

FACT SHEET 2023

PHILIPPINES:

Impacts of Ageism and Lifelong Discrimination on Older LGBTI People

Many older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI)¹ people in the Philippines are disproportionately affected by lifelong and intersectional discrimination, resulting in joblessness, poverty, lack of savings, hunger, physical and mental health decline, lack of access to health care, lack of access to stable housing, social isolation, and violence and abuse without redress and relief mechanisms. These harmful impacts are linked to loss of school education, job discrimination, discriminatory health services, lack of community support systems, and little or no support from government public benefits programs.

These findings presented below are based on a 2022 landscape survey² of 103 LGBTI people and 21 individual interviews with LGBTI people ages 50 to 74 years, living in five regions³ in the Philippines. The survey was conducted online and in-person. The interviews were conducted on Zoom and in-person. The information in this fact sheet⁴ presents a landscape view of the lives of older LGBTI people in the Philippines. Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest percent.

SUMMARY OVERVIEW



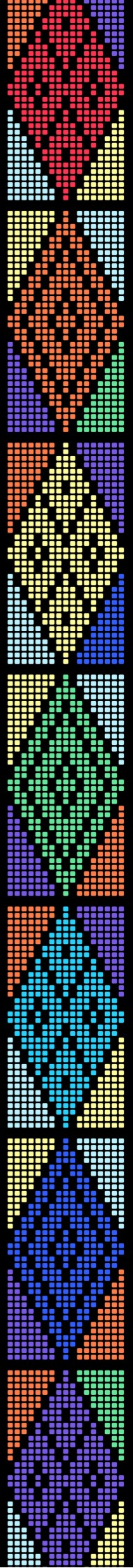
60% older LGBTI people in the study were single and **30%** had a domestic partner.



70% older LGBTI people in the study lived away from their biological families. Of these, **35%** lived with their domestic partner, **22%** lived alone, and **12%** lived with a friend or roommate who was not a relative or domestic partner.



22% older LGBTI people in the study were caregivers for family members and other LGBTI close friends.





78% older LGBTI people in the study received emotional and financial support from their biological families, **65%** older LGBTI people received this support from friends.



40% older LGBTI people in the study did not have enough money for basic needs such as food and medication. This included those who depended on financial support from family and friends. **39%** older LGBTI people in the study had no savings.



41% older LGBTI people in the study did not receive any government benefits and **59%** have received the following: **42%** Covid-19 relief, **13%** senior citizen pension, **14%** Social Welfare Department Assistance, **10%** Social Security pension, **4%** Person with Disability assistance, and **1%** rice subsidy (from local government).



Older LGBTI people in the study were members of different social organizations and networks, including: LGBTI organizations/groups (**37%**), spiritual/religious communities (**19%**), senior citizen groups (**13%**), online groups (**11%**), community or senior centers (**10%**), and support groups for people living with HIV (**1%**).

Summary of most pressing issues for older LGBTI people



Education & learning opportunities for older LGBTI people

Survey respondents and interviewees reported that they experienced maltreatment by parents and siblings for being LGBTI while growing up and mistreatment in school. For example, transfeminine boys and transgender girls (assigned male at birth) were singled out in school and forced to cut their hair. These negative experiences disrupted schooling for many older LGBTI people. For example, 15 of the 21 older LGBTI interviewees had to leave home and drop out of school at a young age due to family violence and discrimination in school.

30% LGBTI elders in the study graduated from college, 22% attended college but did not finish, 16% completed high school, and 17% entered high school but did not finish. 4% finished elementary school and 1% were unschooled.

Employment & income generation for older LGBTI people

Older LGBTI people who were forced to leave home and drop out of school due to discrimination and abuse, lost opportunities to learn job skills, had limited career options, and had difficulty finding employment.

40% were unemployed: **14%** relied on financial support from other people (family/relatives, LGBTI organization, friends), **10%** lived on their savings, **7%** received public assistance, **6%** received a monthly pension, **1%** relied on investment income, and **2%** did not identify sources of financial support.

48% were employed: **29%** could only find work in the informal labor sector and **19%** worked part-time, often in low paying, physically demanding, unstable or seasonal jobs that did not provide social security, pensions, and health care benefits. Jobs requiring strenuous physical labor were difficult for LGBTI people to sustain in their older years, which reduced options for income-generating opportunities.

Older LGBTI people in the study preferred employment where they could be open about their sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), including jobs as performers or makeup artists in bars/comedy bars, hairdressers in beauty salons, dress shop tailors, salespersons, village security guards, or small business owners. The COVID pandemic impacted these jobs. 3% older LGBTI people who owned small businesses suffered loss of income during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Types of jobs that older LGBTI people worked:

21% small businesses (e.g., <i>sari-sari</i> / neighborhood mini convenience stores)	8% healthcare (e.g., clinic personnel, HIV care provider, barangay health worker)
18% seasonal work (e.g., street vending, house repairs, building construction)	5% government
14% health and beauty shops	4% security (e.g., building guards, barangay/ local community government security)
13% entertainment	4% agricultural work
12% education (e.g., school teachers, private tutors)	4% creative arts (e.g., writers, painters)
9% private companies (e.g., overseas outsourcing)	2% NGOs
	1% consultancies (e.g., bookkeeping)
	1% manual labor

Violence & abuse of older LGBTI people

18% older LGBTI people said they did not feel physically and emotionally safe in their daily lives, including those who lived with and relied financially on their families.

19% suffered emotional/verbal abuse, 10% financial abuse, 4% physical abuse, and 2% sexual abuse. Sources of abuse were family, intimate partnership, workplace, and community.

Six months prior to taking the survey, **13%** older LGBTI people experienced emotional abuse, and **10%** experienced physical violence from family, friends, partners, ex-partners, or community members.

Housing for older LGBTI people

48% older LGBTI people feared losing their homes within the year. Reasons included: no control over the house being sold by a family member, rent increase, and demolition.

7% were unstably housed, including those who stayed with friends who, themselves were under-resourced. **2%** were homeless, living on the street, in vehicles, and in parks.

34% cited unsanitary living conditions, such as rodent and other pest infestation, 29% cited noise pollution, 13% cited physical deterioration of their dwellings, 12% cited unsafe neighborhoods, 3% cited dwellings that were fire hazards, and 1% cited poor access to water supply.

Access to health & health services for older LGBTI people

58% older LGBTI people had not visited a doctor for six months prior to taking the survey. Reasons included: fear of discrimination by health care providers, inability to purchase maintenance medication, and no knowledge about free medicines from government health clinics/hospitals.

55% had no health insurance,⁵ 25% received government health insurance, and 19% had private health insurance.

Over **60%** said they were "bothered emotionally" due to stress and anxiety. Reasons for mental health stressors: unaffordable pain medication, fear of losing medical treatments, cost of daily living and monthly utility bills, lack of income generation, unwanted loneliness, social isolation, uncertainty about their future, and job stress for those who were employed. Only **5%** received counseling services from a therapist or mental health counselor.

Impacts of COVID-19 on older LGBTI people

COVID-19 significantly impacted daily lives of older LGBTI people: **61%** lost their earnings, employment, and income-generating opportunities. **52%** suffered isolation and loneliness. **25%** lost loved ones. **29%** had higher than usual medical bills due to COVID-19-related hospitalization/ medication. **3%** were food insecure.

56% could not access or faced great difficulty accessing social services and/or state benefits during the COVID pandemic. Reasons: **44%** were immobilized due to city-wide and inter-city travel restrictions, rolling quarantines, and total lockdowns. **20%** had no money for transportation. **1%** were unable to wait in long queues for their monthly retirement (SSS) pensions.

Of those older LGBTI people who received COVID-19 relief: **29%** received aid as a single person, **27%** as a household member, **16%** as a senior citizen, and **1%** as living with an LGBTI person.

What do older LGBTI people in the Philippines want?

(respondents were asked to select all that apply)



83%

Free healthcare for all seniors, including LGBTI seniors



66%

Free caregiving for seniors, including LGBTI seniors

70%

Lower eligibility age to access senior benefits

Paid pensions for all seniors, including LGBTI seniors



78%

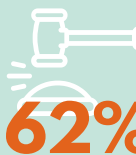
Free housing for seniors, including LGBTI seniors



61%

Passage and enactment of inclusive laws & policies:

- SOGIESC-inclusive national anti-discrimination law
- Legal gender recognition (58%)
- Civil union law (35%)
- Marriage Equality law (35%)
- Other inclusive laws and policies (49%)



62%

Life skills assistance needed by older LGBTI people



42%

Financial literacy



24%

Mental health services



39%

How to obtain government assistance



12%

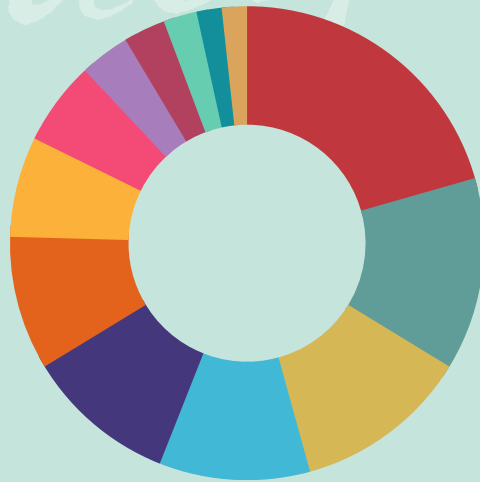
GCash enrollment technical assistance



12%

Zoom tutorials

New job skills training for older LGBTI people



- Cooking/baking (36%)
- Cosmetology/hairdressing (23%)
- Farming (21%)
- Food preservation (18%)
- Local community government/barangay work (18%)
- Massage and reflexology (16%)
- Dressmaking (12%)
- Bookkeeping (10%)
- Call center work (6%)
- Selling real estate (5%)
- Welding/plumbing (4%)
- Computers (3%)
- Eatery business (3%)

Recommendations: EnGendeRights and Outright International

- Amend the Senior Citizen Law to increase access and broaden senior citizen benefits and services to pre-seniors ages 50-59 years.⁶
- Pass the Elder Abuse Bill.
- Pass SOGIESC-inclusive laws & policies in consultation with older LGBTI people.
 - SOGIE anti-discrimination law
 - Comprehensive anti-discrimination law
 - Gender recognition law
 - Marriage equality
 - Civil union law
 - Other SOGIESC-inclusive laws & policies
- Improve housing, health services, access to state benefits, life skills, and income generation for older LGBTI people.
- Organize older LGBTI community groups and LGBTI-inclusive senior groups.
- Ensure political representation of LGBTI seniors.
- Prioritize and raise awareness about older LGBTI people's issues, needs, rights and contributions to society.

Endnotes

- 1 In the Philippines, older people age sixty and older often do not identify as queer and prefer the LGBT or LGBTI acronym, while younger activists tend to include queer in the LGBTIQ acronym.
- 2 EnGendeRights Philippines and Outright International conducted the baseline assessment of the background and needs of older LGBTI people in the Philippines with support of individual volunteer data gatherers. The study was part of the LGBTI Elders Advancing Project funded by SAGE USA.
- 3 Survey and interview participants lived in National Capital Region (42.7%), Mindanao (26.2%), Visayas (16.5%), Luzon (12.6%), and Calabarzon (1%).
- 4 Clara Rita Padilla, Ging Cristobal, Grace Poore, "PHILIPPINES: Impacts of Ageism and Lifelong Discrimination on Older LGBTI People" [Fact Sheet], May 2023.
- 5 Despite the Philippine Universal Health Care Law, 55% older LGBTI people in the study reported not being enlisted with Philippine Health Insurance.
- 6 Create a new pre-senior 50–59 age eligibility category for senior citizen benefits.

For more information:

EnGendeRights Philippines: engenderights.com

Outright International: outrightinternational.org