

**A PROPOSAL FOR WELCOMING THE LGBTQIA+ PUBLIC IN TEMPORARY SHELTERS  
IN DISASTER SITUATIONS**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

As a result of accentuated climate changes, it is clear that the number and intensity of disasters will increase. As warned by (Thomas; Kopczak, 2007) the trend, this number will be 5 times greater around the world in the coming decades. And climate-related disasters are the risks we seen to be least prepared for (WEF, 2023).

This increase and intensity will increasingly affect vulnerable people and fragile ecosystems in developing countries (Calvin Et Al., 2023) such as Brazil, causing human, environmental and financial losses. Recent examples such as the landslides that occurred in São Sebastião, São Paulo, in February 2023 and the heavy rains in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in 2024 corroborate this scenario.

In the disaster in São Sebastião, 68 lives were lost and considerable damage to the Atlantic Forest, one of the most threatened ecosystems on the planet, was reported (O Globo, 2023). The heavy rains that occurred in Rio Grande do Sul in 2024, affected 471 municipalities, with 169 human losses, 445 missing and 97.7 thousand homeless, with financial losses around 11 billion reais by May 29th (CNM, 2024).

The calamitous effects of this increase in numbers and intensity will require public and social organizations to be prepared to define strategies that result in rapid responses in prevention, risk monitoring, relief, damage repair and the strengthening and involvement of affected communities. Rapid responses will contribute to minimizing human, material and environmental losses and alleviating people's suffering, with special attention to vulnerable groups - children, the elderly, people with disabilities, women and girls, ethnic and racial minorities, LGBTQIA+ people, immigrants and migrants, people refugees and displaced people, etc., who are the hardest hit. Given the problematic situation exposed, it is essential to define logistics strategies for humanitarian operations that can provide welcome, aid and relief to these groups at the right time and in the quantities needed.

This theoretical article is applied to the Brazilian context and is one of the partial results of a university extension project. The objective is to suggest a proposal for a protocol for welcoming actions aimed at the LGBTQIA+ public in temporary shelters in the event of disasters. The aim was to investigate strategies and identify factors to be taken into account and to propose a tool in the format of a protocol that could contribute to this purpose. It was chosen to use the acronym LGBTQIA+ as it is the nomenclature recently adopted by the Federal Government of Brazil in its recent policies. The aim was to encourage a theoretical discussion on relevant issues and their interactions and to propose a model that could be included in the list of policies aimed at people from this public.

This work basically presents two parts: a theoretical foundation and a proposal for the practical application of a protocol that can be adapted according to the specific needs of the conditions and places of occurrence. The theoretical foundation presented was researched in textual and documentary sources and will help to clarify concepts and give an overview of the themes presented without exhausting it. As for practical application, the aim was to propose a methodological structure for drawing up a reception protocol that can be used by both public and private organizations and other actors involved in the development of actions in the logistics chain of humanitarian operations in the event of disasters.

Both the full article and the proposed protocol will help public and social organizations incorporate specific guidelines to ensure the inclusion and adequate care of the LGBTQIA+

population in temporary shelters. It aims to ensure that everyone, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, has access to a safe, welcoming and respectful environment, seeking to promote an environment of equality and non-discrimination in emergency situations.

In addition, this work contributes to achieving what is recommended by the Sustainable Development Goals SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities. This goal aims to reduce losses, the number of deaths and the number of people affected by disasters by protecting the poor and people in situations of vulnerability situations in the quest to make cities and communities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (UNISDR, 2015).

The proposal of this work is timely since the Federal Government itself, in an attempt to promote public policies to assist people in the LGBTQIA+ segment, which are still insufficient and incipient, published Ordinance No. 755, OF DECEMBER 5, 2023, which established the Program National Strengthening of LGBTQIA+ Shelters - Acolher+ Program. Article 2 of the aforementioned Ordinance in its Paragraph IV points out as one of the objectives to develop and implement a methodology for welcoming LGBTQIA+ people (BRASIL, 2023).

## 2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

### 2.1 Disasters and Climate Change

Disasters are events that cause serious disruptions in the functioning of a community and that exceed the ability to deal with the situation using its own resources (IFRC, 2019). They can be classified as natural disasters according to their origin and anthropogenic, which are those caused by man (EM-DAT 2024). This classification is further detailed in Figure 01.

In Brazil, disasters are classified within the scope of the National Civil Defense Policy according to COBRADE – Brazilian Classification of Disasters. Around 85% of disasters in the country are caused by 3 types of disasters: sudden floods, landslides and prolonged droughts (Marcos Pivetta, 2016).

**Frame 01- Classification of natural and anthropogenic disasters**

NATURAL DISASTERS	
<b>Geophysicists</b>	<b>Earthquakes:</b> tremors and tsunamis <b>Volcanic eruptions</b> <b>Landslides (dry conditions):</b> landslide, avalanche, subsidence, rockfall
<b>Biologicals</b>	<b>Epidemics:</b> infectious viruses, infectious bacterioses, infectious prion diseases <b>Insect infestation</b> <b>Animal stampede</b>
<b>Hydrological</b>	<b>Floods:</b> fluvial, pluvial, coastal <b>Hydro landslide caused:</b> landslide, avalanche, subsidence, rock detachment
<b>Meteorological</b>	<b>Storms:</b> tropical cyclone, extratropical cyclone, local storms
<b>Climatological</b>	<b>Extreme temperature:</b> heat waves, cold waves
ANTHROPOGENIC DISASTERS	
<b>Socionatural</b>	Combinations of natural and anthropogenic factors
<b>Technological</b>	Chemical leaks, nuclear accidents, dam failures, explosions, fires, cyber incidents
<b>Complex emergencies</b>	Situations of disruption of livelihoods and threats to life arising from external and internal conflicts, civil unrest and mass population displacement

Source: Adapted from EM-DATA(2024)

The increase in number and intensity of disasters as a result of climate change leaves no doubt. There are numerous studies and reports pointing to this trend. For example, that of the IPCC, which is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change prepared by a group of

scientists established by the United Nations to monitor and advise on all global science related to climate change (Calvin et al., 2023) and the National Civil Defense Policy itself, which among its objectives is to reduce the risk of disasters and provide relief and assistance to affected populations (Brasil, 2012).

This scenario will require public and private organizations to come up increasingly rapid and effective coping strategies and responses, increasing the demand for actions in the logistics of humanitarian operations. Otherwise, the lack of preparedness in the event of disasters will contribute to human, environmental and financial losses continuing to rise.

It is worth mentioning that the main aspects of disasters of natural origin or of major proportions are the level of uncertainty, unpredictability of the occurrence and the magnitude of their effects. Even so, it can no longer be claimed that unpredictability justifies the lack or omission of actions, public policies and investments that cover all the phases of a disaster – preparedness, response and recovery. In the pre-disaster phase the focus should be on preparedness actions, in the event or emergency the focus should be on response actions and in the post-disaster phase the focus should be on recovery actions.

Strengthening actions in the logistics of humanitarian operations, a subject to be addressed below, that serve vulnerable groups, including those from the LGBTQIA+ group, becomes more than a requirement, but a necessity.

## **2.2 Logistics of Humanitarian Operations and Protocols**

The logistics of humanitarian operations can be defined as the process of planning, implementing and controlling the efficient and economical flow and storage of goods and materials, as well as related information, from the point of origin to the point of consumption in order to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable people and groups. (Thomas; Kopczak, 2005). It involves managing activities such as acquisition, storage, and transportation of food, water, medicine, and other supplies, as well as human resources, machinery, and equipment needed by victims before and after disasters strike (Nikbakhsh; Zanjirani Farahani, 2011). Therefore, the main role of the logistics of humanitarian operations consists of mobilizing the necessary personnel and resources in the processes of relief, assistance and restoration of calamitous situations in the right way and at the right time in a neutral and impartial manner.

Complex situations such as those involving a disaster impose challenges to the logistics of humanitarian operations, such as delays in distribution, uncertainty in demand and high operational costs (Sentia et al., 2023). Adopting protocols can help to overcome or minimize these challenges.

Protocols, documentary forms of action, standardize tasks, describe procedures, save time and effort, reduce the incidence of errors, optimize the management process and can be applied in various contexts, situations and areas of knowledge. When applied to the logistics chain of humanitarian operations in disaster situations, it helps to better define the role of each actor involved, as well as so that the flow of information, decisions, standards and rules to be followed are clearly defined in each one of the phases of the occurrence.

By minimizing the impact of disasters and optimizing the processes of acquisition, storage, transportation, distribution of shelter, food, clothing and medicine, the use of protocols will maximize the support provided to vulnerable groups by ensuring that aid, relief, material goods and psychosocial support arrives at the right time and in the right quantities.

When building a logistics protocol for humanitarian operations, one of the steps to be considered is the involvement of all actors who may be part of the process, including the most vulnerable groups with special consideration to issues of race, gender and sexual orientation. People in the LGBTQIA+ segment face significant challenges, and in disaster situations this is

no different. However, with specific protocols, logistics actions for humanitarian operations aimed at this public will bring relief in the shortest time and in the most inclusive way possible.

### 2.3 Vulnerable groups and LGBTQIA+

Understanding the concept of vulnerability is crucial in defining public policies to respond to the specific needs of less favored and socially marginalized groups. The term vulnerability is under construction and although it carries inaccuracies, there are advances in the discussion of the dynamic reality and multi-determined human capacity to face it (Carmo; Guizardi, 2018).

People in situations of vulnerability are included in the list of populations that face increased risks due to their position in society related to conditions of inequality and marginalization arising from ethical, political and social factors. People belonging to these groups and segments face challenges in the social, health, political, infrastructure, economic and communication areas, often arising from inequality and discrimination (Mendis Et Al., 2023). This group includes children, the elderly, people with disabilities, women and girls, ethnic and racial minorities, immigrants and migrants, refugees and displaced people and LGBTQIA+ people.

At this point it is worth clarifying two concepts: sexual orientation and gender identity. Sexual orientation refers to the attraction or emotional connection one feels for another person. Gender identity is how a person identifies internally, as male, female, a mix of the two or neither. This group includes lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, queers, intersex, asexuals and other classifications that are not yet designated by the acronym LGBTQIA+.

**Table 01- Distribution of people aged 18 or over, by sex, according to sexual orientation, with indication of the 95% confidence interval - Brazil – 2019**

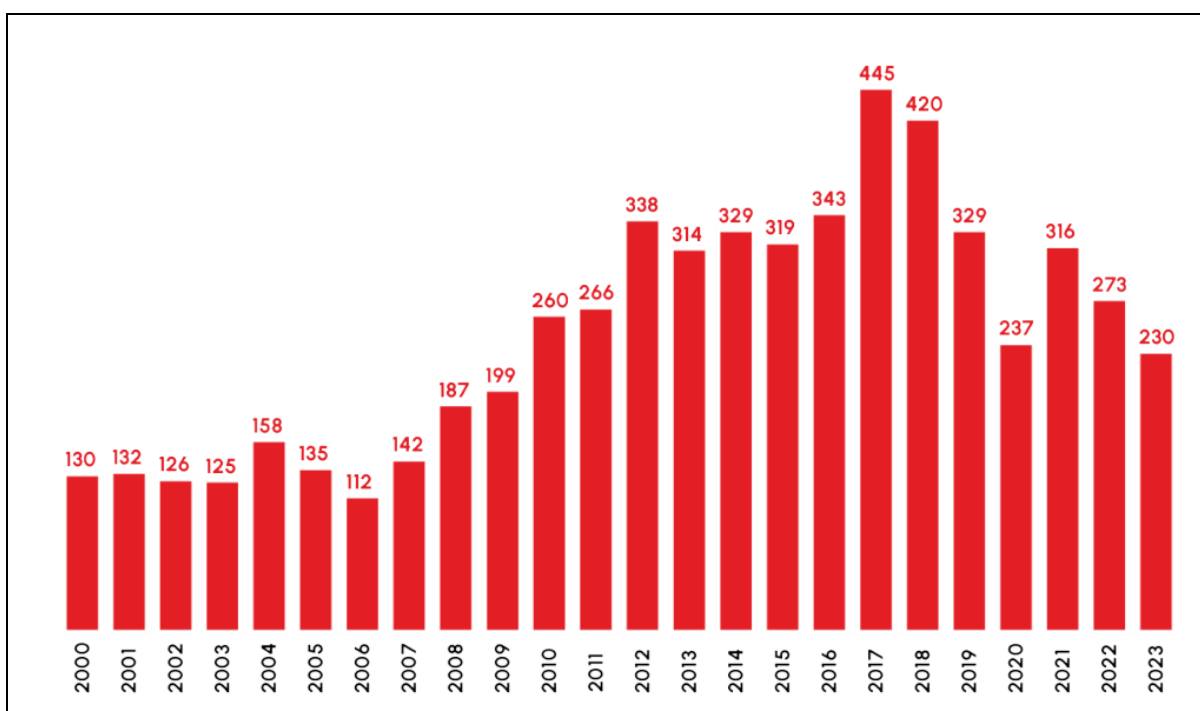
sexual orientation	Distribution of people aged 18 or over (%)										
	Total			Sex							
	Distribution	95% confidence interval		Distribution	Man		Woman		Distribution	95% confidence interval	
		Inferior limit	Upper limit		Inferior limit	Upper limit	Inferior limit	Upper limit			
										Inferior limit	Upper limit
<b>Total</b>	100.0	-	-	100.0	-	-	100.0	-	-		
Heterosexual	94.8	94.5	95.0	94.7	94.3	95.1	94.8	94.4	95.2		
Bisexual	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.0		
Homosexual	1.2	1.0	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.6	0.9	0.8	1.1		
Other sexual orientation	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1		
Do not know	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.3		
Refused to respond	2.3	2.1	2.5	2.3	2.0	2.6	2.3	2.0	2.5		

Source: IBGE, Research Directorate. Coordination of Household Sample Surveys, National Health Survey, 2019.

Another study conducted by (Spizzirri et al., 2022), the percentage of Brazilian adults who declare themselves asexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender is 12%, or around 19 million people. The group struggles against socioeconomic inequality, stigma and discrimination and has higher rates of physical and mental health problems. The study also pointed out that LGBTQIA+ people, in the study named ALGBT, face worse living conditions and higher rates of violence.

Other data corroborates the situation of violence suffered by LGBTQIA+, such as that from the researches from Oswaldo Cruz Foundation released in 2020, between 2015 and 2017, approximately 24,564 cases of violence against the LGBTQIA+ community were officially reported in competent authorities in Brazil(Pinto et al., 2020) . It is noteworthy that as a result of violent episodes, violent deaths of LGBTQIA+ people occur, as shown in Figure 01 (ABGLT; ANTRA E ACONTECE, 2023) .

**Figure 01 - Number of violent deaths of LGBTQIA+ in Brazil, between 2000 and 2023**



Fonte: Dossiê 2023: Mortes e Violência contra os LGBTI+ no Brasil (2023)

Vulnerable people belonging to the LGBTQIA+ segment in disaster situations face discrimination and prejudice, increased rates of sexual and gender-based violence, breakdown of pre-established social structures and a lack or decreased access to essential services such as health, housing and mental health support. These situations are aggravated by the lack of representation and lack of studies to identify specific needs.

It is essential to develop public policies for LGBTQIA+ people, since the lack of social support systems, discrimination and limited access to essential resources are the main contributors to the social vulnerability of this segment in disaster situations.

### 3 DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Practical aspects for proposing a step-by-step guide to building reception protocols in an LGBTQIA+ shelter

The Federal Government created the Acolher + Program through Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship (MHRC) to strengthen and implement LGBTQIA+ Shelters in Brazil (Brasil, 2023). Of national scope, this public policy will strengthen institutions that welcome people in situations of family abandonment, risk or violence. This is not specifically about providing support in disaster situations, but it can be adapted and expanded. Developing inclusive policies and frameworks that specifically address the needs of LGBTQIA+ communities in pre-, during- and post-disaster contexts is crucial to ensuring their safety and well-being in an equitable and inclusive manner. The protocol model proposed here aims to serve this purpose.

The first step in developing a protocol is defining the general and specific objective to be achieved. The general objective, in the case of this study, is to bring relief to people through actions of the logistics of humanitarian operations considering the phases of a disaster: preparation, response and recovery. The specific objective is to welcome the LGBTQIA+ segment in disaster situations and offer support for the formulation of specific public policies. It aims to establish fundamental guidelines and procedures for temporary shelters, with the purpose of serving as an essential reference for civil defense professionals, firefighters, social workers, volunteers and health professionals. This document will be a crucial tool in coordinating emergency and disaster response actions, ensuring that these experts can work efficiently and cooperatively to provide assistance to the LGBTQIA+ community in times of need.

#### Frame 02 – Legislation for preparing the LGBTQIA+ reception protocol

Law 10.948/2001	Provides for the penalties to be applied to the practice of discrimination based on sexual orientation(ALESP, 2001)
Law No. 15.082/2013	Amends Law no. 10,948, of November 5, 2001, which provides for the penalties to be applied to the practice of discrimination based on sexual orientation and provides other measures (ALESP, 2013).
Law No. 12.608/2012	Establishes the National Civil Protection and Defense Policy – PNPDEC(BRASIL, 2012)
Decree No. 8.727/2016	Provides for the use of the social name and the recognition of the gender identity of transvestites and transsexuals within the scope of direct, autonomous and foundational federal public administration(BRASIL, 2016)
Decree No. 55.588/2010	Provides for the nominal treatment of transsexuals and transvestites in public bodies in the State of São Paulo and provides related measures (ALESP, 2010a).
Decree No. 55.839/2010	Establishes the State Plan to Combat Homophobia and Promote LGBT Citizenship and provides related measures (ALESP, 2010b).
Ordinance No. 755/2023	Establishing the National Program for Strengthening LGBTQIA+ Shelters - Acolher + Program (BRASIL, 2023).

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024)

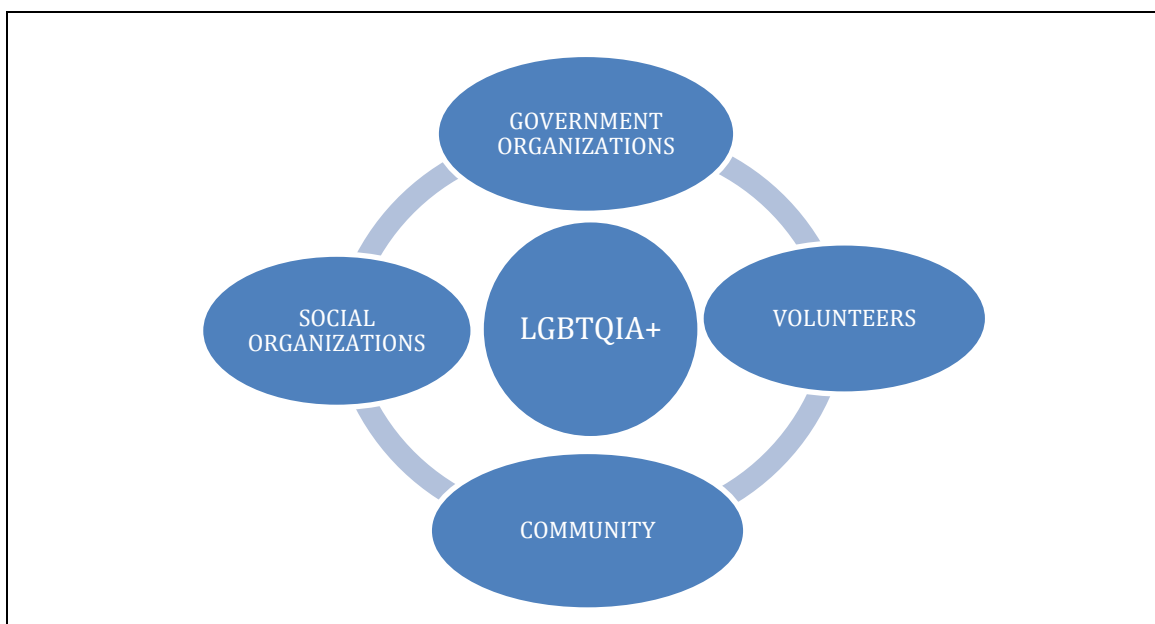
The second step is to survey current legislation and technical documents such as laws, decrees, resolutions, studies and technical manuals, risk maps and contingency plans, which can guide the preparation. The development of the protocol for LGBTQIA+ people in Brazil finds legal basis in some laws and decrees that aim to promote equality, combat discrimination and guarantee the rights of this community. Here are suggestions presented in Frame 02. It is not the intention to exhaust the topic and the example is for illustration purposes. New legal instruments should be included as the protocols are updated and improved.

The third step is the mapping of the processes and tasks related to the assembly and operation of the temporary shelter. It can be represented through maps, flowcharts and graphs. With regard to location of the shelter, it is important to check whether the municipality has public shelters, whether it has Contingency Plans and whether these provide places for this purpose. Another option is to form partnerships with social organizations that shelter people in the LGBTQIA+ segment. Some important actions should be considered at this step:

- Recognize the importance of creating an inclusive space from the beginning and implement forms that allow identification by social name, guaranteeing a humane and respectful welcome;
- Make the nature of the operation at the beginning of the reception. This serves as a preventative measure against discrimination, creating a transparent and safe environment from the outset, setting the expectation of respect and understanding for all shelter residents.

The fourth step is to identify the actors responsible and involved in drawing up the protocols to define roles, responsibilities, interactions and explain the target audience to be served, in the case of this study, people from the LGBTQIA+ segment. It is important to highlight the importance of the participation of vulnerable groups in this development (Bodstein; Lima; Barros, 2014) as this increases resilience and strengthens the affected community. Health professionals such as doctors and psychologists, government representatives, social workers, lawyers, people from the community, volunteers, civil defense agents, firefighters, military police, etc. can be part of the process. These actors can be inserted generically in Figure 02.

**Figure 02 - Actors involved in drawing up protocol for welcoming the LGBTQIA+ public.**



Source: Prepared by the authors (2024)

In this step, it is recommended that comprehensive training be carried out, such as that offered by the Reference and Training Center (CRT-SP, 2024), for those involved, including



civil defense, social workers, volunteers and health professionals. This measure aims to raise awareness and inform the staff about the specific nuances and challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community. Special attention should be given to training mental health professionals to ensure secular, effective and prejudice-free psychological support.

The fifth step is the identification of the physical structure, necessary supplies and personal protective equipment, when applicable.

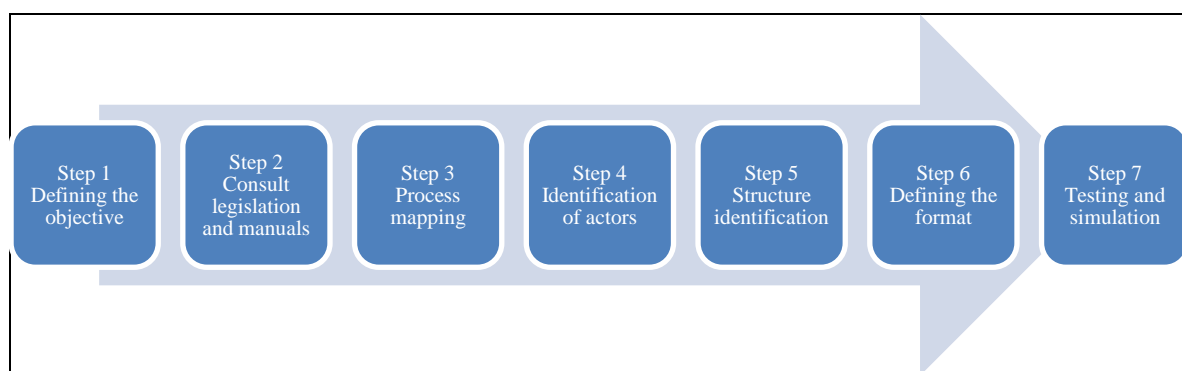
In addition, the relevance of unrestricted access to hormone medication (hormonal treatment) for transgender people is highlighted, not only as a health issue, but also as a recognition of the individual's right to specific care for their medical needs.

The sixth step is to identify the format in which the protocol will be presented. Whether it will be physical on paper, media, on or offline. It can be presented as flowcharts, applications, simulation models and checklists, which is the model chosen for the protocol in this study. A checklist must be based on the mapping carried out and be precise, objective, and easy to use; dynamic, having 5 to 7 items and read in 1 minute, making it ideal for complex situations such as those involving a disaster (Gawande, 2009).

The seventh step consists of carrying out simulations and testing the protocols to identify possible failures, bottlenecks and possibilities for improvements.

And finally, the protocols must be documented and formalized in the legislation applied to each location and become part of the legislative, political, institutional and governance structures. In this sense, it is suggested that these protocols be integrated into the disaster prevention Contingency Plans of prone municipalities and included in the simulated exercises. The Figure 03 presents a summary of the steps for drawing up the protocols.

**Figure 03: Summary step by step for preparing protocols**



Source: Prepared by the authors (2024)

It is important to add is the need to regularly review and update protocols to ensure they are adaptable and reflect best practices learned from previous disasters and compliance with current guidelines (Bang, 2021).

### **3.2 Suggested protocol for welcoming LGBTQIA+ people in disaster situations:**

The protocol and the checklist presented in Figure 04 is a preliminary model that should be improved, updated and revised as new simulations and academic studies are carried out. It was built following the guidelines and step-by-step instructions in item 3.1 - Practical aspects for proposing a step-by-step guide to building reception protocols in an LGBTQIA+ shelters.

It covers the stages of preparation and the moment of response. The post-disaster reconstruction stage will be developed in future studies as LGBTQIA+ individuals face significant challenges in post-disaster contexts, such as discrimination and exclusion from relief efforts, physical, sexual and gender-based violence, which can complicate their process of recovery and exacerbate their vulnerability due to the breakdown of social structures and law enforcement in post-disaster scenarios (Mendis et al., 2023).

**Figure 04 - Checklist model for LGBTQIA+ reception in temporary shelters in disaster situations**

<b>CHECKLISTS FOR LGBTQIA+ WELCOME</b>	
<b>Preparation time</b>	
Plan the distribution of people with space for LGBT+ people without family members.	
Provide unisex bathrooms.	
Prepare entry forms with space for social name.	
Provide team training on correct treatment of the LGBT+ community.	
<b>Response time</b>	
Clarify the conduct of the shelter that should not tolerate discrimination.	
Prepare a hygiene kit according to the homeless person's sexual orientation.	
Prepare a clothing kit according to the homeless person's sexual orientation.	
Provide medication for continuous use (hormoneization).	
<b>Volunteer/responsible for checking:</b> <b>Date:</b>	

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024)

In addition to the step-by-step process, the following considerations were taken into account: Six main moments were drawn up which must be followed by the professionals responsible at the different moments of the disaster, so that the LGBTQIA+ population can have their rights guaranteed, with safety and dignity:

- **Moment 1: Training:**

When preparing for a disaster, it is recommended that the team be trained – civil defense professionals, social, psychosocial and military workers – so that they have greater knowledge of how to treat the LGBTQIA+ community. These must be addressed with the correct pronouns and if they have a social name, pay attention to their use in accordance with the pronoun. Courses such as the one offered by the DST/AIDS-SP Reference and Training Center (CRT-SP, 2024) or similar bodies can be carried out for this purpose.

- **Moment 2: Entry Form**

The shelter entry form must have space to identify sexual orientation, social name, medication for continuous use and type of personal hygiene kit and clothing. Furthermore, it is the role of the server responsible for filling it out to include additional information in the form if relevant.

- **Moment 3: Kit Preparation**

At the time of the response, inside the shelter, it is important that personal hygiene kits and clothing are separated according to sexual orientation.

- **Moment 4: Clarification of Conduct**

Even inside the shelter, it is necessary to establish the content of the reception process with meetings organized by the operation's commanders, making it clear that any kind of segregation and discrimination based on sexual orientation is not tolerable. This clarification must be addressed to the staff who will be working in the shelter as well as the other sheltered people.

- **Moment 5: Provision of Medication for Continuous Use - Hormoneization**

The availability of continuous medication for transgender people is extremely important so that this population does not suffer from hormonal problems, which can trigger physical, mood and emotional changes.

- **Moment 6: Availability of Unisex Bathrooms**

This is a very important action to ensure greater safety for homeless people in the LGBTQIA+ segment.

It is worth remembering that each disaster situation is unique and all procedures must be flexible to adapt to the particularities and specific needs of the event and the place of occurrence.

## 4 CONTRIBUTIONS

This theoretical article sought to encourage and reaffirm the need to discuss public inclusion and welcoming policies for people in the LGBTQIA+ segment in the event of disasters. With the already known increase in disasters as a result of accentuated climate change, it is essential that inclusive actions aimed at vulnerable groups, including LGBTQIA+ people, are strongly planned and implemented.

People in the LGBTQIA+ segment face unique challenges, often increased by low-income conditions, prejudice and discrimination. Developing public policies and specific logistics strategies for humanitarian operations will help to minimize and even eliminate these challenges. In addition to contributing with a proposal to be received by public policy developers, it could contribute to greater knowledge on the topic and encourage new academic studies based on other scientific methodologies.

This work brings an innovative proposal that resulted from the combination of research and extension in order to bring practical solutions to the community. The protocol suggested here could be an important instrument for public policies aimed at disasters to arrive appropriately and in a timely manner, bringing relief and dignified care to people in the LGBTQIA+ segment. It could be adopted by both public and private organizations with the aim of making the process of welcoming the LGBTQIA+ segment into temporary shelters fairer and inclusive.

It can also be used to develop training and simulations with the purpose of improving disaster response procedures and developing and strengthening the resilience of cities together with the affected community. A resilient community has the ability to react and return to normal as quickly as possible, bringing help and relief to those most in need.

For future studies, it is essential that other vulnerable groups are addressed and new protocols to address the elderly, people with disabilities, women, girls, etc. After all, a strong and resilient community is only strong when all segments of the community are included and strengthened.

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