



# LGBTI ASYLUM POLICY ACTIVISM

Effective strategies for policy change employed by LGBTI asylum activists in the Netherlands  
by Emily K Piellusch



### Project

For this self-guided research project I interviewed three experts in the field of LGBTI asylum advocacy in the Netherlands: Sabine Jansen of COC Netherlands, Samira Hakim of Transgender Netwerk Nederland, and Sandro Cortikas of LGBT Asylum Support.

Each interviewee provided me with unique insight into the methods that they used to affect policy change to improve either

- (1) the procedure of filing a claim and attaining status, or
- (2) activism that addresses the conditions and access to resources for asylees during the asylum claim process.

### Skills

Although the number of research participants who were able to be interviewed for the project was too small for the project to be considered scientific research, I still gained research experience which will help my career as a social work researcher. These activities include:

- applying for the IRB
- recruiting participants
- transcribing interviews
- performing qualitative coding
- synthesizing findings
- developing the manuscript
- designing and formatting report content
- editing photos
- designing visualizations

### Acknowledgments

Thank you to Dr. Shanna Kattari for guiding me through this process. Thank you to the Alumni Board of Governors and the Office of Global Activities for finding my experience.

### Advice

Be sure to have a professor that will allow you the time and freedom to enjoy and experience being in a foreign country in addition to getting your important work done!

### The Netherlands

In 1981, the Netherlands was the first country to recognize sexual orientation as a grounds for persecution by a nation-state (as seen in Jansen & Spijkerboer, 2011), and according to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA World) the Netherlands ranks 2nd out of all European Union countries for positive LGBTI impact based on asylum laws and policies, just below Belgium (2019). However, according to LGBTI asylum rights activists, there are still many more changes in LGBTI asylum policy needed.

I chose the Netherlands because of their historical relevance to International LGBTI asylum policy, the country's general climate for LGBTI people, and my cultural connection to the country.

### Deliverables

The final product of the project included a report of findings that provides detailed information on the asylum application process along with findings from the interviews.

The report is written in a journalistic style, was designed in Adobe Illustrator, and includes some visuals. The report and the editable visuals will be provided to interviewees as well as to a few organizations who had expressed interest in the final product when I had contacted them for an interview and were unable to provide me with an interviewee. Interviewees will also receive the recordings and transcripts of their interviews for their own records.

### Coursework

Many courses prepared me for this experience including

- Social Work 818 Special Seminars in Practice, Intervention, and Policy with Marginalized Populations
- Social Work 522 Social Work Research
- Public Policy 510 Politics of Public Policy
- Information 520 Graphic Design

