

Stakeholder Consortium II Event Summary

Advancing LGBTIQ Inclusion
in Displacement Contexts
Across Central and Eastern
Europe

July 2025

Stakeholder Consortium II: Event Summary

ORAM is one of the first international non-governmental organizations (NGO) to assist refugees and asylum seekers based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). ORAM has been a pioneer in protecting and empowering vulnerable Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) refugees and asylum seekers globally.

We assist LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees on every step of their journey, working along displacement routes and in transit countries. We connect individuals with the resources and opportunities they need to build safe, stable and empowered lives.

ORAM is dedicated to working with partners across the globe, through our key programmatic areas in protection, empowerment, sustaining the sector and advocacy, to advance our mission of building sustainable and systemic change.



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Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who made the Stakeholder Consortium II possible. Special thanks to Aras Örgen, Capacity Strengthening Specialist, and Adam McNally, Inclusion Specialist at ORAM for their leadership in co-authoring this report. We would also like to acknowledge Anja Limon, Director of Program for their editorial contributions.

A big thank you to the participants for showing up with openness, thoughtfulness, and the courage to speak truthfully. Your insights, strategies, and lived experience shaped every part of this convening and continue to guide the work that follows. We are especially grateful for the time and care you took to review and respond to this summary. Your feedback strengthens the collective nature of this work and helps ensure that it accurately reflects the diversity of perspectives shared during the event. We are grateful for all the panelist organizations and all participants for their contributions:

[Afghan LGBT Organization \(Czechia\)](#),
[Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit / GIZ \(Germany\)](#),
[Geneva Graduate Institute \(Switzerland\)](#),
[International Womens* Space Resilient Voices \(Germany\)](#),
[John Jay College of Criminal Justice NYC \(USA\)](#),
[Martynka Foundation \(Poland\)](#),
[NGO Nest \(Germany\)](#),
[Queer Without Borders \(Poland\)](#),
[Synergies Migrations \(France\)](#),
[Transgender Europe \(Germany\)](#),
[UNHCR Moldova \(Moldova\)](#),
[WASSLA \(France\)](#).

Our appreciation also goes to the [Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#) for supporting this initiative and making it possible for so many voices to come together across borders.

We stand in solidarity with all individuals, organizations, and collectives across Central and Eastern Europe that are working tirelessly to provide essential support to LGBTIQ refugees and asylum seekers. Your commitment continues to inspire and drive transformative change in the region, and together, we will create more inclusive, equitable spaces for those most in need.

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Pictured: Participants at ORAM's Stakeholder Consortium Event.

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Pictured: Participants at ORAM's Stakeholder Consortium Event.

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Introduction

ORAM's Inclusion Program was launched in November 2023, with a small, but mighty team of two. Grounded in a commitment to localization and rights-based inclusion in humanitarian action, the program aims to mainstream SOGIESC-sensitive approaches across refugee programming. Since its advent, the program has prioritized community engagement, training & capacity strengthening, and facilitating inclusive systems change for LGBTIQ persons in forced displacement contexts. In August 2024, the program took a significant step forward by expanding to Kenya—hiring a Kenya Inclusion Officer and initiating partnerships with local refugee-led and community-based organizations. This expansion marked a key milestone in ORAM's efforts to regionalize and contextualize its inclusion work, ensuring that solutions are community-informed and responsive to local needs. Some of our key achievements include:

- Training **229** humanitarian professionals across Central & Eastern Europe and Kenya, resulting in a **98%** improved knowledge by training participants on LGBTIQ inclusion.
- Training over **124** organizations, including UN agencies, INGOs, LGBTIQ NGOs, civil society, refugee-led groups, government offices and service providers.
- Mapping over **192** organizations working on displacement-related issues and LGBTIQ inclusion.
- Publishing a **52-page** [research & policy report](#) on LGBTIQ displacement in Central & Eastern Europe.
- Hosting **regional in-person learning exchanges and public webinars** in collaboration with partner organizations.

These activities laid the groundwork for ORAM's second Stakeholder Consortium, being the basis of this report, to highlight cross-sectoral efforts to build an inclusive ecosystem of knowledge and practice on LGBTIQ inclusion in forced displacement.

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Pre-Event Phase: Co-Creation for Impact

The 2025 convening is built directly on the outcomes of the first Stakeholder Consortium, which took place the previous year in September 2024. That initial gathering led to the creation of a [roadmap](#) towards strengthening collaborative efforts between cross-sectoral actors, outlining common priorities such as meaningful refugee participation in programming, ensuring equitable partnerships between international actors and grassroots civil society (particularly LGBTIQ-activist led organizations), safe shelter provision for displaced LGBTIQ persons, and localized, trauma-informed approaches in humanitarian action.

In preparing for the second convening, ORAM worked intentionally to ensure that the process was collaborative with local partners, from the very beginning of the planning phase. Invitations to contribute were extended through a pre-event form, where participants suggested themes, highlighted emerging challenges, and expressed interest in facilitating or co-leading sessions. Additional outreach helped refine the format and bring in new voices, particularly those from refugee-led groups and community-based organizations.

The input received shaped the final agenda in meaningful ways. All topics featured during the event were proposed directly by participants. Moderators were drawn from the attending community, and all sessions were co-designed by civil society partners in advance. The result was a program that not only reflected the current inclusion needs within this space, but also gave space to conversations that matter most to those working on the frontlines of LGBTIQ displacement. This approach helped strengthen the sense of shared ownership, co-creation and purpose among attendees. From the beginning, ORAM's Inclusion Program took on the role as facilitator, ensuring that the convening was not just an event for participants to merely attend, but a platform shaped by, and for, its participants.

Notwithstanding the dissolution of USAID, and the United States' retreat as a key donor—which has sent shockwaves through the humanitarian sector and contributed to a sense of paralysis—urgent questions have emerged around the values, objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, funding, and legitimacy of international humanitarian action. In this context, the importance of recognizing and uplifting the tireless efforts of local actors working in solidarity to resist, support, and empower has never been more paramount. We were grateful to facilitate a space that felt like a community—a safer environment where participants could collectively grapple with these political challenges while also illuminating positive and meaningful pathways forward.

Stakeholder Consortium II: Sessions Summary

Stakeholder Consortium II brought together a diverse and committed group of participants, reflecting a wide range of experiences, geographies, and organizational types. In total, 52 participants from 41 organizations attended the event. Participants joined from Poland, Ukraine, Switzerland, Czechia, Hungary, Moldova, France, Belgium, Germany, Canada and UK, representing both newer and long-established actors in the fields of displacement and LGBTIQ inclusion. Among those present, were refugee-led organizations (RLOs), grassroots and community-based organizations, LGBTIQ advocacy groups, INGOs, UN agencies, independent researchers, activists and donors.



Panel 1: Impactful Partnerships

This session explored collaborative models between grassroots organizations, civil society and UN agencies. Featuring insights from Queer Without Borders (Poland), UNHCR Moldova, and NGO Nest (Germany), the discussion highlighted how partnerships can function as sites of both opportunity and tension. Speakers reflected on the importance of long-term commitments, equitable power-sharing, and clear role definitions when working across different institutional capacities. Localization in humanitarian action emerged as a key theme, with examples of how national and community-based organizations have stepped up in times of crisis, often filling critical gaps in service provision. The panel also addressed practical strategies to avoid tokenism and extractive engagement, especially in donor-partner dynamics.

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Panel 2: Meaningful Refugee Participation

We had Afghan LGBT Organization (Czechia), International Womens* Space Resilient Voices (Germany), WASSLA (France), and the Martynka Foundation (Poland) lead this panel, where they shared examples of centering refugee-led leadership in advocacy, program design & implementation, and community support. The session focused on how displacement, trauma, and systemic exclusion interacts with meaningful participation, and what it means to support refugee voices beyond symbolic or tokenistic inclusion. Panelists discussed the psychological toll of unpaid advocacy, the importance of culturally responsive mental health care, and the role of creative practices, such as poetry, arts and the provision of community spaces, in sustaining refugee-led initiatives. Panelists called for more flexible, long-term funding, and intentional space-making to ensure that refugee-led work is recognized and resourced as essential, not peripheral.



Panel 3: Inclusive Research and Data Collection

This final panel brought together contributors from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice NYC (USA), Queer Without Borders (Poland), Synergies Migrations (France), the Geneva Graduate Institute (Switzerland) and ORAM (Germany). Together, they explored what ethical, feminist, intersectional, and decolonial research should look like when conducting research alongside LGBTIQ displaced communities. Panelists emphasized the need to move beyond extractive methodologies, and did so by discussing how participatory and feminist research approaches can center dignity, agency, and safety of interlocutors. Language accessibility, power dynamics between researchers and communities, and the importance of continuously auditing positionality, were some of the key issues raised. There was also discussion of how to better translate research findings into policy impact, particularly through co-authored publications, visual storytelling, and community-based dissemination.

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Keynote Presentation I: CEAS and Impact on Trans and Gender-diverse Asylum Seekers

Transgender Europe (TGEU) facilitated this session, unpacking the impact of CEAS (Common European Asylum System) reforms on trans and gender-diverse asylum seekers. The presentation highlighted how new procedures, including screening regulations, and vulnerability assessments, often fail to recognize the specific risks trans people face, such as inappropriate detention and lack of legal support. The session prompted a lively discussion on the need for rights-based policy design and capacity strengthening support for civil society to engage in impactful policy advocacy at an EU level.

Keynote Presentation II: Funding, Localization, and Inclusion

Delivered by GIZ, this keynote explored how development cooperation actors can embed LGBTIQ inclusion into broader foreign assistance frameworks. Drawing on international examples, GIZ emphasized the importance of flexible funding, long-term partnerships, and direct support for grassroots organizations. The session also raised questions about donor accountability, intermediary roles, and the need to build capacity within funding agencies themselves to uphold inclusion commitments.



Throughout both days, sessions were followed by open Q&A and informal discussion, which brought out additional insights and fostered cross-regional exchange. Participants engaged speakers with concrete questions about implementation, advocacy strategies, and lessons learned from diverse contexts.

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Group Work and Tool Development: Toward Participatory Safer Spaces

The Safer Space Self-Assessment Tool is currently in active development as part of ORAM's ongoing effort to support more inclusive, accountable, and localized responses for organizations supporting LGBTIQ people in forced displacement. This tool is not being presented as a final product, nor as a one-size-fits-all framework. Instead, it is part of a longer, relational process, that must remain participatory, adaptable, and rooted in community realities.

The version shared at the Stakeholder Consortium II was an early working draft, informed by insights gathered through ORAM's recent training programs, outreach & research activities, and previous convening. The goal was to test its structure, gather grounded feedback, and begin a co-creation process with partners and practitioners. Rather than delivering "best practices," the tool aims to open dialogue and reflection across eight thematic areas that contribute to safer spaces for LGBTIQ refugees, asylum seekers, and staff. However, we acknowledge that these themes should be reviewed holistically as they are all interrelated.



This is just one phase of its development. The next version will be shaped more deeply in collaboration with local actors, especially those who bring lived experience and community-level expertise. We recognize that inclusion is always context-dependent, fluid and evolving, and so the tool, must be flexible and adaptable to respond to different environments and situations, for instance, geographies, organizational structures, humanitarian contexts, and cultural settings, to name a few.

This session reflected not only the depth of knowledge in the room, but also the generosity and honesty of participants who shared openly about the challenges they face and the commitments they hold. We are deeply grateful to everyone who engaged in the group work, contributed feedback, and helped move this tool forward. Your insights are central to shaping a resource that is grounded, adaptable, and genuinely useful for all of us working toward safer, more inclusive spaces for LGBTIQ displaced communities.

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Next Steps

The diverse representation of stakeholders fostered a dynamic space where insights were exchanged across roles, disciplines, and country contexts. For many, the convening offered a rare opportunity to meet in person with collaborators and to connect with new peers working on similar issues in different settings. Participants expressed strong appreciation for the space, highlighting the opportunity to connect with others doing similar work, share tools and realities, and build new forms of solidarity. The atmosphere of openness and mutual respect was repeatedly named as one of the convening's greatest strengths.



"In the current political context, being able to come together and see that so many people and organizations are doing such impactful work, despite backlash and challenges, was a big privilege and a huge motivator."

In the coming period, we will continue refining the Safer Space Self-Assessment Tool using the feedback gathered through group work and follow-up consultations. This will include additional collaboration with local actors, RLOs, and practitioners from across the regions we serve. Our goal is to ensure that the tool remains flexible, practical, and grounded in the lived experiences of LGBTIQ displaced communities. We also plan to stay in close contact with participants, and partner organizations, to explore opportunities for testing the tool, providing capacity support, and building peer-to-peer learning spaces that go beyond one-off events. Many of the connections made during the convening will inform regional outreach, technical support, and future convenings, as we continue to foster networks of care, advocacy, and practical collaboration.

We warmly thank all participants, speakers, moderators, and organizers who made the Stakeholder Consortium II possible. Your insights, care, and commitment shaped every part of this convening. Special thanks to the [Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#) for supporting this space.

We look forward to continuing this work together grounded in solidarity and collective action towards inclusion.



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