

# **Professionals' attitudes and knowledge on the specific needs of LGBTQI+ migrants & refugees**

National Report –  
Greece



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# @nclusion

## Fostering inclusion of LGBTIQ+ migrants at local level

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# INTRODUCTION

Greece, due to geopolitical changes and its historical relations, has been at the centre of policy developments in the field of migration. Many individuals who flee their countries, among whom many LGBTIQ+ individuals, arrive in Greece seeking protection. The LGBTIQ+ acronym itself contains a wide array of identities, genders, backgrounds and experiences which are complex, often divergent, and represent a variety of needs that require specific and tailored responses. The “plus” symbol represents numerous other categories, such as asexual and pansexual. LGBTIQ+ individuals seeking protection in Greece face further difficulties and discrimination because of the intersection between being an LGBTIQ+ person and having a migrant or refugee background. The European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) defines intersectionality as ‘ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/ identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination’ (EIGE, n.d).

Local authorities, which play a key role in supporting the long(er)-term inclusion of migrant populations, do not always take into account that discrimination on several grounds – including race, ethnicity, nationality, national or social origin, migration – may be compounded by discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. Furthermore, local and regional authorities often fail to involve migrants themselves in the design and implementation of integration policies. Besides fragmented programs implemented mostly by civil society organizations (CSOs), the needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees remain largely unaddressed. The “@nclusion” project aims to support the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ migrants at local level by bringing together local authorities, CSOs that promote the rights of migrants and LGBTIQ+ persons, and migrant-led organizations from diverse EU regions (Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland & Spain). In this context, the present report focuses on identifying the needs and exploring the views of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees in Greece, aiming to contribute to the formulation of more inclusive policies that respond to the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees in Greece.

The report is primarily divided into two sections that illustrate the findings from the desk and field research conducted in Greece for this project. A separate section outlines the research methodology used to identify and survey the sample. Following this, the report examines the current situation in Greece concerning attitudes and stereotypes towards LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees, as well as the level of knowledge among professionals providing support services. Additionally, it investigates the integration needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants at the local level. The results of the field research, which include the key findings from both surveys and interviews, are then presented. The final section offers overall conclusions and recommendations. The findings from this research will inform the development of actions aimed at addressing the existing gaps in the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals within local communities, providing an evidence base to guide the design of the project's future activities.

# METHODOLOGY

The report is based both on desk and field research with the main objective of identifying challenges, prejudices and stereotypes on meeting the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants/refugees at the local level. All research activities were conducted according to ethical procedures and following a preparatory training for the professionals who were involved in the research in order to enhance the level of trust of the participants during the field research. A targeted literature review and collection of secondary data from existing reports, studies, policy papers, guidelines, and legislation published on national or EU level and by universities, associated partners, CSOs, specialized research institutions and international organizations was conducted, providing a deeper insight into attitudes and stereotypes towards LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees.

The desk research was compounded by field research, including:

- **3 online surveys with close-ended questions addressed to staff, members, and/or volunteers of (a) migrant's organizations, (b) LGBTIQ+ organizations and (c) local authorities, with 31, 20, and 20 participants, respectively.**

The survey was conducted through Google Forms which is an easy-to-use tool and can ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants according to the GDBR regulation. In order to reach the necessary number of individuals, we used different ways of reaching out to the target groups. These included uploading and promoting the survey through the website and social media accounts of Symplexis and Greek Forum of Migrants, the two project partners from Greece, as well as the promotion of the survey in social media groups and online fora of the target groups.

- **10 semi structured interviews with LGBTIQ+ migrants/refugees.**

The interviews were carried out in order to collect LGBTIQ+ migrants'/refugees' experiences and needs for support that can enable their integration in local communities. Participants were reached by the Greek Forum of Migrants, through associated partners and other relevant CSOs, both from their beneficiaries and through open calls launched in social media. All participants were informed about the project, the anonymity and confidentiality of the interviews, the management and storage of personal data according to GDPR regulations, as well as were provided with any needed clarifications before taking part in the research.



# OVERVIEW OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE

## 1. Key figures and statistics on the inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants & refugees

In recent years, migration flows in Europe present a fluctuation, thus putting more pressure on the reception and integration system of first entry countries, such as Greece. In 2023, migration flows increased compared to 2022, with a total of 48,721 refugees arriving in Greece (41,561 by sea and 7,160 by land), compared to 18,780 arrivals in 2022 (UNHCR Greece, 2023). The main countries of origin included Syria (31%), Afghanistan (20%), the State of Palestine (16%), Somalia (6%), and Eritrea (4%). Women accounted for 18% of the persons arriving, children for 23% and men for almost 60% (UNHCR Greece, 2023). In most cases, these persons have been forced to flee their countries of origin because of persecution, war or violence and have a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

Additionally, in Greece, there are Third Country Nationals (TCNs) who hold a residence permit in accordance with the provisions of the Greek Immigration Code. This population falls under the general term 'migrants'. The term 'migrants' refers to any person who moves away from their usual place of residence, whether internally or across a border, and regardless of whether the movement is 'forced' or 'voluntary' (UNHCR, n.d.). As of December 2023, the number of TCNs residing in Greece was 468,038, with the main nationalities being Albanian nationals and the second largest nationality being Chinese nationals (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, December 2023).

In Greece, there is a generalised shortage of statistics in the field of migration. Even though a significant number of people have passed through Greece in recent years, we do not have adequate information about their needs for integration. According to the findings of a study conducted by UNHCR with a sample of 3,755 adult participants who have been in Greece for more than two years, 3% of participants have completed at least a secondary level education, while 57% are educated at an intermediate or lower level (UNHCR Greece, 2024, February). Almost one in four participants reported that they have never studied or have not completed primary education. For women, this is closer to 30%. In relation to housing, 52% of the refugees reported living in a self-accommodated flat in comparison to 36% of the asylum seekers; 22% of the refugees lived in a site, although they should be living outside of camps 30 days after they obtain their refugee status and find their own accommodation; 29% of the asylum seekers lived in a shelter or accommodation program such as ESTIA; and 20% of the refugees were hosted through the HELIOS program.

In the area of employment, according to the same study (UNHCR Greece, 2024, February), 64% were not working in the 4 weeks preceding their participation in the survey, even though 52% were actively looking for work. Among the rest of the participants that were not working, 24% stated that they were looking for work, 11% that they were doing unpaid work, and 9% that they were sick or disabled. In the same sample, 80% of the men were in the labor force (i.e., either working or looking for a job), whereas only 51% of the women were in the labor force. The remaining 49% of the women were not looking for a job and were instead engaged in other activities, including unpaid care work. Among those that did report working, only 41% of men and 45% of women had formal contracts; 68% of people who reported working in the past four weeks were self-accommodated. Only 16% and 10% of those who worked in the past four weeks reported that they lived in an accommodation program or site, respectively. Thus, highlighting that an association between living in independent accommodation and reporting active participation in the labor market exists. In relation to psychological distress, the same study finds that 85% of the persons in the sample suffered from moderate (42%) to severe (43%) psychological distress, with only a relatively small percentage of the sample (15%) not exhibiting indications of psychological distress. When it comes to gender, 48% of the women in the sample had severe psychological distress in contrast to 40% of the men.

In this challenging environment, statistics about asylum seekers, refugees, or migrants who identify as LGBTQI+ cannot be detected in any stage of the reception and integration process. Demographic information for asylum seekers, recognized refugees and migrants is exhausted in the binary “male and female” construct, without any data regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2024 December). LGBTQI+ refugees/migrants remain invisible for the Greek state in various fields of their integration process such as (a) housing (UNHCR, 2021 September and Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2022 September, October, November), (b) integration-related courses (e.g., learning the Greek language, education courses, job counseling, etc.; Ministry of Migration and Asylum & IOM, 2024 August), (c) livelihood activities (financial aid for food, clothing, school supplies, pharmaceuticals, personal hygiene, telecommunications and transportation; Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2024 A’ Quarter). Likewise, in European statistics on migration and asylum, the data on education, employment, social inclusion, and housing are presented in total and are again limited to the binary “male and female” construct (European Migration Network, 2024). The lack of official and reliable statistical data is an important factor constraining the development and implementation of effective policies concerning LGBTQI+ migrants, putting them at greater risk of secondary victimization and further discrimination.

The 2024 report of European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which is based on 100,577 responses from 30 countries, including Greece, highlights the discrimination and exclusion that LGBTQI+ individuals face in several areas of life, including education, healthcare, housing, and social protection. According to the FRA (2024) survey for Greece, 28% of LGBTQI+ individuals felt discriminated against at work or while looking for work in the year

before the survey. Moreover, 45% felt discriminated against in at least one area of life in the year before the survey, declaring that discrimination affects many areas of life, such as going to a café, restaurant, hospital or shop, while 36% often or always avoid certain locations due to fear of being assaulted. According to the same survey findings, the levels of harassment remain high (54%) in Greece, with only 9% having reported to the police physical or sexual attacks and 10% having reported their discrimination experiences to an equality body or another organization. Although access to health care and to medical treatment is provided by the legislation, 13% of LGBTQI+ respondents in Greece felt discriminated against in healthcare in the year before the survey. In the field of education, the findings of the survey are even more worrying, with 70% of all respondents saying that during their time in school they suffered bullying, ridicule, teasing, insults or threats because they are LGBTQI+. Moreover, 38% of respondents in Greece experienced a so-called ‘conversion’ practice in order to make them change their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The highest proportions of respondents said that they experienced discrimination in housing at a high level (20 %).

Greece, despite some progress achieved, faces ongoing issues of double discrimination and lack of acceptance of LGBTQI+ migrants who remain not adequately protected by public authorities. There is a pressing need for training of professionals that support these people and for targeted interventions from the authorities to develop a strategy and establish further legal initiatives in order to improve the livelihoods, mental well-being, and integration prospects of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers in Greece (LGBTQI+ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, Implementation Overview, 2023, December).

## 2. Existing policy and legislative frameworks

Refugees and migrants who have obtained residence permits in Greece should enjoy the same rights and receive the necessary social assistance according to the terms that apply to nationals, without discrimination (ECRE, 2024). In practice though, refugees and migrants who identify as LGBTQI+ face obstacles in accessing basic rights and social benefits. In several cases, legislation on LGBTQI+ rights indirectly excludes persons with migrant background, while the migration code, as in force, presents gaps and insufficiencies regarding the reception and the integration of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees, failing to recognise their intersectional vulnerability. Legislation and directives on ensuring equality and addressing the specific needs of LGBTQI+ individuals remain partial and fragmental. However, we cannot undermine the significant improvements on LGBTQI+ rights in Greece during the last years.

For the first time in 2014, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender characteristics were included in the protected characteristics for hate crimes and hate speech (Law 4285/2014) in order to align national legislation with European Union rules pertaining to hate speech and denial of genocide. In 2016, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristics (SOGIESC) were included among the protected characteristics only in the field of employment (in the private and public sector), rather than in all the other areas of life, such as education, health, or housing (Law 4436/2016). The equal treatment law was amended in February 2024 (Law 5089/2024) in order to include disability as a protected ground in all areas



of life. However, the legislator missed the opportunity to include SOGIESC as a protected ground in all areas of life as well (Transgender Support Association, 2023, February).

One year later, following recommendations and advocacy actions, the legal recognition of gender identity was adopted by law (Law 4491/2017). Nevertheless, the legislator implicitly excludes adult transgender people who cannot provide a Greek birth certificate from the possibility of changing their official documents without medical or psychiatric requirements. Eventually the solution was given by the Court. Following legal proceedings against the proportionate application of the law, the district Court of Mytilene ruled that the law provisions should be interpreted proportionally to asylum seekers and refugees, and that the applicant may request the correction of their name and surname on identification and travel documents issued by the competent Regional Asylum Office European (European Data Base of Asylum Law, 2018, December).

In the context of family equality, the most recent law amends the relevant provisions of the Greek Civil Code, granting same-sex couples not only the right to marry but also the right to adopt children, as is currently the case for heterosexual partners (Law 5089/2024). This law also extended non-discrimination principles across various sectors, providing a more comprehensive legal protection for LGBTQI+ people (Law 5089/2024). These legislative reforms, that have a direct impact on LGBTQI+ individuals' human rights, raised Greece's position from 13<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> among EU countries on the basis of laws and policies that have a direct impact on LGBTI people's human rights (ILGA-Europe, 2024).

The legislative framework in Greece guarantees access to education for all children, citizens or foreigners (including refugees and asylum seekers, boys and girls) who are aged between 5 and 15 years old, regardless of legal or illegal residence of their parents in the country. Furthermore, the International Protection Act (IPA) stipulates education as a right and an obligation for children seeking asylum in Greece, adding that children that do not enrol or attend classes because they do not wish to join the educational system shall face reduction of material reception conditions, while their parents shall face the same sanctions applicable to Greek citizens (Law 4636/2019). Even though the law foresees the creation of reception classes, in practice, several obstacles – including understaffing or insufficient number of classes, language barriers and a significant drop out rate – result in many children being practically excluded from the educational system (ECRE, 2024). In a positive development in 2023, a special residence permit linked to education was introduced (Law 5038/2023). According to the law, unaccompanied minors (UAMs) who have reached adulthood and have successfully completed at least three (3) classes of secondary education in a Greek school in Greece before reaching the age of twenty-three could receive this resident permit (Law 5038/2023). Additionally, an effort to address the increased phenomenon of bullying in the educational sector resulted in 2023 in the adoption of a new law aiming to combat bullying and violence in education (Law 5029/2023). This law also covers phenomena of discrimination or

harassment on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, expression or characteristics of gender (Law 5029/2023).

Regarding training programmes, asylum seekers can access vocational training programmes under the same conditions and prerequisites as foreseen for Greek nationals (Law 4540/2018 and Law 4939/2022). However, the condition of enrolment “under the same conditions and prerequisites as foreseen for Greek nationals” does not take into consideration the significantly different circumstances faced by asylum seekers, and in particular, the fact that they may not be in a position to provide the necessary documentation (ECRE, 2024). The long awaited Joint Ministerial Decision of the Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs, Education and Religious Affairs, and Migration and Asylum which stipulates the terms for the assessment of the skills of applicants who do not have the necessary supporting documents, had not been issued by the end of 2023 (ECRE, 2024). In relation to recognition of foreign diplomas, certificates and evidence of formal qualifications, recognised refugees are treated in the same way as Greek nationals. However, the state institutions responsible for recognizing diplomas provide all relevant information primarily in Greek. As a result, navigating the procedures and requirements can be quite complex for individuals who are not familiar with the Greek administrative system.

Free access to public health services and pharmaceutical treatment is applicable for asylum seekers and members of their families (Law 4368/2016). Nevertheless, the public health sector is under extreme pressure and lacks the capacity to cover the health care needs of both foreigners and the local population (Amnesty International, 2020). In 2022, a Temporary Insurance and Health Coverage Number (*Προσωρινός Αριθμός Ασφάλισης και Υγειονομικής Περίθαλψης Αλλοδαπού*, PAAYPA) was introduced replacing the AMKA and complicating the situation (Law 4939/2022). PAAYPA is issued to asylum seekers together with their asylum seeker’s card (Law 4939/2022) in order to be entitled to free of charge access to necessary health, pharmaceutical and hospital care. However, the PAAYPA is deactivated in case a rejection decision is issued, and the applicant has no legal documentation in Greece, leaving this population with very limited or no access at to hospitals’ emergency services (ECRE, 2024).

The operation of distinct spaces within accommodation centers, tailored to meet the specific needs of TCNS belonging to vulnerable groups, is mandated by law (Law 4825/2021). However, LGBTQI+ individuals are not recognized as a vulnerable population that requires protective measures to address their basic needs. Despite relevant UN guidelines (UNHCR Guideline no.9) and EU recommendations (Yogyakarta, Principle no.23 & CM/Rec (2010)5 on combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity), the “Asylum Code” (Law 4939/2022) does not include LGBTQI+ individuals in the definition of vulnerable groups and persons. The current situation leads to inadequate accommodation that lacks privacy, safe spaces, and dedicated housing for LGBTQI+ individuals. Furthermore, the 30-day deadline imposed on individuals to evacuate their accommodations – such as Reception and Identification Centers (RIC), Closed Controlled Access Centers (CCAC), Controlled Temporary

Reception Facilities (CTRF) – upon receiving refugee status often results in homelessness, particularly for the most vulnerable populations (Law 4674/2020). Similarly, the new law (Law 5038/2023) fails to address the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees, as it does not include any provisions for their protection. Consequently, LGBTQI+ individuals are not recognized as a vulnerable population that requires protective measures to meet their basic needs.

Access to the labor market is contingent upon the legal status of migrants. Applicants for international protection have the right to access the labor market within sixty days of submitting their application and receiving the relevant legal documents, provided that no first-instance decision has been made by the Asylum Service and that any delays cannot be attributed to the applicant (Law 5078/2023). However, the right to work is automatically revoked upon the issuance of a negative decision. According to the same law, a new type of residence permit is granted to TCNs residing illegally in Greece until November 30, 2023, who continue to reside in Greece and have completed at least three years of continuous residence before submitting their application (Law 5078/2023). The new Immigration Code introduces revised processes and requirements for the entry and residence of TCNs in Greece, altering the rules of entry for TCNs in order to cover seasonal work (Law 5038/2023). Specifically, it provides for the extension of the residence permits for immigrants working in the country and simplifies the procedures for obtaining these permits (Law 5038/2023). Despite these promising legal developments, the economic conditions in Greece and administrative obstacles to obtaining necessary documents may result in undeclared employment, which can have serious repercussions on their living conditions (ECRE, 2024).

### 3. Challenges, prejudices and stereotypes

LGBTQI+ individuals with migrant backgrounds belong to more than one marginalized group, experiencing even greater discrimination than those who are only stigmatized due to a single aspect of their identity. The way social identities overlap and intersect with each other is described as intersectionality. The intersection of multiple discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, socio-economic situation, nationality, age, migration status, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity etc., can exacerbate the already existing vulnerability and result in the secondary victimization.

The intersectionality of LGBTQI+ people is not always taken into account, posing barriers to their access to social benefits. LGBTQI+ migrants face double discrimination and hostility even from professionals who are supposed to support them, carrying however, their own prejudices (Held, N. 2022). LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and refugees are far more socially excluded since they do not always enjoy the support of their ethnic communities because of homophobia or transphobia that reflects persecutory conditions in their countries of origin. Refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants, as well as Roma and members of LGBTQI+ communities, remain victims of frequent hate speech, at times involving politicians and even state officials (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance-ECRI, 2022, June).

Upon their arrival in Greece, LGBTQI+ migrants are not legally recognized as vulnerable and face numerous challenges related to vulnerability assessments and the support provided by professionals handling their cases. Often, their vulnerabilities are overlooked, leading individuals to navigate the asylum process without a prior vulnerability assessment (Asylum Information Database-AIDA, 2022). Consequently, LGBTQI+ migrants are unable to access the special reception conditions designated for vulnerable populations. As a result, they are placed in mixed facilities that lack essential protective measures and are often overcrowded, offering little privacy or respite. Reports of threats, harassment, violence, and sexual assault have been documented in these reception facilities (Greek Transgender Support Association, 2021). Following the termination of the ESTIA II accommodation program, asylum seekers are now housed in camps where conditions are even more dire, preventing applicants from feeling safe or comfortable enough to express their identities (Diotima and other civil society organizations, 2023). Consequently, LGBTQI+ refugees and TCNs with migrant backgrounds are at heightened risk of homelessness, with few alternative housing options available.

Healthcare conditions in the camps are either non-existent or of very poor quality, failing to address the specific needs of LGBTQI+ individuals. Even when psychological services are available, they are often unknown to those in need of protection. Another significant challenge in accessing healthcare is the lack of interpreters and cultural mediators in public healthcare facilities, such as hospitals and clinics. This issue, combined with difficulties in obtaining necessary documentation (e.g., social security numbers), can deter individuals from seeking healthcare (UNHCR, 2022). Transgender individuals face numerous challenges regarding reproductive health, hormonal therapy, and gender-affirming treatments. These challenges often arise from a lack of openness within the healthcare system or systemic deficiencies that exclude them from receiving necessary care. General stigma and discrimination further discourage LGBTQI+ individuals from seeking medical assistance when needed. A specific fear of mistreatment by healthcare personnel has also been identified (Médecins Sans Frontière, 2023). Nikolaos Gionakis, psychologist and co-founder of the Babel Day Center, stated, “Most of the time, transgender asylum seekers come to Babel after experiencing violence, either in their countries of origin or in the camps here” (Solomon, 2023). LGBTQI+ migrants often feel compelled to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid harm, despite the severe and detrimental impact this has on their mental health. The intersection of migration-related trauma and prejudice against gender identity highlights the urgent need for specialized support. Additionally, the lack of specific training on sexual and gender diversity among healthcare professionals remains a significant challenge, contributing to inadequate care, particularly in mental health and transgender healthcare (LGBTQI+ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, Implementation Overview, December 2023).

Furthermore, the process of applying for asylum can have detrimental effects on LGBTQI+ individuals. Living in a state of uncertainty, LGBTQI+ migrants often experience negative mental and physical health outcomes, as well as economic insecurity (Llewellyn, Cheryl, 2017). Studies have shown that, although one of the requirements for a successful asylum claim is

for LGBTQI+ migrants to present themselves as sexual or gender minorities, many LGBTQI+ migrants choose to conceal their identities to avoid potential abuse or violence (Kahn & Alessi, 2018).

In Greece, LGBTQI+ migrants do not feel safe either in the camps or during the asylum interview process. Many choose not to disclose their identity during registration (Greek Transgender Support Association, April 2021). The procedure is lengthy, requiring them to endure a prolonged waiting period after registering at the camps. During their interviews, asylum seekers encounter procedural violations and face prohibited and intimidating questions that contravene European Union and international law, particularly regarding inquiries about sexual practices and behavior. This situation fosters feelings of shame about their identity, stemming from traumatic experiences related to their SOGIESC. The discriminatory behavior exhibited by professionals conducting the interviews results in secondary victimization from those who are supposed to provide support (Diotima and other civil society organizations, 2023). Continuous training for professionals on sexual and gender diversity would enhance the quality of interviews and decisions, helping individuals feel more secure in disclosing their identity. Additionally, professionals working in civil society organizations that support this population must receive ongoing training on how to effectively approach LGBTQI+ individuals and assist them in navigating the integration process (GREVIO, November 2023).

Inclusive education for refugee, asylum-seeking, and migrant pupils and students in Greek schools has increasingly become a challenge in recent years. This challenge arises not only from logistical issues and teacher availability but also from addressing potentially negative attitudes among some parents and educators (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance [ECRI], 2022). The primary obstacles include the distance of reception structures from schools, the mobility or short stays of children in accommodation facilities, the reluctance of schools to enroll these children for various reasons, and the absence of reception classes operating alongside regular classes. Inclusive programs designed to support the integration of students into the formal educational system – such as interpretation services in schools, Greek language courses, psychosocial support for students, and teacher empowerment – are severely limited (ECRE, 2024). Adult refugees and migrants may attend educational programs offered by state or private agencies, NGOs, and other organizations, including Second Chance Schools (for adults who have not completed mandatory education) and Lifelong Learning Centers operating in municipalities (ECRE, 2024). Additionally, they may participate in examinations for admission to universities or higher technological institutions or enroll in Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK) (ECRE, 2024). However, accessing these opportunities is nearly impossible, as many individuals are unaware of their existence and face numerous barriers, such as language differences, cultural challenges, legal documentation issues, discrimination, and bullying, which effectively exclude them from participation.

In relation to employment, several challenges can be identified, including mainly the lack of knowledge of the language, lack of documentation and inability to find legal employment



(ECRE, 2024). In most cases, this population does not even know how to find employment (ECRE, 2024). Although there are law provisions enabling them to recognise their education and training qualifications, usually they do not have their original diplomas with them, and it is almost impossible to request them from their countries of origin. At the same time, there is a lack of language and training programmes for LGBTIQ+ migrants to learn Greek, improve their skills and access higher quality jobs.

## 4. Main gaps and needs in knowledge and awareness

In recent years, numerous reports, studies, and articles have been published regarding the refugee crisis in Greece, as well as the needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals and the discrimination they encounter. However, there is a notable absence of research focusing on the intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination that LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees experience due to their migrant status and gender identity. This lack of information and understanding of the concept of intersectionality and its implications can lead to an inadequate assessment of the individual protection needs of each person, potentially exposing them to risks of harassment, abuse, and violence in various aspects of their daily lives.

The lack of research is further exacerbated by insufficient official data in this specific area. Consequently, the precise needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees, as well as the relevant practices implemented in Greece to address these needs, cannot be clearly defined. Even though reports from international organizations and civil society groups offer some insights into the situations that LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees face in Greece, these findings remain fragmented.

Greece does not recognize sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics as valid grounds for the recognition of refugee status. Consequently, a vulnerability assessment is necessary to identify the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals. However, these assessments often exhibit inconsistencies and delays, which may lead to their exclusion by the relevant health authorities (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, December 2023). LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees are frequently placed in mixed facilities with inadequate health conditions that fail to ensure privacy and respect. The lack of safe and suitable housing is particularly concerning, as individuals may be exposed to further abuse and violence in reception centers and camps. As a result, many LGBTIQ+ refugees feel compelled to conceal their sexual orientation and gender identity due to the fear of marginalization. In addition to systemic gaps and procedural issues, the absence of specialized personnel and the poor quality of medical and psychosocial assessments have emerged as significant factors contributing to these inconsistencies (Heinrich Böll Stiftung 2023).

Professionals working with LGBTIQ+ migrants often lack adequate training to identify and address the traumatic experiences and mental health issues these individuals face, including violence, torture, imprisonment, and sexual violence. In many instances, professionals draw conclusions based on stereotypical, inaccurate, or inappropriate perceptions of LGBTIQ+

individuals. They may use prohibited questions, disregard proper terminology, and overlook the relevant legal framework, all while demonstrating a lack of empathy towards LGBTIQ+ migrants (Diotima and other civil society organizations, 2023). Moreover, professionals working with migrants are not always aware of the needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals, while those who specialize in LGBTIQ+ issues may lack knowledge about the legal frameworks affecting migration status. Local authority professionals often engage with various vulnerable populations without fully understanding the unique requirements of each group. In several instances, trained and experienced staff in refugee camps have been dismissed (Refugee Support Aegean, 2022), while essential professionals – such as administrative staff, legal advisors, psychologists, and interpreters – cease to provide their services in reception centers (Ombudsman, 2024). In light of the above, there is a pressing need for sensitive and culturally appropriate training on issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics for all professionals who provide protection and assistance to LGBTIQ+ refugees and migrants. Such training would enable them to respond in a timely, objective, and compassionate manner, free from stereotyping or cultural biases (UNHCR, July 2019). Training on intersectionality is particularly essential for professionals to better understand the challenges arising from the intersection of migration status, gender identity, and sexual orientation. This understanding is crucial for LGBTIQ+ migrants to feel safe and to enhance their trust in authorities.

Navigating the bureaucratic and complex migration system is extremely challenging for many LGBTIQ+ individuals who have limited or no access to healthcare services and legal support. In numerous cases, they lack adequate information about their rights. This situation is further exacerbated by the absence of a comprehensive support model that would establish referral pathways among various support services and providers. The lack of specific protocols and coordination among local organizations, migrant groups, and LGBTIQ+ advocacy organizations aimed at protecting these individuals – such as providing safe reception facilities, access to medical and psychological support, and legal aid – can lead to secondary victimization (LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, Implementation Overview, 2023, December).

Language and cultural barriers, along with the shortage of well-trained interpreters and mediators in local authorities and civil society organizations, negatively impact applicants' well-being and mental health, leading to the ongoing necessity for compelled concealment (ECRE, 2024).

Health and psychosocial support services are not consistently provided, primarily due to the lack of a strategic plan from the state and the discontinuation of project-based services. There are also significant gaps in access to free legal representation by lawyers knowledgeable in the national legal framework, as well as in psychological support. Specifically, access to free legal aid during the initial stages of the asylum process is nonexistent, leaving LGBTIQ+ individuals without legal assistance (C-148/13 to C-150/13). Additionally, various legal and medical

procedures are necessary for legal gender transition, which underscores the urgent need for legal representation (Transgender Support Association, April 2021).

Serious gaps have been identified in the educational sector, leading to schools' inability to create an efficient and welcoming integration environment for refugee and migrant children (ECRE, 2024). Some of the most significant gaps include the administrative weaknesses of accommodation structures, personnel shortages, a lack of material resources, insufficient educational expertise in both schools and accommodation facilities, and the mobility of refugees (ECRE, 2024). Additionally, a lack of awareness-raising efforts among the local population has contributed to an increasingly hostile public discourse against refugees, including racist behaviors exhibited by parents, such as public statements opposing the integration of refugee children into schools (Gazzetta, 2020, September).

In terms of employment, language barriers and the bureaucratic nature of the Greek system effectively exclude refugees and migrants from accessing legal job opportunities. Furthermore, the challenges faced by competent authorities in recognizing foreign diplomas, certificates, and evidence of formal qualifications hinder migrants and refugees from achieving better living standards and securing higher-quality jobs (ECRE, 2024). There is a significant lack of training for LGBTQI+ migrants seeking employment, particularly regarding labor rights, workplace culture, communication and time management skills, and work-life balance. This training is essential for enabling these individuals to articulate their needs and the challenges they encounter in the labor market. Additionally, awareness-raising initiatives aimed at employers, including training on the legal status and gender identity of migrants, are limited. This, combined with the absence of inclusivity training in the labor sector, impedes the participation of LGBTQI+ migrants in the workforce.

## 5. Main risks and intersectional vulnerabilities faced by the LGBTQI+ migrant and refugee population

The lack of understanding of the concept of intersectionality within the Greek context leads to a failure to recognize the specific risks that LGBTQI+ refugees and migrants encounter. Each individual possesses multiple identities and can simultaneously experience discrimination based on these intersecting identities. LGBTQI+ refugees, at every stage of their journey, may be particularly vulnerable to violence, abuse, and exploitation from various actors, including immigration and border authorities, traffickers, and smugglers (UNOHR, 2022). Furthermore, they face heightened risks of exploitation, which can range from violence to discrimination and social exclusion during their integration process (Greek Council for Refugees, 2023).

According to the Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN), there has been a significant increase in the number of victims of racist violence in recent years, particularly among migrants, refugees, Roma individuals, and transgender persons. These incidents indicate that the targeting of refugees and migrants may be intersectional, with perpetrators attacking individuals based on their ethnic origin, race, color, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity.

However, LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees often choose not to report hate crimes due to the fear of secondary victimization (RVRN, April 2024). Between January and December 2023, the Racist Violence Recording Network documented 158 incidents of racist violence through interviews with victims. Among these incidents, 89 involved migrants, refugees, or asylum seekers who were targeted due to their ethnic origin, religion, or skin color. Some cases also included additional factors such as sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or disability, highlighting the intersectional nature of the discrimination they faced. Furthermore, in 61 incidents, LGBTI+ individuals were targeted based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression. In certain cases, victims were targeted due to both their LGBTI+ identity and disability, illustrating the phenomenon of intersectional targeting. An additional indicator of the severity of the trauma is that 15 incidents involved intersectional targeting, where victims experienced violence due to multiple characteristics simultaneously (RVRN, April 2024). To address underreporting, a residence permit for humanitarian reasons is granted to victims of racist crimes, provided there is a related court decision and/or the victim requires medical treatment. Additionally, police officers who receive reports of hate speech or hate crimes should be able to refer victims to support services (Law 3886/2005).

Intersectional forms of social stigma and institutionalized exclusion leave LGBTQI+ migrants without adequate access to protection services and justice from the patterns of violence that initially compelled them to seek safety, which are often reproduced in Greece. Stigma manifests through various forms and dimensions of violence, ranging from physical and emotional to psychological, sexual, and institutional. LGBTQI+ migrants frequently face hostility, as they are perceived as a threat to society due to both their identity and migrant background. Furthermore, the legal framework permits discrimination against LGBTQI+ migrants by incorporating disproportionate provisions (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, December 2023).

Stereotypes and prejudices can lead to disproportionate exclusion from the labor market and further discrimination in the workplace. LGBTQI+ migrants often resort to sex work due to the barriers they encounter in securing formal employment, which heightens their vulnerability to discrimination and stigma, particularly for transgender individuals (IOM, 2024).

The lack of a safe environment and recognition of the specific experiences related to sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) of LGBTQI+ migrants can lead to secondary victimization and create barriers to social inclusion. Specifically, the absence of sustainable and permanent housing, along with protective support, places LGBTQI+ migrants at a higher risk of homelessness and results in insufficient monitoring of the violence and discrimination they face. Additionally, LGBTQI+ migrants often encounter particular health risks, including elevated rates of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse, which may be exacerbated by the gaps identified in the context of Greece (Solomon, 2023). Furthermore, the lack of inclusive and welcoming educational environments increases the risk of exploitation and discrimination.

Although CSOs play a crucial role in addressing the protection needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants by providing access to legal, employment, educational, and healthcare services, a more comprehensive approach under state responsibility is necessary to meet these intersectional needs throughout all aspects of their integration process. Additionally, it is essential to protect them from prejudice and discrimination by professionals in various fields.

## 6. Methods, practices, local plans and strategies for developing more inclusive policies

National strategies and practices have been developed in recent years, aiming for more inclusive policies for LGBTIQ+ individuals, including individuals with migrant backgrounds. In several cases, the developed strategies do not set neither a dedicated budget for the different priorities outlined nor an evaluation plan for their implementation. Despite their gaps and need for improvement, they do constitute important steps to more inclusive societies. In this section, we are going to illustrate these strategies and local plans that have identified.

The LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2021-2025 was adopted in 2021, outlining proposals for the national bodies in charge of monitoring and implementation of LGBTIQ+ equality (Prime Minister cabinet 2021, June). This Strategy was developed within the framework of the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and the LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2020-2025. Several civil society organizations (Colour Youth, 2021) and institutions (National Committee for Human Rights, 2021) have submitted recommendations welcoming the initiative and underlining its gaps. The LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2021-2025 recognises the increased risks asylum seekers and refugees face due to their intersectionality and provides recommendations. In particular, the LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy highlights the need for the recognition of LGBTIQ+ refugees as a vulnerable group who can benefit from the relevant protection services and recommends the establishment of appropriate reception and accommodation services in reception and hosting structures. Moreover, it underlines the need for distinct data on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender characteristics and it stresses the need for the training of all persons involved in the asylum process. The Strategy makes particular mention to trans and intersex people and the difficulties they face in their access to employment. In this regard, it provides the inclusion of transgender persons in the Public Employment Service (PES) programmes targeting vulnerable people. However, transgender migrants and refugees are not included in this vulnerable population. Following strong advocacy and recommendations from civil society organizations (InNewspaper, 2021, September), transgender migrants and refugees were eventually included in the beneficiaries of PES's programmes targeting vulnerable populations (Common Ministerial decision 42632/2021).

By contrast, the National Strategy for the Social Integration of Asylum Seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection does not include any recommendation concerning the



recognition of LGBTQI+ migrants as a vulnerable group and nor any provisions about their specific protective needs (Ministry of Immigration and Asylum, 2022, January).

In relation to gender equality, the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021- 2025 (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs & General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality 2021) was introduced in 2021. However, in this action plan equality is perceived as a field that concerns exclusively men and women – without including LGBTQI+ people – raising concerns on the inclusive goal of gender equality.

In the field of education, the Greek National Action Plan against Racism and Intolerance (NAPRI) 2020-2023 highlights the need to strengthen human rights education in order to create an environment of respect and tolerance for diversity. It also envisages the combating of discrimination in education and the implementation of actions at all levels of education to promote mutual understanding of diversity and tolerance, with a focus on combating stereotypes (ECRI, 2022).

In relation to housing, the Municipal Council of Athens announced an initiative to address the increased needs of homeless LGBTQI+ persons in Athens. The Municipal Council approved the opening of the first shelter for LGBTQI+ homeless people in August 2023. LGBTQI+ organizations had been consulted prior to the decision and later signed a memorandum of collaboration in order to support this initiative. However, due to several reasons, the shelter has not opened as per today, leaving more people socially excluded and without access to basic needs. A similar initiative was organised in 2017 in Athens. The Athens Housing Collective (AHC) was set up with just one apartment at the beginning and had grown to 60 places by 2019. The project provided LGBTQI+ migrants with a bed to sleep, access to food, healthcare, psychosocial support, job training, language training and employment (Info migrants, 2019, June). This project does not have the same capacity nowadays.

## 7. Evaluating capacity building and sensitization programmes

Capacity building and sensitization programs in Greece cannot be easily identified. In many cases these programs are provided by civil society and international organizations and usually remain disconnected from any state strategy concerning LGBTQI+ migrants' inclusion in the local society. Moreover, these programs are part of project-based activities with specific target groups and duration according to each project's requirements. Although the needs of the staff are usually assessed before the implementation of the project, the targeted sample is usually limited, depending again on the framework of each specific project. Consultation with local authorities and migrants' or LGBTQI+ organizations is not always feasible since capacity building and sensitization programmes are not part of a state strategy but are mostly project-based initiatives. The sustainability of these initiatives is not always guaranteed and thus, the follow up and updating of such capacity building programs is not safeguarded. In this context, the list below highlights a few of the most notable capacity building and sensitization programmes and activities that have been implemented in Greece in recent years:

- Seminars for executives and representatives of civil society organizations, members of feminist, women's and LGBTQ+ associations and clubs, as well as activists from across the country, in the forms of a two-day seminar focused on empowerment, awareness raising and capacity building (Diotima 2024).
- Specialized training program for mental health professionals and other health professionals interested in mental health issues who work in culturally diverse environments (Babel, 2023).
- Training sessions for workers of the Greek Council of Refugees on sexual health, sex work, and LGBTQ terminology (Greek Council of Refugees, 2023).
- A series of capacity building trainings on the integration of migrants in inclusive cities and societies in Ioannina. The first capacity-building training was addressed to public service providers and representatives of local authorities, while the second was addressed to civil society organizations, migrants and refugees. Aiming to develop the knowledge and the skills of the participants regarding social inclusion, the educational activities covered a wide range of topics (Symbiosis, 2023).
- The Rainbow School after ten years of efforts against all types of discrimination in education obtained legal recognition and support in order to expand its activities (ECRI, 2022).
- Enhancing the skills of public servants to better understand and respond to the needs of LGBTI+ people and developing a network of stakeholders and interested parties which will serve as a safety net for LGBTI+ in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (KMOP, 2021).
- Workshops on Sex/Gender terminology; gender identity, social identity, gender expression and sexual orientation; homophobia and discrimination elimination; Intersectionality (Generation 2.0, 2016).
- Busting 10+1 Myths, Raising questions – Giving answers – Busting Myths (Solidarity Now, 2019).
- Walk against Discrimination WAD2024 - 10 years. "We march together towards the European Parliament Liaison Office in Greece where we deliver an Open Letter against racism and discrimination co-signed by Civil Society's organizations with our demands regarding human rights in Greece" (Greek Forum of Migrants, 2024).
- Athens Pride Festival; the annual Athens Gay Pride parade aiming at raising awareness about the LGBTQI+ persons (Athens Pride 2024).

The evaluation of capacity building and sensitization programmes is essential to ensure that migrant, LGBTQI+ organizations and local authorities are effectively equipped to support the LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees. However, the evaluation of these programs and a strategic plan for their development and sustainability cannot be easily detected in the websites of the implementing organizations. Exceptional cases could be identified in EU reports (e.g., FRA, 2023) but still this is not enough to evaluate their effectiveness.

# KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SURVEY

## 1. Representatives of migrants' organizations/communities

**Participants in the survey for migrant organizations/communities** were asked about their identities and demographic information, livelihood status, and experiences with the challenges arising from the intersection of LGBTIQ+ issues and migration, as well as the main gaps, stereotypes, and problems in the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees. The survey was distributed online via Google Forms and was available in both Greek and English. It was promoted through the websites and social media accounts of Symplexis and the Greek Forum of Migrants, as well as through social media groups and online forums targeting the relevant communities. At the beginning of the questionnaire, a relevant information sheet and consent form were provided.

The total number of participants in the survey targeting **migrant organizations** was **31, including staff, volunteers, and members of migrant** organizations. Among them, 68% were aged 25-39 years, and 19% were aged 40-54. Regarding gender identity, 55% self-identified as "women," 39% as "men," and 3% as "non-binary," with women's representation among the participants predominating over other identities (see **Figures 1 and 2**).

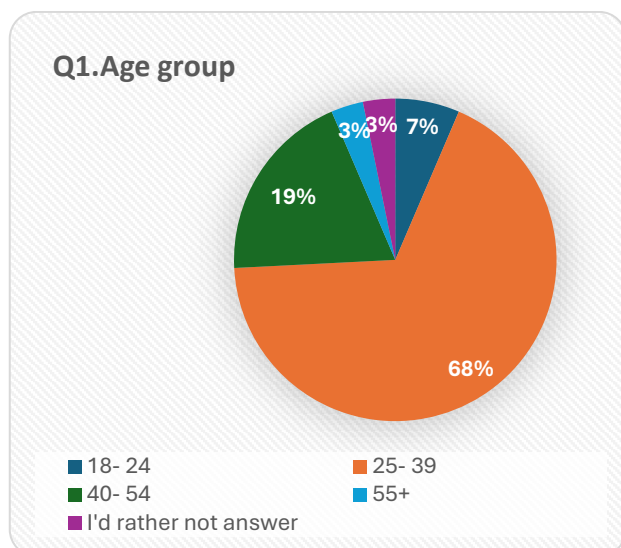


Figure 1

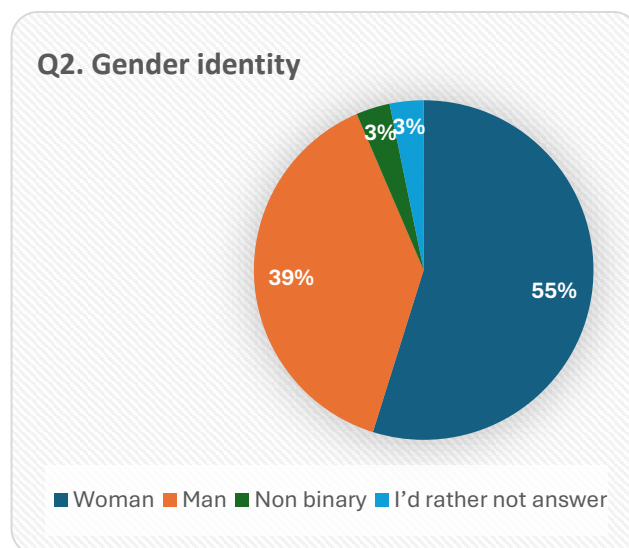


Figure 2

The survey asked questions about participants' educational background, their roles and experience in the organizations they work for, and the geographical areas where their organizations operate. In our sample, the educational level among participants is high, with 45% holding a postgraduate degree and 32% being graduates of higher education (see **Figure 3**).

### Q3. What is your level of education?

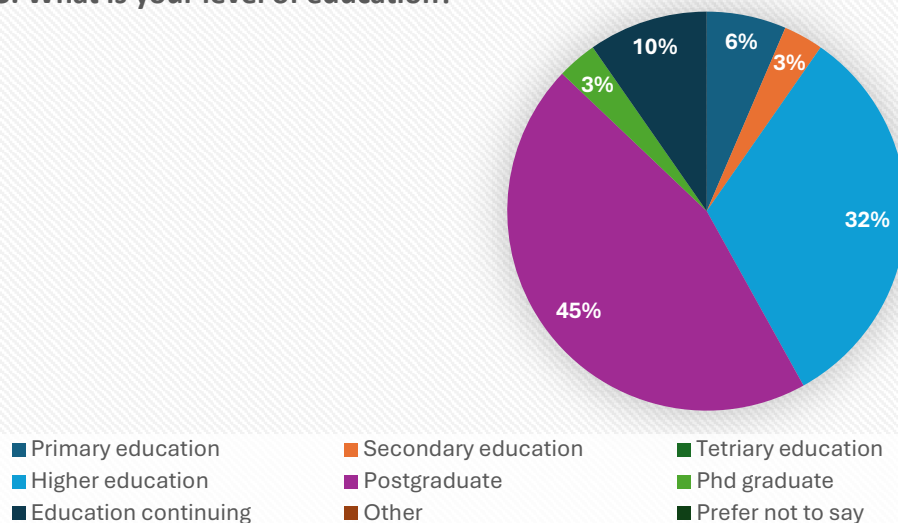


Figure 3

The majority of the participants, over 97%, come from urban areas (see Figure 4).

### Q4. Geographical area of the organization



Figure 4

When participants were asked about their main role in the organization they work, 29% answered "Administrative duties related to migrants'/refugees' inclusion" and 23% "Providing social support (including basic information about rights and obligations, interconnection and referral to other organizations, bodies etc.)" (see Table 1).

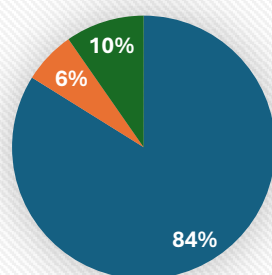
Q5. What is your main role in the body, organization, service in which you work?		
Answer	Responses	Percentage
Administrative duties related to migrants'/refugees'	9	29
Providing legal counselling/support	0	0
Providing psychological support	1	3
Providing social support (including basic information about rights and obligations, interconnection and referral to other organizations, bodies etc.)	7	23

Q5. What is your main role in the body, organization, service in which you work?		
Career counselling	2	6
Adult or youth education	2	7
Medical /nursing care	1	3
Meeting basic necessities (accommodation, food, clothing)	0	0
Cultural sector	1	3
Activities to counteract discrimination	2	7
Municipal administrators	0	0
Municipal Social service employees	1	3
Employee of an SAI centre manager	0	0
Other, please specify	5	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1.**

The survey asked participants whether they have ever provided support to LGBTQI+ migrants/refugees (see **Figure 5**). Among the professionals surveyed, 84% reported having provided such support, while only 10% indicated that they were unsure. The majority of respondents who reported providing support to LGBTQI+ migrants/refugees indicated that they had done so for a period of 0-3 years (76%) or 4-7 years (24%). In our sample, most participants had provided their services for a total of 0-7 years (see **Figure 6**).

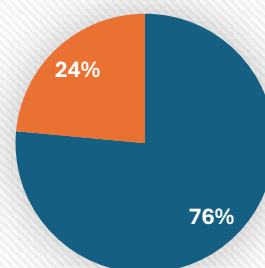
**Q6. Have you ever provided support services to LGBTQI + refugees/migrants?**



■ Yes ■ No ■ I do not know

**Figure 5**

**Q6.1. If “yes” for how many years?**



■ 0-3 ■ 4-7 ■ 8-11 ■ 12-16 ■ 17-20 ■ More than 20

**Figure 6**

In the question “Do you think that LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees face challenges/problems regarding their social inclusion in Greece”, 84% of the participants answered yes and 13% answered probably yes. Thus, a significant percentage of professionals working in migrant organizations/communities suggest that LGBTQI+ migrants face challenges and problems related to their inclusion (see **Figure 7**).



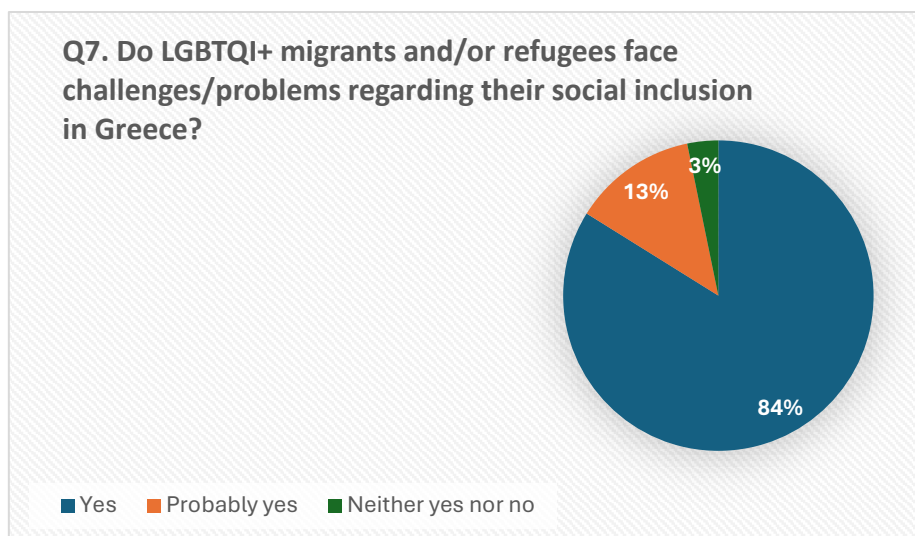


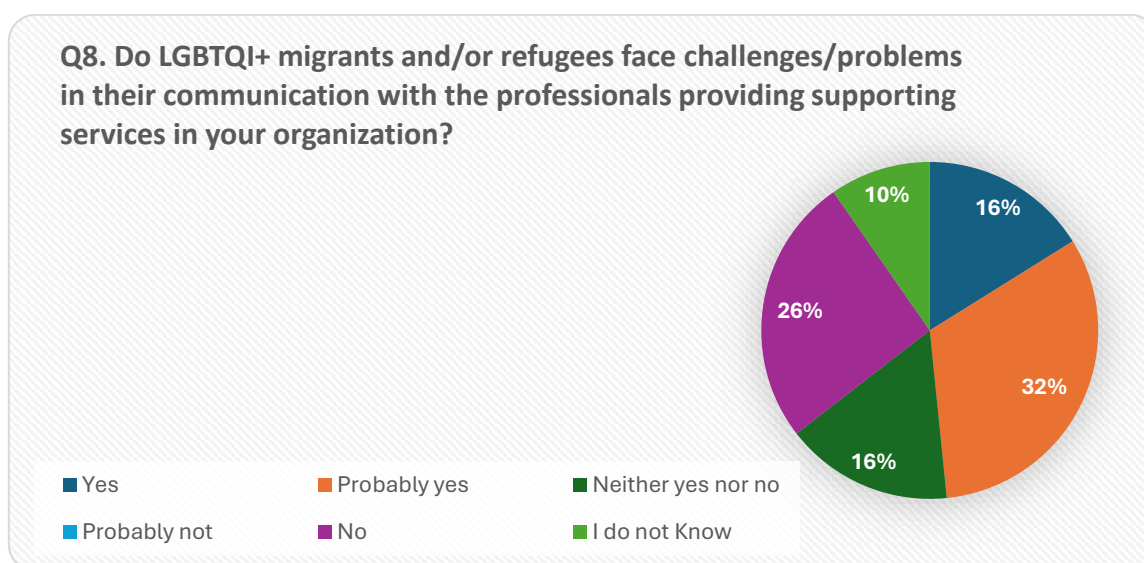
Figure 7

Participants indicated the challenges they have identified, with the option of choosing more than one possible answer. In our sample, most responses highlighted the “double stigma and discrimination based on ethnic origin and sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or biological sex characteristics,” as well as the “inadequate or non-existent state care for the special needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees and/or the challenges they face” (see Table 2). This suggests that respondents recognize the intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination faced by LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees due to their migrant status and gender identity. Participants' responses may also reflect their concerns about the institutional challenges LGBTQI+ migrants encounter, which can lead to discrimination and marginalization.

Q7.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which, do you think are these challenges (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
Double stigma and discrimination based on ethnic origin and sexual orientation gender identity and/or biological sex characteristics.	30
Inadequate or non-existent state care for the special needs of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees and/or the challenges they face.	24
Inadequate or non-existent legal framework/recognition	17
The limited number or complete absence of civil society actors addressing the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees.	16
Inadequate or non-existent skills and abilities of people working in the field regarding the provision of support services to LGBTQI + migrants and refugees.	20
Partial or complete ignorance of the LGBTQI + migrants and refugees regarding their rights.	21
Other	1

Table 2.

More than half of the participants suggest that LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees either do not face challenges in communicating with professionals or are uncertain about the existence of such challenges. Specifically, 26% answered "no," 16% responded "neither yes nor no," and 10% indicated "I do not know." Almost a third of the participants (32%) stated that LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees are likely to experience communication challenges with the professionals providing support services in their organization, while 16% indicated that these migrants and refugees definitely encounter such challenges (**see Figure 8**). This variation may suggest that communication challenges are not always recognized, indicating a potential lack of shared understanding of these issues among the participants.



**Figure 8**

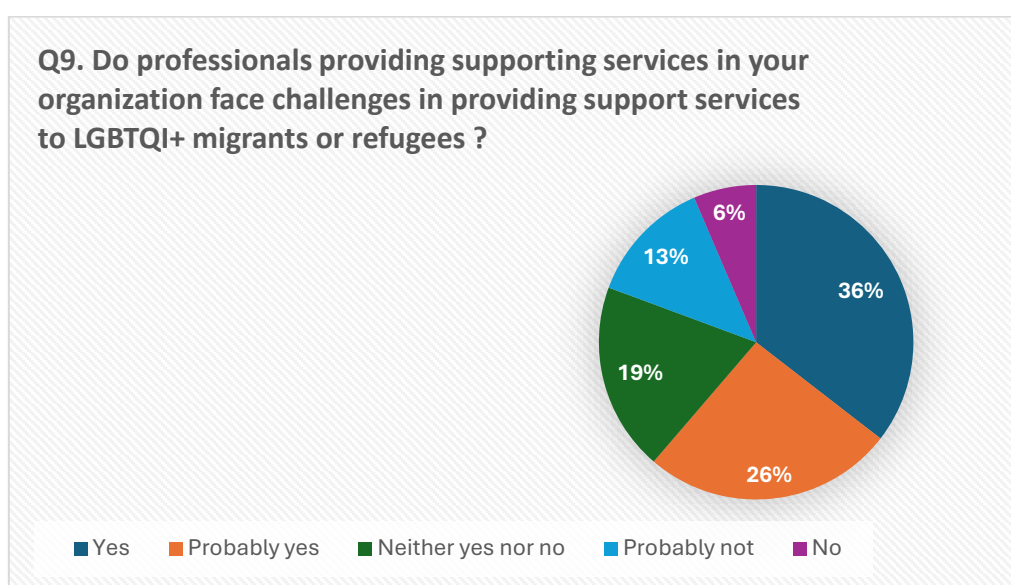
Participants who indicated that LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees probably face challenges in their communication with professionals working in migrant organizations were asked whether they had been in or witnessed a challenging situation. More than half of the participants provided a variety of responses, including ‘providing services while being distant’ (24%), ‘being professional and friendly while taking their needs into account’ (19%), and ‘being professional and friendly, but not interested in their needs as LGBTQI+ persons’ (13%). A significant percentage (43%) of professionals reported that they have never been in or witnessed such a situation (**see Table 3**). This may suggest differing levels of awareness among participants regarding the services they provide to LGBTQI+ migrants.

Q8.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, have you ever been in/witnessed a situation when a person providing a service to a LGBTQI+ migrant (select from 1-5)		
Answer	Responses	Percentage
1. Refuse to provide services to them	0	0
2. Provide services while being distant	5	23.8
3. While they are professional/friendly they are not interested in their needs as LGBTQI+ persons, despite the fact that these needs may be linked to the services provided.	3	14.3

Q8.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, have you ever been in/witnessed a situation when a person providing a service to a LGBTQI+ migrant (select from 1-5)		
4. They are professional/ friendly and take their needs into account	4	19.0
5. I have never been in / witnessed the situation above	9	42.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.**

More than half of the participants answered that professionals providing supporting services in their organization face challenges in providing supporting services to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees (36% answered yes and 26% probably yes), indicating the need for further support and training to address these challenges (see Figure 9).



*Figure 9*

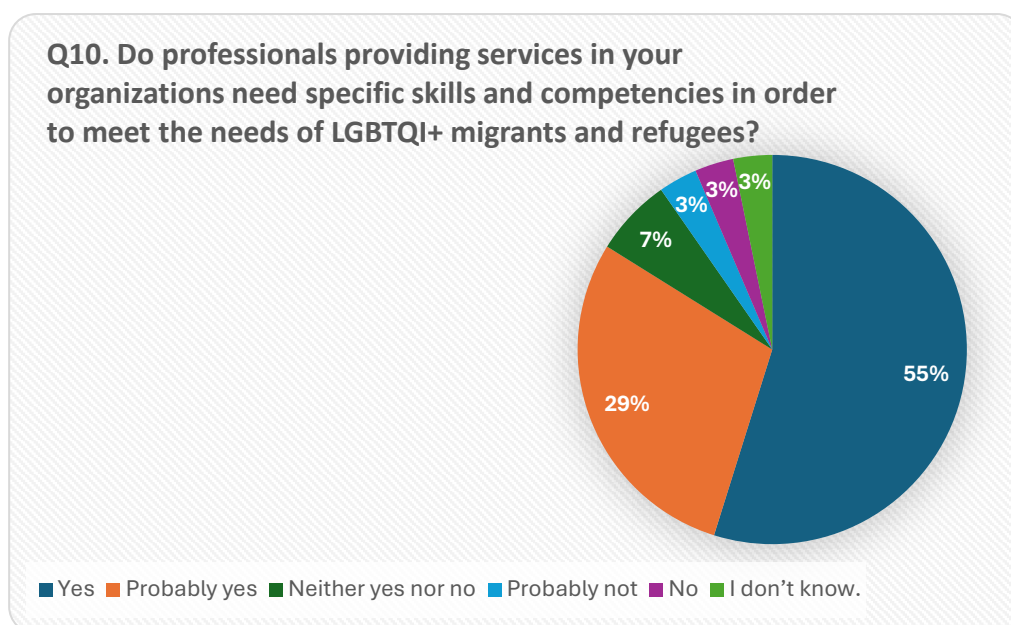
Participants who answered that professionals providing support services to LGBTQI+ refugees/migrants face challenges were also asked to indicate what these challenges are, having the option to choose more than one answer. As shown in **Table 4**, most participants in our sample identify the main challenges as the ‘Incomplete or lack of knowledge, skills, and abilities of professionals to support LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees,’ the ‘Current framework or lack of legal/institutional framework,’ and the ‘Language and culture barriers.’ These results suggest a need for additional training in specific areas and the sharing of good practices.

Q9.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which, do you think are these challenge (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
Incomplete or lack of knowledge skills and abilities of professionals to support LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees.	15
Limited or lack of willingness of the LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees to cooperate with professionals providing supporting services due to fear of ill-treatment stigmatization or victimization (e.g. because they are LGBTQI+)	9

Q9.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which, do you think are these challenge (select all that apply)	
Limited or lack of willingness of the LGBTIQ+ migrants or refugees to cooperate with the professionals providing supporting services due to fear of unwanted "disclosure" of their LGBTIQ+ status	7
Current framework of lack of legal / institutional framework	12
Language and culture barriers	12
Lack of cultural mediators	6
Other, please specify	0

**Table 4.**

In our sample, the majority of participants indicated that professionals providing services in their organizations require specific skills and competencies to effectively meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees. Specifically, 55% answered "yes," and 29% answered "probably yes" (see Figure 10). This suggests that participants have identified a skills gap among professionals in this field and the need for ongoing improvement.



**Figure 10**

Participants who responded that professionals require specific skills and competencies to meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees were also asked to indicate which skills these are, with the option to select multiple answers. As shown in **Table 5**, most participants identified the basic skills necessary as ‘Knowledge about the LGBTIQ+ community and the needs of its representatives,’ ‘Basic knowledge of relevant legislation,’ and ‘Cultural awareness and expression.’ This suggests a need for targeted training in these specific areas and further skill development to better understand LGBTIQ+ needs and acquire the necessary skills to support them.

Q10.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which, do you think are these specific skills? (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
1. Communication in foreign languages	10

<b>Q10.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which, do you think are these specific skills? (select all that apply)</b>	
<b>2. Basic Knowledge of relevant legislation</b>	19
<b>3. Empathy</b>	16
<b>4. Organizational (time management prioritization action planning decision making problem solving etc.)</b>	13
<b>5. Cultural awareness and expression</b>	17
<b>6. Knowledge about LGBTQI+ community and the needs of its representatives</b>	23
<b>7. Other, please specify</b>	1

**Table 5.**

In contrast, participants in our sample who stated that professionals providing services in their organization do not need specific skills and competencies to meet the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees indicated that the "existing skills and abilities of the professionals are sufficient" and that "they are not interested in developing such skills or abilities"(see **Table 6**).

<b>Q10.2. If they “do not” or “probably do not” need specific skills and competencies, what are the reasons?</b>	
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1. There are no such special skills or abilities</b>	0
<b>2. Professionals should not or have no obligation to have such special skills or abilities</b>	0
<b>3. The already existing skills and abilities of the professionals are sufficient</b>	2
<b>4. They are not interested in developing such skills or abilities</b>	2
<b>5. Other, please specify</b>	2

**Table 6.**

Almost half of the respondents (49%) indicate that professionals in their sector likely possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide support services (and) to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees. However, only 13% of participants stated that these professionals do actually have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities. Additionally, 16% suggested that professionals in their sector probably do not have the necessary qualifications, while 3% stated that they lack these essential attributes (see **Figure 11**). This disparity suggests that participants are uncertain about the capabilities of professionals in their sector to support LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees, highlighting a potential need for training to enhance their skills.



**Q11. Do professionals in your sector have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to provide support services (and) to LGBTIQ+ migrants or refugees?**



Figure 11

Participants who indicated that professionals working in migrant organizations lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities were asked to provide reasons for their responses, with the option to select multiple answers. The main reasons stated included the "absence or limited availability of free training activities/programs for professionals," the "limited capacity or willingness of employers to train their employees to acquire these skills," and the "low level of awareness regarding the needs of the LGBTIQ community within institutional contexts" (e.g., due to the absence of a legal framework or lack of targeted services for this group, etc.) (see Table 7). This suggests a potential lack of resources and willingness among employers to provide further training for professionals working with LGBTIQ+ migrants.

Q11.1. If “no” or probably “not”, what is/are the reason(s) for this lack of necessary knowledge, skills and abilities? (choose all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
1. Absence or limited availability of free related training activities/programs for professionals	8
2. Limited or lack of capacity or willingness of employers to train their employees to acquire this knowledge skills and abilities	7
3. Professionals themselves are not interested or have a limited interest in acquiring the relevant knowledge skills and abilities	2
4. Low level of awareness of the needs of the LGBTIQ community in the institutional context (due to e.g. no legal framework lack of targeted services to this group etc.)	7
5. There is no such a need to have specific Knowledge skills and abilities to provide support services (and) to LGBTIQ+ migrants or refugees.	2
6. Other	2

Table 7.

Finally, professionals within our sample were asked whether they would be interested in taking part in a training activity that focuses on meeting and supporting the needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees. Among the respondents, 61% answered that they would be interested

and 32% that they would be probably interested (see Figure 12). This suggests a significant interest in training among participants from migrant organizations.

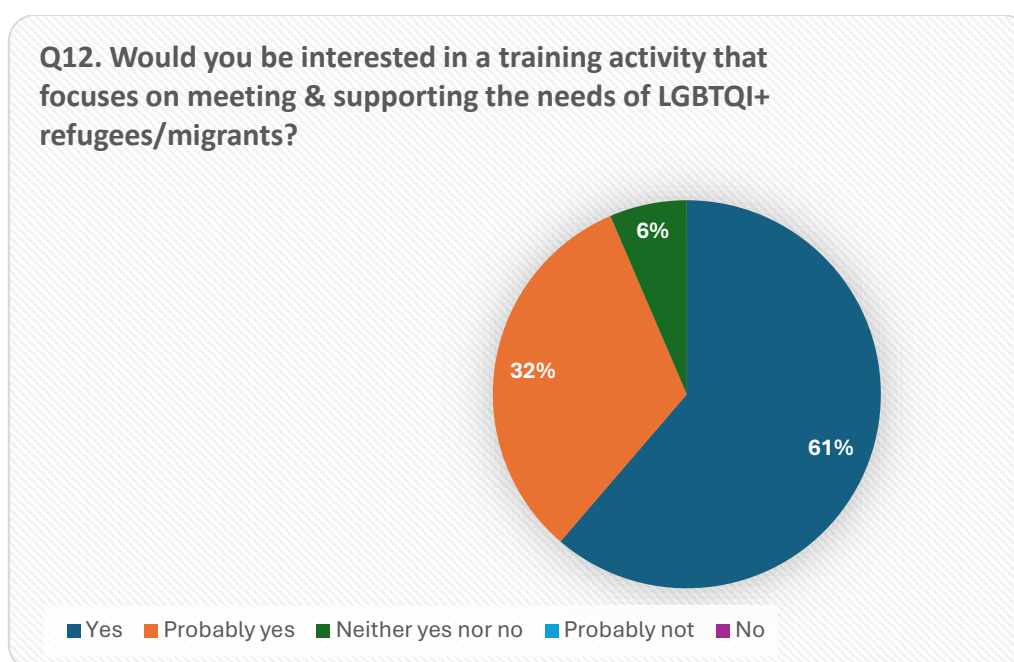


Figure 12

Participants who answered that they were interested in a training activity were asked about the topics this training activity should cover, having the choice to select multiple topics. Most participants indicated the topics: ‘Good practices of social integration of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees implemented in other countries, Legal Institutional Framework for racist homophobic transphobic biphobic crime and discrimination, Human rights abuses discrimination and persecution on grounds of sexual orientation identity or gender in the countries of origin of the LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees’ (see Table 8). These responses highlight the areas in which participants would like to gain more in-depth knowledge.

Q12.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which of the following topics, do you think this training activity should cover? (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
1. Basic concepts - terminology (sexual orientation gender identities gender expression sex characteristics, migrants, refugee’s asylum)	18
2. Legal Institutional Framework for racist homophobic transphobic biphobic crime and discrimination	24
3. Human rights abuses discrimination and persecution on grounds of sexual orientation identity or gender in the countries of origin of the LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees	23
4. Facilitation of - increasing the access of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees to support services	19
5. The legal status of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees in the country	17
6. The social /demographic profile of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees in the country	16
7. Good practices of social integration of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees implemented in other countries	25

Q12.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which of the following topics, do you think this training activity should cover? (select all that apply)	
8. Other, please specify	0

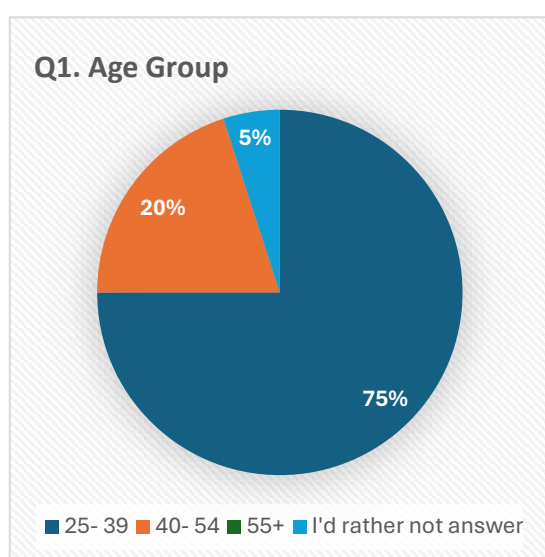
**Table 8.**

When participants were asked why they wouldn’t be interested in participating in a training activity that focuses on meeting and supporting the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees, there was only one answer. In this answer, the difference between the training activities and the actual duties undertaken is pointed out. Nevertheless, the validity of this answer is disputable since it was given following a positive answer in the first part of the question and several replies in the second part.

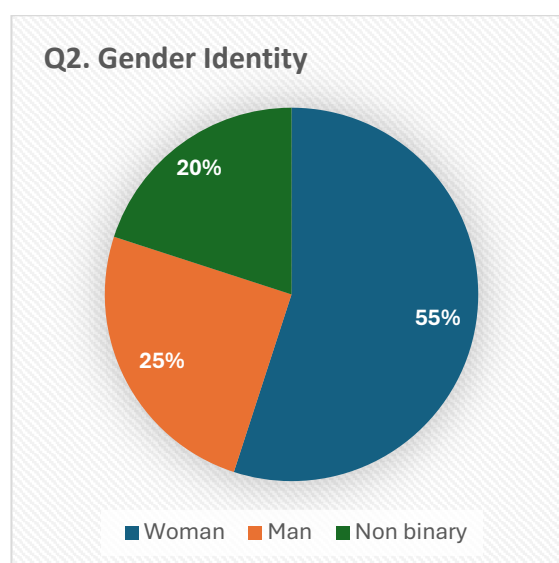
## 2. Representatives of LGBTQI+ organizations

**Participants in the survey for LGBTQI+ organizations** were asked about their identities and demographic information, livelihood status, and experiences with the challenges arising from the intersection of LGBTQI+ issues and migration, as well as the main gaps, stereotypes, and problems in the inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees. The survey was distributed online via Google Forms and was available in both Greek and English. It was promoted through the websites and social media accounts of Symplexis and the Greek Forum of Migrants, as well as through social media groups and online forums targeting the relevant communities. At the beginning of the questionnaire, a relevant information sheet and consent form were provided.

The total number of participants in the survey targeting **LGBTQI+ organizations** was **20, including staff, volunteers, and members of such organizations**. Among them, 75% were aged 25-39 years, and 20% were aged 40-54. Regarding gender identity, 55% self-identified as “women,” 25% as “men,” and 20% as “non-binary” (see **Figures 13 and 14**). Our sample includes a significant representation of individuals who self-identify as “non-binary.”

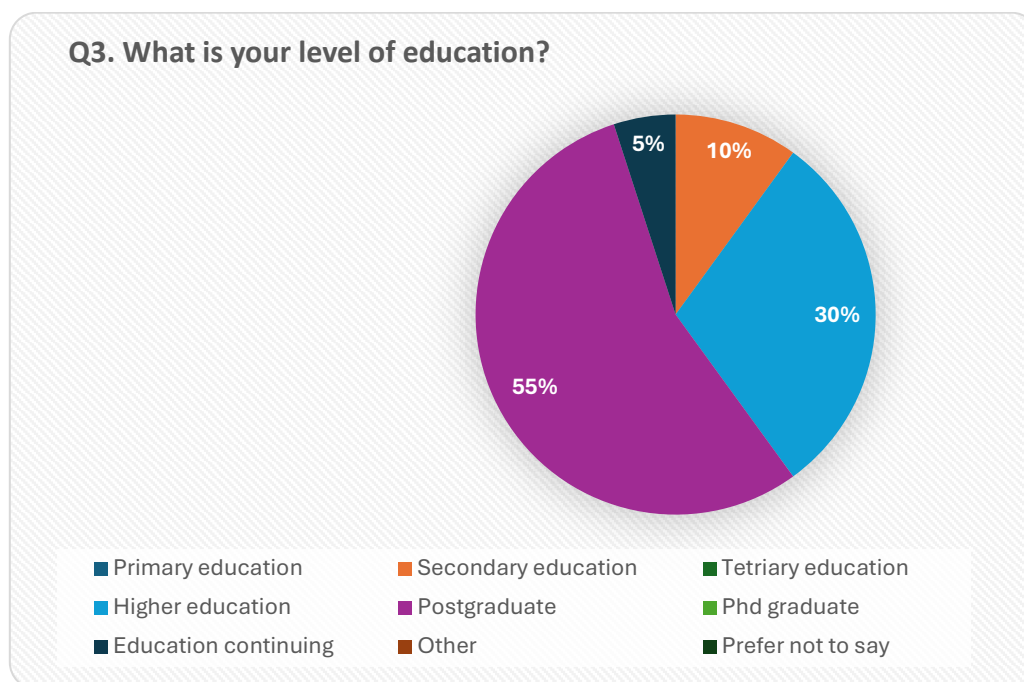


**Figure 13**



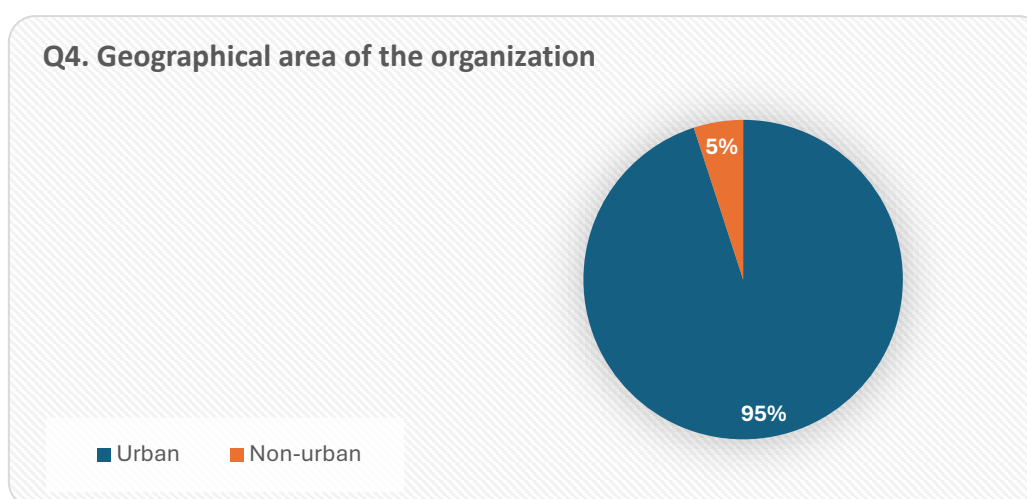
**Figure 14**

The survey asked questions about respondents' educational background, their roles and experience in the LGBTQI+ organization they work for, and the geographical area of their organizations' operations. In our sample, the level of education among the participants is high, with 55% of the participants having a postgraduate degree and 30% being graduates of higher education (see Figure 15).



*Figure 15*

The vast majority of participants, 95%, come from urban areas (see Figure 16).



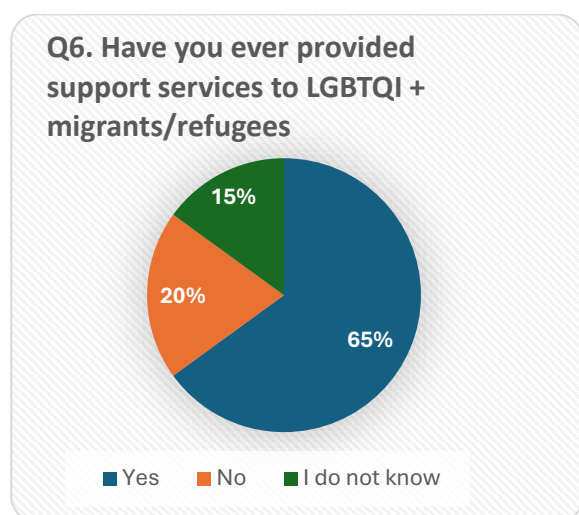
*Figure 16*

When participants were asked about their main role in the LGBTQI+ organization they work for, almost one-third (30%) responded with "Providing psychological support." Fifteen percent answered "other," which includes support services related to project management, volunteering, and supervision, while 10% indicated activities aimed at counteracting discrimination, among others. (see Table 9).

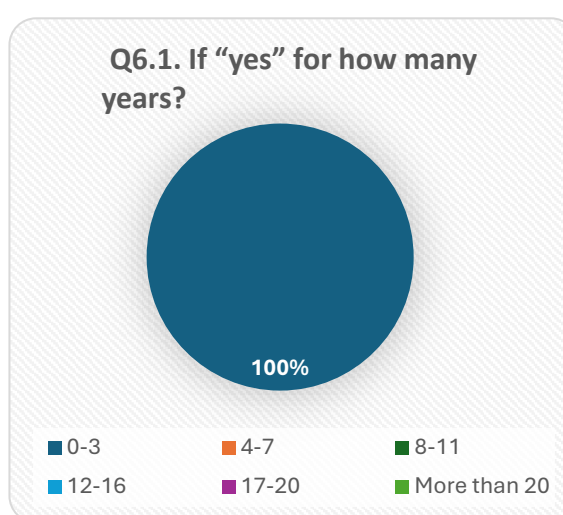
Q5. What is your main role in the body, organization, service in which you work?		
Answer	Responses	Percentage
Administrative duties related to migrants'/refugees' inclusion	2	10
Providing legal counselling/support	1	5
Providing psychological support	6	30
Providing social support (including basic information about rights and obligations. interconnection and referral to other organizations. bodies etc.)	1	5
Career counselling	1	5
Adult or youth education	2	10
Medical /nursing care	1	5
Meeting basic necessities (accommodation, food, clothing)	0	0
Cultural sector	0	0
Activities to counteract discrimination	2	10
Municipal administrators	0	0
Municipal Social service employees	1	5
Employee of an SAI centre manager	0	0
Other, please specify	3	15
Total	20	100

**Table 9.**

The survey asked participants whether they have ever provided support to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees (see **Figure 17**). Within our sample, more than half (65%) of professionals answered that they have provided support to LGBTQI+ migrants/refugees, 20% answered that they have not, and 15% said that they do not know whether they have provided support or not. all participants (100%) who answered that they had provided support to LGBTQI+ migrants/refugees defined the service provision period as 0-3 years (see **Figure 18**).



**Figure 17**



**Figure 18**

In the question "Do LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees face challenges regarding their social inclusion in Greece" the participants working in LGBTQI+ organizations within our sample unanimously (100%) indicate that LGBTQI+ migrants encounter such challenges (see **Figure**

19). This suggests that participants from LGBTQI+ organizations acknowledge that these challenges hinder the social inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants.

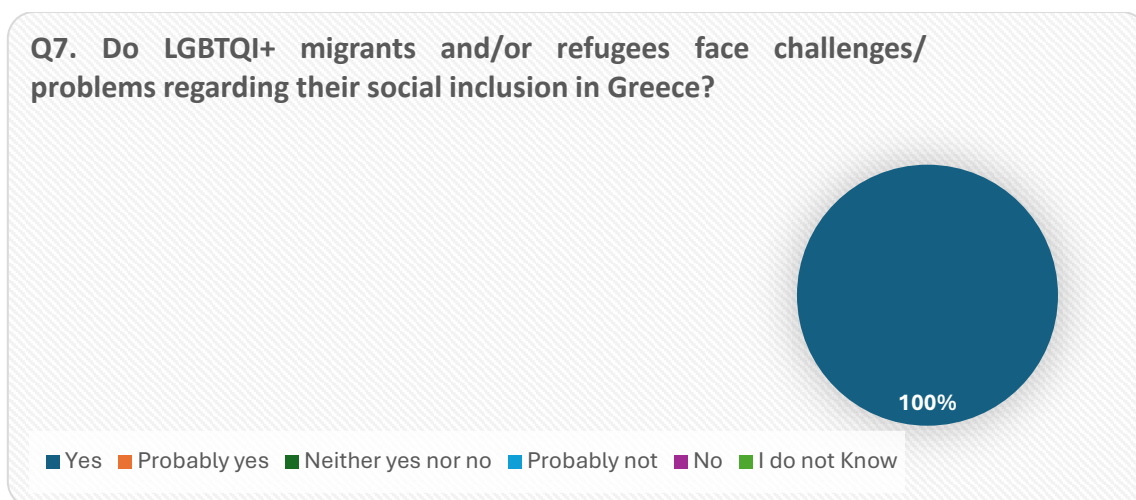


Figure 19

Participants identified the challenges they faced, having the choice to select multiple answers. Most responses emphasized the "double stigma and discrimination based on ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or biological sex characteristics," along with "inadequate or non-existent state care for the special needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees and/or the challenges they face". This indicates that respondents acknowledge the intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination experienced by LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees due to their migrant status and gender identity. Furthermore, the participants' responses may reflect concerns about the institutional challenges that LGBTQI+ migrants encounter, which can lead to increased discrimination and marginalization (see Table 10).

Q7.1. If "yes" or "probably yes", which do you think are these challenges	
Answer	Responses
Double stigma and discrimination based on ethnic origin and sexual orientation gender identity and/or biological sex characteristics.	17
Inadequate or non-existent state care for the special needs of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees and/or the challenges they face.	15
Inadequate or non-existent legal framework/recognition	13
The limited number or complete absence of civil society actors addressing the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees.	11
Inadequate or non-existent skills and abilities of people working in the field regarding the provision of support services to LGBTQI + migrants and refugees.	11
Partial or complete ignorance of the LGBTQI + migrants and refugees regarding their rights.	12
Other	0

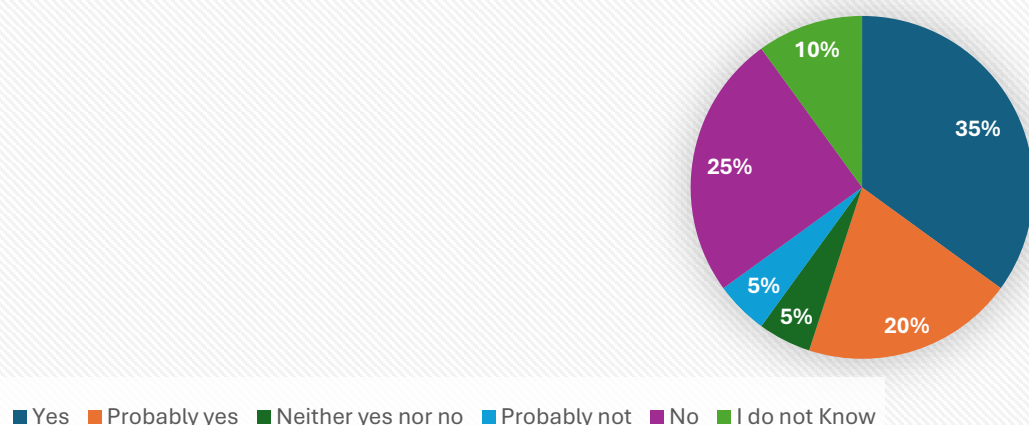
Table 10.

Almost half of the participants suggest that LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees do not encounter communication challenges with the professionals providing support services in their organization or are uncertain about whether such challenges exist. Specifically, 25%



answered no, 5% neither yes nor no, 5% probably not, and 10% I do not know. In contrast, 35% of the participants indicated that LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees do face communication challenges with these professionals while 20% responded that they probably do (see **Figure 20**). This variation may reflect participants' concerns about communication difficulties and their ability to recognise them. It could also suggest a lack of shared understanding of these challenges among participants.

**Q8. Do LGBTIQ+ migrants/refugees face challenges/problems on their communication with the professionals providing supporting services in your organization?**



**Figure 20**

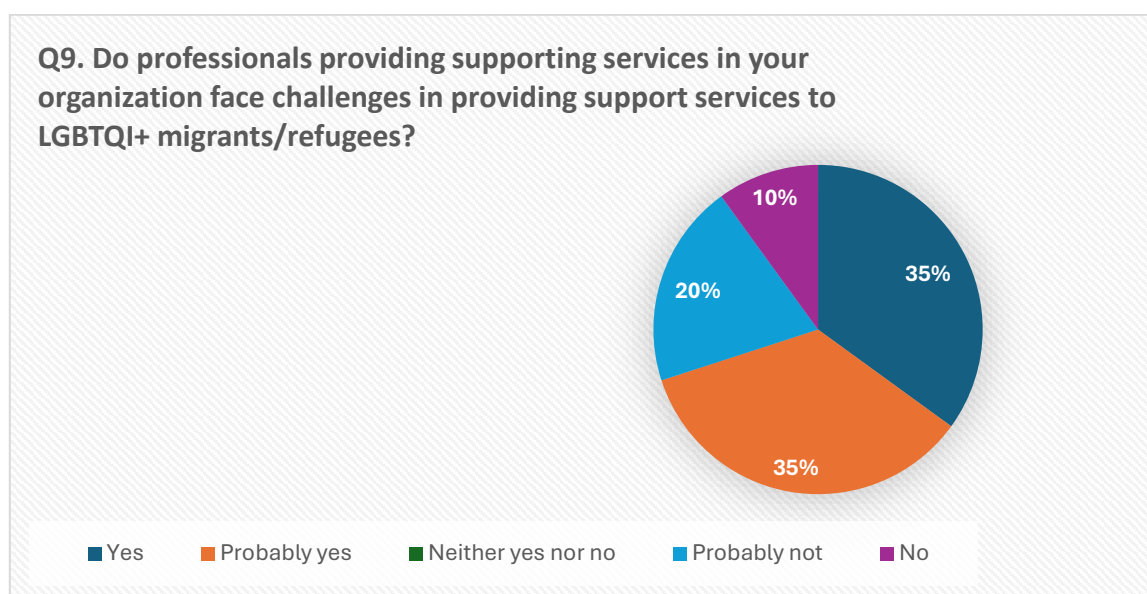
Participants who indicated that LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees likely face challenges in their communication with professionals in LGBTIQ+ organizations were subsequently asked if they had personally experienced or witnessed such a challenging situation. Almost half of the participants in our sample (45%) answered that they have never been in/witnessed one of the situations (see **Table 11**). These responses suggest that participants representing LGBTIQ+ organizations may not frequently encounter such cases in their work. However, 37% of the professionals in our sample reported having witnessed situations where services were denied to LGBTIQ+ migrants. This highlights a potential lack of awareness and inclusivity among some professionals in addressing the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees. It also underscores the need for additional training to equip professionals with the skills necessary to address the unique challenges faced by this community.

Q8.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, have you ever been in/ witnessed a situation when a person providing a service to a LGBTIQ+ migrant		
Answer	Responses	Percentage
1. Refuse to provide services to them	4	36
2. Provide services while being distant	0	0
3. While they are professional/friendly they are not interested in their needs as LGBTIQ+ persons. despite the fact that these needs may be linked to the services provided.	0	0
4. They are professional/ friendly and take their needs into account	2	18

Q8.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, have you ever been in/ witnessed a situation when a person providing a service to a LGBTQI+ migrant		
5. I have never been in / witnessed the situation above	5	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 11.**

More than half of the participants indicated that professionals providing supporting services in their organization face challenges in providing supporting services to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees (35% answered yes and 35% probably yes), highlighting the need for more training to address them (see Figure 21).



**Figure 21**

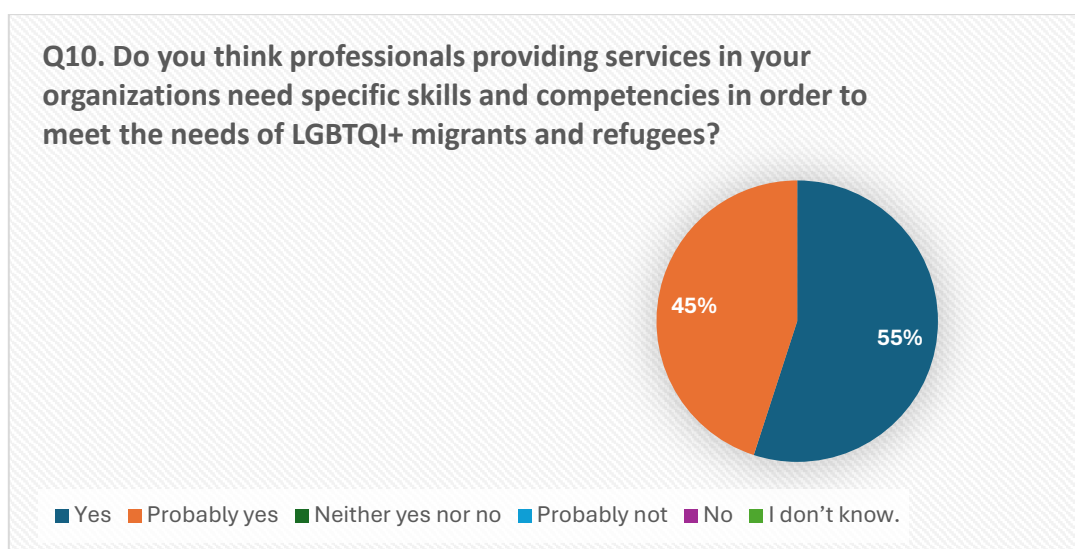
Participants who answered that professionals providing supporting services to LGBTQI+ refugees/migrants face challenges were also asked what these challenges are, selecting among multiple options. As shown in Table 12, most professionals identify as main challenges the ‘incomplete or lack of knowledge skills and abilities of professionals to support LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees’; the ‘limited or lack of willingness of the LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees to cooperate with professionals providing supporting services due to fear of ill-treatment, stigmatization, or victimization (e.g., because they are LGBTQI+)’; and the ‘language and culture barriers.’ The responses may suggest a need for more training in specific areas and a more inclusive approach to creating a safe environment for LGBTQI+ refugees and migrants.

Q9.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which do you think are these challenges? (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
Incomplete or lack of knowledge skills and abilities of professionals to support LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees.	9
Limited or lack of willingness of the LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees to cooperate with professionals providing supporting services due to fear of ill-treatment stigmatization or victimization (e.g. because they are LGBTQI +)	9

Q9.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which do you think are these challenges? (select all that apply)	
Limited or lack of willingness of the LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees to cooperate with the professionals providing supporting services due to fear of unwanted "disclosure" of their LGBTQI+ status	6
Current framework of lack thereof legal / institutional framework	5
Language and culture barriers	9
Lack of cultural mediators	6
Other, please specify	1

**Table 12.**

Most participants in our sample (55% answered yes and 45% probably yes) also indicated that professionals providing services within their organization need specific skills and competencies in order to meet the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees (**see Figure 22**). This suggests that participants representing LGBTQI+ organisations recognize that professionals may lack these skills, emphasizing the need for targeted training.



**Figure 22**

As shown in Table 13, most participants identified the essential skills as ‘knowledge about the LGBTQI+ community and the needs of its representatives,’ ‘basic knowledge of relevant legislation,’ and ‘cultural awareness and expression.’ This highlights the likely need for targeted training in these areas, including intercultural communication, to better understand LGBTQI+ needs and enhance service provision.

Q10.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which do you think are these specific skills? (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
1. Communication in foreign languages	8
2. Basic Knowledge of relevant legislation	15
3. Empathy	11
4. Organizational (time management prioritization action planning decision problem solving etc.)	4
5. Cultural awareness and expression	10
6. Knowledge about LGBTQI+ community and the needs of its representatives	16

**Q10.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which do you think are these specific skills? (select all that apply)**

**7. Other, please specify**

3

**Table 13.**

The survey also inquired why participants might believe that professionals in their organization do not need specific skills and competencies to address the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees. However, no responses were recorded for this question, as all participants in our sample indicated that professionals in their organization either need or probably need these specific skills and competencies (see Table 14).

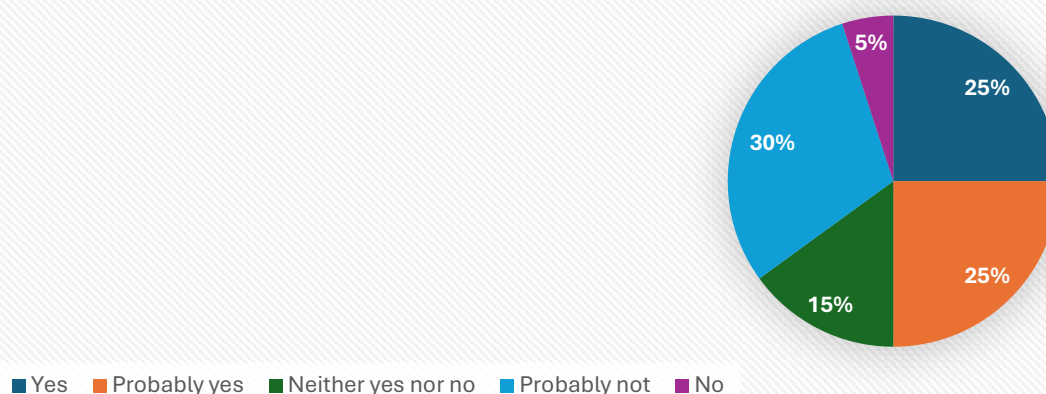
**Q10.2. If they “do not” or “probably do not”, need specific skills and competences, what are the reasons?**

Answer	Responses
<b>1. There are no such special skills or abilities</b>	0
<b>2. Professionals should not or have no obligation to have such special skills or abilities</b>	0
<b>3. The already existing skills and abilities of the professionals are sufficient</b>	0
<b>4. They are not interested in developing such skills or abilities</b>	0
<b>5. Other, please specify</b>	0

**Table 14.**

Almost a third of participants (30%) indicated that professionals in their sector probably lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide support services to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees, among other groups. In contrast, 25% believed that professionals in their sector likely possess the required competencies, while another 25% stated that they definitely have the necessary capacities to provide such support services (see Figure 23). These findings suggest that participants may be uncertain about the capacity of professionals in their sector when it comes to supporting LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees. This uncertainty likely underscores the need for more inclusive training programs aimed at enhancing relevant skills.

**Q11. Do professionals in your sector have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to provide support services (and) to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees?**



**Figure 23**

Participants who stated that professionals working in LGBTQI+ organizations lack the necessary knowledge and skills were asked to justify their answers reasons by selecting among different options. The main reasons cited were the “limited or lack of capacity or willingness of employers to train their employees to acquire these knowledge, skills, and abilities” and the “low level of awareness of the needs of the LGBTQI+ community in the institutional context (due to, e.g., the absence of a legal framework, lack of targeted services for this group, etc.)” (see Table 15). This likely reflects both a shortage of resources and a lack of willingness on behalf of employers to provide further training for professionals working with LGBTQI+ migrants, underscoring the need for targeted training and awareness-raising initiatives.

Q11.1. If “no” or probably “not”, what is/are the reason(s) for this lack of necessary knowledge. skills and abilities? (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
1. Absence or limited availability of free related training activities / programs for professionals	5
2. Limited or lack of capacity or willingness of employers to train their employees to acquire this knowledge skills and abilities	7
3. Professionals themselves are not interested or have a limited interest in acquiring the relevant knowledge skills and abilities	5
4. Low level of awareness of the needs of the LGBTQI community in the institutional context (due to e.g. no legal framework. lack of targeted services to this group etc.)	7
5. There is no such a need to have specific Knowledge skills and abilities to provide support services (and) to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees.	1
6. Other, please specify.	0

Table 15.

The professionals were also asked whether they would be interested in taking part in a training that focuses on meeting and supporting the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees. Most of the participants (80%) answered that they would be interested and 15% said that they would probably be interested (see Figure 24).

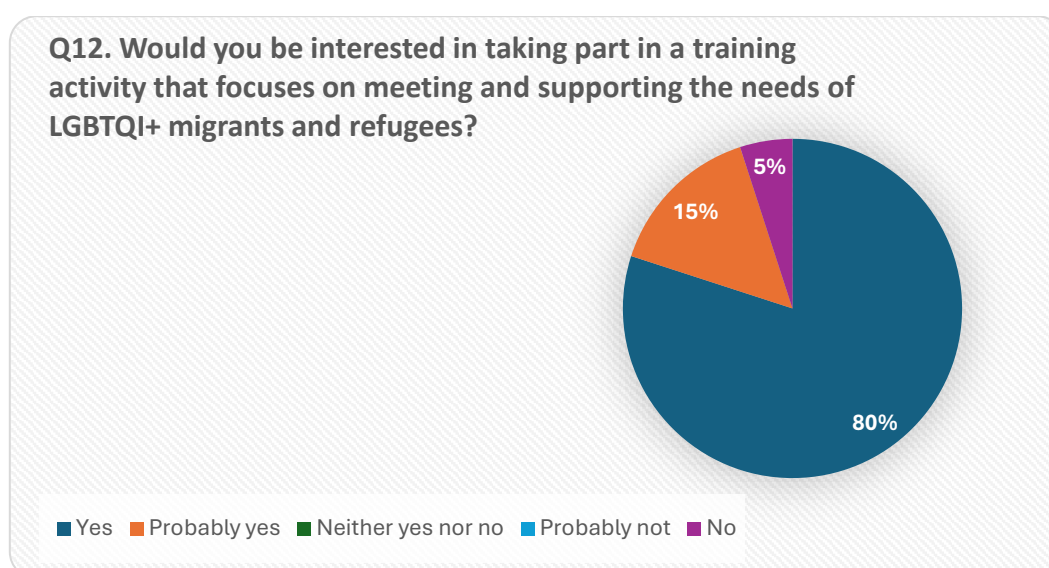


Figure 24

Respondents were then asked to identify topics this training activity should cover by selecting multiple options. Most participants highlighted the following areas of interest: “Good practices for the social integration of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees implemented in other countries,” “Facilitating and increasing access for LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees to support services,” and “Human rights abuses, discrimination, and persecution based on sexual orientation, identity, or gender in the countries of origin of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees” (see Table 16). The results indicate a strong interest among participants in gaining a deeper understanding of the proposed topics and adopting good social integration practices from other countries. This suggests that participants may have recognized a gap in knowledge and effective strategies to address the needs of this target group, highlighting the importance of providing more tailored support.

<b>Q12.1. If “yes” or “probably yes” which of the following topics, do you think this training activity should cover? (select all that apply)</b>	
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1. Basic concepts - terminology (sexual orientation gender identities gender expression sex characteristics migrants’ refugee’s asylum)</b>	8
<b>2. Legal Institutional Framework for racist homophobic transphobic biphobic crime and discrimination</b>	13
<b>3. Human rights abuses discrimination and persecution on grounds of sexual orientation identity or gender in the countries of origin of the LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees</b>	14
<b>4. Facilitation of - increasing the access of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees to support services</b>	15
<b>5. The legal status of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees in the country</b>	10
<b>6. The social /demographic profile of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees in the country</b>	10
<b>7. Good practices of social integration of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees implemented in other countries</b>	15
<b>8. Other, please specify.</b>	3

**Table 16.**

When participants were asked why they might not be interested in participating in such training, one respondent stated a “difficult workload,” suggesting that practical constraints could hinder their ability to engage in professional development (see Table 17).

<b>Q12.2. If “no” or “probably no”, can you specify the reason? (select all that apply):</b>	
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1. No relation with actual duties</b>	0
<b>2. No interest in the topic</b>	0
<b>3. Difficult workload</b>	1
<b>4. Other, please specify</b>	0

**Table 17.**



### 3. Representatives of local authorities

**Participants in the survey for local authorities** were asked about their identities and demographic information, livelihood status, and experiences with the challenges arising from the intersection of LGBTIQ+ issues and migration, as well as the main gaps, stereotypes, and problems in the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees. The survey was distributed online via Google Forms and was available in both Greek and English. It was promoted through the websites and social media accounts of Symplexis and the Greek Forum of Migrants, as well as through social media groups and online forums targeting the relevant communities. At the beginning of the questionnaire, a relevant information sheet and consent form were provided.

The total number of participants in the survey targeting local authorities was **20, including staff, volunteers, and members of local authorities**. Among them, 59% were aged 40-54 years and 35% were aged 25-39. Regarding gender identity, 80% self-identified as “women” and 20% as “men”, with women's representation among the participants predominating over other identities (see Figures 26 and 27).

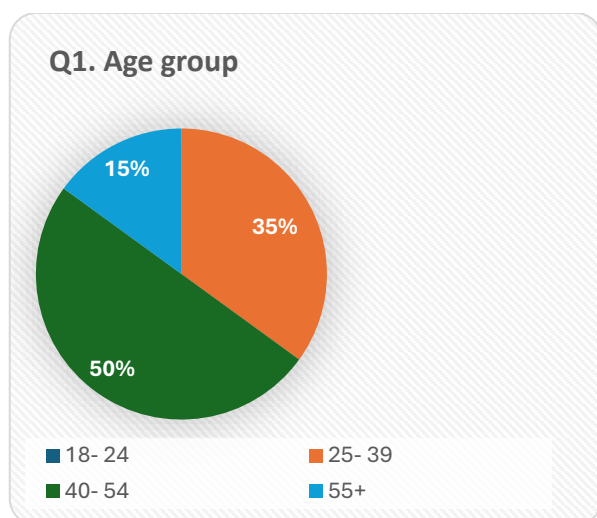


Figure 26

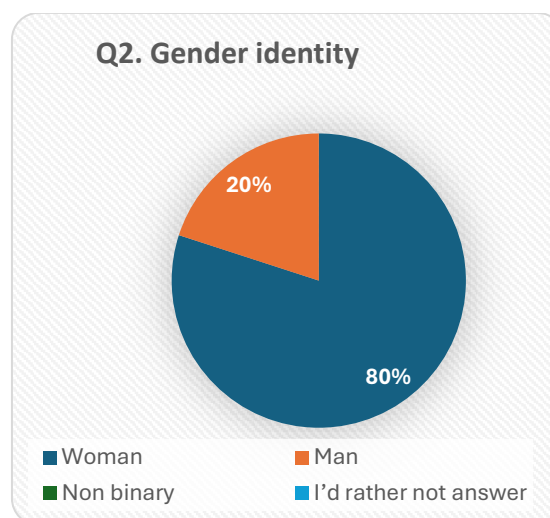


Figure 27

The survey included questions about the participants' educational background, their roles and experience within their organizations, as well as the geographical areas of their operations. The participants had a high level of education, with 60% holding a postgraduate degree and 35% being graduates of higher education (see Figure 28).

### Q3. What is your level of education?

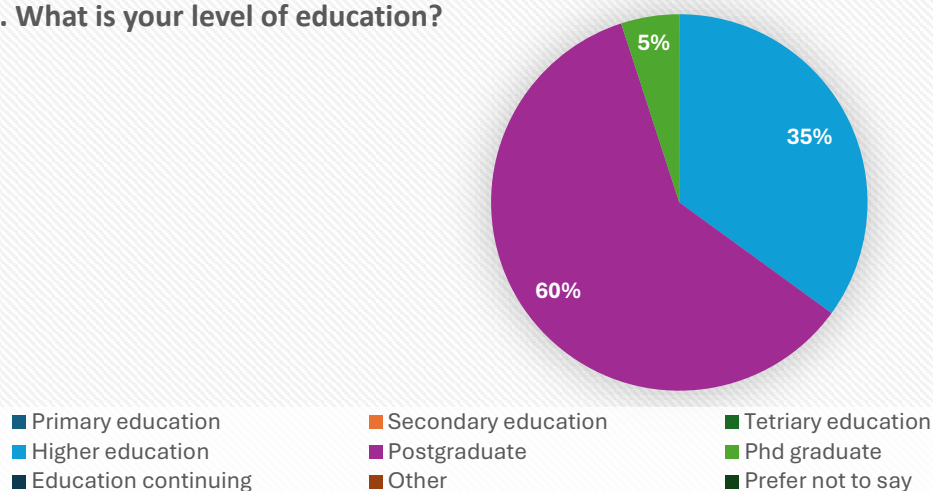


Figure 28

The vast majority of participants, 95%, come from urban areas (see Figure 29).

### Q4. Geographical area of the organization

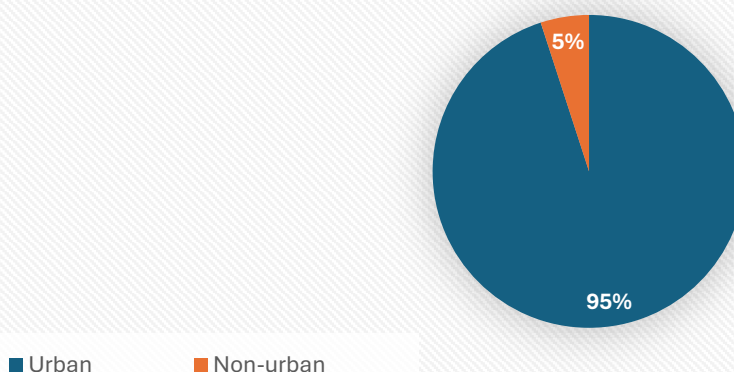


Figure 29

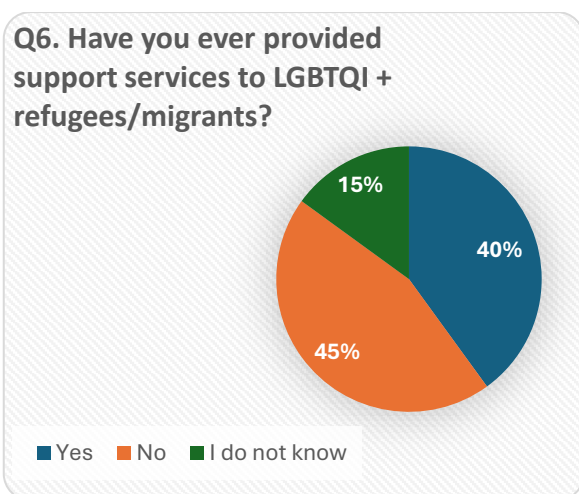
When participants were asked about their main role in the body they work for, 25% answered "Administrative duties related to migrants' and refugees' inclusion," 20% responded "Providing social support (including basic information about rights and obligations, interconnection, and referral to other organizations, bodies, etc.)," and 20% identified as "Municipal administrators" (see Table 18).

Q5. What is your main role in the body, organization, service in which you work?		
Answer	Responses	Percentage
Administrative duties related to migrants'/refugees' inclusion	5	25
Providing legal counselling/support	1	5
Providing psychological support	0	0
Providing social support (including basic information about rights and obligations. interconnection and referral to other organizations. bodies etc.)	4	20
Career counselling	1	5
Adult or youth education	0	0

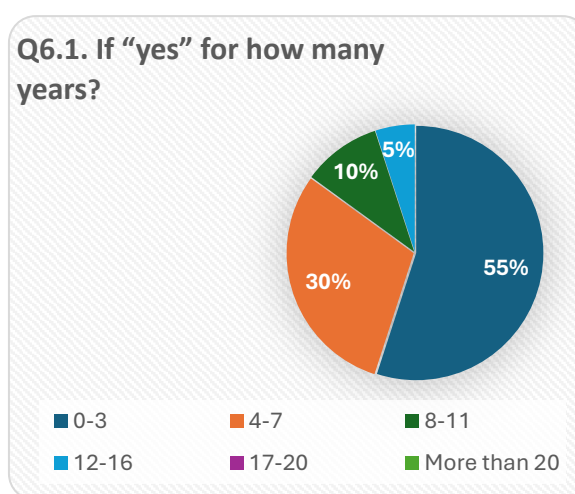
Q5. What is your main role in the body, organization, service in which you work?		
Medical /nursing care	0	0
Meeting basic necessities (accommodation. food. clothing)	0	0
Cultural sector	1	5
Activities to counteract discrimination	1	5
Municipal administrators	4	20
Municipal Social service employees	1	5
Employee of an SAI centre manager	0	0
Other, please specify	2	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 18.**

The survey asked participants if they have ever provided support to LGBTQI+ migrants/refugees (see **Figure 30**). Almost half of the participants (45%) indicated that they have not provided such support to LGBTQI+ migrants/refugees, while 40% stated that they have provided support. Additionally, 15% responded that they are unsure whether they have provided support or not. More than half of the participants (55%) who stated that they have provided support to LGBTQI+ migrants/refugees indicated that they had done so for a period of 0-3 years. Additionally, 30% of participants indicated a service provision period of 4-7 years, while 10% a period of 8-11 years (see **Figure 31**).



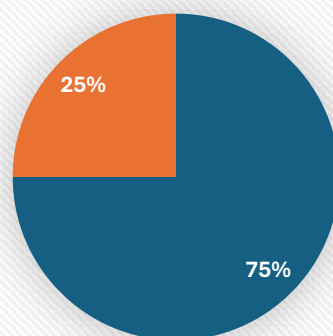
**Figure 30**



**Figure 31**

In the question, “Do LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees face challenges regarding their social inclusion in Greece” a high percentage (75%) of participants in our sample believe that they do face such challenges (see **Figure 32**). This suggests that participants from local authorities acknowledge that these challenges may hinder the social inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants.

**Q7. Do LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees face challenges/problems regarding their social inclusion in Greece?**



■ Yes ■ Probably yes ■ Neither yes nor no ■ Probably not ■ No ■ I do not Know

Figure 32

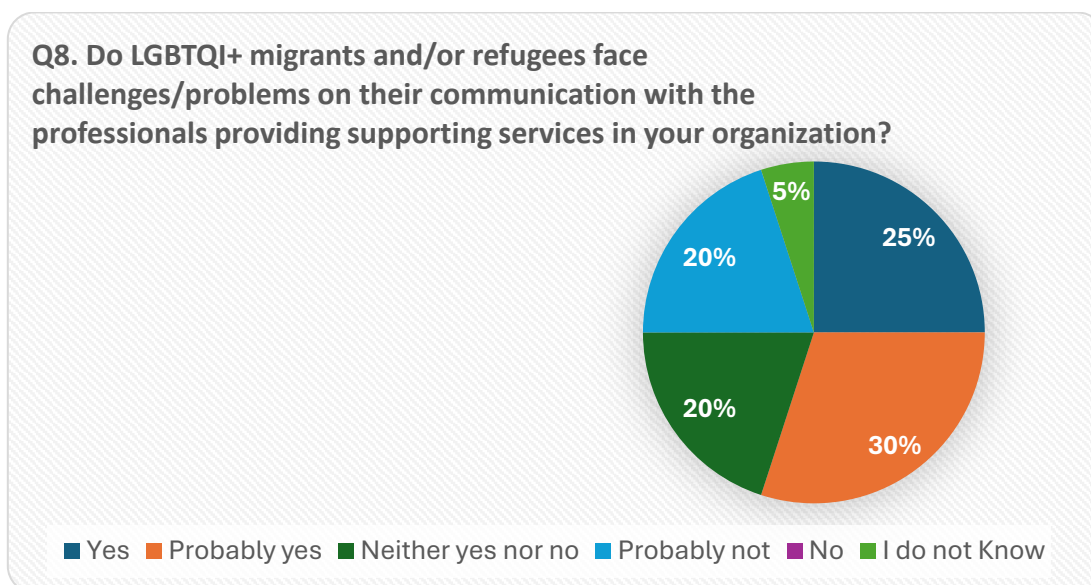
Participants identified the challenges they faced, having the choice to select multiple answers. Most responses emphasized the "double stigma and discrimination based on ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or biological sex characteristics," along with "inadequate or non-existent state care for the special needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees and/or the challenges they face." This indicates that respondents acknowledge the intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination experienced by LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees due to their migrant status and gender identity. Furthermore, the participants' responses may reflect concerns about the institutional challenges that LGBTQI+ migrants encounter, which can lead to increased discrimination and marginalization (see Table 19).

Q7.1. If "yes" or "probably yes", which do you think are these challenges? (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
Double stigma and discrimination based on ethnic origin and sexual orientation gender identity and/or biological sex characteristics.	14
Inadequate or non-existent state care for the special needs of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees and/or the challenges they face.	13
Inadequate or non-existent legal framework/recognition	5
The limited number or complete absence of civil society actors addressing the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and/or refugees.	4
Inadequate or non-existent skills and abilities of people working in the field regarding the provision of support services to LGBTQI + migrants and refugees.	8
Partial or complete ignorance of the LGBTQI + migrants and refugees regarding their rights.	8
Other	0

Table 19.

Over half of the participants indicate that LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees face challenges in their communication with professionals providing support services in their organization, with 25% stating they definitely face challenges and 30% suggesting they probably do. Additionally,

40% of the participants express uncertainty – 20% stated neither yes nor no – and 20% believe that these challenges probably do not exist (**see Figure 33**). This uncertainty may reflect participants' concerns about communication difficulties and highlights the need for ongoing training and more inclusive initiatives to address these issues.



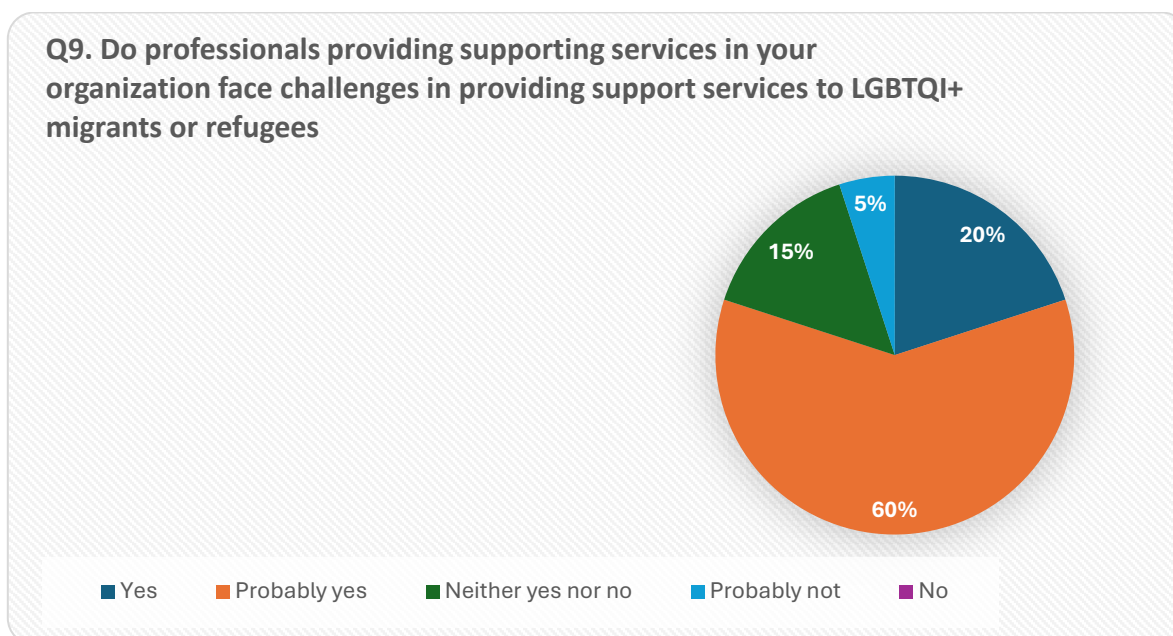
*Figure 33*

Participants who indicated that LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees encounter challenges in their communication with local authorities were asked if they had experienced or witnessed such situations. Over half of the participants (66%) responded negatively. In contrast, 17% stated that they had witnessed instances where professionals were both friendly and considerate of the migrants' needs, while another 17% noted situations where professionals provided services but remained distant (**see Table 20**). These responses suggest that participants from local authorities may not often encounter such cases in their work. This could indicate that LGBTQI+ migrants either access services less frequently or are not openly expressing their gender identity. It also underscores the need for additional training to equip professionals with the skills necessary to address the unique challenges faced by this community.

Q8.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, have you ever been in/ witnessed a situation when a person providing a service to a LGBTQI+ migrant?		
Answer	Responses	Percentage
1. Refuse to provide services to them	0	0
2. Provide services while being distant	2	17
3. While are professional/friendly they are not interested in their needs as LGBTQI+ persons. despite the fact that these needs may be linked to the services provided.	0	0
4. They are professional/ friendly and take their needs into account	2	17
5. I have never been in / witnessed the situation above	8	66
	12	

*Table 20.*

When participants were asked whether professionals in their organization face challenges in providing support services to LGBTIQ+ migrants or refugees, more than half responded affirmatively (60% answered yes, and 20% answered probably yes). This indicates a need for further training to address these challenges (see **Figure 34**).



*Figure 34*

Participants who noted that professionals providing support services to LGBTIQ+ refugees and migrants encounter challenges were asked to specify these challenges, with the option to select multiple responses. As shown in **Table 21**, the majority identified the primary challenges as the "incomplete or lack of knowledge, skills, and abilities of professionals to support LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees," "language and cultural barriers," and "lack of cultural mediators." The responses suggest that participants may have identified a gap in knowledge and cultural barriers that can hinder social inclusion. They highlight the need for effective strategies to address the needs of this target group, emphasizing the importance of providing tailored support, including translators, cultural mediators, and training in specific thematic areas.

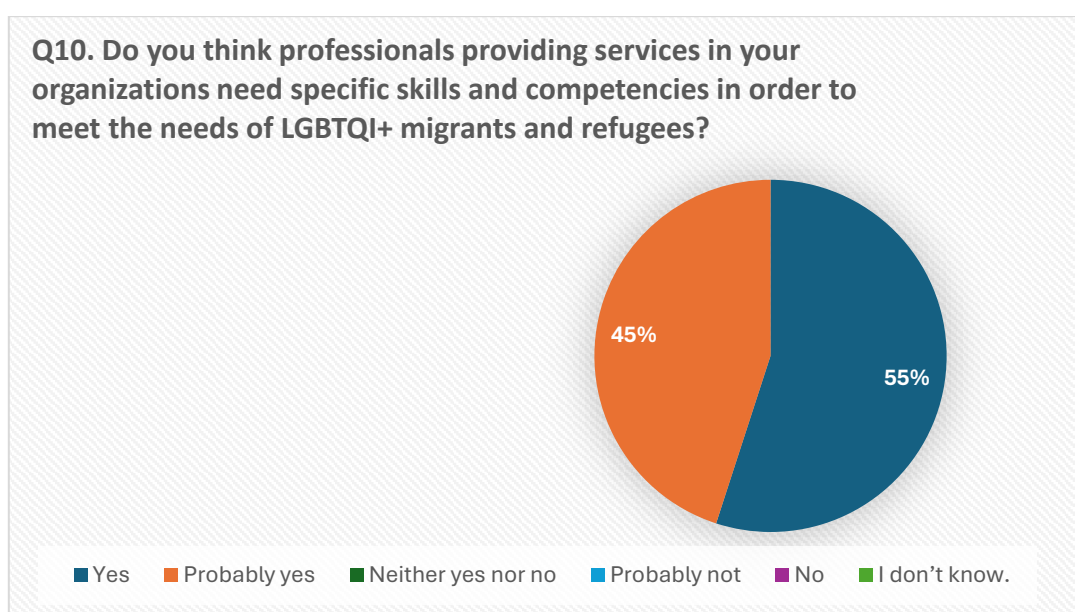
Q9.1. If "yes" or "probably yes", which do you think are these challenges? (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
Incomplete or lack of knowledge skills and abilities of professionals to support LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees.	13
Limited or lack of willingness of the LGBTIQ+ migrants or refugees to cooperate with professionals providing supporting services due to fear of ill-treatment stigmatization or victimization (e.g. because they are LGBTIQ+)	10
Limited or lack of willingness of the LGBTIQ+ migrants or refugees to cooperate with the professionals providing supporting services due to fear of unwanted "disclosure" of their LGBTIQ+ status	8
Current framework of lack thereof legal / institutional framework	4



Q9.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which do you think are these challenges? (select all that apply)	
Language and culture barriers	11
Lack of cultural mediators	11
Other, please specify	0

**Table 21.**

Almost all respondents (55% answered yes, and 45% answered probably yes) indicated that professionals providing services in their organization need specific skills and competencies to meet the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees (**see Figure 35**). This suggests that participants representing local authorities recognize that professionals may lack these skills, emphasizing the need for targeted training.



**Figure 35**

As shown in **Table 22**, the majority of participants identified essential skills as “basic knowledge of relevant legislation,” “empathy,” and “cultural awareness and expression.” This underscores the likely need for targeted training in these areas, particularly in developing empathy skills and cultural competencies, to better understand LGBTQI+ needs and improve service provision.

Q10.1. If “yes” or “probably yes” which, do you think are these specific skills? (select all that apply)	
Answer	Responses
1. Communication in foreign languages	8
2. Basic Knowledge of relevant legislation	15
3. Empathy	11
4. Organizational (time management prioritization action planning decision making problem solving etc.)	4
5. Cultural awareness and expression	10
6. Knowledge about LGBTQI+ community and the needs of its representatives	16

**Q10.1. If “yes” or “probably yes” which, do you think are these specific skills? (select all that apply)**

<b>7. Other, please specify</b>	3
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**Table 22.**

In contrast, participants in our sample who indicated that professionals providing services in their organization do not require specific skills and competencies to meet the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees primarily stated that "they are not interested in developing such skills or abilities" and that "there are no such skills or abilities" (see **Table 23**). These responses suggest that the participants may be unwilling to acquire these skills.

**Q10.2. If they “do not” or “probably do not” need specific skills and competencies, what are the reasons?**

Answer	Responses
<b>1. There are no such special skills or abilities</b>	1
<b>2. Professionals should not or have no obligation to have such special skills or abilities</b>	0
<b>3. The already existing skills and abilities of the professionals are sufficient</b>	1
<b>4. They are not interested in developing such skills or abilities</b>	2
<b>5. Other, please specify</b>	1

**Table 23.**

Almost a third of the participants (30%) responded that professionals in their sector probably possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide support services to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees. In contrast, 20% stated that they do have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities. Meanwhile, 25% stated that professionals in their sector probably lack the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed, and only 5% indicated that professionals in their sector do not have such qualifications (see **Figure 36**). These findings suggest that participants may be uncertain about the capacity of professionals in their sector when it comes to supporting LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees. This uncertainty likely underscores the need for more inclusive training programs aimed at enhancing relevant skills.

**Q11. Do professionals in your sector have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to provide support services (and) to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees?**



**Figure 36**

Participants who stated that professionals working in local authorities lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities were asked to explain their reasons, with the option to select more than one answer. The main reasons stated were the “low level of awareness of the needs of the LGBTQI community in the institutional context (due to e.g. no legal framework lack of targeted services to this group etc.)”, “professionals themselves are not interested or have a limited interest in acquiring the relevant knowledge skills and abilities” and the “absence or limited availability of free related training activities / programs for professionals” (see **Table 24**). This likely indicates that participants recognize a significant gap in both awareness and resources to effectively support LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees. This highlights the need for targeted training programs and awareness-raising initiatives.

<b>Q11.1. If “no” or probably “not”, what is/are the reason(s) for this lack of necessary knowledge, skills and abilities? (choose all that apply)</b>	
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1. Absence or limited availability of free related training activities/programs for professionals</b>	5
<b>2. Limited or lack of capacity or willingness of employers to train their employees to acquire this knowledge skills and abilities</b>	2
<b>3. Professionals themselves are not interested or have a limited interest in acquiring the relevant knowledge skills and abilities</b>	5
<b>4. Low level of awareness of the needs of the LGBTQI community in the institutional context (due to e.g. no legal framework, lack of targeted services to this group etc.)</b>	6
<b>5. There is no such a need to have specific Knowledge skills and abilities to provide support services (and) to LGBTQI+ migrants or refugees.</b>	3
<b>6. Other, please specify.</b>	0

**Table 24.**

Finally, the professionals were asked whether they would be interested in taking part in a training that focuses on meeting and supporting the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees. Almost half of the participants (45%) answered that they would be interested and 15% stated that probably they would be interested (see **Figure 37**).



**Figure 37**

Respondents were then asked to identify topics this training activity should cover by selecting multiple options. Most participants highlighted the following areas of interest: “Human rights abuses discrimination and persecution on grounds of sexual orientation identity or gender in the countries of origin of the LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees”, “Good practices of social integration of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees implemented in other countries” and Basic concepts - terminology (sexual orientation gender identities, gender expression, sex characteristics, migrants’ refugees’ asylum)” (see Table 25). The results indicate a strong interest among participants in gaining a deeper understanding of the proposed topics and adopting good social integration practices from other countries. The variety of topics indicated suggests that participants may have recognized a gap in knowledge related to the diverse individuals they serve, as well as a lack of effective strategies to address the needs of this target group. This highlights the importance of providing more tailored support.

<b>Q12.1. If “yes” or “probably yes”, which of the following topics do you think this training activity should cover? (select all that apply)</b>	
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1. Basic concepts - terminology (sexual orientation, gender identities gender expression, sex characteristics, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers</b>	7
<b>2. Legal Institutional Framework for racist homophobic transphobic biphobic crime and discrimination</b>	0
<b>3. Human rights abuses discrimination and persecution on grounds of sexual orientation identity or gender in the countries of origin of the LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees</b>	10
<b>4. Facilitation of - increasing the access of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees to support services</b>	6
<b>5. The legal status of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees in the country</b>	6
<b>6. The social /demographic profile of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees in the country</b>	6
<b>7. Good practices of social integration of LGBTQI + migrants and refugees implemented in other countries</b>	9

**Table 25.**

When participants were asked why they might not be interested in participating in such training, most respondents stated a "lack of relation to actual duties" and a "difficult workload" (see Table 26). This suggests that participants may feel the proposed training is not relevant to their responsibilities and may be unwilling to participate.

<b>Q12.2. If “no” or “probably no”, can you specify the reason? (select all that apply):</b>	
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1. No relation with actual duties</b>	4
<b>2. No interest in the topic</b>	1
<b>3. Difficult workload</b>	4
<b>4. Other please specify</b>	0

**Table 26.**

## Conclusion

The three surveys revealed both similarities and differences in the findings across the three target groups, namely representatives of migrants' organisations/communities, of LGBTIQ+ organisations, and of local authorities. Even though all groups recognized the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees, opinions varied regarding the specific skills and training required by professionals in each sector. This highlights the importance of creating tailored training programs that address shared concerns while reflecting the unique needs of different organizations.

# MAIN RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH LGBTIQ+ MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Identifying and engaging participants that would be willing to take part in the interviews proved to be a much greater challenge than initially anticipated, mainly due of the reluctance of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees to participate and share their experiences. Most of the LGBTIQ+ migrants we contacted expressed frustration with the local integration process and held low expectations regarding the value of such interviews and related processes. Following multiple efforts, ten (10) in-depth and semi-structured interviews with LGBTIQ+ migrants and/or refugees were finally conducted by the Greek Forum of Migrants in collaboration with Symplexis. The interviews lasted between half an hour and two hours and were held mostly in English and in Greek, depending on the language preferred by each individual interviewed.

During the interviews participants shared their views and experiences regarding the support needs of LGBTIQ+ migrant and/or refugees and the challenges arising from the intersection between LGBTIQ+ and having a migrant or refugee background. Before each interview the participants were informed in detail about the purposes of the interviews, any procedural issues, and confidentiality aspects and gave their written consent for taking part in the research.

Regarding the sample's characteristics, the tables below present detailed demographic information about the participants. An overview of their responses across the main interview topics follows, along with key concluding remarks.

## 1.Age

Age	Number
<b>18 to 24 years</b>	4
<b>25 to 39 years</b>	6
<b>40 to 60 years</b>	0
<b>60 years or more</b>	0

## 2. Gender Identity

Gender Identity	Number
<b>Male</b>	2
<b>Female</b>	6
<b>Non-binary</b>	2
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0

## 3. Sexual Orientation



Sexual Orientation	Number
<b>Straight</b>	0
<b>Non-Straight</b>	10
<b>I'd rather don't answer</b>	0

#### 4. Religion

Religious Beliefs	Number
<b>None</b>	5
<b>Islam</b>	1
<b>Christianity</b>	2
<b>Hinduism</b>	0
<b>Buddhism</b>	0
<b>Judaism</b>	0
<b>Baha'i</b>	0
<b>Other</b>	2

#### 5. Country of Origin

Country of Origin	Number
<b>Albania</b>	2
<b>Armenia</b>	1
<b>Georgia</b>	3
<b>Afghanistan</b>	1
<b>Tynisia</b>	1
<b>Egypt</b>	1
<b>Ukraine</b>	1

#### 6. Country of Residence

Country of Residence	Number
<b>Greece</b>	10

#### 7. Legal Status

Legal Status	Number
<b>Asylum seeker</b>	0
<b>Refugee</b>	0
<b>Migrant</b>	7
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> generation migrant/citizenship</b>	2
<b>Specific Purpose Visa</b>	1
<b>Humanitarian residence</b>	0
<b>Undocumented</b>	0

#### 8. Length of Stay

Length of Stay	Number
<b>0-3 years</b>	2
<b>3-6 years</b>	0
<b>6-10 years</b>	2
<b>10+ years</b>	6

### 9. Type of Housing

Type of Housing	Number
Reception facility	0
Independent housing	0
Rented apartment	10
Street	0
Other (please specify)	0

### 10. Shared or Individual Accommodation

Lives Alone	Number
Yes	3
No	7
Shared With	Number
Family members	4
Flat mate	3

### 11. Support Received

Support Received	Number
Physical health	8
Mental health	7
Legal support	8
Employment support	3
Housing support	1
Financial support	1
Educational support	3
Support for disabilities	0
Lack of social connection	1
Communication barriers	1
Prefer not to say	0
Other	2

### 12. Employment Status

Employment Status	Number
Unemployed	5
Full-time employed	5

### 13. Educational Background

Educational Background	Number
Master Degree	1
University Degree	1
Bachelor Degree	1
High School	1
Student at undergraduate	1
Master Student	1
College	1
None	3

## 1. LIFE IN THE HOST COUNTRY

In general, participants shared that they had experienced mixed reactions, receiving acceptance from younger people and open-minded communities while facing criticism from more conservative environments. Their sense of safety, acceptance, and autonomy often depended on geography, local demographics, and personal networks.

Most participants recounted hostile encounters with law enforcement upon arriving in Greece, reflecting the complex intersection of race, nationality, and sexual orientation. Several participants reported instances of police arbitrariness, mainly in the form of street harassment, where they were asked to present their identification documents. Others mentioned witnessing police violence against migrants and refugees during peaceful LGBTQI+ marches, leaving them in constant fear of police checks.

Some participants noted that Athens tends to be more open and safer for LGBTQI+ migrants compared to rural areas. Many described experiences of implicit and explicit discrimination in various aspects of everyday life, including public spaces and professional settings. Many respondents shared experiences of critical stares and verbal harassment, especially when showing affection with same-sex partners in public. All participants agreed that such experiences foster feelings of insecurity and reluctance to express themselves openly.

A common concern raised was the lack of information regarding access to essential social benefits, particularly within the healthcare system. This issue is further compounded by language barriers. Participants stressed the necessity of being accompanied by a Greek-speaking person familiar with administrative procedures to access such services. Many participants also recounted discrimination from healthcare and public service providers, often experiencing hostility and an unwillingness to assist them. Most said they refrained from filing formal complaints due to the bureaucratic nature of the process, fear of not being believed, and skepticism that any meaningful change would result.

Fear of social exclusion led many participants to conceal their sexual identities. More than half reported facing legal challenges, such as difficulties in securing legal documentation, which further complicated their integration process. The bureaucratic procedures were described as discouraging, especially due to language barriers. Participants emphasized that fostering a culture of empathy and understanding is crucial not only for facilitating the acceptance of LGBTQI+ individuals and refugees but also for promoting a more inclusive society where everyone can thrive without fear of criticism or prejudice.

## 2. OBSTACLES RELATED TO 'BEING WHO YOU ARE' DURING THE INTEGRATION PROCESS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN THE AREAS OF (A) EDUCATION (B) EMPLOYMENT (C) HOUSING AND (D) ACCESS TO SUPPORTING SERVICES, INCLUDING HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Almost all participants mentioned discrimination, language barriers and restricted access to necessary services for LGBTQ+ migrants as the main challenges for their integration into the

local community. While navigating bureaucracy, many participants have found that securing legal documentation is crucial for access to basic rights like housing, education, and healthcare and highlighted the need of a more inclusive community.

In relation to employment, the majority of the participants shared diverse experiences related to their legal status and personal backgrounds. However, most of them pointed out language barriers, the difficulty of work environments to accept their gender identity and the difficulties in assessing professional opportunities and representation.

In the field of education, the absence of adequate Greek language learning programmes emerged as the most significant obstacle among participants. Courses targeting refugees aiming to strengthen their skills are limited and spaces are filling up quickly. In the school setting, a few participants mentioned that teachers discouraged students from pursuing higher education studies and encouraged them to pursue more technical studies. A further significant barrier, highlighted by most of the participants, is the absence of secure and inclusive educational environments in order to prevent discrimination and bullying towards LGBTQI+ migrants. The lack of educational programs which promote gender equality exacerbates discrimination in the school environment, necessitating the support of teachers to foster inclusiveness. Some participants mentioned that schools don't always recognise diversity, resulting in the lack of acceptance due to their migrant background. As they said they are often targeted either for their ethnicity or for being "different".

In relation to health care, all participants have identified a lack of awareness, sensitivity and cultural competence among healthcare professionals regarding LGBTQI+ health issues, leading to feelings of embarrassment and discouragement when seeking care. Reflecting on personal experiences, encounters with healthcare professionals highlighted unfortunate instances of discrimination that remain unreported. This is compounded by the lack of information regarding access to hospitals and the social security documents needed. These documents are often connected to the legal status of these people, which further complicates the situation. The need for specialised services that address the intersection of refugee, migrant, and queer issues has emerged, emphasizing the importance of tailored support for individuals struggling with multifaceted identities in a new environment. A number of participants stressed the psychological burden of their entire journey, citing experiences of anxiety and isolation. Access to mental health support tailored to the unique needs of LGBTQI+ migrants was described as poor, requiring individuals to overcome significant barriers to receive skilled and empathetic care. Additionally, they highlighted the importance of training professionals in understanding and addressing LGBTQI+ issues. Participants expressed their frustration regarding the misconceptions that are perpetuated in mental health services, revealing an urgent need for well trained professionals who understand the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI+ migrants and their intersectional needs.

With regard to housing, many participants identified that housing can be a challenge due to possible prejudice by conservative landlords, leading to rejections without explanations.

Hence, they noted that support by organizations providing housing is crucial to effectively address these barriers.

### **3. HOW THE COMMUNITY YOU LIVE IN BEHAVES/REACTS WHEN YOU FREELY EXPRESS YOURSELF IN (A) DAILY LIFE, (B) PROFESSIONAL LIFE AND (C) WHEN USING SUPPORTING SERVICES?**

An alarming theme present across almost all the interviews was the fear of negative reactions in professional settings. Almost all participants are unwilling to express their identity at work due to fear of discrimination or exclusion if they disclose their sexual orientation. A number of participants pointed out that the working environment is most often concentrated on a straight-oriented approach. This results in a shift in colleagues' attitudes after disclosing their gender identity and sexual orientation and creates a sense of unsafety and an awkward environment for "being who they are". Several respondents remarked that they had changed their behaviour at work to avoid discrimination, which sometimes meant not disclosing their sexual orientation. In addition, some participants stressed that they were concerned that disclosing their identity would have an impact on their career development and job safety.

Support services and resources emerged as critical areas needing attention and enhancement. Participants identified access to support services as one of the challenges they face mainly because professionals are not adequately aware of the intersectional needs of LGBTQI+ refugees/migrants. As most of them said, there are some communities and CSOs offering safe spaces for LGBTQI+ migrants. However, many organizations are still lacking cultural competency, thus it is essential for LGBTQI+ migrants to identify organizations providing inclusive services and demonstrate both sensitivity and empathy. In addition, some participants provided examples of negative attitudes during bureaucratic and administrative interactions which made them feel that they were being assessed based on a personal identity, such as being LGBTQI+ or an immigrant. Such experiences frequently lead to a denial in seeking assistance or filing complaints due to fear of not being taken seriously or experiencing further discrimination. Moreover, several participants identified barriers related to language, cultural differences and a lack of trust in institutions in accessing support services.

### **4. DO YOU THINK THAT INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY EXPERIENCE THE SAME FEELINGS AS YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GETTING IN TOUCH WITH COMMUNITIES (MIGRANTS'/ REFUGEES/ LGBTQI+) THAT CAN SUPPORT THEM MORE DIRECTLY ACCORDING TO THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS AND EVENTUALLY TO BE INTEGRATED IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?**

Most participants noted that connecting with LGBTQI+ and migrant communities has provided them with essential support and a sense of belonging, helping them feel less isolated. As they said, these communities offer valuable information (e.g., on legal rights, access to healthcare, job opportunities, safe spaces to express themselves) and resources that facilitate access to services tailored to their needs. Several participants mentioned that LGBTQI+ communities,

migrants' networks, other networks or online platforms have facilitated their navigation through the Greek system. Additionally, sharing experiences with others who understand the same challenges has made the integration process smoother and more empowering. Regarding their ethnic communities, some participants indicated that they encountered significant homophobia and that they feel constrained in expressing themselves.

## **5. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING INTEGRATION OF LGBTIQ+ MIGRANTS AND/OR REFUGEES IN THE LOCAL LEVEL.**

The participants also offered a series of suggestions that could facilitate and support the integration of LGBTIQ+ migrants or refugees in Greece, including, among other, the following:

- Training for public service providers and organizations, particularly those supporting LGBTIQ+ migrants, is crucial to sensitizing them to the unique needs of this community. This training should aim at creating a respectful and supportive service environment for individuals from diverse backgrounds and with varied sexual orientations, gender identities, expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).
- Training for law enforcement agents, healthcare providers, and social service providers to enhance their understanding and empathy towards LGBTIQ+ and migrant issues. Creating inclusive environments and supportive services is essential for addressing the barriers faced by LGBTIQ+ migrants.
- Educational programs targeting societal attitudes toward diversity: by fostering understanding through ongoing and specialized training, promoting safety in public spaces, and increasing resources available to LGBTIQ+ migrants, we can establish a foundation for greater acceptance and successful integration.
- Expansion of inclusive and accessible legal frameworks to address the needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals more effectively.
- Enhancement of mental health support by developing services that specifically cater to the intersectional needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants.
- Establishment of safe spaces and accommodations for LGBTIQ+ refugees and migrants to protect them from potential discrimination and violence.
- Public awareness campaigns to counter stereotypes, raise acceptance, and foster a more inclusive society.
- Engagement of LGBTIQ+ and migrant communities in decision-making processes to ensure their perspectives and needs are adequately represented.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research revealed that LGBTQI+ individuals with migrant or refugee backgrounds face compounded discrimination due to their intersecting identities, leading to social exclusion and exploitation. An inadequate understanding of attention to intersectionality results in a failure to identify the potential risks faced by LGBTQI+ refugees and migrants. These individuals often experience multiple forms of discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and other intersecting identities. Furthermore, they face an increased risk of violence, abuse and exploitation throughout their migration pathway, exacerbated by systemic factors such as stigmatisation and institutionalised discrimination.

In this context, LGBTQI+ refugees and migrants in Greece face several challenges in accessing social benefits, healthcare, education, employment and support services. These challenges are exacerbated by systemic biases and lack of awareness among professionals. Upon arrival in Greece, many LGBTQI+ asylum seekers conceal their identity for safety reasons, which then leads to secondary victimisation during integration procedures. In addition, barriers to health, education, housing and employment persist due to language obstacles, lack of documentation and discrimination (Diotima and other civil society organizations, 2023).

The findings of the field research performed for the purposes of the present report appear to be in line with the desk research findings, while providing further insights on views and needs of LGBTQI+ refugees and migrants. The experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants in Greece reveal a complex landscape of acceptance and discrimination. Even though some communities are open-minded, conservative attitudes can lead to hostility creating barriers to education, housing, healthcare and employment. Language barriers and legal requirements further complicate access to social benefits and healthcare, making integration more difficult.

Both the desk and field research highlighted an urgent need for specialised support and tailored training on sexual and gender diversity and migration issues among service providers of CSOs organizations and local authorities to improve outcomes for LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees. Diverse training requirements emerged, prominently through the field research, to effectively address LGBTQI+ migrants' and refugees' needs. This includes knowledge about the unique needs of LGBTQI+ migrants/ refugees, a better understanding of legal rights and protections, and an enhanced cultural awareness that can be achieved through systematic and structured training programs. The field research further emphasizes that empathy and sensitivity must be prioritized within professional development efforts to improve interactions between professionals and LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees.

## Main needs, issues, and gaps identified

The report reveals a complex environment characterized by both acceptance and discrimination that could impede the integration of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees in Greece. LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees encounter multiple forms of discrimination rooted in societal biases and a lack of adequate legal protections, increasing their vulnerabilities.

The findings of the present report also highlight substantial shortcomings in services and responses aimed at meeting the needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees. Significant challenges include a lack of trust in service providers and concerns regarding legal status. Another critical issue is the insufficient understanding of the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants among organizations, service providers, and competent authorities.

Noteworthy deficiencies are observed in knowledge, awareness, and intercultural skills, hindering equal access to healthcare, housing, and employment. Moreover, language barriers and inadequate access to information emerged as significant challenges in all the previously mentioned areas. The results of the current report highlight the importance of enhancing awareness and understanding among migrant organizations, LGBTIQ+ organizations, and local authorities about the needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees. Moreover, the report underscores the necessity of specialised training to overcome obstacles and support the integration of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees.

## Recommendations

The analysis of the desk and field research findings has highlighted a series of aspects in need of further development to more effectively support LGBTIQ+ individuals with migrant and refugee backgrounds in Greece. In this regard, a series of recommendations aiming to address the current gaps in the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals are presented below:

- **Collecting and analysing data** on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristics of migrants and refugees in Greece, in accordance with data protection regulations.
- **Developing specialized training programmes**, tailored to the needs of professionals in public services and CSOs that interact with or provide services to LGBTIQ+ individuals and migrants, including a special focus on cultural competency and empathy.
- **Establishing safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ refugees and migrants**, including safe environments and accommodations specifically for LGBTIQ+ refugees and migrants.
- **Strengthening institutional protection frameworks** by enhancing existing frameworks and ensuring their effective implementation.
- **Implementing language support programmes** in sectors such as healthcare, legal aid, and social services to better support LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees.

- **Enhancing healthcare support** by developing mental health services that specifically address the unique intersectional needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees.
- **Launching public awareness campaigns** aimed at countering stereotypes, increasing acceptance, and fostering a more inclusive society.
- **Supporting community engagement** by actively involving LGBTIQ+ and migrant communities in decision-making processes to ensure their voices are heard and represented.

In conclusion, creating inclusive environments and supportive services is essential for addressing the barriers faced by LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees in Greece. By fostering a climate of understanding through ongoing and specialized training, promoting safety in public spaces, and increasing resources available to LGBTIQ+ migrants, we can lay the groundwork for greater acceptance and successful integration.

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