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# Cover photo:

Top Left - Tonga Leitis Association, Tonga Top Right - TransWave and J-FLAG, Jamaica Middle Right - Mongolia LGBT Centre, Mongolia Bottom Left - PFSAQ, South Africa Bottom Right - Pink Armenia, Armenia

giveout.org

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# Welcome from GiveOut's Team and Board

This report celebrates the courageous work of our grant partners and highlights the transformational impact made possible by the support from our community and allies. As we reflect on this past year, we are incredibly proud of the progress our grant partners have achieved in advancing LGBTQI human rights worldwide. We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors, whose giving fuels this vital work.

Over the past year, GiveOut expanded its grant-making, awarding funding to 49 organisations, primarily across the Global South and East. Our partners have made remarkable strides across five pillars of activism.

In advancing equality through the law and courts, partners like Mayako Pahichan in Nepal secured a historic interim order to recognise same-sex marriages, while in Mauritius and Namibia, discriminatory laws criminalising same-sex relations were successfully overturned.

By building supportive communities and safe spaces, SAATHII's fellowship programme in India empowered local leaders to advocate for transgender rights, improving access to healthcare and education for their communities.

Our partners have also provided critical evidence for change, such as EQUAL GROUND's research in Sri Lanka, which exposed systemic discrimination against LGBTQI individuals in healthcare and informed policy recommendations.

In promoting public understanding and acceptance, organisations such as TIERs in Nigeria launched initiatives like Q Convos to elevate LGBTQI voices and challenge stereotypes.

Through the LGBTQI Emergency Fund, GiveOut channelled life-saving support during crises, including aiding partners in East and West Africa, and providing a grant to Helem in Lebanon to offer emergency shelter, food, and essential supplies to LGBTQI individuals displaced by escalating regional violence.

Despite these achievements, challenges remain significant. Shifts in funding and well-resourced and coordinated anti-LGBTQI movements underscore the urgent need for solidarity and action.

Looking ahead, we invite you to join us in continuing to support the global movement for LGBTQI human rights, ensuring that LGBTQI people everywhere can live freely and fully.





# Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision is of a world in which LGBTQI people everywhere can live their lives openly and fully, free from discrimination, fear, and violence. To achieve this vision, our mission is to grow giving to support the global struggle for LGBTQI human rights. To guide our work and decisions, we have five core organisational values:

- Respect We are respectful to each other, our supporters, and partners. We are an open and approachable grant-maker, providing resources not strategies, aware of our privilege, and working in a way that seeks to avoid power asymmetry.
- Ambition We are ambitious to make a meaningful difference to the global LGBTQI movement and the lives of LGBTQI people. We are aware that change may take time, are committed to learning, and hopeful that innovative strategies can achieve lasting change.
- Integrity We use our supporters' donations responsibly, efficiently, and effectively, working with transparency, integrity, and accountability. We strive to complement and collaborate with existing funding infrastructure in the LGBTQI movement.
- Solidarity We are part of, and work in solidarity with, the global LGBTQI human rights movement, harnessing the power of our community and allies, and fostering connections to provide long-term and sustainable support.
- Equity We recognise the diversity of the global LGBTQI movement and seek to reflect this. We provide support across the movement, understanding that different parts of our community need different levels of support in different places.

# GiveOut's Grant-Making

To create a world where LGBTQI people can live their lives freely and openly, we need a properly funded global LGBTQI movement that can advocate on behalf of our communities. With the right resources, our movement can help eliminate discriminatory laws, policies, and practices; change attitudes; and create safe spaces in places where LGBTQI people and identities are not accepted.

In the Global South and East in particular, LGBTQI activists' efforts are hampered by substantial legal and practical barriers to fundraising, beyond those experienced elsewhere. Pooling donations from our community and allies, GiveOut is building a safe, reliable source of funding especially for groups in these regions.

movement, we strive to make our portfolio of grant partners representative of the global movement as a whole, in terms of geography, thematic focus, and community served. Each funding round integrates a more diverse set of grant partners than the last. We provide support at all levels of the global movement but prioritise funding where it is needed most.

We identify pioneering groups to support through a rigorous process of consultation, due diligence, and vetting, guided by our Grant-Making Advisory Panel and governed by our Board of Trustees.

### **Our Sixth Grant Cycle**

Guided by GiveOut's five-year strategic plan (2023-2027), 2024 was an important year for us as we expanded our support of the movement by giving larger grants to many of our existing grant partners. In addition, we piloted multi-year grants for the first time, and added eight new grant partners to our portfolio, bringing the total number of LGBTQI organisations we are supporting to 46.

With careful input from our Grant-Making Advisory Panel, the portfolio has evolved in direct response to the needs of the LGBTQI movement. For instance, we supported LGBTQI activism in West Africa following the introduction of new anti-LGBTQI laws, while continuing to grow our investment in trans-led organising and feminist LBTQ womenled organisations to push back against the growing and well-funded anti-gender movement. We also continued to expand our LGBTQI Legal Aid Fund, channelling more resources to LGBTQI organisations using the law and courts to advance equality, coupled with pro-bono legal support from global law firms.

GiveOut has played a role in convening the movement and funders around emerging issues, such as the intersection of LGBTQI rights and climate change. In April, we brought together LGBTQI activists to create connections, share learnings, and identify new sources of funding through GiveOut's LGBTQI Climate Fund.

This year also saw the launch of our LGBTQI Recognising the diversity and complexity of the Solidarity Fund, an exciting initiative by GiveOut to mobilise our community and allies in the UK to come together to show our collective support for LGBTQI communities worldwide. With support from foundations and the UK government through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), GiveOut is building a pool of match funding to double the impact of donations by individual and corporate donors.

> Through the Solidarity Fund, GiveOut is providing grants to LGBTQI organisations working in contexts in the Global South and East were LGBTQI people are at risk and hard-won victories are being rolled back.





# A Note from GiveOut's Grant-**Making Advisory Panel**

experiences to strengthen GiveOut's grant-making prioritise resources where they're needed most. programme.

This year, we've witnessed the importance of flexibility in grant-making. With LGBTQI communities facing unprecedented challenges whether due to repressive laws, displacement, or climate disasters—providing core, flexible funding has never been more critical. Our discussions within GMAP highlighted the value of long-term, unrestricted support that empowers activists to act proud to contribute to this journey. swiftly and creatively in times of crisis, while also sustaining their long-term efforts for equality.

We were also excited to see GiveOut continue expanding into areas such as climate justice, which has profound implications for LGBTQI communities. Supporting this intersectional work reflects GiveOut's commitment to addressing not Rima Athar, Neish McLean, and Ryan Silverio only the immediate needs but also the structural inequities that marginalise LGBTQI people globally.

As members of GiveOut's Grant-Making Advisory The strategic additions to the portfolio this year, Panel (GMAP), it has been an inspiring and especially in underrepresented geographies such as insightful year for us. GMAP continues to be a space West Africa, and in support of LBQ and trans groups, where we can channel our collective knowledge and further demonstrate GiveOut's commitment to

> Looking ahead, we're eager to continue advising on how GiveOut can further strengthen its role as a funder that actively listens to and supports grassroots movements. As the world becomes increasingly complex, the importance of responsive and participatory grant-making cannot be overstated. We believe that GiveOut is well positioned to continue leading the way, and we are

> We hope this report inspires you as much as it has inspired us. The resilience and creativity of LGBTQI activists supported by GiveOut's community of donors are truly remarkable, and we look forward to seeing the impact continue to grow.

# Doubling Impact: Unlocking UK Philanthropy for LGBTQI Rights **Through Match Funding**

Published in Alliance Magazine

Courageous activists are defending and improving LGBTQI lives, but funding is scarce and fragile. With support from the UK government and foundations, GiveOut's LGBTQI Solidarity Fund is leveraging match funding to double the impact of donations from individuals and businesses in the UK. While the Fund has already supported vital LGBTQI activism in high-risk areas, more support is essential to sustain and advance LGBTQI rights globally.

Over the past 50 years, progress for LGBTQI rights has been remarkable, but significant challenges persist. LGBTQI people in many countries still face systemic discrimination, violence, and criminalisation simply for being themselves.

Same-sex relationships remain criminalised across one-third of the globe - in 63 countries - including 12 jurisdictions where they are punishable by death, while trans identities are outlawed in 14 countries.

In response, courageous activists are undertaking vital work to protect and improve LGBTQI lives, but they lack resources and funding is fragile, especially in the Global South and East.

## Woefully Under-Funded LGBTQI Movement

LGBTQI groups receive a tiny fraction of international development aid - just 0.04% of funding provided by governments, according to research by the Global Philanthropy Project.

Research commissioned by GiveOut and The Baring Foundation found that UK funding for LGBTOI issues globally - from the government, foundations, individuals and businesses - averaged just £13.4 million annually in 2019/20, equivalent to 3p out of every £100 donated to UK charities.

Despite this limited support, the UK remains one of the largest donors, accounting for 15% of funding in this area, further underscoring how little support is given to international LGBTQI issues.

There are concerns that some of the LGBTQI movement's biggest backers are scaling back their support. Meanwhile, groups working to undermine and roll back LGBTQI rights receive triple the funding of the global LGBTQI movement.

As Neville Gabriel, a South African activist and CEO of The Other Foundation, has said: 'LGBTOI people, especially in Africa, are facing a severe backlash against the progress they have made to claim their full and equal citizenship but lack the financial support to break through the backlash.'

## Responding to the Need: The LGBTQI Solidarity Fund

GiveOut, a UK-based international LGBTQI foundation, has the mission to grow giving to support the global struggle for LGBTQI human rights.

The LGBTQI Solidarity Fund - launched one year ago at the first UK LGBTQI Global Giving Summit is designed to mobilise the UK LGBTQI community and allies to show collective support for LGBTQI communities worldwide.

Through the Solidarity Fund, supported by foundations and the UK government via the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), GiveOut is building a match funding pool to double the impact of individual and corporate donations, enabling every eligible contribution to unlock an equal amount to support LGBTQI organisations globally.



"LGBTQI people are facing unprecedented violence. To bring the change needed, movements need sustained, long term, flexible resourcing. Activists have been asking philanthropy to do better in their support. It is urgent."

-Mukami Marete, Executive Director of UHAI-EASHRI

This innovative approach not only encourages more or even death under Sharia law. In response to giving but also highlights the power of collective action. The Fund aims to mobilise £3 million over four years, which on its own would reflect significant increases in individual and corporate giving, and an increase of over 5% in overall UK funding for LGBTQI issues globally.

### **Driving Collective Impact**

In 2024, contributions from LGBTQI professionals, business leaders, and major UK companies and foundations such as Tesco and the LSEG Foundation have been matched, significantly increasing their

Through the Solidarity Fund, GiveOut is providing grants to LGBTQI organisations working in contexts in the Global South and East where LGBTQI people are at risk and hard-won victories are being rolled back.

One of those organisations is SASOD Guyana, which works tirelessly to repeal discriminatory laws, change attitudes about LGBTQI people, and advocate for human rights. SASOD Guyana recently secured the support of a vital part of the business community - the Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana - for their campaign to end the criminalisation of same-sex intimacy.

Another organisation supported through the Solidarity Fund has been operating in Nigeria for 19 years, demonstrating a long-standing commitment to LGBTQI rights in a country where same-sex relations are punishable by up to 14 years in prison

escalating abuse and threats fuelled by homophobic misinformation about a cooperation agreement between Nigeria and the EU, the group has provided critical emergency support and protection to individuals at risk.

### A Call to Action

LGBTQI activists are risking their livelihoods and lives to defend and promote human rights. Just as their communities rely on activists for protection and support, activists in turn rely on their global community and allies.

With funding for LGBTQI rights both insufficient and uncertain, it is more critical than ever to innovate and identify new strategies to unlock philanthropy, ensuring the LGBTQI movement has access to longterm, diverse, and sustainable sources of funding.

As the Kenyan activist Mukami Marete, Executive Director of UHAI-EASHRI, reminds us: 'LGBTOI people are facing unprecedented violence. To bring the change needed, movements need sustained, long term, flexible resourcing. Activists have been asking philanthropy to do better in their support. It is urgent.'

Through the LGBTQI Solidarity Fund, GiveOut is responding to that call, offering a pathway for foundations, individuals and businesses in the UK to make a real difference. Together, we can ensure that LGBTQI activists have more of the resources they need to defend their communities, tackle inequalities and campaign for lasting change.



# GiveOut's New Grant Partners

### Asia Feminist LBQ Network - Asia

The Asia Feminist LBQ Network is a regional organisation that works to create a sustainable and intersectional human rights movement for the social and political inclusion of LBQ persons across Asia. Their key programmes include organisational development for LBQ-led organisations, research around security needs of LBQ persons as well as sexual and reproductive health of those assigned female assigned birth.



# Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality (ECADE) - Eastern Caribbean

ECADE is an umbrella organisation serving 26 organisations across nine countries in the Eastern Caribbean region, working to strengthen institutional capacity and provide a platform to strategise and work towards full equality. The Alliance works to challenge discriminatory laws through strategic litigation and advocacy efforts and build the capacity of its member organisations by conducting regional training, dialogues, conferences and workshops and conduct research.



### Kyiv Pride - Ukraine

Kyiv Pride is Ukraine's largest LGBTQI event which has been instrumental in raising awareness and garnering support for the LGBTQI community in Ukraine. The organisation has been involved in historic shows of solidarity, such as the March for Peace in conjunction with Warsaw's Equality Parade in Poland and during Liverpool Pride when the city hosted Eurovision on behalf of Ukraine. The organisation has also provided much-needed emergency assistance to the LGBTQI community impacted by the war.





# PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUEERS.







### Mayako Pahichan (Recognition of Love) - Nepal

Mayako Pahichan, founded by Nepal's first same-sex couple to register their marriage, advocates for LGBTQI matrimonial rights, political inclusion, and equality. The organisation provides judiciary education on LGBTQI rights, collaborates with policymakers, promotes Nepal as an LGBTQI-friendly tourism destination, and implements economic empowerment projects for LGBTQI individuals. Committed to climate justice, Mayako Pahichan also addresses the unique challenges marginalised communities face due to environmental inequities.

# Parents, Families and Friends of South African Queers (PFSAQ) - South Africa

Parents, Families & Friends of South African Queers (PFSAQ) is a South African organisation dedicated to promoting acceptance, understanding, and inclusion for LGBTQI individuals and their families. Their work focuses on advocacy, education, and community support, helping families and allies understand and champion the rights of LGBTQI people. PFSAQ strives to empower young queer individuals, build resilience, and challenge societal prejudices, aiming to foster a society rooted in dignity, equality, and acceptance for all.

### The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERs) - Nigeria

TIERs is a Nigerian organisation working to create a society where human rights are guaranteed regardless of status, identity, orientation and affiliation. Their key work includes advocacy, empowerment, education, strategic litigation, research, storytelling and the provision of safe platforms of convergence. This includes maintaining a national LGBTQI hotline to provide real time emergency support, legal aid and health services as well as to document and report on human rights abuses.

### Transmen Indonesia - Indonesia

Transmen Indonesia is the first trans masculine organisation in Indonesia, setting out to address the lack of visibility and support for transgender men in the country. They advocate for policies that facilitate gender marker changes and protect transgender individuals from discrimination as well as conducting research on the economic, social, and cultural rights of transgender men in Indonesia. They also engage in UN advocacy and hold social support groups for trans men across five cities.

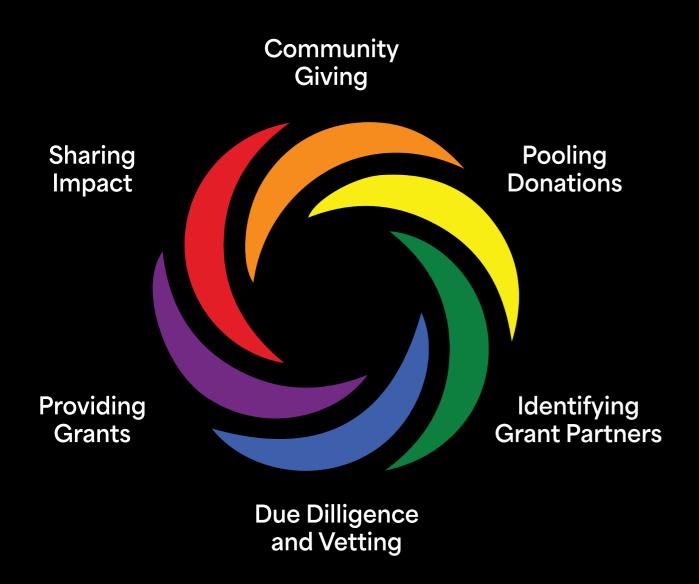
## Women's Health and Equal Rights - Nigeria

WHER (Women's Health and Equal Rights Initiative) is a Nigerian organisation working to create a society free from discrimination and violence against women, focusing on lesbian, bisexual, and queer women and gender non-conforming (GNC) individuals. Their key work includes advocacy, empowerment, education, psychosocial support, research, and community building. WHER also prioritises safety and security, providing platforms for peer support, resource sharing, and addressing violence and discrimination.

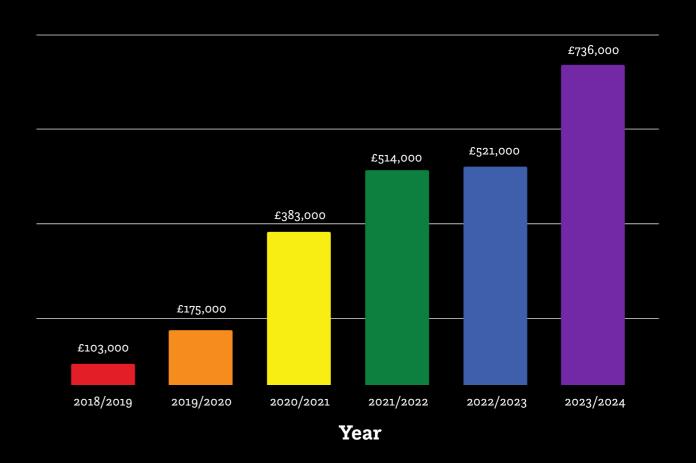


# GiveOut's Funding 2023/24

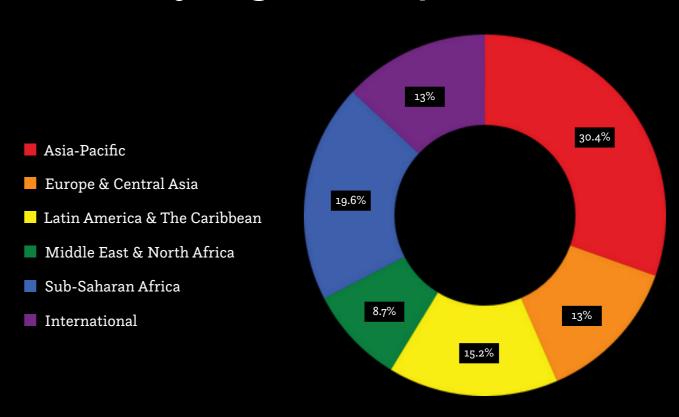
# Our Model



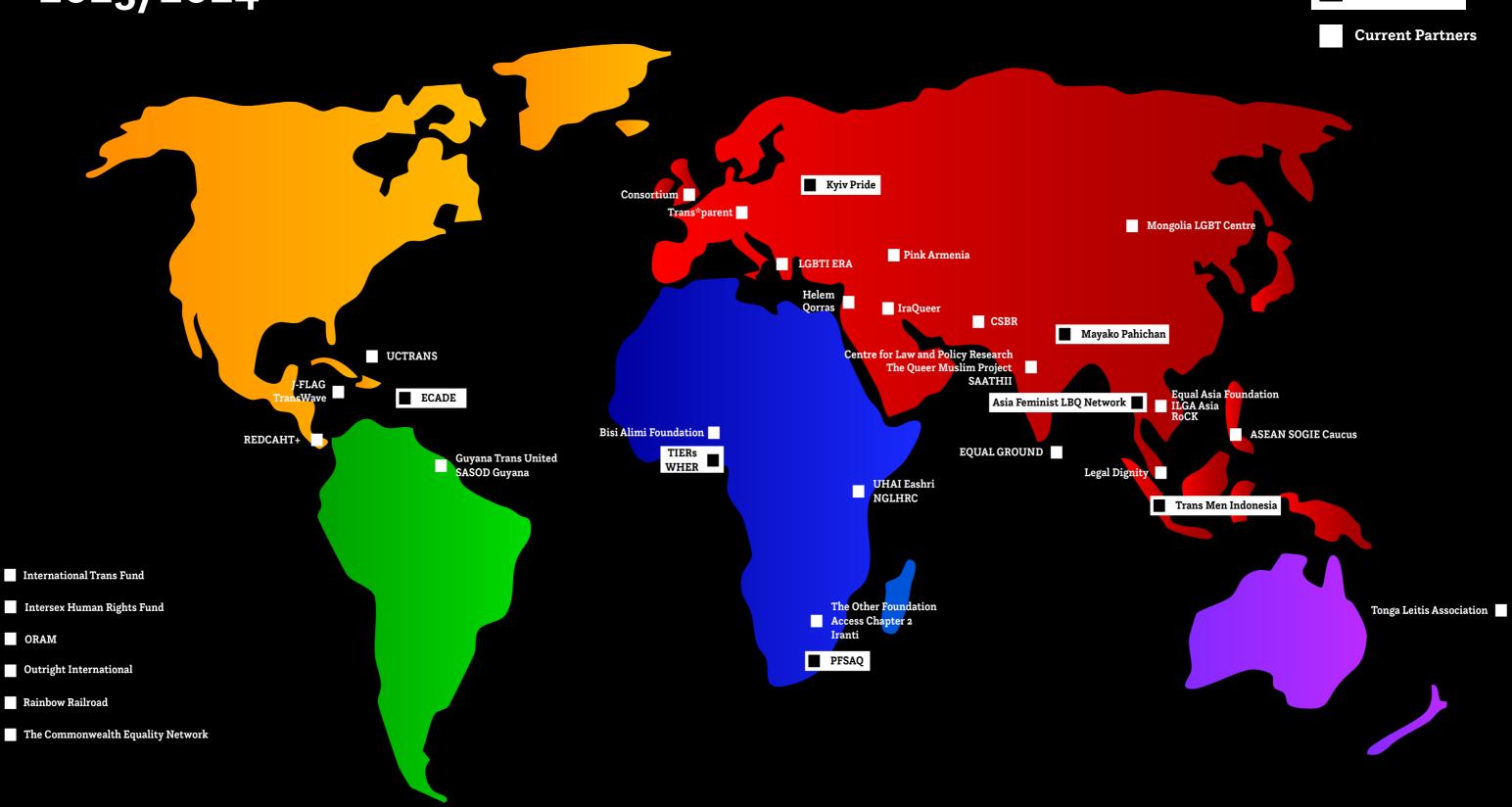
# **Total Grants by Year**



# Grants by Region 2023/24



# GiveOut's Grant Partners 2023/2024



**New Partners** 



# Using the Law and Courts to Advance Equality

# The Challenge

Private, consensual, same-sex sexual activity between adults is still illegal in 63 jurisdictions, with punishments ranging from arrest and imprisonment to whipping and, in 12 countries, the death penalty.

Around the world, public order and vagrancy laws are used to harass, arrest, and prosecute trans people, while gender expression and identity is criminalised in 14 jurisdictions through "crossdressing", "impersonation", and "disguise" laws.

Even in many countries that do not criminalise LGBTQI identities, members of the community face additional legal barriers and a disturbing lack of legal protections against discrimination. Socially and economically excluded, LGBTQI people also struggle to access the support they need if they are being harassed or persecuted through the legal system.

# The Response

GiveOut's grant partners are using the law and courts to challenge laws criminalising same-sex sexual activity and trans identities, advance legal protections against discrimination, defend LGBTQI people against unfair treatment, and advance marriage equality.

To support this vital work, GiveOut has established the LGBTQI Legal Aid Fund. Through it, we channel funding to our grant partners and facilitate pro bono legal support from some of the world's leading law firms. In the stories that follow, we highlight some of the ways that our grant partners are using the law and courts to transform the lives of LGBTQI people across the world.



# How Law Firms and LGBTQI Organisations Are Advancing Human Rights, Together

GiveOut launched the LGBTQI Legal Aid Fund back in 2022. Our aim was to mobilise law firms in the UK, namely Travers Smith, A&O Shearman, Jones Day, and Milbank, to support LGBTQI organisations using the law and courts to advance equality in some of the hardest places to be LGBTQI. Since the fund's launch, law firms have been working closely with our grant partners to provide not just financial support, but also pro bono legal support. Through the fund, GiveOut has been linking law firms to our grant partners where there is a specific need for legal support. This has ranged from providing legal analysis and research expertise, to reviewing draft bills that are potentially harmful to LGBTQI people.

# Tackling Discriminatory Laws in Malaysia

In Malaysia, LGBTQI individuals face significant legal and social discrimination, with laws that criminalise same-sex relations and societal pressures that further marginalise them. Legal Dignity, led by Andi Suraidah, is addressing these challenges by advocating for LGBTQI rights, particularly through legal reforms and support for LBTQ women who are often left out of mainstream narratives.

With support from one of our Legal Aid Fund partners, Legal Dignity undertook a research project analysing access to justice for LGBTQI individuals. The project includes legal analysis, case studies, and interviews, shedding light on the systemic barriers faced by LGBTQI people in Malaysia's legal system. Legal Dignity will use the insights gathered to advocate for policy changes and legal reforms aimed at protecting LGBTQI rights.

"Our partnership has been instrumental in providing Legal Dignity with [an] expert legal lens and editing support, particularly in our ongoing

"Our partnership has been instrumental in providing Legal Dignity with [an] expert legal lens and editing support, particularly in our ongoing participatory action research project on legal cases involving LGBTQI persons in Malaysia."

-Andi Suraidah, Executive Director, Legal Dignity

participatory action research project on legal cases involving LGBTQI persons in Malaysia," says Andi. "This collaboration has significantly bolstered our capacity to analyse complex legal issues and prepare a robust report. The pro bono assistance also allowed us to ensure that international human rights standards are reflected in our advocacy."

Legal Dignity's work is crucial in a country where LGBTQI people risk legal repercussions and social exclusion. The findings from this project will be pivotal in pushing for a more inclusive legal system that recognises and protects the rights of all citizens, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.



# Advocating for inclusive legislation in Guyana

GiveOut's LGBTQI Legal Aid Fund has also enabled a partnership between SASOD Guyana and the law firm Jones Day. A human rights organisation, SASOD Guyana advocates for the rights of the LGBTQI community in Guyana and the Caribbean. The country does not have discrimination protections for LGBTQI individuals, and colonial-era laws criminalise same-sex relationships, giving rise to a variety of legal and societal challenges.

SASOD Guyana has been particularly concerned that the government's draft Data Protection from Harassment Bill ("DPHB") is not LGBTQI-inclusive. Community members in Guyana face harassment based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics.

Jones Day worked with SASOD Guyana to conduct a comprehensive review of the draft bill. Jones Day's expertise has been critical in analysing whether the bill meets international human rights standards, focusing on key areas like enforcement mechanisms and provisions for protecting marginalised groups.

"The quality of this legislative review is outstanding," says Joel Simpson, Managing Director of SASOD Guyana. Jones Day's assistance has enabled SASOD Guyana to ensure that their recommendations align with international human rights standards while addressing local challenges.

The proposed changes include strategic language adjustments to better reflect the realities faced by queer and trans people in Guyana, highlighting the importance of inclusive legal language that fosters equality and protects marginalised communities. As SASOD Guyana and partners prepare to defend their recommendations to the government, this collaboration serves as a critical step toward ensuring that the Harassment Bill reflects the needs of all citizens, particularly those from marginalised groups.

These partnerships underline the vital role that pro-bono legal support plays in advancing LGBTQI rights globally. By connecting local organisations with global law firms, GiveOut is enabling these organisations to push for necessary legal reforms, strengthen their advocacy, and ensure protections for marginalised communities.



# Jones Day on Supporting the Global LGBTQI Movement

by Vica Irani, Co-head of Jones Day's Global Corporate Practice and Head of Diversity for the UK

bono efforts both here in the UK and around the public service, and community involvement across world.

and the team at the National Gay Lesbian Human Rights Commission of Kenya. We've been working with them on some incredibly important strategic litigation efforts.

I've been truly impressed by their commitment and dedication to the movement in Kenya and the significant impact that they're able to have in so many areas with, I have to say, some pretty limited resources. We have been blown away by the work that they've done.

### **Pro-Bono Projects**

I want to say just a couple of things about our probono efforts and why we see these as an important part of our commitment to the communities we prosperity, for businesses and society as a whole,

We're incredibly proud to support GiveOut as part serve, both where we have offices and where we of our standing commitment to charitable and pro- don't. We've had a long history of pro-bono work,

We have the pleasure of currently working with Njeri We do this through both financial support for organisations, via events like City for LGBT+, as well as through the work of our charitable foundation. We also do this by rolling up our sleeves and using the skills we have as a law firm to assist those who are facing injustice, to empower those who are seeking to defend the interests of others across the world, and most importantly, to advance the rule of law, which is one of the principal goals of our probono initiatives.

> It's this final element that I want to briefly focus on as we consider it particularly important for the LGBT+ movement and for the protection of minority groups more generally. Now, I appreciate that I'm a lawyer and so I would say this, but we honestly do see the rule of law as being critical to freedom and

"We've devoted many hundreds of attorney hours developing resources, documenting the rights of LGBT people to have their relationships legally recognised around the world."



but also particularly for those in marginalised groups who can otherwise be left exposed to shortterm or populist agendas that seek to pander to the majority at the expense of the minority.

When I was a child, I-perhaps naively-assumed that things would always get better, the world would always get fairer, life would always improve. We've seen in the last few years that's not the case.

### Championing the Rule of Law

There are too many rule-of-law projects that we've had the privilege to be involved in to mention, but I'll just touch on a couple of examples. A number of years ago, we established a permanent presence staffed by a rotating roster of Jones Day lawyers in Laredo, Texas, on the southern US border, and the island of Lesbos in Greece, to provide free representation to asylum seekers, including with specialist LGBT resources.

We've devoted many hundreds of attorney hours to developing resources, documenting the rights of LGBT people to have their relationships legally recognised around the world. These resources are being used as a basis to advocate for change and reform in a number of countries.

For many years we've trained and mentored judges, public defenders, attorneys, and others, in Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, to improve the administration of justice and institutionalised recognition of fundamental rights. Here in the UK, one of our more significant initiatives is a global law exchange project at the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law, which focuses on access to justice, administrative justice, and corruption in emerging economies.

The work of GiveOut demonstrates not just the importance, however small the project we support, but also the enormous scale of the challenge that lies ahead.



# Supporting Gilbert's Journey to Justice—A Story of Change

Gilbert Noam, a trans man from the Czech Republic, didn't want to have to go through sterilisation to have his gender legally recognised. With the help of transgender rights organisation Trans\*parent, he took on the law and achieved something extraordinary.

In the Czech Republic, transgender people must undergo sterilisation, that is, have their reproductive function permanently removed, before their gender identity can be legally recognised. For Gilbert, this requirement went far beyond the personal: it was a violation of his human rights.

"It may seem like minor details, but they can easily add up quickly," reflects Gilbert. "If I could change my documents without an unwanted medical procedure, I wouldn't have to stress over every situation that requires showing identification, and I would have a greater sense of privacy and choice about with whom I share such personal information."

In 2018, Gilbert reached out to Trans\*parent, who guided him through the legal process with the assistance of pro bono legal expert Petr Kalla. Together, they ensured his case would eventually be heard by the Czech Constitutional Court. Trans\*parent also raised awareness of the injustices facing trans individuals, fostering dialogue among lawmakers, medical professionals, and the public.

In early 2024, following years of legal challenges, the Constitutional Court ruled in Gilbert's favour, declaring forced sterilisation for gender recognition unconstitutional. The court acknowledged that such a mandate violated human dignity. This landmark ruling set a significant legal precedent, requiring lawmakers to pass a new gender recognition law excluding sterilisation by June 2025.

Victory did not come easily. Alongside coordination of the case and legal assistance, Trans\*parent helped Gilbert with psychological support after the



ruling, ensuring that Gilbert had a safe, affirming space to navigate any challenges that arose.

Through Gilbert's case, Trans\*parent helped change attitudes and promote a more inclusive legal framework not just for Gilbert, but for all transgender people in the Czech Republic. The ruling represents a significant milestone toward greater protection of trans rights, reinforcing the principles of bodily autonomy and personal freedom that will benefit countless others in the future.

"When I realised about 10 years ago that I did not wish to undergo sterilisation, I hoped that the situation might change," recalls Gilbert. "That didn't happen, and in the meantime, more and more countries across Europe started removing this requirement. I wasn't particularly eager to go to court, but it was a way to contribute to change and live to see it happen."



# Mayako Pahichan are Securing **Marriage Equality for Same-Sex** Couples in Nepal

Pant, are advancing marriage equality for LGBTQI couples in Nepal, helping same-sex couples navigate same-sex unions within the country.

courts when seeking legal marriage.

But Mayako Pahichan is shifting this landscape. In June 2023, they were instrumental in the Supreme Court of Nepal's landmark interim order directing the government to recognise same-sex marriages.

Despite being widely celebrated, the Court order remains a point of contention for some institutions. In July 2023, Kathmandu District Court rejected the marriage registration of Maya Gurung, whose gender is listed as male in her legal documents. The district court stated she did not qualify as a legal

Mayako Pahichan, led by Executive Director Sunil woman under the Civil Code's marriage criteria. However, thanks to the advocacy of Mayako Pahichan and their partners, Maya and her partner legal channels and promote broader acceptance of Surendra Pandey became the first same-sex couple to legally register their marriage in Nepal.

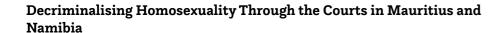
In Nepal, LGBTQI rights have historically faced As a result of this advocacy, the Ministry of Home significant challenges, with same-sex relationships Affairs issued a circular on 27 April 2024, instructing not legally recognised. Despite some progress, all local administrations nationwide to maintain many same-sex couples continue to encounter a temporary record of all same-sex marriages bureaucratic hurdles and resistance from local within their jurisdiction, providing a form of official acknowledgment for these unions. This isn't just bureaucracy—it's a powerful step toward equality, offering same-sex couples official recognition of their unions.

> Following this milestone, seven same-sex marriages have been successfully registered, highlighting Mayako Pahichan's impact in advancing LGBTQI rights in Nepal. Although challenges from some courts remain, Mayako Pahichan continues to advocate for permanent legal recognition and equal rights for LGBTQI couples, paving the way for marriage equality in the country.



### Winning Marriage Equality in Thailand

Thailand became the first Southeast Asian country to legalise same-sex unions after its king signed the marriage equality bill into law. ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, which strengthens LGBTQI movements across the region, including in Thailand, hailed this as a major milestone. The law, set to take effect in January 2025, grants same-sex couples equal rights in areas like inheritance, healthcare, and taxation, marking a significant victory for LGBTQI rights in Thailand.



Mauritius and Namibia took historic steps for LGBTQI rights by decriminalising same-sex relationships. The Other Foundation played a pivotal role, offering financial and strategic support to local activists challenging the discriminatory laws. In Namibia, the foundation backed Friedel Dausab's fight against the colonial-era sodomy law. His courage, along with local efforts, shifted public opinion and led to this victory.

### Advancing Trans Rights in India Through Horizontal Reservations

The Centre for Law and Policy Research (CLPR) is making strides to advance transgender rights in India. Through strategic public interest litigation, CLPR is advocating for horizontal reservations for transgender individuals, a progressive policy that enables trans individuals to secure employment without losing caste-based entitlements. This approach contrasts with vertical reservations, ensuring both gender and caste-based marginalisation are addressed. CLPR's efforts have already seen success in the state of Karnataka, and more recently in Tamil Nadu, where the High Court has directed the government to implement horizontal reservations. This progress reflects CLPR's pivotal role in promoting equitable employment opportunities for transgender communities across India.













### Halting the Rollback of Rights in Botswana

In Botswana, the High Court reaffirmed its 2019 ruling decriminalising same-sex relations. Despite challenges and attempts to overturn the ruling, the court upheld the decision, making Botswana one of the few African nations where same-sex relations remain legal. The Other Foundation provided crucial support for activists and local organisations defending the case.

# Providing Legal Aid to LGBTQI People Experiencing Violence and Discrimination in Kenya

The National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC) legal aid centre responded to over 3,700 cases of human rights violations targeting LGBTQI individuals based on their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. Offering services like legal representation, psychosocial support, and rapid response, the centre has been a vital resource nationwide. It continues to empower the LGBTQI community through legal education and advocacy, ensuring access to justice and protection against discrimination and violence.

### Landmark Legal Victory for LGBTQI Refugee Rights in Armenia

Pink Armenia achieved a groundbreaking legal victory, helping secure asylum for Salman Mukayev, an LGBTQI man who fled Chechnya. The Administrative Court of Armenia ruled that Mukayev, who faced persecution and torture due to his sexual orientation, must be granted refugee status. This decision, supported by Pink Armenia's legal efforts, sets a significant precedent in protecting LGBTQI individuals from persecution, reinforcing Armenia's commitment to safeguarding human rights, especially for vulnerable communities facing threats in their home countries.



# Building Supportive Communities and Safe Spaces

# The Challenge

In many countries, discriminatory laws and socio-cultural norms marginalise and exclude LGBTQI people from education, healthcare, housing, employment, and other sectors.

This environment of exclusion leads to further discrimination, violence, and other serious human rights abuses against LGBTQI people, taking a terrible toll on their wellbeing and mental health. Coming out and being visible risks removing the remaining safety nets that others take for granted, such as a family support network.

# The Response

Throughout history, our community has survived and thrived by coming together for each other, providing both safety and the support network that we often lack. We try to protect one another, share stories, experiences, and resources to help us feel confident and supported in being our true selves.

Safe houses, community spaces, gatherings, and activities are a vital lifeline to many LGBTQI people, and activities like Pride marches help challenge the status quo and ensure local LGBTQI communities are visible, where this is possible. Through community, LGBTQI people can access services, such as legal aid or health services, and also come together to support one another.

GiveOut's grant partners are embedded in their local contexts and cultures and know what support LGBTQI people need. As the following stories show, they are building supportive communities and safe spaces, including in many of the most challenging environments.



# Through SAATHII's Fellowship Programme, Local Leaders are **Transforming Trans Communities** in India



Now in its fifth year, SAATHII's fellowship programme is equipping local activists with the tools and resources to drive impactful change for LGBTQI communities across India. Despite progress in legally recognising transgender people and policy advancements for transgender rights, LGBTQI communities in India still face stigma, violence, and limited access to education and healthcare. Landmark rulings by the Supreme Court have laid a foundation for inclusion, but significant gaps remain between policy and the everyday experiences of LGBTQI individuals. SAATHI is bridging these gaps through its fellowship.

The SAATHII fellowship offers resources that enable activists to dedicate themselves full-time to LGBTOI advocacy, focusing on raising awareness, securing healthcare access, providing legal aid, advocating for housing, and challenging discriminatory practices. This year, SAATHII onboarded two fellows—Kiran Nayak from Karnataka and Telangana, and Pinky from Rayagada, Odisha-who are established leaders within their local communities. The fellowship has empowered them to advocate for transgender rights and mentor local collectives, helping community members access social and legal services and respond to crises.

### Improving Access to Healthcare and Other services in Odisha

Pinky's work has been transformative for the transgender community in Odisha, where she leads Maa Majhi Gouri, a community-based organisation focused on transgender rights. Under her leadership, Maa Majhi Gouri partnered with the Odisha government to implement the Sweekruti scheme across five districts, a flagship programme promoting social, economic, and legal empowerment for transgender individuals through healthcare, legal aid, and social protection services.

Pinky's impact extends well beyond this programme. She organised health literacy sessions for 60 trans women, connecting them to vital healthcare services, and sensitised 140 healthcare providers to the specific needs of transgender individuals. Her outreach also included co-leading inclusion sessions for 134 students and faculty, which led to five trans women being admitted to higher education institutions.

In addition to building the capacity of service providers and empowering transgender individuals, Pinky helped over 100 community members access crucial benefits, such as pensions and food security. She secured identity cards for over 20 transgender individuals and facilitated a work order worth INR 29.6 lakhs (around £27,5000) for a trans-led self-help group, creating meaningful economic opportunities. Pinky's advocacy also reached state-level discussions on marriage equality and transgender welfare, amplifying marginalised voices and fostering sustainable community empowerment in Odisha.

# Promoting Mental and Physical Health **Among Trans Men**

Kiran Nayak, a SAATHII fellow and trans man from rural Telangana, has been a committed advocate for queer and trans rights, particularly in healthcare and legal access. Working across Telangana and Karnataka, Kiran focuses on building support networks for trans individuals and promoting mental and reproductive health rights. His work with the Society for Trans Men's Action and Rights (STAR) has provided vital crisis intervention, addressing over 34 cases involving family violence, emergency shelter needs, and discrimination. Kiran has also been heading a 9,000-member network of persons with disabilities since 2012 in Karnataka; and drawing attention to intersectional marginalisation such as those of gender, sexuality, disability and caste, in local and national forums.

Through his fellowship, Kiran has led advocacy efforts with healthcare providers and legal services to improve access and reduce stigma. At Osmania Hospital in Telangana, he successfully advocated for the removal of invasive screenings for trans men, aligning healthcare practices with international



standards. His engagement with the Telangana State Women & Child Development Department also resulted in increased access to identity cards, loans, and pensions, bolstering the social safety net for trans individuals.

Kiran's impact extends to the national level. He organised workshops on mental and physical health for trans men and served on the Steering Committee for "Our Health Matters: Indian Trans Men and Transmasculine Health Study", a community-led research initiative. His mentorship helped STAR secure non-profit status, positioning the organisation for sustainable growth. Kiran also advised Project Vistaara, guiding leaders in advocating for healthcare access, inclusive education, and legal protections for queer and trans communities.

Through SAATHII's fellowship programme, activists like Pinky and Kiran are reshaping their communities and building a foundation for lasting change across India. The programme illustrates the power of grassroots activism, demonstrating how dedicated local leaders can address systemic issues within healthcare, education, and social protection for India's transgender community.



# Radhika Piramal—Driving **LGBTQI** Inclusion in Business and Advocating for Equality

"I'm an out (and outspoken) Indian businesswoman, which is quite rare where I'm from," says GiveOut trustee Radhika Piramal. Radhika is Vice Chair and Executive Director of VIP Industries, India's leading luggage company. She is one of few openly lesbian Indian business leaders and is a prominent speaker globally on LGBTQI inclusion. GiveOut caught up with Radhika about her personal story, her work driving inclusion in business, and support for LGBTQI equality around the world.

### Can you tell us a bit about yourself? Who are you and what do you do?

I was born in Mumbai and moved to the UK as a teenager for higher education. I studied at Brasenose College Oxford for my undergraduate BA degree and Harvard Business School for my MBA. I was MD and CEO of India's largest luggage company, VIP Industries Ltd., from 2009 - 2017 and I continue to serve on its board as Executive Director and Vice Chairperson since 2017. Outside of work, I am passionate about advocating for LGBTQI equality in team." societies and workplaces worldwide, especially in

What has your experience been like as one of the only openly lesbian business leaders in India? What has the response been?

I had a legal civil union with my spouse Amanda in 2011 in London. About 120 people attended our ceremony, and although we did not post any pictures or updates on social media, I was outed by the Indian tabloid media. They reported (accurately) that I was now legally married to a woman although back in 2011 homosexuality was still a criminal offence in India. Initially, I was concerned about negative

"GiveOut shines a light on underserved areas for funding and supports charities doing some of the hardest work around the world. It's a pleasure and privilege to work alongside the GiveOut trustees and

publicity and backlash, but I now believe that being outed was a positive turning point in my life as I took charge of my own narrative. I gave several interviews to leading Indian newspapers advocating for LGBTQI equality in the Indian workplace and became a prominent speaker on D&I [diversity and inclusion] issues. The response to D&I initiatives has been better since India overturned its archaic anti-LGBTQI laws in 2018. The change in law helped and corporations became more confident about adopting anti-discrimination policies and practices for their LGBTQI employees.

# Why are you passionate about supporting LGBTQI rights globally? Do you support and give to other

I believe that being LGBTQI is a normal and natural part of society and we all deserve to be treated equally under the law, with respect and acceptance from our families. Unfortunately, not everyone shares this belief. India is a deeply patriarchal society in which members of the LGBTQI community still face a lot of stigma and shame. We need to advocate for our rights and fight for tolerance and inclusion. I support several leading LGBTQI causes in India, including the long-running Kashish Queer film festival in Mumbai, the Naz LGBTQI Community Centre in Delhi, and the Pink List, an NGO which tracks how Indian MPs vote on LGBTOI issues.

### What has been the most rewarding aspect or standout memory of supporting GiveOut's mission as a trustee?

GiveOut shines a light on underserved areas for funding and supports charities doing some of the hardest work around the world. It's a pleasure and privilege to work alongside the GiveOut trustees and team, all of whom are brilliant and professional at their work, and share a common bond of queer lived experiences. I have never before worked in an atmosphere which has such high professional standards yet where everyone can fully be themselves.

### What are your hopes for the LGBTQI community globally? How are we going to get there?

I dream of the day when any LGBTQI person anywhere in the world can serve openly and proudly in the military, as a member of parliament, a judge, or a teacher, without fear, and with dignity, respect, and acceptance. We have a long way to go before we achieve this dream. We need to work unrelentingly as a community with unity, determination, perseverance, and hope, to achieve our dreams.





Mongolia's LGBT Centre prioritises the country's first trans-led organisation. Formed and led by trans community, creating a more inclusive environment where trans voices are empowered to lead. This is vital in a context where trans people face profound challenges, including societal prejudice, limited healthcare access, and lack of legal protections. With this in mind, last year the LGBT Centre launched its first Trans Leadership Programme, a six-month initiative focused on developing leadership, advocacy, and communitybuilding skills within the trans community.

The Trans Leadership Programme provided more than basic training; it offered a safe space for participants to build confidence, develop critical activism skills, and learn effective tools for navigating structural challenges. Through workshops on policy advocacy, project management, and community mobilisation, as well as personalised mentorship, participants gained valuable insights into organising grassroots efforts within Mongolia's challenging environment.

This year, the programme's activities culminated in the creation of Trans for Unity, Mongolia's

graduates of the Leadership Programme, Trans for Unity advocates directly for the needs of Mongolia's trans community. With ongoing support from the LGBT Centre, Trans for Unity has quickly become a cornerstone for trans-led advocacy in Mongolia, inspiring other trans Mongolians to believe in their potential to create change.

"This programme gave me a voice I didn't know I had," shared one programme graduate who is now a core member of Trans for Unity. "We learned not only to advocate for our rights but to build something lasting, something that others can stand on in the future."

The establishment of Trans for Unity represents milestone for Mongolia's trans movement, providing direct representation and solidarity. Through initiatives like the Trans Leadership Programme, the LGBT Centre is helping to build a resilient and inclusive trans movement in Mongolia, demonstrating that with the right support, grassroots activism can drive meaningful social A unique event is giving LBQ women from across southern Africa a rare chance to network and forge alliances to better protect their communities. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has made significant strides in safeguarding LGBTQI rights, including legalising same-sex marriage, adoption, and gender recognition for transgender individuals. Despite these progressive achievements, LGBTOI individuals continue to face pervasive discrimination, violence, and barriers to accessing justice, healthcare, and education.

Southern Africa

How LBQ Women Are Building

Resilience and Community in

In response to these ongoing challenges, Iranti, a Johannesburg-based media advocacy organisation, partnered with the Women's Leadership Centre and the Young Feminists Movement Namibia to cohost the seventh edition of the Namibian Lesbian Festival. This annual six-day event has become a vital platform for LBQ collectives from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia, offering a safe, supportive space for lesbians to gather, connect, and build resilient communities.

The 2023 festival, themed "Breaking Down Borders," focused on creating a sense of unity among participants through shared experiences, organising, and healing. The event not only raised visibility but nurtured deep solidarity among LBQ women, many of whom face severe marginalisation

in their home countries. Participants engaged in critical activities such as a conference on LBQ organising, which empowered them to strategise on dismantling patriarchal norms and advocating for their rights. Wellness sessions and artistic workshops provided avenues for emotional healing and self-expression, enabling attendees to reclaim their narratives in a safe, judgement-free space.

an Festival, Women's Leadership Centre

The festival's most profound impact was its ability to foster a strong sense of community and belonging. By offering a safe environment for open dialogue and collective growth, the Namibian Lesbian Festival empowered participants to raise awareness about LBQ rights while finding strength in each other. This sense of solidarity didn't end with the event; it fueled ongoing advocacy efforts and helped build resilient, supportive networks that continue to grow across Southern Africa.

Through the festival's intentional creation of a space where lesbian and queer women can heal, connect, and organise, it has become more than just an annual gathering—it is a catalyst for lasting change and empowerment in a region where such safe spaces are rare. The festival's success continues to inspire a broader movement for LGBTQI rights, advocacy, and solidarity, making it a beacon of hope for LBQ communities throughout Southern Africa.



### Empowering LBQ Women in Malaysia

Legal Dignity, an LBQ-led feminist legal organisation, is empowering LBQ women in Malaysia through initiatives like the LBQ Town Hall, providing a vital platform for LBQ women to share their experiences and foster community solidarity. By creating safe spaces for dialogue, and centring the experiences of LBQ women, Legal Dignity are strengthening collective identity and resilience, which are crucial for sustained advocacy and social change. One participant shared "By organising LBQ convenings, we create a space for the community to come together, get to know each other, and build their own safe spaces. Through these convenings, we can also identify other challenges within the community."



In June 2024, Kyiv Pride held its first march since the 2022 Russian invasion, symbolising resilience amidst ongoing conflict. Despite threats from anti-LGBTQI groups and the war's dangers, hundreds gathered in central Kyiv to demand stronger legal protections, including hate crime laws and equal marriage rights. Although the march was cut short by police for safety reasons, it stood as a powerful statement of resistance and unity for Ukraine's LGBTQI community.

### Empowering Guyana's Trans Community Through Education

Guyana Trans United (GTU) continues to champion the rights of Guyana's trans community through impactful human rights advocacy, promoting respect and acceptance, and offering vital support services. GTU empowers trans individuals by facilitating access to HIV care, gender-affirming services, and providing skills training and economic empowerment programmes. In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, GTU awarded 30 scholarships, enabling trans individuals to pursue education, vocational training, and other opportunities that support their personal and professional growth.













### Protecting LGBTQI People from Digital Abuse in the MENA Region

Helem played a pivotal role in launching the "Secure Our Socials" campaign, alongside Human Rights Watch and other partners. The campaign urges Meta (Facebook, Instagram) to enhance transparency and protection for LGBTQI users in the MENA region, where online targeting by state actors and private individuals often leads to offline consequences, such as harassment, detention, and violence. Helem's efforts aim to safeguard LGBTQI people from digital abuse, promoting safer online spaces for marginalised communities.

### Strengthening Police and Trans Community Relations in Jamaica

TransWave has made significant strides in fostering safer relationships between the police and the transgender community in Jamaica. Through legal education training with police officers, they addressed biases and fears from both groups, facilitating open dialogue on sensitive issues such as pronoun usage and transphobic violence. These efforts, which include ongoing consultations and the development of mutually beneficial resolutions, are crucial steps toward increasing safety and justice for Jamaica's trans community.

# Convening the Trans Masculine Community Across Latin America & the Caribbean

REDCAHT+ has been instrumental in uniting the trans masculine community across Latin America and the Caribbean. By organising regional meetings, virtual forums, and developing support guides on topics such as menstruation, the network has facilitated vital discussions around healthcare access, legal rights, and social inclusion. Through these initiatives, REDCAHT+ is building solidarity and amplifying the voices of trans masculine, non-binary, and gender non-conforming leaders across the region. Importantly, the network is also gaining political visibility and influence, with advocacy efforts underway in several countries where REDCAHT+ is active.



# Providing the Evidence Needed for Change

# The Challenge

A lack of quality data and research on sexual orientation and gender identity opens up our community to harm, as a result of the substantial roadblock created for policymakers, service providers, and others seeking to improve the rights, health, and wellbeing of LGBTQI people.

Research provides the evidence to highlight the challenges, discrimination, and inequalities faced by our communities across the globe. This evidence is crucial for advancing LGBTQI human rights, providing a solid foundation for advocacy efforts demanding policy change and legal reform.

Producing data and research lends legitimacy and credibility to LGBTQI activism. When LGBTQI organisations produce evidence to support their claims and arguments, it becomes harder for opponents, policymakers, governments, and international bodies to dismiss their concerns.

# The Response

Around the world, GiveOut's partners are using research to develop evidence-based campaigns and advocacy to demand greater respect for LGBTQI human rights and drive inclusion.

GiveOut's partners are documenting harms and human rights abuses against LGBTQI people. As noted in the stories that follow, they are providing accurate information and evidence-based arguments to challenge harmful stereotypes, biases, and misinformation against LGBTQI people. They're also breaking new ground in researching previously uncharted areas, such as the intersection between LGBTQI rights and climate change.



# From Research to Advocacy— **EQUAL GROUND's Groundbreaking** Efforts for LGBTQI Rights in Sri Lanka

EQUAL GROUND has emerged as the leading healthcare for LGBTQI individuals, demonstrating voice for LGBTQI rights in Sri Lanka. Founded in how essential research-based advocacy is in 2004 by activist Rosanna Flamer-Caldera, EQUAL GROUND is using pioneering research to inform policy, educate the public, and support a more inclusive society. Their work is essential in a country where LGBTQI people continue to face serious barriers, including discrimination, harassment, and legal restrictions. Same-sex relationships remain criminalised, and there are no explicit protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

## **Groundbreaking Research on Healthcare** Access

EQUAL GROUND's research highlights the many barriers and biases LGBTQI individuals face in healthcare. One of their landmark reports, Access to Healthcare for the LGBTQI Community in Sri Lanka, reveals the discrimination and stigma LGBTQI patients often experience when seeking medical care. Healthcare providers frequently display prejudices, associating LGBTQI patients with HIV/ STIs and "deviant" behaviours. This bias can lead to harassment, a lack of informed consent, and invasive questioning, creating a hostile environment support. for LGBTQI people.

This report advocates for an inclusive healthcare environment and suggests several key changes, including training healthcare providers on LGBTQI issues, establishing gender-neutral facilities, and implementing a confidential complaints system to address discrimination. EQUAL GROUND has used this research to educate healthcare providers and push for policies that ensure safe and affirming

reshaping Sri Lanka's healthcare landscape.

## **Empowering the LGBTQI Community** with Knowledge

While much of EQUAL GROUND's research aims to educate the broader public and service providers, several projects are designed specifically to empower the LGBTQI community. The Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) for LBTQ Women report is a prime example, providing LBTQ women with vital information about their bodies, rights, and available healthcare services. In a society where talking about sexual health is often stigmatised, this report equips queer women with knowledge to make informed health decisions and understand their rights, fostering a sense of autonomy.

EQUAL GROUND also offers resources on legal rights and personal safety, addressing the unique challenges LGBTQI individuals face in various aspects of life. Each report reflects a deep understanding of community needs, aiming to strengthen individuals through education and

# Advocating for Safer Workplaces: Is My Workplace Safe?

EQUAL GROUND's work extends into professional spaces, addressing workplace discrimination. The 2022 report Is My Workplace Safe? documents harassment and discrimination against LGBTQI employees and offers strategies for employers to foster inclusive environments. Findings revealed



that many LGBTQI employees feel pressured to sessions, EQUAL GROUND fosters compassionate, hide their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid stigma or retaliation, with verbal and sexual harassment commonly reported.

This research forms the basis of EQUAL GROUND's workshop series, which educates LGBTQI individuals on labour laws and employment rights. These workshops provide attendees with the resources to understand legal protections against workplace harassment and avenues for redress under civil and criminal law. By ensuring that individuals know their rights, EQUAL GROUND enables the community to advocate for safer, more respectful workplaces.

### **Shaping Media Narratives: Media Guidelines Booklet**

Recognising the power of media in shaping public perception, EQUAL GROUND produced the Media Guidelines Booklet, a tool to help journalists report on LGBTQI issues accurately and sensitively. This booklet offers guidance on respectful language, ethical considerations, and balanced storytelling to avoid sensationalism or harmful stereotypes. EQUAL GROUND has used this resource in media training sessions, working with journalists to ensure they understand the impact of their reporting on public attitudes towards LGBTQI people. Through these

accurate media representation, which helps to challenge societal biases and normalise inclusive perspectives.

### **Building a Foundation for Change**

EQUAL GROUND's research and advocacy efforts are crucial to advancing LGBTQI rights in Sri Lanka. Each report serves as a call to action, providing policymakers, service providers, and the public with critical insights into the obstacles faced by LGBTQI individuals. Through partnerships, workshops, and awareness campaigns, EQUAL GROUND translates research into tangible improvements in healthcare, workplace rights, and media representation.

In a country where the LGBTQI community still faces legal and social hurdles, EQUAL GROUND's work paves the way toward meaningful, lasting change. By shining a light on these issues and promoting understanding, EQUAL GROUND is creating pathways to equality, dignity, and respect for Sri Lanka's LGBTQI communities, demonstrating the transformative power of research-driven advocacy.



# S&P Global Foundation —Building **Environmental Resilience for LGBTQI** Communities

The S&P Global Foundation supports the building As part of the LGBTQI Climate Fund development of inclusive, resilient economies with a focus on areas that are essential to long-term sustainability, including creating environmental resilience. To achieve this, they have supported the development of GiveOut's pioneering LGBTQI Climate Fund.

### Building a Partnership

GiveOut was nominated for a grant by S&P Global Foundation in 2023 through the LGBTO+ network at S&P Global, Pride PRG (People Resource Group). Founded in 2005, Pride delivers programming that builds leadership competencies and increases opportunities for personal, professional, company, and community success and impact for LGBTQ+ employees and their allies. Pride is dedicated to creating an inclusive and supportive work environment where LGBTQ+ employees are encouraged to bring their whole selves to the workplace. GiveOut has built a strong partnership with S&P Global Pride PRG with a shared goal to support the global LGBTQI community.

### GiveOut's LGBTQI Climate Fund

In 2021, GiveOut launched the world's-first LGBTOI Climate Fund to support activist organisations working at the intersection of LGBTQI human rights and climate change. Recognising the unique ways in which LGBTQI people are impacted by climate change, the fund aims to equip these organisations with more of the resources they need to address the crisis. It supports efforts to build knowledge, educate communities, advocate for the inclusion of LGBTQI voices, promote justice and equity in climate responses, and contribute to broader movements for climate justice.

process, S&P supported GiveOut to host a knowledge sharing forum to facilitate international collaboration, creating space for activists and researchers to share and learn strategies. A report was produced which now forms the basis of the GiveOut Climate Fund Strategy

Leaders of LGBTQI organisations from around the world and two researchers specialising in this field came together to share their work on the intersection of LGBTQI rights and the climate crisis, and discussed their priorities, barriers to secure funding, and what role funders with links to climate issues should play.

### More Research and Data Needed

Current work by participants includes research to evidence the needs of LGBTQI communities, as well as advocacy, education, and practical work. Scoping and mapping exercises, quantitative research, and the development of policy reports and recommendations all form part of their work

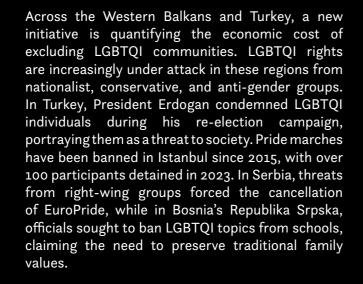
One of the key priorities they identified for future work in this area is to increase data and understanding. There is a profound lack of research and data at local, regional, and national levels on the impact of the climate crisis on LGBTQI communities. This makes it difficult to develop strategic approaches and provide specific evidence when advocating for resources from governments and decision makers.

By funding the development of the LGBTQI Climate Fund, S&P Global Foundation supports LGBTQI communities around the world to create environmental resilience.





# Building the **Economic Case** for LGBTQI Inclusion in Western Balkans & Turkey



The World Bank, in partnership with LGBTI ERA, sought to quantify the economic costs of LGBTQI exclusion. Recognising that economic data could strengthen arguments for inclusion, they aimed to provide evidence-backed insights into how labour market discrimination against LGBTQI individuals affects economies in the region, starting with North Macedonia and Serbia.

The World Bank and ERA conducted studies on LGBTQI labour market exclusion in North Macedonia and Serbia, marking the first in a series of economic analyses on the impact of LGBTQI discrimination. These reports reveal that exclusion due to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) leads to an annual economic loss equal to 0.5% of GDP in both countries. Additionally, fiscal losses from LGBTQI exclusion were estimated at approximately 0.1% of Serbia's 2021 GDP and 0.13% of North Macedonia's GDP, underscoring the economic toll of discrimination.

The reports also offered recommendations, advocating for stronger anti-discrimination laws, systematic data collection on LGBTQI populations, and training programmes to combat workplace stigma. The research has provided crucial evidence that demonstrates the economic benefits of LGBTQI inclusion. Policymakers and stakeholders now have data-backed recommendations to address discrimination, strengthen labour market participation, and enhance productivity. These reports represent a step towards changing perceptions and fostering economic resilience through greater inclusion, with the potential to influence similar actions across the region.





# Assessing the Needs of the LGBTQI **Community in Jamaica**

JFLAG, Jamaica's largest LGBTQI organisation, has JFLAG gathered responses from a range of carried out a detailed survey that provides vital data to bolster campaigns protecting LGBTQI rights in the country. In Jamaica, same-sex sexual activity is illegal with a penalty of up to 10 years in prison with hard labour. While there is no evidence of the law being enforced in recent years, LGBTQI people in Jamaica face high levels of discrimination and violence. LGBTOI individuals are not protected from housing or employment discrimination, and there are no legal recognitions of same-sex relationships or discrimination protections. Same-sex marriage is constitutionally banned, and there are no laws protecting against discrimination based on gender identity.

To gain insights into the experiences of LGBTQI individuals in Jamaica, JFLAG conducted a comprehensive needs assessment within the community. The 2024 LGBTQ+ Community Experience and Needs Assessment Survey collected detailed information about LGBTQI Jamaicans, including their quality of life, personal experiences, aspirations, relationships, political goals, and connection to the environment.

Reflecting on the survey, Glenroy Murray, Executive Director of JFLAG told us: "It's a way for us not only to be able to articulate community needs to our partners, to our government, but also to track what is happening in our community. It is very important for us. It is how we make our arguments."

demographics, focusing on capturing the voices of LGBTQI individuals in rural areas who often face the highest levels of isolation and lack of support. The survey collected responses on numerous topics, including experiences of violence, employment challenges, mental health needs, and access to safe spaces. Through this comprehensive engagement, the survey highlighted critical issues within the LGBTQI community and paved the way for evidencebased recommendations.

The findings showed that over half of respondents (52%) reported experiencing violence in the past year, while 83% had faced violence at some point in their lives. In this environment, 65% expressed a desire to emigrate due to safety concerns, discrimination, and financial instability. JFLAG's recommendations are urgent and far-reaching, advocating for anti-discrimination legislation, awareness programmes, and increased support in rural areas. The report also underscores the need for inclusive healthcare and mental health services, as well as educational initiatives to combat bullying. With these findings, JFLAG aims to drive critical policy changes, create safe spaces, and foster a more supportive environment for LGBTQI lamaicans.



# Exploring the Intersection of LGBTQI Rights and Climate Justice in Southeast Asia

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus initiated groundbreaking work exploring the intersection of climate justice and LGBTQI rights in Southeast Asia. Through research, webinars, and regional learning sessions, they facilitated discussions on how climate change disproportionately impacts LGBTQI individuals, particularly youth and Indigenous communities, and continue to drive intersectional and cross-movement advocacy efforts in this critical area.



### Advocating for LGBTQI Rights at CHOGM 2024

The Commonwealth Equality Network (TCEN) attended the 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa to advocate for the rights of LGBTQI people. Held every two years, CHOGM convenes leaders from 56 Commonwealth member states to address critical political, social, and economic issues. Bringing a delegation of 14 activists from every region of the Commonwealth, TCEN used the event to engage directly with leaders, ministers and Commonwealth decisionmakers. Advocacy by the Network and its members secured inclusive language in key Commonwealth documents and commitments from leading member states to support the vital work of LGBTQI organisations in the Commonwealth.



# Quantifying the Economic Potential of LGBTQI Communities in South Africa

The Other Foundation published the groundbreaking report *Size Matters*, marking the first-ever quantification of the LGBTQI market in South Africa. While previous international studies have primarily focused on the economic costs of discrimination against LGBTQI people, this report shifts the narrative by highlighting the economic opportunities that arise when LGBTQI individuals are included as a recognised market segment. The report offers a robust, evidence-based framework for businesses to engage with and unlock the untapped economic potential of the LGBTQI community, positioning it as a valuable and integral part of South Africa's economy.



The Commonwealth

**Equality Network** 



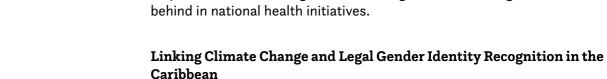
# Investigating Gaps in Humanitarian Services for Trans Communities in Lebanon

Tajassod, a trans-led working group supported by Qorras, is dedicated to empowering Lebanon's trans community by providing vital information and fostering connections among activists and allies. This year, Tajassod released Ways Forward in the Relationship Between the Trans Community and Civil Society, a groundbreaking report exposing gaps in humanitarian service provision. The report underscores the disconnect between trans individuals' needs and existing services, hampered by bureaucracy, misrepresentation, and insufficient knowledge. Key recommendations included centring community-led groups, improving knowledge production, and advancing advocacy, trust, and accountability. The report advocates for more inclusive, informed, and sustainable strategies to address the unique challenges faced by Lebanon's trans community.



# Advocating for the Inclusion of Intersex Health in South Africa's Sustainable Development Goals

Access Chapter 2, Iranti, and Parents and Friends of South African Queers collaborated with several organisations to produce the report *Breaking the Silence: Inclusion of Intersex Health for Sustainable Development Goal* 3. The report highlights the lived experiences of intersex people in South Africa, outlining the barriers they face in accessing healthcare and calling on the government to ensure their inclusion in achieving SDG 3, which urges health and well-being for all. This joint effort marks a significant step towards advocating for intersex rights and ensuring no one is left behind in national health initiatives.





Research by UCTRANS has highlighted the vulnerabilities faced by the Caribbean trans community, including health risks and disruptions in essential care due to natural disasters. The study underscores the urgent

need for a comprehensive Caribbean Regional Trans Health Strategy, aiming to address these challenges and guide regional health responses. UCTRANS advocates for governments to implement rights-based policies and trans-friendly legal frameworks to protect transgender individuals from discrimination and improve access to healthcare in the face of climate change.



# New Resource Launched to Support Intersex Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Intersex refugees face unique challenges, often compounded by discrimination, exclusion, and harmful medical practices like Intersex Genital Mutilation (IGM). In response, VIMÖ, an intersex-led Austrian organisation, launched a programme to support intersex asylum seekers, funded by the Intersex Human Rights Fund. They collaborated with OII Europe to release the OII Europe Refugees & Asylum Seekers Toolkit, a resource designed to help professionals in the asylum system understand and address the specific needs of intersex refugees.



# Promoting Public Understanding and Acceptance

# The Challenge

In the long term, inclusion of LGBTQI people and respect for our rights relies on better public understanding and acceptance. This requires education, campaigning, awareness-raising efforts to promote positive media representation, and collaboration with and support from allies.

Better understanding and acceptance of LGBTQI people and issues can help lay the groundwork for legal reform to protect human rights, reduce stigma, and empower LGBTQI communities to be more visible, ensuring our community can access the services, information and support they need.

# The Response

Around the world, GiveOut's partners are turning the tide of public opinion and embedding respect for LGBTQI rights. As the stories that follow show, they are training journalists to use inclusive language and improve the representation of LGBTQI lives in the media, sharing stories of LGBTQI people to dispel common myths and misconceptions about our community, educating the public about LGBTQI people, and campaigning for change. From one-to-one conversations to national education and awareness campaigns, our partners are also working directly with families, faith-based groups, and potential allies to change hearts and minds.



# The Inspiring Journey of Tonga's Miss **Galaxy Pageant**

Joey Joleen Mataele, Executive Director of TLA at Miss Galaxy 2024

Celebrating its 31st anniversary, the Miss Galaxy Pageant has grown to become a powerful celebration of LGBTQI rights, thanks to the vision of Tonga's Leiti community. Established in 1993, Miss Galaxy was born from a desire to address pressing social issues, particularly the stigma surrounding AIDS in Tonga, using the arts as a medium for change. Founded by the Tonga Leitis Association, Tonga's first and only LGBTQI organisation, the pageant emerged from a passionate community effort.

"When we started in 1992, it was by five uneducated people, and I'm one of those people," says Joey Joleen Mataele, Executive Director of the Tonga Leitis Association. Despite their lack of formal education, they were driven by a common goal: to dispel the myth that their community had caused AIDS. These efforts were catalysed by the death of one of their community members -- the first person in Tonga to succumb to AIDS.

### The Tonga Leitis Association

Realising the need for education and advocacy, they formed the Tonga Leitis Association in 1992. However, their initial attempts to secure funding through proposals were unsuccessful due to their inexperience in communicating with donors. Indeterred, they pushed forward, eventually creating Miss Galaxy as a way to generate resources and raise awareness for their cause.

"It started as just a small pageant," says Joleen. "I came up with the name Galaxy because I thought, hey, we're different. We can bring the stars and the moon and everything and put it together. We'll look like a Christmas tree that blooms in summer."

From its humble beginnings, Miss Galaxy quickly grew in popularity. Recognising its potential, the Tonga Leitis Association moved the event to larger venues, ultimately settling at the Queen Salota Memorial Hall, which accommodates around 2,000 people. "Her Highness Lupe Pa'u actually went and asked Queen Nanasi Pa'u, who was patron of the hall at the time, if we could move the pageant over there," recalls Joleen. "And she said, yes, that's fine."



### A Pageant with a Purpose

Miss Galaxy stands out from traditional beauty pageants by focusing on education and advocacy. "It's a pageant with a lot of education. It's not about Joleen. Instead, the categories for the pageant align with the work of the Tonga Leitis Association. The aim is to educate and inspire, using the pageant as and global spirit. a platform to address important issues.

The contestants from the Miss Galaxy Pageant also go to the prison, disability home, children's ward, and the paediatric ward, and present gifts as a way to give back to the community.

Over the years, Miss Galaxy has awarded 72 scholarships to school dropouts, supporting their education and empowering them to pursue their dreams. The pageant also funds various antipoverty programmes and other community projects, making a tangible difference in people's lives.

### An International Stage

Miss Galaxy has gained international recognition, attracting participants and celebrities from around the world. Notable figures like Minnie Driver and beauty. We've totally taken the beauty out," explains Pamela Connolly have joined, adding star power to the cause. The pageant welcomes participants from diverse backgrounds, reflecting its inclusive

> "We don't do it because we want to be praised for it. When we are older, we'll sit in our wheelchairs and go, thank God that we've done this, we have achieved it. This work will continue from generation to generation," says Joleen.

> Miss Galaxy is more than a pageant; it is a testament to the power of community, creativity, and resilience. By using arts and crafts for advocacy, the founders have created a platform that not only celebrates beauty but also drives meaningful change. They invite everyone to join in this inspiring journey, as they continue to shine a light on vital issues and make a positive impact on the world.



# Tesco Stands Proud with GiveOut— Championing LGBTQI Rights All Year Round

Pride events and flying the rainbow flag are great ways for businesses to celebrate progress and show solidarity with their LGBTQI staff and the wider community. But to help those around the world facing discrimination and violence on a daily basis, corporate allies need to do more.

One company who marked Pride with purpose this year is Tesco, standing in solidarity with LGBTQI communities around the world by selecting GiveOut as a charity partner. GiveOut has leveraged our recently launched LGBTQI Solidarity Fund to double the impact of Tesco's corporate donation, unlocking more support for LGBTQI organisations globally.

Here, the LGBTQ+ at Tesco colleague network shares why it is paramount for them to support LGBTQI organisations all year round, and how their ethos of diversity and inclusion filters into their partnerships with charitable organisations.

"Tesco is proud to support GiveOut as part of our Pride charity donations this year, and looks forward to a longstanding partnership to help improve LGBTQ+ inclusion all year round." Tesco is proud to support GiveOut as part of our Pride charity donations this year, and looks forward to a long-standing partnership to help improve LGBTQ+ inclusion all year round.

As the UK's biggest grocery retailer with over 330,000 colleagues, Tesco is in a privileged position to support our communities in many different ways. Our LGBTQ+ at Tesco colleague network has existed since 2005, and we strive for everyone from all our communities to feel like they can belong and thrive at Tesco.

We are here to provide a safe space for our colleagues to share their thoughts and experiences, advocate for our diverse communities, and raise awareness of important events and issues.

To Tesco, Pride is about standing proud together, celebrating our wonderfully diverse LGBTQ+ colleagues and customers across the UK, and helping to elevate the voices of LGBTQ+ colleagues. It is the perfect opportunity for us to use our scale and reach for good.

For our colleagues, supporting local Prides all across the UK means that everyone has the opportunity to connect with each other and celebrate in a way that is important to them, and we are really proud that in 2024 Tesco is supporting over 20 Prides, all the way from Plymouth to Dundee.

Partnering with charities during Pride shows our commitment to supporting LGBTQ+ communities to make a tangible difference in their lives. While Pride month is a key time for the community, our partnerships with charities extends beyond this to a year round collaboration. This helps Tesco and our colleague network listen and understand the challenges faced by the community, and how we can support. Tesco are proud that our charitable donations are flexible, meaning that charities can decide to use the resource where it is needed the most.





# Guyana Together—Using Storytelling to Build LGBTQI Acceptance in Guyana

Human rights organisation SASOD Guyana are fostering understanding within communities where Act 1893, with penalties of up to life in prison, support. although direct enforcement is not common. The country does not have discrimination protections The campaign has also successfully garnered the for LGBTQI individuals, and there is no recognition of same-sex relationships. While there has been an increase in positive attitudes towards LGBTQI people in recent years, support for LGBTQI issues still faces strong opposition, reflecting underlying homophobic sentiments.

To address these challenges, SASOD Guyana, alongside private sector and civic partners, launched "Guyana Together: Campaigning to Decriminalise Same-Sex Intimacy", a large-scale public education initiative aimed at breaking down homophobia, building public support for LGBTQI people, and Guyana Together is building a path to a more preparing the groundwork for legal and legislative changes.

Through strategic storytelling, the Guyana Together campaign is shifting public perceptions about LGBTQI people. By framing the issue in a positive light, they are educating the public on the harmful effects of criminalisation and the need for nondiscrimination protections. And by amplifying the voices of LGBTQI allies, such as parents and grandparents, the campaign has humanised LGBTQI people, fostering empathy and greater understanding.

One such story from the Guyana Together campaign featured Kaisha and her brother Tarique, a trans man. Kaisha's unwavering support for Tarique highlights the crucial role family can play in supporting LGBTQI individuals, dismantling biases, and

championing storytelling as a force for progress in a acceptance is still evolving. Evidence of changing country where LGBTQI people face numerous legal attitudes is seen in the positive engagement on and societal challenges. Same-sex sexual activity social media, where campaign messages have is prohibited under the Criminal Law (Offences) sparked conversations and increased public

> support of over 100 organisational endorsements. These endorsements represent a significant achievement, demonstrating widespread support from local businesses and civil society organisations. The Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana (THAG) was among these businesses. They called for the repeal of laws criminalising same-sex intimacy in Guyana, underscoring the economic need for LGBTQI inclusion and highlighting the farreaching benefits that decriminalising same-sex relationships could bring to the country and region.

> inclusive society, proving that real change begins with compassion, understanding, and the courage to share one's story.





By creating safe spaces for people to share their stories, The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERs) has emerged as a compelling force for LGBTQI visibility and acceptance in Nigeria. This is essential in a country where same-sex sexual activity is a criminal offence with severe penalties, including life imprisonment or, under Sharia law in the north, the death penalty. The 2014 Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA) bans all samesex unions and public displays of affection, with no legal protections for LGBTQI individuals. Despite widespread homophobia and cultural stigma, Nigeria's LGBTQI community remains resilient, with younger generations increasingly vocal in their advocacy.

TIERs challenges the stigma LGBTQI Nigerians face by producing impactful media, such as Q Convos, a discussion series that tackles essential issues—from cultural narratives and coming out, to workplace discrimination and intimate partner violence. This platform brings forward voices from the community, creating supportive spaces for sharing and understanding experiences that are rarely discussed publicly.

In addition to Q Convos, TIERs launched She, He, They: An LGBTQI Narrative, a YouTube series with over 19,000 views. The series portrays LGBTOI

Nigerians as everyday individuals, countering stereotypes and showing viewers the shared human values that transcend sexual orientation and gender identity. She, He, They has sparked positive feedback, with viewers connecting deeply to characters' journeys of struggle and resilience. This response has encouraged TIERs to plan a second season to continue addressing misinformation and fostering empathy.

Moreover, TIERs' work is grounded in robust research that informs its storytelling initiatives. By consistently measuring shifting social attitudes toward LGBTQI individuals, TIERs gain valuable insights into how public opinion evolves. Their research shows a significant decline in support for the SSMPA, from 77% in 2014 to 48% in 2022, revealing areas where change is occurring and highlighting the impact of their media initiatives. This data-driven approach allows TIERs to refine its advocacy and focus efforts where they are most effective, demonstrating how storytelling can both influence attitudes and guide future actions.

Through its work, TIERs not only elevates LGBTQI voices but also cultivates empathy, understanding, and a shift towards inclusion within Nigerian







Rainbow Community Kampuchea Organisation (RoCK) has made significant strides in advancing LGBTQI rights in Cambodia through their "I Accept" Marriage Equality Campaign. This year, RoCK successfully coordinated efforts with civil society groups and other stakeholders to continue the ongoing dialogues with Cambodian authorities on progressing LGBTQI equality and marriage equality. In October 2024, Cambodia accepted all 12 recommendations on LGBTQI equality during the 4th cycle United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which represents an important positive step as Cambodia makes a continued commitment to implement key measures for progressing LGBTQI equal rights in Cambodia including progressing towards legal recognition of marriage equality for samesex couples. At the same time, through the "I Accept" campaign, RoCK continued to amplify the voices of LGBTQI communities and key supportive stakeholders, including supportive parents and public, in the media, and social media to continue fostering greater support for LGBTQI equal rights within the country.



ACCELERATING SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF LGBT PEOPLE IN NIGERIA

## Amplifying LGBTQI Voices, Culture and History in Nigeria Through Queerpedia

The Bisi Alimi Foundation's Queerpedia programme empowered 19 LGBTQI individuals in Nigeria by providing training in research, storytelling, and digital content creation using tools from the Wikimedia platform, including Wikipedia, Wikidata, and Wikimedia Commons. Through this initiative, participants learned how to curate, edit, and publish content related to LGBTQI history, culture, and activism, addressing the severe underrepresentation of LGBTQI voices on public knowledge platforms. By leveraging Wikimedia's global reach, Queerpedia not only increases visibility for LGBTQI issues but also plays a key role in changing public attitudes and promoting a deeper understanding of LGBTQI people in Nigeria.



### Promoting Understanding and Acceptance of LGBTQI People in **Pakistan**

The Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR) facilitated a study circle in Pakistan that brought together students and LGBTQI community members to engage in open discussions about sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and gender diversity. In a context where LGBTQI topics remain highly taboo, this initiative fostered meaningful dialogue, helping participants gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by LGBTQI people. The study circle contributed to reducing stigma, promoting empathy, and building public acceptance within a predominantly Muslim society.



### **Empowering LGBTQI Filmmakers in South Asia**

The Queer Muslim Project (TQMP) launched the second season of its QueerFrames Screenwriting Lab, providing mentorship and development opportunities for emerging LGBTQI filmmakers from underrepresented communities in South Asia. Supported by Netflix, the programme continues to nurture diverse queer talent. Additionally, the TQMP hosted a successful industry event at the prestigious BFI FLARE London Queer Film Festival, spotlighting queer cinema from the Global South.



### Securing Commitments for LGBTQI Refugees at the Global Refugee Forum

Equal Asia Foundation played a pivotal role in securing increased commitments for LGBTQI refugees at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), where the number of LGBTQI-related multi-stakeholder pledges rose from 5 in 2019 to 15. In the lead-up to the forum, Equal Asia Foundation co-hosted the Time Is Now workshop, bringing together refugee-led organisations and key stakeholders to address the challenges faced by forcibly displaced LGBTQI individuals. This workshop was instrumental in mobilising support for more inclusive resettlement and protection frameworks, amplifying the voices of LGBTQI refugees, and driving action to secure concrete policy commitments.



# Delivering Emergency Support in Times of Crisis

# The Challenge

Forced to the fringes and already vulnerable, it is little surprise that when an emergency strikes, LGBTQI people are among the most at risk. As well as being at increased risk during emergencies, LGBTQI people are often excluded from humanitarian relief efforts and post-disaster recovery programmes, and are therefore more likely to struggle to access food, medicine, or shelter. Even during a disaster, prejudice still exists — in some contexts, LGBTQI people cannot use emergency shelters because of the discrimination they will face.

Sometimes our community is disproportionately impacted by crises affecting everyone; and sometimes LGBTQI people are in the eye of the storm – we are directly targeted. Extremist individuals and groups target us with hate and violence, attacking our LGBTQI spaces; and in the worst cases, anti-LGBTQI forces take control and subject LGBTQI people to arrest, reprisals, and even execution, as in the case of Afghanistan.

# The Response

GiveOut established the LGBTQI Emergency Fund to ensure that in times of crisis, we and our supporters can be there when our community needs us most.

We pool donations to the Emergency Fund, putting aside funds to provide support where it is most needed. When one of our grant partners alerts us to a crisis and the need for support, we are in a better position to make an emergency grant from the fund, alongside the long-term support we already provide. We may also complement this grant with a fundraising appeal, as we did for Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Through this fund, when an emergency hits, we make sure that desperately needed resources are immediately placed in the hands of well-networked groups who are embedded in their local LGBTQI communities. We have responded to emergencies across five continents in the last two years alone. Whether by supporting LGBTQI communities through COVID, swiftly responding to and rebuilding LGBTQI spaces after a volcanic eruption in Tonga, or offering crisis support while evacuating LGBTQI people from Ukraine and Afghanistan, our Emergency Fund has supported our partners to protect LGBTQI people and save lives.



# Responding to Hidden **Emergencies**

Support from our communities and allies is needed more than ever as anti-LGBTQI attitudes intensify across the world. In early 2024, Uganda's Back in 2021, in response to the Taliban takeover Constitutional Court upheld most of the Antihomosexuality Act, including provisions imposing the death penalty, while Ghana's parliament passed a similarly dangerous bill that, if it becomes law, would criminalise merely identifying as LGBTQI. Anti-LGBTQI sentiment is spreading across East and West Africa and creating a climate of fear, with LGBTQI people facing increased persecution and violence.

These twin emergencies for LGBTQI communities have deservedly received widespread international attention. At the same time, most LGBTQI crises receive far less recognition, if any.

In October of this year, Georgia's parliament signed a sweeping anti-LGBTQI bill into law that, among other restrictions, bans same-sex marriage, adoption by same-sex couples, gender-affirming care, and changing one's gender on identity documents. And Iraq's parliament passed a bill in April introducing harsh jail terms for same-sex relations and identifying as trans. This will only compound the appalling abuses already faced by LGBTQI Iraqis.

As Amir Ashour, founder of Iraq's first LGBTQI organisation IraQueer, stated in response to the bill: "Instead of focusing on improving the lives of Iraqis ... the Iraqi government chose to target the most vulnerable and invisible community in the country and make their lives worse." All too familiar.

In these and countless other more hidden LGBTOI emergencies, which can fall under the international radar, support from the LGBTQI community globally is vital.

### The LGBTQI Emergency Fund

of Afghanistan and persecution of LGBTQI people, GiveOut launched the LGBTQI Emergency Fund to ensure that when an emergency hits-when our community is targeted or disproportionately impacted by a crisis affecting everyone—we can quickly provide some of the resources needed for LGBTQI activists to respond.

We pool donations to the Emergency Fund, putting aside funds to provide support when it is needed most. Sometimes, we try to raise additional funds for these crises through fundraising appeals, but in many circumstances public attention increases the risk to our partners, so we can only use what has already been donated.

We have so far responded to LGBTQI emergencies across five continents, helping LGBTQI activists to tackle the COVID crisis, evacuate people from war situations in Ukraine and Afghanistan, and much

We have also channelled support in less high profile emergencies, such as rebuilding of LGBTQI spaces after a volcanic eruption in Tonga, and organising pro bono legal support for a network of activists in Asia facing legal threats.

In a hidden emergency in Zambia, LGBTQI people became deeply concerned when the state media threatened to expose community activists and their organisations. Swift action was needed to protect these LGBTQI activists and, with our community's backing, we channelled funding through our partner to provide the support required.



### The Vital Role of LGBTQI Activists

At the centre of every emergency response are We won't be able to do it without mass support LGBTQI activists—human rights defenders who risk their lives and livelihoods to stand up for their communities. GiveOut's Emergency Fund is designed to support them in this vital work.

Again, to quote IraQueer founder Amir Ashour: "Brilliant, powerful, and determined LGBTQI Iragis dedicate their lives to fight for the rights of LGBTQI people. It is because of these people that we will eventually win the ultimate fight for human rights.

from LGBTQI Iragis and allies."

Indeed, during emergencies, LGBTQI communities around the world rely on the support-and protection—of LGBTQI activists and their organisations like Amir and IraQueer. And they in turn rely on the support of our community and allies



Rokos Capital Management's (RCM) partnership with GiveOut, launched to support LGBTQI rights worldwide, has gone from strength to strength since we first began working together in 2023. We are very proud of this partnership and the impact we have achieved together so far. Our collaboration has provided opportunities to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion at RCM, including Pride Month employee events with speakers from our grant partners. RCM joined us at the City for LGBT+ live crowdfunding event this year, and offered us generous financial support there, too.

**Emergency** 

"RCM would like to thank the GiveOut team, and above all GiveOut's partners for giving us remarkable insights on their work in support of the community," shared Christos Nifadopoulos of RCM "It is moving and powerful to hear directly from those making such an impact."

"RCM would like to thank the GiveOut team, and above all GiveOut's partners for giving us remarkable insights on their work in support of the community"

# **Funding Emergency Interventions**

Over the last year, RCM's donation has supported vital work to advance LGBTQI equality through our dedicated Emergency Fund. Their backing also enabled our partner ORAM to protect and empower LGBTQI asylum seekers and refugees in East Africa at a time when the political climate has grown ever more challenging for our communities.

Anti-LGBTQI sentiment is spreading across Sub-Saharan Africa, as already seen in Uganda last year, and creating a climate of fear and increased violence against and persecution of LGBTQI people. Earlier this year lawmakers in Ghana passed a draconian anti-LGBTQI bill. If signed into law by the President, simply identifying as an LGBTQI person in Ghana will carry a prison sentence of up to three years.

In the last year, RCM support and other individual and corporate support for our LGBTQI Emergency Fund has enabled our partners to provide much needed emergency support. This support has facilitated emergency safety and protection for LGBTQI individuals and activists across West Africa facing heightened violence and persecution, as well as funding education and communication strategies to counter false narratives and hysteria surrounding LGBTQI identities. Additionally, the fund provided urgent aid to a Namibian activist, ensuring their safety during a period of heightened security risks.

RCM celebrates the LGBTQI community at their firm, and are proud of fostering an environment where people feel comfortable, supported, and empowered to bring their whole selves to work each day. By supporting GiveOut's partners, RCM have extended this celebration beyond the firm to the global LGBTQI community, helping people to live their lives freely and openly wherever they are.



# Nasir's Journey—Surviving Violence and Finding Support Through IraQueer

In Iraq, LGBTQI people endure extreme violence and his recovery. The psychological support helped discrimination, often without any legal protections. him regain hope and stability, giving him a chance Many, like Nasir (a pseudonym), a gay man from to consider a safer future. Although he is still Basra, face brutal abuse and threats of honour considering emigrating for his security, IraQueer's killings after their identities are discovered. When support has allowed him the space to plan his next Nasir's family learned of his sexual orientation, he was severely beaten, disowned, and threatened with death, leading to both physical and emotional trauma. Forced to support himself having sustained a slipped disc from the violence, Nasir needed urgent medical care, safe housing, and financial rights," Nasir shared. "IraQueer supported me assistance to regain stability.

Nasir sought help from IraQueer, Iraq's primary LGBTQI organisation. Having followed IraQueer's work, he reached out to them as a last resort, knowing they were the only organisation openly advocating for LGBTQI rights in Iraq. IraQueer quickly responded, providing him with an emergency grant. This financial support enabled Nasir to rent a room in a remote agricultural area outside of Basra, away from the threats posed by his family. The grant also covered his living expenses and essential medical treatments for his injury. With this support, he was finally able to consult a doctor and begin muchneeded treatment, helping him recover physically.

Recognising the deep emotional scars from his ordeal, IraQueer also provided Nasir with psychological support. This ongoing care was crucial in helping him cope with the trauma of the violence, threats, and isolation he had endured. Regular check-ins and access to mental health resources allowed him to process his experiences and rebuild his resilience.

The comprehensive assistance Nasir received significantly improved his well-being. As his physical condition improved, he began contemplating a return to work. The stability of having his rent and living expenses covered meant he could focus on

steps without the immediate pressure of survival.

"I contacted IraQueer because it is the only organisation in Iraq that is concerned with queer people and stands by them and defends their psychologically and financially. It was my only

Nasir's story underscores the vital role of organisations like IraQueer in providing lifesaving support to LGBTQI individuals in crisis. By addressing both physical and mental health needs and offering financial stability, IraQueer has helped him recover from trauma and begin rebuilding his

"I contacted IraQueer because it is the only organisation in Iraq that is concerned with queer people and stands by them and defends their rights. IraQueer supported me psychologically and financially. It was my only refuge."



tools to become economically self-sufficient so they aren't left behind. These groups face severe marginalisation, with limited safety, persistent discrimination, and exclusion from social and economic opportunities. This isolation hinders their access to essential resources and affects their well-being, creating an urgent need for a holistic approach to support their economic empowerment and protect their dignity.

ORAM's new project, "Expanding and Scaling Programming in Kenya Leading to Sustainability and Self-Reliance for LGBTIQ Asylum Seekers and Refugees", focuses on building economic resilience for marginalised people. Through targeted vocational training in fields like beauty, fashion, and baking, along with financial literacy and business management education, ORAM empowers participants to start businesses and secure an income.

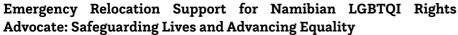
The project ensures accessibility by covering training fees, materials, and transportation. Graduates also receive mentorship and seed funding to launch or expand their businesses, creating a path toward self-sufficiency. At ORAM's Digital Learning Centre, individuals are given support with laptops only improves financial security but also fosters community integration and enhances mental wellbeing for LGBTQI refugees.

The project successfully empowered LGBTQI refugees by creating economic opportunities that enhanced their financial security, fostered community integration, and improved mental wellbeing. Focus groups and individual surveys showed significant improvements in clients' quality of life and increased social ties within their communities.

Project participant Aidah Kabuya, a lesbian asylum seeker, used her skills in fashion design and seed funding to establish a profitable tailoring business, allowing her to meet basic needs with dignity. "The fashion and design training was very comprehensive and provided a lot of insight for me as a first-time business owner," says Aidah. "The seed funding also enabled me to pursue my passion, and I have been able to support myself daily. It has also restored a sense of hope as I am no longer worried about where my next meal will come from."

The impact of ORAM's work underscores the transformative power of economic empowerment for marginalised groups.





In the wake of significant developments in Namibia's legal landscape regarding same-sex relationships, an emergency assistance grant was facilitated through Kaleidoscope Trust to ensure the safe relocation of a prominent LGBTQI rights advocate. This critical intervention responded to escalating security threats fuelled by institutional pressures and heightened societal hostility. It underscores the precarious environment faced by LGBTQI individuals in Namibia, particularly in the context of advocacy work. The support package not only provided essential resources for immediate relocation but also safeguarded the advocate's physical and emotional well-being during a period of acute vulnerability. This intervention highlights the ongoing risks faced by LGBTQI rights defenders and their vital role in pushing for equality and human rights. The impact on the lives of LGBTQI individuals extends beyond the immediate safety of the advocate. The rapid response demonstrates solidarity within the global LGBTQI movement, inspiring hope and resilience among marginalised communities. It also underscores the critical need for sustained efforts to dismantle societal and institutional barriers that perpetuate discrimination. This situation exemplifies the indispensable role of GiveOut's LGBTQI Emergency Fund in addressing urgent, timesensitive needs. By mobilising resources swiftly, the fund ensures that situations requiring immediate action are met with comprehensive support, preventing potential harm and fostering a safer environment for advocacy to thrive.









### Supporting Displaced LGBTQI People in Lebanon

Helem, Lebanon's first LGBTQI NGO, has long provided safe spaces and vital support services for LGBTQI individuals through their community centre. Recognising that LGBTQI people are disproportionately impacted during times of war and crisis, Helem has expanded its efforts to offer vital humanitarian assistance. This includes providing emergency shelter, food, and essential supplies to LGBTQI individuals displaced by the escalating violence in the region.

### Supporting LGBTQI Refugees from Afghanistan

ILGA Asia has played a critical role in supporting LGBTQI individuals from Afghanistan who are fleeing persecution under Taliban control. Through their Afghanistan Humanitarian Project and SAFAR programme, ILGA Asia has provided emergency assistance, including safe passage, legal documentation, and mental health services to 258 Afghan LGBTQI individuals.

### Protecting LGBTQI Communities Displaced by Climate Change in Latin America

LGBTQI individuals displaced by climate change face increased risks of violence and persecution, especially in regions where their identities are criminalised. To address this, Derechos Humanos y Diversidad Asociación Civil (DHD) launched an initiative connecting displaced LGBTQI people with Argentina's humanitarian visa programme, offering safe resettlement options. DHD also produced an educational animation to raise awareness and established a support centre in Argentina, providing essential services for those affected by climate-induced displacement.

### Supporting Intersex, Trans, and Gender Non-Conforming Refugees from Uganda

With funding from GiveOut's East Africa appeal, provided through the International Trans Fund, a grant was awarded to Refugee Trans Initiative (RTI) to support intersex, trans, and gender non-conforming refugees arriving in Kenya from Uganda following the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act. This emergency support provided food relief, medical outreach, security training, and legal aid to ensure the safety, well-being, and access to essential services for these vulnerable individuals.



To our grant partners around the world, thank you so much for everything you do for our communities, and for allowing us to be by your side.

To our community of supporters, thank you for making this vital work possible.

Together, we have already provided almost £3 million in new funding to the LGBTQI movement, advancing our shared vision of a more just and equal world.

Thank you to our closest individual supporters: Adal, Alison, Antonia, Andrea, Charlie, Chris, Christos, Elliot, Esmond, Hosh, Jon, Josh, Julie, Paolo, Paul, Radhika, Simon, Suki, to our 100 Circle of regular givers, and to our Germany Circle of supporters.

We would like to thank our corporate allies, including: our founding sponsor Boston Consulting Group, A&O Shearman, Addleshaw Goddard, Cinven, Ernst & Young, E.V. Energy, GayTimes, Gartner, Global Butterflies, Google, Jones Day, Latham & Watkins, Levi Strauss & Co, LinkedIn, London Stock Exchange Group, Macquarie Bank, Milbank, Northern Trust, PlayStation Cares, Rokos Capital Management, S&P Global, Teradata, Tesco, The Capital Group and Travers Smith.

Thank you to our trust and foundation funders, including The Baring Foundation, ClimateWorks Foundation, Elton John AIDS Foundation, Kreitman Foundation, MSN Fund, Oak Foundation and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

And thank you to the UK government through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), for supporting GiveOut's LGBTQI Solidarity Fund.

If you would like to join the incredible individuals, businesses, and foundations supporting the vital work and impact set out in this report, GiveOut would be delighted to welcome your support for the global LGBTOI movement.

# **Get Involved**

### **Individuals**

There are so many ways that you can support LGBTQI activism worldwide with GiveOut. Whether that's setting up a regular donation, fundraising to get your friends, family and colleagues supporting this vital work, creating a giving circle or even setting up your own Philanthropist Advised Fund, getting involved and having an impact has never been easier. We'd be delighted to speak with you about how you can make a lasting impact on the lives of LGBTQI people around the world.

### **Businesses**

We offer various options for businesses to support LGBTQI equality and inclusion, including sponsorship opportunities, in-kind support, Pride talks, employee engagement and payroll giving. From our LGBT-QI Legal Aid Fund to supporting work at the intersection of LGBTQI rights and climate change, our pioneering partnerships are advancing equality around the world. We'd be delighted to discuss with you how we can get your business involved.

### Trusts & Foundations

We work closely with trusts and foundations to invest in supporting the global LGBTQI movement and mainstreaming LGBTQI issues across funding priorities. Whether you would like to partner with us to support LGBTQI activism globally or to invest in growing LGBTQI philanthropy, GiveOut can help.

Visit giveout.org/donate or email give@giveout.org to get involved.



# Special Focus Funds

You can choose to direct your giving through any of these funds with GiveOut. For gifts of £10,000+/year we can work with you to establish your own Philanthropist Advised Fund for yourself, your family or business.

# **Philanthropist Advised Funds**



### Antonia & Andrea Belcher Trans Fund

Sponsored by trans businesswoman Antonia Belcher OBE and her wife Andrea, the Fund supports organisations that improve the lives of trans people around the world.



Suki Sandhu LGBTQI Asia Fund

Sponsored by talent, diversity and inclusion expert Suki Sandhu OBE, the Fund supports LGBTQI human rights activism in Asia



### **GAY TIMES Amplifund**

Sponsored by Gay Times, Amplifund supports LGBTQI activists around the world and amplifies their stories.



### Steinberg-Graff Fund for International LGBTQI Human Rights

Sponsored by Jon
Steinberg and Josh
Graff, the Fund supports
LGBTQI organisations
campaigning for legal
reform and human rights
protections in some of
the hardest places to be
LGBTQI.



### **Global Butterflies Fund**

Sponsored by Global Butterflies, a company that helps businesses become trans and nonbinary inclusive, the Fund supports organisations working to advance human rights and protections for trans and non-binary communities in the UK and worldwide.

# Thematic Funds



### **Climate Fund**

Supports organisations working at the intersection of climate justice and LGBTQI human rights, recognising that our communities will be affected by this crisis in particular ways.



### **Emergency Fund**

Provides urgent support to LGBTQI organisations and communities facing crisis situations.



### **Legal Aid Fund**

Sponsored by law firms, the Fund supports legal work to advance LGBTQI equality.



### Women's Fund

Supports organisations working to advance the human rights of lesbian, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer women around the world.

# **Partner Funds**

GiveOut has established partner funds to enable UK-based supporters of other international LGBTQI organisations to give tax efficiently to support their chosen organisation's work.



# Outright International UK Fund

Outright International is dedicated to working with partners around the globe to strengthen the capacity of the LGBTQI human rights movement.



### Rainbow Railroad UK Fund

Rainbow Railroad is a global not-for-profit organisation that helps LGTBQI people facing persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics.





The LGBTQI Solidarity
Fund is an exciting
initiative by GiveOut to
mobilise the UK LGBTQI
community and allies to
come together to show
our collective support
for LGBTQI communities
worldwide.

# **Germany Circle**



The GiveOut Germany Circle brings together the LGBTQI community and our allies in Germany to support GiveOut and the global movement for LGBTQI human rights.

# Grant Partner Index by Region

# Key



Using the Law and Courts to Advance Equality



**Building Supportive Communities** and Safe Spaces



Providing the Evidence to Advocate for Change



Promoting Public Understanding and Acceptance



Delivering Emergency Support in Times of Crisis

# **Asia Pacific**

**ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC),**Southeast Asia







Asia Feminist LBQ Network,







Centre for Law and Policy Research (CLPR),

Southeast Asia





**EQUAL GROUND,** 

Sri Lanka







Equal Asia Foundation,

Asia



ILGA Asia,







**Legal Dignity,** *Malaysia* 







Mayako Pahichan (Recognition of Love),

Nepal





Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK),

Cambodia





Solidarity and Action Against the HIV Infection in India (SAATHII),





**Tonga Leitis Association (TLA),** *Tonga* 









The Queer Muslim Project (TQMP)
South Asia



Trans Men Indonesia, Indonesia







# Europe & Central Asia

**Consortium,**United Kingdom







**Equal Rights Association,** Western Balkans & Turkey







**Kyiv Pride,** Ukraine







Mongolia LGBT Centre, Mongolia







Pink Armenia, Armenia









Trans\*parent, Czech Republic







# Latin America & Caribbean

Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality (ECADE), Eastern Caribbean









Guyana Trans United (GTU), Guyana





Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals & Gays (J-FLAG), Jamaica









REDCAHT+, Central America









**SASOD Guyana,** *Guyana* 









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**United Caribbean Trans Network** (UCTRANS), Caribbean







# Middle East & North Africa

Coalition for Sexual & Bodily Rights Middle East & North Africa, Southeast &





Helem, Lebanon

Central Asia







IraQueer, Iraq









Qorras, Lebanon







# Sub-Saharan Africa

Access Chapter 2 (AC2), South Africa







## Bisi Alimi Foundation, Nigeria





Iranti, Southern Africa





Parents, Families and Friends of South Africa Queers (PFSAQ), South Africa







National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC), Kenya









The Intiative for Equal Rights (TIERs), Nigeria









The Other Foundation, Southern Africa







UHAI-Eashri, East Africa









Womens Health and Equal Rights (WHER), East Africa







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# International

International Trans Fund (ITF)











Intersex Human Rights Fund









Organisation for Refugees, Asylum and Migration (ORAM)











**Outright International** 









**Rainbow Railroad** 







The Commonwealth Equality Network (TCEN)







www.giveout.org

GiveOut is a charity registered in the UK with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Charity Number: 1176434)

Third Floor, Thomas Ford House, 23-24 Smithfield Street, London EC1A 9LF