COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT
LAVENDER PHOENIX

By Yuan Wang, Executive Director of Lavender Phoenix

TOPICS Gender, Sexual Orientation, Violence

ABOUT

Lavender Phoenix is a community-based organization that supports queer (LGBTQ+), transgender, and non-binary and Asians and Pacific Islanders in the San Francisco Bay Area. The organization builds real solutions to enable members of queer and transgender Asian and Pacific Islander communities to develop self-determination and promote healing.

DATA NEEDS

Lavender Phoenix needs but lacks disaggregated data for queer and transgender Asian and Pacific Islander (QTAPI) communities. To ensure the well-being of QTAPIs, Lavender Phoenix uses data to identify the priority needs of their communities and make the case for supportive resources, policies and practices. The data deficiency hinders the ability of the organization to enlist the partners and resources needed to instigate real change for QTAPIs.

Lavender Phoenix offers comprehensive education on the needs of transgender and non-binary Asians and Pacific Islanders to other service providers and advocates in the San Francisco Bay Area. Data is critical to the adoption of policies and practices that align with the needs and experiences of QTAPIs. Some federal agencies are starting to ask questions about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), but supportive disaggregated data by race and ethnicity is not widely available. Data-driven decisions about culturally and linguistically aligned supports and services cannot be made in the absence of disaggregated data for each ethnic group.

- **Language:** Many transgender and queer Asians and Pacific Islanders are immigrants and refugees, or come from immigrant or refugee households, with a wide range of language diversity. Without clear data on the linguistic preferences and needs of our community, the one-size-fits-all approaches to LGBTQ+ health equity overlook important service gaps.
- **Queer identity:** As research has demonstrated, the health and well-being of QTAPI people differ greatly from the larger Asian and Pacific Islander population. QTAPIs face barriers to health and mental health due to the stereotypes, tropes and phobias that exist in society at large. Data-driven solutions will be possible only through the generation of more data and research on the intersections of race and queer identity.

Because of the lack of data on QTAPIs, Lavender Phoenix must raise funds to conduct its own study. Lavender Phoenix administered a community-led needs assessment titled "Up to Us"[1] in 2020. The study was effective in illuminating the needs of queer

Yuan Wang, Lavender Phoenix's Executive Director, speaks at a rally. (Photo: Nicholas Lea Bruno)

and transgender Asians and Pacific Islanders, but the organization cannot fund studies like that recurrently. Lavender Phoenix has discerned an urgent need for data regarding the needs and experiences of queer and transgender Asians and Pacific Islanders. The "Up to Us" needs assessment reveals the deep obstacles that QTAPIs face in four pivotally important areas:

- **Housing and homelessness.** More than 1 in 5 respondents have experienced homelessness, including almost half of respondents (40%) who live in San Francisco, and almost half of feminine respondents (41%).

Lavender Phoenix members lead a chant at a community rally. (Photo: Nicholas Lea Bruno)

- **Workplace discrimination.** Almost one quarter (23%) of respondents were fired from a job, treated unfairly or declined in job hiring processes because of their gender identities.
- **Violence, harassment and safety.** More than two-thirds of participants (68%) experienced verbal harassment, and one in every six (17%) were physically attacked. Unsurprisingly, more than 80% alter their appearance regularly to avoid harassment. Nearly two-thirds (58%) experienced sexual assault, and more then 40% experienced domestic abuse.
- **Health and mental health.** Almost half (43%) of respondents were uncomfortable going to the doctor. Almost one third (28%) needed to see a doctor, but could not afford to. Moreover, while more than 70% of respondents seriously considered suicide and almost a third (29%) attempted suicide, 74% of respondents face barriers accessing mental health care, and half (49%) reported that mental health care is generally culturally inaccessible.

Data from the needs assessment enabled Lavender Phoenix to educate service providers and advocates about the needs of queer and transgender Asians and Pacific Islanders. Data must be consistently collected over time in order to assess and anticipate the evolving needs of a growing QTAPI population.

1 https://lavenderphoenix.org/uptous/

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