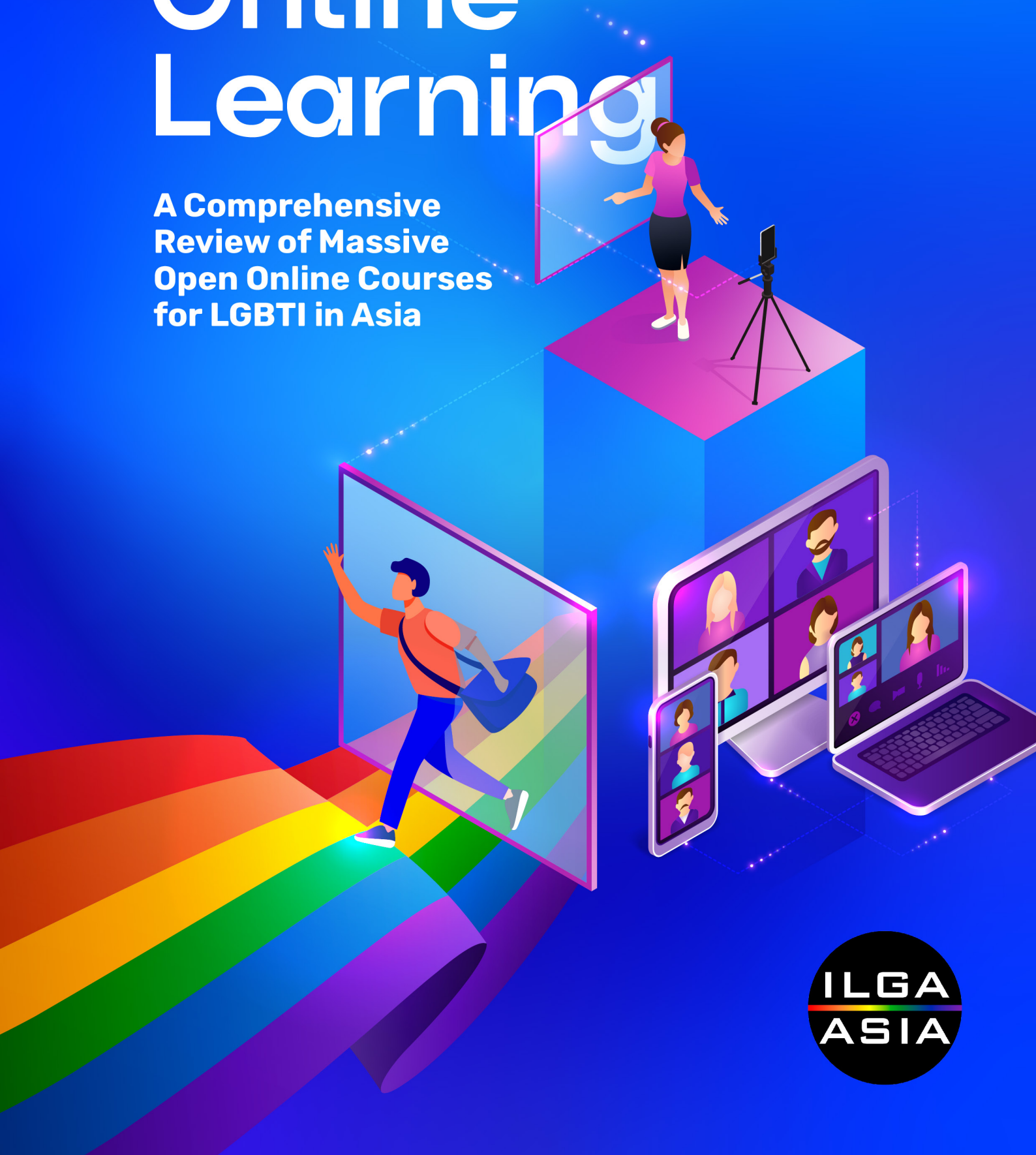
ILGA Asia Online Learning

A Comprehensive Review of Massive Open Online Courses for LGBTI in Asia



ILGA ASIA

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Acronyms

CEDAW
The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

COVID-19
CoronaVirus 2019

CRC
Convention on the rights of Child

LGBTI
Lesbian, gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex

MOOC
Massive Open Online Courses

SOGIESC
Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics

ToT
Training of Trainers

UN DESA
The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UN
United Nations

WHO
World Health Organization

Introduction

ILGA ASIA - ONLINE LEARNING:

THE INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX ASSOCIATION (ILGA) Asian office strives towards achieving equal rights for LGBTI across the Asia region. *ILGA Asia envisions a world where Asia is a safe place for all, where each and every person gets to experience freedom and equality and are well-informed in terms of the sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) rights in order to be just.*

ILGA Asia's Needs Assessment on online learning aims at introducing and developing online learning platforms for ILGA Asia's partner organizations and supporting inclusive, free and secure learning opportunities for everyone especially the *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex (LGBTI)* in the South Asia region.

The Needs Assessment hopes to support ILGA Asia's partner organizations in developing and effectively running MOOCs through analyzing the current capacities these organizations have in terms of internal strengths and opportunities, their visions define how far they want to take the idea of online learning and current analysis of where they stand with this idea. Similarly, the Needs Assessment identifies and highlights various internal and external weaknesses and challenges that may threaten the effective implementation of e-learning in the South Asia region with the help of different tools and techniques.

MOOC- OBJECTIVES OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. To understand the challenges and opportunities brought by online learning;

B. To explore the strategies and tools available for developing online learning on the subject of human rights and UN mechanisms; and

C. To acquire the skills and techniques in facilitating online learning, taking into considering the health, safety, and wellbeing of all the participants.

Through another perspective, mapping of MOOCs understanding and participation provides analysis of community, personal, thematic, organizational and regional collaboration needs especially during COVID-19 situation globally. Finally, the Needs Assessment report identifies the gaps that need to be filled in order to have a successful e-learning experience.

Overview of the Report

The Needs Assessment Report aims at understanding and defining its purpose and objectives in the development of MOOCs. The report then gives a *brief background* and overview of the underlying factors that are leading grassroots organizations in the South Asian countries to shift their focus towards distance learning. Moving forward, the report highlights the *current institutional and organizational capacities of the LGBTI groups from South Asia* that can help develop MOOCs along with *challenges and weaknesses* that may affect the effectiveness of online learning in the current COVID-19 pandemic situation. Finally, it *identifies the gaps and needs* found in the existing institutional, organizational, social, economic, environmental, legal, technical and sociological frameworks based on which some recommendations and policy implications are provided to ILGA's partner organizations to help fill in these gaps for MOOCs' successful development, implementation and evaluation.

The needs assessment study finds that there is a *shift towards digitization* across the region for online learning. This shift means reforms at institutional, social and organizational levels to deliver MOOCs to masses. The solution indicated by participants of the study includes providing *technical and technological literacy* to organizations, trainers/ activists and educating them on making online spaces safe for them and communities. This also requires a *shift in funding strategy* to allow partners to test online learnings in local contexts.

The findings from the MOOCs Needs' Assessment have been exciting and compelling considering vast and promising grounds to play. There is a new and emerging opportunity for ILGA Asia and partners for advocating, lobbying with local governments, and bridging spaces within UN systems and grassroot community organizations. Based on survey for the study[1] almost 92% population size access the internet, 97% use smartphones and spend almost 70% of their time on social media (Optimized Apps like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube). This means that there are promising opportunities for Online Learning; nevertheless, a cautious and customized approach towards is required for online learning for LGBTI communities. The study used a customized toolkit[2] of assessment of MOOCs' needs for LGBTI. The toolkit covered Vision Journey, SWOT & PESTLE analyses, 5Ws, 1H exercise and online survey from community & organizations.

[1] Survey questionnaires from community & organizations
[2] Ref. Methodology Section (Section 04)

High level summary of findings from the study exhibits that;

- There is, currently, a shift towards digitalization (within and outside organizations) and organizations realize the needs for this shift especially after COVID-19 situation worldwide. The benefits of technology that can be learning and community outreach, online advocacy and institutionalizing reforms (policy levels).

- There are constraints too to realize this shift; like technological access, technical illiteracy and data protection issues, financial constraints and illegality of homosexuality.

- The opportunities towards this shift are promising; including mass and inclusive outreach, online advocacy and awareness programs, financial flexibility (COVID-19) and networking/ movement building.

As most countries in the South Asia region legally don't recognize (even penalize through various laws), the assessment highlighted *weak formal political structures*, and lack of political will for LGBTI rights discourse in the region. However, MOOCs can be useful for *digital/cyber advocacy* and creating a momentum for LGBTI human rights' discussions at social, political and family (household) levels.

- LGBTI Organizations are equipped with SOGIECS & UN systems (thematic) expertise, community engagement models and resource mobilization, though weaknesses included technical, technological and institutional capacity issues (limited staff, finances, work spaces).

- The outside opportunities that can bring huge positive impact for LGBTI, are mass awareness, entrepreneurship, creative designing, online mentoring/coaching, online training and advocacy and skills' learning. Going online means, strong networking within LGBTI community and social activism, while some negative outside factors especially hinders this shift towards digitalization for LGBTI communities are; data protection and safety & security concerns, illegality and sometimes

surveillance (online tracing for LGBTI activists) by government.

- There are still other factors that impact the needs for online learning; like *political*- lack of formal institutional capacity and lack of political will to engage for policy engagement, *economic factors* like increasing unemployment and shift to more online skills trainings (COVID-19), while some *societal factors* like lack of support from families, depression and anxiety and mental wellbeing concerns in isolated learning environments. These factors contribute to questions like when, where, what, why and how of implementation strategy for MOOCs. Study indicated the implementation strategy and timeline for organizations for online learning (through ToT) and mapped steps for MOOCs implementation.

- The assignment also evaluated the Training of Trainers through Online Learning Platform Zoom for mass engagement, technological aspects, online security and how to make the learning interactive and engaging for communities.

Interestingly, the participants of the MOOCs needs' assessment identified a huge list of *subjects like entrepreneurship, e-commerce, start-up education and technical courses* to be included in MOOCs along with human rights & SOGIESC themes.

Purpose

Understanding background and context of MOOCs with regards to Covid-19 situation

Assessing current situation of LGBTI with regards to MOOCs

Identifying and analyzing current organizational, institutional, human, technological, political and infrastructure capacities with regards to MOOCs

Recognizing challenges and opportunities for ILGA's local partner organizations in developing MOOCs

Providing recommendations and policy implications to ILGA Asia towards addressing gaps and needs in order to facilitate effective online-learning

Background

ILGA Asia's one strategic objective indicates that ILGA Asia provides technical capacity to partners to strengthen their ability to engage with human rights mechanisms; especially UN's mechanisms. Since 2016, the formation of mandate- *"Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity"*, LGBTI issues are institutionalized within UN. ILGA Asia has supported many local partners, activists and civil society to voice for LGBTI rights in Asia region through increasing their knowledge on UN systems. ILGA Asia has also rejoiced privilege of provided technical capacity to UN bodies and advocated for a better understanding of LGBTI community.

One such Training of Trainers (ToT) took place in December 2019 where 5 plans were developed by trainers that included *organizing a training workshop in their countries* on LGBTI diversity, and addressing context specific socio-political challenges to understand human rights mechanisms in an *easy yet comprehensive framework.*

In early 2020, with outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent situation around the globe, ILGA Asia and its partners were pushed to use proactive measures to address the gaps created with travel restrictions and spread of virus through in-person meetings. Learning from many other organizations (non-profit and corporates), *Online Learning Mechanism* was the most convenient and realistic option if not the 'only option'. It also brought opportunities and challenges that required evaluation before used widely for a larger number of participants. *ILGA Asia would want to learn from this 'piloting' of Online learning strategy for LGBTI communities. So, the evaluation of this pilot became ILGA Asia's one of priorities together with ToT.* Most recently (Sep.-Oct. 2020) ILGA Asia conducted a series of online training of LGBTI trainers (ToT) for LGBTI civil society in Asia at the regional levels. ten organizations from five to six countries from the South Asian region, including Bangladesh, Pakistan, India,

Most recently (Sep.-Oct. 2020) ILGA Asia conducted a series of training of LGBTI trainers (ToT) for LGBTI civil society in Asia at the regional levels. 5-6 countries from Asia region participated with 18-20 in this ToT and would replicate those trainings to their respective communities.

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The ToT conducted in Oct. 2020 was hosted virtually by country teams through Online Platform and was a unique experience for ILGA Asia and participants. An evaluation of the process is also conducted for recommending ways forward to ILGA Asia on Massive Open Online Learning (MOOC) mechanism. The ToT objectives included creating a platform for LGBTI human rights defenders, developing context specific training modules, adapting them for community needs and integrating using UN mechanisms in advocacy for LGBTI rights.

Learning from participants from last years' ToT (for Southeast Asia region), who are organizing online training since early 2020, ILGA Asia has organized & evaluated the ToT for South Asia region through an online platform.[3]

New Registered Users	2019	2020	Total
coursera	8M	20M	65M
edX	5M	8M	32M
Future Learn	1.3M	4M	13.5M
CLASS CENTRAL	350k	700k	2.2M

Global pandemic situation related to COVID-19 pushed for use of MOOCs as a tool for learning and wider outreach to communities. There has been a tremendous (two or more folds) increase in needs for MOOCs. For example, a report[4] on MOOCs showed that Coursera (an online learning platform) registered 08 Million new users in 2019, while the number of new sign-ups saw a 2.5 folds increase in 2020 with 20 Million new sign-ups.

[3] As per UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the most affected populations during current Covid-19 situation are women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, youth, indigenous people and LGBTI communities. Therefore, it is important to note that in the absence of effective policy interventions to combat the global social crisis, a rise in inequality, exclusion, global unemployment and discrimination can be observed in the near future. Online learning and training could be the most effective strategy to cope with these contemporary challenges.

[4] https://www.classcentral.com/report/mooc-stats-pandemic/ (Data on web traffic for MOOCs in 2019-2020)

Since MOOCs are all-inclusive, the beneficiaries may include human rights activists, LGBTI members and general society.[5]

In Asia, LGBTI (especially visible members like transgender) individuals are more often than not excluded from the traditional educational and societal setups due to the misconceptions and prejudices common masses have towards LGBTI. Various studies show that LGBT students are bullied at schools in South Asian countries. A study[6] on SOGIECS based violence in schools showed that the reason for lack of education amongst LGBTI communities is strongly linked to SOGIECS-based bullying at formal education institutes. In a situation like this, MOOCs can bring knowledge and learning to these minority groups via online learning platforms as they may not have access to formal education otherwise. MOOCs also promote social inclusive, cost-effective learning, safety and security of participants. Through distance learning, the probability of these minorities getting physically and mentally harassed may also decrease. Similarly, MOOCs require a person to learn from home and in current times of Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing can easily be observed via online learning.

[5] 2018, Addressing Societal Issues Through MOOCs in Southeast Asia, IEE Xplore, https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/8534649
[6] https://en.unesco.org/themes/school-violence-and-bullying/homophobic-transphobic-violence- (From Insult to Inclusion...)

Current Situation

There has been an exponential growth in MOOCs with respect to new platforms offering technology for MOOCs and new sign-ups/registrations for same platforms during COVID-19 in the South Asia region. For example, new registrations for Coursera crossed 20 Million in 2020 compared to 8 Million in 2019. Most of these courses are free or charge a very low fee, have greater outreach as compared to conventional ways of learning, are open for all resulting in lack of discrimination in terms of sex, gender, race, age, physical appearance, are easily accessible to all which removes the limits of time and space and finally offer a variety of courses to choose from. To name a few, there is the Asian MOOCs portal, Alison, Apnacourse, Coursera, edX, futurelearn so on and so forth. However, most of these courses are on business management, economics and finance, marketing & communication, computer science, information and technology (IT) while some are on humanities, health and society, personal and professional development with limited focus on human rights or the rights of LGBTI and marginalized groups. Therefore, in order to have socially inclusive MOOCs, there is a need to introduce courses that talk about human rights, gender and sexuality issues and perspectives.[7]

ILGA Asia's strategic objective as outlined in its Strategic Plan (2017-2019) clearly foreseen beyond Covid 19 situation. ILGA Asia's approach to provide technical support to its partners, activists and civil society organizations has proven its success and an online learning platform can prove a vast opportunity for advocating for LGBTI rights in the South Asia region. Not to mention, the current situation relating to COVID-19 is seen as a challenge as well as an opportunity and requires cautious implementation of Online learning.

[7] Asia MOOCs & Free online courses, MOOC LIST, https://www.mooc-list.com

Methodology

Setting up a methodology for needs assessment of MOOCs for LGBTI communities was a process of rigorous desk review, development of tools and customizing them for the objectives of the assignment like partners and communities' capacities to handle MOOCs, safety & security concerns and evaluating internal and external factors that may affect online learning.

MOOCs development needs assessment undertook a mixed methodological approach to map current situation for development of MOOCs, needs and existing gaps and how to convert such restraints into opportunities. Such approach provided a base for in-depth exploration of MOOCs development needs especially on the subject of human rights for LGBTI communities in South Asia.

A number of tools were employed to obtain responses from participating countries on capacities, internal and external scan and approaches towards online learning. This was clubbed with organizations and community questionnaires to identify needs at various levels.

A combination of tools was developed after desk review of available information on the situation of LGBTI communities, global and regional COVID-19 impacts and available tools and opportunities for online learning. The tools were developed through rigorous research process to obtain the responses for needs assessment of MOOCs development, they included:

I. **Assessment of current situation vs. Visions for MOOCs development**

II. **Internal environmental scans for organizations- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for MOOCs development**

III. **External Environmental scans- Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental factors impacting MOOCs on LGBTI subjects**

IV. **What, Where, When, Who & How of MOOCs development to identify action plans**

V. **Organizations and community questionnaires**

The tools provided not only a chance to assess the needs & capacities of partners and communities for MOOCs but also strategic insights into the core competencies and strategic visioning viz a viz online learning. Based on limited secondary sources on methodology of evaluation of MOOCs especially for non profit advocacy organizations like ILGA Asia and its partners, various approaches and techniques were formulated, thought through analytically and purposefully tailored to the needs.

Toolkits were completed by participating countries and responses were collated, analyzed and interpreted. Return/completion rate for these tools remained as follows:

Tools	Response Rate
Visioning Exercise	**87.5%**
SWOT Analysis	**87.5%**
PESTLE Analysis	**87.5%**
Opportunity & Gap Action Plan	**87.5%**
Community Questionnaire	**130%**
Organizations' Questionnaire	**62.5%**

These tools collected information on various factors as *external factors* like political, economic, sociological, technological, legal and environmental, *internal factors* organizational strengths; staff capacity, thematic expertise and weaknesses like lack of finances, organizational structures, set ups for MOOCs delivery, opportunities like shift towards digitalization and threats like illegality of homosexuality, COVID-19 situation and online security etc. The tools also collected information on current situation in various contexts where these organizations work and their strategic visions for MOOCs. These tools led towards an action plan for exploiting the 'opportunity' of MOOCs post COVID-19 situation for large scale (Massive) learning and advocacy, and how to fill the gaps to access and use this opportunity. The

participants of the study also included LGBTI community groups across the countries who responded to needs for online learning areas like access to 4G technology, use of smart phone and laptops, social media use and topics of interest for human rights domain. The organizations also responded to questionnaire to understand organizational needs at various levels like personal and technical needs, institutional and thematic needs and regional and geographic needs for MOOCs. These sets of tools provided a chance to look deep into the needs for MOOCs for LGBTI communities and correlated the factors to address the gaps and exploit the opportunity positively.

This approach resulted in *identifying needs and responding to them through a set of recommendations. The recommendations from needs assessment will facilitate and support the second stage, that is acquiring tools, platforms, and skills for MOOCs development and facilitating.*

Finding & Analysis

FIGURE 1.1 shows the collective vision of ILGA Asia's partner organizations from South Asia which had participated in the needs' assessment, their current situation and capacity to run MOOCs. It also highlights the opportunities present within these organizations that can guarantee successful MOOC implementation and challenges that may hinder the effectiveness and functionality of these online learning platforms.

VISION	CURRENT SITUATION	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
To conduct effective online advocacy & introduce institutional, social and organizational *reforms* that support human rights/LGBTI rights	Grassroots organizations with a *shift towards digitalization* and of advocacy and training activities into online spaces	*Technological constraints* in terms of outreach. Most areas have weak or no internet access	There is *financial flexibility* in terms of re-allocating budget to human development, MOOCs development and promoting e-learning
To Identify human rights violations, define these issues through national and international mechanisms and *report on human rights/LGBTI rights*	*Strong technical and thematic knowledge* of human rights related issues and concepts, UN mechanisms as well as community needs	*Technological/ technical illiteracy*; there is lack of technological understanding, technical knowledge & skills within local communities	*Online training* and advocacy modules will be provided to participants to ensure effective distance learning
To *disseminate knowledge on the rights of LGBTI via online learning platforms* & eradicate misconceptions & stigma associated w/t LGBTI	Close contact with and *access to local minorities & marginalized communities; LGBTI*	*Lack of awareness and knowledge among masses* on the rights of LGBTI viz a viz human rights due to negative sentiment and misconceptions on the subject	*Technical knowledge and capacity building* of a) team members and b) local communities around human rights related issues and concepts
Ensure safety and security of marginalized communities (LGBTI) by providing them with safe and secure spaces i.e. Digital	Greater emphasis & focus on introducing *inclusive & safe online learning paces and platforms* in the current COVID-19 situation	*Lack of data protection & encryption* in cyberspace that gives a false sense of security.	There has been a *positive shift in the mode of service delivery;* from conventional ways of training, teaching and learning towards online (distance learning)
		Financial constraints occur during M&E i.e. courses licensing and e-learning content creation	

VISION	CURRENT SITUATION	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
			Wider and secure access to local communities (LGBTI) through greater community outreach
			Strong thematic understanding of & expertise in gender, sexuality and human rights
			Advocating and *introducing language diversity* in e learning; multilingual MOOCs
			MOOCs will ensure *mass and inclusive outreach; leaving no one behind*

The Vision exercise evaluated current/existing situation VS vision and mapped constraints and opportunities with respect to strategic vision of MOOCs beyond COVID-19.

The tool collected responses of ILGA Asia's partners and indicated a shared vision for a shift *towards effective online advocacy* and campaigning through strong *institutional, social and organizational policy reforms* that identify, define, promote and thereby *report on human rights violations and concepts* especially when it comes to the LGBTI or marginalized communities. Grassroots' organizations are shifting their focus towards distance learning by utilizing their technical and thematic knowledge and understanding of human rights issues and concepts taking into consideration the current COVID-19 situation. There are a number of opportunities and advantages in grassroots' activism, for instance an increased focus on gender, sexuality and human rights, financial flexibility, technical knowledge and capacity building of local communities and team members with regards to human

rights. Similarly, there is mass community outreach that ensures safe and inclusive cyberspaces. Some of the challenges that hamper MOOCs development may include *technological and technical illiteracy* among masses, *lack of online data encryption and protection, negative stigma and misconceptions towards LGBTI and inadequate funding for M&E and online content creation.*

FIGURE 1.2 tries to find out ILGA Asia's partner organizations' existing strengths to successfully develop and operate MOOCs by identifying gaps and weaknesses within these organizations that if met, can lead to the effective implementation of MOOCs. Similarly, the table highlights opportunities that MOOCs offer along with internal and external threats that can impact the effectiveness and proper functionality of distance/online/ e-learning learning.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Wider outreach in terms of qualified team members; volunteers, skilled workers, and staff members belonging to multicultural backgrounds	*Lack of technical capacity of team members* in translating human rights activism into action	MOOCs can be *cost effective* *Ensure social distancing* in the current situation of COVID-19 while offering continued/ break free learning	*Online surveillance, monitoring and data tracing* can be a threat to privacy, personal space, safety & security
Greater access and outreach to beneficiaries (local rural communities & marginalized groups)	*Lack of institutional capacity*; • limited office space • limited funding • limited technological materials (laptops, desks) -lack of legal registration/local-laws compliance	MOOCs can increase attendance ratio to ensure high levels of participation, interest and enrollment	A high probability of breach of personal space and information due to lack of online data encryption/ protection Illegality of theme in most countries
Strong previous experience and *thematic expertise* on human rights issues and concepts	*Limited financial resources* to operate MOOCs & to procure e-learning materials (Laptop, internet access, COVID-19 supplies, licensed software etc.)	The 'M' in MOOCs stands for Massive; which indicates *greater coverage and outreach* to local communities & public masses	*Stigma & misconceptions towards LGBTI* related topics and discussions can curb the effective implementation of MOOCs viz a viz sexuality and gender themes

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Actively involved in *resource mobilization*, conducting training sessions and raising advocacy campaigns to ensure an inclusive	*Insufficient materials for in-depth online learning*; lacks diversity in available online courses (limited options to choose from)	MOOCs offer a *wide range of courses* that are multilingual and bilingual promoting inclusive and diverse learning opportunities	Intra community conflicts, *differences of opinions* and perceptions can affect the online enrollment ratio in MOOCs
Strong institutional outreach; can easily access government agencies, local government officials, advisory boards, ministers & CSO	*Lack of engagement and involvement of beneficiaries* (local communities + marginalized groups) in human rights training, activism & e-learning	Through MOOCs, *new innovative and creative methods and teaching techniques* can be i.e. (visual learning)	
	Absence of an effective organizational structure in MOOCs development as most participants work on voluntary basis; time commitment becomes an issue	E-learning opens the door to social activism through online discussion platforms that lead to active advocacy, policy reforms and rigorous campaigning on human rights issues	
	Staff members' *unfamiliarity with digital hygiene and security*	Individuals can develop *strong networking skills via online learning*	
	Weak M&E strategies in organizational setups that hinder strategic planning to design and implement MOOCs and to allocate and reallocate resources	*Increased funding opportunities in Digital education sector* during and post-COVID-19 situation	

ILGA Asia's partner organizations present a strong portfolio and diverse institutional mechanisms like being grassroots organizations, and national and regional ties. Having a number of strengths and opportunities increases the overall probability of success in MOOCs implementation. For instance; *the presence of a qualified and gender -sensitized staff, easy access to local rural communities, technical and thematic understanding of and expertise in gender, sexuality & human rights play a vital role in the development and evaluation of MOOCs. Similarly, organization's background experience in advocating human rights activism through effective resource mobilization, training activities and local campaigns can surely contribute to online learning. However, it is difficult to operate MOOCs with lack of* ***technological*** *& technical capacity of staff members,* ***weak institutional capacity and insufficient financial resources.*** *Misconceptions attached with LGBTI in South East Asian societies along with the existing intra community conflicts can curb the development of MOOCs on topics surrounding human rights, gender and sexuality.*

MOOCs come with some great benefits. For instance, ***cost effectiveness and health safety*** especially in the times of COVID-19, innovation & creativity in methods of teaching i.e. ***visual learning.*** MOOCs ensure strong social networking and activism leading to effective policy interventions through online advocacy, campaigning and movements. Though with good comes the bad, MOOCs can pose a threat to people's personal space due to excessive online surveillance and monitoring of human rights activities by local governments and pose a threat of banning such information materials in online spaces.

FIGURE 1.3 gives yet another perspective on the development of MOOCs in Asia by shedding light on six macro external factors that can impact or influence an organization from the outside. These factors are important in determining the need for online-learning in the South Asian region. The six key factors are as follows; political, economic, sociological, technological, legal and environmental respectively.

POLITICAL	ECONOMICAL	SOCIOLOGICAL	TECHNOLOGICAL	LEGAL	ENVIRONMENTAL
Lack of formal institutional capacity development and policy support by local and national political systems	*Unemployment has increased* during COVID-19 leading to partial payments, reduction of salaries, Lack of consumer spending due to less purchasing power	No social distancing is required in MOOCs; thus, *less probability if getting COVID-19*	*Lack of technological & technical literacy* among local community members to access MOOCs	*Controlled activism in cyberspace* can disregard LGBTI activism due to unfavorable legislative environment in the South East Asia-region	MOOCs are *climate friendly* as there is limited social mobility; resulting to reduced carbon dioxide emissions
Online security issues and high levels of surveillance and monitoring by the government	*Re-allocation of budgets* for post COVID-19 response to better implement e-learning activities for those community members who suffer from economic crunch due to COVID-19	In some cases, there is *lack of support from families* to attend online courses;	Excessive use of technology and lesser community interactions can take a *toll on participants' mental, physical & emotional health*	*Absence of a legal stance* on the rights of LGBTI in Asia	Excessive use of technology can lead to *social disconnected-ness;* drifting away from nature
Lack of political will or interest in supporting rights of LGBTI & marginalized communities	A general *decline in consumer spending* during COVID-19 and enrollments for learning opportunities	MOOCs provide LGBTI with a *safe space from bullying, social harassment,* name-calling etc.	The issue of *poor internet connection* can affect participants' interest and attention span	*Anti-poor policies & regressive state policies* during COVID-19 ; high levels of unemployment among masses	*Reduction in man-made calamities* due to limited social mobility

POLITICAL	ECONOMICAL	SOCIOLOGICAL	TECHNOLOGICAL	LEGAL	ENVIRONMENTAL
Political systems exhibit low level of involvement and policy engagement for institutional development of human rights debate	MOOCs can be *cost effective;* cutting down travel expense, health expense	Similarly, *limited social interactions* & contact with/towards LGBTI can develop misconceptions and prejudices against marginalized communities	*Online learning limits learning capacities on subject/themes* because online platforms require knowledge and expertise to use	*Lack of inclusive laws* and grievance mechanisms	*Increase in population growth has led to limited resources and unlimited needs;* alternative platforms needed to accommodate entire population i.e. MOOCs
Unequal distribution & use of technology within local communities (unequal access to internet services)	*MOOCs come with a high communication cost;* designing online learning modules, visual learning methods and techniques, effective interpersonal skills (pursuance)	MOOCs bring about *innovate & creative ways of thematic teaching & learning* with regards to gender and sexuality	*Weak internet connection, limited internet outreach & access* can affect the effectiveness of online learning & limit participation of some members of the local community		
Non-unified online learning strategy during COVID-19		MOOCs could increase the *chances of depression and anxiety among participants* due to confinement to a single/ limited space	*Online surveillance* refrains community members from participating in MOOCs unless privacy concerns are met		

The above six key factors (political, economic, sociological, technological, legal and environmental) influence an organization's capacity to introduce and thereby run MOOCs effectively. Some of the **political factors** may include; the lack of institutional capacity due to *weak formal institutions* (like local governments, human

rights bodies, education sector), *lack of political interest and will in supporting the rights of minorities* (LGBTI, marginalized communities), and the *unequal allocation of resources* geographically and community wise. In the same way, *unemployment* is one of the biggest **economic issues** being faced by the local communities during Covi-19 resulting to a general decline in consumer spending towards paid education opportunities. MOOCs can have a positive sociological impact on the lives of LGBTI and marginalized groups as they *provide safe and inclusive cyberspaces*. Similarly, *new innovative ways of thematic learning* on gender and sexuality will help people understand and recognize the rights of minorities in South Asia while others may fall into the trap of *depression and anxiety.* **Technological and legal challenges** identified by these organizations include *digital illiteracy, poor internet connection, mental & physical health issues, unfavorable legislative environment* etc. Online learning can also have an **environmental impact** for instance; limited social mobility leading to *less carbon prints, reduced man-made calamities, and social disconnectedness*.

FIGURE 1.4 raises a series of questions that have been divided into 6 categories namely (who, what, when, where, why & how). These questions further investigate organizations' capacities in terms of the understanding of MOOCs and their effective implementation. To understand who will be involved and benefitted from MOOCs, what topics will be introduced via MOOCs and what objectives these topics will cover. Similarly, the question of when and where MOOCs will take place effectively and how communities will access online learning, all will be answered in the below table.

WHO	WHAT
Who will be involved? • All LGBTI local community involved in grassroots activism • Other beneficiaries of local language training • Local human rights defenders • Volunteers	**What will be the topics of interest for MOOCs?** • UN human rights mechanisms • Gender & Sexuality • International human rights treaties and treaty bodies • Government structures on human rights mechanisms

WHO

- Lawyers
- Civil Society participants

WHAT

- Treaty body reporting cycle
- Legal rights
- Mental health
- Skill Development
- SDGs

Who will benefit?

- Participants
- Grassroots community & organizations
- LGBTI minorities and marginalized groups
- Youth

What objectives the topics will cover for training through MOOCs?

- Ratification of human rights treaties and their functioning
- Knowledge and capacity building of participants
- Community sensitization
- Inclusion & acceptance
- Finding safe spaces
- Understanding local laws & concepts on gender & sexuality

What skills your organization has for MOOCs, what is missing?

- Previous online teaching experience
- Community context and knowledge of community needs
- Experience in advocacy on human rights
- Experienced facilities
- Access to technological resources and materials
- Good reach in community
- Sufficient knowledge on training items
- Local audio visuals
- Simplified, localized training materials

- Knowledge on how to develop participatory and interactive sessions
- Adequate resources
- Funding
- Effective communication
- Digital/technological skills

WHEN

When should MOOCs take place?

- When the team is well-equipped

WHERE

Where should MOOCs take place?

- Zoom

WHEN

When should MOOCs take place?

- When the team is well-equipped
- Depends on the availability of participants
- In October
- Over the weekends for general population for 1-2 hours to ensure attentiveness and combat fatigue

Does when (time) MOOC take place effect the organization?

- Yes, if occur during weekdays
- No, if made an official activity

WHERE

Where should MOOCs take place?

- Zoom
- Facebook Live
- Google meet
- Jitsi meet
- Stream Yard
- WhatsApp
- Jiomeet
- Teams

Where the MOOCs will be more effective? (Smart phone users or desktop/web-based learning?

- Smart phone users; since majority of the participants don't have access to laptops
- Both have pros and cons; most people use mobile phones as they are handier though with limited functions

What skills your organization has for MOOCs, what is missing?

Does it matter where MOOC takes place?

- Yes, online spaces matter to ensure participants' security and safety

WHY

Why MOOCs? Why not regular training methodology?

- Ensures safety from COVID-19; people feel safe attending classes online
- To reach maximum participants and stakeholders
- A tool for self-learning
- Time and cost effective
- Small honorarium

HOW

How communities will access the MOOCs? In case they have no phones, internet etc.

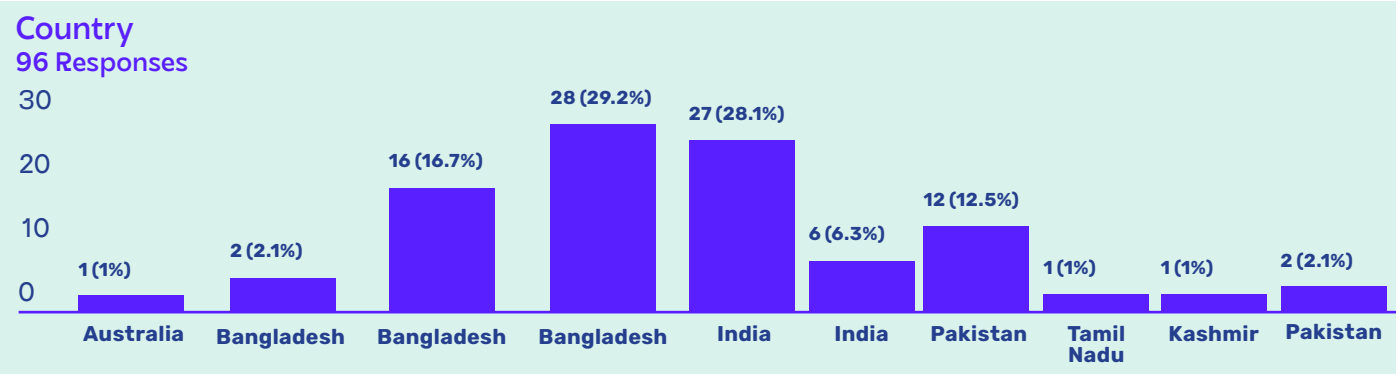
- Printed copies of learning materials will be sent directly to participants
- Online courses will be available in local languages both online and offline
- Participants can be given digital devices through partnerships with other donor organizations

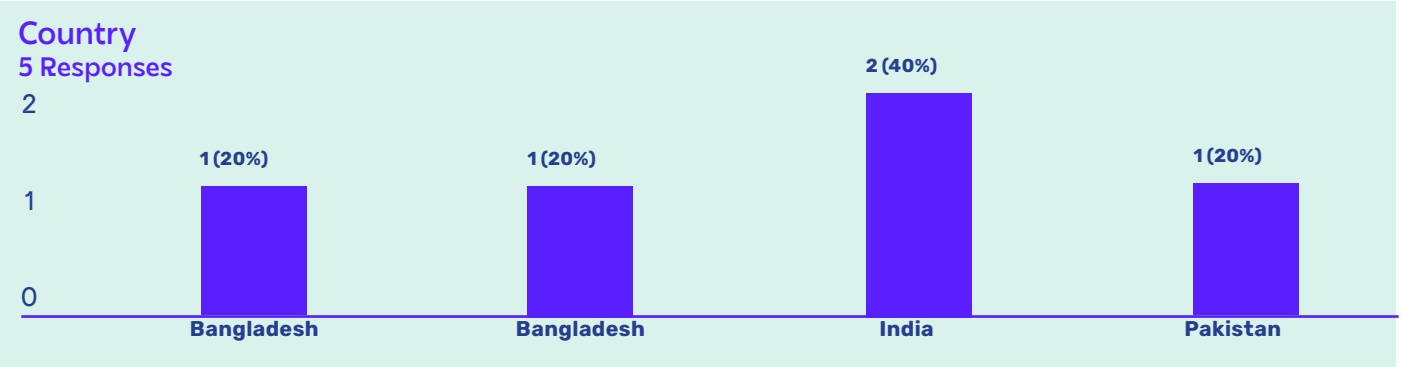
WHY	HOW
	• Build community knowledge centers w/t the help of partner organizations • Reach out for corporate help; to build virtual classrooms in schools and colleges • Through a focal point; if no phones are available then a focal person will be appointed that shares information in small groups • Develop courses that are pre recorded in local languages and later distributed in the form of leaflets via local members to areas where internet connection is poor
Why beneficiaries will use MOOCs? Benefits (License, certificate etc.) • For capacity building • To access human rights-related materials and resources • To develop strong networks & ties w/t national grassroots organizations as well as international • To have easy access to knowledge and information • Since it is much more feasible than conventional ways of learning • It promises certificates, licenses, lobbying and advocacy trainings • Chances of future engagement opportunities • Consistent skill development	

Community & Organizations' Questionnaires-Analysis

Participating organizations responded to tools like Vision exercise, SWOT and PESTLE analyses along with an opportunity and gap profiling. Though, the more clear and numeric analysis came from responses through a questionnaire for Organizations. Likewise, it was important to collect from LGBTI communities in various contexts on data like access to 3G/4G technology, use of social media and time spending, topics of interest for Online Learning and how many of communities prefer learning online. The empirical information as observed and obtained through desk reviews, organizations and evaluating during MOOCs workshops was supported and verified by numerical data through community questionnaire.

The return rates for Community and Organizations' questionnaires are shown in charts.





Interestingly, the community questionnaire obtained large set of responses from LGBTI communities, whereas the organizational surveys obtained small number of responses through the response rate can be effectively correlated with length and respondents' interests, like the organizational questionnaire was quite lengthy- required

an hour or so to complete the form, repeated questions for verifying responses from empirical information as obtained in other tools etc. *This is already an evaluation of how to develop MOOCs for LGBTI communities and make them interesting and engaging.*

The questionnaires were developed using Google Survey Form and disseminated to LGBTI communities through ILGA Asia's partner organizations (the participants of study) through a shareable link. The responses were collected through filling in forms by participants in a period of two weeks.

Consolidated response to Community Questionnaire exhibits that 90% of the respondents (out of 96 responses) were familiar with online learning and the term MOOC. Similarly, more than half of the respondents were tech-friendly of which 97% were smartphone users since 92% could easily access internet services in their respective areas. Most of these respondents had already taken online learning courses and were quite satisfied with the idea of independent learning, having flexible timings and receiving certificates after the completion of each course. Similarly, the dissatisfaction grew from internet connectivity issues, electricity failures and other technical and service delivery issues. One of the biggest motivators of online learning was the presence of free online learning courses.

Responses from Organizations Questionnaire were comparable with findings from tools and there were seen synergies/correlations and common grounds to invest into online learning and especially MOOCs. Within organizational settings, majority of the participants were familiar with the term MOOC with a previous history of participating in online courses via platforms such as EDEX, Google Meet Coursera. Similarly, the high level of interest taken in online learning by participants was primarily due to the availability of free online courses. Most of these participants spent 70% of their time on smartphones while 80% spent 70% time on laptops/desktops throughout the week resulting to having greater technological and technical knowledge.

Two best and most prominent e-learning platforms highlighted by the respondents were social media apps (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & LinkedIn) & online

webinars. MOOCs come with a number of challenges, these include lack of internet access, lack of technical and managerial experience, and limited internet access though can be resolved through effective strategies and policy interventions. Other challenges posed during MOOCs development are by relevant stakeholders especially country governments.

The core mission and objectives of these organizations focus on increasing awareness of legal and social rights of LGBTI, developing basic as well as technical understanding on HR UN mechanisms, scientific theories and human rights related concepts and issues and finally, creating safe spaces for LGBTI to ensure their social wellbeing through online learning platforms. These organizations also offer professional skill development opportunities to their staff members.

The challenges being faced by these organizations during MOOCs development & delivery include lack of interactive online teaching materials and resources available, poor internet connection, strict online surveillance. Though are willing to tackle these issues by using effective organizational and community involvement strategies. MOOCs have a series of activities that ensure a memorable and effective online learning experience.

The geographical analysis or local language adaption vital lead and facilitate to MOOCs effective implementation. Moreover, 60% of the respondents argue that MOOCs address organizational needs as opposed to the 40% who believe individual needs are addressed through e-learning.

The importance of cross-cultural learning and having different regional perspectives on similar topics is important in terms of identifying and adopting existing best practices or changing policy interventions to meet desired outcomes though challenges may occur during such collaborations.

There is lack of policies and educational frameworks regarding MOOCs which can impact the overall success of MOOCs development and delivery.

Recommendations & Wayforward

Based on Needs' Assessment for MOOCs, a set of recommendations is proposed for considerations by ILGA Asia and its partners. The recommendations are based on findings above and can serve as a broader framework to online learning and strategic visioning for advocacy.

A. Organizations, working on advocacy and campaigning, would require a shift towards digitalization amid COVID-19 situation and beyond it. This shift will require institutional, social and organizational reforms including providing technological and technical literacy, safety & security guidelines for data protection & encryption availability of funds to monitor and evaluate online learning for masses.

B. ILGA Asia's partner organizations present a strong and diverse portfolio of strengths community outreach, national and regional ties within LGBTI and allies, technical and thematic expertise on subject of SOGIE, human rights and UN mechanisms. The MOOCs trainings would use these strengths under a guiding framework to develop & deliver the trainings. It is recommended to consider technological aspects of MOOCs development and delivery, supporting organizations with weaker institutional capacity and insufficient technological and financial resources.

C. It is recommended to use MOOCs beyond a learning platform- as a tool for digital activism, online networking and advocacy & movement building. Nonetheless, the concerns like online surveillance by governments and monitoring of staff, location and online activities should be considered in designing and running MOOCs.

D. It is recommended to consider various aspects for MOOCs development & delivery like; defining target beneficiaries/communities (like age, urban/ semi urban/rural/, demographic & socio-economic information etc.), use of internet technology (3G, 4G, 5G), type of mobile, geographical information, mental and physical effects of online trainings and legislative environment (favorable for some topics, unfavorable for others).

E. Using new contemporary learning techniques is recommended for MOOCs development and delivery. This can be done through use of audio-visual tools, animations and graphics, info-graphics and other interactive, participatory methods like edutainment (online Theatre). The purpose of MOOCs should be to engage, learn and remember the contents for use when required (like how to write a complaint against harassment).

F. It is recommended that various stakeholders' participation is ensured during development and delivery of MOOCs- like members from civil society, local human rights defenders, grassroot organizations, allies within legal and legislative bodies, youth groups (allies student bodies etc.)

G. The communities should also be provided safe and secure spaces (physically) together with MOOCs and online cyberspaces- the social & physical disconnection can lead to depression and anxiety. Lack of support from families, lesser community interactions and online security infringements can lead to health concerns for mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

The second phase of the assignment is evaluation of MOOCs Workshop and sharing recommendations towards ILGA Asia and Partners. Understanding the needs assessment, partners competences and capacities to run MOOCs, online learning is seen as an 'learning niche' and it will require skills, technical, technological and financial support as well as adapting Online Learning as an 'Implementing Strategy' within activities, approaches and project designs.

Evaluation of MOOCs workshop & delivery

Two pilot & controlled workshops and a ToT on UN Mechanisms hosted by ILGA Asia have been evaluated for MOOCs development and delivery during the study. MOOCs evaluation provided a chance for understanding tools and techniques for Online Learning. As the name suggests for Massive Open Online Courses are developed for large groups and most of the time delivered/kept Online for free and ready access (only with a sign-up/registration of a user account). The MOOCs for LGBTI communities are seen a new technique during and post COVID-19 situation, nonetheless, Online Learning can provide basis for advocacy and campaigning, movement building and networking and shifting interests of LGBTI communities to more mainstream subjects like entrepreneurship, e commerce, and new digital economy. The evaluation of MOOCs focused on areas as;

I. **Identifying Platforms and tools for Online Learning and comparing user friendliness, features and tools for MOOCs delivery**

II. **Risks of Online Safety & Security and its management especially in hostile environments**

III. **Identifying engagement strategies for MOOCs development and participants involvement**

The evaluations of these areas are as follows:

Identifying platforms and tools for online learning

The controlled MOOC Workshop- I identified and evaluated three online interacting platforms for large number of audience and more time span like above 60 minutes training. The following analysis presented with various aspects of MOOCs trainings;

ZOOM	GOOGLE MEET	JOIN ME
PROS Collaboration tools Free account available Connects to conferencing equipment Works with all/common operating systems	**PROS** Share screen Send files through chat Free for everyone to use. No additional fee for call-in participants Additional tools with G Suite subscription	**PROS** The free version of this software is relatively Ok, this can synch with Google Calendar, Outlook. The interface of software provides quite a lot of options

ZOOM	GOOGLE MEET	JOIN ME
Host up to 500 people. **CONS** Call-in access costs extra Must disable popup blockers to use 40 minutes of free call with a group (need to purchase/upgrade to paid version) Software needs to be downloaded. Web based meeting is mostly difficult to run.	Users can join in from web without downloading/installing the software. **CONS** Dashboard is messy sometimes with more room check Ins and the platform catches unwanted noises in the background. Can host fewer participants Clunky and unreliable for Mac users.	and the windows can be separated, moved from one place to other on screen. **CONS** Sometimes when using the browser only feature there have been glitches where the screen will need to be reloaded. At times, the service can freeze like the call will still be running, however the users will not be able to interact, unless they disconnect and connect call again. The voice is not properly synched with mobile/laptop's mic and can cause technical problems for a new/naïve person. This only works from it installed application on mobile/laptop.

The platforms were evaluated with reference to aspects like;

a. User friendliness
b. Audio quality and ability to use mics from phones, laptops etc. without any technical assistance in switching
c. Presentation and running on low internet connections

MOOCs development and delivery are a seen as a 'two-way process' involving 'beneficiary' or LGBTI participant at core. The feedback from the participants is important at development and delivery of MOOCs. The workshops'

evaluations from participants through surveys at end of MOOCs are reflective of participants/user experiences with technology including aspects like stable connectivity, minimum disruption and noise etc. The other important aspect of these evaluations is access of MOOCs through laptops and smartphones, making them easy to use at various locations (home/roads/travel) and situations. The evaluation of Workshop- I exhibited smooth experience for most participants in terms of audio, video and visual presentations, attending/participating in MOOC with a simple click to web link and without need to register to platform. Such aspects are important for participants with limited technology literacy.

Risk of online safety and security and its management especially in hostile environments

Online safety & security is a major concern for LGBTI communities in South Asia region. This becomes even an issue for LGBTI activists who face online harassment and sometimes life threats. MOOCs require the online presence or establishing 'at-least' an account to access the online platforms, interacting with trainers, participants (that concept is alike as in a regular class, though with cyber interactions); also, as the surveys show that almost 97% of sample size were able to use smart phones with 95% access to internet, that means they use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and other dating apps with registered access to those online media. This puts the online security at risk. The other element of online safety & security is 'lack of legal recognition of homosexuality' in most contexts, that means governments can spy, monitor and take notice of online activities through various reinforcements like spywares, tracking and recording data, information about LGBTI activists. Such risks again put the health and welfare of LGBTI participants at stake too.

Online safety & security is perhaps the only larger threat to MOOCs after concerns of illegality of homosexuality in many countries in South Asia region.

To address the online security concerns, the MOOCs Workshop- II was developed on 'Online Safety & Security for LGBTI and delivered through Zoom to participating

organizations. This workshop not only provided a chance to evaluate MOOCs platform of 'Zoom' but also it built the knowledge and understanding of online security fundamentals and how to minimize the risks related to use of online platforms. This workshop also was evaluated for participants engagement/interest into topic/subject through use of simple format and use of colors and animations in presentation. The MOOCs Workshop II encompassed topics as below and provided a basis for Online Safety & Security Framework for trainers and participants/trainees;

a. What is safety and Security?
b. Why online safety and security is important especially for LGBT community?
c. Basic understanding of Cyber Security definitions
d. Online security really seems to be an issue
e. Three-dimensional online security
f. Securing online learning as a trainer
g. Securing online learning as a Trainee/LGBTI individual
h. Security mechanism
i. Online learning security framework

LGBTI organizations, activists and community members can face cyber-bullying, harassment and threats and that can compromise the health and wellbeing as well as work and personal life. MOOCs are an important tool for learning; however, it is important for trainers (LGBTI organizations and trainees (LGBTI participants) to use following actions before using online platforms (social and learning); these actions are:

- Securing the machine (laptop/smart phone/ tablets, e-learning pads) by keep it up-to-date with latest software
- Securing your online information for work/ professional/social circles/platforms by using passwords, two-way authentication (use of password and a code through registered email/ cellular network) and data encryption
- Never pass your personal information like emails, passwords and codes to anyone while using online platforms

The workshop on safety and security also provided an

evaluation for Zoom as a MOOCs platform and audio, video, screen sharing experiences were evaluated as 'good', that means that Zoom can provide appropriate and quality platform for MOOCs delivery.

Identifying engagement strategies for MOOCs development and participants involvement:

The third aspect that requires special focus for MOOCs is engagement of participants in presentation, content and involvement without loosing attention span. The study evaluated some aspects on delivery of ToT to trainers (LGBTI organizations) in South Asia region under ILGA Asia's ToT. It was for the first time that a whole training was delivered Online for LGBTI organizations on UN mechanisms, the subject being a more 'theory based' presentation, however, participants used mixed approaches to engage participants; like through use of interactive tools like Kahoot, Google Jam boards, etc. The important aspect of this Online ToT was the reflective feedback and evaluation by participants, that were collected through discussions and surveys. The collective feedback presented some learnings and strategies for engaging the audience (especially when the LGBTI communities participate in such MOOCs independently). Evaluation and feedback for the ToT was very useful for designing and developing engagement strategies for participants in developing and delivering/during MOOCs presentations.

Recommendations for development and delivery of MOOCs for LGBTI Communities

The feedbacks as collected during and after the MOOCs workshops and a desk review for online safety & security and engagement for participants in MOOCs presented with valuable evaluation and a set of recommendations are framed to take Online Learning to large LGBTI communities in South Asia region.

Recommendations on Online safety & Security as a trainer and as a trainee are:

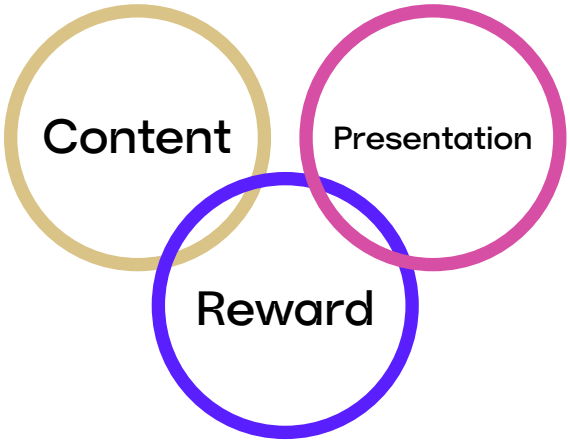
Online Security as a LGBTI trainer	Online security as a LGBTI trainee
A. Know the Information Security Policy (ISP) of the organization or follow General Data Regulation Protection (GDPR) guidelines for information protection. B. Maintaining Confidentiality of participants through various means like using administrators, licensed web-learning platforms. C. Limit number of participants through log-in verification to protect from unauthorized participations that may cause cyber bullying for LGBTI individuals. Trainers must have identified potential security risks for LGBTI people in especially MOOCs. D. Always use up-to-date system to use for Online training delivery. E. Monitor your local legal environment around LGBTI issues and if you use VPN, use from a trusted source.	A. Use up-to-date system with reliable anti virus software. B. Use an encrypted and secure WIFI network on your system to participate in MOOCs. C. Avoid sending personal photos and information in groups during MOOCs D. Be careful of what you down, the links and apps can contain spywares to hack your information. E. Set Up Firewall in your system or update your system regularly. F. Always use two-way authentication for your email ID, Online Learning Platform Sign Up/Registration and Login. G. While purchasing online, like courses, use safe weblinks with “HTTPS” and not with “HTTP”. H. Inform the website/Online administrator if someone cyber-bully you.

Recommendations for engaging LGBTI communities into MOOCs are:

The participants’ engagement for MOOCs is vast area and one of the least evaluated aspect for MOOCs. Feedback from participants on MOOCs is important. The study confirms the progress and engagement of participants

for MOOCs that have gone through feedback and improvements were made in MOOCs. The engagement strategies can be designed, developed and customized as per needs of 'target group'- like here, the target group is LGBTI community- further classification can be made on geography, rural/urban status, demographic information etc.

Though there are no set rules for engagement of LGBTI communities in MOOCs, some strategies came forward from assessing needs for MOOCs and their evaluation; the recommendations are classified on three levels; like contents, presentation and reward/Motivation for LGBTI participants to take part in MOOCs.



1. **Contents of MOOCs** - Contents for a MOOC should be designed in a way that they provide space for interest and retaining that interest from participants. Engaging MOOCs may include agenda of training, course outline, story telling to relate to LGBTI issues, set of ground rules for effective participation, short clips to generate debate and reflections, use of groups, role plays, exercises to ice-break etc. There was a feedback from participants in ToT that the contents that relate and provide practical experiences to LGBTI communities, would engage more participation- having said that, it is important to design contents in simple form and in a way that LGBTI community can use those learnings in day to day life. For example, a training on human rights for LGBTI community should include examples (arbitrary) and context specific and most importantly, appropriate for the 'target audience'.

2. **Presentation of MOOCs** - With a shift towards digitalization, there are factors that can act as 'attention distractor' for an Online Learning in an independent environment especially for MOOCs. Therefore, presentation of MOOCs might be used as a strategy to engage LGBTI participants. Presentation includes *personality and facilitation skills of trainer*, space for reflections and feedback and constructive dialogue (sometimes managing disputes and conflicts), as well as ensure online security during MOOCs. Presentation also includes elements like using info-graphics and pictures to simplify the concepts, using *audio-visual tools* like short clips, having guests and experts onboard and allowing interactions with participants online through video, chat or screen sharing options. The time for *presentation* also counts important as lengthy sessions may become boring with time and participants loose attention in MOOCs.

3. **Rewards for MOOCs** - The MOOCs are usually effective and participants would like to complete the course or workshop through MOOCs for some rewards. One of such regards is 'certificate of completion/participation', second reward can be MOOCs' availability free of charge and even sometimes, rewards like small stipend or allowance may attract LGBTI communities into MOOCs.

The Way Forward

The study findings and recommendations for needs assessment and evaluation of MOOCs provide promising grounds for developing and delivering MOOCs for LGBTI communities and run large scale advocacy campaigns especially for a domain like human rights of LGBTI communities. Not to mention that developing and delivering MOOCs may bring additional burden on financial and human resource and may expose LGBTI communities to online and offline security concerns, the opportunity for MOOCs is realistic and with a potential to grow, the opportunity as seen *'the shift towards digitalization'* might remain hidden and unrealized if the world won't face the COVID-19 situation.