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# FUNDER BRIEFING:

## THE STATE OF TRANS FUNDING



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SUGGESTED CITATION

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**About Global Philanthropy Project:** Global Philanthropy Project (GPP) is a collaboration of funders and philanthropic advisors working to expand global philanthropic support to advance the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in the Global South and East. Established in 2009, GPP's 20 member organizations include many of the leading global funders and philanthropic advisors for LGBTI rights. As the first and only international cohort of LGBTI funders, GPP is internationally recognized as the primary thought leader and go-to partner for donor coordination around global LGBTI work.

**About American Jewish World Service:** American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is the leading Jewish organization working to promote human rights and end poverty in the developing world. AJWS promotes civil and political rights; advances sexual health and rights; defends land, water and climate justice; and aids communities in the aftermath of disasters. We pursue lasting change by supporting grassroots and global human rights organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and by advocating for U.S. and international policies for justice and equality worldwide.

**About Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice:** The Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice is the only philanthropic organization working exclusively to advance LGBTIQI rights around the globe. Through grantmaking, capacity building and leadership development, philanthropic advocacy and media and communications, we support hundreds of brilliant and brave grantee partners in the U.S. and internationally who challenge oppression and seed social change. We work for racial, economic, social and gender justice, because we all deserve to live our lives freely, without fear and with profound dignity. Astraea launched the Intersex Human Rights Fund as a core program in 2015 and serves as the fiscal host for the International Trans Fund.

**About GATE:** GATE is a civil society organization working internationally on gender identity, gender expression and bodily diversity issues by defending human rights, making available critical knowledge and supporting political organizing worldwide. Our areas of work include depathologization and human rights, trans and gender diverse issues in the international HIV response, movement building and socioeconomic justice, and trans, gender diverse and intersex advocacy at the United Nations.

## THE MOVEMENT FOR THE RIGHTS OF TRANS<sup>1</sup> PEOPLE IS TRULY GLOBAL.

*The State of Trans Organizing* survey of trans organizations in 2016 garnered responses from 455 organizations working in 99 countries, representing every region of the world. These organizations are on the front lines of legal and policy advocacy, community organizing, public education, and health and social service provision to their communities. They are pushing for an end to the endemic violence faced by trans communities across public life, for the right of trans people to legally define their own genders, and for the removal of the pathologization of gender diversity in health systems and in schools.

Yet the progress being made by trans organizations is being hampered by the insufficient amount of funding currently given to trans human rights and development issues and to trans-led organizations in particular. At a time when the progress made on trans rights is facing pushback by conservative forces at the local, national, and international levels, the global movement for trans rights is facing a funding crisis.

More trans organizations in more countries need external funding support and at greater levels. Government, multilateral, and philanthropic funders, including those that already support LGBTI issues, have an important role to play in scaling up their partnerships with trans organizations and trans movements at the national, regional, and international levels to advance the rights and improve the lives of trans communities across the globe.

When comparing the funding needs and priorities of the global trans movement with the state of trans funding in 2015–16, there are several funding challenges that emerge:

1. The rapidly expanding international trans movement is significantly under-resourced and continues to receive only a small amount of total global funding on LGBTI issues.
2. Too few funders are reaching trans organizations, and the limited funding that is given to trans organizations is not evenly distributed across the globe.
3. Trans organizations receive smaller grants compared to other types of organizations that are funded on LGBTI issues.
4. Government and multilateral funders have not yet scaled up funding to trans organizations.
5. While foundations are the leading funders for trans organizations, funding is concentrated among a small number of foundations.
6. Only a quarter of total funding for work with trans communities outside of the U.S. was awarded to trans organizations.
7. Outside of the U.S., there is a significant gap between the number of trans organizations working at the local level and those being funded to do so.
8. Trans organizations working at the international level are doing so with little funding.
9. Trans organizations are at the front lines of the HIV response within their communities but receive a very small amount of global HIV funding.

Each of these challenges is outlined in the brief below and should provide both funders and activists with evidence needed to drive greater attention to trans issues within individual funding institutions and philanthropic fields, with the goal of scaling up funding levels to meet current movement needs and aligning the funding with the activist priorities.

<sup>1</sup> People whose gender identity or expression differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. Some transgender people identify and present themselves as either a man or a woman; others identify with a gender nonconforming or a nonbinary gender category. Transgender people identify themselves by many different terms, some of which are specific to local cultures, including transgender, transsexual, fa'afafine, travesti, hijra, genderqueer, or transpinoy—to name just a few.

This brief is based on a comparative analysis of data from two reports. The first, *The State of Trans Organizing (2nd Edition)*, produced by American Jewish World Service, the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, and GATE, is based on a global survey of 455 trans organizations or groups about their organizational structure and budget as well as funding needs and priorities. The report, written by Strength in Numbers Consulting Group, was published in October 2017. The second report, the *2015-2016 Global Resources Report: Government and Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities* (hereafter, *Global Resources Report*), analyzed data on 12,964 grants awarded by 511 foundations, intermediaries, and corporations, and by 15 government and multilateral agencies over the two-year period of 2015–2016. It was published by the Global Philanthropy Project and Funders for LGBTQ Issues in April 2018.

Comparative analysis was done based on the published findings of *The State of Trans Organizing* and a review of the original data set that was used to inform the *Global Resources Report*. All findings from *The State of Trans Organizing* report were reviewed to determine which could be aligned with findings in the *Global Resources Report* data set to draw comparative analysis. As *The State of Trans Organizing* survey solicited data from organizations or groups that specifically and primarily exist to work with trans people or on gender identity issues (i.e., trans-specific organizations or groups), the comparative review of data from the *Global Resources Report* focused on grants that were given to trans-specific grantees (referred to in the brief as trans organizations) and/or to work with trans populations (which included both trans-specific organizations and non-trans-specific organizations).

Given that *The State of Trans Organizing* was a global survey including responses from the U.S., effort was made to compare data from that survey with global LGBTI funding data that included domestic U.S. funders. However, given that the funding context for LGBTI issues within the U.S. differs and is quite distinct from funding outside of the U.S. (as recognized throughout the findings of the *Global Resources Report*), in a number of instances in this brief, comparison between the two reports focuses on data for work outside of the U.S. Where this occurs, it is indicated in the text.

### WHY FUND TRANS ORGANIZATIONS?

Trans people from every region of the world face challenges in aspects of everyday life—including going to school or work, using a public restroom, voting, and traveling across borders. They face alarmingly high rates of violence from state and non-state actors, often have significant barriers to having their gender legally recognized in official documents based on their self-determination, and continue to be pathologized within healthcare systems, which has a significant impact on their health and well-being.

Trans movements have been at the forefront of both highlighting these human rights issues and calling government and non-state actors to account where violations have occurred. Trans organizations hold expertise, informed by lived experience, which makes them well-placed to find the best solutions to the challenges they face. Importantly, such organizations are most deeply connected to trans communities and are vital to supporting their development, which is crucial for achieving sustainable and long-term improvements in the lives of trans people.



West Africa Trans Forum members at a leadership training event in Liberia, 2018; Credit: West Africa Trans Forum

## KEY FINDINGS

### FUNDING CHALLENGE 1

**The rapidly expanding international movement of trans organizing is significantly under-resourced and continues to receive only a small amount of total global funding on LGBTI issues.**

In 2016, more than half (55.8%) of trans groups responding to *The State of Trans Organizing* survey had annual budgets of less than \$10,000;<sup>2</sup> nearly three-quarters (78.4%) had annual budgets of less than \$50,000.

A review of data from the *Global Resources Report* found that in those two years, 255 trans organizations across the world were awarded \$18,679,400 through 803 grants. This accounts for only 3.5% of the total amount of global LGBTI funding over those two years. When you look at funding to trans organizations outside of the U.S., only 72 organizations across all other regions of the world received a combined total of \$7,056,800 through 201 grants, which was **only 2.7% of all global LGBTI funding in 2015–16 outside of the U.S.**

### FUNDING CHALLENGE 2

**Too few funders are reaching trans organizations and the limited funding that is given to trans organizations is not evenly distributed across the globe.**

Although 255 trans organizations received at least one grant in 2015–16, there were 455 trans organizations that completed *The State of Trans Organizing* survey, which demonstrates the unmet need within the global trans movement. This correlates with the finding that of those who completed the survey, more than two in five had no external funding (meaning that the only funding is provided by members, out of pocket and via community/grassroots funding). Trans groups in every region lack access to external funders, though data from both reports suggests that it is particularly challenging for trans groups in the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Asia and the Pacific, Australia, and New Zealand.

Data from the *Global Resources Report* highlights that across each region, trans organizations are receiving limited resources with median grant sizes ranging between \$5,000–12,000 (except for Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which only had one recorded grant to a trans organization, and the Pacific, Australia, and New Zealand, where there were no recorded grants to trans organizations in 2015–16).

### FUNDING CHALLENGE 3

**Trans organizations receive smaller grants compared to other types of organizations that are funded on LGBTI issues.**

When trans organizations are supported, they are, on average, receiving smaller grants than other organizations funded to do LGBTI work. In 2015–16, according to the *Global Resources Report*, the average grant size to trans organizations was almost half that of the global average grant size for LGBTI work (\$23,000 vs. \$44,700). Such differences in average grant sizes replicate existing funding inequities and hamper the growth of trans organizations.

### FUNDING CHALLENGE 4

**Government and multilateral funders have not yet scaled up funding to trans organizations.**

Funding from government and multilateral funders on LGBTI issues has steadily increased in recent years, and in 2015–16 accounted for almost half (46%) of all funding outside of the U.S. Many of the governments funding LGBTI issues employ numerous approaches to funding organizations, including through direct grants, support to intermediary organizations for regranting, and support at the national and local level through embassies. The three largest funders for all LGBTI issues outside of the U.S. are government and multilateral funders, as are five of the top ten largest funders.

However, government and multilateral funders have yet to provide significant funding to trans organizations or for work with trans communities. According to *The State of Trans Organizing*, only 10% of trans organizations had received support from an embassy, and 6% had received direct support from a donor government. **Among the fifteen government and multilateral donors that submitted grantmaking data to the *Global Resources Report*, there were cumulatively only seven recorded direct grants to trans organizations totaling \$794,100, which accounted for only 0.62% of total funding from government and multilateral funders outside of the U.S.**<sup>3</sup> When looking at government and multilateral funding for work that covered trans communities (which includes funding to trans organizations and other organizations), 37 grants worth a combined US\$4,970,000 were given in 2015–16, which was 3.9% of total government and multilateral funding outside of the U.S. over those two years.

2 All monetary figures in the brief are in US dollars.

3 There were no grants to intermediary or regranting organizations for funding trans organizations.



International Trans Camp, 2018; Credit: Trans\*Coalition in Post-Soviet Space

**Table 1 – Number of Trans Organizations and Access to External Funding, by Region**

REGION	NUMBER OF TRANS ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING AT LEAST ONE GRANT, 2015–16	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS TO STATE OF TRANS ORGANIZING	TRANS ORGANIZATIONS WITH NO EXTERNAL FUNDING, 2015–16
Europe	19	72	35.6%
Asia	14	99	45.2%
North America	187	102	26.8%
Sub-Saharan Africa	17–29 <sup>4</sup>	50	36.8%
Pacific, Australia, and New Zealand	0	24	40.0%
Caribbean, Central America, and South America	21	105	64.7%

**Table 2 – Average and Median Grant Size, Total Funding, and Number of Grants to Trans Organizations, by Region**

REGION (% OF THE STATE OF TRANS ORGANIZING SURVEY RESPONDENTS)	AVERAGE GRANT SIZE (\$)	MEDIAN GRANT SIZE (\$)	TOTAL AMOUNT TO TRANS ORGS (\$18,679,400)	NUMBER OF GRANTS TO TRANS ORGS <sup>5</sup>	% OF GLOBAL TOTAL GIVEN TO TRANS ORGS
Europe (15.8)	62,800	12,200	2,481,000	42	13.3%
Asia (21.8)	23,386	10,000	514,500	23	2.7%
North America <sup>6</sup> (22.4)	21,100	5,000	12,881,800 <sup>7</sup>	611	68.9%
Sub-Saharan Africa (11.0)	19,855	10,000	1,509,000	76	8.1%
Pacific, Australia, and New Zealand (5.3)	0	0	0	0	0%
MENA (N/A)	95,300	95,300	95,300	1	0.5%
Caribbean, Central America, and South America (23.1)	24,400	10,000	1,195,300	49	6.4%

4 A range is given, as there were 12 grants given to anonymous trans-specific organizations in Africa. This allows for the possibility that as many as 12 of these grants were given to organizations that were not recorded elsewhere as receiving a grant.

5 Total grants in this column = 800. There were 801 grants awarded to trans orgs in 2015–16, including one where the location was unspecified.

6 Includes funding to GATE, Astraea (for ITF), WPATH, Gender Proud for work outside of the U.S.

7 \$1,235,000 for work outside of the U.S.

## FUNDING CHALLENGE 5

While foundations are the leading funders for trans organizations, funding is concentrated among a small number of foundations.

According to *The State of Trans Organizing*, foundations are the largest source of external funding for trans organizations. In 2016, two in five (40.2%) trans organizations received at least one grant from a foundation, an increase from 28% in 2014. However, that funding comes from a small number of foundations. The five largest foundations supporting trans organizations outside of the U.S. in 2015–16<sup>8</sup> accounted for 60% of all funding.

Of the 511 foundations that awarded at least one grant on LGBTI issues outside of the US in 2015–16, only 5% (n=29) gave a grant to a trans organizations and less than one in ten (n=46) gave a grant for work with trans communities (either to a trans-led organization or other organizations). As a result, only 4.2% of all foundation funding on LGBTI issues globally in 2015–16 was awarded to trans organizations, and 11.6% for work with trans communities.

From the top 20 foundation funders of LGBTI issues outside of the U.S. (by amount) in 2015–16,<sup>9</sup> only half provided direct support to trans organizations. Only two of those ten foundations gave more than 10% of their total funding in 2015–16 to trans organizations.<sup>10</sup> When looking at funding for work with trans communities (which includes funding to trans organizations and other organizations), that number increases to 14 of the 20 largest foundations of LGBTI issues.<sup>11</sup>

Only a quarter of total funding for work with trans communities outside of the U.S. was awarded to trans organizations.

Comparing respondents to *The State of Trans Organizing* survey in 2016 with the respondents from the 2013 survey, which led to the first edition of *The State of Trans and Intersex Organizing*, indicates considerable growth in the number of trans organizations across the world (as compared to programs working primarily or specifically with trans communities but situated within a larger organization). In 2013, just over half of the respondents were autonomous trans organizations, while nearly ninety percent (85.1%) of trans groups responding to the 2016

8 Open Society Foundations (OSF) gave the highest amount to trans organizations, followed by Astraea, Arcus, American Jewish World Service, and Mama Cash.

9 The funders that did were Hivos, OSF, Arcus, AJWS, Astraea, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Global Fund for Women, UHAI, Tides, FRI (ranked in order of total LGBTI funding in 2015–16).

10 Open Society Foundations and Astraea.

11 The funders that did were Hivos, OSF, Arcus, AJWS, Big Lottery Fund, M.A.C Aids Fund, Amplify Change, Gilead, Astraea, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Global Fund for Women, UHAI, Tides, FRI (ranked in order of total LGBTI funding in 2015–16).



TransAkcija's trans march in Slovenia, 2017; Credit: TransAkcija

survey were autonomous. In comparison, just under one in six (14.9%) respondents to the 2016 survey were programs of another organization (i.e., a broader LGBTI, women's rights, or HIV/AIDS organization).

The growth and leadership of trans organizations in addressing human rights and development concerns of trans communities has not been matched by levels of funding to trans organizations for this work. According to the *Global Resources Report*, **of the \$26,134,000 awarded for work with trans communities outside of the U.S. in 2015–16, only \$7,032,700 (26.9%) was awarded to trans organizations directly.** Of the 456 grants awarded, trans organizations received 198 (43.4%).

## FUNDING CHALLENGE 7

Outside of the U.S., there is a significant gap between the number of trans organizations working at the local level and those being funded to do so.

Across all regions of the world, many trans organizations are working locally to address issues that impact the daily lives of their communities. Just under one-third of all trans respondents to *The State of Trans Organizing* (32%) indicated that they undertake work at the local level. Data from the *Global Resources Report* indicates that U.S. domestic funders of trans organizations have recognized the importance of resourcing community-based work, with 39% (235 out of 602) of all grants to trans organizations in the U.S. focusing at the local level.

However, outside of the U.S. the picture is very different, with less than 5% of all grants (10 out of 201) to trans orga-

nizations dedicated to work at the local level. Instead, most of the funding for trans organizations outside of the U.S. is for work at the national level (156 out of 201, or 77.6%). While more respondents to *The State of Trans Organizing* indicated that they worked at the national level (59.2%) in their own country than at any other level—local (32.0%), regional (14.1%), or international (15.5%)—it would appear that funders supporting the work of trans organizations outside of the U.S. are not sufficiently dedicating resources for work at the local level.

### FUNDING CHALLENGE 8

**Trans organizations working at the international level are doing so with little funding.**

According to *The State of Trans Organizing*, in 2016 one in every six (15.5%) trans groups across the world had worked at the international level. However, data from the *Global Resources Report* showed that only ten grants were awarded to just four trans organizations for work at the international level in 2015–16, which accounts for only just over 1% of all grants to trans organizations (10 out of 803) over those two years.

The limited amount of funding that was given for trans organizations to work at the international level was focused on human rights advocacy (nine grants awarded to four organizations in 2015–16). At the same time, 45 trans groups indicated in *The State of Trans Organizing* that they have done work to influence an international or regional decision-making body to improve the human rights of trans people. Trans organizations working to make HIV/AIDS responses inclusive of trans people is one area of international advocacy that is particularly under-resourced. According to *The State of Trans Organizing*, 4.6% of trans respondents were doing this work, while just under one in ten (8.7%) would like to do this work but cannot because of lack of resources. This aligns with data from the *Global Resources Report*, which showed

that there were no documented grants to trans organizations for HIV work at the international level in 2015–16.

### FUNDING CHALLENGE 9

**Trans organizations are at the front lines of the HIV response within their communities but receive a very small amount of global HIV funding.**

Trans communities are disproportionately burdened by the HIV epidemic and increasingly recognized as a key population for inclusion within effective national responses to the disease. Trans organizations themselves have long organized to address HIV in their communities, with 23.7% of respondents to *The State of Trans Organizing* indicating that they provided HIV prevention services. At the same time, just over one in five (21.1%) had received HIV/AIDS funding.

Data from the *Global Resources Report* showed that 17% of all LGBTI funding outside of the U.S. in 2015–16 that focused on HIV/AIDS was inclusive of work with trans communities (\$7.74m out of \$44.39m). However, very little of that money went directly to trans organizations. Of the 42 grants awarded for HIV work with trans communities outside of the U.S., only six were awarded to trans organizations. Combined, these six grants totaled only \$68,700, which amounts to less than 1% of the total amount given for HIV work with trans communities outside of the U.S. in 2015–16.

The funding challenges facing trans movements across the world can be met. The Global Philanthropy Project, GATE, American Jewish World Service, and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice call on government, multilateral, and philanthropic funders, including those that already support LGBTI issues, to prioritize supporting trans issues. In particular, this brief is a call to resource trans organizations and activists that are at the forefront of the legal, social, economic, and political change that is, and will, improve the lives of trans people across the world.



*Resilience Diaries* documentary launch in Uganda, 2019;  
Credit: East African Visual Artists



*International Trans Camp, 2018;  
Credit: Trans\* Coalition in  
Post-Soviet Space*



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