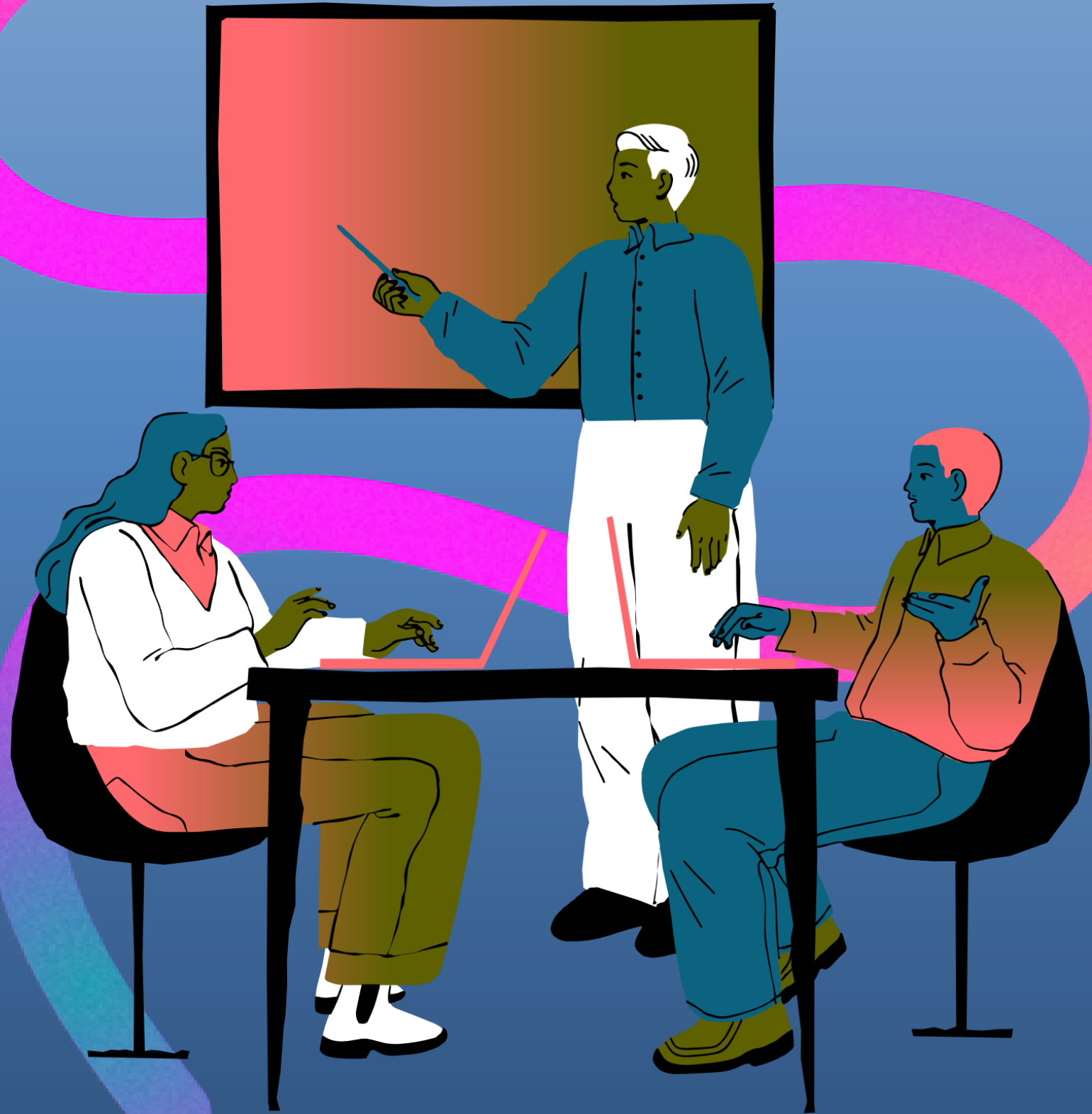




Butterfly Barbados

Gender Inclusion and Constitutional Reform in Barbados





Areas of Concern for Transgender and Non-Binary Citizens in Barbados

Butterfly Trans Barbados has identified some key issues that our community is desirous of reform in the upcoming Constitutional Reform for Barbados, The Republic.

- 1 *Gender Identity and Gender Markers*
- 2 *Safety and Healthcare*
- 3 *Social Services and Welfare*
- 4 *Housing Issues in Government Facilities*

Gender Identity and Gender Markers



The two binary identifiers, male and female, have limited persons who exist outside of those two boxes, excluding individuals who exist between those binaries. This issue of restrictive gender markers for Transgender and Non-Binary persons impacts many aspects of our lives. Resulting in our community encountering issues while traveling overseas and entering Barbados, where our National Identification documents, Barbados passport, driver's licence, and ID card, show a gender marker that does not match our gender identity & expression.

Example: in 2018 a transgender woman was removed from the immigration line at the airport and flagged as a security risk anomaly due to the male designation on her passport while trying to enter Canada. This incident also happened several times in Trinidad and Tobago. This was an extremely terrifying event, where she was detained in the airport, and was aggressively interrogated by immigration personnel who were asking questions about whose passport she had in her possession, and why she was there; at which point, she was not allowed to use the phone to contact anyone while she was being detained. Being escorted out of a line, and entering a country, at midnight was traumatizing, to say the least. Further, being harassed about the passport gender marker by an immigration officer was an added insult to the entire situation which was out of the passport holder's control.

This barrier of not having the gender marker amended in the National Identification documents also impact daily societal navigation, bank account access, higher level of education access, employment, insurance, and comprehensive general and mental healthcare services.

Safety and Healthcare



As citizens of Barbados, the Transgender, and Non-Binary community encounter a variety of safety issues while navigating the healthcare system. Our major concerns surround the efficiency and awareness of medical professionals on how to adequately provide healthcare for transgender and non-binary persons in this country. Additionally, access to appropriate medical care is absent unless those community members are persons who are living with HIV and are accessing those specific HIV welfare services. Pointedly, Gender-affirming care is not accessible to the Transgender community.

The Barbados drug service does not provide the necessary medication for a safe medical transition in the Country, especially as Barbados is a bio-available zone. This happens in part due to the Government not recognizing Trans persons and their identities, consequently, the community does not have access to comprehensive healthcare services, which are supposedly allocated to all citizens of this country through public health facilities.

Core minimum obligation - The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights have also stressed that States have a core minimum obligation to ensure the satisfaction of minimum essential levels of each of the rights under the Covenant. While these essential levels are, to some extent, resource-dependent, they should be given priority by the State in its efforts to realize the rights under the Covenant. With respect to the right to health, the Committee has underlined that States must ensure:

- The right of access to health facilities, goods, and services on a **non-discriminatory basis, especially for vulnerable or marginalized groups;**
- Access to the minimum essential food which is nutritionally **adequate and safe;**
- Access to shelter, housing and sanitation, and an adequate supply **of safe drinking water;**
 - The provision of essential drugs;
- Equitable distribution of all health facilities, goods, and services.

Social Services and Welfare



The need to live happy and fulfilling lives is the hope for our community. Sustain one's life, livelihood and well-being has proven difficult for the transgender and non-binary community in Barbados. The community faces issues around access to social care services such as welfare, and National Insurance Benefits (NIS), access to proper education, and decent work that pays a liveable wage. The Employment legislation act 2020, The recent anti-discrimination law in the workplace and this law prohibit discrimination based on age, skin color, creed, disability, domestic partnership status, marital status, medical condition, physical features, political opinion, pregnancy, race, trade, sex, sexual orientation, social status, or union affiliation. The law provides the same legal status and rights for women and men. However, it excludes protection from discrimination on the basis of gender identity.

The community cannot access employment without the stigmatization of identifying outside of traditional binary roles, and fear of harassment due to identifying openly as Transgender and Non-Binary individuals causing trauma due to safety and navigating in public, and accessing services to assist with the daily living experiences/traumas are not clearly mapped due to no designation for Trans identities in the healthcare system in the country. Ultimately, we need some form of protection & security with legislative authority.

Housing Issues in Government Facilities



Regarding access to the housing of transgender and non-binary people in Barbados in government institutional facilities, such as hospitals and correctional facilities. Not having clear unbiased provisions to effectively and adequately place persons of the Transgender and Non-binary community in less-than-ideal situations, due to mental health challenges, stints of incarceration, or other rehabilitative periods cause more harm than good to the persons affected being in those facilities for any period of time.

Gender identity recognition can remedy this, reducing the chances of physical, emotional, and mental suffering by any means. Proper placement of these individuals will significantly reduce all forms of violence, that may result from ignorance.

Also, access to government housing for no or low-income earners is not inclusive to this community specifically, which causes more disparities among this marginalized community.

Barbados has the profound opportunity to address and adequately rectify all of the issues the community faces, and hopefully will do soon.



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End

Thank You!

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