



# EVALUATION REPORT

**Isibani Project, Uthingo Network**

**February 2022**

Report compiled by Suzanne Clulow, [clulowsuzanne@gmail.com](mailto:clulowsuzanne@gmail.com)

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

- This study was commissioned by Uthingo Network for the Isibani Project funded through the National Development Agency.
- Thanks go to the Uthingo Network management and staff for their input into the evaluation, assistance with data collection and fieldwork logistics.
- Recognition and gratitude is also given to the community members and key stakeholders who participated in the interviews. Their willingness to share and valuable insights are a key aspect of this qualitative study.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Table of Contents.....         | 0  |
| Acronyms .....                 | 1  |
| Introduction .....             | 2  |
| Background .....               | 2  |
| Isibani Project .....          | 2  |
| The Evaluation .....           | 4  |
| Purpose and Scope .....        | 4  |
| Key Evaluation Questions ..... | 4  |
| Approach.....                  | 5  |
| Methodology .....              | 5  |
| Sampling .....                 | 5  |
| Instrument Development .....   | 6  |
| Data Collection.....           | 6  |
| Data Capture.....              | 7  |
| Data Analysis.....             | 7  |
| Ethical considerations.....    | 7  |
| Limitations of the Study.....  | 7  |
| Findings .....                 | 9  |
| Recommendations .....          | 29 |

# ACRONYMS

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| CBO      | Community-based organisation   |
| GBV      | Gender-based violence  |
| KII      | Key informant interview  |
| KZN      | KwaZulu-Natal  |
| IPV      | Intimate partner violence  |
| LGBTQIA+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual or Ally |
| M&E      | Monitoring and evaluation  |
| NDA      | National Development Agency  |
| SOGIESC  | Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics          |
| UN       | Uthingo Network  |
| VEP      | Victim Empowerment Programme   |

# INTRODUCTION

---

## BACKGROUND

---

Uthingo Network (UN), a voluntary association based in Pietermaritzburg South Africa, works with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual or Ally (LGBTQIA+) individuals in promoting recognition of the LGBTQIA+ community through institutional change and partnerships in rural communities together with authorities and service providers. Currently, they primarily focus on rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), with the aim of facilitating whole systems change and development processes, which lead to significant impact and improvements in the life chances of rural LGBTQIA+ people.

UN's work is divided into three programmatic areas:

1. Institutionalising change in Pietermaritzburg & three rural communities in KZN
2. Knowledge creation, networking and influence
3. Sustaining and developing UN

A sub-programme connected to both Programme 1 and 2 is *LGBTQIA+ Tertiary Activism and Safe Spaces*

According to UN's strategy 2020-1 the broad change goals per programmatic area are as follows:

| Programmatic focus  | Broad change goals   |
|---|--|
| 1. Institutionalising Change in three rural communities in KZN & Pietermaritzburg                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community development</li><li>• Active citizenship</li><li>• Building a human rights culture</li></ul>   |
| 1.1. LGBTQIA+ Tertiary Activism and Safe Spaces ( <i>a sub-programme linked to both programme 1 and programme 2</i> ) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating safe, empowering spaces for LGBTQIA+ students</li><li>• Building a human rights culture</li><li>• Developing a cadre of influence</li></ul>   |
| 2. Knowledge Creation, Networking and Influence   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Movement building</li><li>• More grounded and rational conversations around LGBTQIA+ and human rights issues in provincial and national spaces</li><li>• More effective community development and influencing practice in rural settings</li></ul> |
| 3. Sustaining and Developing UN   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased capacity, sustainability, visibility and effectiveness</li></ul>   |

---

## ISIBANI PROJECT

---

The Isibani (The Light) Project is a 12-month project that aims to provide services and support 100 LGBTQIA+ persons who are survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and hate crimes and to improve their livelihood and to influence change of attitudes of LGBTQIA+ issues by relevant

stakeholders and government service providers. The project was implemented in Pietermaritzburg (Umgungundlovu District) and Estcourt (Umtshezi District) and was co-funded by other donors.

Key activities of the project include support groups for families, educational workshops for LGBTQIA+ persons to know their rights and to address GBV and hate crime issues, improved access to health and legal services for survivors of GBV and hate crimes, holding service providers accountable so that they provide equitable and high standards of services to the LGBTQIA+ communities.

In addition, the project sought to develop the capacity of UN staff and LGBTQIA+ organisations in two target geographic locations with the expectation that UN participation in accountability structures would provide opportunities to bring LGBTQIA+ issues to the attention of respective bodies and would include contributing to changes to policies to ensure that LGBTQIA+ issues and needs are included in all policies.

The overall objective of the project is:

- LGBTQIA+ persons in KZN are free to live active and productive lives as full members of their communities.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To improve the response to GBV and hate crime survivors among LGBTQIA+ persons in KZN
- LGBTQIA+ persons and other community leaders and institutions actively build a human rights culture in communities around Estcourt, and Pietermaritzburg
- A strong LGBTQIA+/human rights movement in KZN uses its wider networks, official platforms, the media and other communication channels effectively to support attitudinal and behavioural change at multiple levels
- UN is recognised as an effective agent of community change and a proponent of human rights culture in KZN and beyond

Results identified in the project proposal include:

- LGBTQIA+ persons have increased knowledge on GBV, hate crimes and their human rights
- LGBTQIA+ persons have increased confidence in accessing GBV services and reporting GBV and hate crime cases
- Improved wellbeing and situation of LGBTQIA+ persons
- Peers, family, guardians have an increased knowledge on GBV and hate crime needs of LGBTQIA+ persons
- Traditional leaders, traditional healers, religious leaders, healthcare providers and the police have an increased awareness of LGBTQIA+ needs and issues
- Traditional leaders, traditional healers, religious leaders, healthcare, police are confident in providing GBV services to LGBTQIA+ persons
- LGBTQIA+ persons GBV and hate crime challenges raised at accountability structures
- Policies and laws are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ acceptance

# THE EVALUATION

An external evaluation of the Isibani Project was formally requested by UN as part of their organisational monitoring, evaluation and learning culture. The Isibani Project and the evaluation was funded through a project grant received from the National Development Agency (NDA) Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP).

---

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

---

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the outputs, outcomes and learnings of the project over the past 12 months. Aspects considered as part of the evaluation (as per the guidance received from the UN Director) included:

- What worked and what did not work in the implementation of the project?
- How has the project contributed to increasing target beneficiaries' knowledge and awareness of GBV?
- How do we know this?
- What can we do to improve on this work moving forward?
- What support do staff need to implement this work effectively?

The evaluation was undertaken in February 2022 and focused on the two implementation districts, Umgungundlovu and Umtshezi.

---

## KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

---

The key evaluation questions are shown in the table below. These were shared with the UN staff in advance of data collection for their input.

|   | Key evaluation question  |
|---|--|
| 1 | To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs as planned?  |
| 2 | What range of outcomes (intended and unintended) has the project contributed to? What have been the major factors affecting the achievement of these outcomes? |
| 4 | What is the sustainability of the project outcomes? Is there evidence the results might grow beyond the project life in the stakeholder communities?           |
| 5 | What are the challenges the organisation has faced in implementing the projects? What are the gaps in programming?   |
| 6 | How do the Isibani Project results relate to UN's wider organisational strategy?   |
| 7 | What are the recommendations for future work by UN?  |

---

## APPROACH

---

A participatory approach was used with collaboration and inclusion of project implementers and stakeholders:

- Management and staff from UN provided input in the development of the key evaluation questions
- UN gave input regarding whom the evaluator should interview during the fieldwork
- Staff assisted with data collection, shared information with the evaluator and participated actively in sharing their views and opinions
- Beneficiaries/participants/stakeholders in the project also share their experiences.

---

## METHODOLOGY

---

A mixed methods methodology was applied and both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analysed.

### Qualitative data

- *Key informant interviews (KIIs) (semi structured interviews)* were carried out with project staff and other stakeholders associated with the project such as local government officials, and community and religious leaders as well as with project participants and other stakeholders associated with the project. Due to COVID considerations, these took place telephonically.
- *A review of project documents* including project proposal, progress reports, M&E documents, workshop reports and participant feedback captured during the course of the project.

### Quantitative data

- *A document review* of secondary data such as monitoring data and project reports in order to quantify the outputs of the project by objective.

---

## SAMPLING

---

The following set of activities was carried out using purposive sampling:

- Interviews with project participants.
- Interviews with key community stakeholders such as community leaders, local government representatives, members of the local war room and teachers or principals from schools worked with where applicable.

UN staff assisted with the identification of key contacts within the different sample groups and also facilitated access to participants.

The table below reflects the main sample groups for the evaluation and the data collection method used:



| Sample Group   | Data Collection Method           | Number |
|--|----------------------------------|--------|
| LGBTQIA+ persons (1 of whom was also a traditional healer) | Telephone interview              | 4      |
| Students from tertiary institutes                          | WhatsApp                         | 1      |
| Peers and family members                                   | Telephone interview              | 2      |
| Traditional leaders/healers/religious leaders              | Telephone interview              | 2      |
| Stakeholders government departments                        | Telephone interview              | 1      |
| Stakeholders NGO   | Telephone or in person interview | 2      |
| Total  |                                  | 12     |

## INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Discussion guides for the interviews were developed with input from UN staff. The guides included an information sheet and consent process for participants.

## DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was, for the most part, carried out by the evaluator over the phone. In a few instances, participants requested to be sent the questions and replied via WhatsApp. In the interest of time and due to language considerations, three of the interviews were undertaken by the UN staff using the data collection tools prepared by the evaluator.

### Answering the evaluation questions

The table below shows which instruments and data relate to which key evaluation questions.

|   | Key evaluation question  | Project participants | Other community stakeholders | Document review |
|---|--|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs as planned?  |                      |                              |                 |
| 2 | What range of outcomes (intended and unintended) has the project contributed to? What have been the major factors affecting the achievement of these outcomes? |                      |                              |                 |
| 3 | What is the sustainability of the project outcomes? Is there evidence the results might grow beyond the project life in the stakeholder communities?           |                      |                              |                 |
| 4 | What are the challenges the organisation has faced in implementing the project? What are the gaps in programming?  |                      |                              |                 |
| 5 | How do the Isibani Project results relate to UN's wider organisational strategy?   |                      |                              |                 |

|   | Key evaluation question                             | Project participants | Other community stakeholders | Document review |
|---|---|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 6 | What are the recommendations for future work by UN? |                      |                              |                 |

---

## DATA CAPTURE

---

Interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants and then translated and transcribed as needed. Some interviews were recorded but not transcribed, rather field notes were made.

---

## DATA ANALYSIS

---

**Qualitative data:** Thematic analysis was performed, using hand tabulation, based on themes arising from the evaluation questions.

**Quantitative data:** Descriptive statistics were produced for quantitative data using Excel.

---

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

---

All participants were asked to give informed consent to their participation as well as to the recording of the interviews/discussions. Participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary, that they could chose to discontinue at any point and that they would receive no benefit from being included in the data collection. (See informed consent information sheet accompanying discussion and interview guides in Appendix 2)

No people younger than 18 years participated in the evaluation activities.

---

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

---

Although informed consent took place, it is possible that some participants may still have had expectations of receiving further support from UN and this may have influenced their answers. In addition, three of the interviews were carried out by UN staff and this may also have affected participant's answers.

Interviews were conducted telephonically meaning that the benefits of trust and connection gained through person-to-person contact may not have been as strong.

Due to the short timeframes for the evaluation, availability sampling was used. Given the vulnerability of the LGBTQIA+ community, some participants may have been initially reluctant to participate but may have changed their minds if more time had been given to build trust. Some participants also declined to participate due to busy schedules and being unwell.

# FINDINGS

Firstly, the outputs for the Project are presented followed by the results in terms of intended and unintended outcomes. A summary of factors influencing the achievement of project outcomes as well as challenges faced by the Project is also given. Thereafter, findings relating to sustainability, and linkages to wider organisational strategy are discussed. Finally, a set of recommendations are provided.

---

## ISIBANI PROJECT OUTPUTS

---

### Key Evaluation Question 1: To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs as planned?

Table 3 presents the planned outputs and results achieved for the Isibani Project implementation between July 2020 and February 2021, and September 2021 and February 2022. During the period March to August 2021, not activities were carried out for the project as there was delay in processing and receiving the second tranche of the grant. As a result of this delay, an extension was granted by the NDA until the end of February 2022. The project was originally planned as a 12-month project; however, activities were implemented over a 14-month period. From March to present day, South Africa has been under varying levels of national lockdown which impacted on the implementation of certain project activities.

Cells highlighted in green reflect outputs where targets have been met or exceeded, those in amber reflect outputs that were met with some adaptation and those in red reflect outputs where targets were not met.

| Planned outputs with targets   | Results Achieved  | Comment  |
|--|---|--|
| 1 x baseline study with LGBTQIA+ persons                                 | June 2020 baseline study in PMB/Estcourt with LGBTQIA+ individuals and stakeholders: 20 participants (8M, 12F)  | This baseline study was carried out using co-funding for the project as the NDA funds had not yet been received.   |
| 5 x support groups to families with LGBTQIA+ children                    | UN worked with 2 families from Pietermaritzburg who lost their children to hate crimes and referred them to Pietermaritzburg Mental Health Society for counselling support.   | UN was unable to go to Empangeni due to COVID-19 and lockdown regulations so rather focused on Pietermaritzburg.   |
| 3 x workshops with LGBTQIA+ persons on human rights, GBV and hate crimes | August 2020 WhatsApp discussion on Gender Based Violence and Intimate Partner Violence: 21 participants (6M, 16F)<br><br>October 2020 4 x workshops:<br>KwaPata GBV Workshop: 20 participants (1F,19M)<br>KwaPata GBV Dialogue: 27 participants (17F, 10M)<br>Escourt online GBV Dialogue: 10 participants (10M)<br>Escourt online Dialogue on Secondary Victimization: 10 participants (10M)<br>2020 KwaMachibisa MSM drug users group workshop: 30 participants (30M) | During the national lockdown, Uthingo Network made use of online platforms to facilitate discussions.<br><br>The outputs shown for the workshops were cost-shared with other donors. |

| Planned outputs with targets  | Results Achieved   | Comment  |
|---|--|--|
|   | <p>October 2021 Queer Sangomas KwaPata Workshop: 20 participants (13M 7F)</p> <p>October 2021 1x Trans and Intersex 101 in conjunction with Iranti: 20 participants, (8M, 12F)</p>   |  |
| <p>Provide psychosocial support, case management, referrals and linkages to victims of GBV and hate crimes, support during court appearances</p>  | <p>Food parcel distribution: 2020 140 (37M, 103F)</p> <p>24-hour telephone counselling through the Helpline 63 calls in total:<br/>           July-December 2020: 36 calls<br/>           January-February 2021: 7 calls<br/>           September-December 2021: 15 calls<br/>           January-February 2022: 5 calls</p>  | <p>During the lockdown period, the Gay and Lesbian Network provided telephonic counselling for beneficiaries through 24-hour counselling lines. Issues raised during counselling included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beneficiaries being evicted from home due to their sexuality.</li> <li>- Cases of hate speech and humiliation.</li> <li>- The fear of coming out within a discriminatory family.</li> <li>- Beneficiaries facing anxiety and setbacks because of peers discriminating due to sexual orientation.</li> <li>- Hate crime cases and secondary victimization.</li> <li>- Need for support groups during lockdown.</li> <li>- Beneficiaries looking for a nearby LGBTQIA+ organization.</li> </ul> <p>Areas from which calls were received included KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg, Durban), Eastern Cape (Nelson Mandela Bay), Gauteng (Johannesburg) and Orange Farm (Poortjie), covering 4 provinces.</p> |
| <p>Partner with other NPOs and government departments and structures on joint campaigns to address GBV and hate crimes</p>  | <p>October 2021 SANARELA+ meeting to discuss rise in hate crimes in Charlestown near Newcastle, KZN</p> <p>December 2021 Homophobic Hate Crime and GBV Dialogue with Ujamaa Centre in Pietermaritzburg 37 participants (19M, 18F)</p> <p>December 2021: SRH and GBV awareness campaign, Estcourt: 37 (8M, 29F)</p>   | <p>This outcome of this meeting was a formalisation of the partnership between SANARELA+ and UN to do awareness raising campaigns (in conjunction with UN's existing partner Newcastle Pride for Legends) in the Charlestown area.</p>   |
| <p>Participate in the following accountability structures:<br/>           4 x National LGBTQIA+ Task Team meetings<br/>           4 x provincial LGBTQIA+ Task Team meetings<br/>           12 x VEP Forum meetings<br/>           4 x Hate Crimes Working Group meetings</p> | <p>October 2021 2 x Iranti Action Group meetings:<br/>           Pietermaritzburg: 20 participants (8M, 12F)<br/>           Durban: participant statistics unavailable.</p> <p>4 x virtual meetings of Hate Crimes Working Group</p> <p>December 2021 1 x District Aids Council meeting</p> <p>3 x virtual meetings of VEP Forum</p> <p>National and Provincial Task Team meetings were not held</p> | <p>Due to COVID-19 and the national lockdown, many meetings of these accountability structures were affected. Some were successfully moved to virtual platforms whilst others did not take place.</p> <p>The Iranti Action Group meetings in Durban and Pietermaritzburg bring together civil society organisations and government stakeholders around issues relating to the LGBTQIA+ community.</p>  |

| Planned outputs with targets   | Results Achieved   | Comment |
|--|--|---------|
|  | November 2021: District AIDS Council meeting   |         |
| Participate in provincial legislative processes and engagement to effect change to policies to be inclusive of LGBTQIA+ issues and needs                     | Participated in the KZN Legislature LGBTI symposium organized by the Speaker's Office on 9 April 2021.<br><br>UN were signatories to the Hate Crime Working Group submission to the Parliamentary Justice Portfolio Committee on the Hate Crime and Hate Speech Bill   |         |
| Monthly monitoring and documenting cases of GBV and hate crimes  | 5 hate crimes were monitored by UN during the course of the project and two cases were supported during court appearances - one at the Durban Supreme Court and the other at the Mpophomeni Magistrates Court.   |         |
| 14 x gender and sexuality trainings to traditional leaders (2), traditional healers (2), magistrates (2), NPA (2), legislature (2), SAPS (2), clinics (2)    | December 2020 3 x trainings:<br>Lay Ecumenical Center 30 (30M)<br>Caluza 30 participants (24M, 6F)<br>Mpumzuza 20 participants (20M)<br><br>February 2021 1 x training to CBO:<br>7 participants (2M, 5F)<br><br>September and October 2021 8 x trainings with Refugee Social Services (RSS):<br>3 x peer educators and youth 50 participants (15M, 35F)<br>1 x RSS staff 19 participants (6M, 13F)<br>4 x community and religious leaders 66 participants (50M, 16F)<br><br>September 2021 1 x training with tertiary institute students:<br>20 participants (9M, 11F)<br><br>September 2021 1 x community-based training in Nhlazatshe:<br>25 participants (5M, 20F)<br><br>2020 and 2021 Msunduzi Municipality HIV and AIDS division (ATTIC) 6 x sensitisation trainings:<br>October 2020 2 x meetings total 30 participants (3M, 27F)<br>October to December 2021 4 x meetings total 71 participants |         |
| Provide staff development and training to GLN staff and volunteers on:<br>Trauma counselling x 1<br>Staff support x 1<br>IPV and GBV x 1<br>Facilitation x 1 | February 2021: 5-day training by NICDAM on Victim Support and GBV<br><br>September 2021: 2-day staff training on victim support for child survivor<br><br>October 2021: 2-days basic counselling training to CBO partners and selected community ambassadors<br><br>November 2021: 2-day staff reflection retreat<br><br>December 2021: 2 staff attended 2 x day at International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa  |         |
| 11. Producing podcasts to host on community radios and social media  | 1 x podcast by UN Queer Platform Reporters on Sound Cloud:   |         |

| Planned outputs with targets  | Results Achieved   | Comment |
|---|--|---------|
| campaigns and media articles as a broader our reach to the LGBTQIA+ community and the general community as a whole. | <p>September 2020 Lockdown Experiences, 31 plays, 1 message, 1 like</p> <p>Regular posts on Facebook, twitter and Instagram averaging approximately 27 posts per site a month. Topics shared included updates on UN’s works, media articles, court case and legislative updates, events host by other stakeholders.</p> <p>Facebook: 7736 followers, posts reached 1735 (increase of 101% from start of project)</p> <p>Twitter: 2006 followers</p> <p>Instagram: 1125 followers</p> |         |

Overall, UN achieved their anticipated activities and outputs during the challenging and uncertain period of COVID-19. One output was achieved with some changes to the target participants for the workshops due to government departments not being easily available during the lockdown. Targets for two outputs were not achieved, although activities were carried out in relation to these outputs. The national lockdown and the challenges of holding meetings during this time were noted as the reason for not meeting these targets.

Challenges encountered which affected the implementation of activities included:

- Running out of airtime during counselling calls on the Helpline.
- There being no national database to use in referrals of clients instantly, this had to be researched and the client phoned back
- People putting ‘test’ call through to the helpline to see if was for real. This wasted airtime.
- Clients calling during the evenings, even though their concerns were not urgent.
- Participants arriving late for workshops, which then led to the extension of working hours for UN staff.
- The withdrawal of the university implementers from trainings due to stipends being cut for the months of February and March.
- Technical difficulties with GLN equipment.
- Venue booking in the field, for example the one in KwaPata had no roof, which was a challenge in terms of protecting GLN equipment during the process of facilitation. In another community, the venue was unavailable due to the booking not being communicated to the ward councillor, something that was not a challenge before COVID.
- Tight deadlines for implementation at the end of the 2021 due to changed or delayed activities as a result of COVID-19.
- Hate crimes victims being located in areas inaccessible to UN.
- Changes to implementation methods for certain activities were required due to COVID-19 restrictions, for example online meetings and workshops, more use of social media to reach participants. Staff were required to learn new ways of working and new technologies quickly.
- Challenges relating to staff oversight, motivation and feelings of isolation during remote working periods.

---

## ISIBANI PROJECT OUTCOMES

---

### Key Evaluation Question 2a: What range of outcomes (intended and unintended) has the project contributed to?

In the following section, project achievements highlighted by the evaluation will be discussed in relation to the intended outcomes.

According to the project proposal submitted to the NDA, the following outcomes were expected by the project:

- LGBTQIA+ persons have increased knowledge on GBV and hate crime and their human rights
- LGBTQIA+ persons have increased confidence in accessing GBV services and reporting GBV and hate crime cases
- Improved wellbeing and situation of LGBTQIA+ persons
- Peers, family, guardians have an increased knowledge on GBV and hate crime needs of LGBTQIA+ persons
- Traditional leaders, traditional healers, religious leaders, healthcare providers and the police have an increased awareness of LGBTQIA+ needs and issues
- Traditional leaders, traditional healers, religious leaders, healthcare, police are confident in providing GBV services to LGBTQIA+ persons
- LGBTQIA+ persons GBV and hate crime challenges raised at accountability structures
- Policies and laws are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ acceptance

UN worked with a range of different stakeholders (LGBTQIA+ persons, religious, community and traditional leaders, parents and peers, government departments and other NGOs) in the two implementation districts during the course of the project. Of the participants interviewed from within these groups, all were clearly able to articulate the aims of the organisation and its work. One participant eloquently summarised the organisation's aims as:

*"I understand Uthingo Network to be a human rights body which defends and advances the interests of members of the LGBTI+ community." Family member of LGBTQIA+ person*

Another participant described the organisation's aim as follows:

*"They teach us that LGBTI is not a sin, teach us about our sexuality, teach our parents to accept the LGBTI people, boost our self-esteem, create a safe space for us". LGBTQIA+ participant*

A further participant referred to the excellent job UN is doing in achieving their aims of teaching both the general population as well as the LGBTQIA+ community:

*"Of course, the aim of the whole project is to teach people, generally people that know nothing about LGBTI, as well as the people that live among or within the LGBTI community, and they are doing an excellent job." LGBTQIA+ participant.*



Other descriptions referred to learning about the different types of people that live in our communities, how to accept one another, LGBTQIA+ rights, gender and sexuality education, pro-Queer, Queer rights and safety.

Participants interviewed heard about UN from various sources such as the internet, word of mouth, referrals from another organisation, university campus activities and UN community awareness raising workshops.

### **Outcome 1: LGBTQIA+ persons have increased knowledge on GBV and hate crime and their human rights**

All the LGBTQIA+ participants interviewed had participated in a training or workshop facilitated by UN. Specific areas of personal learning referred to were GBV, gender and sexuality, conflict management – within their families and communities – violence within communities, sexual and reproductive health, awareness about homophobic violence, abuse within Queer relationships, corrective rape, conversion therapy and talking to others in a non-confrontational way about their gender and/or sexuality.

Several participants shared vulnerable stories of their own experiences of victimisation and discrimination and how they now understand themselves better and feel more equipped to stand up for themselves and their rights because of what UN taught them. As one participant described it:

*“I have more trust in my decision making and more self- confidence. I can stand my ground when talking, knowing the world is not against me, there is a brighter side on the people that live in the community.” LGBTQIA+ person.*

*“When I joined I got a chance to know more about myself.” LGBTQIA+ participant.*

Several references were made about the need for the LGBTQIA+ community to learn more about their own community:

*“...we the LGBTI+ community have so many things to learn about our own community.” LGBTQIA+ participant.*

Feedback from internal project reports suggests achievements were made in this regard:

*“A breakthrough in the facilitation came when one of the queer members of the church stated that she felt bad because, even though she is lesbian, she realises how judgemental she has been towards other members of the queer community because she didn’t understand transgender individuals, as well as bisexuals.” UN internal project report.*

In addition to increases in personal knowledge, several of the LGBTQI participants interviewed were also involved in community-based organisations working with the LGBTQIA+ community in their area. Organisational learning cited related to project management, organisational development and how to facilitate local awareness raising events for the LGBTQIA+ community.

## Outcome 2: LGBTQIA+ persons have increased confidence in accessing GBV services and reporting GBV and hate crime cases

Counselling by UN staff was the most common GBV service referenced by the evaluation participants. This was highly valued, with one person sharing how they felt this had saved their life.

*“They saved my life. I was very suicidal [before I met UN]”. LGBTQIA+ participant.*

Another participant shared a story about accessing services at the local clinic and feeling free to ask questions about protection during sexual intercourse. Unfortunately, the clinic nurse was not able to assist them and ended up asking more questions that advice was given. Whilst this was frustrating for the participant, it did not appear to deter them from seeking further assistance, but rather encouraged them to advocate for training to improve the knowledge and understanding of the LGBTQIA+ community’s needs within health service provision. This need for further training was also confirmed by other stakeholders interviewed.

In terms of hate crimes, no specific examples of reporting were mentioned during the interviews. Participants did, however, refer to a greater confidence in standing up for themselves and others in the face of intimidation or discrimination.

*“I’m not afraid to stand up in front in a crowd of thousands and thousands of people and tell them about myself and tell them more about Uthingo and what good impact it has done in my life.” LGBTQIA+ participant.*

Feelings of greater acceptance within their communities, connection and a sense of belonging within the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as increased self-esteem and general emotional wellbeing were all cited as contributing towards participants increased confidence in advocating for themselves and others.

In several interviews, poor service delivery from the police in relation to LGBTQIA+ protection was noted. This is a recognised barrier to the upholding of LGBTQIA+ rights. In addition, the Prevention and Combatting of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill (widely considered as the cornerstone for protecting the rights and lives of the LGBTQIA+ community) has been before the National Assembly since 2018 with no indication of when this might be enacted. Both these factors contribute towards an environment in which violence and discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community continues without consequence.

## Outcome 3: Improved wellbeing and situation of LGBTQIA+ persons

Improvements in wellbeing and their general situation were cited by all the LGBTQIA+ persons interviewed. These included improvements in relation to their:

**SRH:** Participants referred to a better understanding of sexually transmitted diseases, anatomy and sexual relationships between different sexualities. This information helped them in their personal

relationships with their partners as well as being more understanding and acceptance of different sexualities.

**Personal relationships:** less family conflict and better relations with their partners, peers and work colleagues were all cited as positive changes. One participant shared the story of their relationship with their Mom:

*“I was going through depression. A lot was going on. Between me and my mother we had issues because I wanted to come out of the closet, so she was really pulling me back because of the family, because of church, because of so many things. She is a businesswoman also so she couldn’t understand much about LGBTI. So, I also took her in one of the meetings so now she understands it very well due to the works of the organisation [UN] itself.”* LGBTQIA+ participant.

**Sense of belonging:** participants mentioned feeling more accepted generally within their communities and families, as well as within the LGBTQIA+ community. A number described UN as a bridge builder between different communities.

*“When I met them, I also met some of the LGBTI community in my town and it made it easier to get that information that ‘Ahh, I am not alone’. They dress like me; they laugh like there is no criticiser out there.”* LGBTQIA+ participant.

*“[The project will sustain its results if it] continues as the team do every day when they talk to people because they invite not only LGBTI community but they invite community members too.”* LGBTQIA+ participant.

*“I also got to learn of other people in our community.”* LGBTQIA+ student.

Whilst improvements in feelings of isolation were noted, several references were also made to how these were exacerbated during lockdown by participants during interviews and UN staff in project reports.

*“My stepdaughter would have loved to get connected with young people who are members of the LGBTI+ community and be able to make friends. Due to Covid-19 socializing limitations, this did not easily come to pass.”* Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.

*“Working remotely takes away the feeling of being part of a team. Feelings of isolation and loneliness often creep in as a result making work seem impossible to complete or even unnecessary to complete, especially when it comes to QPR and creating a podcast there’s an energy that you feed off others when working as a team that doesn’t quite exist when working alone, it feels so foreign.”* UN staff member in internal project report

**Mental health:** many LGBTQIA+QA+ individuals experience high levels of trauma, violence, and inter-personal conflict due to harmful social norms and discrimination. This can have a serious impact on their mental health. One participant explained how the counselling they received from UN staff significantly helped their mental health. For others, this was implied in the stories they shared of improved and more supportive inter-personal relationships within their family and peer groups.

An increased self-esteem, less self-doubt and a sense of belonging, connection and seeing themselves in others were all mentioned as contributing to improved mental health.

*“It has also given knowledge to those who have been doubting themselves.” LGBTQIA+ student.*

*“Uthingo network has created a place like home for those who were rejected by their families.” LGBTQIA+ student.*

*“They boost our self-esteem, and we feel more confident in ourselves.” LGBTQIA+ participant.*

In addition, internal project reports reviewed mention the important role that staff debriefing and psychosocial support plays within the organisation, suggesting this is highly valued by the UN staff, many of whom are from the LGBTQIA+ community.

#### **Outcome 4: Peers, family, guardians have an increased knowledge on GBV and hate crime and the needs of LGBTQIA+ persons**

Family members and peers reported finding the workshops they attended very useful on a number of levels:

***Increase in knowledge:*** Firstly, family members and peers mentioned an increase in their knowledge in general about the LGBTQIA+ community and the issues that affect them. They also referred to a reduction in their preconceived prejudices and misconceptions about the LGBTQIA+ community.

*“My stepdaughter and I went through relevant, pertinent, and world-class consultation with one of Uthingo network consultants who took us through what it means to be LGBTI+ and characteristics of the various categories.” Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

*“Uthingo Network affected me in a positive manner due to the educational, advocacy and awareness work they are involved in to support members of the LGBTI+ community. The experience enabled me to face my preconceived prejudices and misconceptions about being a member of the LGBTI+ community and left me a positive-minded person who can now easily understand, relate to and even support someone who perceive themselves as ‘not straight’.” Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

With regards to violence, they talked about a better understanding of GBV and its effects, including in relation to men, as well as an understanding of how violence affects children:

*“We got spanking at an early age which led us to thinking that beating up someone for discipline is good whereas it is not.” Male workshop participant, UN internal project report.*

*“Most of the participants went home with an idea that male has gone through the most they must be attended to before it too late.” UN internal project report.*

*“Also, when men log rape cases police officers laugh at them and end up going back home with no service rendered because they do not understand the seriousness of the matter as*

*well as how violence can affect children.” Male workshop participant, UN internal project report.*

Another project report reviewed referred to the challenges of facilitating workshops when participants do not show empathy or hide their discomfort with insensitivity:

*“In this workshop I had noticed that the participants were noisy and needed to be called to order most of the time. Participants just randomly laughed when they were watching a video of intimate partner violence when the partner was beating up the other partner, making nasty comments such as how can a man be another’s punching bag.” UN internal project report.*

However, the facilitator skilfully found a way to make the content more relatable and went on to note:

*“By the end of the workshop their perspective of the above mentioned was challenged since the facilitator brought in woman abusing man and how mentally challenging it is for males to share that with anyone”. UN internal project report.*

**Sharing of knowledge:** The second area of change family members and peers referred to the sharing of their new knowledge with others and to defend the LGBTQIA+ community, even if this was hard to do:

*“I usually share the information that I have learned with people that are close to me. Whenever I hear people having discriminatory conversations, I can weigh in a say something, but this is always hard.” Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

Feedback from workshop participants in one of the project reports reviewed suggests that participation in more than one workshop is needed before they feel comfortable sharing their knowledge outside of their close personal circles.

*“Participants believe that they still need a whole day workshop on the subject matter to be capacitated with public speaking and would not mind sharing what they have learnt on the day starting by sharing in their current relations.” Internal project report feedback from participant.*

**Safe space to be vulnerable:** Lastly, family members found the sessions a safe place to share their stories and to learn information to protect themselves from GBV or seek further help:

*“Yes, personally, I used to be in relationships and not notice that I was being victimized. I used to translate this as love, but I learned that this is wrong and its traumatic. I learned all the signs. Your workshops have helped a lot because we learned a lot. We would love for you to come back to the community. We used to joke about the name of the organisation and the work that you were coming to do in the community, but after attending a few workshops we saw that it allowed us to talk and share our stories.” Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

*“This particular group was quite interesting because it was the first time meeting them and [yet] they were comfortable to talk to me and they would like to be capacitated on gender*

*diversity. Two of the group participants would like face to face counselling and most of them are seeking for job and they need assistance in doing so.” UN internal project report.*

*“The participants were very engaging in the discussion and are willing to attend a support group for same sex only.” UN internal project report.*

### **Outcome 5: Traditional leaders, traditional healers, religious leaders, healthcare providers and the police have an increased awareness of LGBTQIA+ needs and issues**

During the course of the project, UN worked with traditional leaders and healers as well as religious leaders. As part of this work, they provided gender and sexuality sensitisations trainings to various groups totalling over 350 individuals.

They also worked on a joint campaign with the Ujamaa Centre for Biblical and Theological Community Development and Research. The campaign centred around Eudy Simelani lecture (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eh3k6fPwKf8>), which is hosted annually to raise awareness of the intolerance that is shown towards the LGBTQIA+ community with the church, as well as the communities surrounding our churches. A dialogue on Homophobic Hate Crime and Gender Based Violence Dialogue was hosted on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 bringing together the LGBTQIA+ community and faith-based leaders located within Pietermaritzburg. As a part of this, the LGBTQIA+ individuals present were able to share their stories, as well as their opinions on the matter. Raising awareness of the hate crime incidences that have been fuelled by religious and cultural teachings.

Work with government departments, such as healthcare providers and the police was more challenging during this period due to the national lock down regulations, however UN was able to continue providing support to the Msunduzi Municipality’s HIV and AIDS division – ATTIC. Through this programme they facilitated sensitisation to stakeholders providing psychosocial support services within various communities, focusing on language, cultural and religious values that may hinder good service delivery efforts, as well as personal perceptions that have been informed by society.

The traditional healers, leaders and religious leaders interviewed during the evaluation reported an increased awareness of LGBTQIA+ needs as a result of their interaction with UN. One traditional healer, themselves a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, explained the change as follows:

*“It has made a huge difference because now they [the Traditional Healers Organisation] are more free to speak to me. I think maybe some people are more afraid of the unknown. They had so many questions of which they ended up being judgemental. So now I feel they are a bit warmer to me. Even the chairperson is able to speak and joke with me.” LGBTQIA+ traditional healer.*

Another participant, quoted in a project report reflected:

*“Another participant stated that it is wrong and inhumane to treat people like animals, regardless of their gender or sexuality, ‘it is important to acknowledge queer individuals as human first before their sexuality’.” UN project internal progress report.*

Other specific areas of learning referred to included basic counselling skills, hygiene, gender and sexuality, usage of prevention methods and sexual diseases, human rights, sexual consent, reporting of cases of abuse, job seeking skills, the importance of healing past scars, and how to initiate a conversation about sexual behaviour.

### **Outcome 6: Traditional leaders, traditional healers, religious leaders, healthcare, police are confident in providing GBV services to LGBTQIA+ persons**

UN's work aligns with the knowledge, attitude, behaviour (KAB) approach to behavioural change. Findings relating to behavioural change are still nascent which is to be expected given that the project is in the process of closing out and longer-term results (such as behaviour change) are still emerging. Nonetheless, several strong examples of behavioural change amongst stakeholders were noted as reflected in the following comments:

*"They have so many unanswered questions because they do have initiates that look like and speak like me and they don't know how to treat them but now... [we can talk together]."*  
LGBTQIA+ traditional healer referring to improved relationships within the Traditional Healers Organisation following training from UN.

*"This started a conversation in which religious leaders agreed to engage in conversations of sexuality with their churches, with the hope that Uthingo Network and Ujamaa will be available to facilitate these discussions as well as working on a joint campaign with the Ujamaa Centre".* UN internal project report on the campaign with Ujamaa Centre and religious leaders.

*"Myself, I wasn't aware of the people who are in a same sex relationship because I am coming from a too traditional family and there you will find it is a taboo to even talk about it. Working with UN enlightened me to understand more about them. And because I'm the trainer, and also the counsellor, it helps me even when I'm counselling people or coming across anyone who is part of the LGBTI now it is very easy to listen to that person, to understand the terms of reference from that person."* Government stakeholder.

*"I even requested and received condoms from the organization, I placed them in a place everyone can see when they come for ancestral consultation since I also sit on the clinic committee. Now it easy for some people to ask for condoms."* Traditional healer participant

*"Now I am able to listen more, when someone is offloading giving them a safe space for sharing without fear."* Traditional healer.

*"Now, I allow transgendered clients to come dressed in the manner they are comfortable with."* Traditional healer.

### **Outcome 7: LGBTQIA+ persons GBV and hate crime challenges raised at accountability structures**

Achievements towards this outcome were the most severely affected by COVID and the national lockdown. Some government departments have still not returned to fulltime staffing capacity within their offices.

Towards the end of 2021, UN participated in two Iranti action group meetings, one in Durban and the second (which UN coordinated) in Pietermaritzburg. Iranti is a Johannesburg-based media-advocacy organisation which advocates for the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons, with specific focus on lesbian, transgender (including gender non-conforming) and intersex persons in Africa. The action group meetings bring together civil society organisations and government stakeholders around issues relating to the LGBTQIA+ community.

Input from LGBTQIA+ participants in the meetings raised a useful list of challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community which can serve as a guide for UN's work with government departments and accountability structures moving forward. Issues raised included:

- Personal violation experiences within the justice system.
- The issue of cells allocated for queer individuals within certain police stations, followed by a lack of information on LGBTQIA+ individuals within local police stations.
- The need to empower the LGBTQIA+ community to know their rights to give them the ability to stand up for themselves. Equipping them with the tools to fight for their rights when they are violated.
- The need to teach all government employees, as well as the community, about the limitations of their rights (to prevent them overstepping their rights when dealing with the LGBTQIA+ community)
- The need to have a LGBTQIA+ representative within each police station that will be focused on LGBTQIA+ related cases.
- The issue of the lack of wards allocated to transgender individuals in hospitals
- The fact that the system does not make it easy to address transgender issues.
- The lack of support available within government to deal with transgender and intersex related challenges.
- The issue of the lack of training offered to the SAPS in terms of LGBTQIA+ individuals and their challenges.
- The lack of resources available to transgender individuals in the process of transitioning.
- The issue of access into the health and justice department in terms of sensitization.

The report goes on to note:

*“Queer organisations have faced a lot of barriers when trying to facilitate access to rights within various government departments. Which is the biggest challenge in terms of following up on hate crime violations, because even the structures that are put in place to assist fail to do so. The task taken to form these structures will help in terms of forming a rights movement that is ready to tackle these challenges head on, however, we hope that this will be supported by an active leading partner that will help us fill the gaps in service delivery, especially the monitoring and support of hate crimes at a national level.” UN internal project report.*



The South African Police Service were represented at the Durban meeting.

### Outcome 8: Policies and laws are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ acceptance

The Prevention and Combatting of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill was introduced to the National Assembly in 2018. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2021 UN participated in an online meeting with other civil society organisations to discuss changes that need to be made to the Bill in terms of language and terminology as well as the recognition of certain rights and the limitations these could present in future cases.

---

## UNINTENDED OUTCOMES

---

The main unintended outcome identified during the evaluation related to the development of (self) advocates amongst the LGBTQIA+ participants (for themselves as well as the wider LGBTQIA+ community) their peers and family members:

*"I became more determined to support the work of Uthingo Network and I even published a letter to the editor in a daily newspaper which was published and shared with members of the organization in question after the very first professional consultation I have ever taken part in involving LGBTI+." Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

*"I have also turned into an activist. I have an initiation school that runs in my home. I teach my kids the value of respecting and recognizing with respect people who live among the LGBTI community. I really, really, really do not tolerate someone who calls an LGBTI member names that are so unfair. I am bold enough, because of the team, to take the wound for a next person in order to protect them if they are called certain unfair names. I am bold enough to rectify the matter and say that is not right. I am that bold now because of the team." LGBTQIA+ participant.*

*"Previously I used to change churches [...now] I would have to approach pastor and tell him I won't wear skirts because of what the church says, I'm here to praise God." LGBTQIA+ participant.*

---

## FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SUCCESS

---

**Key Evaluation Question 2b: What have been the major factors affecting the achievement of these outcomes?**

In considering the major factors affecting the achievement of the project outcomes, the following were noted:

**Project implementation was informed by a baseline study:** carrying out a baseline study in communities prior to project implementation helped to identify real, as opposed to perceived, needs

specific to that community. This resulted in programmatic work being more targeted and structured, which likely contributed to improved outcomes.

**Facilitation skills and style of UN staff and workshops:** The facilitation skills of the UN staff, as well as the workshop approach and content, were noted as positive factors by several participants. Words used to describe the workshops and facilitators included relaxed, world class, empowering, educational, eye-opening, mature, non-confrontational, and patient. The excellent facilitation skills of the UN staff, including their ability to find areas of personal resonance with the participants, allowed for the discussion of “hidden”, complex, and often painful issues.

**Emphasis on non-violent communication:** UN’s approach helped participants to focus on finding non-confrontational ways to discuss gender and sexuality. This style of dialogue is also known as non-violent communication.

*“They have taught us that you shouldn’t approach a person in an aggressive manner. You should be kind in order for you to have that sort of energy that you want to project so that you will be able to teach a person more about LGBTI.”* LGBTQIA+ participant.

**Creating safe spaces:** Linked to the facilitation style and non-violent communication factors is the creation of safe spaces to talk. A number of participants made reference to this as a positive factor.

*“It helped with understanding the value of community work. I don’t think we were able to have these discussions before. We didn’t even have a space where we can come together and talk.”* Parent of LGBTQIA+ person.

*“A lot of what I learned came from the conversations that we had. We had the opportunity to speak about our issues in an honest space. You gave us an opportunity to come together as a community to talk. We were able to talk about our issues. You helped us make connections because we didn’t have that.”* Parent of LGBTQIA+ person.

**Participants found resonance with UN and its programmes:** Participants built strong connections and relationships with UN programmes and staff. Many of the participants interviewed had been connected with the organisation for 3 or more years.

*“Uthingo has always pushed us and given us that oomph not to give up and what channels to take.”* LGBTQIA+ participant.

*“A friend of mine introduced me to one of their programs in 2019. From there onwards I fell in love with all its projects.”* LGBTQIA+ student.

**Use of ‘knowledge, attitude, behaviour’ approach:** As mentioned previously, UN’s approach aligns well with the knowledge, attitude, behaviour change model. Whilst the provision of knowledge alone does not necessarily equate to attitude and behaviour change, when combined with the other success factors listed above this was successful. The table below shows some examples of how the KAB model was reflected in participant’s responses:

| Participant               | Knowledge   | Attitudes   | Behaviour   |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| Parent of LGBTQIA+ person | We spoke about the violence within the community and what is the definition of violence.<br>The kind of lifestyle that the LGBTI+ community lives and why they dress in different ways. | I believe that you taught us a lot. As a community we were not educated. We used to use derogatory words such as isitabane to refer to the LGBTQIA+ community.  | I usually share the information that I have learned with people that are close to me. Whenever I hear people having discriminatory conversations, I can weigh in and say something, but this is always hard.  |
| Traditional healer        | I was trained on basic counselling, gender and sexuality.   | Now, I allow transgendered clients to come dressed in the manner they are comfortable with.<br><br>Also applying to all my initiates to give them authority to do health check-ups [before and after initiation].<br><br>Now I am able to listen more, when someone is offloading giving them a safe space for sharing without fear | I am also allowing initiates who are taking ARVs to use warm water [during initiation] in order to minimize exposing them to pneumonia. Even the type of food, I am allowing them to consume it to boost their immune system since I know better that our traditional medicine is too strong.<br><br>I even requested and received condoms from the organization, I placed them in place everyone can see when they come for ancestral consultation, since I also sit in the clinical committee. Now it easy for some people to ask for condoms |
| Stakeholder               | Working with UN enlightened me to understand more about them [LGBTQIA+ community].  | It helps me even when I'm counselling people or coming across anyone who is part of the LGBTI now it is very easy to listen to that person, to understand the terms of reference from that person.  | It's easier to talk about LGBTI but before I would not have done that. But now even when I'm in the church, whether I'm in my community wherever I am I do talk about them and also now I am asking people to listen to them, not to judge them.  |

---

## SUSTAINABILITY

---

### Key Evaluation Question 3: What is the sustainability of the project outcomes? Is there evidence the results might grow beyond the project life in the stakeholder communities?

Discussions in the previous section regarding the KAB model link to sustainability. The behaviour change examples provided suggest that results will grow beyond the life of the project within the stakeholder communities. A key factor in the sustainability of UN's works is the long-term

relationships they build with participants, communities, and stakeholders. This is a critical element of work with highly vulnerable populations where trust needs to be built over time.

All participants interviewed referred to the value they place on UN's work, with many requesting more interventions. Increasing the scope and reach of the work within stakeholder communities could further increase the sustainability of the results, as these comments from evaluation participants reflect:

*"I think the work can continue only if we come together as a community and work together to make sure that people are educated. The danger would be people leaving and letting all the information go when you leave. The problem would be with us as a community, we need to be united." Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

*"We haven't been able to call the community in their masses. To be able to tell them about this work and the kind of organisation that is in the community. It is hard for them to believe us when we pass on the information, so it would be nice if you try to fill up the community hall and share the kind of work that you do." Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

*"The more we have these workshops with different types of people different types of belief systems and religions and traditions is the more Umtshezi Municipality will be broadminded." LGBTQIA+ participant.*

Two participants interviewed explained how UN had helped strengthen the work of their LGBTQIA+ focused community-based organisation through their capacity building and project management trainings.

One of these participants also shared that members of her community had approached her for more information on UN's work and she had organised a workshop with UN for them. Replication is an important element of sustainability:

*"There are a lot of LGBTI in my area who are in the closet. So, they came to me and said to me 'we heard about your organisation in Estcourt, we want to join you, we want you to speak to our families'. They came to me and asked more info about LGBTI things. So, I organised a workshop with UN with them." LGBTQIA+ participant.*

One comment from a participant referred to the importance of personal resonance in the sustainability of UN's work:

*"Yes, as long as you are able to make them understand the information. If you are explaining clearly, and you are making them understand what you are talking about. The peer educators will carry on talking to people about these things. People are talking about their own experiences." Government stakeholder.*

---

## CHALLENGES

---

### **Key Evaluation Question 4: What are the challenges the organisation has faced in implementing the project? What are the gaps in programming?**

Some challenges were highlighted by participants during the interviews as well as in internal project reports. These included:

Fear of the “unknown” and fear of being judged were cited by several participants as barriers to participation:

*“Yes, sometimes it happened that we had people judging us for going to the workshops, telling us that we also want to become homosexual, but we had to tell them that it’s all about education and not so much about wanting to belong to the LGBTI community. People get upset because they think that you are condoning certain things when you trying to get an understanding. I have learned a lot.” Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

Unemployment of young people in general within communities and specifically LGBTQIA+ individuals:

*“A lot of the young people are not working. I hope that one day you will help us reach our counsellor so that we can ask him about the lack of opportunities that are in the area. We also want to ask him how he selects the people that get to work on certain projects.” Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

Linked to unemployment was a lack of disposable income to use for transportation to attend UN workshops and meetings:

*“Also, the lack of transport support for her to be able to visit the resource center and per chance encounter other young people like her in the process was an expectation that was not met.” Family member of LGBTQIA+ person.*

*“Transport [cost] is also a problem for these students to attend training.” Government stakeholder.*

The lack of availability of UN staff to assist stakeholders with trainings due to busy implementation schedules:

*“Sometimes you will find that we are running trainings at the same time and then they are not available to help with our training. They need more trainers.” Government stakeholder.*

The emotional toll of working in a space where incidences of violence and discrimination are high:

*“We have learned to have a thicker skin now, we just brush things off. But when you think about it when you are alone, you see that no I was being very disrespected but then I have to accept it because that is how people are and that is how they believe things.” LGBTQIA+ participant.*

Project report challenge which talked about holding the emotional space of the CBO partners

Lack of LGBTQIA+ issues being raised within traditional accountability structures – and probably also in other accountability structures, although this was not specifically referred to:

*“Our community centre is not functional, only tribal committee structure that sit weekly, if the organization can request slot to do workshops with them because whatever is said by them is final. We need more structures that will look on community social issues like Youth problems, skill enhancement. Abuse in that area is uncontrollable and is not given enough attention because the tribal committee focusing on land dispute, marriage issues, family dilemma.”  
Traditional healer.*

The need for improved understanding and service delivery in relation to LGBTQIA+ issues in government departments serving communities:

*“We wish to have counsellors/social worker deployed in the community centre and even a committee that will focus on doing campaigns relating community social issues [such as GBV and hate crimes].” Traditional healer.*

*“We are pushing the municipality to make sure we have enough awareness within the municipality. Would like to provide awareness raising trainings to other departments within the municipality as part of their workplace health trainings.” Government stakeholder.*

Lack of service delivery can lead to community vigilantism and violence:

*“... and our community mostly take the law with their own hands and no actioned taken to perpetrators which encouraging more cold incidences.” Traditional healer.*

---

## PROJECT LINKAGES TO WIDER ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY

---

### Key Evaluation Question 5: How do the Isibani Project Results Relate to UN’s Wider Organisational Strategy?

Linkages between the Isibani Project and wider organisational strategy are shown in the table below:

| Programmatic focus  | Broad change goals   | Linkages with Isibani Project  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Institutionalising Change in three rural communities in KZN & Pietermaritzburg | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community development</li> <li>● Active citizenship</li> <li>● Building a human rights culture</li> </ul> | <p>CBOS within communities have been strengthened.</p> <p>Community members in general have more knowledge on gender and sexuality.</p> <p>Individuals who participated in trainings have become LGBTQIA+ advocates within their communities.</p> <p>Rights protection understood as core focus of the organisation.</p> |
| 1.1. LGBTQIA+ Tertiary Activism and Safe Spaces                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating safe, empowering spaces for LGBTQIA+ students</li> </ul>   | <p>Students find UN meetings to be a safe space – “they are a home to us”.</p>   |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <i>(a sub-programme linked to both programme 1 and programme 2)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a human rights culture</li> <li>• Developing a cadre of influence</li> </ul>   | <p>Students have influenced other students to participate in meetings.<br/>Campaigns were held on campuses.<br/>Rights protection understood as core focus of the organisation.</p>  |
| 2. Knowledge Creation, Networking and Influence                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movement building</li> <li>• More grounded and rational conversations around LGBTQIA+ and human rights issues in provincial and national spaces</li> <li>• More effective community development and influencing practice in rural settings</li> </ul> | <p>Movements are beginning to grow in key communities, although more reach is needed. Non-confrontational approach used by UN allows for rational conversations and safe spaces for learning at community level – this should be replicable in provincial and national spaces.<br/>Traditional healers interviewed show changes in practice, requests for meeting with wider leadership council received.<br/>Use of baseline studies in communities supports effective community development.</p> |
| 3. Sustaining and Developing UN                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased capacity, sustainability, visibility and effectiveness</li> </ul>   | <p>Social media visibility has increased<br/>People have found the organisation on the internet, word of mouth, through referrals from other participants.<br/>Visibility could be increased further.</p>  |

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Key Evaluation Question 6: What are the recommendations for future work by UN?

Recommendations provided by participants in the evaluation included (quoting the participant directly):

- Work with Men's Forum which also collaborates with traditional or indigenous leaders to advance the cause of LGBTQIA+ community as they have great influence in the community and this would influence their thinking which would hopefully cascade down to ordinary community members who are prejudiced and uneducated about "not straight" people.
- Work with the Department of Education to empower learners who may wish to be free from the bondage of self-hate, ignorance and abuse.
- Organise events, activities and get-togethers for members of LGBTQIA+ community who are usually lonely, neglected, forgotten, marginalised, ignored and even suppressed by communities and their own families.
- Help victims of abuse to access legal support.
- Engage in social media and media publicity, including video clips with TikTok, to educate society about LGBTQIA+ members.
- If we can talk to the older women [over 40], this will make a huge difference, because they will also be able to share this information at home and in the church, it would change people's lives.
- Expand gender and sexuality education to schools and workplaces.
- Expand the focus of comprehensive sexuality education beyond cisgender person.
- Provide awareness raising trainings to other departments within the municipality.
- Host a workshop that includes all the community governing structures e.g. tribal committee, religious group, traditional healers, community police forums, ward councilor with his governing structure because they have a massive power to influence since they serve as role figures. Our community govern their households with rules coming from Governing structures
- We need to keep on talking about these things because people are dying but if we keep on talking about these things, if we keep on making people understand, you know that you will really make help us see another kind of life where people will live peacefully.

Additional recommendations from the evaluator include:

- UN must continue to work at the individual, community and policy level to ensure a rights-based culture of protection for the LGBTQIA+ community is upheld.
- Consider further increasing the visibility of the organisation through publications/media articles which have a broader reach than the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Set up an advocacy group for project participants to allow them to advocate for themselves within provincial and national spaces.
- Continue to build M&E capacity within the organisation to ensure effectiveness of results as well as to build a body of strong evidence in support of their work.