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"DIG OUR HEELS IN": SIDA'S CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS AND THE BACKLASH AGAINST SEXUAL AND GENDER-RELATED RIGHTS

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Note: The phrase "dig our heels in" was provided by Informant E during their interview with the author.

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Foreword by EBA

The protection, respect, and promotion of gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) have long been central to Swedish international development cooperation. The Government's reform agenda for development assistance reaffirms Sweden's commitment to SRHR and gender equality. In many contexts, the increased politicisation around and backlash against these rights have led to growing personal insecurity for human rights advocates and to the revocation of previously gained rights and liberties. In this working paper, Sofia Kahma shows how what is referred to as the 'anti-rights' or 'anti-gender' movement affects the rights-based work of three international civil society organisations that are partners to Sida. The informants report having their funding blocked by conservative governments; being targeted by anti-rights intimidations attempts; and having anti-rights actors infiltrate and disrupt their activities and events. Based on the findings, she explores possible responses to the current opposition and backlash against sexual and gender-related rights.

We hope this working paper will find its audience at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida, as well as among policymakers and practitioners in Sweden and abroad. EBA working papers are shorter studies that investigate a question of limited scope or that complements a regular EBA report. The authors are, as with other EBA publications, independently responsible for the content, conclusions, and any recommendations of the reports.

Stockholm, December 2024

Jan Pettersson, Managing Director

Sammanfattning

Under senare år har aktörer som arbetar emot sexuella och könsrelaterade rättigheter blivit starkare, både i antal, organisatoriskt och finansiellt. Aktivister, forskare och praktiker har alla larmat om det pågående arbetet med att nedmontera respekten för frågor som SRHR, jämställdhet, tillgång till preventivmedel och abort samt HBTQI+ [1] -rättigheter. Det som började bland ultrakonservativa i den religiösa och radikala högern i USA och i Vatikanen är en rörelse kallad 'anti-rights' eller 'anti-gender' som spridits över världen och nu även verkar i Latinamerika, Asien och Afrika. Detta inkluderar regioner och länder som Sverige samarbetar med och tillhandahåller bistånd och tekniskt stöd till. Frågan här är därför hur backlashen mot dessa sexuella- och könsrelaterade rättigheter påverkar de civilsamhällesorganisationer som Sida samarbetar med, och hur den hanterar den utmaning som anti-rightsrörelsen innebär?

Denna underlagsrapport försöker belysa dessa frågor genom fem intervjuer med tre av Sidas partnerorganisationer inom civilsamhället. Av säkerhetsskäl uppges inte namnen på de organisationerna och de informanter som intervjuats. Dels beror organisationernas upplevelse av backlashen, åtminstone delvis, på vilken nivå de arbetar på. Organisationerna rapporterar att de och deras anställda har blivit "namngivna" och hotade av medlemmar inom anti-rightsrörelsen; att deras finansiering stoppats av konservativa regeringar; och att aktörer inom anti-rightsrörelsen infiltrerat och stört deras aktiviteter och evenemang. På global FN-nivå rapporterade informanterna liknande erfarenheter, till exempel att aktörer inom anti-rightsrörelsen krävt att viktiga FN-institutioner ska avskaffas, att de infiltrerat FN-evenemang och medvetet försenat eller saboterat viktiga resolutioner om jämställdhet, SRHR och HBTQI+-rättigheter. På lokal nivå rapporterade informanterna att de upplever backlashen genom en ökad hotnivå, statliga och civila attacker mot HBTQI+-synlighet och genom den mer aktiva roll som lokala religiösa ledare spelar. Konsekvenserna av backlashen beror både på organisationens storlek (stor och välfinansierad vs. mindre och mindre resurser) och på vilken nivå de verkar på (lokal, regional, global).

[1] HBTQI+ är en akronym som står för homosexuella, bisexuella, trans- och queerpersoner. Genom att inkludera "plus"-tecknet erkänns den mångfald av självidentifikationer som faller inom det bredare spektrumet av "sexualitet" och/eller "kön".

Rapporten identifierar också en uppsättning strategier som organisationerna använder när de möter motstånd från aktörer inom anti-rightsrörelsen. Organisationernas förmåga att reagera på och skydda sig mot dessa attacker är återigen beroende på deras storlek och verksamhetsnivå, men också på om de arbetar med frågor eller bedriver verksamhet som drar till sig uppmärksamhet eller medvetenhet hos allmänheten. Informanterna beskrev hur deras organisationer har skapat nätverk och samarbeten, både formella och informella, med likasinnade aktörer, har höjt sin beredskap och vidtagit säkerhetsåtgärder, har ökat sin kreativitet och flexibilitet i samarbetet med sina partners och arbetar systematiskt för att avslöja anti-rightsrörelsen arbete, finansiering och idéer. Således beskriver denna underlagsrapport, trots sina begränsningar, hur Sidas partners inom civilsamhället kan påverkas negativt av den pågående attacken mot sexuella- och könsrelaterade rättigheter och att de har fått anpassa sina verksamheter och aktiviteter till ett nytt, mer fientlig, landskap. Informanterna beskrev också att denna backlash bara är en av flera globala fenomen som påverkar deras möjligheter att arbeta med frågor som rör SRHR, jämställdhet och HBTQI+. Detta kan i sin tur påverka effektiviteten av svenskt bistånd negativt.

Rapporten identifierar fyra aspekter som givare eller andra aktörer som är intresserade av att stödja civilsamhället i dessa frågor behöver beakta.

1) **Flexibilitet underlättar**
   Givare behöver främja flexibilitet och kreativitet i sina relationer med och styrningen av sina CSO-partners. Detta skulle sedan kunna tillåta civilsamhällesorganisationerna att bibehålla, anpassa eller till och med utveckla sina verksamheter när de ställs inför motstånd från anti-rightsrörelsen.

2) **Riskhantering är kostsamt**
   Backlashen har lett till högre säkerhetsrisker för CSO partners, vilket medför högre kostnader. Att förstå hur motreaktionen har lett till en ökad nivå av fysiskt och psykiskt våld kan vara det första steget mot att stärka motståndskraften och säkerheten i det civila samhället. Givare bör överväga att öka sin finansiering till organisationer som är drabbade av backlashen, bland annat för att kompensera för ökade säkerhets-kostnader. Denna slutsats grundas på det faktum att backlashen har tvingat civilsamhällesorganisationer att rikta finansiering bort från planerad verksamhet och mot riskhantering, vilket lämnar dem med färre resurser för att bedriva sina normala verksamheter. Det stöds ytterligare av rapporterna om hur anti-rightsrörelsen blir alltmer välfinansierad, och att mer resurser kommer sannolikt att behövas i framtiden.

3) **Nätverk och samarbeten underlättar**
   För det tredje bör givare uppmuntra sina partners att skapa nätverk med likasinnade aktörer. Detta gäller särskilt för partners och grupper som är särskilt utsatta för hot och våld.

4) **Attacker mot SRHR = attacker på mänskliga rättigheter**
   Slutligen betonar underlagsrapporten vikten av att hantera angrepp mot mänskliga rättigheter horisontellt och att förstå sambandet mellan skyddet och respekten för 'övergripande' mänskliga rättigheter och sexuella- och könsrelaterade rättigheter.

Summary

Recent years have seen an increase in the number and organisational and financial strength of actors working to revoke the protection of sexual and gender-related rights. Activists, scholars, and practitioners alike have sounded the alarm about the efforts currently being made to dismantle respect for issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender equality, abortion, family planning and LGBTQI+ [2] rights. While many claim it to have begun among ultraconservatives among the religious (and radical) right in the US as well as in the Vatican, the 'anti-rights' or 'anti-gender' movement has now spread globally, establishing local branches and forging alliances in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. This includes regions and countries that Sweden, through its development cooperation, provides development finance and support to. The question here is how the backlash against SRHR and gender equality affects Sida's civil society partners, and how do they overcome the challenges that the rise of the anti-rights movement presents?

This working paper tries to respond to these questions through five interviews with three of Sida's CSO partners. For security reasons, the names of the (organisations and) informants (representing them) have been left out. The findings suggest that the CSOs' experience of the backlash, at least partly, depends on the institutional level at which they operate. The informants report having their funding blocked by conservative governments; being targeted by anti-rights intimidations attempts; and having anti-rights actors infiltrate and disrupt their activities and events. At the level of the UN, the informants reported similar experiences, for example, that anti-rights actors (both traditional and previously considered 'gender champions') are calling for the defunding of important UN institutions; are infiltrating their UN events and are purposefully stalling or sabotaging important resolutions on gender equality, SRHR, and LGBTQI+ rights. At the local level, informants reported experiencing the backlash in terms of an increased level of physical and psychological violence; state and civilian attacks on LGBTQI+ visibility; and through the active role played by local religious leaders.

[2] LGBTQI+ is an acronym representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals. The inclusion of the 'plus' sign acknowledges the diverse array of self-identifications falling within the broader spectrum of 'sexuality' and/or 'gender'.

The working paper concludes that the effect of the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights is dependent on both the size of the organisation (big and well-funded vs. smaller and less funded) and its institutional level. The paper also identifies a set of strategies or responses used by the organisations when facing opposition from anti-rights actors. The ability of organisations to respond to these attacks is again conditioned on their size and level of operation, but also on whether they are engaged in activities and issues that attract attention or awareness by the general public. The informants mentioned how their organisations have created networks and collaborations, both formal and informal, with likeminded actors, increased their preparedness and set up security measures, increased their creativity and flexibility in dealing with their partners, and are working strategically to expose the work, funding, and ideas of the anti-rights movement. Thus, while limited in scope, this working paper describes how that Sida's CSO partners are negatively affected by the ongoing attack on sexual and gender-related rights and that they have had to adapt their operations and activities to a new, more hostile, landscape. Given that the informants stated that this backlash is just one of several other global phenomena negatively impacting their ability to work on topics related to SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+, the findings indicate that Sida's partners are currently under great pressure and that this in turn could affect the effectiveness of Swedish aid.

This report identifies four aspects that members of the donor community or other actors interested in supporting civil society should consider, based on the findings.

1) **Flexibility facilitates**
   Firstly, donors should consider increasing or promoting flexibility and creativity in their relationships with and management of their CSO partners. This could then allow the CSOs to maintain, adapt, or even advance their operations when faced with backlash from the anti-rights movement.

2) **Security measures are costly**
   Secondly, donors need to be aware of how the backlash has produced higher security risks for their partners, and that these, in turn, come with additional costs. Understanding how the backlash has resulted in an increased level of physical and psychological violence can be the first step towards strengthening the resilience and security of civil society. Donors should consider increasing their funding of CSOs. This implication is based on the fact that the backlash has forced CSOs to route funding away from planned activity and towards risk

mitigation, which leaves them with fewer resources to conduct their normal operations. It is further supported by the reports of how the anti-rights movement is increasingly well-funded and that more resources are likely to be needed in order to combat them in the future.

3) **Networks and collaboration**
   Third, donors should encourage their partners to create networks with like-minded actors, especially among vulnerable communities and actors in hostile environments. Networks and alliances can help CSOs deal with the negative consequences of the backlash and function as a tool for combatting the rise of the anti-rights movement.

4) **Attacks on SRHR are attacks on human rights**
   Lastly, the working paper highlights the importance of addressing attacks against human rights horizontally and to understand the interconnectedness of the protection and respect for 'overall' human rights and sexual and gender-related rights.

Abbreviations

CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex. The 'plus' sign acknowledges the diverse array of self-identifications falling within the broader spectrum of 'sexuality' and/or 'gender'
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SRR	Sexual and Reproductive Rights
TERF	Trans-exclusionary Feminist Movement
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

Introduction

Sweden is and has long been a key actor in the international work on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender equality, and LGBTQI+[3] rights. However, an increasingly strong global trend indicates that it might be harder for Sweden to find like-minded allies in the future. Despite the fact – and in some respects due to the fact – that the international community has been dominated by a progressive view on gender equality since the 1990s, we are currently witnessing increased opposition to and backlash against these rights and liberties. With strongholds in the US and Europe (Datta, 2021), an increasingly transnational, professional, and well-funded movement built on conservative religiosity (primarily Catholic and Orthodox Christianity but also, in some contexts, Islam) [McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023]) is spreading globally, establishing local outposts and allies in Latin America (Corrales, 2019), Africa (Awondo et al., 2021), and Asia (IWRAW Asia Pacific, 2023). The aim of the movement is to roll back human rights regarding sexual, reproductive, and gender-related rights, and research has confirmed the movement's infiltration of international, regional, and national institutions (Datta, 2018). This suggests that the reality of those working daily to execute and operationalise Sweden's strategy for women's and minority groups' right to freedom and empowerment most likely looks different to what it did just 10 years ago. It is paramount to understand the effects of this global and growing opposition to ensure the continued efficiency of Swedish development cooperation. The aim of this working paper is therefore to explore and describe how some of Sida's CSO partners experience, are affected by, and respond to the current opposition and backlash against sexual and gender-related rights. The findings may also provide a basis for future evaluations of Swedish aid about the backlash against SRHR and gender equality. The following research questions has guided the study:

1. How do Sida's CSO partners experience the backlash against SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights?
2. How does the backlash affect Sida's CSO partners' ability to implement development projects on SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights?
3. How do Sida's CSO partners address and respond to the backlash against SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights?

[3] LGBTQI+ is an acronym representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals. The inclusion of the 'plus' sign acknowledges the diverse array of self-identifications falling within the broader spectrum of 'sexuality' and/or 'gender'.

Background

The following sections will provide a background on the anti-rights movement and the thematic areas under attack in the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights.

Terminology

The global opposition towards sexual and gender-related rights goes under various names, which reflects the variety of topics under attack and the diversity of actors involved. Two key concepts used to describe the movement, that are sometimes used interchangeably, are the terms 'anti-rights' and 'anti-gender'. The difference between the two concepts is that the former is used to refer to the overall movement attacking the human rights of various groups (for example, women, children, and the LGBTQI+ community) (Clavaud et al., 2022; Eurochild, 2022; Rutgers, 2023). The latter refers to a specific network of conservative Christian actors that form part of the larger global opposition (Datta, 2018; McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023). Thus, all anti-gender actors can be considered part of the anti-rights movement, yet not all anti-rights actors are considered part of the more specific anti-gender movement.

This working paper will mainly use the term 'anti-rights movement'. The choice to use this term is based on the understanding that it encompasses most of the actors currently involved in the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights, but this study also notes that not all opposition actors can be identified by using this term. It should, however, be noted that most actors referred to here as 'anti-rights actors' do not use the term themselves and would most likely deny their affiliation with the movement.

Development of the anti-rights movement

The overall anti-rights movement is often said to have developed as a response to the progressive steps taken for global gender equality and LGBTQI+ rights during the 1990s (Datta, 2021; Norris, 2023; McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023). Actors and members of the anti-rights movement have become increasingly well-organised and connected (Datta, 2018; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). The movement lacks official coordination and is, in essence, a "disparate alliance" (Clavaud et al, 2023, p.12) of actors with similar ideological stances that, at times, work together to achieve a

common goal but most often operate in separation. Today, the movement and its actors are active on most continents and have taken positions within several institutions at national (for example US under Trump [Clavaud et al., 2022], Argentina under Milei, and Hungary under Orbán), international (for example United Nations [Datta, 2018; 2022; McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023]), and supranational (for example European Parliament [Kantola & Lombardo, 2021]) level. The movement has allies among religious extremists (Datta, 2018; Clavaud et al., 2022), far-right political parties (Datta, 2021; Graff & Korolczuk, 2022) and civil society organisations (Datta, 2018; 2022; NSWP, 2022).

While anti-rights actors centre their opposition on different aspects of the "progressive world order", three overarching themes reoccur. Firstly, members of the anti-rights movement argue that 'gender ideology' disturbs and violates the 'natural order' designed by God (most commonly the Catholic and Orthodox Christian God). 'Gender ideology' is a term invented by the anti-gender movement to encompass various elements of the progressive stance and centrally the idea that gender is a social construction. From this follows that any international approval of elements of the 'gender ideology' threatens the rights and continued existence of the divine, heteronormative, cisgender[4], and patriarchal world order (Datta, 2018; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). Central to this argument is the concept of the 'traditional or natural family' and the idea that this family type constitutes a core and essential institution in civilised society. This same argument is, however, increasingly framed in more religiously neutral language as anti-rights actors attempt to professionalize their public image and distance themselves from the negative connotations of fundamentalist religiosity (Datta, 2018; Graff & Korolzcuk, 2022). For example, the anti-rights movement is now frequently referring to the natural order as a 'natural law' rather than a divine ordinance (Datta, 2021; Norris, 2023).

Secondly, anti-rights actors, especially those operating in previously colonised regions (Latin America [Biroli & Caminotti, 2022], Africa [Awondo et al., 2022] and Eastern Europe [Korolczuk, 2020]), argue that human rights (including SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights) are being imposed by the West as a form of "cultural imperialism" (Clavaud et al., 2022, p.15) and that these ideas are 'foreign' and 'unnatural' to these regions (Awondo et al., 2022; McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023).

[4] The word cisgender (often shortened to cis; sometimes cissexual) describes a person whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth.

Lastly, anti-rights actors manipulate and co-opt internationally recognised language and terms to suit their own purposes (Clavaud et al., 2022; Datta, 2018) by, for example, using human rights language in claiming to protect the 'right to life' of the unborn child by banning abortion (Datta, 2018) or by protesting the contents of international commitments and statements on account of the 'right to sovereignty of states' (Corredor, 2019; Graff & Korolczuk, 2022).

Academia has largely focused on the European anti-rights movement (e.g., Datta, 2018; 2022; Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018), but there are clear indications that similar ideas and actors are articulated and operating in other parts of the world. A clear and relevant example for the development cooperation community is the steps taken by the former Trump administration to disrupt global access to abortion care by reinforcing and enlarging the 'Global Gag Rule' (or 'Mexico City Policy' as it was formally called) that effectively banned all American financing of abortion-related aid projects (Ahmed, 2020). While the policy was renounced by the Biden administration and was only in effect for four years, research has highlighted its negative and potentially long-term consequences, for example, in reduced access to contraceptives (Sully et al., 2023) and abortion even in countries where these services have been legalised (Ahmed, 2020), an increased number of unplanned pregnancies (Marie Stopes, 2020) and in the widespread practice of self-censorship on abortion and SRHR among health care providers in US's partner countries (Ahmed, 2020).

Another region whose anti-rights movements have been heavily researched is Latin America (e.g., Corrales, 2019; Biroli & Caminotti, 2020; Zaremberg et al., 2021). As in the European (and partly US) case, the anti-rights opposition is based on a conservative Catholic (or Evangelical) Christian understanding of the (heteronormative and cis-gendered) nuclear family's importance and divine nature (Biroli & Caminotti, 2020; Datta, 2018) and the advocacy of conservative gender roles (Zaremberg et al., 2021). Scholars have argued that the anti-rights and anti-gender movement in Latin America differs from that in the US and parts of Europe due to the region's relatively recent democratisation and the progressive leaders that followed. Latin American conservatives work transnationally to oppose the advancements made by the region's feminist movements, in what has been called a 'reactionary politicisation of gender' (Biroli & Caminotti, 2020). The growing anti-right movement in this region has given "conservative groups a common language for political struggle that are not necessarily connected to sexuality" (ibid, p. 2).

Anti-rights actors have assumed powerful positions in state institutions (ibid.), with one recent example being the Argentinian law banning the use of gender-inclusive language in public administration (Buenos Aires Times, 2024).

A region that has been granted less attention in anti-rights research is Africa, despite the clear signs of increased mobilisation against SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights there (Awondo et al., 2021). Researchers are now highlighting how the "ideological war" (Awondo et al., 2021, p. 2) imported to Europe from the US has begun to take root across the African continent, escalating the mobilisation against sexual and gender-related rights. At a global level, there has been an awareness for a long time about the LGBTQI+ community's situation in Uganda, where the 'Anti-Homosexuality Act' made same-sex relations a criminal offence charged with the death penalty in 2014 (HRW, 2014). A similar law has now been passed in Ghana (Naad, 2024). Other examples are Zambia where the Ministry of Health advised its staff and cooperating partners to remove and disregard the word 'sexual' in sexual and reproductive health and rights (Petrus-Barry, 2023) and research is highlighting the increased power and influence of anti-rights actors working in countries like Kenya (McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023), Mali, Cameroon (Awondo et al., 2020), Botswana, and Namibia (Mmolai-Chalmers, 2023). Most Swedish SRHR aid is also directed at Africa (UD, 2022b).

In summary, members of the anti-rights movement are now operating globally to reverse protection against several human rights, particularly those relating to the sexual and gender-related rights of various minority groups. The next section will go into more depth about three of the most important thematic areas against which the anti-rights movement is now opposing, namely, SRHR, including CSR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights.

Thematic areas under attack

As previously mentioned, there are several themes and rights that have been attacked by the increasingly global opposition to sexual and gender-related rights. The anti-rights movement have mobilised against different topics in different contexts. However, three essential thematic areas reappear in the anti-rights narrative, and even though these topics have several intersections and are theoretically (and ideologically) connected, this working paper will present and discuss them separately. The following

sections will define these three themes (SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights) and provide examples of how the anti-rights movement has previously acted on these themes. Additionally, SRHR has a sub-category, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), to highlight the nuances of the opposition and the diversity of its actors, narratives, and strategies.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

SRHR can be separated into its two main aspects, 1) sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and 2) sexual and reproductive rights (SRR). Sexual and reproductive health can be defined as a "state of physical, emotional, mental, and social wellbeing in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity" (The Lancet, 2018, p. 2646) and sexual and reproductive rights are the rights required to ensure the equal and sufficient fulfilment of this state of sexual and reproductive wellbeing (health). Health topics within the frame of sexual and reproductive health are, for example, abortion, access to contraception and other forms of family planning counselling, the treatment and care of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), maternal mortality, antenatal-, pregnancy- and postpartum care; CSE; and LGBTQI+-rights (more information in the following section).

Unlike other areas of health, those related to sexuality and reproduction have long been and are increasingly being politicised in many parts of the world. The access and right to abortion are among the most highly debated issues in terms of SRHR, and as previously mentioned, the domestic politics around abortion have influenced international development cooperation, for example through the 'Global Gag Rule' (Ahmed, 2020). The anti-abortion movement is complex and will not be described in detail here, but in relation to the anti-rights movement, the discourse can be briefly summarised as the use and appropriation of a "human rights language" to advocate for the divine right to life from the moment of conception to natural death (Datta, 2018), as well as the idea that sex and sexuality should solely be enjoyed for the purpose of procreation (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). These arguments are similar to those used against contraception, and ultimately originate in the movement's vision of the 'traditional family' described in the 'natural order' and the wish to further marginalise (or ban) other forms of intimacy and kinship that, in their minds, violate this order and therefore represent a threat to the hetero-normative, patriarchal, and cis-gendered nuclear family (McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023).

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)

CSE is defined by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as a "rights-based and gender-focused approach to sexuality education, whether in school or out of school" (Sida, 2016, p.1). International human rights standards require national governments to ensure children's and youth's access to CSE (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2008). This right to CSE is grounded in international human rights conventions regarding children's right to education and the highest attainable health and well-being standard (UNESCO, 2021). Despite proven positive public health effects, the anti-rights movement has long mobilised against children's right to CSE, and with its stronghold in the US, the opposition has now risen in Latin America (Biroli & Caminotti, 2020; Zaremberg et al., 2020), Africa (Ipas, 2023), and Europe (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017).

The opposition against CSE is based on an alternative interpretation of two rights, the human right to religious freedom and what the anti-rights movement calls 'parental rights'. The movement argues that CSE violates a parent's authority over their children's education and their right to raise their children in accordance with their personal and religious convictions (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Sosa, 2021; McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023). One reason behind the opposition to CSE is a perception that it poses a threat to the traditional family and the idea that it is and should be heterosexual, patriarchal, and hierarchical (Ipas, 2023). According to the anti-rights movement, CSE is used to indoctrinate children and youth in 'gender ideology' and undermines the parents' 'natural role' as the educators of their children and their right to raise their children in line with their own moral and conservative religious values. Another argument, which also originates in the concept of the 'natural order', is the idea that CSE leads to the sexualisation of children and that it promotes homosexuality and abortion (Ipas, 2023), which violates the idea that sexual activity should be reserved to the procreative functions of the heterosexual, cis-gendered, adult, monogamous, and Christian marriage (Datta, 2018; Clavaud et al., 2022). This argument is also used as part of the movement's narrative on the need to protect children from harm, and the parents' right to decide freely how to educate them (Eurochild, 2022; Kuhar & Patenotte, 2017).

Gender equality

The opposition from the anti-rights movement is not limited to women's and other minority groups' right to bodily autonomy and equality in the area of SRHR but is also expressed in opposition to their equality (in relation to cisgender heterosexual men) in general. Furthermore, when the anti-rights movements continue to claim support of women's rights and liberties many argue that it is in essence a cover and tool to legitimise its discrimination of people who do not confine to conservative forms of femininity (Datta, 2018; Graff & Korolczuk, 2022). From an anti-rights perspective, gender equality and the notion of gender as a social construct violates the 'divine' and 'natural' social order based on a binary and biological division of the sexes (McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023; Norris, 2023). The current international support of progressive gender equality is therefore seen as a threat to this 'natural' order (Norris, 2023).

The movement advocates for an alternative view of gender equality based on biological sex (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022). This view relies on patriarchal and traditional gender roles, where the 'natural' role of women is defined by their reproductive capacity. Moreover, the notion of the 'natural family' as one of the most important social institutions further influences the movement's perception of women and their 'natural' role in society. According to the anti-rights movement, women have a social responsibility to fulfil their role as mothers and as part of the 'natural family'. This then contributes to the idolisation of a conservative view of women that excludes women's role and place outside the home (McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023; Norris, 2023).

Progressive gender equality is, however, not only about cisgender women's rights in relation to cisgender men's rights, but the anti-rights movement more or less openly denies the rights of any other group. As will be discussed in more detail in the coming section, the natural order opposes the 'naturality' of any other sexual orientations and gender expressions than that of the traditional cis-gendered and heterosexual men and women and claim that members of the LGBTQI+ community are products of the depravity of modern society (Datta, 2018; Kuhar & Paternotte, 201; McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023; Norris, 2023).

Since the anti-rights movement is grounded in a binary and cisheteropatriachal understanding of gender, the movement is fundamentally exclusionary of transgender and other sexual and gender minorities (as described in more detail in the next section). This means that the

movement's increased impact has direct effects on the holistic view of gender equality that does not equate the improved position of heterosexual ciswomen with gender equality. A worrying development is the alliances that are now being formed between the anti-rights movement and the growing trans-exclusionary feminist movement (TERF) (IWRAW Asia Pacific, 2023) and their use and distortion of gender equality arguments to promote conservative gender roles.

LGBTQI+ rights

Discrimination against LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex) people is unfortunately a global phenomenon and, like the issues discussed earlier, the opposition has increased with the expansion and international recognition of LGBTQI+ human rights. In some contexts (e.g., Poland and Russia), the backlash against LGBTQI+ human rights is more widespread compared to other aspects of anti-rights mobilisation (Korolczuk, 2020). Anti-rights actors rely to a large extent on the same arguments in their opposition of the human rights of the LGBTQI+ community as it does for people's right to bodily autonomy and gender equality. The movement uses the same strategic rhetoric centred on the 'traditional family' and the 'protection of religious freedom and culture' to either openly oppose LGBTQI+ rights or to mask their underlying hatred of LGBTQI+ people and other minority groups (Datta, 2018; McEwen & Narayanaswamy, 2023).

According to the anti-rights movement and its allies, the social acceptance of LGBTQI+ people pose a direct threat to the, in their view, 'natural' monogamous, heterosexual, and patriarchal nuclear family. Central to this belief is the idea that gender is binary, that people's gender can only be defined by their biological sex and that sexual relations can (and should) only occur between two people of the opposite biological sex (Corrales, 2021; Datta, 2018). This view of what is 'natural' and 'divine' leads to a perception of LGBTQI+ people as 'unnatural' and a threat to (conservative) Christian religiosity. LGBTQI+ people, especially gay men and transgender people, are therefore often associated with and accused of paedophilia and the perceived corruption of Christian culture (Korolczuk, 2020). Further examples are the opposition to same-sex marriage, LGBTQI+ family and parental rights, and gender-affirming care, all of which are considered to threaten the traditional family and to be an expression of the indoctrinating 'gender ideology' (Datta, 2018; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017).

As the sections above show, the anti-rights movement opposes core elements of what can be considered progressive gender equality and human rights. There is great awareness of the difficulties faced by CSOs working on these issues in general, and it is reasonable to assume that the hostile environment and polarisation on these issues have not made their situation any easier. There is, however, a need for more specific knowledge about how the backlash has affected their situation and operations in practice. This working paper aims to bridge this knowledge gap by focusing on the anti-rights movement's backlash against SRHR (including CSE), gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights as proxies for the larger opposition against sexual and gender-related rights.

Methods and design

Five interviews with three of Sida's CSO partners working in different fields targeted by the anti-rights movement were made during March–April 2024.

Selection of partner CSOs

The organisations were selected in consultation with Sida's SRHR team and represent the breadth of themes (SRHR, gender equality and LGBTQI+ rights). There are both conceptual and practical overlaps between the thematic areas and the organisations, and the organisations in some ways touch upon all themes in their work. The intersection of the themes cannot be understated. In light of the hostilities faced by these organisations and to safeguard their confidentiality, their names and the names of the responders are not included in the working paper. The following descriptions of the organisations and their portfolio are therefore consciously brief.

- Organisation 1 is an international grant-making organisation supporting local civil society and advocacy actors working with SRHR. Three informants were interviewed, two from their headquarters and one from a local office.
- Organisation 2 is an international LGBTQI+ member organisation. One informant based at the organisation's headquarters was interviewed.
- Organisation 3 is an international membership organisation supporting feminist movements working for women's rights and gender justice. One informant based at the organisation's headquarters was interviewed.

The initial contact with the informants was taken with help from Sida's SRHR team. All interviews were conducted in English using digital meeting tools. To quote or refer to information provided by the informants, they have been assigned an alphabetical letter, for example, Informant A, Informant B, etc. More information about the informants and their organisations can be found in Appendix II.

Data collection and analyses

The data collection was made through semi-structured interviews with key actors at the studied organisations. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 1. The decision to use a semi-structured interview method was based on the wish to unravel and retain previously unknown information relevant to the study. The semi-structed approach provides a balance between flexibility and structure and allows the researcher to cover specific topics while also permitting the exploration of unexpected avenues that may arise during the interview process. This flexibility also promotes rapport and engagement between the researcher and interviewee, which is beneficial considering the sensitive nature of the studied topic. The data has been analysed using an inductive thematic analysis approach. This means that the analysis of the data was not guided by theoretical assumptions or predetermined codes. Instead, the analysis was data-driven, and the identified themes were based entirely on the data.

The method allows for the compartmentalisation of data into themes that captures relevant aspects in relation to the research questions. The analysis of the collected data has been guided by the three research questions (how do Sida's CSO partners experience the backlash?; how does the backlash affect Sida's CSO partner's ability to implement development projects; how do Sida's CSO partners address and respond to the backlash?), yet as the analysis relies on an inductive approach, the answers and insights provided by the informant might come to expand the scope of the themes underlying these research questions.

Positionality

This report is authored by a white, Swedish, middle-class, cis-woman, and LGBTQI+-ally. The sociocultural context in which I live may differ substantially from that of some of my interviewees and the communities they serve. With this section, I want to acknowledge the various privileges I hold and how, despite my best intentions, these may hinder my ability to fully understand the lived reality of those I interview and their political contexts. Throughout the writing of this report, I have recognised and been aware of the potential effect, both positive and negative, my positionality has on the work I do, and, whenever possible, attempted to minimise its negative influence.

Results

The following chapter presents the results of the thematic analysis of the interview data and describes the most prominent themes identified in relation to the three research questions. The chapter has been structured around these questions. The first section will present the informants' experience of the backlash at three different 'levels' and how their experiences differ and coalesce. The second section will present how the backlash affects the CSO's ability to implement projects, followed by the final section on strategies and responses to the backlash.

Experiences of the backlash

The informants differed in their descriptions of the nature of the backlash. One informant referred to the opposition against LGBTQI+ rights as a form of backlash, but they also highlighted how "what we call backlash today has happened for a very, very long time" (Informant C), 2024-03-20) and that "what we have seen in terms of opposition against LGBTI issues has always been there, but now it is or can be seen in a context of opposing gender equality" (ibid). These insights on the longevity of the opposition against the human rights of the LGBTQI+ community can be compared to the reflection provided by an informant working on the ground in a sub-Saharan country where "at a certain point [local LGBTQI organisation] could do some activities, not with the LGBTI flag, but just emerge to speak […]. Now it is totally forbidden" (Informant C). Additionally, the backlash was referred to as a "campaigning tool [used by anti-rights actors] in order to leverage political power" that not only threatens access and support of sexual and gender-related rights, but that threatens "our liberal societies [and] democracy" (Informant D) and "the all other human rights" (Informant E) as such. These statements reflect the notion that the backlash may have broader societal implications than 'just' in the case of sexual and gender-related rights and that this perspective on the backlash might also influence their programming and response to it.

This understanding is also embedded in the distinction between the concepts of 'anti-gender' and 'anti-rights' (as previously mentioned). Related to the above is the notion that the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights is just one among other global phenomena negatively impacting the operations and resilience of CSOs working on these topics. The informants mentioned the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic (Informant B), the politicisation of migration (Informant A), and general

attacks on civil society and human rights organisations (Informant E) as global trends with similar, and negative, effects on the conditions of performing civil society work. One comment that was provided by an informant based in sub-Saharan Africa warned about the negative and violent repercussions for the region's vulnerable communities when actors in the Global North publicly discuss the status of feminist, LGBTQI+, and SRHR movements in the Global South. They said that:

> "When Western people are talking of these issues, it doesn't help at all. […] People will use this to say that 'Oh they're promoting homosexuality' and they will start to assault and beat people on the ground to let them know that 'we will not allow white people to come and tell us how to live and how to behave and things like that'. So, it has the reverse [effect]. So, what white people need to do now is to let […] us organise ourselves, because we are living in the context, and we can manage in this context".

This comment shed light on how anti-colonial sentiments are sometimes used to warrant violence against minority groups and that these sentiments need to be considered in the planning and implementation of development projects; and the need to incorporate a level of caution when working with or talking about issues that ultimately are a matter of life or death for people living under more precarious circumstances. It further highlights that even though the anti-rights movement is working transnationally and cross-continentally to undermine respect for human rights, the backlash is experienced and expressed within a local context that needs to be not only considered but given priority when talking about and programming for the enhancement of SRHR, gender equality and LGBTQI+ rights in partner countries. The quote also highlights what it is the CSOs under study are fighting against, and a clarifying reminder of the types of scenarios we wish women, girls, members of the LGBTQI+ community and other minority groups in all their diversity never again have to face. As said by one of the informants, "this whole anti-rights and anti-gender stuff is [not] gonna go away in the next decade or so, it's the topic of this decade" (Informant D) and actors supporting progressive values should be prepared to a long fight against this backlash. This violence is only going to spread if the anti-rights movement gains power across the world and this is why we need to increase our support of CSOs, activists, and other actors working on these issues and our own commitments to their cause. How the backlash became visible differed at different arenas or

operational levels. The informants described how the backlash was visible at global level; how their organisations were targeted and how their local partners were targeted. The following sections will describe what the backlash looks like at these different levels. Some anti-rights actors are involved at all institutional levels, while others are only active at certain levels.

Opposition at the global level

Two of the informants described experiencing the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights at global level, with attacks targeting the UN. One informant distinguished between two different types of anti-rights attacks on the UN system, those coming from "inside of the multilateral system" and the "attacks on the outside" (Informant E). The former refers to attacks from state and non-state actors, so-called "traditional anti-rights actors" (ibid), that in different ways oppose the realisation of gender equality by working to, for example "stop [the UN] from adopting a resolution, […] lower the level of progress on language on certain documents, [and] pushing for the election of representatives in UN institutions that are anti-rights actors" (ibid). This view is corroborated by another informant who furthermore pointed out the new "level of organisation" (Informant D) among traditional anti-rights actors and that there is a new dimension or phenomenon of "organisations that put money, effort and strategy into figuring out how to sell [the anti-rights] message" (ibid). So, while these types of actors appear to have existed within the UN institutions for a long time, the CSOs have experienced an enlargement of the backlash in terms of the size of the anti-rights network, its professionalism, and resources.

The other type of attack was external. The informants mentioned how various anti-rights actors "are seeking to penetrate our spaces" (Informant D) at the UN and thereby constitute a somewhat external threat against the UN system. The informants mentioned how anti-rights actors from civil society have started to "come to the events that we organise [at UN conferences], deliberately, in order to hold their ground" and "to make a visible point of 'we disagree with what is happening in this side event'" (Informant D). One concrete example was from the annual conference Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) [5]. Two organisations mentioned experiencing anti-rights attacks during this

[5] The CSW is an annual gathering on gender equality and women's rights organized by UN Women and was held in New York, in March 2024.

event, and one informant described how, at the CSW, "someone in the room was from the opposition or from anti-rights, taking notes and writing [down] everything that was being said", essentially "monitoring for one of the anti-rights organisations that were present at the CSW" (Informant E).Another new phenomenon caused by the backlash is how anti-rights sympathising states are now calling for the defunding of UN institutions and feminist organisations (Informant E). This reinforces and coincides with the ongoing "restrictions on civil society participation in the UN" (ibid). Both phenomena directly affect the ability of CSOs and the UN to promote progressive stances on sexual and gender-related rights, which will be further discussed below. Lastly, as a result of the overall polarisation and politicisation of sexual and gender-related rights, one informant noted how actors "traditionally [considered] allies to our feminist movement" (Informant E) are increasingly promoting and using anti-rights language within the UN institutions, particularly on the topic of "trans people's rights" (ibid) and human rights in general. The informant mentioned both state representatives and UN mandate holders as actors now "behaving similarly as the block of traditional anti-rights actors" (ibid). This tendency of actors previously considered progressive beginning to waiver in their support of sexual and gender-related rights, and human rights in general, was also mentioned another informant who argued that it has now become "more and more important in many more countries" (Informant D) to hold government accountable on their human rights positioning.

The effects of this trend will be further discussed below, but for now, it can be argued that the anti-rights actors operating within and outside of the UN institutions appear to be strengthened both by additional resources and additional allies among previously progressive states and actors.

Opposition targeting international CSOs

All informants described experiencing opposition and attacks directly targeting their own organisations. The informants mentioned how their organisations have been "named" (Informant B) or "quoted by anti-rights lobbying", and that actors are spreading information to their supporters about how the CSOs are "radical gender ideology supporters" (Informant E) or that they "fund homosexuality" (Informant B). The CSOs also mentioned how they have been blacklisted by governments in some of the countries where they operate (Informant A). One informant mentioned how a UN mandate holder directed an open and official letter

to the organisation and other feminist groups following their critique of its stance on trans rights, and the informant referred to this tactic as a form of "intimidation" (Informant E). Furthermore, the CSOs mentioned how anti-rights actors are attending their events. They noted how opposition actors are increasingly "coming there to slur trans people or sex workers" (Informant D) and that they are using these platforms to attack individual participants as well as their message at large. Finally, and as previously mentioned, CSOs report that the backlash reinforces and coincides with the ongoing and "new level of attacks against civil society and civil society organisations" (Informant E), with anti-rights actors and states calling for the defunding of feminist CSOs.

Opposition against local CSOs

The international CSOs have local partner organisations that are at the frontline of the opposition, and often experience the worst consequences of the backlash. The informants from one organisation reported that their partners in sub-Saharan countries have "experienced a lot of government shutting down organisations' spending activities"; that grantee partners "have their bank accounts frozen by the government"; and that "people are being put in prison" (Informant A) because of their work on sexual and gender-related rights. Local partners receiving funding and organisational support from one of the studied organisations have reportedly been summoned to "speak to the government and sign a document to say that they are not working on LGBT rights" and that the grantee partner "has been reported [to the government] by another organisation" (Informant B).

These accounts suggest that the government, state officials and other members of civil society are important players in the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights in certain contexts and that they are wielding their state authority to attack the CSOs working on these topics. One informant working in the sub-Saharan context corroborated the statements about government repression towards progressive actors and nuanced the image by highlighting how "the government has [a] double language" (Informant C). They mentioned how the government claim to support "the right to an intimate life, to privacy" and is aware of the backlash against women's rights, yet simultaneously dissuades and prevents organisations from working on LGBTQI+ rights and visibility and fails to prevent or even comment on the fatal violence against women (ibid). The informant further pointed to the role played by religious leaders in reinforcing stigma and backlash against the LGBTQI+ community by, for

example, publicly speaking against the Catholic Church's decision to bless gay couples, and how these statements were circulated by media and later used by civilians to harass members of the LGBTQI+ community. According to the informant, "religious movements are making […] [it] more difficult now to speak of [LGBTQI+] things" (ibid) and that this affects the ability of local CSOs to work on these issues, which will be discussed further below.

Lastly, the informant further commented on the interaction between anti-colonial and anti-rights sentiments. In discussing the violence experienced by local LGBTQI+ communities, the informant mentioned how state and non-state actors alike have combined their resistance against Global North interventions or normative impositions with their resistance against LGBTQI+ rights by saying that 'we will not allow white people to come and tell us how to live and how to behave" (Informant C). Taken together, the analysis revealed that the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights manifests in different ways across the three identified institutional levels and that the ways in which the CSOs encounter and experience the opposition partly depend on where and how they work.

Consequences of the backlash

The analysis reveals that the backlash has affected the ability of Sida's CSO partners to carry out their activities and that they have had to adapt their work to the more hostile context. In conclusion, three major effects of the backlash have been revealed; increased violence and insecurity; anti-rights actors actively naming and 'shaming' progressive actors; and an increased need of funding due to attacks on civil society from state and non-state actors. The backlash has different effects depending on both the operational level and size of the CSO, and smaller organisations and vulnerable communities are disproportionately impacted.

Violence and insecurity

An increase in violence against employees as well as against sexual and gender minorities, especially trans people and other members of the LGBTQI+ community, was articulated in different ways by all informants. They all mentioned violence as one consequence of the backlash. Keeping in mind that this study is limited in terms of its generalisability, this trend of increased hostility faced by CSOs is disconcerting. At the local level, and here specifically referring to the sub-Saharan African region, the

informants described incidences of physical, at times even fatal, violence as a result of the backlash. One informant described how "people are becoming violent" (Informant C) and that this affects the ability of local organisations and partners to carry out their activities, especially activities that are performed in public or with elements of LGBTQI+ or feminist visibility (ibid).

This violence also has repercussions for the international grant makers, as the informant stated that more of their grantee partners are now asking for "safety and security funding" (Informant A), and that they had not "read a recent application that doesn't in some way mention opposition [or] anti-rights" (Informant B). At CSOs working at the international level, informants pointed to an increase in psychological or emotional violence and its effect on their ability to carry out their work. These intimidation tactics affect the ability of the CSOs to arrange and attend public events and to ensure the safety and security of their members, guests, and invitees as it may be "very re-traumatising to reexperience certain discrimination that many of us have experienced in [our] lives" (ibid). While the severity of these incidents cannot be understated, the informants expressed that this was expected to some extent. One informant stated that it is "almost our job to go into hostile spaces and hold our ground, but that's not for everyone" (Informant D). This suggests that, disturbing as these incidents are and may be, certain actors within the CSOs described having somewhat of an inherent preparedness for situations like these. These types of backlash effects also mean that the CSOs "have to spend time, money, and energy in responding to [the anti-rights] actors" (Informant D) that attack their work and their members or allies. This leaves the CSOs with less resources to perform their actual and mandated activities. This also goes for resourcing safety and security measures taken to protect their employees, partners, and community members, which will be discussed further below.

Naming and 'shaming'

As previously mentioned, two of the studied CSOs reported having been 'named' by anti-rights actors, yet both organisations stated that these intimidation attempts have thus far had little or no effect on their operations. One informant reported that they had not "felt direct repercussions" of their organisation having been blacklisted by some governments due to their work on CSE and LGBTQI+ rights in the country and that "nothing will come of [these events]" (Informant A). They attributed this partly to them "working quite hard to keep under the

radar […]" and, like several of the informants, highlighted that this strategy is not a direct result of the backlash, but rather that they "always had to be a little bit cautious […] because that is the nature of these things" (ibid).Similarly, another informant reported that they "don't expect that [the naming of their organisation] would affect too much of [their] reputation or funding, but that [they] had to have a contingency plan to […] explain [to their funders and partners] what was going on" (Informant E).

It appears as though the attempts to stifle the operations of progressive CSOs by naming them have not yet succeeded, even though the developing a contingency plan may redirect funding from other activities. The informant attributed the limited effect of this anti-rights strategy to the fact their organisation is one of the bigger feminist CSOs and argued that these same attacks "can have very, very damaging effect[s]" (ibid) on smaller organisations.

Funding and government shutdown

One, perhaps obvious, effect of the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights is problems with or need of additional funding. As previously mentioned, organisations now have to spend resources and money in responding to attacks from anti-rights actors and groups (Informant D) and on building the capacity of their members and partners to protect themselves from other, sometimes violent, effects of the opposition (Informant E). Yet another direct effect of the backlash against these rights is how the CSOs now experience "a lot of government shutting down [local partner] organisation's spending activities" and that local partners have had "their bank accounts frozen by the government" (Informant A). This directly impacts the ability of these local partners to perform their planned activities and results in the loss of invested resources. On top of this, local partners working in contexts of increased government repression also have "bigger funding needs" (Informant B), as they have to take new and additional measures to ensure the continuation of their work. Calling for UN institutions and feminist organisations to be defunded is another related effect (Informant E). One informant stated that more and more anti-rights actors are now "attacking us based on the funding [that] feminist organisation receive" (ibid). The informant reported that this is part of the broader and "new level of attack on civil society and civil society organisations" (ibid) and emphasised that, due to their size, their organisation has not yet felt direct repercussions of these attacks in terms of funding, but that it can have a detrimental effect

on smaller civil society organisations. Having funding removed "makes a huge difference" for how the organisation operates. Having confidence in the continued funding of one's organisation "makes us bolder, […] gives us space to be more creative to try to talk to other people, to have more imagination in the work we do" (ibid). This indicates that the current attacks on civil society can have serious effects for the resilience and future activities of CSOs. Smaller organisations, in particular, might require additional support in order to continue their work in face of the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights.

Finally, one informant mentioned how the disproportional resource base of progressive and anti-rights actors has created 'new', additional funding needs in order to be able to effectively counter the opposition they are facing. "[The anti-rights actors] have financial capacities that are way beyond anything that any progressive movement would have […] and I don't think it can be expected that our movement resources [the] counter work" (Informant D). This quote relates to the previously mentioned idea that the anti-rights backlash is greater than 'only' an opposition to sexual and gender-based rights, but that it presents a threat to "our societies [at large], our liberal societies at least, and a threat to democracy" (ibid). It further suggests that, while it is important to continue funding CSOs fighting against the backlash from the anti-rights movement, donors and funders need to adopt a more holistic approach in challenging this backlash, one which requires the resourcing of CSOs working in various fields for the protection of liberal values.

Strategies and responses to the backlash

The informants identified several strategies adopted in response to the backlash. The CSOs uniformly stated that certain aspects of these strategies have been in use prior to the rise in anti-rights opposition. This comes to some extent from working on sensitive issues and that it "is a bit of who [they] are" (Informant A). Some strategies, however, have been introduced or emphasised because of the opposition to sexual and gender-related rights. In summary, the analysis highlighted four major strategies – collaborations; safety and security; creativity and flexibility; and exposing – that are used by the interviewed CSOs and their partners in responding to the opposition to sexual and gender-related rights. All but one (exposing) was mentioned by informants from all three organisations, and some of these strategies have been used by the organisations prior to the rise in anti-rights backlash. Not all CSOs are able to respond to the attacks from

the anti-rights movement on equal terms. The informant representing the organisation working primarily on LGBTQI+ issues highlighted that the ability to respond to the backlash is a "numbers game" in terms of the number of "generic persons who would resource our movement" (Informant D) in challenging times. This comment suggests that public awareness of or support of a topic can influence the strategies available to the CSOs and, in turn, their resilience against attacks from anti-rights actors.

Collaborations, alliances, and networks

One of the reoccurring strategies mentioned by the CSOs was the creation of networks, both with likeminded organisations, and with different segments of society. These networks were then used for "strategizing […], exchanging information" (Informant E) with likeminded movements and actors; to gain access to "safe places for [local organisations] to have conversations" (Informant B); to create security networks for vulnerable communities (Informant C); and to bring "together LGBTI actors, feminists, and SRHR actors […] at one table to hold our ground and fight our battle collectively" (Informant D).The analysis revealed two types of networks that partly served different purposes. Firstly, networks created to link feminist, LGBTQI+, and SRHR movements (Informant D; Informant C); and secondly, networks created to link local CSO partners and vulnerable groups with powerful actors in their context (Informant B; Informant C). The collaboration of feminist, LGBTQI+, and SRHR movements was mentioned as a strategy used by all the studied CSOs. The general goal of creating these cross-movement networks appears to be the unification of likeminded actors to jointly overcome the challenges posed by the backlash. One informant stated that they have deliberately increased their cooperation with other movements based on the realisation that "we're all fighting the same battle around gender equality and sexual and gender rights for all" and that they need to "work as almost one movement" (Informant D). These collaborations are then used to circulate information and share knowledge to strengthen and universalise expertise among the organisations. One such example was how "feminist groups who work on the question on religion" could share their analyses and perspectives with other organisations that lack that certain expertise, another was on "the question of sex work" and "trans inclusivity" (Informant E). This last point, and the general question of LGBTQI+ inclusivity in feminist and gender equality movements, was mentioned by all CSOs as one of the key benefits, but also challenges in collaborating 'across' movement lines.

One informant mentioned how organisations working on LGBTQI+ rights "are working to get into feminist groups […] to let them know that, as a feminist, you cannot fight for the rights of women [while] excluding certain kinds of women" (Informant C). This statement suggests that, in certain contexts, feminists have been late to incorporate the LGBTQI+ community in their battle for gender (and sexual) equality. Another side of this phenomenon was mentioned by an informant who said that "it would be very blue-eyed to assume that the LGBTI movement by definition is a feminist movement" and that both movements have had "to do a lot of homework" (Informant D). They further stated that, in the future, the movements have to "both mindful of the exclusions that our movements have produced with each other, but at the same time not get hung up on it and move past that" (ibid). Both accounts highlight the efforts made by both the 'traditional' feminist movements and the LGBTQI+ movement in overcoming past and present challenges in order to create a stronger and more unified front against the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights.

The informant based in the sub-Saharan context further mentioned how, following a violent backlash against both LGBTQI+ and women's rights, the linkage between the feminist and LGBTQI+ movements was further used to improve the circulation of LGBTQI+ messaging in times of state repression against pride visibility. The CSO's local partners are "using [the] aspect of violence against women […]", a phenomenon that has escalated due to the backlash against gender equality, and are now "working with the feminist movement in order to […] make this message [about violence against the LGBTQI+ community] come out" (Informant C). In this way, the networks between feminist, SRHR, and LGBTQI+ movements can function as a springboard for issues otherwise left out of the public debate due to stigma and repression.

The second type of network are those designed to connect vulnerable local organisations or individuals with powerful allies in the local context. One informant mentioned how they, as a result of the rise in violence against their partners in certain regions, now are "connecting LGBT organisations on the ground with local embassy partners that we know are safe places for them to have conversations" and that this is "one of the big things [they] can do as a donor with this kind of address book" (Informant B).

Another example is how they are "working with faith leaders in [the] context" (ibid) and that "having very vocal faith allies is very important" in order to challenge the rise in religious-based anti-rights discourse. The

informants did, however, make it clear that the alliance with faith-based actors is not a consequence of the anti-rights backlash, but rather "a quite popular approach" (Informant A) that the organisation has used for a long time. Other examples are "partnering with human rights lawyers and legal advocacy organisations to pursue legal remedies" (ibid) in contexts where the backlash has resulted in legal and state repressions. Another form of these alliances with powerful local actors is closely connected the strategy of mitigating risks and ensuring the safety of members of the community (discussed further below). Parts of the LGBTQI+ movement in the sub-Saharan African context are "trying to mobilise a wide range of allies" (Informant C) by establishing networks with important members of society that can support and protect members of their community when facing harassment and violence. According to one informant, local CSOs and partners are creating alliances with "journalists […], policemen […], people in law" and "local leaders, the community leader" (Informant C) to secure powerful allies that can either stop harassments and violence from happening or reduce violence against arrested members of the LGBTQI+ community.

However, an interesting aspect is that the informant further stated that "it is better to have alliance on the ground, not with the officials, because […] when it becomes difficult [officials] can't say anything" (Informant C). This statement suggests that while CSOs are creating alliances with people in positions of power to support and protect vulnerable communities and spread awareness of the situation of marginalised individuals, they prefer collaborating with actors not working for the government as these are considered to have dual loyalties to the position of the repressive or anti-rights state. Safety and security. The strategies around safety and security can be summarised as having to do with mitigating the risk of violent backlash, either for their own members, their allied activists, or their partners in hostile contexts. One such strategy involved "dumb[ing] down what we're doing" and "changing some of the wording" (Informant A) in order to not attract attention to or keep potentially high-risk projects and activities "under the radar" (Informant B). One example was that, instead of stating that a project will serve the LGBTQI+ community, they are claiming to work with "marginalised populations or young people" (ibid). An illuminating quote related to the strategy of not openly spelling out what a sexual and gender-related project does comes from the sub-Saharan African context, where one informant reported that the local government allows CSOs to "work on health issues, but [that they] don't want anything about rights or visibility" (Informant C, emphasis added). This statement suggests that, even in contexts where the local government is violently

repressing the rights of sexual and gender minorities, CSOs can circumvent the backlash by framing their activities in terms of health. This strategy is closely linked to the theme on 'creativity' described below and shows how CSOs today have to adapt their programming and activities to mitigate security risks. Another example is how CSOs have had to "re-strategize into digital interventions" (Informant B) in order to ensure the safety of the organisation's employees and the communities they serve.

However, informants highlighted how digital activities come with their own risks, as online events are sites where anti-rights actors have deliberately come to harass sexual and gender minorities (Informant D). In these instances, the CSOs have had to "take precaution measures to protect [their members]" such as to "not allow for people to take the floor in a webinar, […] to vet people when they register and then be approved [before] they can join" (ibid). At physical events, another informant reported how they are now taking measures to "make sure that our people are not being harassed or in trouble" (Informant E). This involves security activities such as "to protect our emails, […] to make sure that [anti-rights actors] don't take pictures of us" (ibid). The informant further stated that they are actively "training ourselves and our allies on how to react, how to respond, how to be prepared, [and] what to look out for" (ibid). Relatedly, CSOs have started to tell their local partners "to avoid any kind of activity that would put them at risk" (Informant C) and to use their allies and networks to better ensure the safety of people on the ground. Finally, the CSOs further report that they are now mitigating risks by looking over their "external communications" (Informant E) to ensure that their words and language cannot be twisted or co-opted by anti-rights actors.

Creativity and flexibility

Two words that were repeated by the informants were 'creativity' (Informant E; Informant C) and 'flexibility' (Informant A). Both were used in the sense that the backlash has forced the CSOs and their partners to find alternative ways of conducting their activities and continue their work in the face of state and societal repression. This was only explicitly articulated by informants from one organisation, but the other informants also discussed how the backlash has made them rethink their strategies and how to continue to advocate for human rights in an increasingly hostile environment.

The most vivid example of this 'creativity' is how the CSOs are tackling the backlash by increasing the level of flexibility in their funding and project management. When working with partners under state repression, the organisations have now started to re-route and use "funding that is already existing in the country" rather than "parachuting in additional funds, which takes time" (Informant A). In other words, the organisation is mobilising and relocating funds from different parts of their project areas and allowing their partners to move "away from their original activity, their planned activity" in order to continue "their advocacy work in different [and new] ways" (ibid). In practice, this has meant "re-routing funds towards legal action litigation, looking at partnering with human rights lawyers and legal advocacy organisations to pursue legal remedies to the situation" (ibid) or allowing partners to momentarily pause their planned activities and "use some of their funding to support mental health workshops" (Informant B). It is, however, important to note that the informants emphasised how "it is still important for not everything to be rerouted" into these types of "rapid response" activities, but that attention also needs to be placed on "helping [their partners] to adapt to the current climate" (Informant B) and to continue their work in slightly different forms.

Another creative response are new forms of awareness raising introduced due to the difficulty in arranging public events under conditions of state repression and violence. Joining sport clubs was an example that was provided. The informant working in the sub-Saharan context stated that local partners in the region "are changing the ways to organise themselves and the ways to raise their advocacy" and one example is by joining "sport groups" (Informant C). This way, local partners can build personal connections and find potential allies and thereby hopefully reducing the risk of violent backlash when openly talking about stigmatised issues. The informant mentioned how activists are now approaching people through sport and that "after the [football] match, they have a beer, and when having a beer, they start this kind of discussion [on LGBTQI+ rights], and there are some people who listen" (ibid). Thus, when faced with state repression and attacks on LGBTQI+ visibility, these organisations have found new and creative ways of approaching potential allies and partners and to raise awareness of LGBTQI+ rights with a lower risk of violent backlash. A final, more abstract form of flexibility and creativity relates to the need for organisations, funders, and actors working with sexual and gender-related rights and health to rethink the parameters of this backlash and the resources needed to combat it.

Based on the previously described notion of the backlash as a threat to democracy (Informant D) and the respect of human rights (Informant E), one informant spoke of the need to change our mindset regarding whose responsibility it is to fund and take part in the work to stop the anti-rights movement. They said that this backlash "goes way beyond the question of even gender equality, let alone sexual and gender rights or LGBTI rights" that this is "not only something that concerns LGBTI people or women" (Informant D). Progressive actors therefore need "resourcing of not so much only […] LGBTI issues, but […] the whole response to issues that are threatening our societies" (ibis). These statements could suggest that progressive actors need to both view this backlash as greater than a conservative opposition against women, members of the LGBTQI+ community and other minorities and to involve all actors working for the consolidation of liberal and democratic values in order to overcome the challenges faced by the anti-rights movement.

Exposing

One final strategy that was solely mentioned by one informant is deliberately "showing [and] exposing how bad [the anti-rights backlash] is" (Informant E). The informant stated that they are actively working towards "explaining [to others] where those ideologies come from […] and making other feminist groups aware of the linkages between [anti-trans narratives] and the far right and the general anti-rights groups" (ibid). This strategy is very much connected to the strategy of creating alliances and networks among movements working with sexual and gender-related rights but has a clearer focus on the need to highlight, reveal and uncover the tactics, narratives and actors involved in the anti-rights movement and backlash to strengthen the progressive movement's response to it. This strategy is, furthermore, "the goal of the program [that the informant works on]" (ibid), which can explain why none of the other informants mentioned this strategy.

Strengths and limitations

The topic and research questions for this working paper is highly relevant and the timing is opportune, because of all the changes taking place with Swedish development cooperation, and because the opposition against gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and LGBTQI+ rights is growing stronger and getting more organised. The

selection of CSOs was made in dialogue with Sida, and the initial contacts were facilitated by Sida. This is a strength, because the CSOs felt comfortable to share their experiences with the interviewer. However, the fact that the CSOs are depending on funding from Sida could affect what they chose to share. Before the interviews, the informants received information about EBAs independent role and about the confidential handling of all the data collected. This was a small qualitative study that was carried out during an internship at EBA. The scope of this study was limited in time and in resources. The results cannot be generalised to the experiences of other CSO partners.

Conclusions

This study, albeit small, has given us a better understanding of how some of Sida's CSO partners operate in a context now dominated by a global, sometimes violent, opposition to sexual and gender-based rights. The findings may contribute to our knowledge of how the backlash manifests for CSOs working in development and how they try to overcome the challenges.

This paper concludes that, while there are similarities across the studied organisations, the backlash is experienced and handled differently depending on the context in which it takes place. Based on the level at which the CSO operates, both commonalities and distinctions could be found. All organisations stated that they experience opposition from both state and non-state actors. A worrying number of previously considered "gender champions" can now be regarded as part of, or either vocal or silent supporters of, the anti-rights backlash. It was only when discussing experiences at the local level that the CSOs mentioned the part religious actors play in the backlash, but most mentioned the political element of the backlash and how it is used, in different ways, as a form of "campaigning tool" in "the polarisation of international relations". All informants mentioned how opponents of sexual and gender-related rights are infiltrating progressive spaces, either in a passive monitoring or observing capacity, or to actively and loudly show their disapproval in an effort to, and sometimes successfully, shut down their events and activities. Some informants referred to this anti-rights tactic as a form of "intimidation" and that handling its 'milder' manifestations is "almost our job". At the local level, however, these intimidation tactics have been known to turn violent, even fatal. The CSOs are affected by the backlash with consequences for their financial resources and funding, with anti-rights actors calling for the defunding of important institutions or the organisations themselves and with resources needing to be re-routed from planned activities towards responding to the backlash. They are affected in terms of how public and open they can be, having to take measures to ensure that opponents cannot enter their spaces or to keep their activities out of the authorities' view by claiming to work on health rather than rights. They have been named and called out by the opposition and their partners have been shut down by local authorities or asked to make official statements to deny any affiliation with the feminist or LGBTQI+ movement. They also experience violence and threats from state, non-state, and civilian actors, which especially affects vulnerable communities operating in spaces dominated by conservative values. The CSOs respond

to the attacks from the anti-rights movement by creating networks and collaborating with likeminded actors, with other feminists, SRHR, and LGBTQI+ movements to share resources and knowledge and with powerful actors (like law enforcement, journalists etc.) in the local contexts to ensure the safety of vulnerable communities. They are also implementing safety and security measures and increasing their level of creativity and flexibility in terms of funding, contact creation, and in re-thinking the parameters of the backlash. Lastly, they are also exposing the activities, ideologies, and funding of the anti-rights movement to educate and warn fellow progressives.

The findings suggest parts of the already limited resources (both human and financial) needs to be redirected towards responding to attacks from the anti-rights movement, and in the long run this can be expected to have negative implications for the resilience, quality, and potentially survival of civil society. It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the backlash's effect on the CSOs' service delivery, but it is reasonable to assume that the CSOs' resource restraints will, in some way, influence the services provided to the communities they serve, communities that are often already marginalised and vulnerable. Considering also that most respondents discussed this backlash as one of several global phenomena negatively impacting their operations, one can reasonably assume that Sida's CSO partners are currently under great pressure to ensure universal access to SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights, and that the protection of these values, rights, and associated services are threatened.

The findings also indicate that organisations with smaller human and financial resources working at the local level are more likely to be negatively impacted by the backlash. Additionally, the study finds that public awareness of or support for a topic also influences the resilience of CSOs. Taken together, this suggests that smaller, less funded organisations working at the local level on topics garnering lower levels of public support or other types of 'neglected issues' are predicted to fare worse during the global opposition to sexual and gender-related rights and that these CSOs therefore require further support from international donors. Future analyses of the conditions of CSOs working with questions threatened by the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights should strive to include further perspectives from these types of organisations, with an emphasis on local organisations, to substantiate or refute these conclusions and to better understand how the context affects a CSOs relationship with and ability to respond to the global opposition against SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights.

Implications for development aid

Three key aspects will be highlighted that that could help improve or maintain the effective functioning of civil society organisations facing backlash from the anti-rights movement. The implications and conclusions presented in this section are based on the interviews, but they are not direct suggestions provided by the CSOs. The implications are intended for development actors in general, not specifically Swedish actors. The CSOs in this study expressed content with their current partnership with Sida, and particularly mentioned Sida's willingness to provide core support for the implementation of the CSOs' "operational strategies", and Sida´s interaction with Swedish embassies to protect and support organisations under threat in certain contexts.

Flexibility

Firstly, given that the backlash has affected (for some, in minor ways) the ability of CSOs to conduct their activities, donors should maintain or consider incorporating a high level of flexibility in their relationship with their partners. Taking notes from the work of one of the studied CSOs, international donors could, temporarily or permanently, enhance the ability of their partners to adjust their operations, resource allocations and strategies to the current situation by relaxing requirements on detailed predetermined project plans and timelines to make room for the unexpected. Taken together, this report advocates for the development of partnerships that both allow CSOs the flexibility to adapt and rearrange their activities to suit a changing environment and allows for the donors or financial partners to exhibit steadfastness in providing consistent resources and support for CSOs working in challenging contexts. Such partnerships can enable the CSOs to achieve more of their predetermined goals while ensuring that operations and activities remain responsive to local dynamics, potentially fostering positive change.

Raising awareness

Second, and related to the above, there is a need for an awareness among international donors of how the backlash against sexual and gender-related rights has produced higher security risks and associated costs. Donors should encourage their partners to take necessary precautions to ensure the safety of their personnel, volunteers, members, and allies, especially at

the local level. While this is most likely something the donor community is aware of to a large extent, the fact that informants working at the UN, international, and local levels all mentioned insecurity and (different forms of) violence as a tangible effect of the backlash suggests that this is an area that warrants further attention. Apart from being aware of the unsafe environment in which SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ activists currently work, the donor community could support their activities by providing additional resources to cover expenses associated with newly introduced safety and security measures and encourage, promote, or ensure that their partners stay safe while working for (or just living for) the protection and respect of sexual and gender-related rights.

Secure funding

Thirdly, and perhaps not entirely unsurprisingly given the previous two aspects, increased funding should be considered, to compensate for the higher costs associated with security risks. The backlash has forced CSOs to redirect their resources, time, and energy away from planned activities and towards responding to the attacks from the anti-rights movement by, for example, altering their operations and introducing security measures. Considering that the average (if not all) CSO's budget is finite, an increase in expenses to combat the effects of the backlash logically entails a reduction in resources available to perform their planned activities. The donor community should therefore consider increasing the funding for CSOs in order to support both their continued fight against the anti-rights movement and their ability to maintain full operations. The anti-rights actors involved in this backlash are known to be well-organised and, most importantly, well-funded. Previous research has identified at least USD 707 million of anti-rights and anti-gender funding in Europe alone (Datta, 2021) and many of the informants substantiated the view that progressive CSOs "do not have matching resources with [their] opponents" (Informant D).

One element of the backlash is the anti-rights actors' targeting of funding for progressive causes, and how opponents of sexual and gender-based rights are calling for the defunding of important multilateral institutions or of the feminist, SRHR, or LGBTQI+ movements themselves. Increasing, or at least not reducing, the funding to CSOs and other important actors working on this topic could then go towards stifling the resource drain (at least partly) caused by the anti-rights actors in this sector.

Support networks and collaboration

The final aspect is about the creation of networks as a well-used and appreciated strategy for both dealing with the consequences of the backlash and as a tool for combatting anti-rights actors in the future. All informants mentioned collaborations, cooperation, and networks as an essential part of their response to the growing opposition against sexual and gender-related rights, and while the findings in this working paper are limited in scope, they also suggest that networks and alliances can provide distinct benefits for their members at the local and international level. Supporting the creation of on-the-ground and cross-sectoral networks could improve the safety and security of vulnerable communities and individuals whilst simultaneously spreading awareness, increasing trust, and building resilience among different groups in society. On the other hand, the creation of international networks among progressive actors could create a buffer against the anti-rights movement's continued efforts to destroy multilateral and international consensus on sexual and gender-related rights (and human rights in general) and thereby strengthen the protection of these rights. Interviewing members of the SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ civil society highlighted an important aspect of the backlash, namely the interconnectedness of attacks against all forms of human rights and how the current and global disregard for human rights protection has direct consequences for the protection of sexual and gender-related rights. The informants stated concern about how "Global North states are really, really, moving away from human rights-based approaches on many issues" and that this is "making it easier for [traditional] anti-rights states […] to push back" (Informant E). It was mentioned how opposition against sexual and gender-related rights is being by used anti-rights actors "to stabilise authoritarian rule" and that this backlash therefore has "much wider general political implications" (Informant D).

Two important lessons for how to support the protection of sexual and gender-related rights in the future are:

- To remember and make visible the fact that when we stand up for and protect 'overall human rights' by confronting actors and states neglecting or violating their human rights responsibilities, we are inherently shielding further attacks on SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights.
- To understand that supporting sexual and gender-related rights for all peoples, communities and individuals also functions as a protection against anti-democratic and anti-humanitarian powers.

The implication on the back of these lessons is, therefore, to not treat and work with SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ in isolation from broader questions around democracy and human rights, and to also support broader interpretations of these rights to ensure that people and groups with intersecting vulnerabilities are protected from the current anti-democratic, anti-gender, anti-feminist, anti-rights, and anti-LGBTQI+ attacks.

Research suggestions

This report leaves several avenues for future research to explore in more depth. Further attention should be given to the experiences of local CSOs and how the backlash is expressed and handled in different contexts. This is especially true for the African context, as previous research has focused less on both the theoretical and empirical aspects of the African backlash against sexual and gender-related rights and how it may or may not differ from the experiences of other regions (Awondo et al., 2022).

Understanding the unique socio-political, cultural, and economic factors that influence the backlash in Africa and other understudied contexts can provide more nuanced insights and tailored strategies for CSOs operating in these environments and their international partners in supporting their work.

Future research is also needed on the immediate and tactical responses of CSOs during these critical times, such as how organisations and actors react and act when faced with acute and imminent threats from the anti-rights movement and the strategies used in these rapid-response periods. Understanding the specific strategies employed, the effectiveness of these actions, and the support mechanisms needed during such urgent situations could improve the donor community's ability to support their partner organisations in the future.

Research could also be focused on the development of good practices for the donor community and other actors supporting the work of SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ organisations facing backlash and operating in locations of shrinking civil space. Examples for further exploration are what funding models and streams that are the most effective when supporting CSOs facing backlash from the anti-rights movement; what practical support can donors and other actors give to their partners to reduce the long-term psychological and social impacts on CSO staff working under constant threat; and how can donors promote flexible partnerships and ensure local contextualization in their programming.

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Appendix I

Interview Guide

Interview stage	Question
Introduction	Could you introduce yourself and your organisation and the types of questions, topics, and issues you work with?
Map the anti-rights backlash:	Do you experience any opposition from the anti-rights movement and if so, what does this look like?
Map the impact of the anti-rights backlash:	Would you say that the anti-rights backlash affects you and your organisation's ability to work with these types of questions, and if so, how?
Map strategies	How do you respond to the backlash from the anti-rights movement? Is collaboration/cooperation with other actors a strategy you use to overcome or challenge the resistance and backlash?
Resources	What do you think the future of the ongoing backlash will look like and what can actors do to stop it or slow its pace? What resources would your organisation need in order to continue to oppose the rise of the anti-rights movement and their backlash against SRHR? How can Sida and other actors support and strengthen you and your organisation to promote SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQI+ rights despite the resistance you face?

Please note that these questions were supplemented with follow-up and clarification questions during the course of the interviews.

Appendix II

Informants

This study relies on the information provided by informants representing three of Sida's CSO partners. For security reasons, both the names of the organisations and the informants have been redacted from this version of the working paper and the informants have been assigned an alphabetical letter used to refer to information or quotes provided by them. The ordering of the letters and organisations (see below) is based on when in time the interviews took place, meaning that the interviews with Informant A took place prior to the interview with Informants D and E.

Organisation 1:

- Informant A
- Informant B
- Informant C

Organisation 2

- Informant D

Organisation 3:

- Informant E