

DIVING DEEPER:

Under the surface of LGBTI
embassy funding data



Global Resources Report Brief Series #3
June 2021

I. Diving Deeper Brief Series

The 2017–2018 *Global Resources Report: Government and Philanthropic Support for LGBTI Communities* (Global Resources Report, or GRR) documents six years of global LGBTI funding, from 2013 to 2018, including over 19,764 grants awarded in 2017–2018 by 800 foundations, NGO intermediary funders, and corporations and by 15 donor government and multilateral agencies. The 2017–2018 GRR documents a total of \$560 million in grants awarded in that two-year period. The report provides detailed data on the distribution of LGBTI funding by geography, issue, strategy, population focus, and more, offering a tool for identifying trends, gaps, and opportunities in the rapidly changing landscape of LGBTI funding.

The biennial *Global Resources Report* contains over 125 pages of data and analysis – and yet there are many more ways to assess and engage with the information collected by Funders for LGBTQ Issues and Global Philanthropy Project (GPP).

In 2021, for the first time, GPP is sharing a series of “Diving Deeper” briefs to explore a number of new analyses using the GRR dataset. These briefs focus on: global LBQTI funding, the role of intermediaries and the role of government embassies in global LGBTI funding, and regional trends. As we move towards the development of a next iteration of the *Global Resources Report* which will be published in 2022, this series further illuminates the importance of the GRR data in ongoing strategy and advocacy towards impactful resourcing of LGBTI human rights advancement and inclusive development. The “Diving Deeper” briefs are developed to serve as tools for LGBTI movements, funders, and policymakers.

The “Diving Deeper” brief series is developed by the GPP staff, with additional review and feedback from members and other key partners.

II. Introduction

Government donors play an important role in funding LGBTI issues, yet the size and reporting requirements of government funding can limit the accessibility of this funding for smaller or locally-focused LGBTI organizations. One emerging solution is the use of embassies as a funding instrument. This brief uses data from the *Global Resources Report* to examine the extent to which embassies are providing resources for local LGBTI movements, the types of organizations and issues that are supported, as well as best practice examples.

At a time when major development assistance streams supporting LGBTI issues are being stretched and in some instances reduced, and when LGBTI organizations face funding shortages, this brief provides government donors and other advocates with evidence about how embassy funding can be used to support and strengthen local movements.

The data shows that:

- Looking at total funding amount in 2017–2018, embassies made an estimated 269 grants totaling close to \$24 million, or one-third of the total amount of documented government funding.
- Looking at the total number of grants in 2017–2018, embassy-based grants accounted for 70 percent of the number of government grants.
- LGBTI embassy funding has more than doubled in amount and has grown in number of grants by more than 600 percent from 2013–2014 to 2017–2018. In that same time period, the percentage of embassy grants compared to overall government funding more than doubled. These increases likely reflect a growing use of embassies as LGBTI funding mechanisms and also improved detail in government grant reporting over time.
- In 2017–2018, the vast majority of embassy funding was focused on general LGBT grants, with scarce funding focused explicitly on LBQ, trans, or intersex populations. Additionally, only 9 percent of embassy funding in those two years was awarded to groups focused on LGBTI issues.

Read on to learn more about these numbers and additional details, why embassy funding is important for LGBTI movements, and good practices for embassy grants programs to consider.



III. Methodology

The *Diving Deeper* brief series draws from and expands data analysis developed for the *2017-2018 Global Resources Report: Government and Philanthropic Support for LGBTI Communities* (GRR). This series will retain the methodology documented on pages 8-14 of that report. We note a few elements key to this specific brief.

Funding attributed in full to year of the grant award

The GRR provides data on the year of grant award as opposed to the year(s) of grant disbursement. This means that for multiyear commitments, the full sum of the grant is counted in the year in which it was awarded.

Reporting global funding excluding funds focused on the U.S.

In most sections of the *Global Resources Report*, and in this brief, we exclude U.S.-focused funds (unless otherwise noted) and report on all other global LGBTI funding. As documented in The Big Picture section of the GRR, funding to the U.S. vastly exceeds funding to all other world regions and is separately explored in detail by Funders for LGBTQ Issues in their annual domestic tracking reports.

See *Appendix 1* for a list of funder type definitions.

IV. Why is embassy funding important for the global LGBTI movement?

An opportunity for local and national LGBTI organizations to access donor government support.¹ Government donors contribute a significant part of LGBTI global funding. Funding awarded from the headquarters of government donor agencies (usually based in the country's capital) tends to support international or regional organizations, including funds awarded for re-granting at the country level. When embassies provide funding on LGBTI issues, there is more opportunity for LGBTI organizations working at the local or national level to apply for that funding. Importantly, this engagement can also increase the capacity of LGBTI organizations to directly engage with the embassy staff responsible for this funding. Through this process, embassy staff can also become increasingly familiar with the LGBTI work taking place within the country. In contrast, government donor representatives working in headquarters are likely to have less capacity to develop working relationships with local or national LGBTI organizations, given the many countries that each government donor has embassies in.

Embassy grants tend to be smaller than other donor government funding, making it easier for many LGBTI organizations to manage.

According to data from the *2017-2018 Global Resources Report*, the average size of grants awarded through embassies was about half that of other forms of donor government funding (see chart 3 below). Of the 269 embassy grants awarded, one-third were for less than \$10,000 and two-thirds were under \$30,000. While the requirements for embassy funding will vary by donor government, in general smaller grants tend to have less burdensome application and reporting requirements.

Embassy support can greatly strengthen LGBTI movements in hostile environments. Located and acting from within the local communities, embassies are often more aware of the situation on the ground. Their ability to administer smaller-scale grants combined with this awareness, can yield crucial for emerging LGBTI initiatives and groups in countries where discrimination and exclusions of LGBTI communities is high.

Embassy funding tends to be more flexible than other funding. In 2017-2018, 40 percent of grants awarded through embassies were for general operating expenses. In comparison, only 21 percent of non-embassy government funding was assigned to general operating expenses. Beyond donor government funding, embassy grants were more likely to be for general operating than overall grants reported to the *2017-2018 Global Resources Report*, of which 28 percent were assigned to general operating. General operating support through embassies enables local or national organizations working on LGBTI issues to undertake activities that are responsive to their context.

¹ For civil society groups interested in approaching embassies for support including (and beyond) funding, see the Council for Global Equality resource [Accessing U.S. Embassies: A Guide for LGBT Human Rights Defenders](#) available in English, Spanish, and French.

Embassy funding can provide an entry point for broader engagement with donor governments. Receiving a grant from an embassy may also provide opportunities for representatives from local or national LGBTI organizations to build working relationships with donor governments that will serve their work in other ways. For example, embassies can support Pride events and can host cultural events of significance for the local LGBTI community, or provide spaces for organizations and networks to meet within the embassy or Ambassadors’ residence. Some also provide support for activists to participate in regional or international conferences or learning exchanges.

Allies to LGBTI groups within embassies can also utilize their networks to access and convene stakeholders that LGBTI groups may not be able to reach directly. Embassies can also be effective connectors to stakeholders such as local chambers of commerce, media, and businesses in their own country to facilitate trade with local LGBTI businesses.

V. Under the surface of embassy-based LGBTI grants data

For the first time, the 2017-2018 Global Resources Report identified known funding from embassies as a distinct element of government support, providing a small-grants distribution mechanism for donor government grantmaking.

In 2017-2018, embassies made an estimated 269 grants totaling close to \$24 million, or one-third of the total amount of documented government funding. Moreover, embassy-based grants accounted for 70 percent of the number of government grants awarded in 2017-2018.²

The chart below shows the total number of embassy grants and total embassy funding amounts focused on LGBTI communities for governments that reported to the 2017-2018 Global Resources Report.³ The final column shows what percentage of the government’s LGBTI global funding was awarded by their embassies.

DOCUMENT KEYS

Throughout the charts in this report, please note these icon keys which identify whether reported funds include funding awarded for the purposes of regranting and funding focused on the United States.

REGRANTING

R

+

INCLUDED

R

—

NOT INCLUDED

US FUNDING

US

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Chart 1 – Government embassy funding in 2017-2018 showing number of grants to global LGBTI communities; total LGBTI global funding awarded by embassies; and the percentage of government LGBTI global funding awarded by their embassies.

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2017-2018	Number of embassy grants to global LGBTI	Total amount embassy global LGBTI funding Sum USD	Percentage total LGBTI funding awarded by embassies
Government of The Netherlands	158	\$7,222,884	67%
Government of Sweden	31	\$14,324,206	48%
Government of Germany	24	\$588,601	40%
Government of Canada	41	\$771,286	16%
Government of Denmark	3	\$478,845	10%
Government of Norway	12	\$568,688	9%
Totals	269	\$23,954,510	

² These numbers have been slightly updated since the publication of the 2017-2018 Global Resources Report based on additionally detailed evaluation.

³ The six donor governments included in Chart 1 are those for whom we can confidently identify embassy funding. Additional governments that reported in 2017-2018 may also have made grants through embassies, and the data development process has been adjusted for the 2019-2020 Global Resources Report to more clearly identify embassy funding in the next iteration of analysis.

4 | Diving Deeper: Under the surface of LBQTI Embassy funding data

As demonstrated in Chart 2, embassy grants make up a much greater proportion of the number of government global LGBTI grants compared to the proportion of total global LGBTI funding amount by governments, due to the relatively small grant amounts of embassy funding.

Chart 2 – Number and sum of embassy grants in 2017–2018 as a percentage of all government funding.

R — US —

2017–2018	Number of grants	Sum USD
Embassy funding as a percentage of all government funding	70%	33%

In Chart 3, we see that the average global LGBTI grant amount by embassies in 2017–2018 was about half the size of non-embassy global LGBTI funding by donor governments.

Chart 3 – Comparison of average grant size in 2017–2018 between embassy and non-embassy government funding.

R — US —

2017–2018	Average Grant Amount (USD)
Embassy	\$89,050
Non-Embassy Government	\$188,869

The data also shows that global LGBTI funding by embassies is more likely to be focused on short-term projects. About 82 percent of embassy grants documented in the *2017-2018 Global Resources Report* had a duration of one year. In comparison, only about 35 percent of non-embassy government grants had a one year duration while another 42 percent of those grants had a duration of 3 or more years.

Chart 4 – Comparison of grant duration in 2017–2018 between embassy and non-embassy government funding [percentage of total government grants].

R — US —

2017–2018	1 Year	2 Year	3+ Years
Embassy	82%	14%	4%
Non-Embassy Government	35%	23%	42%

An increasing role for embassies within the LGBTI funding landscape

The data shows that LGBTI embassy funding has increased in amount by more than two times and in number of grants by more than six times from 2013–2014 to 2017–2018.

In that same time period, the percentage of embassy grants compared to overall government funding more than doubled from 15 percent to 33 percent.

These increases likely reflect a growing use of embassies as LGBTI funding mechanisms and also improved detail in government grant reporting over time.

Chart 5 – Change in reported embassy funding over time, 2013–2018

R — US —

Time period	number of grants	Sum USD	% of all government funding
2013–2014	42	\$11,468,367	15%
2015–2016	85	\$7,608,146	13%
2017–2018	269	\$23,954,510	33%

% change in sum 2013–14 to 2017–18	209%
% change in # grants	640%

What was funded by embassy grants?

In 2017–2018, embassy funding to LGBTI communities was primarily focused on LGB communities generally, with less than 1 percent of grants focused explicitly on subpopulations of lesbian, gay, or bisexual communities. Only 2 percent of the total funding directly focused on trans populations and 1 percent directly focused on intersex populations.

At the same time, only 9 percent of the grants were directed towards explicitly LGBTI-focused groups (as compared to organizations focused on broader issues which might have LGBTI programs). Comparing embassy funding to the general funding trends suggests that this is an area for increased advocacy to ensure that LGBTI funding reaches those most impacted.

It is worth noting that the embassy grants we are reporting are predominantly moving through human rights and/or civil society engagement funding streams. There may be possibilities for additional government funding streams to support LGBTI communities through embassies, including funding focused on economic development.

In Chart 7, we see that 91 percent of embassy funding went to non-LGBTI groups. This included groups with broader human rights focus or groups with a broader health focus, including groups focused on HIV/AIDS response. A good deal of this funding was focused on intermediary organizations which may likely have then supported LGBTI groups in-country.

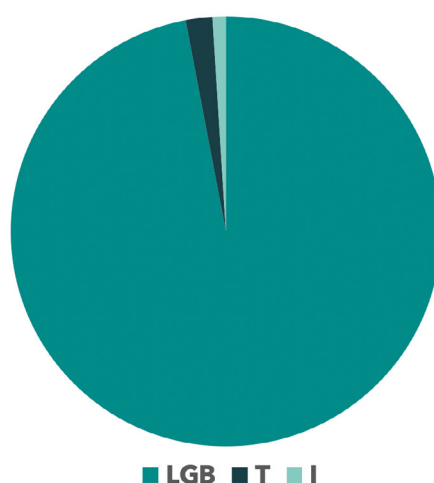
All funding reported by embassies was focused on the global south and east.

Half of the funding awarded by embassies was focused on the world region of Latin America and the Caribbean, with no other region making up more than 20 percent of the total.

If we look deeper at the funding amounts by world region, we see that in many regions the majority of government funding is received through embassies. The percentage of government funding awarded through embassies has increased in every region, to varying degrees.

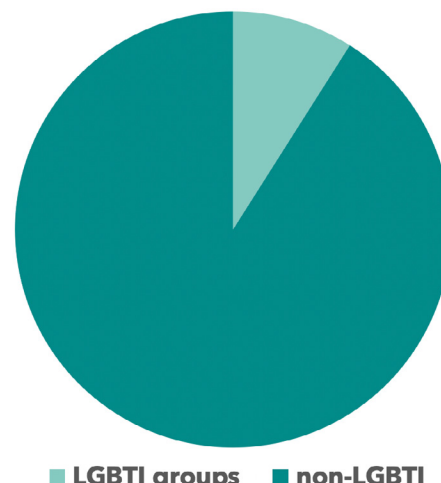
The region of Latin America and The Caribbean varies significantly in

Chart 6 – Embassy funding by population focus, 2017–2018



R — US —

Chart 7 – Embassy funding by group type focus, 2017–2018



LGBTI groups non-LGBTI

R — US —

funding amount due to a large amount of funding awarded through an embassy to an intermediary organization and a multilateral agency for work in the region.

Embassy grants generally focused on general operating or program support. Looking at strategy and issues funded, 75 percent were focused on advocacy, and 77 percent were focused on human rights.

Chart 8 – Embassy funding by world region focus, 2017–2018

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US

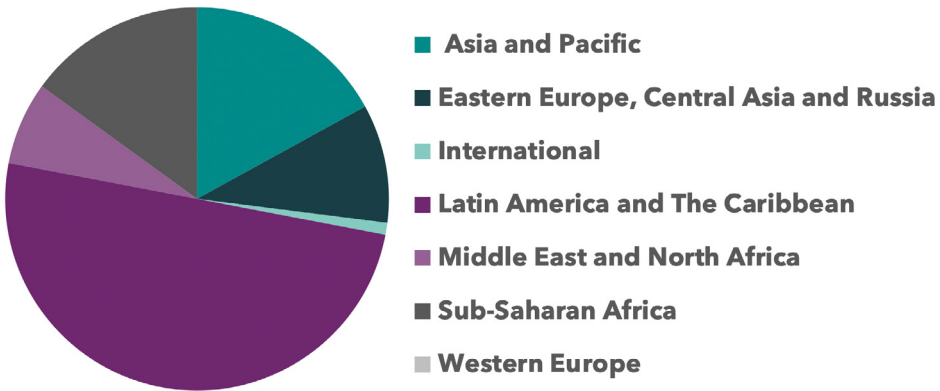
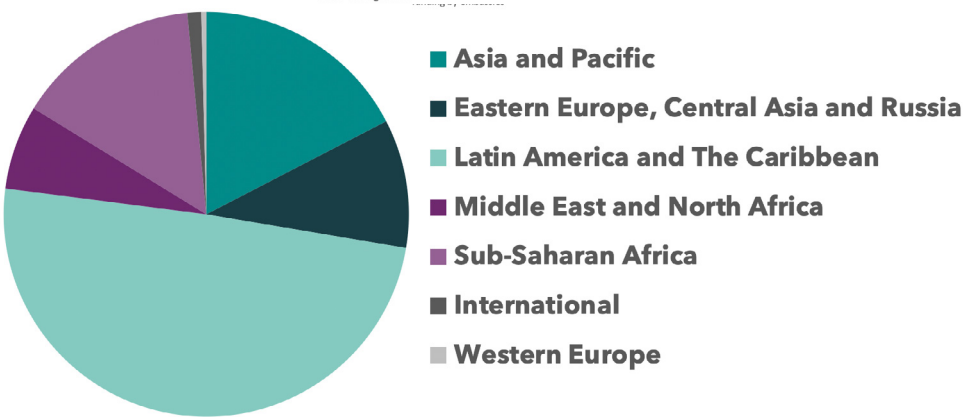


Chart 9 – Embassy funding by world region focus in 2017–2018; Total LGBTI global funding amount by embassies; percentage of global LGBTI funding from embassies as a percentage of all global LGBTI government funding; and change in that percentage from 2013–2014 to 2017–2018.

R

US



Embassy funding by world region	2017–2018 global LGBTI funding by embassies	Embassy funds as percentage of overall government global LGBTI funding	Change in percentage from 2013–2014 to 2017–2018
Overall	\$23,954,510	33%	+18

Chart 10 – Embassy funding by type of support focus, 2017–2018

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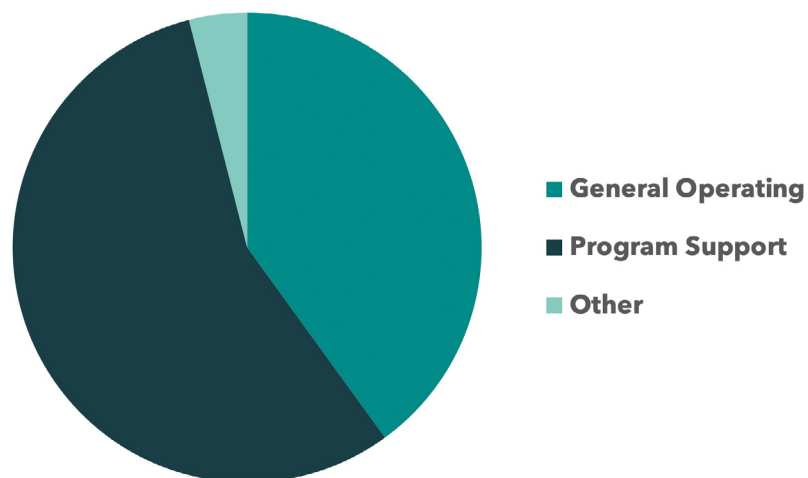
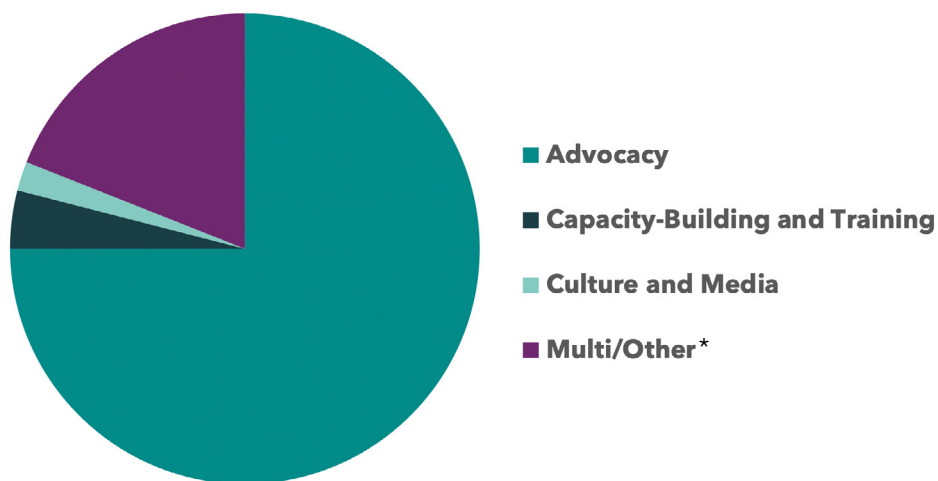


Chart 11 – Embassy funding by strategic focus, 2017–2018

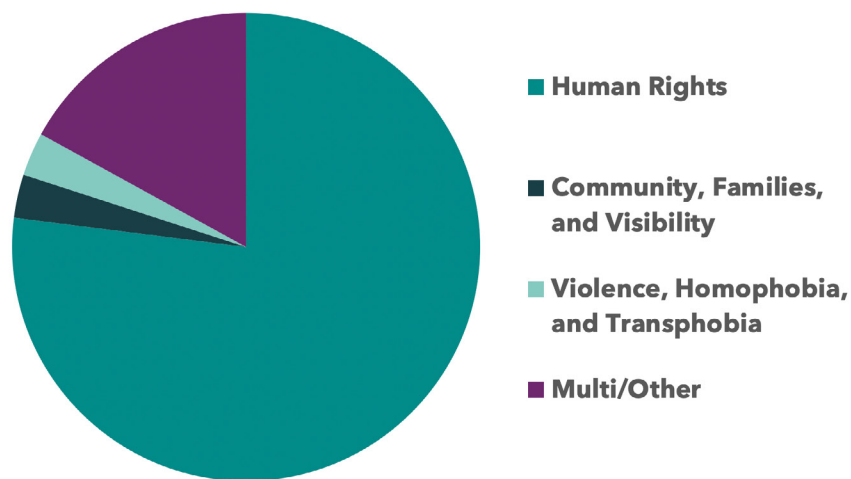
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* The category of Multi/Other includes Direct Service which only received three grants from embassies totaling about \$305,000 in this time period, or 1 percent of the total global LGBTI embassy funding.

Chart 12 – Embassy funding by issue area focus, 2017–2018

R	—	US	—
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V. Good Practices

How the Netherlands advances equal rights for LGBTI communities through its embassies

Funding from Dutch embassies plays an important role in resourcing movements for equal rights for LGBTI persons in many parts of the world. Based on data submitted to the *2017-2018 Global Resources Report*, the Netherlands provided more LGBTI grants through their embassies than any other government donor. Over those two years, the Dutch government awarded 158 grants in 64 countries, across each region of the world. More than half of all Dutch global LGBTI funding was awarded through their embassies (53 percent; \$7.2 million).

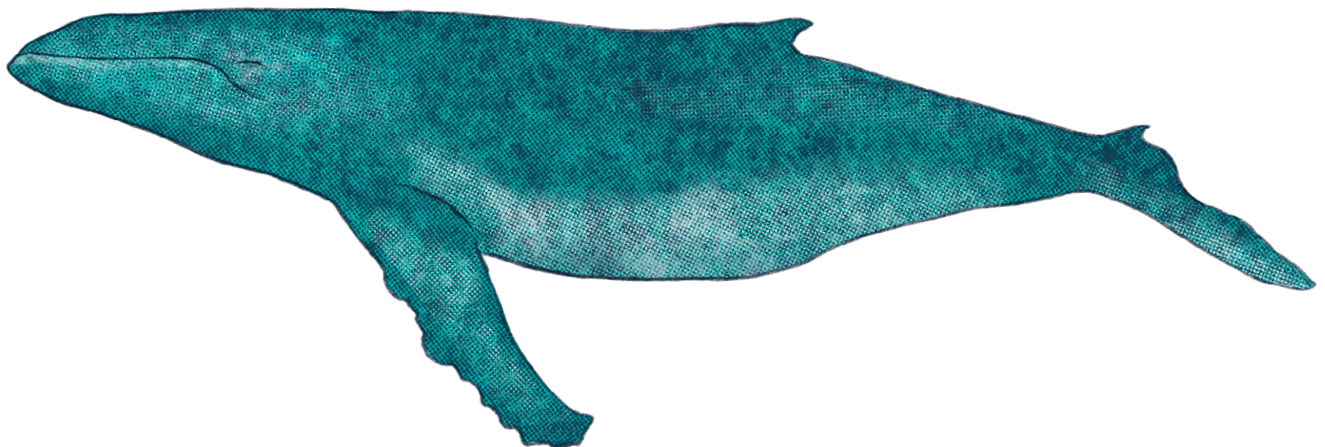
Much of the funding awarded through Netherlands embassies comes from the Human Rights Fund, a global funding program that advances the Dutch Government's priorities under its human rights policy. One such priority is equal rights for LGBTI persons. Part of the total funding for the Human Rights Fund is allocated to Netherlands embassies for projects that focus on addressing the human rights priorities in that country. Having equal rights for LGBTI persons as an explicit priority of the Human Rights Fund has facilitated a significant number of local LGBTI organizations and projects seeking support from the Dutch Embassy in their country. Supported projects have included campaigns for law and social reform in Serbia and Romania, the provision of sexual and reproductive health services for trans communities in Colombia, development of a SOGIE Diversity Index in the Philippines, and support for Pride events in Ukraine.

The Dutch Government publishes the activities it supports to advance the equal rights of LGBTI persons through its annual Human Rights Report, emphasizing the importance that embassy funding plays in its global human rights strategy.

Recommendations

Based on the data and analysis above, GPP offers a series of recommendations on strengthening embassy funding programs' support of local LGBTI human rights and development outcomes.

- 1. Prioritize supporting LGBTI-led organizations:** Embassy funding programs focused on supporting in-country work to advance human rights and improve development outcomes for marginalized groups should actively engage and seek to support LGBTI-led organizations. In particular, it is important to ensure that funding opportunities exist for organizations or groups led by and for lesbian, bi, and queer (LBQ) women, trans people, and intersex people.
- 2. Identify ways to support non-registered organizations or groups:** Smaller, grassroots organizations may not be formally registered. This can be due to lack of resources, security issues, or they may be restricted from registration by the national government. While some donor government regulations may make it impossible or difficult to support non-registered organizations or groups, embassy officers could facilitate collaboration between larger registered organizations and smaller LGBTI groups to establish a fiscal host partnership or joint project where the registered organization receives and administers the embassy funding.
- 3. Where possible, provide funding up front.** Some embassy funding is awarded and disbursed as reimbursements for expenses. Given that many small organizations have limited resources to cover such costs up front, this can be a barrier to applying for embassy funding. Providing funding before projects commence would make it easier for these groups to receive support from embassies.



4. **Where possible, provide funding to support core/general costs:** While embassy small grants can provide much needed resources for projects, general operating support through embassies enables them to undertake work that is responsive to their context. This is especially important because many local LGBTI organizations are “one-stop shops” for their community. For example, being able to cover staff or office costs means that LGBTI organizations can focus on providing community safe spaces while also engaging in other activities such as advocacy or community outreach and education.
5. **Where possible, provide ongoing or multi-year funding:** Many embassy funding programs are based on annual grantmaking cycles which require groups to apply each year for funding, without guarantee of ongoing support. This makes it challenging for groups to plan and undertake work towards systemic change, which usually takes numerous years to achieve.
6. **Identify opportunities for providing larger grants** (either through embassies or by connecting to HQ): While embassy funding plays a vital role in supporting local and national LGBTI organizations, embassy small grants programs may not provide larger LGBTI organizations and networks with the resources they need to undertake their work, such as leading major public law reform campaigns or regional movement building. Where such work aligns with the foreign policy objectives of a donor government, embassy officers could identify discrete funding or ensure that the LGBTI organization is connected to program staff in-capital who oversee LGBTI funding programs.

VI. Appendix

Definition of Funder Types

The following types of funders are included in the *Global Resources Report* and these definitions are reflected in this brief.

- **Private foundations:** Nongovernmental and/or nonprofit organizations or charitable trusts whose funding is typically endowed by a family or an individual donor, or through the sale of corporate assets. Private foundations do not solicit funds from the public.
- **Public foundations:** Institutions set up to raise funds from the general public in order to award grants, sometimes also called **community foundations**. Some public foundations also function as intermediary funders, receiving funds from other foundations or development agencies in order to regrant those funds to civil society organizations and grassroots groups.
- **Intermediary nongovernmental organizations (NGOs):** Civil society organizations (CSOs) operating a range of programs including the regranting of funds received from foundations or development agencies to other (generally smaller) civil society organizations and grassroots groups.
- **Note:** The terms civil society organization (CSO) and nongovernmental organization (NGO) are used interchangeably in this report.
- **Corporate funders:** Foundations and grantmaking programs at for-profit organizations.
- **Governments:** Funding awarded by donor governments through a range of agencies and embassies. This report documents government funding focused on international development efforts to advance LGBTI rights and does not include governments’ domestic funding.
Note: Embassy funding is generally included within the government category. A focus on Embassy-specific funding is included on page 32 of the 2017-2018 Global Resources Report.
- **Multilateral agencies:** Organizations formed by multiple countries for the purpose of joint funding or other types of cooperation.
- **Anonymous funders:** Foundations and funds seeking to maintain anonymity in their giving.

Data from individual donors was not collected unless the funding was awarded through a philanthropic entity, such as a private foundation or a donor-advised fund housed at a public foundation.

Acknowledgements

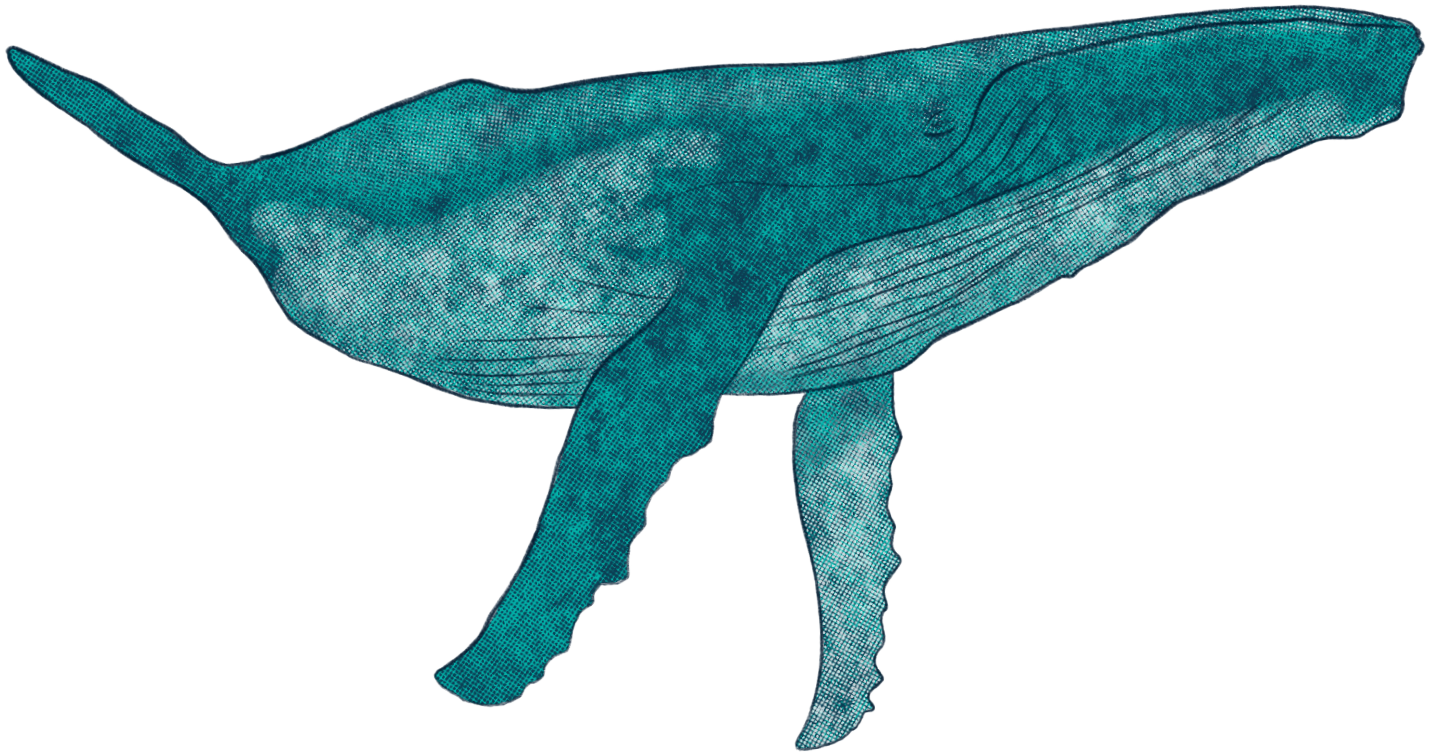
This report was written by Ezra Nepon, GPP Senior Program Officer for Knowledge and Learning with David Scamell, GPP Senior Consulting Advisor on Government Relations and Field Engagement and Jay Postic, Global Resources Report Research Consultant.

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Chart formatting based on the 2017-2018 *Global Resources Report* designed by Vito Raimondi



About GPP

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, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in the Global South and East. Established in 2009, GPP's 21 member organizations include many of the leading global funders and philanthropic advisors for LGBTI rights. As the first 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.

Contact:

Global Philanthropy Project
c/o Community Initiatives
1000 Broadway Suite #480, Oakland, CA 94607
info@globalphilanthropyproject.org
Website: <http://globalphilanthropyproject.org>
Twitter: @gpp_updates

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Staff:

Marina Gonzalez Flores

Program Officer for Member Engagement and Operations

Ezra Berkley Nepon

Senior Program Officer for Knowledge and Learning

Dave Scamell

Senior Consulting Advisor for Government Relations and Field Engagement

Jay Postic

Research Consultant, Global Resources Report

