

ELEVATING GLOBAL LGBTI RIGHTS

Recommendations for Danish
leadership on global LGBTI funding

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TERMINOLOGY

This report primarily uses the acronym LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex) as it is widely used in an international context.

Throughout this publication, we refer to “anti-gender” movements to describe actors who want to advance an authoritarian agenda by weaponizing false arguments about gender to dismantle human rights and democracy. We place this term in quotations to indicate that it means “so called.”

ACRONYMS

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	UN Conference on the Status of Women
DIPD	Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy
ESF	Equal, Safe and Free Fund (UK)
EUR	Euro
GBP	British Pound
GPP	Global Philanthropy Project
GRR	Global Resources Report - Government and Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities
IRCT	International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
IWGIA	Disabled People’s Organisations Denmark, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SWANA	Southwest Asia and North Africa
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USD	U.S. Dollar
VND	Vietnamese Dongs
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

ABOUT

LGBT+ Denmark

LGBT+ Denmark is Denmark's largest and oldest democratic membership organization for homosexuals, bisexuals, trans people and others who break with the norms of gender and sexuality. LGBT+ Denmark fights for everyone to be able to live their life in full compliance with their identity through rights, safe communities, and social change – locally, nationally and globally. Since 2011, LGBT+ Denmark has worked in partnerships with LGBT+ grassroots organizations in SWANA, East Africa, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus to advance rights and enhance the well-being of local LGBT+ populations.

lgbt.dk



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, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in the Global South and East. Established in 2009, GPP's 23 member organizations include many of the leading global funders and philanthropic advisors for LGBTI rights. As the 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.

globalphilanthropyproject.org



BRIEF METHODOLOGY

The funding information included in this report derives from the *2021–2022 Global Resources Report: Government & Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities*. A full methodology note is available in the report - however some key points are listed here to facilitate an accurate reading of the data.

- **The *Global Resources Report* data only includes grants to organizations or programs that focus on an LGBTI issue or population.** In some cases, donors who track funding to multiple impacted populations have been able to identify a percentage of a larger grant with a demonstrated LGBTI focus.
- **Full grants – including multi year grants – are attributed to the year they are awarded, not the year of grant disbursement(s).**
- **Domestic government funding is not included in the data.** Funding committed by the Government of Denmark for LGBTI rights within Denmark is thus not included.
- **Data featured in this publication includes funds awarded for the purpose of regranting.**
- **The *Global Resources Report* findings are reported in US dollars.** They are converted to DKK based on mid-year exchange rates as the original reported amounts were provided in multiple currencies including GBP, EUR, VND, and DKK. Figures from sources external to GPP are given in DKK using mid-year exchange rates, and in the case of amounts covering multiple years with unspecified yearly amounts, the average rate for all years is used.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LGBTI communities across the globe are experiencing an unprecedented wave of attacks, coordinated by well-funded opposition movements. These “anti-gender” and anti-rights movements are using LGBTI rights as a wedge issue to manufacture moral panic, rollback human rights protections, and undermine the fabric of democratic societies. In the face of these unprecedented challenges, funding for LGBTI issues is crucial for defending our communities’ rights and freedoms, and building a world that we all want to live in.

Denmark is one of the few donor governments that consistently commit to funding global LGBTI movements. Despite fluctuations, notably the most drastic decrease in LGBTI funding among donor governments, in 2021 and 2022 Denmark provided DKK \$38.6 million (US\$5.8 million) in global LGBTI funding, making it the 7th largest donor government and 19th donor altogether. This existing funding is critical to ensure that efforts to uphold LGBTI rights in a shifting and challenging context are resourced.

However, the funding gap remains a stark reality for activists and movements, particularly in the Global South and East. With a significant share of donor government funding now at risk with recent and upcoming elections, Denmark has a critical role to play.

The case for Danish leadership on global LGBTI funding

LGBTI LIVES AND NEEDS INTERSECT WITH DANISH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PRIORITIES

Denmark has identified key global challenges to prioritize in its international cooperation and foreign affairs: protecting human rights and democracy, addressing the climate crisis, humanitarian and peacekeeping responses to conflicts, the promotion of gender equality, and the role of faith-based actors in development. LGBTI individuals and communities face specific challenges, and have developed specific resources, in all these areas, however international frameworks do not currently appropriately address these specificities. LGBTI people remain absent from the international humanitarian frameworks or responses to the climate crisis. Denmark can lead by significantly stepping up LGBTI inclusion in its cooperation, not least by recognizing that women and girls, refugees, or people of faith, can also be LGBTI people.

DENMARK HAS A TRACK RECORD OF GLOBAL LGBTI FUNDING

On average, since 2015 Denmark has provided US\$3.1 million (DKK 21.3 million) a year to global LGBTI movements. The decrease in funding from 2019-2020 to 2021-2022 shifted Denmark from 4th to 7th in the ranking of donor governments. In the Nordic landscape, Denmark features in the middle of the range, both in absolute terms and in proportion of ODA given to LGBTI issues.

Denmark plays an important role in resourcing LGBTI movements in different world regions, notably Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In 2021-2022, nearly 80% of Danish funding focused broadly on sexual orientation, and an increasing share of funding went to LGBTI-focused organizations.

This track record provides a strong basis for Denmark to elevate its commitment, building also on the experiences of peer donor governments that have in recent years developed specific funds or funding programmes focusing on serving LGBTI movements worldwide.

THE DONOR GOVERNMENT LANDSCAPE IS SHIFTING

2024 has seen several donor governments announce cuts to their Official Development Assistance (ODA) budgets. This includes major donor governments in the LGBTI funding landscape, notably the Netherlands, the all-time top contributor government towards LGBTI movements globally. Beyond shifts in ODA levels, some governments are changing their approaches to international assistance and partnerships. Denmark remains one of the rare donor governments striving to effectively abide by the 0.7% target and maintain its commitment towards international cooperation.

Elevating Danish leadership on global LGBTI funding

The recommendations presented in this report by LGBT+ Denmark and Global Philanthropy Project (GPP) aim to support Denmark in stepping up its commitment for more and better global LGBTI funding, in line with existing Danish priorities.

1. Fortify Denmark's commitment to LGBTI rights globally in Denmark's development policy

The renewal of its strategy for development cooperation, for the period 2025-2029, provides Denmark with a critical opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to LGBTI rights in 2024-2025. The national LGBT+ action plan coming to end in 2025 further strengthens this opportunity

2. Increase Denmark's dedicated global LGBTI funding

Denmark can demonstrate its leadership among progressive donor governments by committing to **an additional US\$5 million (DKK 34 million) a year in funding to the global LGBTI movement**, starting in 2025. This could be achieved through:

- **Establishing a strategic initiative focused on strengthening global LGBTI civil society and advancing LGBTI rights globally**, with LGBT+ Denmark as the government's strategic partner;
- **Increasing funding to existing and new intermediary partnerships**, including AmplifyChange and regional, LGBTI-led intermediaries; and
- **Increasing direct funding to local and national CSOs through embassy grants.**

3. Mainstream LGBTI rights across existing Danish development cooperation priorities and programs

LGBTI rights intersect with many existing priorities in Denmark's development cooperation and foreign affairs, yet its existing framework does not explicitly acknowledge this intersection. LGBTI inclusion throughout policies and programming is however important to maximize Danish investments. This report demonstrates the value and relevance of the twin-track approach to ensure that Denmark can properly support LGBTI rights throughout all its international action, including in relation to its recent election to the UN Security Council for 2025-2026.

INTRODUCTION

“Democracy and human rights are increasingly under attack in step with the resurgence of authoritarian regimes. Developing countries, particularly in Africa, are the new geopolitical battleground. This poses a challenge to the international level playing field and the values in which we believe.”

- *The World We Share* - Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation

While the global movement for LGBTI equality has made once-unimaginable progress, rising backlash puts the rights, wellbeing, and collective future of LGBTI people in jeopardy. LGBTI communities across the globe are experiencing an unprecedented wave of attacks, coordinated by well-funded opposition movements. These “anti-gender” and anti-rights movements are using LGBTI rights as a wedge issue to manufacture moral panic, rollback human rights protections, and undermine the fabric of democratic societies.

In the past twelve months, LGBTI movements have witnessed new legislation criminalizing their rights, public violence and threats and attacks against Pride events. For example:

- In Ghana, the “Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values” bill, passed in February 2024 in Parliament, would impose a jail term of up to three years for identifying as LGBTI and five years for advocating in favor of LGBTI rights. Although sitting now in limbo pending the President’s signature, in a country where same-sex acts were already criminalized, it is already having a very real impact in Ghanaian LGBTI people’s lives.¹
- In April 2024, the Iraqi Parliament passed a law that criminalizes same-sex relationships with jail terms of between 10 and 15 years and puts transgender people at risk of jail terms of up to 3 years. The law was passed after months of hostile rhetoric against LGBTI people by Iraqi officials and government crackdowns on human rights groups.²
- The Georgian Parliament passed the first reading of a draft “Protection of Family Values and Minors” bill in late June 2024, as well as amendments to various laws directly depriving LGBTI people of their rights, despite challenges to the constitutionality of the law by independent experts. Following Russia’s 2013 legislation, if passed the bill would allow prosecution

for the mere dissemination of information on SOGIESC issues.

In the face of these unprecedented challenges, funding for LGBTI issues is crucial for defending our communities’ rights and freedoms, and building a world that we all want to live in. Communities are organizing to respond to attacks. A funding infrastructure now exists within LGBTI movements – including notably regional community-led and participatory intermediaries – that is ready to move money to front line movement leaders and organizations.

Progressive donor governments, including Denmark,³ are pivotal in resourcing the global LGBTI rights movement. The latest *Global Resources Report*, published by GPP, shows encouraging signs that this is increasingly being recognized, with total funding by donor governments and multilaterals reaching US\$ 174m (DKK 1.15 billion) in 2021-2022.⁴

However, donor governments are still collectively dedicating only 0.04% of their Official Development Assistance (ODA) to global LGBTI funding (i.e 4 cents out of every \$100 in ODA) – a proportion that has not moved since 2013. Finally, no government in the world is currently providing more than 0.5% of its ODA to LGBTI-focused work.

2024 is an absolutely key year. About 49% of the people in the world – more voters than ever in history – have voted, or will vote, in national elections this year in 64 countries on virtually all continents. At the same time, the world is witnessing expanding regional conflicts and protracted crises, with vulnerable populations further impacted by the climate crisis and the disruption of already-strained essential services. In all situations of humanitarian emergencies and complex changing political contexts, LGBTI rights are particularly threatened, with demonstrated increases in discrimination, harassment, and violence.

In this shifting context for global LGBTI rights, development finance, and geopolitics, the Danish

Government has a critical role to play. For a number of years, Denmark has demonstrated its support for the global LGBTI movement by funding a range of global, regional, and local projects, albeit without a dedicated LGBTI funding initiative or envelope in the Danish aid program, or explicitly prioritizing LGBTI issues in the country's development cooperation strategy.

The moment calls for the government to elevate LGBTI issues in Denmark's development cooperation program. LGBT+ Denmark and Global Philanthropy Project are pleased to share this report which makes the case for why Denmark should build on its record of funding LGBTI rights globally, outlining how the needs of LGBTI communities intersect with the existing priorities set by Denmark for its development cooperation. As the government looks to the future of its strategy for development cooperation, *Elevating Global LGBTI Rights* sets out specific recommendations on how Denmark can step up its leadership on global LGBTI issues.

THE CASE FOR DANISH LEADERSHIP ON GLOBAL LGBTI FUNDING

LGBTI lives and needs intersect with Danish development cooperation priorities

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

More than ever, the “anti-gender,” anti-rights, and anti-democracy agenda is weaponizing the bodies and lives of LGBTI people, particularly transgender people, to foment a “moral panic” and build support for authoritarian illiberal politics while amplifying and disseminating disinformation.⁵ Insidiously, human rights language is co-opted to undermine LGBTI rights and gender justice. International multilateral human rights fora, such as the Conference on the Status of Women (CSW), are abused by a well-coordinated set of actors that seek to weaponize LGBTI lives to attack democracy and the rule of law.⁶ This is particularly relevant for Denmark and its priorities as a newly elected non-permanent member to the United Nations Security Council for the years 2025 and 2026 as a “committed defender of the international rules-based order”.⁷

Attacks on LGBTI people are increasingly recognized as a facilitator of democratic backsliding.⁸ Across many parts of the world, conservative and far-right leaders are seeking to instrumentalize LGBTI issues in order to gain popular support, further erode democratic norms, and consolidate political power. LGBTI movements are therefore critical stalwarts for human rights and democracy. Yet, GPP's latest data on global LGBTI funding indicates that autocratizing countries are, on average, receiving half the LGBTI funding per capita compared to democratizing countries.⁹

This set of attacks against LGBTI rights, civic rights, and democracies means that support to LGBTI movements cannot be understood as a niche issue, easily addressed with sporadic and small-scale funding. Because these attacks are increasingly connected, organized, and threaten to consolidate state power, undermining the democratic values that are central to Denmark's strategy for development cooperation, they should be faced in turn with robust and ambitious funding strategies.

CLIMATE CRISIS

Denmark's leadership on addressing the climate crisis is demonstrated by its commitment to “*strengthen[ing]*

resilience to climate change, with focus on poor and vulnerable countries and people.” Poverty is a reality for many LGBTI people, for an array of reasons: from difficulties finding – and retaining – employment without being discriminated against on the basis of one’s sexual orientation or gender identity, to being at risk of homelessness due to family conflict and stigmatization. Poverty is compounded by discrimination and violence, which remain a reality for LGBTI communities in all regions of the world.¹⁰

These experiences of poverty, discrimination, and violence, directly impact LGBTI people’s vulnerabilities to climate change in a myriad of ways. Homelessness, temporary, and unsafe accommodation, and the obligation to settle in segregated locations to avoid further violence by landlords and neighbors means that LGBTI people often end up living in highly polluted, water-insecure areas.¹¹ This limits their ability to adapt to rapidly changing environmental conditions and increases their exposure to avoidable diseases.

The multiplication of natural disasters caused by the climate crisis has made apparent that LGBTI-specific needs in this context remain largely ignored in the response. Because of the lack of legal recognition of their gender identities, trans, and gender non-conforming people may be de facto excluded from housing and food distribution mechanisms. Past experiences of stigmatization may trigger LGBTI people to simply not access care facilities or distribution points that do not take any steps to guaranteeing their safety.¹² Finally, the scapegoating and blaming of LGBTI communities in the face of climate challenges remains a reality.

CONFLICTS

Similar to the challenges presented above and faced by LGBTI people in situations of climate-related disasters, specific needs also exist in conflicts. Violence against LGBTI communities is rife in conflict or war settings as an integral part of gender-based violence, and notably includes persecution against activists, sexual violence, and torture in detention.¹³

Refugee camps and migration routes are particularly risky for LGBTI people. A 2023 report by the UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity indicates that “abuse of LGBTI and gender-diverse displaced people can take the form of gender-based violence, as well as of exclusion from essential services, such as safe and appropriate accommodation, safe access to the distribution of food and essential non-food items, medical care and mental health and psychosocial services (including but not limited to sexual and reproductive

health services and, where applicable, torture rehabilitation treatment), financial services and livelihoods support. Structural exclusion from the legal labour market exposes them to increased vulnerability, exploitation and pressure to participate in high-risk livelihoods.”¹⁴

There is increasing acknowledgement that current frameworks for humanitarian and peacekeeping responses do not adequately address LGBTI-specific needs. The 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction does not make a single mention of LGBTI people. Nor do any Women, Peace and Security (WPS) UN resolutions.¹⁵ This lack of inclusiveness not only weakens the objective of mitigating risks for all people, but it also misses the opportunity to make use of the existing resources within LGBTI communities and networks.

GENDER EQUALITY

The current Danish international cooperation strategy, *The World We Share*, does not explicitly mention LGBTI people or rights within its gender equality priority. To fully implement the “Leave No One Behind” principle enshrined in the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, it is critical to consider how efforts towards gender justice can better consider LGBTI-specific challenges and opportunities. This does not mean de-centering women and girls, but recognizing the challenges of harmful gender norms to the rights of all people and the need to pursue inclusive policies. This would benefit all communities served by Danish cooperation.

Denmark can draw inspiration from other peer donor governments that have recently included a more explicit recognition of the importance of a non-binary understanding of gender, such as Germany in its 2023 Feminist Development Policy.¹⁶ The policy recognizes that although “*women and girls are the largest group facing discrimination worldwide, [and] the main focus of the BMZ’s feminist development policy,*” the aim of the policy is centered around the fight against marginalization of people in all their diversity.

Such an approach also facilitates the recognition of the specific lived experiences of lesbian, bisexual, trans and queer women and girls. A 2023 Human Rights Watch report shed light on the specific violations of lesbian/bisexual/queer women’s rights (consent to marriage, family-building, access to justice, housing or work, etc) and the danger in understanding these violations only as mere subsets of LGBTI and/or women’s rights violations.¹⁷ The Trans Murder Monitoring, a research project led by Transgender Europe tracking murders of trans and gender diverse people globally, reported in 2023 that 94% of

murder victims identified by the project were trans women or trans feminine people.¹⁸

PEOPLE OF FAITH

In a context where “anti-gender” forces use religious narratives and infrastructures to attack LGBTI people, their existence, their bodies, and their rights, it is key to engage faith leaders and to build trust within both LGBTI and faith communities. An important way to counter these narratives is acknowledging that LGBTI people and people of faith are not exclusive groups and that for many LGBTI people, their faith is an important component of their identity.¹⁹

Denmark as a donor government particularly highlights the role of faith leaders. *The World We Share* identifies as one of the key actions under its section on the rights and dignity of marginalized groups that Denmark “will expand the role of faith-based actors in promoting respect for human rights and democracy.” Research, including by GPP members, indicates that long-term work with faith leaders and faith-based organizations is critical to promote and protect LGBTI rights, and that sustainable funding is essential to that end.²⁰

Denmark has a track record of global LGBTI funding

According to data self-reported to the newly released *Global Resources Report*, in 2021 and 2022 the Government of Denmark provided US\$5.8 million (DKK \$38.6 million) in global LGBTI funding. This represents a 29% decrease from the previous period, when Denmark invested US\$8.1 million (DKK 54.8 million). On average, since 2015 Denmark has provided US\$3.1 million (DKK 21.3 million)²¹ a year to global LGBTI movements.

In 2021–2022, Denmark dedicated only 0.10% of its ODA to global LGBTI funding. Although this ranked it fifth among donor governments in proportion of ODA, it did represent a decrease from the previous period (0.16% in 2019–2020).²²

In absolute terms

In % of ODA

Evolution of Danish Global LGBTI Funding

2019-2020 / 2021-2022

WHERE DID DENMARK FUND?

Before identifying key regions receiving Danish funding, it is important to recall that the Government of Denmark, like many other peer donor governments, reported a significant share of its funding without attribution to a specific country. In 2021–2022, nearly 9 in 10 (89%) of grants from the Danish government were categorized as having a multi-country focus.²³ In 2021–2022, Denmark funded LGBTI issues focused on at least six countries.²⁴

The Government of Denmark plays an important role in resourcing LGBTI movements across the world. In 2021–2022, the Government of Denmark was the eighth largest donor for Sub-Saharan Africa of all donors, and the second donor government. Assessing funding focused on specific sub-regions, Denmark was a key donor for South Asia (ranking third in that sub-region for all donors and second for governments). Within Sub-Saharan Africa, Denmark ranked as the second government for funding focused on East Africa and Southern Africa.

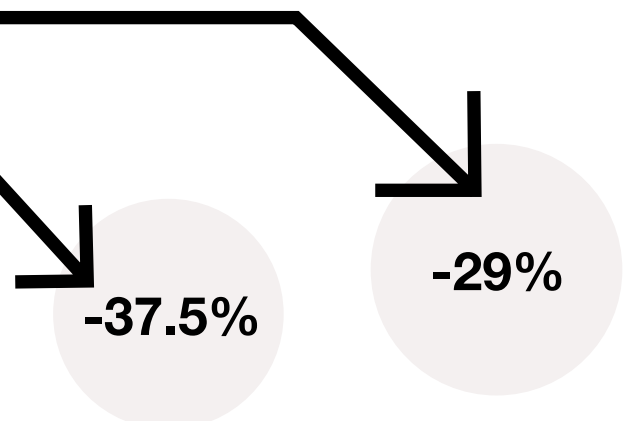
WHO DID DENMARK FUND?

Organizations

Over time Denmark has increased its funding for LGBTI-focused organizations. In 2019–2020, only 16% of LGBTI funding committed by the Government of Denmark was awarded to 7 LGBTI-focused organizations. In 2021–2022, 75% of funding went to 12 LGBTI-focused organizations.²⁵ The number of non-LGBTI grantee organizations stayed roughly similar, with four recipients in each two-year period.

Populations

In 2021–2022, the vast majority of Denmark’s funding (nearly 80%) was focused on general LGBQ populations. Of the remaining funds, 20% was specifically focused on trans people, and less than 1% on intersex people. No LGBTI grants were specifically focused on other subpopulations within the LGBTI community.²⁶



DENMARK AMONG ITS PEERS

In 2021-2022, the levels of Danish global LGBTI funding put Denmark seventh among donor governments in absolute terms. This is a drop from 2019–2020 where Denmark held the fourth highest donor government funding total.

Out of the 13 donor governments present in the 2021–2022 *Global Resources Report*, only 4 reported lower funding commitments than in 2019-2020, including Denmark. **With a 29% drop, Denmark registered the most drastic decrease in its LGBTI funding among donor governments.**

When assessing Denmark’s funding levels against its Nordic peers’, Denmark comes in the middle of the range, behind Sweden but just ahead of Norway. Finland comes last in total funding, however it surpasses both Norway and Denmark in proportion of ODA. Denmark comes second to last in proportion of ODA going to global LGBTI funding.

What the 2021–2022 *Global Resources Report* shows is that the leadership of key donor governments is critical to properly resource LGBTI movements. Only 13 donor

governments reporting still accounted for 19% of the total funding available worldwide in the period. The top 4 donor governments – the Netherlands, the United States, Canada and Sweden – represented 74% of all donor government funding. This shows the critical role of ambitious commitments by a few governments and how any donor government increasing its funding commitment can make a significant positive difference.

Overall, Denmark ranked 19th among all global LGBTI donors (governments and philanthropy).²⁷

Donor Government	Global LGBTI Funding 2021-2022	As a % of 2021-2022 net ODA
Sweden	\$20,787,536	0.173%
Denmark	\$5,798,831	0.100%
Norway	\$5,229,662	0.055%
Finland	\$4,524,504	0.143%

LEADING DONOR GOVERNMENT GLOBAL LGBTI FUNDING INITIATIVES

Denmark can draw on the example of other donor governments that have set up specific Funds or funding programmes focusing on serving LGBTI movements worldwide.

UK - Equal, Safe and Free Fund

In November 2023, the UK Government announced a major step up in its funding on global LGBTI issues, committing to a five-year, £40 million funding program (about DKK 345.5 million). A major part of that commitment was the creation of Equal, Safe and Free: A Partnership Fund for LGBT+ Rights. The fund, worth an initial £25 million over four years (about DKK 216 million), is a partnership between the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and four philanthropic foundations - Baring Foundation, Oak Foundation, Foundation for a Just Society and Foundation for a Just Society International.

Equal, Safe and Free (ESF) focuses on four objectives:

- A reduction in the violence, discrimination, and stigma experienced by LGBT+ people throughout society.
- Upholding and advancing human rights compliant laws and policies that protect LGBT+ people.
- Ensuring equal access to public services including health, education, water, sanitation, and promoting economic inclusion.

- Progressive change in social and cultural norms.

The ESF is prioritizing resourcing regional funding mechanisms to provide them with funding to re-grant to local and national organizations. The geographic focus of the ESF is Sub-Saharan Africa, alongside a developing focus on the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands.

Canada – A multi-window program to serve LGBTI communities

In 2019, Canada launched its LGBTI International Assistance Program, with an initial commitment of CA\$30 million (DKK 150.4 million)²⁸ over five years (2020-2025) and CA\$10 million (DKK 50.1 million) per year post-2025 for LGBTI rights in ODA-recipient countries. This program aimed at “respond[ing] to the needs, realities and priorities of LGBTQ2I persons and their representative organizations.”²⁹

This Program is organized around three funding windows providing support to Canadian LGBTI organizations working in partnership with Global South peers; to local and regional LGBTI movements in the Global South directly; and to global partnerships and multilateral initiatives conducting advocacy and research work.

Canada has recently recommitted to the annual funding target for this Program from 2025 onwards, and in 2021-2022 was the third donor government for LGBTI funding with a 360% increase in its funding compared to 2017–2018, pre-Program levels.

The donor government landscape is shifting

Denmark has successfully strived to abide by its 0.7% target, with this commitment strongly renewed by Minister Jørgensen in September 2023. This positioning stands out in a context where many donor governments, including top donors to LGBTI communities, are cutting back on their Official Development Assistance.

The Netherlands, the all-time top contributor government to global LGBTI funding, saw its new government coalition announce a cut of up to two-thirds of the development cooperation budget in the coming years. France has announced a cut of EUR 742 million (about DKK 5.5 billion) to its international assistance budget in February 2024. Germany is planning to reduce its Development Ministry (BMZ) budget by 8% or EUR 940 million (about DKK 7 billion), reaching its lowest level in the last decade, and humanitarian funding under the Foreign Affairs Ministry will also decrease by 54% or EUR 1.2 billion (about DKK 9 billion). Beyond ODA levels, recent government coalitions have signified a change in their approaches to international assistance. This could be seen with Sweden's decisions not to apply a feminist foreign policy anymore and to review its civil society partnership framework.

While cuts to ODA or changes in partnership agreements do not automatically mean cuts to global LGBTI funding, these policy changes are an indication of the potential fragility of current donor government funding. In addition, shifting political environments in some of the leading donor countries, present a real threat to the gains made and resources that might have been considered "safe".

Several major funding streams for global LGBTI rights are under threat. The recent development cooperation cuts announced by the new Dutch Government, shifts in Sida's civil society funding agreements, and potential attacks on U.S. global LGBTI funding if there is a change of power in the U.S., all pose a significant threat to funding for the global LGBTI movement.

ELEVATING DANISH LEADERSHIP ON GLOBAL LGBTI FUNDING

Recommendations provided in this report by LGBT+ Denmark and GPP are grounded specifically in this analysis of past and current Danish global LGBTI funding, as well as existing practices by peer donor governments that Denmark could use to inform its future commitments.

If we are to mount a strategic and effective response to anti-rights forces, we need a fundamental transformation of this funding landscape. Resourcing movements for LGBTI rights is a critical component of a strategy to defend human rights, equality, and democracy. *The World We Share* acknowledges the unique role of civil society in leading change, particularly in "promoting gender equality and ensuring inclusion of marginalized groups". LGBTI movements are indeed on the frontlines, advocating for inclusive development and the realization of human rights for all. This includes a funding infrastructure now existing within movements themselves.

Recommendation 1: Fortify Denmark's commitment to LGBTI rights globally in Denmark's development policy

As outlined above, the needs of LGBTI people, who are often among the most marginalized in societies across the world, intersect with current Danish development cooperation priorities. In the current *The World We Share* strategy for development cooperation, LGBTI people are recognized in a limited way - as a marginalized group within the Human Rights and Democracy section. The strategy remains silent on the importance of prioritizing support for LGBTI communities in order to protect human rights and democracy, mitigate the impact of climate change and conflicts, and advance gender equality.

The renewal of the Danish development strategy in 2025 offers an important opportunity to clearly underline Denmark's commitment to the promotion of LGBTI rights globally and to weave the lives and needs of LGBTI people more intently throughout policy priority areas (such as gender equality, climate, civic space, and humanitarian action). Doing so will provide the government with the framework needed to scale up targeted funding for LGBTI civil society at the frontlines of protecting rights and meaningfully integrate LGBTI issues across Denmark's development cooperation program.

Further, Denmark's current LGBT+ action plan is set to end in 2025. The current action plan has a section on international engagement for LGBTI rights globally stating that "Denmark will continue to protect and promote the

human rights of LGBT+ people globally and support civil society in those countries where their space for manoeuvre is limited.”³⁰ A new action plan should maintain a strong international focus, including the focus on restricted civic space for LGBT+ civil society.

Recommendation 2: Increase Denmark’s dedicated global LGBTI funding

Given the current global LGBTI funding landscape and the government’s commitment to human rights for all, Denmark can demonstrate its leadership among progressive donor governments by committing to **an additional US\$5 million (DKK 34 million) a year in funding to the global LGBTI movement**, starting in 2025.

Such a commitment would place Denmark among the top donor governments in the field and provide movements with much needed resources at a time where the threat against LGBTI rights is significant. If Denmark had made this commitment for the years 2021-2022, it would have featured in the top 5 of donor governments.

A. ESTABLISH AN LGBTI STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

In order to achieve its commitment to working with civil society as critical partners in its strategy for development cooperation, Denmark should consider **establishing a strategic initiative focused on strengthening global LGBTI civil society and advancing LGBTI rights globally** as a central focus of the additional US\$5 million (DKK 34 million) in annual dedicated funding for global LGBTI issues.

A dedicated strategic initiative, with multi-year funding, would significantly enhance Denmark’s impact on global LGBTI rights advancement. Youth rights, disability rights, the right to religious freedom, the rights of indigenous people, and the fight against torture are amongst the issues prioritised in Danish development cooperation, through strategic initiatives and targeted funding with key civil society partners, such as the Danish Youth Council, Disabled People’s Organisations Denmark, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), and the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD). As the largest and oldest LGBTI civil society organization in Denmark, and with a longstanding network of partners across the regions that are geographic priorities for Denmark, LGBT+ Denmark is similarly positioned to become a strategic collaborator for Danish development cooperation.

Building on the existing relationship with LGBT+ Denmark, a comprehensive, strategic LGBTI-focused initiative could be launched, in partnership with LGBT+ Denmark. This initiative would include regranting to LGBTI civil society in the Global South and Eastern Neighborhood Region,

advocacy, advice to stakeholders in Denmark, including the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs when engaging on this agenda, capacity building of Danish development and humanitarian organizations on LGBT+ inclusion in programming, and engagement of the Danish public.

B. INCREASE FUNDING TO EXISTING AND NEW INTERMEDIARY PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to a new LGBTI strategic initiative with LGBT+ Denmark, the Danish Government could also utilize additional dedicated LGBTI funding to increase its funding for leading intermediary funding mechanisms. For example, Denmark has played an important role in resourcing the AmplifyChange funding mechanism, which provides vital resources to LGBTI-led organizations across the world.

Data from the *Global Resources Report* shows that regional, LGBTI-led funding intermediaries³¹ are an important mechanism to reach local and national CSOs that are critical to advancing human rights at the country level. At a time when other leading donor governments that have supported the development of these mechanisms may reduce their LGBTI funding programs (as discussed above), Denmark can step in to ensure the continued resourcing of the LGBTI-led intermediary infrastructure that has been built over the last decade.

C. INCREASE DIRECT FUNDING TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL CSOS THROUGH EMBASSY GRANTS

While Denmark has reported funding some LGBTI organizations through Danish embassies, with an increase in annual dedicated LGBTI funding Denmark could join other leading donor governments that have identified the rights of LGBTI people as a priority for their embassy grants programs. According to the *Global Resources Report*, across 2021 and 2022, 100 grants on LGBTI issues were awarded through U.S. embassies. The Netherlands (84 grants), Canada (71 grants), and Germany (53 grants)³² also utilized their embassies to reach national and local CSOs working on LGBTI issues. As highlighted above, there is a real possibility that the U.S. and the Netherlands could reduce their LGBTI funding in the coming years. Increased resources and support for LGBTI rights through Danish embassies could be an important demonstration of Denmark’s commitment to supporting the global LGBTI rights movement.

Recommendation 3: Mainstream LGBTI rights across existing Danish development cooperation priorities and programs

Stepping up the Danish commitment to global LGBTI funding does not require a departure from the existing priorities of Danish development cooperation. On the contrary, as outlined above, LGBTI needs align with several of these priorities, and linkages can be found in a number of areas. As one of the core principles of *The World We Share* states: “We maintain that human rights are universal and that **no one must be left behind**. We place human rights at the heart of all our activities. We will have **particular focus on women and girls as well as marginalised groups**.”

Drawing from lessons learned from gender justice work, the most effective way for Denmark to play its part in ensuring that no one is left behind is to adopt a “twin-track” approach – combining mainstreaming and standalone efforts – to best serve LGBTI communities’ specific needs. The efficiency of this approach to strengthen LGBTI work is increasingly recognized by donor governments in their cooperation strategies.

The LGBTQI+ Inclusive Development Policy adopted by USAID in August 2023, for example, explicitly states the combination of mainstreaming and targeted efforts as essential to reach its objectives: “A common question when considering how to best meet LGBTQI+ persons’ needs is whether to do this by integrating LGBTQI+ individuals into mainstream development programming or by developing standalone activities and programs specifically focused on LGBTQI+ advocacy, service delivery, or organizational development. The answer is that both integrated and standalone approaches are necessary.”³³

In practice, this means requiring that civil society partners for existing and future Danish development programs meaningfully include LGBTI communities in their work, at the assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation stages. LGBTI organizations hold unique expertise about the lives and experiences of LGBTI people and often hold connections to marginalized communities that larger development agencies do not. Danish backed climate mitigation programs focused on reaching the most vulnerable, initiatives aimed at creating social safety nets and employment opportunities, and innovative approaches to helping people along key migration routes, will only be strengthened if the specific (and sometimes unique) needs of LGBTI people are meaningfully considered and addressed.

CONCLUSION

Denmark has shown consistent support to LGBTI rights, although its funding contribution has decreased slightly in recent years. However, the support of committed donor governments to global LGBTI movements remains critical in 2024 and for the years to come. While progress has certainly been made in supporting LGBTI people and communities to attain - and retain - their rights, disparities remain in how they can access funding and needs are far from being met. In the current geopolitical context, government support in particular can unfortunately be volatile and support for LGBTI rights will be an integral part of the answer to challenges to inclusive societies by “anti-gender,” anti-rights, and anti-democracy forces.

The recommendations presented in this report by LGBT+ Denmark and Global Philanthropy Project (GPP) aim to support Denmark in stepping up its commitment for more and better global LGBTI funding, in line with existing Danish priorities.

The moment’s urgency requires collective efforts from all actors committed to protect and promote LGBTI rights. There are particular opportunities in the coming months where Denmark could reassert its commitment as a progressive global funder to the LGBTI movements.

ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68490872>.
- 2 Iraq: Repeal Anti-LGBT Law | Human Rights Watch (hrw.org).
- 3 Throughout this report, “Denmark” and “Government of Denmark” are used interchangeably.
- 4 All funding figures included in this report without a specific reference are derived from the *2021–2022 Global Resources Report*. <https://globalresourcesreport.org/>.
- 5 Global Philanthropy Project and Elevate Children’s Funders Group. 2021. “Manufacturing Moral Panic: Weaponizing Children to Undermine Gender Justice and Human Rights”. <https://globalphilanthropyproject.org/manufacturing-moral-panic>.
- 6 The first ever resolution in UN history referring to sexual rights was adopted by consensus by the UN Human Rights Council only in July 2024 - despite facing stark opposition. See <https://www.ippf.org/media-center/landmark-decision-un-human-rights-council-adopts-first-ever-resolution-reference>.
- 7 <https://dk4unsc.dk/>.
- 8 Flores, A.R., Fuentes Carreño, M., & Shaw, A. (2023). *Democratic Backsliding and LGBTI Acceptance*. Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.
- 9 *The 2021–2022 Global Resources Report* presented the first-ever analysis of global LGBTI funding in relation with data on democratizing or autocratizing trends at the national level. The results are striking. While autocratic countries are more likely to criminalize same-sex relations, block the possibility of changing one’s gender markers, or permit surgical interventions on intersex minors, they receive less than half as much the amount of global LGBTI funding per capita than democratic countries. Although LGBTI funding has risen globally between 2019 and 2022, democratizing countries saw a considerably larger increase in funding (74%) than countries that are autocratizing (23%). See *2021–2022 Global Resources Report*, p. 24.
- 10 For example, recent research found that over half (56%) of people who identify as a sexual and gender minority in Southern and Eastern Africa have experienced violence in their lifetime. In South and Eastern Europe, 32% of LGBTI respondents to a World Bank Group survey reported threats or acts of physical and/or sexual violence, a figure that rises to 55% of trans people. See Müller, A., Daskilewicz, K., Kabwe, M. L., Mmolai-Chalmers, A., Morroni, C., Muparamoto, N., Muula, A. S., Odira, V. Zimba, M. and the Southern and Eastern African Research Collective for Health (SEARCH) (2021) Experience of and factors associated with violence against sexual and gender minorities in nine African countries: a cross-sectional study, *BMC Public Health* (2021) 21:357, <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-021-10314-w>; World Bank Group (2018) *Life on the Margins: Survey Results of the Experiences of LGBTI People in Southeastern Europe*, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30607>.
- 11 https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/learning-and-resources/resources/KL/WfW_EdgeEffect_Guidance-Note_COVID-19-WASH-SGM-Inclusion-FINAL.pdf.
- 12 Multiple examples of these challenges have been recorded in the past decades, for example in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, Hurricane Katrina in North America in 2005 or the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. See for example Seglah, H A & Blanchard, K (2021) *LGBTQIA+ People and Disasters*. <https://irp.cdn-website.com/cde3424c/files/uploaded/LGBTQIA%2B%20report-3.pdf>.
- 13 https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LGBTQLivesConflictCrisis_0.pdf.
- 14 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/lgbti-and-gender-diverse-persons-forced-displacement>.
- 15 An analysis of the existing WPS resolutions by Outright International shows that these documents currently “do not acknowledge the impact of conflict on people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics, nor the need to engage them in peacebuilding”. See https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LGBTQLivesConflictCrisis_0.pdf.
- 16 <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/153806/bmz-strategy-feminist-development-policy.pdf>.
- 17 https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2023/02/global_lbq0223_web.pdf.

- 18 <https://transrespect.org/en/trans-murder-monitoring-2023/>.
- 19 A wealth of resources exist on LGBTI people's experiences of faith, religion and spirituality. See for example <https://www.instagram.com/thequeermuslimproject/> or <https://www.gaychristianafrica.org/category/english/testimonies-and-experiences/>.
- 20 <https://www.arcusfoundation.org/publications/faith-based-efforts-in-east-africa-to-combat-discrimination-based-on-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/>.
- 21 This amount is provided in DKK using the 2024 mid-year rate, as it covers 8 years.
- 22 *2021–2022 Global Resources Report*, pg 44.
- 23 Donors may choose not to reveal the country focus of a grant award, instead only identifying the grant as within a world region or sub-region, within the Global South and East, or deciding not to disclose the geographical location at all. These locations were redacted out of concern for the safety and security of grantees and regionally based grantmaking staff because of hostile environments.
- 24 Because the majority of Denmark's funding had a multiple country or regional-level focus, the funds are likely reaching groups in many more countries but only six grants were identified with specific country focus.
- 25 LGBTI-focused organizations (or LGBTI organizations) are those with a primary focus on LGBTI populations or issues, as compared to non-LGBTI organizations which have a broader focus and may include an LGBTI program. It should however be noted that some existing awarded grants to non-LGBTI organizations do include regranteeing to a combination of LGBTI and non-LGBTI organizations.
- 26 The *Global Resources Report* commonly documents grants to the subpopulations of children and youth; people of faith; immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers; people living with HIV/AIDS; sex workers; survivors of violence.
- 27 Excluding funding focused on the U.S.
- 28 Using the 2019 mid-year exchange rate.
- 29 Global Affairs Canada website.
- 30 Plads til forskellighed i fællesskabet (trm.dk).
- 31 Organizations whose primary focus is LGBTI populations or issues, operating a range of programs including the regranteeing of funds received from foundations or development agencies to civil society organizations and grassroots groups.
- 32 *2021–2022 Global Resources Report*, pg 45.
- 33 <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/lgbtqi>.



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