

Supporting LGBT rights is good for the economy, study finds

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The report found that each additional right a country grants LGBT residents boots its GDP

If protecting human rights is not a compelling enough argument, a recent report co-authored by a Rutgers professor gives developing countries another reason to promote inclusiveness of LGBT citizens.

It is good for the economy.

The study, recently released by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), analyzed the impact of the treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people on [economic development](#) in 39 emerging economies.

The [report](#) found that each additional right a country grants its LGBT citizens equates to a \$320 per capita increase in its GDP, about a 3 percent increase in the countries that were studied.

"We can make a [human rights](#) case, we can make a moral case, we can say of course it matters," said Yana V. Rodgers, a professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies who co-authored the report. "But sometimes policymakers need numerical and quantitative arguments that more inclusion matters. Here is a report that crunches the numbers and can get LGBT rights to the policy table."

LGBT residents make up between 1 and 5 percent of the adult population, according to estimates for the United States and other countries with available data. When LGBT people are targets of violence, denied equal access to education, stigmatized in communities, and discouraged from pursuing the jobs that maximize their skills, their economic contributions are diminished. This can hold back economic advancement for the entire country, the report found.

While other studies have examined the connection between tolerance and economic growth, this is the first report that looks at the connection between legal protections and economic expansion. The authors used an index developed by a Dutch law professor that establishes eight categories of legal recognition and protection for lesbians and gay men to measure inclusiveness.

"This research provides a new window into understanding the extent to which stigma and discrimination against LGBT people affect a country's economy," said lead author, M. V. Lee Badgett, Williams distinguished scholar and director of the center for public policy and administration at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The report found that violence and discrimination against LGBT citizens

creates economic harm for the individuals and the country as a whole:

- Police officers unjustly arrest, detain, jail, beat, humiliate and extort LGBT people, taking LGBT people out of productive employment.
- LGBT people face disproportionate rates of physical and psychological violence, which can restrict someone's ability to work because of physical injuries and psychological trauma.
- Workplace discrimination causes LGBT people to be unemployed and underemployed, compromising their full productive capacity.
- LGBT people face multiple barriers to physical and mental health, which reduces their ability to work and productivity in the workplace.
- LGBT students face discrimination in schools by teachers and other students, which hampers their learning and reduces the development of skills and knowledge that benefit an economy.

Rodgers said this study creates an economic rationale for countries to adopt LGBT rights.

"Countries that adopt more rights for the LGBT population will grow more quickly and have better social development," she said.

More information: The study is available online:
[williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu ... nt-november-2014.pdf](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/...nt-november-2014.pdf)

Provided by Rutgers University

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