

NEWS/ BUSINESS/ FINANCE/ LIFESTYLE EDITORS
[For Immediate Release]

2017 Hong Kong LGBT+ Inclusion Index Report Reveals: Companies raise the bar on LGBT+ workplace inclusion SME Index introduced for the first time

Hong Kong, 21 June 2017 – Community Business, a leading not-for-profit organisation advancing responsible and inclusive business practices in Asia, today launched its “**2017 Hong Kong LGBT+ Inclusion Index – Making Progress**” report, presenting the collective findings from all the participating companies, providing critical benchmarking data and highlighting best practices. The Index, introduced for the first time in 2015 and now run every two years, is Asia’s first benchmark on inclusive workplace policies and practices for LGBT+ employees. To encourage greater participation by the local corporate sector, a tailor-made version of the Index was launched for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs¹) this year (SME Index).

In total, 51 organisations participated, including 40 multinational corporates operating in Hong Kong and 11 local SMEs, an increase of 46% compared to two years ago. The banking industry again dominated the Index, however the diversity of participating companies has grown to include industries such as hospitality, media, and recruitment.

The Index requires companies to demonstrate what they have done to advance LGBT+ inclusion inside and outside their organisations in Hong Kong and is structured around 9 key categories. The assessment covers the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016.

“The increasing participation rate, quality of submissions and overall index performance demonstrates that companies are committed to LGBT+ inclusion and are genuinely making progress. Since launching the Index in 2015, it has become a game changer for Hong Kong. Besides facilitating change within the corporate sector, the Index has played an important role in encouraging more open and public debate, advocating for policy change, and broadening the attitudes of the general public,” says **Fern Ngai, Chief Executive Officer of Community Business**.

MAIN INDEX

For the 40 participating companies in the Main Index, including multinationals, NGO’s and government organisations, despite raising the bar on the Index criteria, the overall average score has increased from 42.8 to 49.17 points out of 100, with the overall performance of companies improving at Gold, Silver and Bronze levels compared to two years ago.

	Overall Index Average	Gold Standard Average	Silver Standard Average	Bronze Standard Average
2017	49.17 points	72.33 points	50.52 points	37.70 points
2015	42.8 points	70.3 points	48.7 points	35.6 points

Companies have performed better in nearly all categories of the Index, except *Category 2: Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy* and *Category 5: Benefits*, both of which were adjusted to stretch companies in the direction of best practice. The most notable areas of

¹ Small or Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), defined as:

- Manufacturing firms with fewer than 100 employees in Hong Kong, or
- Non-manufacturing firms (including the branches or subsidiaries of global/regional companies) with fewer than 50 employees in Hong Kong.

improvement include *Category 3: Diversity Training* with more companies offering LGBT+ specific training to their employees and *Category 4: Diversity Structure*, supported by the launch of many new LGBT+ employee networks in Hong Kong in the last two years.

Category	2017 Index Average / Maximum Points	2015 Index Average / Maximum Points	2017 vs 2015
1. Strategy & Leadership Accountability	51.7%	N/A	N/A
2. Equal Opportunity & Anti-Discrimination Policy	47.0%	62.7%	▼
3. Diversity Training	54.9%	27.0%	▲
4. Diversity Structure	73.8%	55.3%	▲
5. Benefits	34.3%	38.0%	▼
6. Corporate Culture	55.5%	44.0%	▲
7. Market Positioning	35.7%	27.5%	▲
8. Monitoring	25.5%	23.3%	▲
9. Community & Advocacy	47.0%	45.0%	▲
Overall Index Average – Main Index	49.2%	42.8%	▲

It is also encouraging to see that companies have made specific improvements since 2015 in many areas, with an increase in the number of companies who have:

Observations ²	% of participating companies providing specific measures	
	2017	2015
• Provided LGBT+ specific diversity training	67.5%	40.0%
• A nominated executive sponsor to champion LGBT+ inclusion efforts	67.5%	45.7%
• Fostered an inclusive culture by holding an annual diversity or LGBT+ celebration	55.0%	17.1%
• An LGBT+ employee network which their employees in Hong Kong can join	92.5%	77.1%
• Proactively supported activities of their LGBT+ network and provided resources for their activities	70.0%	37.1%
• Engaged their LGBT+ network as a business partner, working together on issues relating to the business, such as HR policies, campus recruitment, etc.	45.0%	28.6%
• Proactively marketed their company to the LGBT+ community for recruitment purposes	52.5%	25.7%
• Provided financial, in-kind support, and/or pro-bono services to LGBT+ focused organisations or activities in Hong Kong	82.5%	65.7%

SME INDEX

With the goal of engaging the wider corporate sector in Hong Kong on LGBT+ inclusion and the fact that SMEs constitute over 98% of business establishments and employ about 46% of the workforce in the private sector, Community Business introduced an SME version of the Index for the first time. Eleven companies and organisations operating in Hong Kong participated, with an average total score of 39.43 points.

“Our introduction of an SME Index was a deliberate attempt to broaden the appeal of the Index and encourage the local business community to get involved. While we were delighted that we exceeded our modest goal of ten companies, the lack of attention by the SME sector is disappointing and shows us that much more work needs to be done,” says Mrs Ngai.

² Please refer to the full list of observations from the Index Report.

Category	Index Average / Maximum Points	Gold Standard Average	Silver Standard Average	Bronze Standard Average
1. Strategy & Leadership Accountability	59.7%			
2. Equal Opportunity & Anti-Discrimination Policy	39.5%			
3. Diversity Training	30.5%			
4. Diversity Structure	30.3%			
5. Benefits	14.8%			
6. Corporate Culture	34.8%			
7. Market Positioning	40.3%			
8. Monitoring	54.5%			
9. Community & Advocacy	42.4%			
Overall Index Average – SME	35.8%	76.00 pts	49.75 pts	36.19 pts

“We commend all participating companies for the work they are doing to create inclusive workplaces for all their employees, including their LGBT+ employees. It clearly shows that these companies appreciate the business benefits and are taking steps to differentiate themselves as inclusive employers, for example, in the provision of benefits for their employees and their domestic or same-sex partners, even though same-sex relationships are not yet legally recognised in Hong Kong,” says Mrs. Ngai.

It was found that 70% of the 40 companies on the Main Index clearly define what is meant by partners or domestic partners in their employee benefits and state that this may include same-sex or opposite sex, while 60% of them clearly state that any benefits extended to “family” or “dependents” include those of same-sex partners. Another area of differentiation is the robust anti-discrimination policies of these leading companies, despite a gap in Hong Kong’s discrimination laws which lack protection for LGBT+ individuals. Recently, there have been LGBT+ related court cases such as the QT case involving a British lesbian seeking to live in Hong Kong on a dependant visa, and another case of a Hong Kong civil servant claiming equal spousal benefits for his same-sex partner.

“Our findings provide compelling evidence that leading companies in Hong Kong are already a step ahead in providing same-sex benefits and understand that the attraction and retention of talent, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, is a key business imperative,” adds Mrs Ngai. “It is our firm belief at Community Business that if Hong Kong is to truly be ‘Asia’s World City’, discrimination of any kind should not be tolerated – it not only hurts the individuals being discriminated against, but it impacts on Hong Kong’s ability to attract and retain the best talent. This is not only limited to overseas talent coming to Hong Kong to work, but also our home grown talent - young, educated people who are our future leaders who want to stay here to live and work.”

“In particular, we would welcome the participation of the Hong Kong SAR Government as the city’s largest employer, to demonstrate its leadership and commitment to the Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation which it introduced in 2014,” adds Mrs Ngai.

Community Business revealed the **2017 Hong Kong Top Employers for LGBT+ Inclusion** at a fundraising Gala Dinner held at the Island Shangri-La Hotel last month, in commemoration of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOT). Visit <http://bit.ly/2pNd1Bq> for the full list of Top Employers, together with the full details of the Index Report .

– End –

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Media Contact:

Lam Cho Wai (林祖偉)

Public Relations Manager

Tel: +852 2201-1810 +852 2201-1810

Email: chowai.lam@communitybusiness.org

Delorian Ko (高子盈)

Marketing & Communications Associate

Tel: +852 2152-1889 +852 2201-1822

Email: delorian.ko@communitybusiness.org

About Community Business

Community Business is a not-for-profit organisation (Hong Kong Charity Number 91/6560) whose mission is to lead, inspire and support businesses to have a positive impact on people and communities. A recognised leader in advancing responsible and inclusive business practices in Asia, Community Business facilitates networks, conducts research and events, leads programmes and campaigns and provides training and consultancy. Our focus on responsible business is aligned to 5 mission-led themes:

- Building responsible leadership
- Investing in local communities
- Tackling workplace inequality
- Ensuring employee wellbeing
- Promoting social inclusion

Founded in 2003 and based in Hong Kong with a presence in India and the United Kingdom, Community Business works with companies of all sizes and from diverse industries across Asia, harnessing the power of business to drive social change. For more information, please visit www.communitybusiness.org.