

Same-Sex Sexuality

IN THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCE

COMMUNITY REPORT ON OUTCOMES OF A RESEARCH PROJECT

Note, this community report is informed by a UNISA and SANPAD-funded research project, entitled: "Empowerment of emerging South African LGBT communities: North-West Province as case study".

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IN THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCE
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Introduction

THIS IS THE FOURTH
STUDY IN THE PAST
FEW YEARS THAT
FOCUSES ON LGBT
EMPOWERMENT
LEVELS IN SOUTH
AFRICA

IN TOTAL 319
PERSONS
PARTICIPATED
IN THE NWP
STUDY, OF
WHICH MOST
WERE YOUNG



This report, entitled: Same-sex sexuality in the North-West province, conveys the outcomes of a community-based research project conducted under the auspices of the UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology during 2009 – 2010. Primarily authored by a member of the community-based collaborative partner in the research project (see Appendix B), it aims to make the findings of the study accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

This report, entitled: Same-sex sexuality in the North-West province, conveys the outcomes of a community-based research project conducted under the auspices of the UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology during 2009 – 2010. Primarily authored by a member of the community-based collaborative partner in the research project (see Appendix B), it aims to make the findings of the study accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

Brief background to the study

This is the fourth study in the past few years that focuses on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) empowerment levels in South Africa.

This study however, differs from the previous studies into this topic in that it looks at LGBT people from a largely rural background in one of the poorest and most under-populated provinces of South Africa, namely, the North-West Province (NWP).

Summary of major findings

In total 319 persons participated in the NWP study, of which most were young, black persons who were still at school or just out of school and unemployed. The largest single group in the sample was made up of young black women. Most participants identified as either lesbian or gay. The main languages used by the participants were Setswana and English.

There was a large prevalence of gender non-conformity among the young, black participants, who had mostly disclosed their sexual orientation to at

least one person (also referred to as 'coming out') at a relatively early age, but at the same time actively tried to hide their sexual orientation from the majority of people around them. The coming out of the black participants was mostly a positive experience, as opposed to the white participants, whose coming out usually happened at a later age and which usually was a less positive experience. White participants were more likely to be gender conforming, but were less secretive about their sexuality at a later age.

Black participants generally felt accepted in the NWP, while white participants tended to feel less accepted. The youngest, gender non-conforming participants believed that traditional leaders were accepting. One fact that everybody did agree on was that religion was not accepting of same-sex sexuality and this was something the white participants in particular felt very strongly about.

Participants reported a relatively low incidence of sexual abuse and rape, as with discrimination and violence. There was a higher incidence of discrimination and abuse while the participants were growing up, especially the gender non-conforming participants. Older white women reported the highest incidence of sexual abuse during childhood.

Men believed they were more susceptible to HIV infection than women and in fact tested more regularly than the women. Men who did not get tested named regular condom use as the main reason for not testing.





Introduction

The fear of the result of an HIV test and the embarrassment associated with a test were other important reasons participants gave for not having been tested.

Most people were aware of their rights under the Constitution, although there was some level of confusion as to exactly what these rights were and how to use them.

Mental health of the participants was generally good, although women and young people had a higher likelihood for attempting suicide. Young people were more prone to alcohol abuse than people in older age categories. Bisexual participants had a largely negative experience in most aspects relating to their sexual orientation and this affected their mental health negatively.

Major policy recommendations

The findings of this research project could be used as a broad guideline for developing future policies and prevention strategies aimed specifically at LGBT persons who live in a more rural South African environment. Based on the findings, it is clear that race, age and gender non-conformity play important roles in determining LGBT people's experiences, feelings and

perceptions. Language is an important consideration when designing programmes for LGBT well-being.

There is a definite need to address a young, gender non-conforming black audience and assist them with the issues they have regarding coming out and the hiding of their sexuality because of perceived negativity. The possibility of working closely with schools, youth clubs and youth organisations could be examined as a way of reaching this target group.

Policies and interventions should consider the fact that young people are dependent on family and friends and information has to be shared in a manner sensitive to these considerations. By providing more information about LGBT issues to the extended family and friendship circles, better understanding could be facilitated and the levels of acceptance of LGBT people can increase.

There seems to be reason to engage traditional leaders and healers in issues related to same-sex sexuality. Traditional matters are important to many of the participants and they should feel comfortable to use these traditional structures and services without fear of discrimination or



abuse. Informing the traditional leaders and healers and assisting them if they have LGBT issues to deal with, could go a long way to improving the perceptions these traditional leaders and healers may have of LGBT individuals. This will also affect the social climate in communities in which traditional leaders and healers play an important role.

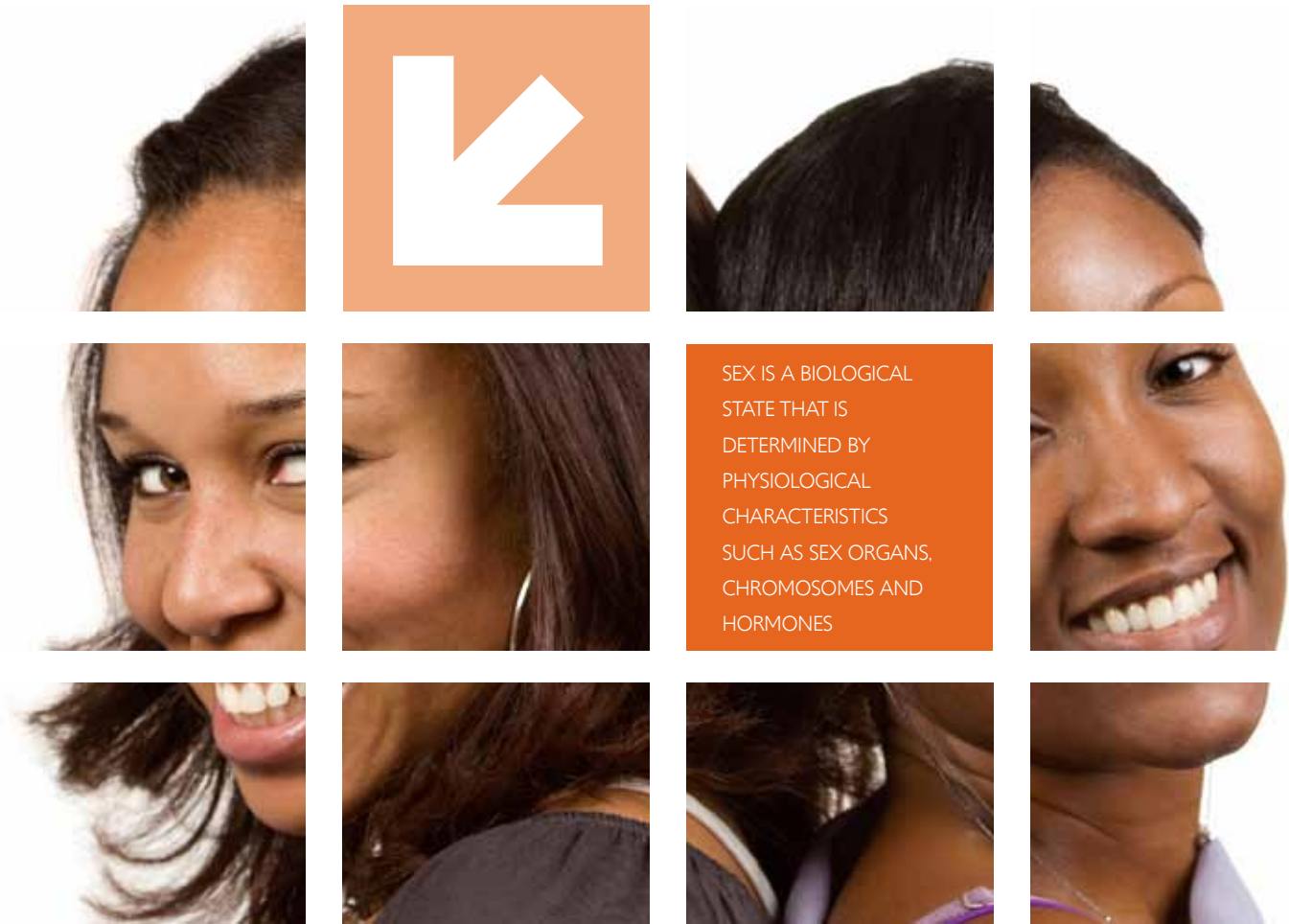
White participants indicated isolation from both the LGBT or the broader community. While these white participants mostly conform to their gender and are not in ongoing intimate relationships, they do not integrate across racial lines, nor did they socialise outside of their own closed circles. Ways need to be found to strengthen their social networks while at the same time further exploring their needs. Special effort should be made to attract white LGBTs to gay-themed events. Every effort should be made to integrate the races in the delivery of LGBT services.

Possibilities exist to educate LGBT individuals about the South African constitution and the rights they have in an effort to get more people to make use of the relevant legislation. This will also support their sense of self-esteem and bolster their sense of South African citizenship.

The participants of any future projects should also be taught the value of their rights and how to use these rights in their everyday lives. HIV testing should be intensified especially among women, who test less regularly than men. At the same time it should be stressed that the use of a condom should not result in less regular testing, especially among men.

The abuse of alcohol under the youngest participants in the sample is cause for concern. Interventions to reduce the intake of alcohol among this group could take the form of awareness campaigns. The fact that the highest incidence of negative experiences was reported by bisexual women is also cause for concern. Special effort should be made to address all LGBT people. Because this research didn't reach transgender persons, special attention needs to be paid in future to research regarding transgender matters.

It is imperative that this emerging LGBT community receive the attention they deserve in the form of proper policies that would be of benefit to the greater LGBT community and prevention programmes that would be of use to specific LGBT individuals on a large scale throughout the NWP and possibly even beyond the borders of the province.



SEX IS A BIOLOGICAL STATE THAT IS DETERMINED BY PHYSIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS SUCH AS SEX ORGANS, CHROMOSOMES AND HORMONES

Terminology and Definitions

To understand the study findings presented in this report, it is necessary to briefly examine the meanings attached to certain words used in this report.

1. **LGBT:** This acronym refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons. Men and women who are exclusively same-sex attracted are often referred to as being 'gay', while women sometimes prefer the term 'lesbian' to refer to her same-sex orientation. The term 'transgender' is explained later in this report. Even though no transgendered people participated in this study, the term 'LGBT' will be used throughout this report to serve as a broader, more inclusive term.
2. **Sex:** Sex is a biological state that is determined by physiological characteristics such as sex organs, chromosomes and hormones. Two sexes are commonly recognised: male and female. However, the existence of intersexed persons challenges the idea that there are only two biological sexes.
 - **Intersexed people:** This is a biological variance characterised by a combination of male and female reproductive organs, chromosomes and/or hormones that are either fully or partially developed at birth. Only one person identified as intersex in the North-West Province (NWP) study and because the data could not be compared with other intersex participants, it was left out of this report.

3. Gender:

- **Gender roles:** In contrast with biological sex (male or female), gender is culturally and socially determined. In every society there are cultural norms for how men and women are expected to behave and certain tasks that are considered appropriate for either one sex or the other. For example, through socialisation men learn that they are expected to wear certain types of clothes and to provide for the family. Women have their own specific dress codes and for instance, are often expected to stay at home and to raise children. In many societies, including some in South Africa, men are considered superior to women and men are considered to have dominant gender roles. In these so-called patriarchal societies, 'masculine' characteristics (such as rationality and competitiveness) and roles assigned to men are considered superior to and valued above those characteristics considered 'feminine' (such as emotionality and being nurturing) and roles assigned to women. Gender and gender roles are, however, not fixed as society and culture is forever changing. This report will refer to gender conformity and gender non-conformity. A person can be said to either conform to their gender (gender conforming) or not (gender non-conforming). For instance, a person may be male, but act in extremely feminine ways and, not even dress in accordance to his gender. Women may act in a masculine fashion and dress and cut their hair to look like men. This is gender non-conformity and it could occur to various degrees.

Introduction

To understand the study findings presented in this report, it is necessary to briefly examine the meanings attached to certain words used in this report.

On the other side of the spectrum is the example of a lesbian woman, who acts and dresses in a feminine fashion and conforms to gender expectations. She would be described as being gender conforming.

- **Transgender:** A collective term for transsexuals (those who have the feeling of being 'born in the wrong body', some of whom may have a sex change so that they can feel more comfortable) and transvestites (cross dressers) is 'transgender'. Nobody in the NVWP identified as transgender, whether transsexual or transvestite. This does not reduce the experiences of transgender people; they just did not take part in the study. Transgender issues indeed need more attention and research.

4. Sexual orientation: Sexual orientation refers to whether people are sexually attracted to the opposite sex, their own sex, or both. It encompasses how one expresses oneself sexually in relation to others, in other words the lasting emotional, romantic, sexual or intimate feelings one has for individuals of a specific gender. Three sexual orientations are commonly recognised: homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual.

- **Homosexual:** This is a very clinical and academic term and it is generally not accepted by lesbian and gay people, as it is associated with abnormality. Although the term 'gay' is often used in reference to men as well as women with same-sex attractions, many women prefer the term 'lesbian', believing the term 'gay' is too strongly associated with men; it leaves them invisible in a world still dominated by men. This report will not use the term

'homosexual', but will refer to 'gay men' and 'lesbian women' and will refer to homosexuality as 'same-sex sexuality'.

- **Heterosexual:** A man who has romantic, sexual and intimate feelings for, or a love relationship with, a woman (or women), or a woman who has romantic, sexual and intimate feelings for, or a love relationship with, a man (or men).
- **Bisexual:** Being capable of having romantic, sexual, intimate feelings for, or a love relationship with, someone of the same sex and/or with someone of the opposite sex. Note: being bisexual doesn't mean that people necessarily have these feelings at the same time or with equal amount of attraction to both sexes.

5. Other relevant terms:

- **Hetero-normative:** The assumption or belief that everyone is and should be heterosexual and therefore 'normal', and that the other sexual orientations are unhealthy, unnatural and a threat to society.
- **Homophobia:** This refers to an irrational fear or disgust of and hatred towards lesbian women and gay men, or same-sex sexuality. It can result in people not wanting to associate with lesbian women or gay men or those perceived to be lesbian or gay. Same-sex sexually attracted people can experience negative feelings about themselves based on the beliefs of those around them, and this is often referred to as internalised homophobia.

A close-up photograph of a young Black man with a bright smile, holding a green apple. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a bed with white linens. The image is overlaid with several semi-transparent colored boxes in shades of blue and yellow, containing text. A horizontal rainbow-colored line is also visible across the middle of the image.

SOUTH AFRICA IS A
HIGHLY PATRIARCHAL
SOCIETY, KNOWN FOR
ITS HETERO-NORMATIVE
FORMS OF MASCULINITY
AND SEXUALITY

ASK INDIVIDUAL LGBT
PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR
EXPERIENCES, FEELINGS
AND BELIEFS IF EFFORTS
ARE TO BE MADE TO
CHANGE SOCIETY'S
NEGATIVE ATTITUDES
TOWARDS SAME-SEX
SEXUALITY



CHAPTER 1:

Background to the North-West Province Research Study

On the African continent, South Africa is in a unique position regarding rights of LGBT persons, as it is the only country that has these rights protected in its Constitution. The legislation does however not always translate to a change in attitude on the ground. Attitudes towards LGBT people are still negative because homophobia is deeply rooted in South African society.

South Africa is a highly patriarchal society, known for its hetero-normative forms of masculinity and sexuality. Gender-based violence can be seen in the so-called 'corrective' rape of lesbians, perpetrated in the false belief that a lesbian woman's sexual orientation can be changed if a man has sex with her. A continual silencing of issues relating to same-sex sexuality further implies that it is immoral, and therefore taboo, and so discrimination against sexual minorities persists in present day South African society.

It is important to ask individual LGBT people about their experiences, feelings and beliefs if

any efforts are to be made to change society's negative attitudes towards same-sex sexuality. The only way to measure the levels of well-being and empowerment of LGBT communities is to do research on a sample of individuals from the community. If a large enough number of people take part in the research and the right questions are asked of them, a picture will emerge that offers an insightful perspective on the lives of LGBT individuals and their communities. More importantly, by understanding LGBT communities, programmes can be developed to specifically address their needs.

This research project, together with the three that preceded it (as later described), serve as a starting point for a more open discussion about LGBT issues among the people who participated in the study, and those around them. Having a better understanding of a sample of people through research leads to better or new ways in which issues raised in a specific study, such as the North-West study, can be addressed.

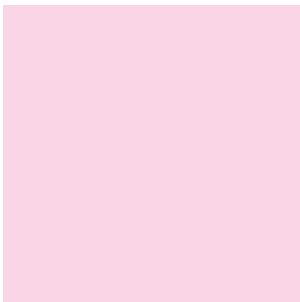
Previous research studies

Research into the levels of empowerment of LGBT communities has previously been conducted by the University of South Africa (UNISA) Centre for Applied Psychology (UCAP). Collaborating under the auspices of the Joint Working Group (JWG) and collaborating with a range of LGBT community-based organisations (CBOs), such as OUT LGBT Well-Being (OUT), the Durban Lesbian and Gay Community Centre and the Triangle Project. Three separate studies were conducted during the period 2003 - 2006. These three studies into the empowerment levels of LGBT persons focused on urban areas of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. All three studies found that despite the changes to the South African Constitution, discrimination against LGBT people was still widespread.

Research question

In building on these earlier research efforts, the North-West Province (NWP) project, entitled: "Empowerment of Emerging South African

"EMPOWERMENT OF EMERGING SOUTH AFRICAN LGBT COMMUNITIES: THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCE AS CASE STUDY", AIMED TO GATHER DATA WITHIN A LESS RESOURCED PROVINCE IN SOUTH AFRICA TO PROVIDE A RURAL PERSPECTIVE



Why the

LGBT Communities: The North-West Province as Case Study", aimed to gather data within a less resourced province in South Africa to provide a rural perspective.

Using previous research questions as a starting point, the research team focused on issues relating to the empowerment of LGBT communities in a rural area. To add to the knowledge already gained in the previous studies, the study in the NWP aimed to obtain answers to the following questions:

- What is the societal position of men and women engaging in same-sex sexual activities in emerging South African LGBT communities, specifically in the NWP? and
- What possibilities are present to empower these communities?

Why the North-West Province?

The NWP, home to 9.5% of South Africa's total population, was created in 1994 by the merger of Bophuthatswana (one of the former black homelands) and the western part of the Transvaal (one of South Africa's former provinces). It's 118 797 square kilometres of mostly flat grassland with scattered trees, is bounded by Botswana to the north, the provinces of Free State and the Northern Cape to the south, and on the northeast and east by the Limpopo Province and Gauteng.

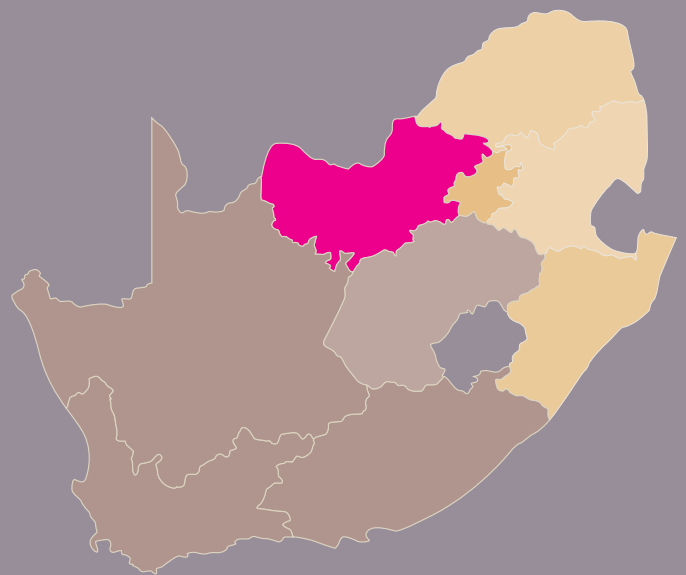


Figure 1: Geographical location of NWP

According to official statistics from Statistics SA, the NWP has about 3.5 million inhabitants, the third lowest population of all nine provinces in South Africa. Around 65% of the province's inhabitants live in rural areas. The majority of NWP's inhabitants are the Tswana people who speak Setswana. The mainstay of the economy is mining. The literacy rate is 57% and the province has the lowest number of people aged 20 years and older who have received higher education. The poverty rate



North-West Province?

is 52.2% and the ultra-poverty rate is 28.2%. No less than 67% of the population earns less than R300 a month.

The province has a rape incidence of 150.2 per 100 000 (or over 5 200 rape cases reported during 2009). The NWP has the highest alcohol consumption rate of all the provinces at 34 liters to 68 liters per person per year. According to www.metam.co.za, the HIV infection rate can be broken down into the following: whole population 13%; Antenatal clinic estimate 30%; and Adults ages 20 - 64 years of age, 22%. This translates to almost 496 000 people living with HIV in the province, with 117 people getting infected every day.

The statistics of the province are in stark contrast to that of the mostly affluent urban areas where the previous LGBT research studies were conducted: Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria are vastly different to the small villages and towns in rural NWP. Overall, the LGBT communities in urban South Africa enjoy a much higher standard of living than those in the under-developed provinces, such as NWP.

This report summarises the major findings of the research conducted among LGBT persons in the NWP during 2009 - 2010

The research team was interested to see how living standards influenced issues such as LGBT people's perception of their environment, and to broadly compare these results to the previous studies. The research team was also interested in seeing how the experiences, feelings and perceptions of rural LGBT people concur with, or differ from those in big cities who have been studied before.

The community report

This report summarises the major findings of the research conducted among LGBT persons in the NWP during 2009 - 2010. This is not a scientific report, but aims to be accessible to the LGBT community so as to better understand themselves, but also to the broader community and service providers as a source of discussion and information to inform future policies and interventions aimed at LGBT people in the NWP.

This community report examines several aspects of the lives of the participants, including their sexual orientation and openness, in other words, whether they have told someone about their LGBT status. The report further explores the participants' perception of their environment.

SEXUAL
ABUSE



MENTAL
HEALTH



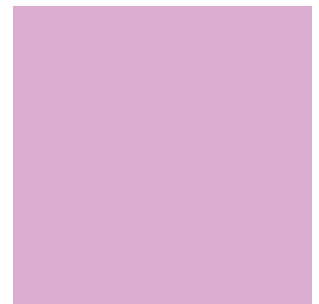
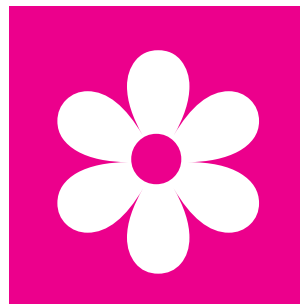
HIV
TESTING



SUICIDE



The opportunities that exist to empower the emerging LGBT community in NWP are identified and suggestions made about future policy directions and prevention programmes



The levels of sexual abuse, discrimination and violence also receive attention. The report finally looks at HIV testing, mental health and suicide.

Findings are presented against the backdrop of what is already known about the province in general and what is known specifically about the LGBT community in the NWP. After discussion of the statistically important findings, the report summarises and contextualises these main findings, before drawing conclusions and making recommendations. The opportunities that

exist to empower the emerging LGBT community in NWP are identified and suggestions made about future policy directions and prevention programmes.

This community report aims to be useful to service providers working in the field of LGBT rights, health and well-being, as well as to government departments. Furthermore, non-profit organisations (NPOs) and CBOs working within the province and beyond ought to be able to gain insight into and understanding of a rural LGBT community from reading the report.

Research

THE UNISA STRATEGIC PROJECTS COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SPCC) WAS THE PRIMARY FUNDER OF THE PROJECT

UCAP COLLABORATED WITH TWO NPOs TO COMPLETE THE NWP RESEARCH PROJECT, NAMELY OUT AND GAY UMBRELLA



CHAPTER 2:

Method

The UNISA Strategic Projects Coordinating Committee (SPCC) was the primary funder of the project. The study was also partially funded by the South African Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) that among others facilitated the participation of a Dutch collaborator from Columbia University, New York

Research project funding

The UNISA Strategic Projects Coordinating Committee (SPCC) was the primary funder of the project. The study was also partially funded by the South African Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) that among others facilitated the participation of a Dutch collaborator from Columbia University, New York.

Research partners

The research was conducted under the auspices of UCAP who has invested in the development of the South African LGBT sector since 1998. In particular, the emphasis in the work of UCAP has been to strengthen community-based mental health services and LGBT-related research expertise. UCAP collaborated with two NPOs to complete the NWP research project, namely OUT and Gay Umbrella.

OUT is a Gauteng-based, national, registered NPO that renders health and psychosocial services to primarily lesbian women and gay men, and to a lesser extent also bisexual, transgendered and intersexed people. OUT has been active for the past fifteen years and recently opened an office in Mafikeng to serve the NWP, very much as an outcome of collaborating in this project.

As indicated, both UCAP and OUT had previous experience in how to conduct a study of the kind reported here, having been involved in three

previous research studies. The method utilised in the NWP study was in the end informed by a combination of this previous experience and new insights gained from local perspectives brought by the second community partner in this project, Gay Umbrella, an LGBT organisation located in the NWP.

Very early in the project, it became evident to UCAP that an investment in Gay Umbrella would be beneficial to the project. This CBO acted as gatekeeper by establishing contact with stakeholders and service providers in Mafikeng. Gay Umbrella also had the necessary knowledge of LGBT-friendly venues within the relevant areas that the researchers needed to access in order to obtain the required sample of participants for this project.

Note, a detailed list of the extended research team is included in Appendix A.

Roles of research partners

As indicated, the research project in the NWP was driven by three main partners, namely UCAP, OUT and Gay Umbrella. Each of the three partners had very specific roles and tasks. The team from UCAP, together with the Dutch collaborator, took the lead and the project was completed under their direction and supervision. UCAP made sure that the various processes were kept on track through regular meetings, workshops, training sessions and monthly teleconferences. Team supervisors from both UCAP and OUT visited various data collection events held by Gay Umbrella throughout the province. These visits formed part of a broader quality assurance process.



Stages of the Research Project

and OUT staff members provided condom demonstrations, safe sex information and literature during data collection events, which was distributed to the participants.

Stages of the research project

The research was conducted in different stages. The study formally commenced in February 2009 with a start-up workshop held in Mafikeng, the capital city of the NWP. It was attended by the research team consisting of the project leader, senior researchers from UNISA, MA Research Psychology students from the University of the Witwatersrand and UNISA, the Dutch collaborator, members from OUT, and students from North-West University (Mafikeng) - or NWU (Maf). Other people who attended this start-up workshop included a range of stakeholders from the province and Gay Umbrella members.

The start-up workshop was followed by a series of focus groups. At one of these focus groups, for instance, a group of lesbian women shared their experiences with the research team. Interviews with individuals, such as a traditional leader and traditional leader, were also conducted. The start-up workshop, focus groups and individual interviews helped the research team to identify the most relevant issues affecting the LGBT community of NWP. The information that was unearthed here ultimately influenced the general research questions included in the questionnaire designed to inform the study.

The second stage of the research process was the identification and training of field workers and recruiters. Field workers were responsible for collecting data while recruiters were responsible for recruiting people to take part in the research project. Field workers were chosen from senior students at NWU (Maf) who applied to participate in the study.



THE STUDY
FORMALLY
COMMENCED IN
FEBRUARY 2009
WITH A START-
UP WORKSHOP
HELD IN
MAFIKENG, THE
CAPITAL CITY OF
THE NWP



The applicants were interviewed and underwent training before the final selection was made. Gay Umbrella enlisted the help of some of its volunteers in the four districts of the province to act as recruiters.

The field workers and recruiters travelled to UNISA main campus in Pretoria, Gauteng, to undergo training at UCAP. Conducted over a period of two weekends, the training touched on all aspects relating to the process of data collection, ethics and other pertinent issues. The field workers were given an opportunity to test an early draft of the questionnaire and provide their inputs, in an effort to improve the questionnaire and make it clearer and more to-the-point. Field workers were awarded certificates of attendance for the training at UCAP, with the expectation that the research skills they had learned would assist them in their own studies.

Over the next eight months until February 2010, a team from Gay Umbrella, together with the field workers, travelled to various towns and areas in the NWP to complete the third stage of the process, namely the collection of data. A more detailed look at the ways in which participants were recruited follows a little later in the report. During this stage the team made sure that the information about the research was available in the media and through social networks.

The last stages in the process included the electronic capturing of the data early in 2010 and the long process of data analysis and interpretation by the academics on the research team. The results of the research will be disseminated in various ways. Apart from the official launch of this report, smaller dissemination events will be held in the areas of the NWP where data collection took place. Academic papers will be published in due course by the researchers who have been part of this study, while the information will be further disseminated at academic conferences.

Method of recruiting participants

Only LGBT people from the NWP qualified to participate in the study. All participants had to be living in the province during the time of the study and had to be 16 years old or older. LGBT men and women who were black, white, coloured or Indian could participate and the goal was to recruit 340 participants, as much as possible equally divided across sex, age and race.

Participants were recruited in various ways:

- 1. Recruiters:** The recruiters consisted of two people in each of the four districts of the province. They were responsible for finding eligible people to attend data collection events. These recruiters were also responsible for distributing the questionnaire for completion to other individuals and groups who did not participate in the data collection events.



THE FIELD WORKERS IDENTIFIED PARTICIPANTS WHO WOULD TAKE PRE-ADDRESSED QUESTIONNAIRES TO THEIR FRIENDS OR NETWORKS TO RETURN THROUGH THE POST

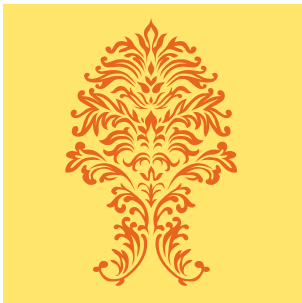
Methods of Recruiting



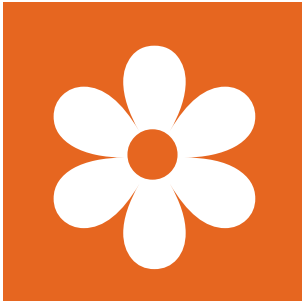
GROUPS OF PEOPLE FILLED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE DURING A SPECIFIED TIME SLOT AT ONE OF SEVEN EVENTS



THE RESEARCH TEAM PAID VERY CLOSE ATTENTION TO CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH WITH A STRICT SET OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES TO ENSURE THAT ALL THE PARTICIPANTS COULD PARTICIPATE WITH DIGNITY, WHILE HAVING THEIR RIGHTS AND PRIVACY RESPECTED AND PROTECTED



Participants



2. Field workers: Senior students from the NWU (Maf) were selected as field workers. The field workers supervised the filling in of the questionnaire and assisted participants who experienced problems with or had questions about their participation. The field workers identified participants who would take pre-addressed questionnaires to their friends or networks to return through the post. They also gave the questionnaire to individuals or smaller groups to fill in and assisted people in the completion of the questionnaire.



3. Data collection events: Groups of people filled in the questionnaire during a specified time slot at one of seven events. These events started off with a session for the completion of the questionnaire and ended with an informal social gathering, during which community building activities took place. These data collection events were held in Mafikeng,

Itsoseng, Vryburg, Lehurutshe, Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp and Rustenburg.

4. Post: Questionnaire packs were distributed through the post to various individuals, CBOs and churches. They were supplied with pre-addressed, stamped envelopes and participants could post the completed questionnaires back to UCAP at no cost to themselves.

5. Email: Questionnaires were circulated via email to those who sent a request after hearing about the research project on a radio broadcast

on Radio Sonder Grense (RSG) or through other mainstream and LGBT media.

6. SMS alerts: The Gay Umbrella database of some 450 contacts was used to send sms alerts to various people in the province, to either attend a data collection event or make use of other means for completing the questionnaire.

7. Joburg Pride: The field workers attended Joburg Pride in October 2009 and assisted people in filling in some questionnaires there, while others were handed out to people who passed the Gay Umbrella stall with instructions to post it back to UCAP. The team made sure that only people



residing in the NWP were approached at Pride.

8. Online: An electronic version of the questionnaire was available online from November

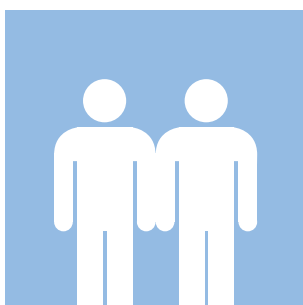
2009 to those with internet access and

participants were notified via social networking sites, such as Facebook, and news sites like mambaonline.com. Participants could fill in the online questionnaire in the privacy of their homes and the data was forwarded to UCAP.

Ethical Considerations



THE QUESTIONNAIRE WAS DEVELOPED AFTER THE INFORMATION THAT WAS GATHERED AT THE START-UP WORKSHOP, FOCUS GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WAS STUDIED AND ANALYSED



A QUESTIONNAIRE
WAS USED TO
GATHER THE
INFORMATION

The research team paid very close attention to conducting the research with a strict set of ethical principles to ensure that all the participants could participate with dignity, while having their rights and privacy respected and protected

Ethical considerations

The research team paid very close attention to conducting the research with a strict set of ethical principles to ensure that all the participants could participate with dignity, while having their rights and privacy respected and protected. The research was approved by the UNISA Ethics Committee. Participants were informed in detail about their participation, were free to participate and could stop participating at any point without consequence or penalty. All the filled out questionnaires were kept strictly confidential and anonymity was guaranteed.

The questionnaire


A questionnaire was used to gather the information. The questionnaire was developed after the information that was gathered at the start-up workshop, focus groups and individual interviews was studied and analysed. Using the research questionnaire of the three urban-based studies as a starting

point, questions were tailor-made to fit the context of the NWP, informed by findings from the first stage of the research process, that is, the start-up workshop. It resulted in a new questionnaire specific to the NWP.

The twenty page NWP questionnaire required the participants to report their experiences by rating their perceptions and feelings on a variety of topics. Completing the questionnaire took between 40 – 90 minutes.

The questionnaire was available in English, Afrikaans or Setswana. The vast majority of participants preferred to complete the English version.

The completion of questionnaires was monitored by means of report sheets which were completed by the field workers. This tracked any problems experienced with the questionnaire while it was being filled in. In most instances the field workers solved the queries and as a result the majority of questionnaires were filled in properly and fully.



AT THE START OF THE RESEARCH THE PLAN WAS TO HAVE EQUAL NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS BASED ON SEX, AGE AND RACE, BUT IN THE END IT BECAME CLEAR THAT WITH THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO FILL THE VARIOUS QUOTAS

THE TERM 'DEMOGRAPHICS', REFERS TO THE DATA DESCRIBING THE SAMPLE GROUP'S RACE, SEX, AGE, AND OTHER ATTRIBUTES THAT DETERMINE THEIR POSITION IN SOCIETY.

CHAPTER 3:

Description of the Sample

The research attracted a total of 343 participants (thus three more than the target of 340), of which 319 questionnaires were sufficiently completed for analysis. At the start of the research the plan was to have equal numbers of participants based on sex, age and race, but in the end it became clear that with the available resources it was not possible to fill the various quotas.

The demographics of the sample of 319 are described in this chapter.

The term 'demographics', refers to the data describing the sample group's race, sex, age, and other attributes that determine their position in society.

Race and sex

The majority of people who took part were black (69.5%), compared to the 23.2% of white participants, as can be seen from Table 1. Very few Indian and coloured people (a combined 7.3%) took part in the study and in the end they were grouped together as 'Other'. These 'Other' people are for the most part not mentioned in this report, except in one or two instances where enough data exists in relation to them to allow for meaningful analysis.

Table 1: Participants by Race and Sex

	Men (n=168)	Women (n=134)	Total (n=302*)
Black	58.3%	83.6%	69.5%
White	33.3%	10.4%	23.2%
Other	8.3%	6.0%	7.3%

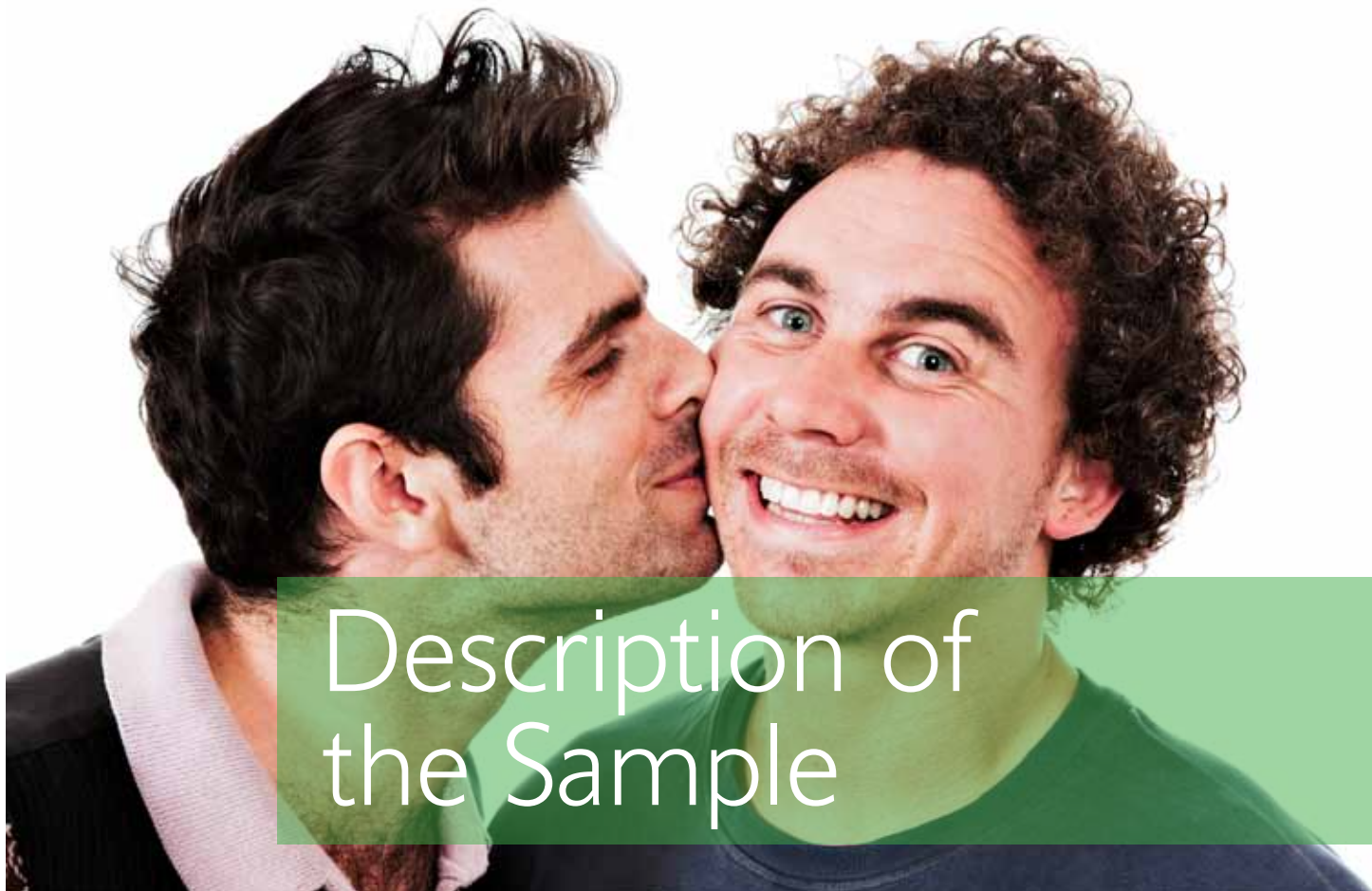
**Some participants did not supply all their demographic detail, therefore this total differs from the total of 319 participants mentioned in the introductory paragraph*

There were more men than women in the sample, and there were almost twice as many black men as white men in the sample. Overall black women made up the biggest single group of participants. The black women far outnumbered the white and 'Other' women.

Table 2: Participants by Age and Sex

	Men (n=169)	Women (n=135)	Total (n=304*)
16-20 Years old	19.5%	33.3%	25.7%
21-25 Years old	37.3%	43.7%	40.1%
26-35 Years old	29.6%	11.9%	21.7%
36-68 Years old	13.6%	11.1%	12.5%

**Some participants did not supply all their demographic detail, therefore this total differs from the total of 319 participants mentioned in the introductory paragraph*



Description of the Sample

Age and language

From Table 2, it can be seen that, overall, 40.1% of the participants were aged between 21 and 25 years old and nearly two thirds (65.8%) of the sample was between the ages of 16 and 25 years. The vast majority (77%) of the women were younger than 25 years. The women in the sample were generally younger than the men, with a third of the women being in the age group 16 - 20 years. White women were more represented in the 36 - 68 age group. Almost a third (29.6%) of the men were aged between 26 and 35 years.

Table 3: Participants by Race, Language spoken most often and Sex

Race	Language	Men (n=160)	Women (n=127)	Total (n=287*)
Black	Setswana	66.7%	69.5%	68.2%
	Afrikaans	2.2%	2.9%	2.5%
	English	31.2%	27.6%	29.3%
Total Black		(n=93)	(n=105)	(n=198)
White	Setswana	0%	0%	0%
	Afrikaans	61.8%	92.9%	68.1%
	English	38.2%	7.1%	31.9%
Total White		(n=55)	(n=14)	(n=69)
Other	Setswana	25.0%	37.5%	30.0%
	Afrikaans	41.7%	12.5%	30.0%
	English	33.3%	50.0%	40.0%
Total Other		(n=12)	(n=8)	(n=20)

*Some participants did not supply all their demographic detail, therefore this total differs from the total of 319 participants mentioned in the introductory paragraph



PARTICIPANTS AGED BETWEEN 16 AND 20 YEARS, ESPECIALLY THE WOMEN, WERE LIKELY TO BE EITHER AT SCHOOL OR STUDYING DURING THE TIME OF THE RESEARCH AND THEREFORE WERE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE LITTLE OR NO INCOME

Participants were asked which language they speak most often and 49.1% of participants spoke Setswana most often. A third of the participants, at 30.6%, spoke mainly English.



WHITE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SAMPLE HAD HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND EARNED MORE THAN THEIR YOUNGER BLACK COUNTERPARTS, BUT IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THE WHITE PARTICIPANTS WERE GENERALLY MUCH OLDER THAN THE BLACK PARTICIPANTS, WHICH MEANS THAT THE TWO GROUPS CANNOT BE COMPARED DIRECTLY ON THE BASIS OF EDUCATION AND INCOME.

Participants were asked which language they speak most often and 49.1% of participants spoke Setswana most often. A third of the participants, at 30.6%, spoke mainly English (See Table 3). Compared to the women, relatively more black and white men spoke predominantly English. While they were a small section of the sample, half of the 'Other' participants indicated that they also spoke mainly English. Language is therefore not completely bound to race. Where specific mention is therefore made of a finding related to Afrikaans speakers, it must be remembered that this predominantly concerns older white women, some white men as well as almost a third (30.0%) of the coloured or Indian people. Black women spoke Setswana most often, while 92.9% of the white women spoke only Afrikaans.

Education and income levels

White participants in the sample had higher levels of education and earned more than their younger black counterparts, but it must be remembered that the white participants were generally much older than the black participants, which means that the two groups cannot be compared directly on the basis of education and income. As indicated in Table 5, women were more likely to have no income than men, with 44.8% reporting that they had no income. A total of 29.3% of the women said they earned less than R 1 600 per month. This is opposed to the 22.4% of men who had no income, with 23.0% earning less than R1 600 per month. Again, these figures must be viewed in the light of the respective ages of these participants. Participants aged between 16 and 20 years, especially the women, were likely to be

either at school or studying during the time of the research and therefore were most likely to have little or no income.

Table 4: Participants by Education and Sex

	Men (n=168)	Women (n=135)	Total (n=303*)
<Grade 12	13.1%	23.0%	17.5%
Grade 12	41.7%	51.1%	45.9%
Diploma	22.6%	15.6%	19.5%
Degree / Post-graduate	22.6%	10.4%	17.2%

*Some participants did not supply all their demographic detail, therefore this total differs from the total of 319 participants mentioned in the introductory paragraph

Table 5: Participants by Income and Sex

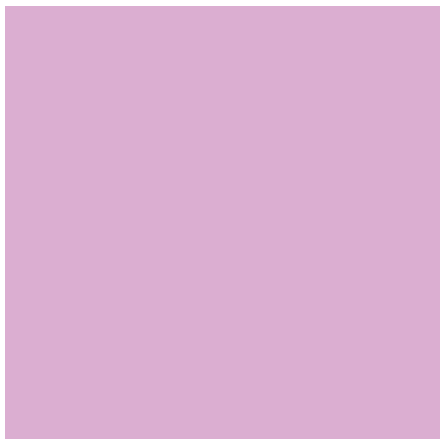
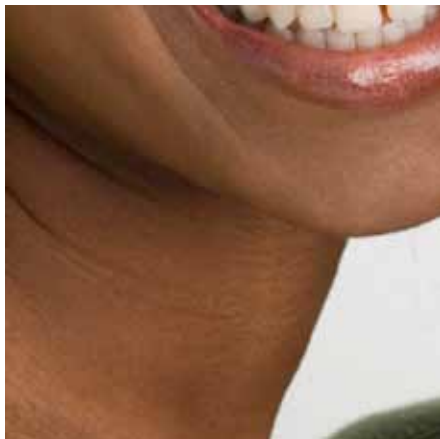
	Men (n=165)	Women (n=116)	Total (n=281*)
No income	13.1%	23.0%	17.5%
<R1600pm	41.7%	51.1%	45.9%
R1600pm – R6400pm	22.6%	15.6%	19.5%
>R6400pm	22.6%	10.4%	17.2%


*Some participants did not supply all their demographic detail, therefore this total differs from the total of 319 participants mentioned in the introductory paragraph

THE MAJORITY
OF THE BLACK
PARTICIPANTS
WERE BORN IN
NWP



Description of the Sample





Apart from the few (white) churches and networks to which the questionnaires were posted and those from NWP who filled in the questionnaire at Joburg Pride, most white participants filled in online versions of the questionnaire.

Born in NWP

The majority of the black participants were born in NWP. Most of the Afrikaans speaking participants were born outside of the province. Note, both white and 'Other' participants speak Afrikaans, so these people are not necessarily only white, as indicated earlier. Women were more likely than men to be born in NWP.

Relationship status

The vast majority of the women in the sample (90.2%) were in an ongoing intimate relationship. For men this proportion was smaller at 66.9%. Setswana speakers were more likely to be in a relationship than speakers from any other language group. It must be remembered that all the Setswana speakers were black and consisted mainly of young black women.

Discussion of method and limitations of findings

The description of the sample makes clear that there is no single, uniform group of LGBT people in the NWP. The LGBT community is made up of many smaller groups, friendship circles and cliques. The people who participated in this study do not adequately represent the whole LGBT community of the NWP. It seems that young, black participants are over-represented in the sample. Older black LGBT people did not participate in large numbers. It was also hard to find white respondents in the younger age groups.

There are a few possible reasons why it was not possible to reach the original target numbers for age, race and sex. One of the reasons could be that the networks established by Gay Umbrella historically only target young people. Second, the field workers were students who moved within networks that represented the younger age groups. Third, all the field workers and recruiters were black and because the races are still divided in South Africa, it was hard for them to find white participants, because the networks they used to draw people to the data collection events were black.

Apart from the few (white) churches and networks to which the questionnaires were posted and those from NWP who filled in the questionnaire at Joburg Pride, most white participants filled in online versions of the questionnaire.


The process of gathering the data proved to be difficult and labour intensive because it took place in the rural districts of the NWP. Plans had to be adapted when it became clear that the target numbers were not being filled as planned. It is furthermore important to remember that the needs of people keep on changing and that there may be different needs not necessarily identified by this research due to the demographics of the actual participants. It would be wise to keep on asking questions and to do further research in order to build on the knowledge which has been attained here, so as to elaborate on the picture that is emerging from this study and to further refine ideas for the empowerment opportunities that may exist.



Research



SAME-SEX
ATTRACTION
EXISTS IN
VARYING
DEGREES



AS INDICATED, BOTH
UCAP AND OUT HAD
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE
IN HOW TO CONDUCT
A STUDY OF THE KIND
REPORTED HERE, HAVING
BEEN INVOLVED IN THREE
PREVIOUS RESEARCH
STUDIES

CHAPTER 4:

In this chapter, and Chapters 5 – 10 that follow, the main findings of the NWP study will be presented.

Findings Orientation and Gender



Research findings - Orientation and gender

In this chapter, and Chapters 5 – 10 that follow, the main findings of the NWP study will be presented. These findings concentrate on experiences and themes that are important in the lives of LGBT persons. These themes include the way LGBT persons see themselves, how they perceive their social environment, their experiences with discrimination and their mental health.

For each of these themes there was an exploration during the data analysis as to whether there were differences between sub-groups of participants. For instance, one of the aspects explored, looks at whether lesbian women experience their environment more positively than gay men. Do persons who are gender non-conforming experience more discrimination than gender conforming participants? Is the mental health of younger LGBT persons more positive than that of older LGBT persons? Such associations were explored with statistical tests. These statistical tests could only be done when there were a significant number of persons in each sub-group. If such associations were found and they were not the consequence of pure chance, they are described in the text. It will be clear at the end of the report that there are patterns in the findings.

Sexual orientation

Same-sex attraction exists in varying degrees. Three quarters of the sample (75.2%) described themselves as exclusively same-sex attracted. The majority of the men with exclusive same-sex attraction identified as 'gay' and almost

all the women who reported exclusively same-sex attraction identified as 'lesbian'. These gay men and lesbian women were also more likely to report that they ever have had exclusively same-sex attractions, fantasies and sexual experiences.

A total of 15.8% of the sample described themselves as predominantly same-sex attracted, with only a total of 3.6% of the sample identifying as 'bisexual'. Generally, persons who identified as bisexual were younger than persons who identified as lesbian or gay. Women were also more likely to identify as bisexual.

Within the group of women, lesbian women had more exclusive same-sex fantasies and more exclusive same-sex sexual experience than bisexual women. They were more open about their sexual orientation and less secretive about it. They also experienced lower levels of internalised homophobia than bisexual women. The same was true of gay men vs. bisexual men.

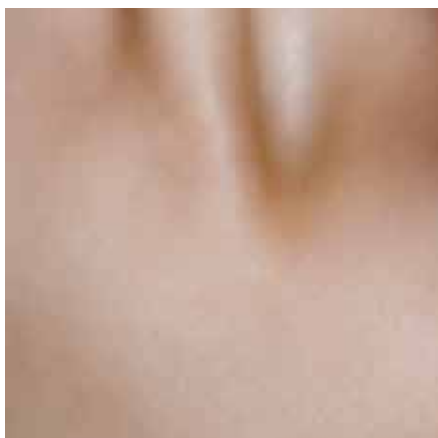
Gender

LGBT people in the NWP live in a society where men are expected to be masculine and females are expected to be feminine. The research looked into the question of whether LGBT people conform to these expectations or not. The study found a high degree of gender non-conformity amongst the younger men and women. More than half of all black participants (52%) indicated that they did not conform to their gender. Gender non-conformity was less present among the older, white participants.



Research Orientation and Gender

COMPARATIVELY,
THE GENDER NON-
CONFORMING MEN
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MUCH EFFORT TO
KEEP THEIR SEXUAL
ORIENTATION A
SECRET



IT WAS THE YOUNGEST
WOMEN, WHO AS SEEN
EARLIER WERE MOSTLY
BLACK AND SETSWANA
SPEAKING, WHO
WERE MOST LIKELY
TO BE GENDER NON-
CONFORMING

Findings

The majority of participants indicated that they have had sex with someone of the same sex.



Men who did not conform to their gender saw themselves as less masculine, and more feminine; these gender non-conforming men were less likely than the gender conforming men to ever have had sex with a woman. Gender non-conformity was more prevalent among black men who were born in the province; these men were mostly young and had low levels of income, if any. The gender conforming men reported that they were less sure of their same-sex sexual orientation and had more doubts about it than the gender non-conforming men. Comparatively, the gender non-conforming men did not make much effort to keep their sexual orientation a secret.

Women who did not conform to their gender saw themselves in comparison to other women as more masculine and less feminine. The gender non-conforming women were more likely to identify as lesbian and were less likely to ever have had sex with a man. It was the youngest women, who as seen earlier were mostly black and Setswana speaking, who were most likely to be gender non-conforming.

These gender non-conforming participants were either still at school, in university or college, and not working, and therefore had very low levels of income, if any income at all. They were less confused about their sexuality and had had mostly same-sex sexual experiences.


Older white men and women were more likely to conform to their gender. As was mentioned earlier, the coloured and Indian (or 'Other') sample was quite small. When it came to gender conformity, half of the participants in the 'Other' category said they did conform, while the other half indicated that they did not conform to their gender.

Sexual practices

The majority of participants indicated that they have had sex with someone of the same sex. This was true for 78% of men and 75% of women. Only 2.4% of men and 4.4% of women indicated that they have had sexual experiences with persons of both sexes. Of all the participants, 7.7% of men and 5.2% of women indicated that they were not sexually active at all.

Summary and exploration

Most participants in the NWP study identified as lesbian or gay, with a small group of people seeing themselves as bisexual. It is interesting that there were people in the sample who rated themselves as 'mostly' same-sex attracted yet did not necessarily see themselves as bisexual. There were many participants who are gender non-conforming, especially under the black and the youngest participants.



THERE ARE SEVERAL STAGES TO THE COMING OUT PROCESS, FROM DISCOVERING ONE'S SAME-SEX ATTRACTION, BEING OPEN ABOUT IT, TO INTEGRATING IT INTO ONE'S SENSE OF SELF

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS INDICATED THAT THEY HAVE INDEED DISCLOSED THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Research

CHAPTER 5:

Findings

Openness about Same-Sex Sexuality and LGBT Integration

Research findings - Openness about same-sex sexuality and LGBT integration

Telling somebody about one's same-sex sexual orientation, or coming 'out of the closet', can be a very traumatic experience, not only for the person with same-sex attraction, but also for that person's family and friends.

It usually is a defining moment in the life of a gay or lesbian person. There are several stages to the coming out process, from discovering one's same-sex attraction, being open about it, to integrating it into one's sense of self; this report will not deal with these stages in detail.

Disclosure

The majority of respondents indicated that they have indeed disclosed their sexual orientation. More women (94.1%) than men (87.1%) said to have disclosed their sexual orientation to at least one person. Whether people told someone about their orientation was not related to their sex, age or race.

Level of income and whether people were in ongoing intimate relationships played a role in whether a participant had come out or not. The men in the highest income bracket were least likely to have come out. As seen before, these men were most likely to have higher levels of education and were more likely to be white. The young black women who were in ongoing intimate relationships were most likely to have come out, followed closely by the young black men.

Age of first disclosure

In relation to the age of coming out, participants can be divided into three main groups: Those who came out before the age of 16, those who came out between ages 16 and 20 and those who came out after the age of 20. The table below, Table 6, indicates these ages of coming out in the top column. The left column indicates various sub-groups.

Table 6: Age at time of coming out

Age at time of coming out	Before age 16	Between ages 16 - 20	After age 20
Male	39.0%	44.5%	16.4%
Female	38.8%	47.3%	14.0%
16 - 20 yrs	55.2%	44.8%	0.0%
21 - 25 yrs	38.6%	47.4%	14.0%
26 - 35 yrs	33.3%	45.2%	21.4%
36 - 68 yrs	23.5%	35.3%	41.2%
Black	50.0%	39.8%	10.2%
White	20.0%	55.6%	24.4%
Other	27.3%	45.5%	27.3%
Setswana	52.6%	36.8%	10.5%
Afrikaans	26.5%	47.1%	26.5%
English	31.3%	54.2%	14.6%
In ongoing intimate relationship	46.3%	41.1%	12.6%
Not in relationship	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%
Gender non-conformity	54.7%	43.4%	1.9%
Gender conformity	30.1%	45.2%	24.7%
No income	45.5%	42.4%	12.1%
R1 600 or less	45.9%	51.4%	2.7%
R1 601 - R6 400	36.8%	42.1%	21.1%
R6 401 or more	23.5%	44.1%	32.4%



Research

Openness about Same-Sex Sexuality and LGBT Integration

The data indicates that the majority of people in the study had indeed come out and disclosed their same-sex orientation to someone else. The majority of the black participants as well as most of the white and 'Other' participants had come 'out of the closet'.

When looking specifically at the groups of participants who came out before the age of 16, Table 6 shows that the men most likely to have come out before the age of 16 were predominantly black (50.0%), Setswana speaking (52.6%) and in an ongoing intimate relationship (46.3%). When looking at the women who disclosed before the age of 16, they were most likely to be gender non-conforming, in other words they acted in a more masculine manner. This refers to the young, black women who participated in the study.

The participants who came out mostly between the ages of 16 and 20 were bisexual women. A total of 55.0% of the white participants also came out in this age category.

The last age category for coming out was after the age of 20 years. In this category the men who were likely to have come out after the age of 20 years were most likely to be gender conforming, older and in the highest income bracket. Women who came out after the age of 20 were older, white and Afrikaans speaking, highly educated and among the top income earners. Compared to the men, the women who came out after

age 20 were most probably not in an ongoing intimate relationship at the time of the study.

The participants who tended to be least open about their sexual orientation were highly educated and gender-conforming women. These were mainly the white women. Furthermore both bisexual men and bisexual women tended to be less open about their sexual orientation than gay men or lesbian women.

Coming out as positive experience

The researchers asked the question: "Does coming out make you feel good about yourself?" The gender non-conforming men and women were more likely than gender conforming participants to agree that their coming out experience was a positive one. The men aged 16 – 20 years stood out within this group. White, Afrikaans speaking men and women tended to indicate that they had a negative coming out experience, an opinion the bisexual participants shared.

Active hiding of same-sex attraction

Even though a LGBT person may have come out, that does not necessarily imply that people are always open about their experiences, nor open to everyone. Some LGBT persons may actually try very hard to hide from other people that they are attracted to persons of the same sex. This involves active hiding of such a person's sexual identity



Findings

The researchers asked the question: “Does coming out make you feel good about yourself?” The gender non-conforming men and women were more likely than gender conforming participants to agree that their coming out experience was a positive one.

from people outside of a circle of confidants most probably consisting of gay or lesbian friends. A gay man or lesbian woman could for instance actively hide large aspects of their lives from judgmental family members or disapproving church congregants. Also, for fear of victimisation, a gay or lesbian person could be hiding their sexual orientation from an employer or colleagues at work.

The scenarios described above likely reflect the realities faced by some of the participants in the NWP study. Even though 87.1% of men and 94.1% of women had come out to others, 35.7% of men and 64.3% of women who participated in the study tried to hide their sexual orientation from others. Generally women tended to feel more strongly than men that they should keep their LGBT status a secret. While being a small minority of participants, the coloured and Indian women felt particularly strongly about the need for secrecy in their communities. Bisexual men were more likely than gay men to keep their orientation a secret.

Black women who indicated that they were out of the closet about their same-sex sexuality, tended to try slightly harder than white women to keep their sexuality a secret from family, friends, colleagues or peers. Most of the gay men as well as the young black lesbian women who were gender non-conforming were more likely to actively hide their sexual orientation from family or friends, although they were also more likely to have come out at a young age.

White women with the highest level of education tended to be less likely to hide their sexual orientation from people around them. These are the very same women who indicated that they would be most likely to come out at a much later age. It seems that older white women may take longer before disclosing their sexual orientation, but then tend to be very open about it once they have disclosed. By contrast, the young black females disclose their orientation very early in their lives, but are selective about whom to disclose to.

Identification with the LGBT community

Do participants see themselves as part of a community of LGBT persons, or do they see themselves as outsiders? An LGBT community can be defined as people who share the same experiences and see themselves as part of a group that works together to promote acceptance of same-sex sexuality.

Both men and women indicated that they identify with the LGBT community. This means that they feel that the work done by organisations within the LGBT sector has had some meaning to them in that they found LGBT-related information or took part in organised activities. It was the women who felt strongest that they had some way of identifying with everything LGBT stands for, more so than the men. Among women, the black women identified more strongly with this community than the white women, while specifically those women with a Grade 12 education indicated a stronger sense of identification with the LGBT community than any of the other groupings.

WOMEN STILL AT SCHOOL TENDED TO HAVE A LESSER SENSE OF BELONGING THAN THOSE WITH A GRADE 12 QUALIFICATION.



Research

Openness about Same-Sex Sexuality and LGBT Integration

LGBT community belonging

People who identify with a specific community do not necessarily take part in activities that bind the community together, yet feel that they can identify with the people who do take an active part in community life. In fact, many people who identify as gay or lesbian often do not frequent gay bars or clubs or get involved in any activities organised by CBOs and NPOs working in the LGBT field. In this instance, women indicated a stronger sense of belonging to the LGBT community than the men. Women still at school tended to have a lesser sense of belonging than those with a Grade 12 qualification.

LGBT people at risk of negativity

LGBT people often believe that if they are open about their same-sex sexuality, they will put themselves at risk of negative reactions. Negative reactions could take the form of derogatory speech, discrimination or violent crimes directed at LGBT people because of their same-sex sexuality.

Overall the gay men tended to be less afraid of the risk of negativity than the lesbian women. Generally, the men most likely to agree that being open would put them at risk, were the white, Afrikaans speaking men with high

income levels. These (mostly gender conforming) men agreed that being open about their sexual orientation put them at risk of negative reactions from people around them. They were joined by the high income earning and highly educated women, who tended to indicate that they believed that openness about same-sex sexuality put them at risk of negative comments or actions.

Bisexual men in the sample were also afraid of negativity or violence if they spoke openly about their bisexuality. On the other hand, men born in the NWP were less likely to indicate that they felt that disclosing their LGBT status did not put them at risk.

LGBT friends

LGBT friendship circles usually include same-sex attracted friends where secrets can be shared and intimacies kindled. When it comes to the friends of LGBT people, a significant finding concerns the men born in the NWP. These mainly black men were more likely to have only LGBT friends than those not born in the province. Gender non-conforming men were also more likely to only have LGBT friends, while bisexual men tended to have no LGBT friends. There are no similar statistical significant findings for women.

A photograph of two young women standing under a large, colorful umbrella with a rainbow pattern. The woman on the left has long blonde hair and is wearing a black top. The woman on the right has short dark hair and is wearing a white top. They are both looking towards the camera with neutral expressions. The background is a bright, slightly overcast sky.

Findings

Summary and exploration

When reading the above research findings, it soon becomes apparent that there were three main groups of people in the sample. Each of these groups had a specific experience of what it means to be LGBT. The first group consists mainly of the young, black participants who came out at a very young age, most likely before they were

16 years old. Coming out was largely a positive experience for them. At the same time, the participants in this first group were likely to be more secretive about their sexual orientation. It is important to note that even though they had come out to a close family member, or more likely to another same-sex friend, the people in this group kept their same-sex sexuality an active secret from the majority of people around them. They identified quite strongly with the LGBT community and indeed feel a strong sense of belonging to the LGBT community. Some of them had only LGBT friends.

A third, much smaller group, but no less important, were the bisexual men and women who seemed to be more secretive about their orientation than their lesbian or gay counterparts.

On the opposite side of the spectrum and in the second group were the older, white, mainly Afrikaans speaking participants who came out relatively late in life. Coming out was not such a positive experience for them and they felt at risk of experiencing negative comments or violence if they disclosed their sexual orientation. They did not identify strongly with the LGBT community, nor did they feel that they belonged to it. Cognisance must be taken of the fact that these older people grew up in a repressive era under Apartheid and would then most likely not have come out early on in life. This is contrary to the experience of the first group in this present study; the younger generation that came out before the age of 16.

A third, much smaller group, but no less important, were the bisexual men and women who seemed to be more secretive about their orientation than their lesbian or gay counterparts. The bisexual men felt that openness about their sexuality could put them at risk. Their coming out process was not a positive one and they were less likely to have LGBT friends. In short, it seems as if the young black participants are generally having a much different LGBT experience than their white or bisexual counterparts.



Research

THIS CHAPTER DEALS WITH HOW THE PARTICIPANTS PERCEIVE AND EXPERIENCE THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE BROADER COMMUNITY

THE MAJORITY OF BOTH MALE AND FEMALE PARTICIPANTS INDICATED THAT THEY THOUGHT THAT, IN GENERAL, LGBT PEOPLE WERE ACCEPTED IN THE NWP

CHAPTER 6:

Findings

How LGBT Persons Perceive their Environment

Research findings - How LGBT persons perceive their environment

This chapter deals with how the participants perceive and experience their environment and how they relate to the broader community. It measures LGBT people's sense of belonging to the province and its broader community. It also deals with traditional attitudes and religious beliefs.

The NWP has an elaborate traditional leadership system in place and the Dikgosi (or chiefs) hold important positions of power and influence in the broader community life. Similarly traditional healers play an important role in the lives of many of the Tswana people in the NWP. The Tswana people also respect and revere their ancestors.

It must be noted here that the white participants indicated that the concepts of traditional leaders and traditional healers were not applicable to them at all.

Perceived acceptance of LGBT persons in NWP

The majority of both male and female participants indicated that they thought that, in general, LGBT people were accepted in the NWP. Both white and black women indicated they experience a high level of acceptance. Among the women there was however a specific group who felt otherwise: it was the 21 – 25 year old women who tended to slightly disagree, by

indicating that they thought that the level of acceptance was less high. In particular, the white, Afrikaans speaking women were of the opinion that they were not accepted in the NWP.

As far as the men were concerned, black men felt more strongly that they were accepted in the NWP than the white men. The people least likely to think that they were accepted were the white, Afrikaans, high income earners with higher levels of education, not born in the province and who were gender conforming.

Perceived attitude of religion towards LGBT persons

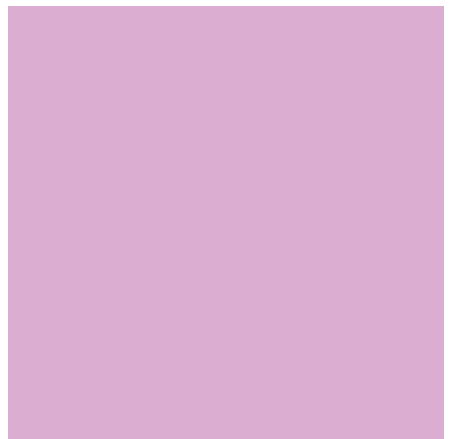
Both men and women felt very strongly that religion disapproved of their same-sex sexuality. This was true for English and Setswana speaking men, but particularly so for Afrikaans men (both white and other), who felt even more strongly about religion's deep disapproval of same-sex sexuality. The only exception with regard to this strong opinion was the women aged between 21 – 25 years, who thought that religion was less disapproving.

Role and attitude of traditional leaders

For the black participants, women and men disagreed about how important a role traditional leaders play in their community. Black women, on the one hand, felt that the traditional leaders do not play an important role in their community, while men who spoke mainly Setswana were more likely



DO PARTICIPANTS THINK THAT TRADITIONAL HEALERS ARE TOLERANT OF SAME-SEX SEXUALITY?



Research

How LGBT Persons Perceive their Environment

Findings

The men who thought that traditional leaders play an important role were more likely to be earning a salary, suggesting that they were in a slightly older age group, who had at least completed Grade 12.

to report that traditional leaders in fact do play an important role in the community. The men who thought that traditional leaders play an important role were more likely to be earning a salary, suggesting that they were in a slightly older age group, who had at least completed Grade 12.

Do participants think that traditional leaders are tolerant of same-sex sexuality? Black men and women seemed to think that they are not. Men who were gender non-conforming, in other words mostly the young black men, reported however that they felt that indeed there was some level of tolerance among traditional leaders when it came to same-sex sexuality. The black women on the other hand disagreed with this way of thinking and were more adamant that traditional leaders were not that tolerant toward lesbian women in particular, and LGBT people in general.

Role and attitude of traditional healers

Participants were first asked what role traditional healers play in their lives and then had to rate the attitude they thought traditional healers had toward LGBT people. According to the black women in the sample, traditional healers played an important role in their lives. The black men in the sample reported that they felt traditional healers played an important role in the community, if not necessarily in their own lives. The people who felt most strongly that traditional healers do play an important role in the NWP, were the young, school-going, gender non-conforming black men. On the whole the English speaking women, who could be either white, black or 'Other', felt that the

traditional healers did not play such an important role in society.

When it came to traditional healers' acceptance of same-sex sexuality, black men and black women were still in disagreement. Black men said that traditional healers were tolerant and black women said they didn't know if traditional healers were tolerant or not. Those mainly black men born in the NWP said that they weren't sure if the traditional healers were tolerant of their sexual orientation or not. On the whole though, black men tended to agree more than the black women that traditional healers were tolerant of same-sex sexuality.

Role of ancestors and their perceived attitudes

Do ancestors play an important role in the participants' lives? For white participants this was not a matter of great importance. It was the young, black, gender non-conforming men and women who indicated that ancestors were important in the community. When asked if ancestors were important to themselves, the same group answered that this was indeed the case, while white participants consistently indicated that in their lives ancestors were unimportant.

Black men indicated either that they felt that their ancestors approved of their lifestyle, or that they did not know if the ancestors approved of their lifestyle or not. It was the gender non-conforming participants, the overtly effeminate men and masculine women who indicated that their ancestors approve of their lifestyle.



General sense of belonging to NWP community

The NWP community consists of more than the LGBT community. With the NWP community we refer to the broader, mainstream society in the province.

Which of the study participants felt that they belonged to the broader NWP community? Black men and women were more likely to feel this way than the white men or women. When broken down, Setswana speakers had a greater sense of belonging than Afrikaans speaking participants; this was also true of English speaking women who had a greater sense of belonging than Afrikaans speaking women. The young black men who were gender non-conforming also reported a greater sense of belonging to the broader North-West community.

Summary and exploration

The participants, specifically the black ones, had a strong feeling of acceptance in the province. These young, black, mostly Setswana or possibly English

speaking men and women were likely to have been born in the province, and therefore probably take part in traditional culture. It is most likely that most of them have rarely left their own town or province and hence, they feel a sense of belonging to the broader community. It is remarkable, though, that this suggests that they do not feel excluded.

Both black men and women tended to believe that traditional leaders were important in their lives, but they tended to disagree over how accepting they are of same-sex sexuality. The young, gender non-conforming men seemed to think that there was some level of acceptance by traditional leaders. The black women generally disagreed and said instead that both traditional leaders and healers to varying degrees were not tolerant of same-sex sexuality.

Men who felt that traditional leaders were tolerant of their sexuality reported a higher sense of belonging to the NWP than those who indicated that traditional healers were intolerant. The same was true of traditional healers. Women who felt that traditional healers were tolerant (or who didn't know if

Findings

they were tolerant or not) also experienced a greater sense of belonging than those who felt traditional healers did not tolerate their sexuality.

The white men who felt that the traditional healers were irrelevant to them had the least sense of belonging. The young, black men who felt approval from their ancestors felt that the ancestors played an important role in their lives and subsequently also felt that they belonged to the province.

From the findings it can be deduced that men in the study who had a greater sense of belonging to the NW community were most likely to be black, Setswana speaking, born in the NWP and gender non-conforming.

They were likely to believe that their traditional leaders, traditional healers and ancestors were tolerant of their same-sex sexuality. Furthermore, they were likely to believe that their ancestors played a very important role in their community and their own lives.

The women who had a sense of belonging to the NWP community were likely to be black and Setswana speaking. They were either very low or

very high income earners, in an ongoing intimate relationship and felt that traditional healers are tolerant of their same-sex sexuality.

Traditional leaders and healers had little meaning to the white participants. Usually not even born in the province, they seem more cut off from each other, from the community and from other races and cultures. These people do not feel accepted in either their communities or as part of the province and they feel that their religion strongly disapproves of their same-sex sexuality.

The fact that the participants generally felt that religion is highly intolerant of same-sex sexuality needs more investigation. This one area stands out because it is almost unanimously experienced that way, except among a smaller number of women in their twenties. What was notable was that men who said that religion approved or was neutral about same-sex sexuality, or who didn't know, were more likely to have a sense of belonging to the NWP community than men who said religion strongly disapproved.





Research

THE PEOPLE WHO WERE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED DURING CHILDHOOD WERE WHITE, AFRIKAANS SPEAKING WOMEN OLDER THAN 36 YEARS OF AGE WHO WERE HIGH INCOME EARNERS AND WHO WERE NOT BORN IN THE PROVINCE

ABOUT ONE OUT OF SIX PARTICIPANTS (16%) EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE PAST YEAR

CHAPTER 7:

Findings

Sexual Abuse and Discrimination and Violence

Research findings -

Sexual abuse and Discrimination and violence

LGBT people can suffer a number of abuses, from name calling and verbal intimidation to threats of violence. Abuse can also take place in the form of physical acts, like spitting, hitting, being punched and kicked or worse.

Physical and sexual assault or attacks with a weapon can occur. Sexual abuse can also take place during childhood, when a vulnerable child is exposed to violent or sexual acts by an adult. When dealing with sexual abuse, discrimination and violence, it is hard to figure out which groups are more affected by this than others; unlike the other topics, there are very few significant differences. Furthermore, such negative experiences seem relatively rare among the participants.

Sex abuse during childhood

The people who were most likely to have been sexually abused during childhood were white, Afrikaans speaking women older than 36 years of age who were high income earners and who were not born in the province.

Discrimination experienced in the year prior to the study

About one out of six participants (16%) experienced some form of social discrimination in the past year. Men who were gender non-conforming experienced higher levels of discrimination, but overall this was reported rarely by the participants in this study.

Sexual violence

When asked if the participants had experienced sexual abuse or harassment during the past year, both men and women reported that it was not something that happened often. Gender non-conforming men were more likely to have experienced these abuses than other men. The overall incidence of rape was very low. Bisexual men were more likely to have been raped in the past year than any other group.

LGBT attribution of social discrimination

Almost a third of the lesbian women and a fifth of the gay men who reported to have experienced some kind of social discrimination in the past year, attributed the experience to their being LGBT. A few of these participants reported that the discrimination was not an isolated incident and had happened a few times. The majority of participants indicated that any abuse they had experienced had nothing to do with their LGBT status.

Attribution of social discrimination to gender conformity

Almost 10% of both men and women indicated that social discrimination had happened a few times during the previous year. However, most men and women across age and race groups thought that it was unlikely that the recent abuse they had experienced was related to whether or not they conformed to their gender.



INSTITUTIONAL
DISCRIMINATION

Research

Sexual Abuse and
Discrimination
and Violence



Findings

There were few men and women who reported to have experienced any form of institutional discrimination more than once or twice. Institutional discrimination refers to discrimination LGBT people might experience at institutions like hospitals, government departments, police services and the like.

Institutional discrimination

There were few men and women who reported to have experienced any form of institutional discrimination more than once or twice. Institutional discrimination refers to discrimination LGBT people might experience at institutions like hospitals, government departments, police services and the like. Men were somewhat more likely than women to have experienced institutional discrimination. Generally, older, white women and women not in an ongoing intimate relationship, most likely the older white women, were also more likely to have experienced this form of discrimination at an institution.

Responses to abuse

When confronted with issues of discrimination, the participants reported equal feelings of anger and of being upset. Very few of them however took the trouble of reporting these experiences to a higher authority.

Women were less likely than men to report incidents of abuse to a higher authority. Among the men, it was the white men that were least likely to report such incidents. For the rest of the participants the fact that they were discriminated against confirmed their belief that their same-sex sexuality was not accepted.

Summary and exploration

The incidence of sexual abuse, discrimination and violence reported by the participants in the NWP study is relatively low; this low frequency makes it hard to determine which groups are most affected by such experiences.

The fact that the abuse and discrimination does not take place often, does however not diminish the impact a beating or rape could have on a LGBT person's quality of life.

Looking back at the demographics, levels of acceptance and other issues already discussed, it seems that the majority of LGBT people in the province did not have negative experiences when it comes to discrimination and abuse, and maybe not more so than non-LGBT persons experience. The participants did not experience the high levels of sexual abuse & discrimination and violence that have been seen in urban areas of other provinces, nor do they experience the high levels of so-called 'corrective rape' that lesbian women face in other areas of the country.

The fact that the incidence of rape is low in the sample does not mean that it does not exist at all. Gender non-conforming women and men seem to be burdened with some levels of discrimination and at least one in ten of them feel strongly enough about the discrimination or abuse that they will actually report an incident of discrimination to a higher authority like the police. Mostly, people react to what discrimination and abuse there is by being angry or upset.

The incidence of discrimination and abuse seems highest when the participants were still growing up, and coupled with the information that the young black participants came out at a very early age, one can understand that they will keep their orientation a secret to avoid perceived discrimination, abuse or violent crimes like rape.



Research

IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION WHETHER PARTICIPANTS HAD TESTED FOR HIV OR NOT, ALMOST TWO THIRDS OF THE PARTICIPANTS INDICATED THAT THEY HAD TESTED FOR HIV AT LEAST ONCE AT THE TIME OF FILLING IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

SOME PARTICIPANTS TESTED ONLY ONCE FOR HIV, OTHERS DID SO MORE FREQUENTLY

CHAPTER 8:

South Africa is known for having one of the highest HIV infection rates in the world, and as was seen earlier, 22% of all adults in the broader NWP society aged 20 - 64 had tested positive for HIV

Findings HIV Testing



THE MEN WERE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE TESTED DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS, WHILE WOMEN WERE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE TESTED UP TO TWO YEARS AGO

Research findings - HIV testing

South Africa is known for having one of the highest HIV infection rates in the world, and as was seen earlier, 22% of all adults in the broader NWP society aged 20 - 64 had tested positive for HIV. When conducting this study, participants were asked two main questions, namely if they thought they were HIV positive and if they had ever tested for HIV. This led to further questions about the reasons why they did go for a test if they answered 'yes', or the reason why they didn't go for HIV testing if they answered 'no'. Those who had tested for HIV were further asked how many times and how frequently they have tested. They were also asked to reveal whether they had tested positive to HIV or not.

Rate of HIV testing

In response to the question whether participants had tested for HIV or not, almost two thirds of the participants indicated that they had tested for HIV at least once at the time of filling in the questionnaire. The highest income earning men had almost all been tested for HIV. Those who had not tested were likely to be very young and with low levels of income, of whom almost half had not tested at all. More than a third of black women had not yet tested for HIV.

Frequency of HIV testing

Some participants tested only once for HIV, others did so more frequently. Men, especially high income earning men, were most likely to have tested five times or more. The men were more likely to have tested during the last six months, while women were more likely to have tested up to two years ago.

Table 7: HIV Testing

HIV Testing	Have not tested	Have tested	Tested once	Tested twice	Tested 3 times	Tested 4 times	Tested 5 times or more
Men	29.9%	70.1%	22.1%	20.2%	21.2%	9.6%	26.9%
Women	32.6%	67.4%	22.4%	31.8%	22.4%	15.3%	8.2%
Black men	34.0%	66.0%	21.7%	26.7%	25.0%	11.7%	15.0%
White men	21.7%	78.3%	25.0%	11.1%	13.9%	5.6%	44.4%
Other men	25.0%	75.0%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	42.9%
Black women	38.3%	61.7%	23.1%	30.8%	21.5%	15.4%	9.2%
White women	7.1%	92.9%	15.4%	38.5%	30.8%	15.4%	0.0%
Other women	0.0%	100.0%	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%



Research

HIV Testing

Reasons for not testing

The participants who had not yet had an HIV test were asked to choose from a list of reasons why they had not yet gone for a test. The results among the men show that men who used condoms regularly were less likely to have tested themselves for HIV. Black men indicated that because they were fearful of the test results, they have not yet had an HIV test. Women on the other hand, especially English speaking women, tended to be more embarrassed about testing and therefore would not have an HIV test. Some women indicated that they did not test because they felt safe using condoms. Bisexual women also indicated that they did not test because they used condoms.

Reasons for getting tested

The participants who had already tested for an HIV were asked the reasons for testing. They could choose from a list of reasons provided on the questionnaire. The reasons they gave were varied and differed somewhat between the sexes, although there were also similarities.

Men in general and black men in particular indicated that the reason they went for an HIV test was because they thought they could be HIV positive. More men than women indicated this as one of the main reasons they went for an HIV test. Men in the study who did not use condoms and were having unprotected sex reported a higher incidence of testing for HIV than those who used condoms regularly. Men who were in ongoing

intimate relationships said they went for an HIV test because they wanted to know their status. The older, white men indicated that they had tested as part of the requirements for a medical exam.

When it came to the women, they were likely to have tested because their employers required it or it was part of a medical exam.

Some women just wanted to know their status while other women tested for HIV because they had had unprotected sex. Bisexual women were likely to test due to having had unprotected sex.

HIV positive

The participants who had gone for an HIV test were asked to reveal their status if they so chose. A total of 109 men and 85 women had been tested, of whom 8.8% of men and 10.3% of women reported having tested positive for HIV. These percentages are not a scientifically accurate reflection of the actual rate of infection. The data is self reported, meaning that it is not based on actual test results, but the information was shared voluntarily by the participants. On top of this, the women in the sample generally indicated less frequent testing than men and their last test could have been up to two years ago. This area should indeed be studied further.

Findings

WHAT IS ENCOURAGING FROM THIS STUDY IS THAT THE PARTICIPANTS INDICATED THAT THEY WERE USING CONDOMS, WHICH IS A POSITIVE SIGN THAT SOME MESSAGING IN THIS REGARD HAS REACHED THEM

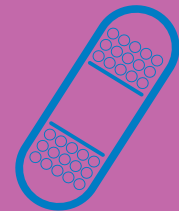


Table 8: Ever Tested HIV Positive

HIV Positive	Tested positive	Tested negative
Men 16 – 20	10.5%	89.5%
Men 21 – 25	10.0%	90.0%
Men 26 – 35	13.2%	86.8%
Men 36 – 68	22.2%	77.8%
Women 16 – 20	8.7%	91.3%
Women 21 – 25	19.5%	80.5%
Women 26 – 35	20.0%	80.0%
Women 36 – 68	14.3%	85.7%

Summary and exploration

What seems to stand out from the findings in this chapter is that extensive further information around HIV testing and the rate of infection among the LGBT community of the NWP is needed to formulate a proper response in combating the disease. What is also clear though is that the participants have indicated through their answers that some sort of response is required based on the information already acquired during this study. The figures produced by this study are the first that indicate in some way the possible rates of infection among a sexual minority in the NWP, namely lesbian women, gay men and to a lesser degree, bisexual women.

When looking at those who had tested for HIV, one wonders if similarities can be drawn to recent government announcements that

the HIV infection rate among the youth of South Africa has decreased. In the absence of previous data one could not draw these comparisons, yet the numbers of those who had tested positive seem lower than for the provincial figure. However, the fact that so many people indicated that they had not yet gone for an HIV test (especially the black women) is worrying and should be addressed in order to get more reliable statistics. When it comes to the frequency at which people test, it seems that the norm of testing at least once every six months is not followed by everybody, and especially the women in the study indicated a lower frequency of testing than the men. The reasons for not going to an HIV test in the first place need addressing in order to get as many people as possible tested, so that a clearer picture of the pandemic under the LGBT community in NWP can be formed.

What is encouraging from this study is that the participants indicated that they were using condoms, which is a positive sign that some messaging in this regard has reached them. Whether the messages they have been receiving about safe sex has been specifically LGBT orientation, is unclear. While it seems then that there is some level of understanding around the need to use condoms to prevent infection, related health issues specific to LGBT people are not included in mainstream messaging.

For instance, men who have sex with men are encouraged to use water based lube with a condom during anal sex. These kinds of messages about HIV and sexual health can be brought specifically to LGBT people in a way which understands gay and lesbian issues.

The background of the page features a blurred image of two men in suits and hats walking on a floor decorated with large red heart patterns. A semi-transparent pink box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the word 'Research' in white text. Below this, there are two white text boxes on a pink background, and two solid red rectangular boxes at the bottom right. A horizontal line with a rainbow gradient is positioned above the text boxes.

Research

LGBT RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTION AND VARIOUS LAWS HAVE BEEN CHANGED OVER THE YEARS TO LEGALISE, FOR INSTANCE, SAME-SEX MARRIAGE AND ADOPTION BY LGBT PARENTS

MOST LGBT MEN AND WOMEN WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS EMPOWERMENT STUDY KNEW THEIR RIGHTS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION

CHAPTER 9:

Findings

Knowledge of LGBT Rights

Research findings - Knowledge of LGBT rights

LGBT rights are protected by the South African Constitution and various laws have been changed over the years to legalise, for instance, same-sex marriage and adoption by LGBT parents. Other legislation affecting, among others, employment benefits and the right of LGBT people to work in a profession of their choice have been mostly the result of court action challenging the unconstitutionality of certain pieces of legislation that date back pre-1994.

The research project investigated whether LGBT people knew their rights and whether they thought LGBT rights were effective in affording them the same quality of life as that of heterosexual people.

Knowledge of rights

Most LGBT men and women who participated in this empowerment study knew their rights under the Constitution. The majority knew that their rights are protected by the Constitution, although 9.2% of men and 18.5% of women seemed to think they were not protected and 11.1% of men and 20.8% of women did not know whether their rights were protected at all. Men were more likely than women to know that their rights were protected. Women were more likely to know that they can include their partner in their medical aid. White men tended to think, falsely, that they cannot adopt children. Men in ongoing intimate relationships did seem to know that they can marry their same-sex partner and these men were also more likely to know that they can include their partner on their medical aid.

Perceived effectiveness of LGBT rights in South Africa

There were two responses that stood out from the data set that bears highlighting. Participants either thought that LGBT rights were 'very effective', while some people thought that the rights might be effective, but not totally so. It was the youngest, black women who felt that LGBT rights were very effective in protecting LGBT people. They were joined by the young gender non-conforming men who tended to agree that LGBT rights were effective. The rest of the sample perceived LGBT rights as being only 'somewhat' effective.

Summary and exploration

Even though a significant number of participants seemed to know about their rights and judged these to be mostly effective, it was again the youngest women (and men) who felt most strongly about the effectiveness of these rights and would most probably use the marriage laws to their advantage.

Overall there seems to be a high level of awareness of the fact that LGBT rights are protected and that LGBT people have the same rights as others when it comes to adoption, medical benefits, etcetera, even though there was still a substantial group who clearly did not understand all of their rights, indicating that more education is needed.

Research

THIS CHAPTER EXAMINES IN BRIEF THE MENTAL HEALTH OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE NWP AND LOOKS AT THE PREVALENCE OF SUICIDAL THOUGHTS, AND WHO HAD MADE PREPARATIONS FOR SUICIDE OR ACTUALLY ATTEMPTED IT

IN THE TOTAL SAMPLE, MOST PARTICIPANTS INDICATED THAT THEY USED ALCOHOL REGULARLY, BUT SOME OF THE CATEGORIES OF PARTICIPANTS HAD ALCOHOL DEPENDENCY OR ALCOHOL ABUSE PROBLEMS

CHAPTER 10:

Findings

Mental Health and Suicidality

This chapter examines in brief the mental health of participants in the NWP and looks at the prevalence of suicidal thoughts, and who had made preparations for suicide or actually attempted it. But first it looks at the issues surrounding alcohol, which could have an effect on a person's mental health.

Research findings - Mental health and suicidality

This chapter examines in brief the mental health of participants in the NWP and looks at the prevalence of suicidal thoughts, and who had made preparations for suicide or actually attempted it. But first it looks at the issues surrounding alcohol, which could have an effect on a person's mental health.

Alcohol abuse

In the total sample, most participants indicated that they used alcohol regularly, but some of the categories of participants had alcohol dependency or alcohol abuse problems. Men in the study were more likely than women to experience problems with alcohol abuse. There certainly were more incidents of abuse of alcohol among the younger, black LGBT males.

These men had little or no monthly income, they had lower levels of education, were born in the NWP and were gender non-conforming. The women who exhibited the highest instance of alcohol abuse tended to be somewhat more educated, with women who hold diplomas more at risk than highly educated or uneducated women. Generally, participants who fell into the category of those who were higher income earners were less likely to have alcohol abuse problems.

Mental health status

The only notable conclusion that can be drawn from the data is that bisexual men tended to have lower levels of mental health than gay men. This meant that they might have experienced long periods of unhappiness, or could be prone to depression or other mental illnesses. Other factors, like race, sex or age seemed to have no effect on the mental health status of the participants.

Suicidality

Even though women showed very low levels of mental health problems, they were more likely to have made plans for suicide than men. It is however the youngest men who were most likely to have attempted suicide during the past year, while white men were likely to only have had suicidal thoughts, rather than actual attempts. While suicide attempts by men were related to their income level (and thus related to age), with men with no income having attempted suicide more than another group, the women who attempted suicide were most likely still at school and not yet in Grade 12. This was probably related to their age and not the level of education. Suicide attempts were the least likely among gender conforming women.

Summary and exploration

The issue of alcohol abuse, mental health and suicidality cannot be seen in isolation, but must be seen against the high levels of openness and acceptance that the participants experienced and their general sense of belonging to NWP. Add to this the low incidence of sexual abuse and discrimination. Generally the mental health of the LGBT participants seems relatively good. What is worrying are the levels of alcohol abuse among especially the younger participants, because in this sample these characteristics refer to adolescents, some still at school.

Bisexual participants again stand out in that they have lower levels of mental health than other participants and this can be linked to their not coming out, having negative coming out experiences and their levels of internalised homophobia, to name but a few.



Summary,

THE MAJORITY OF
RESPONDENTS
INDICATED
THAT THEY
HAVE INDEED
DISCLOSED
THEIR SEXUAL
ORIENTATION

CHAPTER 11:

Conclusion and Recommendations

In total 319 persons participated in the NWP study. Overall there were more men than women in the sample. Most participants were young and black, had no or low levels of income, mostly because they were still at school or just out of school and unemployed. The largest single group in the sample was made up of young black women.

There were smaller numbers of white participants in the study; white participants were generally older than the black participants. Most participants identified as either lesbian or gay, with a small number, mostly women, calling themselves bisexual.

The main languages used by the participants were Setswana and English, with a small number of participants speaking Afrikaans. Afrikaans was not restricted to the white group only, as half of the coloured and Indian sample

also spoke Afrikaans most often. English was also not restricted to race, as some black, white and 'Other' participants spoke it most often.

There was a large prevalence of gender non-conformity among the young, black sample. The black participants had mostly come out at a relatively early age, but at the same time actively tried to hide their sexual orientation from the majority of people around them. The coming out of the black participants was mostly a positive experience. This is opposed to the white participants, whose coming out usually happened at a later age and which usually was a less positive experience. White participants, unlike the black participants, more likely to be gender conforming, were now, however, less secretive about their sexuality.

Black participants generally felt accepted in the NWP, while white participants indicated to feel less accepted. When it came to traditional affairs, black men and women did not agree on the importance of traditional leaders and healers in the community, nor could they agree on the attitude these traditionalists have about same-sex sexual orientation. What did stand out was that the youngest, gender non-conforming participants believed that traditional leaders were accepting, while the rest of the black participants felt the opposite way. One fact that everybody did agree on was that religion was not accepting of same-sex sexuality and this was something the white participants in particular felt very strongly about.



MEN BELIEVED THEY WERE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO HIV INFECTION THAN WOMEN AND IN FACT TESTED MORE REGULARLY THAN THE WOMEN



Summary,





IT IS LIKELY THAT THE RESEARCH TEAM WAS ABLE TO RECRUIT PERSONS WHO WERE LESS CONFLICTED ABOUT THEIR SAME-SEX SEXUALITY. WHILE PERSONS FOR WHOM THEIR SAME-SEX SEXUAL ATTRACTION IS PROBLEMATIC WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE LIKELY TO AVOID PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although the participants reported a relatively low incidence of sexual abuse and rape, as with discrimination and violence, it did still occur and some participants reported cases to the authorities. There was a higher incidence of discrimination and abuse while the participants were growing up, especially the gender non-conforming participants. Older white women reported the highest incidence of sexual abuse during childhood.

Although the participants reported a relatively low incidence of sexual abuse and rape, as with discrimination and violence, it did still occur and some participants did report cases to the authorities. There was a higher incidence of discrimination and abuse while the participants were growing up, especially the gender non-conforming participants. Older white women reported the highest incidence of sexual abuse during childhood.

Men believed they were more susceptible to HIV infection than women and in fact tested more regularly than the women. An important reason for the men not getting tested seemed to be that they always use condoms. The fear of the result of an HIV test and the embarrassment associated with a test were other important reasons participants gave for not having been tested.

Most people were aware of their rights under the Constitution, although there was some level of confusion as to exactly what these rights were and how to use them.

Mental health of the participants was generally good. Relatively few persons had tried to commit suicide, although women and young people had a higher likelihood for suicide, possibly linked to either coming out or their

level of alcohol abuse. Young people were more prone to alcohol abuse than people in older age categories. Bisexual participants had a largely negative experience in most aspects relating to their sexual orientation and this affected their mental health in a negative way.

It must once again be highlighted that the findings reported by the research team are based on responses received from the 319 individuals who participated in the research project. It is not clear to what extent the findings reflect the experiences and ideas of the broader LGBT community in NWP. The fact that the sample was over-represented by young black participants indicates that one has to be careful in drawing general conclusions from these findings: older LGBT persons and white LGBT persons were underrepresented.

It is likely that the research team was able to recruit persons who were less conflicted about their same-sex sexuality, while persons for whom their same-sex sexual attraction is problematic would have been more likely to avoid participation in the study. At this stage, the reported findings are the only figures available about the LGBT community in NWP. Reflecting the needs of an important group of LGBT persons, the findings give important suggestions for policies and programmes.



What do these Findings mean in

What do these findings mean in terms of policy and prevention?

The findings of this research project could be used as a broad guideline for developing future policies and prevention strategies aimed specifically at LGBT persons who live in a more rural South African environment. Based on the findings, it is clear that race, age and gender non-conformity play important roles in determining LGBT people's experiences, feelings and perceptions.

It would be appropriate to target people in the language of their choice. Both English and Setswana stand out in this report, while Afrikaans also enjoys use among a sector of the participants.

There is a definite need to address a young, gender non-conforming black audience and assist them with the issues they have regarding coming out and the hiding of their sexuality because of perceived negativity. The possibility of working closely with schools, youth clubs and youth organisations could be examined as a way of reaching this target group.

The way in which the youngest participants experience and express their gender should be examined more fully and taken into consideration when designing prevention programmes aimed at the young black population. Policies and interventions should consider the fact that young people are dependent on family and friends and information has to be shared in a

manner sensitive to these considerations. By providing more information about LGBT issues to the extended family and friendship circles, better understanding could be facilitated and the levels of acceptance of LGBT people can increase.

With so many participants in ongoing intimate relationships, especially the women, the question arises: "What are the situations within those relationships?" Do the participants have the necessary skills to ensure that these relationships endure as long as they would like to? Can they successfully deal with the stresses and other issues that inevitably crop up in any relationship? What kind of support do people need and experience from their social environment? It seems that there would be room for education in the area of relationship skills, seeing as most of the participants who were in ongoing intimate relationships were very young. People within intimate relationships could also benefit from supportive counseling, whether individually or as a couple.

There seems to be reason to engage traditional leaders and healers in issues related to same-sex sexuality. Traditional matters are important to several participants and they should feel comfortable to use these traditional structures and services without fear of discrimination or abuse. Informing the traditional leaders and healers and assisting them if they have LGBT issues to deal with, could go a long way to improving the perceptions these traditional leaders and healers may have of LGBT individuals. This will also affect the social climate in communities in which traditional leaders and healers play an important role.



Terms of Policy and Prevention?

A next question is whether anything can be done to change the experiences of the isolated white individuals who do not have a sense of belonging either to the LGBT or the broader community. While these white participants mostly conform to their gender and are not in ongoing intimate relationships, they do not integrate across racial lines, nor do they socialise outside of their own closed circles. Ways need to be found to strengthen their social networks, like the gay churches, while at the same time further exploring their needs. Special effort should be made to attract white LGBTs to gay-themed events, like beauty pageants or sport days. Every effort should be made to integrate the races in the delivery of LGBT services.

Possibilities exist to educate LGBT individuals about the South African constitution and the rights they have in an effort to get more people to make use of the relevant legislation. This will also support their sense of self-esteem and bolster their sense of South African citizenship. The participants of any future projects should also be taught the value of their rights and how to use these rights in their everyday lives.

Even if the mere 10% HIV infection prevalence reported by participants is an accurate reflection - as explained earlier this is most likely an underestimate - anything over 0% is unacceptable. HIV testing should be intensified especially among women, who test less regularly than men. At the same time it should be stressed that the use of a condom should not result in less regular testing, especially among men.

The abuse of alcohol under the youngest participants in the sample is cause for concern. Interventions to reduce the intake of alcohol among this group could take the form of awareness campaigns. The fact that the highest incidence of negative experiences was reported by bisexual women is also cause for concern. Special effort should be made to address all LGBT people, and even though lesbian and gay participants made up the biggest portion of respondents in the study, the experiences of bisexual and transgender individuals should not be left by the wayside. Special care should be taken to specifically assist bisexual people. Because this research didn't reach them, special attention needs to be paid in future to research regarding transgender matters.

Many possibilities seem to exist for empowering the emerging LGBT community identified in this research. By looking at some issues closely, very specific programmes could be implemented to, for instance, deal with support groups or counsellors. Other problems would require a more long term solution, like educating specific groups of people in order to get them to adopt more affirmative attitudes over time. In the end, it is imperative that this emerging LGBT community receive the attention they deserve in the form of proper policies that would be of benefit to the greater LGBT community and prevention programmes that would be of use to specific LGBT individuals on a large scale throughout the NWP and possibly even beyond the borders of the province.

THROUGH THE PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES, WE HAVE SEEN THAT THERE SEEMS TO BE A MARKED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAVING GROWN UP UNDER EITHER APARTHEID OR THE NEW CONSTITUTION

THERE SEEMS TO BE A TREND AMONG PARTICIPANTS TO BE IN ONGOING INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

The Way

CHAPTER 12:

Forward

The outcomes of this research project reflect the experiences and opinions of 319 people. They do not necessarily represent all LGBT people who reside in the NWP. Our study participants are a small but important part of a greater emerging LGBT community in the NWP. While every individual person's experience of LGBT life is unique, groups who have some binding factor have common experiences and tend to act generally in the same patterns. Race, age and class play important roles here, while the high levels of gender non-conformity have been highlighted in several sections of this report.

Through the participants' responses, we have seen that there seems to be a marked difference between having grown up under either Apartheid or the new Constitution. The older participants, who were young during the 1970's and 80's, did not come out as early as the young people of today do. The fact that as yet very little is known about older black LGBT people, is a gap in the research findings. What emerges from the findings of this project is that there is a new generation who is born with their rights acknowledged in the constitution. In some ways they have to struggle less with both a coming out process and adverse legal implications. Gay men and lesbian

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women of today can practice their same-sexuality without fear of arrest or imprisonment because of their same-sex sexual practices. This has seemed to free the participants to come out at a younger age and to be more confident of their sexual orientation. It would seem that the extreme negative reactions of society at large may have lessened to some degree for the fact that these laws are on the books. That same-sex sexuality is not yet fully accepted and integrated seems clear, with the perceived adverse reactions of religion towards issues of same-sex sexuality still an example of one of the most negative perceptions still persisting.

There seems to be a trend among participants to be in ongoing intimate relationships. It would be important to nurture these relationships. This could in turn lead to the reduction in the number of sexual partners, while at the same time a sustained HIV reduction programme needs to be mounted to reduce the rate of new infections to zero. If LGBT communities are to be fully incorporated into the broader society, without discrimination or abuse, same-sex sexuality must become an everyday thing, not unusual or strange, but part of accepted human behaviours. The young people in this study generally have good mental health.



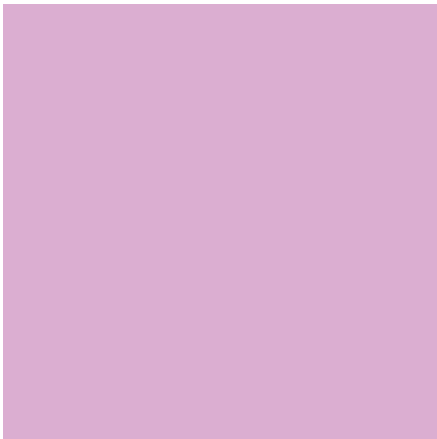
NOW IS THE TIME TO STEP FORWARD AND BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ADDRESSING THE ASPECTS RAISED IN THIS REPORT



The Way



IT IS NOW UP TO CBOs LIKE GAY UMBRELLA TO BE ABLE TO OBTAIN SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING SO AS TO PLAY THEIR ROLE IN LGBT COMMUNITY BUILDING, WHILE NPOs LIKE OUT WHO DELIVER HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SERVICES NEED TO BE EMPOWERED FURTHER TO, AMONG OTHERS, ADDRESS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HIV PREVENTION STRATEGIES



Forward

With the help of government departments, NPOs and other regional and national LGBT organisations, and not excluding any others who could play a role in the development of the emerging LGBT community, the opportunities that exist to enrich and improve the lives of LGBT persons in NWP must be seized and acted upon.

They openly admit that they no longer experience those extreme reactions from people in general.

Great care must be taken to further reduce and remove the negative factors that stand in the way of emerging LGBT communities so as to further set them free. It seems sure that there is a great deal of work to be done to keep the gains already achieved. The challenge now is to also meet the needs of a new generation who is growing up in different times. The ways in which their needs should be met, the levels of education they need to enjoy, and the investments that must be made to improve the future of these people, are indeed substantial. There is however no doubt that steps must be taken to empower these emerging LGBT communities so that they can play their part on the stage of life.

It is now up to CBOs like Gay Umbrella to be able to obtain substantial funding so as to play their role in LGBT community building, while NPOs

like OUT who deliver health and well-being services need to be empowered further to, among others, address the implementation of HIV prevention strategies. The future involvement of UCAP in the NWP is crucial and indeed UCAP has already committed itself to partner with Gay Umbrella beyond the life of the two-year NWP project. Among others, UCAP has committed to also assist with developing appropriate interventions based on the research findings, to assist in strengthening LGBT services and conduct follow-up studies to inform the theory and practice.

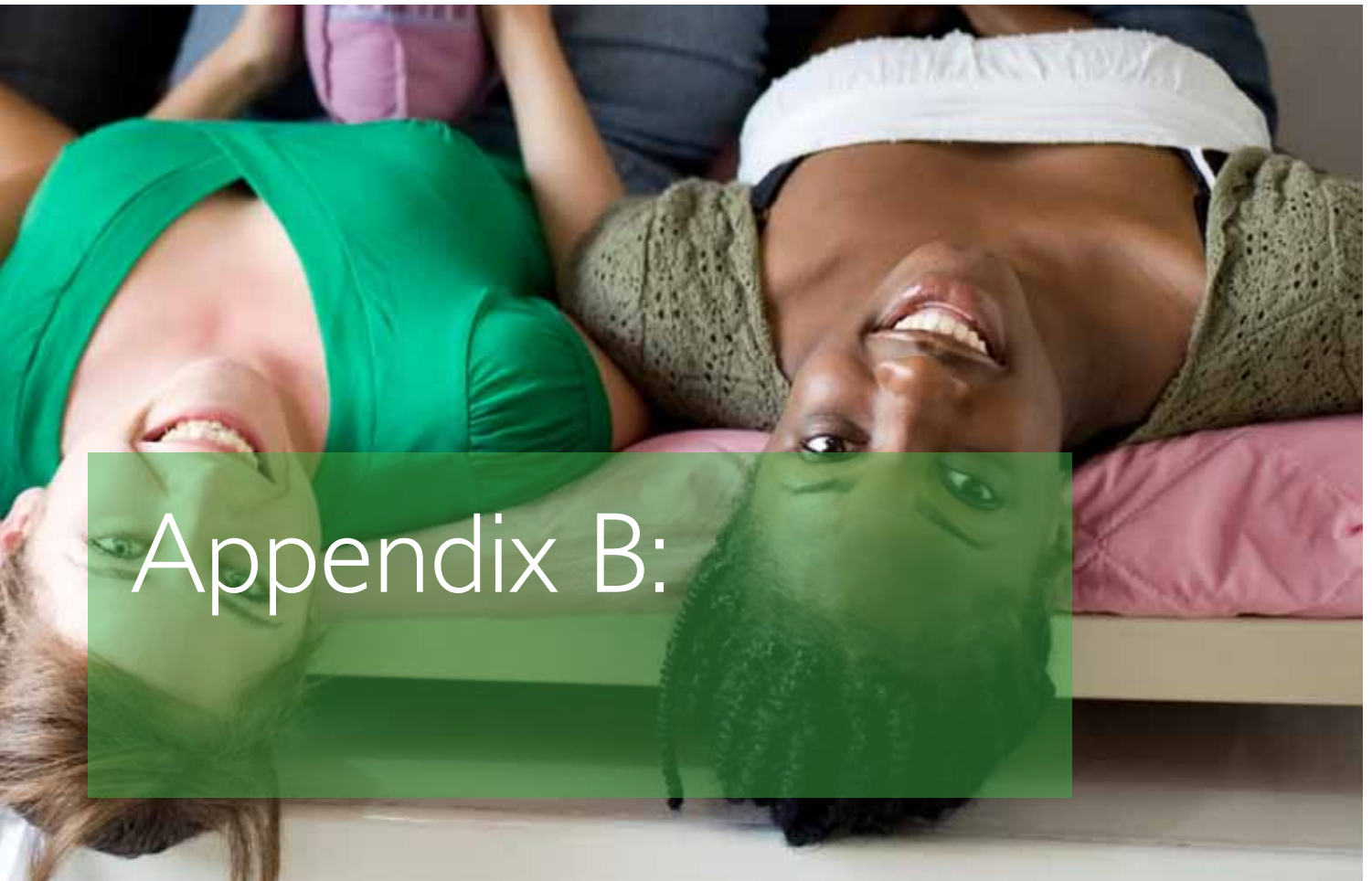
With the help of government departments, NPOs and other regional and national LGBT organisations, and not excluding any others who could play a role in the development of the emerging LGBT community, the opportunities that exist to enrich and improve the lives of LGBT persons in NWP must be seized and acted upon. Now is the time to step forward and become actively involved in addressing the aspects raised in this report.



Appendix A:

Project Name	Empowerment of emerging South African LGBT communities: North-West Province as case study
Project Sponsor	Prof MC Maré (UNISA Vice-Principal: Academic and Research)
Project Owner	Prof R Moeketsi (Executive Dean: UNISA College of Human Sciences)
Project Leader	Prof Juan A. Nel (Director: UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology)
Project Steering Committee	Prof Juan A. Nel (Director: UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology) Prof KP Dzvimbo (UNISA - Deputy Executive Dean: Education and Research College of Human Sciences) Prof EO Mashile (UNISA - Deputy Executive Dean: College of Human Sciences) Prof TS Maluleke (UNISA - Executive Director: Research) Prof M Matoane (Chair: UNISA Department of Psychology) Prof Theo Sandfort (Specialist Advisor: University of Amsterdam/Columbia University) Ms Eileen Rich (UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology Contract Researcher) Ms Boshadi Semanya (UNISA Department of Psychology)
Project Team	Prof JA Nel (Director: UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology) Ms Gladys Themrani (Project Finance Manager & Centre Manager: UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology) Prof Theo Sandfort (Specialist Advisor: University of Amsterdam/Columbia University) Ms Eileen Rich (UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology Contract Researcher) Ms Boshadi Semanya (UNISA Department of Psychology) Mr Dawie Nel (Director: OUT LGBT Well-being) Mr Senkhu Maimane (OUT LGBT Well-being) Mr Daniel Knobel (UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology Research Intern) Ms Yolanda Mitchell (UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology Research Intern) Ms Thandeka Tshabalala (UNISA Department of Psychology) Ms Precious Mubiana (UNISA Department of Psychology) Ms Keit Mthombeni-Shirinda (UNISA Department of Psychology) Ms Mandisa Magwaza (UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology Research Intern) Ms Nkateko Lowane and Mr Jean-Pierre Kruger (UNISA Masters in Psychology - Research Consultation students) Ms Sanele Mdanda (UNISA Centre for Applied Psychology Research Assistant) Ms Mildred Maropefela (Chairperson: Gay Umbrella: North-West Province Community-based organisation) Mr Hennie Baird (Secretary: Gay Umbrella: North-West Province Community-based organisation)

Field Workers, Recruiters & Volunteers (North West University & Gay Umbrella):	
Field Workers	Mlando Dhlamini Boitumelo Choabi Itumeleng Faku Lucia Moniemang
Recruiters	Tshenolo Mabale Millicent Phiri Olebogeng Mataboge Thabo Pilane Kgotsi Mashoba Olebile MosimaneKgosi Modise Motsoemang Benjamin Maphoko Dorothy Magome
Volunteers	Andile Tolom Lucky Nkgodi Ntombi Maseko



Appendix B:



About the author¹

Hendrik Baird studied Drama at the University of Pretoria and obtained an BA (Drama) Hons degree in this field. He worked for many years as a professional actor in theatre, films, television and commercials. Hendrik conceptualised the 'North West Cultural Calabash' arts festival held annually in Taung, NWP. He managed this developmental arts festival for many years. After more than 20 years in the entertainment industry, Hendrik changed focus in 2008 to use his extensive creative and project management skills in the LGBT sector. As a founding member of Gay Umbrella, Hendrik worked closely with colleague and friend Mildred Maropela to ensure that services for LGBT people become available in the NWP. Hendrik has been employed as Office Manager of OUT North-West as of September 2009.

¹Note, the writing of this report was supported by Ms Yolanda Mitchell and Prof Juan A Nel of UCAP, and Prof Theo Sandfort of Columbia University.