Olivia recalls. "That day, I made the decision to commit myself to building the resilience of the LGBTI+ community."

Since then, Olivia has become a powerful advocate. Through the IGI project, she learned how to document human rights violations, raise awareness and engage with local authorities. She began working closely with CEDHUC, helping to strengthen protections for LGBTI+ individuals and build a more inclusive society.

She has already defended two cases of violence against LGBTI+ people at her local police station. She also founded a peer support group and now leads awareness-raising activities in her community.

"I've gained the confidence to speak out – not just for myself, but for others who are still afraid," she says.

One of her most courageous moments came when she sat down with her father and other church leaders to speak about her identity. "It was difficult," she admits. "But I used that moment to ask for understanding and to speak out against discrimination."

Today, Olivia is no longer defined by fear. She is a leader, a mentor and a voice for change.

"Thanks to #WeBelongAfrica, I've found a community and a purpose," she says. "I now know that I can make a difference – and I'm not alone."

Hope lives where inclusion grows and communities unite



The #WeBelongAfrica programme is grounded in the principle of leaving no one behind – regardless of country, gender identity or socio-economic status. While success is often measured in data and statistics, the true impact of development work is sometimes best reflected in the personal stories of those whose lives have been transformed. In Eswatini, individuals empowered by the #WeBelongAfrica programme are sharing their journeys of resilience, identity and hope.

Sipho's story: From silence to advocacy

Sipho, a 30-year-old intersex teacher from a rural community in Eswatini, has always been passionate about shaping young minds. Yet, their journey has been marked by challenges stemming from a gender identity that does not conform to binary norms – or match the gender marker on their official documents.

"It was painful to constantly explain myself," Sipho shared. "The stares, the questions and the bureaucracy made me feel invisible in my own country."

Sipho attended a legal gender recognition workshop, hosted by UNDP's #WeBelongAfrica programme in partnership with TransSwati — an LGBTIQ+ organization working directly with trans and intersex people — and the LGBTQIA+

Consortium, that brought together representatives from key government ministries, including Home Affairs, Health and Justice. It aimed to equip government officials and frontline workers with knowledge about the rights and needs of transgender and intersex individuals.

"For the first time, I met others like me and felt heard," Sipho said. "The trainers didn't just talk about policies – they showed us how these laws could change our lives."

Empowered by the knowledge gained, Sipho began advocating for intersex rights. They were invited to contribute to Eswatini's roadmap for legal reforms and shared their lived experience with policymakers.

"I explained how the lack of accurate gender markers on IDs affected everything – from accessing loans to being taken seriously as a teacher."

Sipho's testimony helped catalyze the formation of a task team within the Ministry of Home Affairs to explore inclusive policies. Today, Sipho continues to teach with pride and serves as an advocate for

gender diversity among youth.

Musa's journey: Finding courage and community

Musa, a 21-year-old gay man from Mbabane, grew up navigating fear and rejection. From enduring whispers in his community to being excluded from opportunities, Musa often felt isolated.

"I used to hide who I was. I was afraid of being judged, harassed or worse," he recalled.

In 2024, Musa attended a READY Academy workshop, with funding support from the #WeBelongAfrica programme. Organized by the READY Movement, Y+ Global, Frontline AIDS and UNDP, the workshop aimed to empower young key populations with skills to build resilience, advocate for their rights and challenge stigma.

Musa was particularly inspired by a session on storytelling as a tool for change. He shared his personal journey – of rejection, but also of hope and leadership.

"The Ready Academy didn't just teach me skills – it gave me courage."

Musa developed a personal advocacy plan focused on raising awareness about LGBTI+ rights, beginning with local schools and youth groups. He began speaking at community gatherings and reconnected with his family.

"My mother told me she was proud of the person I was becoming," Musa said with a smile.

Today, Musa is a vocal advocate and is helping to establish a peer support network for young gay men in Eswatini.

Nomvula's transformation: From awareness to action

Nomvula, a Member of Parliament in Eswatini, has long championed women's rights. However, issues affecting LGBTI+ individuals were not initially part of her advocacy.

"I thought these issues weren't relevant to our communities," she admitted.

That changed in 2024 when she attended a workshop organized by #WeBelongAfrica. Tailored for decision-makers, the session highlighted the legal and social barriers faced by LGBTI+ youth and other marginalized groups.

During the workshop, Nomvula listened as young people shared deeply personal stories. One of them was Sipiwe, a 20-year-old transgender woman who described the pain of being denied access to education and healthcare simply because of her

gender identity.

"I realized how much systemic exclusion they endure. Not because they're doing anything wrong, but because of who they are."

Inspired by these insights, Nomvula began supporting inclusive policies. She advocated for reviewing Eswatini's gender and legal frameworks and to further integrate LGBTIQ+ issues into the Women's parliamentary Caucus strategic plan.

"The #WeBelongAfrica programme opened my eyes to the realities of their lives," she said. "It reminded me that true leadership is about listening and acting for those whose voices are often silenced."

** Name changed to protect their identity.*

Uniting faith and LGBTI+ inclusion through religious leadership

Across Kenya, a growing movement is showing that faith and inclusion can go hand in hand. Through dialogue and partnership, religious leaders are advancing dignity, compassion and the well-being of all people—including members of the queer community and other gender and sexual minority groups.

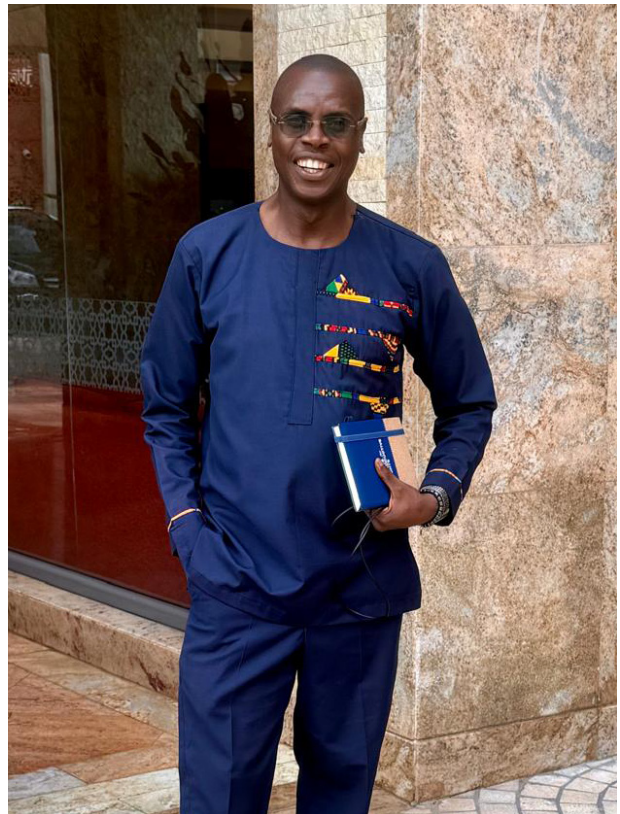
With support from UNDP's #WeBelongAfrica programme, faith leaders are engaging in open conversations on equality, health and belonging. These efforts are bridging spiritual values and human rights, helping foster a culture of care, inclusion and social cohesion. At their heart is a belief that spiritual leadership and inclusive governance are mutually reinforcing – and that faith can be a powerful force for healing and change.

Among the many leaders embracing this intersection of faith and inclusion is Boaz Abuko, a reverend in a church in Kenya and a vocal advocate for inclusivity and queer rights. As a respected theologian, Boaz is challenging long-held prejudices and fostering compassion and understanding within religious spaces – spaces where sexual and gender minorities have historically faced exclusion and stigma.

Boaz serves as the coordinator of a network of over 25 religious leaders from diverse faith backgrounds across Kenya's 47 counties. Through this role, he has collaborated with the #WeBelongAfrica programme. His engagement has included participation in consultations, convenings and training sessions focused on human rights and inclusive governance. Notably, he attended a religious convening organized by Galck+ with support from a #WeBelongAfrica low value grant and visited the United Nations Complex in Gigiri to deepen his understanding of the programme's work.

These experiences have had a profound impact on Boaz's ministry. He credits #WeBelongAfrica with equipping him with the knowledge and tools to advocate for sexual and gender minority rights from a place of informed faith.

“The training and consultation I have received through UNDP have empowered me to speak about the queer narrative from a position of knowledge and understanding,” he reflects.



While same-sex sexual activity remains criminalized under Kenya's criminal code, the country has taken some meaningful steps toward greater recognition of sexual and gender minority rights. In a landmark ruling in February 2023, the Supreme Court affirmed the community's right to freedom of association by declaring that the denial of registration to the National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission was unconstitutional. Yet, societal acceptance continues to evolve slowly, with many sexual and gender minority individuals still facing stigma in their daily lives. In this context, the leadership of religious and community voices – like Boaz Abuko's – is helping to shift public perceptions and open hearts. These efforts are essential to translating legal recognition into real inclusion and dignity for all.

Boaz Abuko's work, supported by UNDP, underscores how spiritual values of love, respect and justice can inspire positive change. As Kenya continues to navigate complex conversations around sexual and gender minority rights, the role of inclusive religious leadership is more important than ever.

Building inclusive futures: How #WeBelongAfrica is empowering grassroots leaders

UNDP's #WeBelongAfrica programme plays a pivotal role in advancing inclusive, accountable and rights-based governance across Sub-Saharan Africa, including in countries such as Namibia.

#WeBelongAfrica is designed to strengthen the capacity of governments to be more inclusive and responsive to sexual and gender minorities. It also empowers marginalized groups to participate meaningfully in governance, influence policy and hold institutions accountable. By promoting legal and policy reforms aligned with international human rights standards, the programme fosters collaboration between civil society, government institutions and international partners – ensuring that no one is left behind.

In many countries across the Global South, including Namibia, punitive laws and entrenched social norms continue to marginalize LGBTI+ people. The #WeBelongAfrica programme works to dismantle these barriers by promoting inclusive governance structures that reflect the diversity and dignity of all people. One of the most compelling examples of #WeBelongAfrica's impact is the story of Desiree Haman, Director of the Khaibasen Rural Action Foundation in Keetmanshoop, Namibia. Over the past three years, Desiree has undergone a profound transformation through her engagement with the programme.

What began as a simple introduction to a regional initiative soon became a turning point in Desiree's role as a leader and changemaker. Through #WeBelongAfrica, she gained valuable skills in governance, advocacy and community engagement – tools that have strengthened her efforts to hold local leaders accountable and drive change in her community. Workshops and dialogues organized by the programme introduced Desiree to the power of collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including government officials and civil society organizations. Her participation in the [Ten Years of Resolution 275: Advancing LGBTI+ Rights in Africa](#) regional meeting was a transformative experience. It deepened her understanding of political engagement and affirmed her voice as a leader.

Desiree recalls how the spaces encouraged open dialogue and critical questioning without fear of judgment.



“UNDP's #WeBelongAfrica has contributed a lot to supporting the programmes and work that I do in the south of Namibia,” she shared. “It helped me understand that there are different pieces that can come together, like a puzzle, to hold government and leaders accountable.”

Desiree's leadership has led to tangible improvements in her community. She has facilitated community dialogues that brought together traditional leaders, church communities and civil society. These conversations are creating safe spaces for discussing human rights and fostering greater acceptance of LGBTI+ individuals. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she successfully advocated for marginalized individuals to be allowed back into clinics after being forced to wait outside. She also lobbied for the reopening of a hospital gate that had been closed due to safety concerns, improving access to healthcare services.

The #WeBelongAfrica programme has not only enhanced Desiree's professional capabilities but also contributed to her personal growth. She now envisions a future where her experiences can help build stronger collaborations between civil society and government, leading to more robust protections for sexual and gender minorities.

Empowering voices: Diana Mailosi's advocacy for LGBTI+ rights



Although Zimbabwe's Constitution enshrines the rights to dignity, equality and non-discrimination, sexual and gender minorities continue to face systemic exclusion, stigma and violence. Civil society organizations play a critical role in bridging this gap by educating lawmakers on constitutional protections, challenging harmful stereotypes and advocating for inclusive legal interpretations that uphold the rights of all citizens.

Diana Mailosi (Dee) is a dedicated human rights defender working to empower LGBTI+ communities in Zimbabwe. Through strategic partnerships with civil society actors, Dee supports key stakeholders – including government commissions and legislators – in deepening their understanding of the rights of sexual and gender minorities, as well as key populations affected by HIV such as sex workers. Dee also works directly with LGBTI+ groups, sharing strategies for resilience and encouraging safe, active participation in public life.

Over the past few years, UNDP's #WeBelongAfrica programme has supported Dee's advocacy efforts. Dee has contributed to a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the rights of intersex persons in Zimbabwe and participated in a regional convening on the implementation of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights [Resolution 275](#). With support from #WeBelongAfrica, Dee has also led community consultations for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [Voluntary National Review](#), and helped consolidate inputs for a forthcoming LGBTI+-focused spotlight report

assessing the country's progress and persistent gaps in achieving the SDGs.

These platforms have enabled Dee to engage directly with decision-makers and legislators on the impact of punitive laws that perpetuate violence, stigma, and discrimination against sexual and gender minorities and key populations. Dee's engagement with human rights mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review and the SDG Voluntary National Review process has strengthened their ability to spotlight the lack of protection for marginalized groups across sectors, such as justice, education and employment.

"The process of developing the SDG Voluntary National Review spotlight report – with technical assistance from UNDP's #WeBelongAfrica programme – greatly enhanced my skills in integrating education sector priorities through a sustainable development lens. The focus on community experience, leadership and representation was especially empowering," reflects Dee.

Looking ahead, Dee sees #WeBelongAfrica as a vital partner in advancing inclusive advocacy. Dee emphasizes the importance of sustained engagement with policymakers and the need to strengthen the capacity of LGBTI+ civil society organizations to lead human rights advocacy – particularly at a time when global solidarity with LGBTI+ communities is under increasing pressure.

MPs champion health rights for young key populations and LGBTI+ communities

In Zimbabwe, as in many parts of the world, young key populations and LGBTI+ people encounter significant barriers to inclusion. These barriers stem from entrenched stigma, discrimination and legal frameworks that limit their access to healthcare, justice and the chance to participate fully in society. However, amidst these challenges, a rising number of parliamentarians are courageously stepping up as allies to promote health equity and human rights for all.

Through the #WeBelongAfrica programme, UNDP is working to amplify the voices of young key populations, including young people who sell sex, use and inject drugs, are incarcerated, or identify as LGBTI+. By ensuring that these voices are heard and their priorities reflected in policymaking, the programme aims to strengthen inclusive governance that bridges the gap between marginalized communities and decision makers.

One of the programme's most effective strategies has been to engage Members of Parliament (MPs). As lawmakers and policymakers, MPs have the authority to shape and reform laws that protect and promote the rights and health of marginalized populations. This includes ensuring equitable access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services. By focusing on strengthening MPs' knowledge and support for key populations' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), the #WeBelongAfrica programme is building a network of informed and committed MP champions and a space where communities and decision-makers come together to build a more inclusive Zimbabwe – one where no one is left behind.

Following the 2023 general elections, many newly elected parliamentarians entered office, and the programme adapted its strategies to reach them. These enhanced methods include informal dialogues, regional discussions and collaboration with networks of people living with HIV, key populations and national community structures such as the Key and Vulnerable Populations Forum. As a result, the programme is supporting a growing group of MP champions who understand key populations' SRHR, are supportive, willing to speak out publicly and take action to advance the rights of these marginalized groups. To deepen the understanding of MPs, the programme prioritizes small-group dialogues, allowing MPs who recognize the urgency of advancing the rights of young key



populations and LGBTI+ persons, to engage and connect with the young key populations and LGBTI+ people's concerns.

To strengthen their capacity in being agents of positive change, MP champions have been supported to participate in the quarterly HIV and SRHR Forums for Key and Vulnerable Populations. In addition, MPs have been facilitated to attend regional convenings related to [Resolution 275](#) of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Capacity-building activities and field visits have been organized for 35 new MPs from the Portfolio Committee on Health and the Thematic Committee on HIV.

Mojalifa Ndlovu, Chairperson of the Key and Vulnerable Populations Forum, emphasizes the impact of this engagement:

“By gaining first-hand experience of key populations programming, MPs have developed a deeper understanding of real, lived experiences. We hope this will, in turn, empower them to make informed decisions, enact protective laws and policies, that will support effective implementation of key populations programmes.”

In addition to direct engagement, UNDP has equipped parliamentarians with a range of resources. A specially designed [handbook for parliamentarians](#) provides practical tools, tips for

advancing the human rights and inclusion of LGBTI+ people. This resource, which shares best practices from around the world, serves as a guide for MPs launching inclusive reform initiatives or enhancing existing efforts.

Another key resource is a [handbook for decision makers](#) focused on strengthening the SRHR of young key populations in law and policy. This handbook helps policymakers across various sectors including health, justice, gender and youth to create protective laws, policies, strategies and programmes to address inequalities and ensure the well-being of young key populations. Importantly, it emphasizes the need to involve young key populations in all efforts to advance SRHR, ensuring that no one is left behind.

MP champions, who are also members of the #WeBelongAfrica programme's National Steering Committee and the African Parliamentary Forum, have taken proactive steps to mobilize their peers. They established a WhatsApp group to coordinate an action plan that responds to anti-LGBTQI+ developments in parliament. These engagements have created safe spaces for dialogue, enabling MPs to hear personal testimonies from young key populations, including LGBTI+ youth. This direct exposure has fostered empathy and deepened MPs' understanding of how policies impact marginalized communities prompting several MPs to pledge their support for LGBTI+ rights.

A pivotal moment in the programme's progress occurred in 2024. MPs, along with their parliament support staff, including researchers and clerks, had the opportunity to meet with young key populations and LGBTI+ individuals in a field visit to Masvingo under the Key Populations National HIV Programme,

organized by the Key and Vulnerable Populations Forum and Zimbabwe Network of People Living with HIV with support from UNDP and the #WeBelongAfrica programme. There, they listened to first-hand accounts of violence, discrimination and exclusion. The conversations were powerful, sparking empathy and reflection among MPs who, were for the first time engaging with KP communities as real people with real stories. An evaluation conducted after the visit revealed that over 80 percent of the MPs who participated had never encountered these issues in such a personal way before. The experience left many with renewed commitment to using their positions to advocate for inclusive health and human rights policies.

“Key and vulnerable populations are often overlooked in policymaking. This field tour was a turning point,” said one MP. “It was a powerful reminder to ensure that we are inclusive in our policymaking and ensure no one is left behind.”

Looking ahead, the #WeBelongAfrica programme will continue to prioritize the empowerment of MPs through sustained engagement, capacity-building and the provision of tools and knowledge to champion the rights and well-being of the LGBTI+ community and young key populations in Zimbabwe. As influential public figures, MPs have a vital role to play in shaping discourse and driving change. When adequately informed and engaged, they can become powerful allies in challenging stigma, discrimination and harmful social norms that limit access to essential health services. Their leadership can help foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for all. Ultimately, it is not only about policies or laws; it's about people. Thanks to the courage of those in power, a truly inclusive society is now within reach.

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