COMMUNITY IS RESOURCE

REIMAGINING LGBTQI RESOURCING

GiveOut

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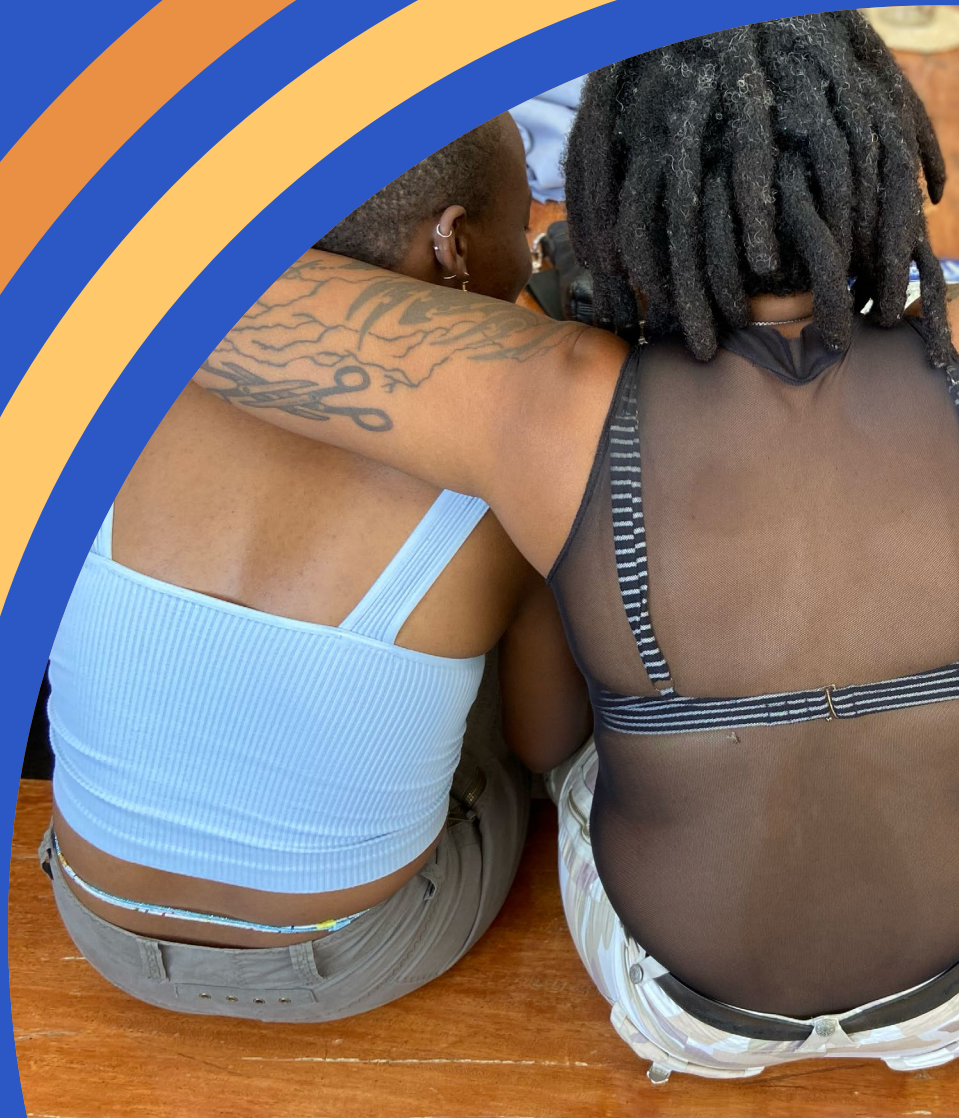

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The Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) is the only organisation working globally to build community philanthropy as an essential element of people-led development. globalfundcommunityfoundations.org

GiveOut is an award-winning international community foundation bringing together the LGBTQI community and allies to support LGBTQI activism worldwide. giveout.org

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GLOSSARY

This glossary sets out how key terms are used in this report. The definitions are intended to support shared understanding among readers, rather than to propose universal or definitive meanings, and reflect the specific context and purpose of this research.

Term	Definition (as used in this report)
Community-led / community-rooted	Approaches to development, organising, or resourcing that originate in and are directed by communities themselves, reflecting local priorities, knowledge, and assets rather than externally imposed agendas.
Community philanthropy	A form of, and force for locally led development. It strengthens local agency, builds trust and, crucially, mobilises and grows local resources — both financial and non-financial — which are pooled and stewarded to build resilient, connected and self-determining communities.
Community philanthropy organisation	Local institutions such as community foundations, women's funds, feminist funds, participatory grantmakers, or grassroots intermediaries that channel resources and decision-making power closer to communities.
Diaspora	People living outside their country of origin who maintain ongoing ties of identity, solidarity, and commitment to communities at home. These ties may be social, cultural, political, or economic.

Diaspora giving	Financial or in-kind support provided by members of diaspora communities to individuals, groups, or organisations in their countries of origin or identity.
External funding / external resource flows	International philanthropic, foundation, government, or corporate funding originating outside the community, delivered directly to organisations or through intermediaries.
In-kind support	Non-financial contributions such as housing, food, transport, meeting space, legal accompaniment, skills, labour, or services.
Internal resource flows	Resources mobilised from within communities themselves, including mutual aid, community giving, pooled savings, in-kind support, volunteer labour, social capital, emphasising trust, reciprocity, and collective responsibility.
Infrastructures of care	Community-created systems that sustain safety, wellbeing, and survival alongside activism, such as safe houses, mental health support, legal aid, accompaniment, and informal protection networks.
LGBTQI	An umbrella acronym referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex people. The term is used in this report for consistency and inclusivity, while recognising that identities, experiences, and preferred language vary across cultures, regions, and communities.
Movement resilience	The capacity of social movements to sustain themselves, adapt, and withstand shocks over time. In this report, resilience is rooted in diverse, trusted, and complementary resource flows.

Mutual aid	Collective, trust-based systems of resource sharing in which communities directly support one another to meet immediate needs. Mutual aid is typically rapid, informal, and grounded in relationships rather than eligibility criteria or formal assessments.
Participatory grantmaking	A funding approach in which decisions about resource allocation are made by people directly affected by the issues, rather than by donors, often through collective or peer-led processes.
Philanthropic advocacy	Efforts to influence funding norms, practices, and priorities within philanthropy, including challenging power imbalances.
Pooled funds	Collective mechanisms through which individuals combine contributions into a shared fund, often shaped by shared identity, values, or geography.
Resource mobilisation	The process of identifying, generating, and sustaining financial and non-financial resources over time. This includes internal fundraising, diaspora pipelines, local giving, and philanthropic advocacy.
Resourcing ecosystem	The interconnected system of internal, diaspora, and external resource flows that collectively sustain movements.
Self-help group	A member-led group of people with shared life experiences, challenges, or socio-economic backgrounds who meet regularly to pool savings, provide mutual support, and make collective decisions about resourcing. Self-help groups build trust, solidarity, and financial resilience, and can enable access to formal finance without reliance on external donors.

Self-resourcing	Informal strategies by which individuals and communities generate or mobilise resources from within their own networks, often in contexts where formal funding is inaccessible, unsafe, or insufficient — can be understood as one expression / form of community philanthropy.
Social capital	Relationships, trust, networks, and access to information that enable communities to mobilise resources, coordinate, and sustain collective effort.
Trust-based philanthropy	A funding approach rooted in long-term relationships, flexible support, streamlined reporting, and respect for community-defined priorities. Trust-based philanthropy shifts accountability away from bureaucratic compliance and towards community legitimacy.
#ShiftThePower	A mobilising force and movement of people and organisations around the world that seeks to highlight, harness, resource, legitimise and join up new ways of "deciding and doing" that are emerging around the world. The movement is galvanising a vision of a good society and serving as a force for genuine and lasting change in how development work is done.
Visibility (in funding contexts)	The degree to which activities, organisations, or individuals are publicly identifiable. In many LGBTQI contexts, visibility carries significant risk, and ethical resourcing may require discretion, anonymity, or low-profile support.

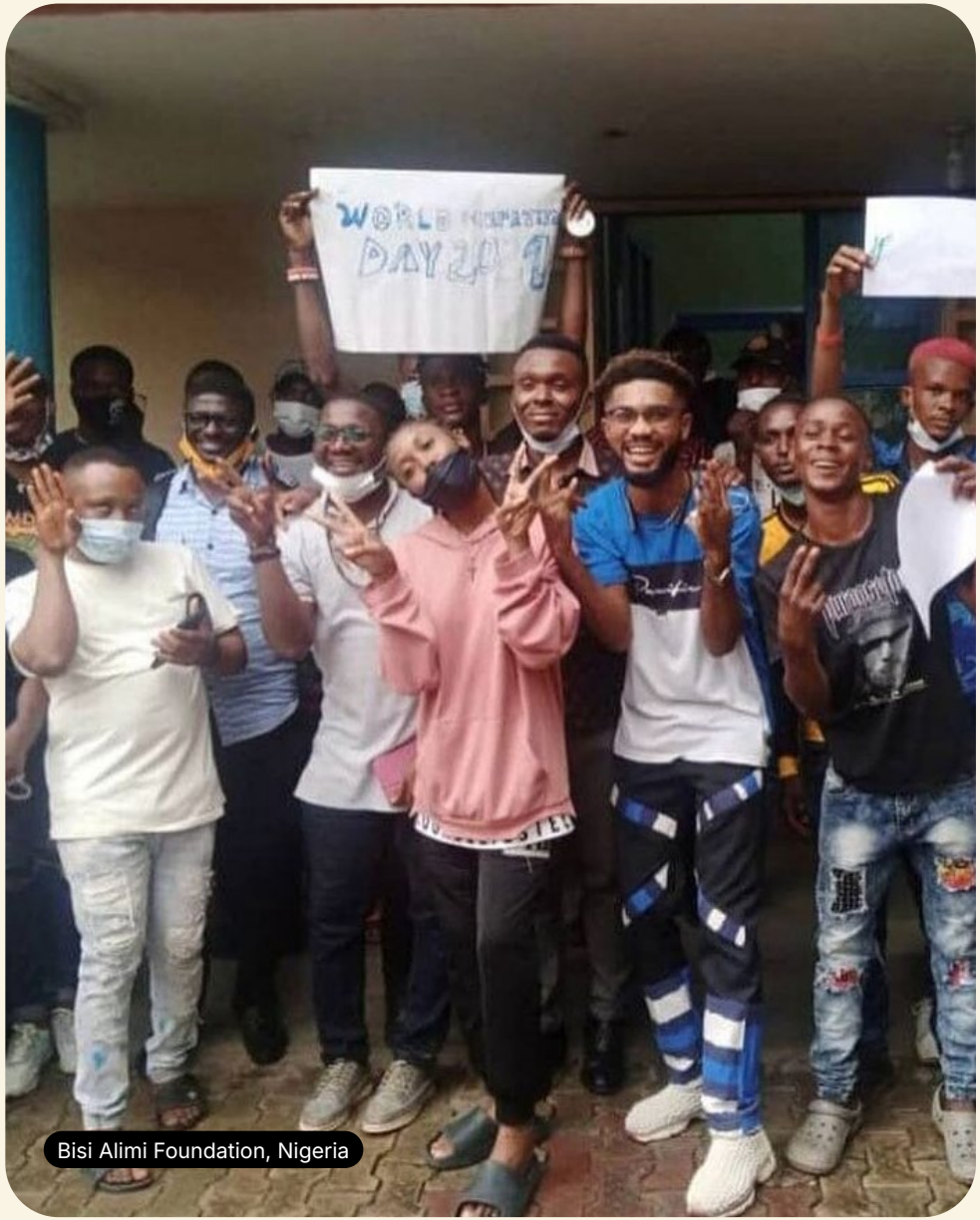
FOREWORD

LGBTQI movements around the world are facing a defining moment. Hard-won rights are under attack, civic space is shrinking, and many communities are experiencing criminalisation and violence. At the same time, external funding for human rights and development is becoming more fragile, with significant cuts, shifting priorities, and growing constraints on international funding flows.

And yet, this is not only a moment of loss. It is also a moment of possibility.

Across contexts, LGBTQI communities continue to organise, care for one another, and mobilise resources — often quietly and under risk. Mutual aid, collective savings, in-kind solidarity, community-led funds, and diaspora giving are not new responses to crises; they are long-standing practices rooted in trust, shared responsibility, and collective survival.

It was from this understanding that the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) and GiveOut came together to undertake this research. Our aim was not simply to document funding gaps, but to examine the wider resourcing ecosystem that sustains LGBTQI movements — including internal and local resourcing, diaspora solidarity, and external funding — and to explore how these flows can better complement one another.



Bisi Alimi Foundation, Nigeria

This report shows clearly that LGBTQI movements are not waiting to be resourced. They are already mobilising financial and non-financial resources of their own. External funding remains vital, and it is most effective when it recognises, centres, and strengthens these existing community efforts rather than overriding or displacing them.

At a moment of contraction and uncertainty, external funders have a particular responsibility to hold the line. As resources shrink, this means not only maintaining support for LGBTQI movements, but doing so more thoughtfully: with greater trust and flexibility; with attention to care, safety, and long-term resilience; and with investment in community philanthropy and resource mobilisation alongside programmes.

This report is offered as a contribution towards broader reimagining efforts around how LGBTQI movements are resourced in this context. While grounded in the experiences of communities, intermediaries, and diaspora actors, it is directed in particular to external funders. We invite you to join us in working together — learning, adapting, and sharing responsibility — to support LGBTQI movements in ways that are effective, sustainable, and grounded in solidarity.

Jason Ball
Executive Director, GiveOut

Jenny Hodgson
Executive Director, Global Fund for Community Foundations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LGBTQI movements are operating at a moment of heightened pressure. Criminalisation, political backlash, and shrinking civic space are increasing risks and needs for communities, while external funding has been cut and has become increasingly fragile and unpredictable.

This report shifts the focus from external funding alone to the wider resourcing ecosystem —- including and especially internal/local and diaspora resourcing —- that play a critical role in sustainings LGBTQI movements. Drawing on interviews and case studies, it examines how resources flow:

- within, from and through communities
- across diaspora networks
- through external funding

The report shows that these resource flows do not operate in isolation: they interact in ways that either reinforce or undermine one another.

The central finding is clear: LGBTQI movements are not simply waiting to be resourced. They are already mobilising significant local and diaspora resources, often invisibly and under constraint. External funding remains crucial and it is at its most effective when it recognises, centres, and complements these existing alternative resourcing strategies.

> "More than ever ... we need to collectively think about shifting power and resources."
>
> Olumide Makanjuola, Director of Programmes, Initiative Sankofa d'Afrique de l'Ouest (ISDAO)[1]

INTERNAL RESOURCING: HOW COMMUNITIES RESOURCE THEMSELVES

> "Community is resource because trust is fundamental."
>
> Severus Hama-Owamparo, Taala Foundation, Uganda[2]

Across regions, LGBTQI communities mobilise diverse internal, local resource flows that sustain survival, organising, and care to build resilience. These include:

- **Mutual aid and emergency solidarity**, providing rapid, flexible support from within communities for food, rent, healthcare, transport, legal costs, and safety.
- **Collective savings, pooled giving and community funds**, enabling communities to smooth risk, invest, plan ahead, and support one another over time.
- **In-kind solidarity and care infrastructure**, such as locally-supported safe housing, shared meals, psychosocial support, legal accompaniment, and volunteer labour.
- **Community-led and participatory funds**, which pool mainly external resources and distribute at scale while shifting decision-making power to activists and people with lived experience.
- **Economic empowerment and livelihoods**, strengthening individual autonomy and reducing long-term reliance on crisis support.
- **Social capital and convening, creating trust**, shared analysis, coordination, and connections that enable all other forms of resourcing.

These practices demonstrate that internal, local resourcing is not only about money. It is about relationships, legitimacy, shared responsibility, and collective decision-making. Internal resourcing forms the foundation of alternative forms of organising and movement resilience, particularly in contexts where formal funding systems are inaccessible or unsafe, or where movements, in response to particular challenges and concerns, intentionally choose not to receive international funding.

DIASPORA GIVING: SOLIDARITY ACROSS BORDERS

> "It's about solidarity, not saviour syndrome."
>
> Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, UK Black Pride[3]

Diaspora giving sits between internal and external resource flows, combining financial contributions with identity-based solidarity and transnational connection. Across interviews, diaspora support took multiple forms:

- **Personal remittances and relational support,** often informal, discreet, and shaped by trust.
- **Collective giving circles and pooled funds,** allowing modest contributions to be combined into more sustained resources.
- **Digital crowdfunding and rapid-response appeals,** enabling fast mobilisation during crises.
- **Diaspora-led organisations and charities,** navigating transnational funding, advocacy, and protection.
- **Pipelines to participatory and community-led funds,** offering trusted intermediaries for diaspora donors.
- **Non-financial transfers,** including skills, advocacy, introductions, and influence.

Diaspora giving in this context is rarely about scale. Its distinctive value lies in flexibility, speed, and trust. Interviewees emphasised that diaspora contributions are most effective when they reinforce existing community systems rather than creating parallel structures.

At the same time, diaspora giving is shaped by constraints: safety risks, financial friction, uneven capacity to give, and ethical questions about engaging people who may themselves be rebuilding their lives after migration.

EXTERNAL FUNDING: VITAL, FRAGILE, AND RISK OF MISALIGNMENT

> "Resourcing looks like multiple things. External resourcing is not just about funding."
>
> Bhavani Kumaran, Solidarity Foundation, India[4]

External funding — from governments, foundations, and corporations — remains crucial for sustaining organisations, covering core costs, and enabling work at scale. When done well, it can provide stability and long-term investment that internal and diaspora flows cannot always achieve alone.

However, interviewees identified **patterns where external funding struggles to align with movement realities**, including:

- Donor-imposed strategies and language that overlook lived priorities such as safety, care, and livelihoods.
- Short-term, projectised grants with heavy administrative and reporting burdens.
- Pressure from funders for visibility and public impact that can expose activists to risk.
- Measurement frameworks that privilege professionalisation over community accountability.
- Failure to recognise the scale and value of local contributions already invested by communities.

By contrast, interviewees described supportive external funding as flexible, trust-based, movement-led, and attentive to how communities already resource themselves.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR COMPLEMENTARY FUNDING

Internal, diaspora, and external resources should not be treated as separate or competing streams. Together, they form a resourcing ecosystem:

- Internal flows provide immediacy, trust, and legitimacy.
- Diaspora giving brings solidarity, flexibility, and transnational ties.
- External funding offers scale, infrastructure, and longer-term investment.

Based on interview findings, the report proposes five principles to guide external funders seeking to support and complement — rather than override and displace — community resourcing:

1 Recognise community philanthropy as the foundation:

Start from the reality that communities have mobilised money, labour, care, knowledge, relationships, and resources over decades.

2 Invest in resource mobilisation, not just programmes:

Support internal, local fundraising strategies and constituency building, diaspora pipelines, philanthropic advocacy, and systems that diversify resources over time.

3 Create and support forums for shared learning and connection around alternative resourcing strategies:
Invest in convening and connective infrastructure that enables collaboration, experimentation, and solidarity across the ecosystem.

4 Provide flexible support that strengthens safety nets:
Fund care, safety, livelihoods, and infrastructure — not only advocacy or legal reform.

5 Practise trust as a funding discipline:
Reduce administrative burden, respect discretion, and allow adaptation as contexts shift.

At a moment of shrinking external resources and rising threats, the challenge is not simply to give more, but to give in ways that centre community philanthropy and strengthen the resourcing ecosystem.

1. INTRODUCTION

Around the world, LGBTQI movements are resourced through a mix of external and internal sources. While external resources, such as philanthropic and government development funding, remain important, internal flows of resources are essential but often overlooked. These include financial and non-financial resources, including mutual aid, in-kind support, and social capital. Such strategies not only sustain day-to-day work but also build collective power, strengthen bonds of trust, and reinforce movement resilience — serving as a central pillar of community-owned and community-led development.[5]

Diaspora giving often sits at the intersection of internal and external flows. It combines financial contributions with deep-rooted solidarity and identity-based connections, often operating through informal, relational, and trust-based mechanisms, and offers a promising pathway for sustainable, community-rooted funding streams.

This report seeks to identify, document, and elevate examples of how LGBTQI movements mobilise resources — within communities, across diaspora networks, and through external partnerships — and to highlight how these sources can complement one another. In particular, the aim is to: *"Ensure that external funding recognizes, respects, and builds on local resources and assets, rather than overlooks, undermines, or displaces."*[6] The goal is to contribute to stronger, more connected, and more sustainable resource flows, grounded in solidarity and shaped by the needs and strategies of communities and frontline movements.

> "Wealth is not in cash. Resourcing is combining efforts, what you can give, bringing your very best to each other."
>
> Pepe Julian Onziema, Deputy Director, Sexual Minorities Uganda[7]


© Solidarity Foundation

The timing is urgent. As LGBTQI human rights come under increasing threat globally,[8] governments cut development assistance,[9] foundations shift strategies,[10] and external funding flows become more fragile,[11] community-led and internal resources are more important than ever. External support can have the greatest impact when it complements, centres, and does not disrupt or override internal strategies.

Community philanthropy and other forms of internal resource mobilisation offer pathways not only to support and sustain work, but also foster legitimacy, ownership, and resilience.[12] LGBTQI movements have long used these strategies to sustain themselves, often in the absence of formal funding, and their practices provide important lessons for reimagining how inclusive and resilient resourcing ecosystems can function.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

This report examines how LGBTQI movements mobilise resources and how the LGBTQI funding ecosystem operates, recognising that these dynamics sit within — and are shaped by — wider international development and human rights systems.

It does not seek to provide a comprehensive mapping of all resourcing practices. Rather, it highlights innovations, illustrates connections between different funding sources, and offers potential directions for funders and further debate.

The findings draw on:

- Desk research and literature review of global, regional, and national studies; and
- Key informant interviews with civil society groups, community funders, diaspora initiatives, and development donors.

The study was conducted between September and December 2025, and draws on case studies from Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as Asia and Europe. Many interviewees were partners under the GFCF's 2023 Giving for Change programme, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

While focused on LGBTQI movements, other civil society groups were interviewed, and many of the examples and lessons are relevant to other community-led movements. For consistency, this briefing uses the acronym LGBTQI to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and

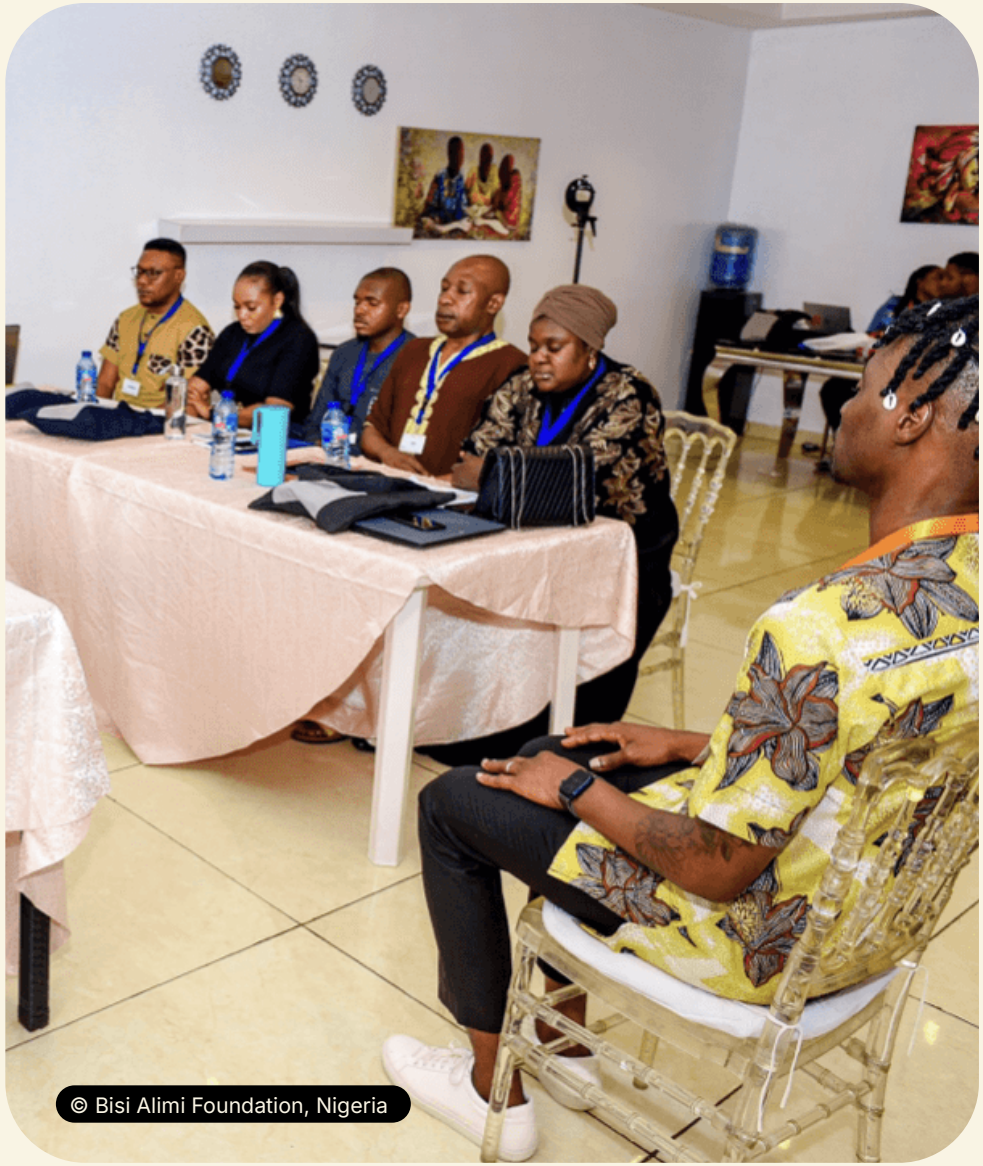
intersex people, while recognising that identities and terms vary across contexts. Our intention is to use inclusive language that reflects the diversity of the communities and movements referenced throughout the report.

1.2 WHO THIS REPORT IS FOR

This report is written for two primary audiences:

Community actors within the LGBTQI resourcing ecosystem, including activists, community leaders, participatory funds, intermediaries, and diaspora networks. For these readers, the report documents and affirms the many ways movements resource themselves — financially and beyond — and creates space for shared learning, exchange, and inspiration across local, diaspora, and transnational contexts.

External funders, including governments, philanthropic foundations, corporate funders, and individual philanthropists. For this audience, the report recognises that external funding remains crucial, particularly in contexts of shrinking civic space and rising need, while offering insight into how such support can be designed to complement and strengthen internal and diaspora-led resource flows. The report proposes Five Principles for Complementary Funding to help ensure external resources reinforce community agency, decision-making, and long-term movement resilience, rather than unintentionally undermining them.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2. MAPPING INTERNAL RESOURCE FLOWS

Around the world, LGBTQI communities have long mobilised their own local resources to meet urgent needs, sustain activism, and build collective resilience. These internal resource flows take many forms — including rapid mutual aid, pooled savings, in-kind support, community-led funds, and livelihood strategies. They are often informal and beyond the gaze of external funders, yet they play a critical role in enabling communities and movements not only to survive but also to shape their own futures.

This chapter maps some of these internal resource flows, drawing on examples from Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. It shows that resourcing is not only about what is given, but how it is mobilised: through relationships of trust, shared responsibility, and collective decision-making. In many cases, the act of contributing — whether money, time, skills, space, or care — is as significant as the amount contributed, reinforcing belonging and mutual support.

Taken together, these practices form layered systems of care and solidarity. They provide immediate responses in moments of crisis, create more predictable forms of collective support over time, and help to sustain the social and organisational infrastructures that movements depend on. These internal strategies demonstrate principles and practices that are highly relevant to wider debates about how movements are resourced — and how external funding can engage in ways that strengthen, rather than displace, community funding systems.

> "Activists creating an alternative system of care."
>
> Gosia Leszko, FemFund, Poland[13]

Community philanthropy as a development tool: an emerging discourse and practice

Community philanthropy draws on a rich range of traditions and ideas, from long-standing practices of mutual aid, solidarity and local giving to more recent forms of organising rooted in collective action, networked power, and the solidarity economy. It forms part of a broader tapestry of alternative approaches being shaped by people and communities around the world who, without waiting for permission or external coordination, are building new forms of resilience, innovation and social cohesion.

Community philanthropy is both old and new. It is old in the sense that practices of giving, reciprocity, and collective care have always existed within communities. It is new in that it is only in recent years that it has begun to be articulated and organised as a deliberate development strategy that centres communities and their resources, in ways that enable them to exercise agency and drive their own futures.

The "community" in community philanthropy is neither singular nor static. It is expressed variously through place, identity, and shared struggle, often in overlapping ways. Its practitioners include place-based community foundations, women's, LGBTQI and socio-environmental funds, as well as other civil society actors and movements working through place, issue or identity-based lenses who seek to build local ownership and constituencies for their work.

Global Fund for Community Foundations (2026)

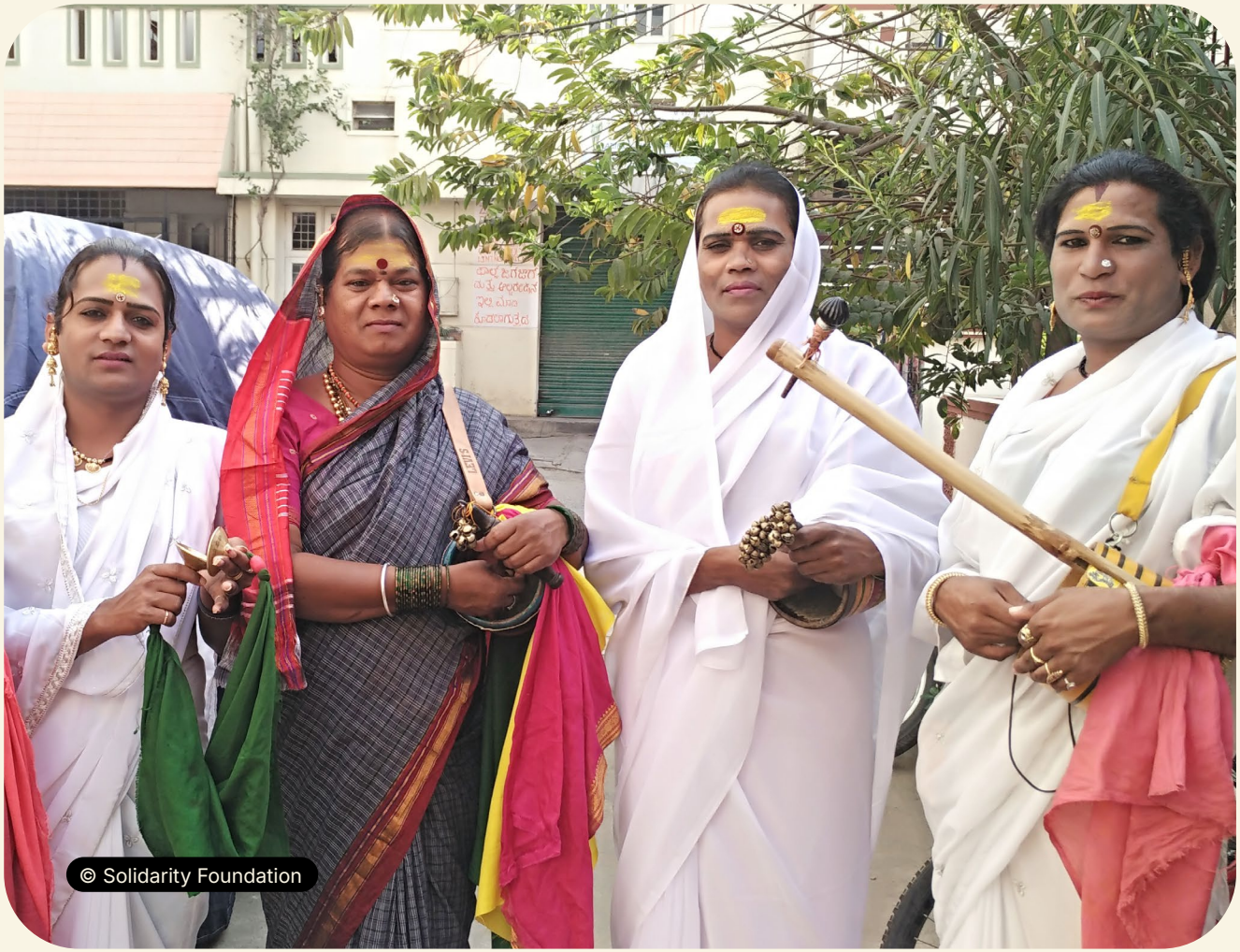
2.1 MUTUAL AID AND EMERGENCY SOLIDARITY

Mutual aid is one of the most immediate and recognisable forms of internal resourcing within LGBTQI communities. It typically involves rapid, flexible support — financial or in-kind — provided directly to individuals facing crisis. This may include help with food, rent, healthcare, transport, legal costs, or emergency relocation. What distinguishes mutual aid is not only its purpose, but its method: resources are mobilised quickly, informally, and relationally, grounded in trust rather than eligibility criteria or formal assessment.

Mutual aid becomes particularly visible in moments of acute shock, when state systems and external funding are absent, inaccessible, or unsafe. During the COVID-19 pandemic, LGBTQI communities in multiple contexts organised their own emergency responses as people were excluded from government relief or unable to seek help without risking exposure, stigma, or violence. In China,

community volunteers coordinated the delivery of HIV medication to thousands of people unable to travel during lockdown.[14] In Kenya, queer and trans activists mobilised small, rapid money transfers via a phone-based payment system to meet urgent needs related to housing, healthcare, and personal safety.[15] These responses were often coordinated through existing community networks and digital platforms, enabling fast action based on local knowledge of who needed support most urgently.

In other contexts, mutual aid operates through ongoing mechanisms rather than crisis-only responses. In Nepal, for example, an informal WhatsApp-based mutual aid group allows lesbian, bisexual and trans (LBT) community members to request and offer support directly, whether for basic needs or small amounts of seed money linked to livelihoods.[16] Contributions are typically modest and voluntary, but collectively they create a responsive safety net.



The Trans and Queer Fund – Community Mutual Aid in Kenya

> "We want to be a solidarity project as opposed to one that is transactional."
>
> Mumbi Makena Kanyogo, Founder, The Trans and Queer Fund[17]

The Trans and Queer Fund (TQF) was established in March 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, as queer and trans communities in Kenya faced acute employment insecurity, housing precarity, and heightened safety risks. Founded by feminist writer and organiser Mumbi Makena Kanyogo with friends, the Fund emerged from a recognition that while queer and trans people face shared structural discrimination, access to resources within communities is uneven and requires intentional redistribution. As Mumbi reflected, *"Recognising that some have resources. We can't keep saying [we're all] vulnerable in the same way."*

TQF operates entirely on a volunteer basis and is not formally registered, as registration itself can create risk. The Fund works primarily online through social media and distributes funds via mobile money. Early fundraising was deeply personal and community-led: Mumbi contributed from a stipend received while studying abroad, and others in her network gave what they could. She then collaborated with another founding organiser, Makena, to distribute funds, after which other founding members, K, M and M, joined. The group has since grown to a collective of 12 members who engage in political education, communications, fundraising, and distribution. In its first year, TQF raised approximately USD 25,000, primarily through small gifts ranging from the equivalent of USD 1 to USD 100, mostly from within Kenya.

Over time, the Fund has also engaged queer organisers and diaspora supporters in Canada, the US, and the UK, and now raises around USD 600 per month (approximately USD 8,000 annually) from these sources. Trust is built through transparency, including regular public reporting on social media about how funds are used.

TQF provides small grants to individuals every two to three months, typically totalling USD 6,000–7,000 per round, to meet urgent and material needs. Grants support healthcare, rent for private and safe housing, private transport for safety, food and groceries, and school fees. Anyone from the community can apply for support, and rather than relying on extensive documentation, the Fund uses informal verification through social media profiles and community knowledge and connections.

Mutual Aid Group, Nepal

"Mitini is a 'family' for LBT people - they reach out to Mitini for help and resources."

Sarita K.C., Executive Director, Mitini, Nepal[18]

Mitini Nepal has supported the creation of an informal mutual aid group using WhatsApp, enabling LBT community members to support one another directly in times of need. Through this group, individuals can request help for urgent expenses, including basic living costs or small amounts of seed money to sustain livelihoods. Other community members respond if and when they are able, typically by making small, direct transfers to the individual's bank account.

The mutual aid group operates on trust, solidarity, and responsiveness rather than formal eligibility criteria or assessments. This approach allows support to be mobilised quickly and flexibly, reflecting the realities faced by LBT people who may lack stable income, family support, or access to formal financial systems.

Sarita K.C. shared an example of a trans man whose scooter, essential for earning a living, was stolen. After requesting support through the group, community members contributed what they could to help him. One contributor was a former Mitini livelihood training participant now working abroad, illustrating how livelihood training can benefit both participants and the wider community, while also providing an example of diaspora giving.

Rather than positioning people solely as beneficiaries, mutual aid affirms collective responsibility and shared vulnerability, recognising that individuals may move between needing support and being able to offer it over time.[19] The contribution itself — however small — carries meaning, reinforcing belonging, mutual protection and accountability within the community.

At the same time, mutual aid carries limits and risks. Initiatives often rely on volunteer labour and irregular contributions, making them difficult to sustain over long periods, particularly in hostile or high-risk environments. Communities respond by developing light-touch governance practices — such as peer verification, transparency through trusted channels, and collective decision-making — that balance accountability with speed and discretion.[20] These adaptations highlight both the ingenuity of community-led responses and the importance of support that strengthens, rather than overburdens, these systems.

In some contexts, informal mutual aid responses evolve into more sustained and structured models of collective support, as seen in initiatives such as the TQF in Kenya — the following section explores these longer-term approaches and models.

2.2 COLLECTIVE SAVINGS, POOLED GIVING AND COMMUNITY FUNDS

Beyond immediate crisis response, LGBTQI communities have developed collective savings and pooled giving mechanisms to create more predictable and sustained forms of collective support.

Collective savings differ from emergency mutual aid in both tempo and intent. Rather than responding to sudden shocks alone, they are designed to smooth risk, plan ahead, and build shared assets. Members commit to one another over time, creating a form of financial solidarity rooted in trust. Regular contributions — however modest — signal shared responsibility and help embed resourcing within the community.

Examples from the interviews illustrate how these models function in practice. In India, a sex workers' collective supported by Solidarity Foundation established a self-help group and community savings fund through which members contribute small monthly amounts and collectively decide how loans are made.[21] The fund supports healthcare costs, education, and small business activities, while also enabling access to formal bank credit by demonstrating collective savings and repayment capacity.[22] In Uganda, *Quchu Coin* is emerging as a flexible, community-owned fund to which individuals contribute depending on their means, initially responding to emergencies but increasingly seen as a vehicle for longer-term community investment.

Self-help Group as Collective Financial Infrastructure, India[23]

Bhavani Kumaran at Solidarity Foundation shared one example of internal resourcing: a self-help group established by a sex workers' collective in Karnataka state, India, supported by government programmes. Members contribute a small monthly amount to a savings fund, building a shared financial resource over time.

Once the fund matures, members are able to borrow from it for essential needs such as healthcare, children's education, or starting a small business. Importantly, decisions about loans are made by collective members themselves, reinforcing community ownership and accountability.

The existence of the savings fund also enables access to formal finance. Banks are willing to lend using the collective savings as a basis for credit, demonstrating how internal resource mobilisation can unlock external financial opportunities without reliance on donors.

Quchu Coin – Community Philanthropy, Uganda

"Resourcing is combining efforts, what you can give, bringing your very best to each other."

Pepe Julian Onziema, Uganda[24]

Quchu Coin is a community philanthropy initiative initiated by Pepe Julian Onziema in response to an increasingly restrictive and high-risk environment for LGBTQI communities in Uganda. As NGOs have been closed and external funding has become more constrained, Pepe brought LGBTQI leaders together and encouraged them to support one another by contributing to a shared, community-owned fund.

The initiative is built on the principle of *"sharing and giving without expectations."* Community members contribute in different ways depending on their circumstances: some offer moral support and listening, others bring food such as bananas from their farms, and some contribute money. Pepe contributed USD 10 to initiate the fund, and others followed. Contributions are made on a flexible basis — one-off, monthly, quarterly, or annually — and are primarily transferred through mobile money platforms. The fund now has around 75 contributors.

While *Quchu Coin* initially responded to urgent needs — such as providing small, flexible amounts of money to keep someone out of prison — the collective vision is evolving beyond emergency support. Community members increasingly see the fund as a long-term investment vehicle, with aspirations to support housing, small businesses, land for farming, and other forms of economic empowerment that can strengthen community resilience over time.

Community Mental Health Fund – Taala Foundation, Uganda

"I want to see a world where a standard of care is universal and accessible to everyone."

Severus Hama-Owamparo, Director, The Taala Foundation[25]

The Taala Foundation was established to make mental healthcare accessible in Uganda, particularly for marginalised communities facing stigma, violence, and exclusion.

In response to significant gaps in access to care, Taala helped establish an emergency mental health network. This network includes volunteers trained in mental health first aid, alongside support for more complex cases. The model is deliberately community-led, recognising both the urgency of need and the limits of formal systems.

To sustain this work, Taala has developed a community-funded mental health fund, grounded in what Severus described as *"building a spirit of community philanthropy."* Participants transfer contributions directly to a bank account, with around 40–60 people currently giving. As Severus noted, *"We are capable of resourcing our movement."*

Decisions about how the fund is used are made by the mental health network itself, ensuring that support responds to real and immediate needs. Taala also seeks, where possible, to match community giving with resources from other sources.

Similar principles underpin community-funded care initiatives, such as the mental health fund supported by the Taala Foundation in Uganda.[26] In this model, community members contribute directly to a shared fund that is governed by those delivering and receiving care, ensuring that resources respond to real and immediate needs while reinforcing a sense of collective ownership. Although focused on care rather than income generation, the fund reflects the same logic of pooled responsibility and community decision-making.

Collective savings and pooled giving illustrate how internal resourcing can move beyond crisis response toward longer-term stability and autonomy. While these mechanisms strengthen resilience, they also face constraints. Limited contribution capacity means that pooled funds can be quickly depleted by major shocks, such as arrests, medical emergencies, or displacement. Confidentiality and security are ongoing concerns, particularly where participation may expose individuals to risk. Communities respond by keeping groups small, using trusted intermediaries, rotating leadership roles, and combining pooled giving with other strategies such as mutual aid or in-kind support.

2.3 IN-KIND SOLIDARITY AND CARE INFRASTRUCTURE

Not all internal resourcing is financial. Across contexts, in-kind solidarity forms a critical part of how LGBTQI communities survive and organise. In-kind support includes safe housing, shared meals, transport, legal accompaniment, psychosocial care, and the contribution of skills and labour on a voluntary basis.

In moments of crisis, in-kind care becomes indispensable. During the COVID-19 pandemic, LGBTQI communities mobilised food distribution, shelter, and healthcare support when state responses were inaccessible or unsafe.[27] In China, volunteers organised the collection and delivery of HIV medication to people unable to travel during lockdown.[28]

Community Mutual Aid During COVID-19, China[29]

"We had to help our own community, because we are all we had."

Haojie, Wuhan LGBT Center

During the COVID-19 lockdown in Wuhan, China, the LGBTQI community organised rapid, community-led mutual aid in response to urgent health and safety needs. As the city shut down and travel was severely restricted, thousands of LGBTQI people living with HIV were unable to access essential medication. Many were reluctant to seek permission to travel or disclose their HIV status to local authorities due to fear of stigma and discrimination. Calls for help quickly overwhelmed the Wuhan LGBT Center.

In response, the Center mobilised 22 volunteers who organised themselves into teams to take calls, collect medication from hospitals, and deliver it directly to people's homes. Volunteers navigated daily travel across the locked-down city, often to hospitals at the centre of the outbreak, using protective equipment where possible. Between 26 January and 8 April 2020, the Center supported an average of 200 people per day, delivering medication to an estimated 14,000 individuals over the 74-day lockdown period.

"I Am Committed" Campaign – In-Kind Support, Francophone Africa

"Look at resourcing in all its dimensions."

Massan d'Almeida, Director, XOESE[30]

XOESE is a Togo-based women's fund that supports feminist organising in Francophone Africa and Haiti. Through its *"I Am Committed" (Je m'engage)* campaign, XOESE demonstrated how feminist funds can mobilise local philanthropy by securing in-kind support for women's rights organisations. Launched in May 2021 ahead of the Generation Equality Forum in Paris, the campaign focused on encouraging local actors in Francophone contexts to contribute resources such as space, services, and logistical support.[31]

XOESE facilitated national coalitions in 12 Francophone countries through small campaign grants and a shared advocacy toolbox. These coalitions engaged local governments, businesses, and institutions, securing 127 commitments to tackle gender-based violence and promote women's rights.[32]

Some of these commitments took the form of in-kind contributions, including meeting spaces, communications support, and other services that reduced costs and strengthened local organising. By mobilising in-kind philanthropy, the campaign broadened the resource base available to feminist movements and demonstrated local ownership and solidarity. It also helped make the case to external funders by showing that communities were already contributing meaningfully to the movements they sought to support.

Beyond crisis response, in-kind solidarity functions as ongoing care infrastructure. Safe houses, shared spaces, and informal support networks embed care into everyday organising. These forms of support are particularly important for people excluded from family support or formal welfare systems, and for those for whom visibility carries significant risk.

Examples from the interviews illustrate how in-kind resourcing can be mobilised strategically. In Francophone Africa, the XOESE *"I Am Committed"* campaign encouraged local actors — including businesses, hotels, and service providers — to contribute meeting space, communications support, and other services to women's and feminist groups.[33] By mobilising in-kind commitments rather than cash alone, the campaign both strengthened local organising and demonstrated to external funders that communities were already contributing resources, skills, and solidarity to the movements they supported.

2.4 COMMUNITY-LED FUNDS AND PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING

In recent years, a number of community-led funds have emerged in Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere that combine internal and external resources and are governed and directed by activists themselves. Alongside informal mutual aid and pooled community giving, these funds mobilise resources at significantly greater scale while deliberately shifting decision-making power to movements. In some cases, these funds steward millions — and cumulatively, tens of millions — of US dollars, demonstrating that participatory, movement-led resourcing is not limited to small or informal initiatives, but can operate at substantial scale across regions.

These funds typically pool a mix of predominantly external resources, but differ from donor-led funding approaches in one crucial respect: they are governed and directed by activists and community members with lived experience. Participatory grantmaking sits at the heart of these models. Rather than donors or professional staff determining priorities, funding decisions are made through community-led committees that assess needs, set criteria, and allocate resources. As interviewees repeatedly emphasised, power lies not only in how much money is available, but in who controls it.[34]

Examples from across regions illustrate how these models function in practice. In East Africa, the East Africa Sexual Health and Rights Initiative (UHAI EASHRI) operates as an indigenous, feminist, activist-led fund supporting sexual and gender minority and sex worker organising across multiple countries.[35] Through peer review and participatory grant mechanisms, community members have collectively disbursed more than USD 30 million through hundreds of grants, enabling the fund to reach small, informal groups often excluded from mainstream funding.[36]

In southern Africa, The Other Foundation has also embedded participatory grantmaking within its regional funding model, using movement convenings and activist-led processes to inform priorities and resource allocation across multiple countries.[37] In West Africa, ISDAO similarly operates as a participatory fund *"created by activists for activists"*, combining flexible grantmaking with an emergency fund to respond to rapidly changing and high-risk contexts.[38]

Participatory Grantmaking – UHAI EASHRI, East Africa

UHAI EASHRI is Africa's first indigenous feminist, activist, participatory fund for and by sexual and gender minorities and sex worker communities. It supports civil society organising across seven East African countries — Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda — as well as allied Pan-African organising.[39]

At the core of UHAI's model is participatory grantmaking and movement resourcing. Local activists are directly involved in determining funding priorities and making grant decisions, ensuring that those living the struggles have agency to fund action. Through its peer and strategic grant mechanisms, UHAI has disbursed more than USD 30 million through around 1,600 grants to over 400 grant partners across seven countries. This approach shifts decision-making away from donor-centred models towards community-driven processes, while also functioning as a form of due diligence, as communities know who is doing the work and where resources are most needed.

Participatory grantmaking has also enabled UHAI to take risks that traditional donors often avoid. By centring intersectionality, UHAI has been able to reach groups frequently excluded from mainstream funding, including transgender, intersex, refugee, and migrant sexual and gender minorities. Alongside participatory movement resourcing and strengthening, UHAI provides and supports collective convening, ecosystem and partnership building, learning and evidence generation, policy and systems influence, and institutional stewardship, grounded in feminist, community-led values. Through this work, UHAI has also supported the development of similar activist-led funds in other regions, including ISDAO in West Africa.

> "Helping communities to realise the amount of power and assets they bring together — not as receivers, but as agents of change."
>
> Wanja Ngure, Program Manager, UHAI EASHRI[40]

Participatory Fund – ISDAO, West Africa

"Created by activists for activists."

Olumide Makanjuola, Director of Programmes, Initiative Sankofa d'Afrique de l'Ouest (ISDAO)[41]

ISDAO is an activist-led fund working to build a West African movement for sexual diversity and sexual rights through flexible grantmaking and a strong commitment to movement-led decision-making. As Olumide explained, ISDAO was *"created by activists for activists"* and operates as a participatory fund in which communities themselves decide how resources are allocated.

This approach reflects ISDAO's emphasis on *"movement-led rather than donor-led strategies."* Funding decisions are made by people with lived experience of the contexts and challenges facing LGBTQI communities across the region, ensuring resources respond to real priorities rather than externally imposed agendas. As Olumide noted, *"Power has been shifted to the grassroots."*

Participatory approaches are also evident beyond Africa. In Poland, the Feminist Fund uses participatory grantmaking to support feminist movements, reinforcing trust and solidarity by ensuring that those closest to the work shape funding decisions.[42] Convenings linked to the Fund's grantmaking provide additional spaces for accountability, learning, and collective care, reinforcing the connection between resourcing, governance, and movement cohesion.

Beyond their grantmaking role, these community-led funds can function as bridges within the wider funding ecosystem. They translate movement priorities to external funders, steward resources in ways that protect community autonomy, and channel funding to groups that external donors may be unable or unwilling to reach directly.

At the same time, managing resources at this scale brings challenges. Stewardship of pooled funds requires administrative capacity, legal compliance, and sustained care for activist decision-makers who may already be operating under significant risk. Interviewees highlighted the importance of investing in governance, protection, and organisational infrastructure.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Participatory Fund – Feminist Fund, Poland

"Making decisions about money is a form of power."

Gosia Leszko, Feminist Fund, Poland[43]

The Feminist Fund in Poland uses participatory grantmaking to shift decision-making power closer to feminist movements themselves. Rather than concentrating authority with donors or Fund staff, funding decisions are shaped by people with lived experience of the issues and contexts the Fund seeks to support.

This approach reflects a core belief that who makes decisions matters as much as how much money is given. By involving movement actors directly in allocation processes, participatory funding helps ensure resources respond to real needs, while also challenging traditional power dynamics in philanthropy.

Gosia emphasised that participatory processes build trust between the Fund and grantees. They also strengthen account-ability to movements, not just donors, reinforcing solidarity and shared ownership over resources.

2.5 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND LIVELIHOODS

Alongside mutual aid and pooled community resources, many LGBTQI movements prioritise economic empowerment and livelihoods as a core resourcing strategy. Rather than focusing primarily on income generation for organisations, these approaches centre on strengthening individuals' economic agency — recognising that people's ability to earn and sustain themselves is foundational to both personal safety and collective resilience.

Across the interviews, livelihood strategies were framed less as standalone economic projects and more as long-term investments in people. Training, skills development, mentorship, and access to networks enable community members to reduce dependency on emergency support, navigate exclusion from formal labour markets, and contribute back to their communities over time. In contexts where discrimination severely limits access to employment, livelihoods become a critical form of internal resourcing.

Examples from South Asia illustrate how this works in practice. In India, livelihood initiatives supported by Solidarity Foundation combine vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and access to finance, often delivered in partnership with businesses under corporate social responsibility frameworks.[44] These programmes support trans and gender-diverse people to establish small enterprises or secure employment.

Economic Empowerment Through Business Partnerships, India[45]

Livelihoods are a key strand of Solidarity Foundation's approach to resourcing. In the context of India's mandatory corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework,[46] Solidarity Foundation has worked with businesses to create employment placements for trans workers and to provide entrepreneurship training.

This support includes practical assistance such as developing business plans and accessing finance. Examples shared by Bhavani Kumaran at Solidarity Foundation include sweet sellers, artists, and food cart businesses. These initiatives create income opportunities in contexts where formal employment is often inaccessible due to stigma and discrimination.

Livelihood work is embedded within a broader leadership approach. Economic opportunities are combined with support around self-care, health, digital safety, and engagement with government systems, reinforcing resilience at both individual and collective levels.

Livelihood Training, Nepal

"Empower[ing] the community with vocational skills while fostering inclusivity."

Sarita K.C., Executive Director, Mitini, Nepal[47]

Mitini in Nepal provides livelihood training to LBT community members who face barriers to formal employment, including limited education, unemployment, and experiences of homelessness. The organisation focuses on practical, marketable skills that can support income generation in Nepal and abroad, helping participants build greater economic independence in contexts where discrimination can limit work opportunities.

One example is Mitini's bakery and barista training programme, delivered with financial support from the Kathmandu Metropolitan City.[48] The 15-day programme engaged 20 participants in a structured course covering the history of baking, different types of coffee, and hands-on practical training.

By pairing vocational training with small amounts of seed funding and ongoing community support, Mitini's livelihood programmes help participants translate skills into income-generating activities. In doing so, they also contribute to wider community resilience, as trained participants have gone on to support others through informal networks, including mutual aid and diaspora-based giving.

In Nepal, livelihood training plays a similar role, particularly for LBT people who have experienced homelessness, family rejection, or long-term unemployment. Programmes such as bakery and barista training provide practical, marketable skills alongside small amounts of seed support and ongoing community care.[49]

In more restrictive contexts, economic empowerment is also closely linked to safety. In Nigeria, interviewees described how skills training, mentoring, and access to professional networks enable LGBTQI people to build autonomy.[50] Importantly, several examples showed how individuals who benefited from training later returned as mentors, employers, or contributors — allowing resources, knowledge, and opportunities to circulate back into the community.

While livelihood-focused strategies rarely generate large or immediate financial returns, interviewees emphasised their longer-term value. By strengthening individual stability and autonomy, these approaches can reduce reliance on emergency support and enable people to participate more fully in other community-based resourcing strategies. In some cases, they also create modest opportunities for individuals to support others over time.

Economic Empowerment Through Skills and Networks – Rainbow Academy, Nigeria

"Safety and visibility are constant negotiations."

Judith Iwaomo Airiohuodion, Executive Director, Bisi Alimi Foundation[51]

In Nigeria's highly restrictive context, the UK-based Bisi Alimi Foundation has prioritised economic empowerment as a core resourcing strategy. Through its Rainbow Academy, the Foundation equips LGBTQI people with practical skills, information, and tools, including business development support, to strengthen economic independence and resilience.

The Academy draws on business allies who volunteer their time and expertise to provide training and mentorship. Judith shared several examples of impact: an artist supported to develop a business plan and establish a sculpture business; a lawyer who went on to develop a legal NGO advocating for LGBTQI people who have been arrested; and a filmmaker who, after participating in the Academy, later returned to provide training and job opportunities for others.

These examples illustrate how skills, knowledge, and networks function as critical resources in contexts where formal funding is limited and safety risks are high. By investing in people, the Rainbow Academy enables resources to circulate back into the community, strengthening both livelihoods and long-term movement capacity.

2.6 SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CONVENING

Across the interviews, social capital emerged as a core — and often under-recognised — form of internal resourcing. Relationships, trust, shared analysis, connections, and access to networks shape how effectively communities mobilise material resources, respond to risk, and sustain collective action over time. For LGBTQI movements operating in constrained or hostile environments, who you know, where you can safely gather, and how information circulates are critical.

Convening plays a central role in building and maintaining this social capital. Formal and informal gatherings create spaces for activists to exchange knowledge, coordinate responses, and support one another. Interviewees described convening not as an add-on, but as a form of care infrastructure that helps prevent isolation, burnout, and fragmentation.

Examples from the interviews illustrate how this functions in practice. In India, Solidarity Foundation emphasised the importance of connecting community leaders to wider networks — including peers, allies, and, where possible, officials — to help navigate complex systems and access opportunities that would be difficult to reach alone.[52]

Social Capital and Networks as Core Resources, India

"A lot of resourcing is rooted in building social capital, larger networks."

Bhavani Kumaran, Executive Director, Solidarity Foundation[53]

Bhavani emphasised that access to networks is a critical form of resourcing. For Solidarity Foundation, this includes building connections with other community leaders and with people who can help make things happen, such as local officials.

Knowing who to speak to, and not working in silos, strengthens collective action and enables communities to navigate complex and difficult environments. These networks help communities share information, coordinate responses, and access opportunities that would be difficult to reach alone.

By investing in social capital alongside financial and material resources, Solidarity Foundation supports community leaders to operate collectively rather than in isolation, reinforcing long-term movement strength and sustainability.

Convening as Care, Poland

"Activists creating an alternative system of care."

Gosia Leszko, Feminist Fund, Poland[54]

Beyond grantmaking, the Feminist Fund plays a key convening role for feminist movements in Poland. These spaces bring activists together to share organising strategies, learn from one another, and provide mutual emotional support in a challenging political environment.

Gosia described convening as a vital form of resourcing in itself. *"Bonding with a group of people who share your values"* helps sustain activists whose work is frequently voluntary and emotionally demanding. Convenings also enable the sharing of practical information, including access to services and support in situations such as family violence.

Convening spaces also create opportunities for accountability and collective reflection. Grantees can report back not only to the Fund, but to the wider community that made their work possible, strengthening transparency, trust, and movement cohesion.

In Poland, convening emerged as a deliberate strategy to sustain movements facing political hostility and social backlash.[55] The Feminist Fund supports spaces where activists can come together to share experiences, reflect on strategy, and provide mutual emotional support. Interviewees described these spaces as essential for sustaining long-term engagement, strengthening accountability to one another, and reinforcing a sense of shared purpose.

In southern Africa, convening also functions as a form of movement infrastructure. Through regional gatherings, activists are able to develop shared analysis, align priorities, and build trust across countries and constituencies.[56] These spaces support coordination and learning, while also informing participatory grantmaking and other resourcing decisions grounded in movement realities.

The Other Foundation, Southern Africa

While social capital and convening do not generate financial resources directly, they shape how all other forms of resourcing function by enabling information to flow, trust to be built, and collective decisions to be made.

Taken together, the internal resource flows described in this chapter — including mutual aid, collective savings, in-kind support, community-led funds, livelihood strategies, and social capital — form interconnected systems of care, solidarity, and mutual responsibility. These practices illustrate that LGBTQI communities and others are active stewards of resources, relationships, and decision-making, rather than passive recipients of support.

At the same time, internal resourcing does not operate in isolation. Many of the strategies described here intersect with ties beyond national borders. The following chapter explores how diaspora giving sits within this wider resourcing ecosystem, and how it can complement community-led approaches.

Convening as Resource Infrastructure, Southern Africa

"Resources can also include people and ideas."

Kutlwano Magashula, Head of Programmes, The Other Foundation[57]

The Other Foundation acts as a movement builder across southern Africa and harnesses the power of convening as a core form of resourcing. In contexts where many LGBTQI activists operate with little or no formal funding, convenings provide critical infrastructure for sustaining movements through shared analysis, strategy, and care.

Through its *Kopano* convenings, the Foundation creates space for knowledge exchange and collective strategising, enabling activists to reflect on the state of the movement, prioritise issues, and develop coordinated approaches to change. These spaces also support mutual care among LGBTQI activists working on advocacy and systems change in often hostile environments.

Convenings are deliberately inclusive, bringing together activists alongside allies such as religious leaders, businesses, parents, and other supporters. Insights generated through these gatherings inform the Foundation's participatory grantmaking, ensuring that funding decisions are grounded in movement realities and that resources are directed to where they are most needed.

3. EXPLORING DIASPORA GIVING

Diaspora giving sits at the intersection of internal and external resource flows. It combines financial support with identity-based solidarity, offering LGBTQI movements a flexible source of support beyond their immediate communities.[58] For many donors, diaspora giving is shaped by lived experience of exclusion and resilience, and by enduring bonds that extend across borders.

In this chapter, *"diaspora"* refers to people living outside their country of origin who maintain ongoing ties of identity, solidarity, and commitment to communities at home. These ties may be expressed through remittances, collective giving, volunteering, advocacy, or philanthropy.

Diaspora giving is motivated by a mix of solidarity, reciprocity, and strategic intent. Interviewees described giving as a way to support communities facing challenges similar to those they once experienced,[59] particularly where institutional funding is limited or inaccessible.[60]

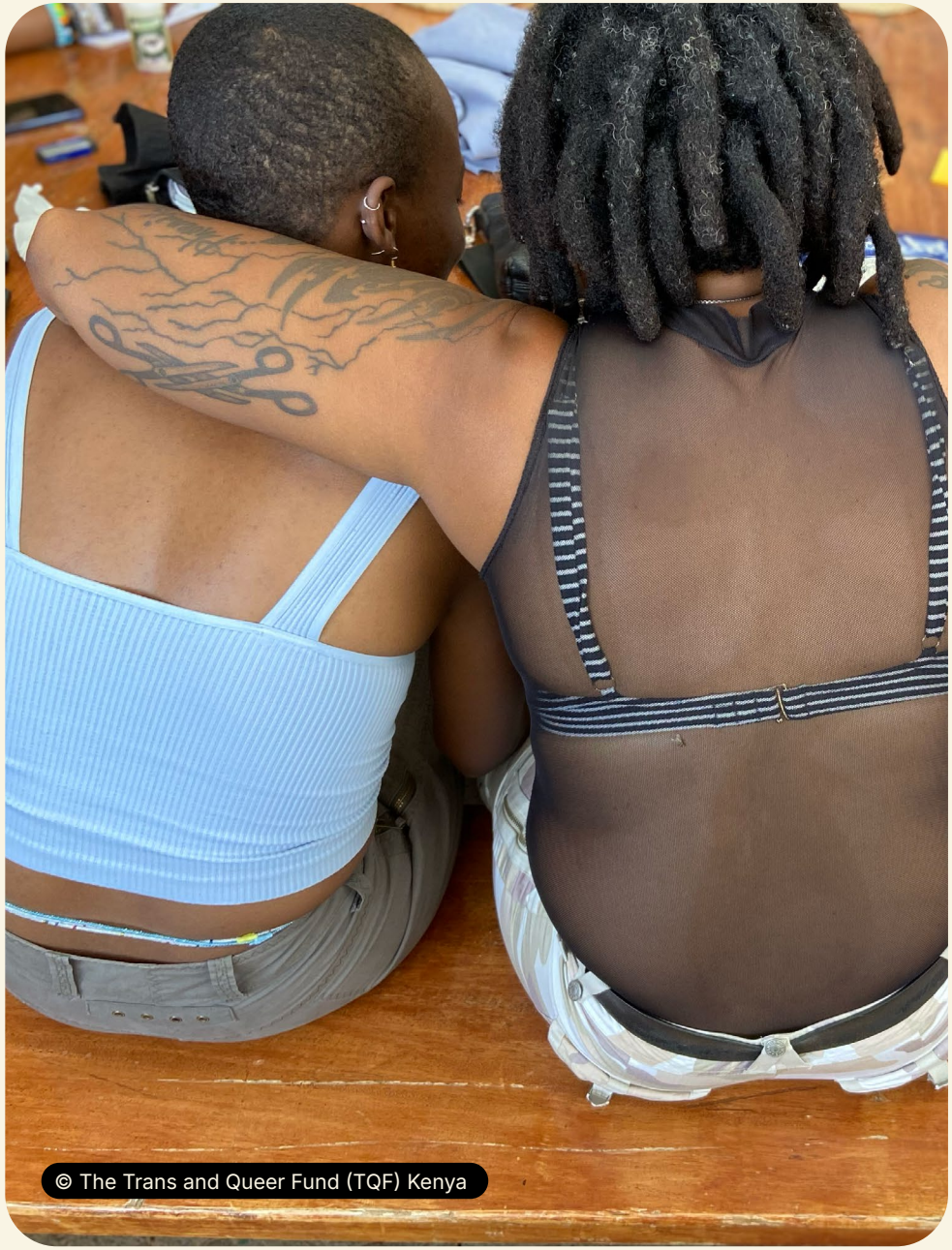
At the same time, diaspora giving is shaped by real constraints. Safety and visibility remain central concerns, particularly where financial transfers may expose recipients to risk.[61] Trust, transparency, and financial friction — including transfer costs and banking barriers[62] — also influence how, when, and through whom diaspora donors choose to give.

For LGBTQI people from parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and other restrictive contexts, migration is often linked not only to economic opportunity, but also to the pursuit of safety, dignity, and legal recognition — raising important questions about when and how diaspora engagement is appropriate as individuals rebuild their lives.[63]

> "Tapping into diaspora funding is a huge opportunity."
>
> Radhika Piramal, Co-Founder, Pride Fund India[64]

Further, diaspora giving can surface power dynamics between those who have migrated and those organising in-country. In this context, giving is not only about resources, but also about sustaining trust, connection, and accountability across borders.

Despite these constraints, diaspora giving takes diverse and evolving forms. The sections that follow outline six forms of diaspora giving observed through interviews and case examples, moving from informal, relational support to more structured and institutional approaches. Together, they illustrate the range of ways LGBTQI diaspora engage in resourcing movements, and how these contributions interact with wider community systems.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3.1 PERSONAL REMITTANCES AND RELATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The most common form of diaspora giving is still the simplest: small, direct transfers to individuals and trusted groups, often shaped by personal relationships. For LGBTQI diaspora, this support may go to family members, but it often extends to chosen family, peers, and community organisers. It can be a way of staying connected, responding quickly to urgent needs,[65] and supporting survival in contexts where formal funding routes are limited or risky.[66]

Across the interviews, this kind of giving was described as relational and informal, shaped by trust, discretion, and the realities of people rebuilding their lives abroad. One Caribbean diaspora donor described this form of giving as deeply tied to home and identity, shaped by

frequent travel, family connections, and long-standing relationships with activists and organisations in Trinidad and Tobago. Living abroad provided safety and opportunity, but also reinforced a sense of responsibility to remain engaged.[67]

Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, the Co-Founder and Chief Executive of UK Black Pride, noted that support often happens through everyday mechanisms — sending money directly, sponsoring small fundraising efforts, or quietly amplifying appeals — with careful attention to what is safe for people receiving support.[68]

Interviewees also highlighted that remittances and direct transfers are not always purely "one-way". Instead, people may move between receiving support and later contributing back to their communities as circumstances change. In Nepal, Sarita K.C. shared an example of a former livelihood training participant now working abroad who contributed to a WhatsApp-based mutual aid response, illustrating how diaspora support can flow back into community safety nets.[69]

In Kenya, Mumbi Makena Kanyogo described how The Trans and Queer Fund receives modest but regular contributions from supporters in Canada, the US, and the UK, complementing local giving.[70] At the same time, interviewees underscored the constraints. In some contexts, diaspora transfers can be difficult or unsafe, with heightened risks for both senders and recipients.

Diaspora Giving, Poland

"A piggy bank for the movement."

Gosia Leszko, Feminist Fund, Poland

The Feminist Fund has been supported by a few diaspora donors since its early days, particularly from the UK, US, and Germany. These supporters remain closely connected to the Fund and contribute primarily through online transfers.

Diaspora giving complements domestic individual giving and helps anchor the Fund within a wider transnational feminist community. Diaspora donors include individuals with strong personal and political ties to feminist movements in Poland.

Beyond financial contributions, diaspora supporters also offer non-monetary support. This includes making introductions, helping the Fund access new spaces, and representing the Feminist Fund and its work at convenings and events, extending its reach and influence.

3.2 COLLECTIVE GIVING CIRCLES AND POOLED FUNDS

Beyond individual remittances, some LGBTQI diaspora support takes collective and pooled forms, allowing donors to combine modest contributions into more sustained and strategic resources. Giving circles, pooled funds, and identity-linked initiatives can reduce individual risk, create shared ownership, and increase the reach of diaspora support, while still remaining grounded in solidarity and trust.

Interviewees described these models as particularly useful where donors want to contribute but feel uncertain about where or how to give. For some diaspora donors, pooled funds also respond to a desire for coordination, shared decision-making, and accountability — particularly where individual giving feels fragmented or insufficient in the face of systemic need.[71]

A study of diaspora giving in the UK suggests that creating physical and online spaces for collective giving can help multiply impact and strengthen accountability, particularly for second- and third-generation diaspora members seeking meaningful connection.[72]

Radhika Piramal reflected on how Pride Fund India provides a vehicle for diaspora supporters and others to pool resources and support a wide range of LGBTQI-led grassroots organisations in India, translating individual solidarity into grantmaking aligned with local priorities.[73]


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Interviewees also pointed to diaspora-led pooled funds shaped by shared identity and lived experience. GiveOut, the UK-based international LGBTQI community foundation, has supported diaspora-linked giving mechanisms that enable individuals with personal ties to particular regions to contribute collectively to LGBTQI activism, while drawing on established due diligence and grantmaking processes.[74] For example, Suki Sandhu, who has South Asian heritage, established a fund to support LGBTQI activism across Asia, engaging other donors with ties to the region.[75] Similarly, Liam Rezende, a UK-based Caribbean diaspora donor, described working to establish a pooled Caribbean LGBTQI Fund to mobilise diaspora and ally resources in a coordinated and accountable way, responding to funding gaps and growing regional pressures.[76]

Across these examples, pooled funds help bridge the gap between informal solidarity and more structured philanthropy.

Pride Fund India – Mobilising Diaspora Giving

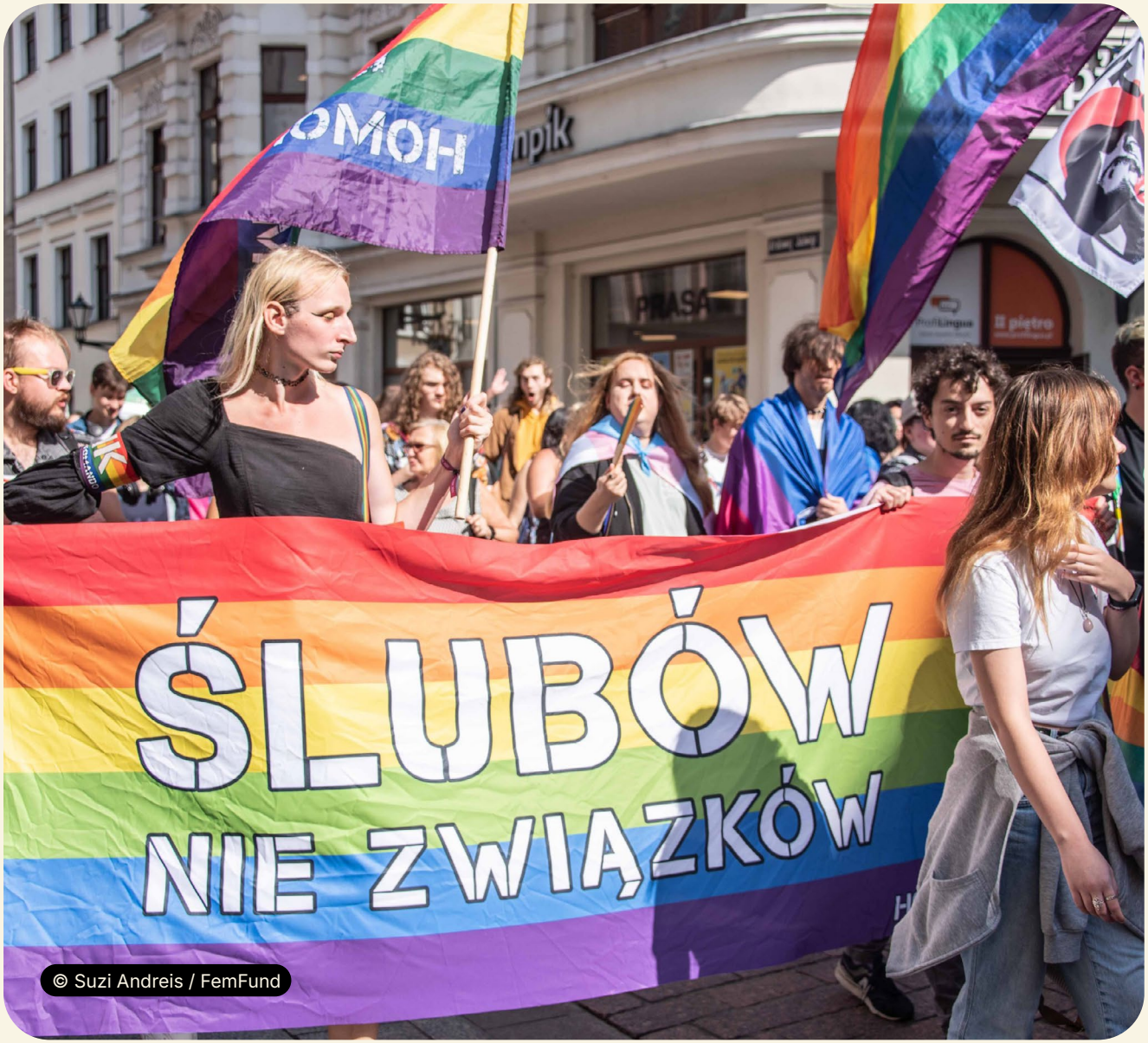
"Tapping into diaspora funding is a huge opportunity."

Radhika Piramal, Co-Founder, Pride Fund India[77]

Pride Fund India is a philanthropic initiative launched by Radhika Piramal to address the severe underfunding of LGBTQI movements in India, particularly as international funding declines. Drawing on her experience as a trustee of GiveOut, Piramal is mobilising personal, corporate, and diaspora networks to support LGBTQI-led grassroots organisations in a context where India receives less than 1% of global LGBTQI funding despite representing 18% of the world's population.[78]

Diaspora giving is central to the Fund's model. Working in partnership with Dasra, an India-focussed foundation with offices in India, the UK and the US, Pride Fund India provides a mechanism for Indian diaspora communities in the UK and elsewhere to pool resources and channel them to underfunded LGBTQI organisations working across health, justice, livelihoods, shelter, community access, and emergency support.

Launched with an initial corpus of ₹2 crore (approximately £190,000), supported by Godrej Industries Group, The Keshav Suri Foundation, and a personal contribution from Radhika Piramal, the Fund has already identified 20 grassroots organisations for support.[79]



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3.3 DIGITAL CROWDFUNDING AND RAPID RESPONSE

Digital platforms and social media have enabled forms of diaspora giving that are fast, relational, and responsive to moments of urgency. For LGBTQI movements, crowdfunding and online appeals can mobilise support quickly for emergency needs such as safe housing, healthcare, legal defence, or disaster response. These flows are typically informal and time-bound, relying on trust within networks rather than formal grantmaking processes.

Interviewees described these mechanisms as especially important where traditional funding channels are inaccessible or too slow. In Kenya, for example, mutual aid initiatives and emergency appeals shared through social media channels have enabled queer and trans organisers to raise small amounts rapidly from both local supporters and diaspora networks. Mumbi Makena Kanyogo described how The Trans and Queer Fund combines mobile

money transfers within Kenya with PayPal and other tools for supporters abroad, allowing diaspora contributions to complement community-led redistribution.[80]

Phyll Opoku-Gyimah described how UK Black Pride has amplified urgent fundraising appeals shared by trusted partners, including appeals supporting LGBTQI communities affected by crises in the Caribbean. In these cases, UK Black Pride does not act as a formal intermediary, but as a connector — using its reach, credibility, and community trust to mobilise rapid solidarity across borders. Phyll framed this as a form of responsibility rather than charity, emphasising that such giving is *"about solidarity, not saviour syndrome."*[81]

Overall, digital crowdfunding and rapid-response giving operate as a flexible layer within the wider resourcing ecosystem. They do not replace pooled funds, participatory grant-making, or longer-term support, but they play a distinct role by enabling diaspora communities to respond quickly and collectively when needs are most acute.

Diaspora Giving as Solidarity – UK Black Pride

"It's about solidarity, not saviour syndrome."

Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, Co-Founder and Chief Executive, UK Black Pride[82]

UK Black Pride provides a safe space to celebrate diverse sexualities, gender identities, expressions, cultures, and backgrounds, and works to foster, represent, and celebrate Black LGBTQI and Queer, Transgender and Intersex People of Colour (QTIPOC) communities through education, the arts, cultural events, and advocacy. It is the world's largest celebration for LGBTQI people of African, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American, and Middle Eastern descent, delivering a flagship annual Pride event alongside year-round activities across the UK.[83]

Phyll described diaspora giving not as a fixed or formalised practice, but as relational and community-led, shaped by second- and third-generation experiences. *"Some of us don't know where we come from,"* she noted, with many people identifying as part of the global majority rather than through a traditional diaspora lens. Giving often takes informal forms: sponsored events such as fun runs to support groups in Kenya, sending money directly to family and community members, and careful consideration of the safest ways to transfer funds to LGBTQI communities.

UK Black Pride has also played an important role in amplifying emergency appeals, including recent fundraising to support LGBTQI people affected by Hurricane Melissa in the Caribbean. Phyll described: *"Diaspora community really coming together. We do our utmost as it's connected to where we come from."*

3.4 DIASPORA-LED ORGANISATIONS AND CHARITIES

Beyond informal giving and pooled funds, some LGBTQI diaspora establish registered organisations or charities in the countries where they are now based to resource activism and support communities in their countries of origin. These organisations typically combine fundraising, advocacy, and service delivery, while navigating the regulatory, safety, and political constraints of operating transnationally.

Interviewees emphasised that diaspora-led organisations must continually balance visibility with protection.[84] Operating in highly criminalised or hostile contexts shapes what can be funded, how support is delivered, and how organisations communicate impact.

Diaspora and Modest Giving – Small Acts of Kindness, Nigeria

"At the end of the day, it's about small acts of kindness – making people think of new possibilities."

Judith Iwaomo Airiohuodion, Executive Director, Bisi Alimi Foundation[85]

Alongside foundation funding, the UK-based Bisi Alimi Foundation has begun to tap into diaspora giving, from Nigerians with lived experience who are now working abroad and want to support LGBTQI communities at home. This form of giving is often modest, relational, and grounded in solidarity rather than scale.

Judith described the Foundation as *"a connector and convenor"*, helping to channel contributions from individuals who want to give what they can. Emerging approaches include informal dinners and small fundraising gatherings, alongside individual donations from the diaspora.

One Million Ones, Southern Africa

"It's about building a robust funding ecosystem."

Kutlwano Magashula, Head of Programmes, The Other Foundation[86]

The Other Foundation has experimented with accessible models of individual and diaspora giving through initiatives such as the One Million Ones campaign. The campaign invited one million people to donate one rand each, emphasising participation and collective ownership over the size of individual contributions.

While rooted in South Africa, the campaign was open to supporters globally, including diaspora communities in the UK and US. Fundraising was complemented by informal gatherings, such as dinners hosted in people's homes and restaurants, where participants were invited to make one-off or regular donations and deepen their connection to the movement.

These efforts illustrate the potential of diaspora giving as a means of building solidarity and shared responsibility, even at an early stage. Kutlwano noted that there remains significant untapped potential to deepen these connections and further strengthen a transnational funding ecosystem for LGBTQI movements in southern Africa.

3.5 DIASPORA TO PARTICIPATORY FUNDS PIPELINES

Interviewees noted that established participatory, community-led funds are increasingly exploring how to engage diaspora giving in ways that align with movement priorities. These funds offer a trusted intermediary between diaspora supporters and grassroots groups, combining community legitimacy with systems for pooled giving, redistribution, and accountability. For diaspora donors, they can provide a way to contribute collectively without having to navigate risk, compliance, or grantmaking decisions individually.

In this model, diaspora contributions do not replace internal resourcing, but can reinforce it by flowing through structures that are governed by activists and rooted in local knowledge. As discussed in Chapter 2, funds such as UHAI EASHRI, The Other Foundation, ISDAO, and others are well positioned to act as bridges between community-led philanthropy and external solidarity, including diaspora giving, where this is safe and appropriate.

3.6 SKILLS, ADVOCACY, AND INFLUENCE TRANSFERS

Diaspora engagement is not limited to financial contributions. Interviewees highlighted the importance of non-financial transfers of skills, advocacy, and influence, which can play a complementary role in strengthening movements, particularly where funding is constrained or risky. A study of diaspora giving in the UK suggests that, beyond financial transfers, diaspora engagement frequently includes skills-sharing, mentoring, and knowledge exchange, enabling communities to build local capacity even where funding flows are constrained.[87]

Liam Rezende, a UK-based Caribbean diaspora donor, described using professional skills, networks, and influence to complement financial support — including governance roles, business advocacy, and stakeholder engagement — particularly where they are positioned to amplify local voices in regional or global forums.[88]

Gosia Leszko described how diaspora supporters of the Feminist Fund in Poland contribute not only through donations, but by offering connections, opening doors to new spaces, and representing the Fund's work internationally.[89]

Similarly, Wanja Ngure reflected that some groups supported by UHAI EASHRI engage diaspora actors for specific forms of assistance, such as navigating international advocacy processes or accessing resources that are difficult to reach locally. At the same time, she cautioned that such engagement requires care, as diaspora actors may be more insulated from local risk and may not always anticipate the consequences of external advocacy for communities on the ground.[90]

Across interviews, these forms of engagement were described as most effective when they are responsive rather than directive. Skills-sharing, introductions, and advocacy can add value when they are invited by movements and aligned with locally defined strategies.

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This chapter has shown that diaspora giving takes many forms, from direct remittances and pooled funds to rapid-response crowdfunding, diaspora-led organisations, and non-financial transfers of skills and influence. Its distinctive value lies less in scale than in flexibility, speed, and identity-based trust across borders.

Diaspora support is most effective when it reinforces and complements internal resourcing rather than substituting for it. At the same time, diaspora giving is shaped by real constraints, including safety and visibility risks, transfer friction, uneven capacity to give, and ethical questions about engaging people who may be rebuilding their lives after migration.

Together, these insights point to a broader lesson: resources move most effectively through trusted relationships and accountable structures. Where appropriate intermediaries exist, diaspora giving can act as a bridge between informal solidarity and more durable, community-led funding mechanisms.

This brings us to the role of external funding. While diaspora giving can complement both internal and external flows, it cannot meet the scale of need facing LGBTQI movements on its own. Chapter 4 explores how external actors can contribute to a more resilient and complementary resourcing ecosystem.

4. RETHINKING EXTERNAL FUNDING

External funding encompasses bilateral and multilateral development assistance, foundation grants, and corporate contributions, delivered directly to organisations or through intermediaries.

Across the interviews, external funding was consistently described as both vital and fragile. For many LGBTQI movements, philanthropic and development resources remain an important source of support, for sustaining organisations, covering core costs, and enabling work at scale.

At the same time, interviewees noted that external funding has become increasingly constrained, unpredictable, and difficult to access, precisely as needs are rising — especially in contexts marked by criminalisation, political hostility, or shrinking civic space.

Recent analysis by the Global Philanthropy Project indicates that resourcing for LGBTQI movements is entering a period of acute contraction. At least USD 105 million in government funding to the Global South and East is now at risk, with more than half of embassy-level grants potentially disappearing.[91] LGBTQI funding intermediaries report rapid reductions in both regranting and organisational budgets,[92] while several long-standing philanthropic funders are reducing or freezing

> "Resourcing looks like multiple things. External resourcing is not just about funding. There is knowledge and there are partners all over the world who we can work with and learn from."
>
> Bhavani Kumaran, Executive Director, Solidarity Foundation, India[93]

commitments, leaving grassroots LGBTQI organisations facing growing threats with diminishing external resources available.[94]

Wider cuts to foreign assistance, including the dismantling of USAID, have exposed how fragile the current funding paradigm is. While external funding has long provided a buffer for southern civil society, it has also created structural dependency. At the same time, governments in multiple regions are increasingly restricting international funding flows, weaponising "foreign agent" narratives to criminalise civil society actors.[95]

Building on the internal and diaspora resource flows explored in Chapters 2 and 3, this chapter examines how external funding interacts with community-led resourcing in practice. It first reflects on funding practices that interviewees identified as misaligned with movement realities. It then highlights approaches described as more supportive and complementary, before setting out practical considerations for funders seeking to engage in ways that centre — rather than undermine — community-led resourcing at a moment of profound funding uncertainty.

4.1 WHERE EXTERNAL FUNDING STRUGGLES TO ALIGN

Across the interviews, activists and community funders were clear that the challenge is not external funding in itself, but how it is often designed and delivered. When poorly aligned with community realities, external funding can inadvertently weaken, or even displace — rather than strengthen — community-led resourcing strategies that sustain movements.

IMPOSING STRATEGIES AND LANGUAGE

A recurring concern was the imposition of donor agendas, priorities, and language without sufficient grounding in lived experience. Interviewees described funding frameworks that prioritise visibility, legal reform, or advocacy outputs, while overlooking urgent needs related to safety, livelihoods, care, and survival.[96]

Mumbi Makena Kanyogo cautions against reducing queer liberation to a narrow liberal rights framework that fails to reflect the everyday realities of working-class LGBTQI people.[97] Interviewees noted that when donors define what counts as "legitimate" work, organisations can be pulled away from accountability to their communities towards upward accountability to funders. Over time, this risks weakening trust within movements and eroding organisational legitimacy.

Building a Queer Safety Net – What the Trans and Queer Fund Asks of Donors

"Queer people don't have safety nets. How do we create a safety net for queer people?"

Mumbi Makena Kanyogo, The Trans and Queer Fund[98]

The Trans and Queer Fund (TQF) provides small grants to individuals every two to three months, typically totalling USD 6,000–7,000 per round, to meet urgent and practical needs such as healthcare, rent for private and safe housing, private transport for safety, food and groceries, and school fees. Anyone can apply, and rather than requiring extensive documentation, the Fund relies on informal verification through social media profiles and community connections, reflecting a deliberate move away from forcing people to repeatedly prove their need.

From Mumbi's perspective, external donors need to rethink not only what they fund, but how they fund. Large sums of money can be disruptive, while smaller, thoughtful forms of engagement — including time, learning, and accompaniment — can be more useful and appropriate. TQF's long-term vision focuses on infrastructure rather than projects, including safe spaces, housing, food provision, and healthcare, particularly for older queer people who may not have family safety nets.

Mumbi also cautioned against narrowing queer liberation to legal reform alone. *"We could win decriminalisation [of same-sex relations] today. But who would really enjoy it?"* For TQF, donor support must centre material safety, collective care, and long-term infrastructure if it is to meaningfully improve the lives of working-class queer and trans people.

PROJECTISATION, RIGIDITY, AND ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

Many interviewees highlighted the persistence of short-term, project-based grants with heavy administrative and reporting demands. These models sit uneasily alongside the informal, adaptive, and trust-based systems described in Chapters 2 and 3, where resources often need to move quickly and discreetly.

Sarita K.C. of Mitini Nepal captured this tension succinctly, noting that *"submitting proposals can sometimes feel like a poor use of time."*[99] For organisations operating with limited staff capacity — often in hostile environments — translating lived realities into donor templates can come at the expense of direct support, organising, or care.

Rigid budgets and activity plans further limit organisations' ability to respond to emerging needs. When grants cannot be adapted without formal approval, groups are forced either to absorb risks internally or to rely more heavily on already stretched community resources. Severus Hama-Owamparo at the Taala Foundation highlighted a lack of trust in communities' ability to manage resources, calling instead for investment in care infrastructure and long-term sustainability.[100]

PUBLICITY OVER PROTECTION

Another concern is pressure to demonstrate visibility, scale, or public impact in ways that can expose activists and communities to risk. In criminalised or politically hostile contexts, publicity is not a neutral good. As Judith Iwaomo Airiohuodion explained, *"safety and visibility are constant negotiations."*[101]

Interviewees emphasised that discretion, anonymity, and low visibility are often essential components of ethical and effective resourcing. Yet these practices may be undervalued or misunderstood by external funders more accustomed to public-facing narratives of impact.

SHORT-TERMISM AND FUNDING VOLATILITY

Short funding cycles were widely seen as misaligned with the long timelines required for movement-building, care infrastructure, and trust-based organising.

When funding ends abruptly or donor priorities shift, organisations are often left to absorb the consequences, drawing once again on internal and diaspora-led resources to sustain core functions. In this context, external funding can feel less like a stabilising force and more like a volatile layer added onto already fragile systems.

MEASUREMENT MISMATCH AND PROFESSIONALISATION

A further challenge identified across interviews was the mismatch between donor reporting frameworks and what communities consider meaningful evidence of impact. Bhavani Kumaran's observation that *"resourcing looks like multiple things"* speaks directly to this gap.

Standardised logframes, linear indicators, and compliance-heavy reporting tend to privilege forms of professionalisation that mirror donor bureaucracies, rather than strengthening community legitimacy or accountability. Global research on community-led development echoes this concern, showing how such systems often oversimplify complex realities and divert scarce time and energy away from work on the ground.[102]

As a result, measurement practices frequently fail to capture what LGBTQI movements consistently identify as central to their work: trust, safety, resilience, solidarity, belonging, and dignity. Well-intentioned accountability mechanisms can inadvertently undermine the relational strength and autonomy that sustain movements over time. As Phyll Opoku-Gyimah reflected, *"I'd love to see flexible giving that recognised the needs of grassroots movements,"* particularly through core support rather than narrowly defined projects.[103]

NOT VALUING LOCAL CONTRIBUTION

Finally, interviewees highlighted a persistent failure to recognise the scale and significance of local contributions. Communities routinely invest labour, care, knowledge, social capital, and personal resources over many years, yet these investments are rarely acknowledged as foundational forms of resourcing. As community philanthropy practitioners note, donors often frame their grants as the primary "counterpart," yet overlook the far greater investments communities make through decades of organising, lived experience, local knowledge, social capital, labour, and personal resources.[104]

As Gosia Leszko put it plainly, *"making decisions about money is a form of power."*[105] When external funding is framed as the primary or defining contribution, it obscures the reality that donor resources are often layered onto long-standing community effort. This framing risks reinforcing power imbalances and undervaluing the assets that communities already bring.

Massan d'Almeida of XOESE emphasised that contributions should be recognised as different but equal: donors may bring funding, while communities bring ideas, leadership, relationships, and lived experience.[106] Failing to value these contributions not only distorts power, but weakens the very ecosystems external funding seeks to support.

4.2 WHAT SUPPORTIVE FUNDING LOOKS LIKE

Across the interviews, there was strong alignment that external funding can be transformative when it is designed to reinforce community-led resourcing, rather than to replace it. Interviewees emphasised that what matters is not only how much money is provided, but how it is provided.

RESOURCING BEYOND GRANTS

Several interviewees stressed that external support is not only about funding. It can include partnerships, accompaniment, knowledge sharing, protection, and access to networks. Bhavani Kumaran captured this plainly: *"Resourcing looks like multiple things. External resourcing is not just about funding. There is knowledge and there are partners all over the world who we can work with and learn from."*[107]

This broader framing was echoed by interviewees who described convening, learning, introductions, and solidarity as forms of resourcing that can be as valuable as financial support when delivered in ways that respect community leadership.

FLEXIBLE, TRUST-BASED FUNDING THAT MATCHES LIVED REALITIES

The most consistent marker of "good" external funding was flexibility. Interviewees described how rigid budgets, narrow project plans, and high reporting burdens often collide with volatile contexts, where needs shift quickly and discretion is essential.

By contrast, flexible core support and light-touch reporting were described as enabling organisations to respond to risk, sustain staff capacity, and support care infrastructures that cannot be neatly projectised.

MOVEMENT-LED DECISION-MAKING AND TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

Interviewees highlighted the value of funding models that shift decision-making closer to communities, including participatory funds and community-led intermediaries.

Participatory funds can act as trusted pathways that can reach groups external donors often struggle to fund directly, while reducing risk and strengthening accountability to movements rather than to donor agendas.

At the same time, participatory funds are not the only pathway to supporting frontline work. Some face challenges in responding to external donor requirements, and they may not be the most appropriate vehicle for nurturing community philanthropy or local resource mobilisation.

INVESTING IN RESOURCING CAPACITY AND DIVERSIFICATION

A further theme was that strengthening long-term sustainability requires investing in resource mobilisation itself, not only programmes. Studies from East Africa show that over half of organisations lack trained staff dedicated to local resource mobilisation, underscoring that sustainable resourcing requires investment in people, systems, and institutional capacity — not only programmes.[108]

Olumide Makanjuola noted that *"you need resources to raise resources"*, pointing to the importance of funding fundraising capacity, communications, systems, and strategies that can diversify income over time.[109] This was echoed by donor interviewees who argued that building organisational and fundraising capacity can enable more resilient, community-driven resourcing beyond the life of a single grant.[110]

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY WITHOUT OVERSHADOWING IT

Several interviewees emphasised that external funding is most complementary when it recognises local contributions and helps them grow. Severus Hama-Owamparo framed this as a question of trust and narrative.[111] One practical implication raised in interviews was matching community giving, to amplify locally owned practices while maintaining community control.

Taken together, these insights point to an external funding approach grounded in humility and partnership: fund what communities say they need; support what already exists; reduce burdens and risks; invest in long-term resilience; and treat movements as agents of change rather than implementers of donor strategies.

Recognising and Supporting Community Philanthropy – Taala Foundation, Uganda

Taala's approach to resourcing is grounded in a belief that community itself is a core resource. As Severus explained, *"We view community as resource,"* drawing on a long history of marginalised movements in Uganda supporting one another. This has included deeply personal forms of care, from rotating support across each other's homes to helping one another find work.

As part of this approach, Taala has supported a model of community philanthropy in which individuals contribute directly to the mental health fund through bank transfers. Around 40–60 people currently give, with contributions determined by what individuals are able to offer. This model is intentionally designed to build a *"spirit of community philanthropy,"* challenging narratives that frame African communities solely as recipients of aid.

Severus emphasised that external funders have an important role to play by recognising and strengthening these existing practices. One proposed approach is for external support to match community giving, amplifying local contributions rather than replacing them. As Severus noted, *"Community is resource because trust is fundamental,"* underscoring the need for trust-based philanthropy that invests in care infrastructure and long-term sustainability.

Raising awareness about community philanthropy is also important. As Severus noted, dominant narratives often frame Africans primarily as recipients of aid, despite significant levels of giving within communities themselves.

The long-term goal is clear: *"Embedding mental health and well-being into the fabric of activism will be essential in maintaining the strength and longevity of these movements paving the way for a more inclusive just and equitable future on the continent."*[112]

> "We are capable of resourcing our movement."
>
> Severus Hama-Owamparo, Director, The Taala Foundation[113]

4.3 FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR COMPLEMENTARY FUNDING

The findings in this report point to a clear conclusion: LGBTQI movements are already resourcing themselves in diverse, creative, and resilient ways. The role of external funders is not to replace, undermine or displace these efforts, but to recognise, centre, and reinforce them.

In a context of accelerating funding cuts, political hostility, and rising need, interviewees consistently emphasised that how resources flow matters as much as how much is given. The following five principles seek to distil what movements, community funders, and diaspora actors identified as most urgent for external funders to consider to ensure that external funding centres — rather than overrides — community-led resourcing.

1. RECOGNISE COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY AS THE FOUNDATION

Across all regions, interviewees stressed that resourcing does not begin with external donors. Instead, it begins with communities — through labour, care, relationships, time, knowledge, gifts, savings, mutual aid, and collective organising built over years, often decades.

External funding is most effective when it explicitly recognises these contributions as primary capital, not informal or secondary inputs. Treating donor grants as the starting point risks obscuring the scale of what communities already mobilise, and reinforcing power imbalances in which external actors appear as originators rather than partners.

Funders should begin from a position of humility: external resources complement — they do not generate — community action.

2. INVEST IN RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Many interviewees emphasised that sustaining movements requires investment not only in activities, but in the ability to mobilise resources over time. This includes strengthening internal fundraising, supporting diaspora pipelines, and enabling philanthropic advocacy.

As several community-led funders noted, *"you need resources to raise resources."*[114] Yet fundraising capacity, infrastructure, and experimentation are often excluded from donor priorities. Investing in resource mobilisation — across communities, countries, and diasporas — helps reduce dependency on volatile external flows and strengthens long-term autonomy.

3. CREATE AND SUPPORT FORUMS FOR SHARED LEARNING AND CONNECTION

The research points to the need for spaces where funders, intermediaries, diaspora actors, movements and others can meet as peers — to learn how different forms of resourcing interact and how power can be shared more equitably.

Convenings, exchanges, and collaborative platforms can help surface alternative and community-led philanthropy models, connect complementary actors, and enable experimentation with approaches such as matching funds, pooled safety nets, or blended resourcing mechanisms. These spaces also support philanthropic advocacy, helping shift norms within the funding ecosystem itself.

For funders, this includes using their influence to open doors — not only to other donors and corporate actors, but also to alternative sources of support, partnerships, and non-financial resources that movements may not be able to access on their own.

In a fragmented and fragile funding landscape, such connective infrastructure can function as vital "tissue" — enabling solidarity, coordination, and collective imagination across borders.


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4. PROVIDE FLEXIBLE SUPPORT THAT STRENGTHENS SAFETY NETS

Interviewees consistently challenged narrow funding priorities focused on legal reform, visibility, or advocacy outputs alone. In many contexts, the most urgent needs relate to survival and care: safe housing, healthcare, livelihoods, mental health support, transport, and protection from violence.

Interviewees described the absence of reliable safety nets for LGBTQI people — particularly those rejected by families or excluded from formal systems.[115] Flexible funding that supports care infrastructure and material security is therefore not peripheral to movement-building; it is foundational.

Funders should be open to supporting what communities identify as necessary — even when this sits outside conventional programme categories — and recognise that building safety nets is itself a long-term strategy for resilience and freedom.

5. PRACTISE TRUST AS A FUNDING DISCIPLINE

Finally, trust emerged as one of the most decisive factors shaping whether external funding helps or hinders movements. Interviewees described how rigid applications, intensive reporting, visibility demands, and donor-driven indicators often consume scarce capacity, increase risk, and weaken accountability to communities.

Trust-based funding goes beyond reducing paperwork. It means accepting community-defined priorities, respecting decisions about visibility and discretion, and allowing organisations to adapt as contexts shift.

This emphasis on trust mirrors how movements themselves function: through relationships, shared responsibility, and accountability within and between communities. Funding that reflects these dynamics is more likely to reinforce, rather than disrupt, how movements organise and sustain themselves.

External funding will continue to matter for LGBTQI movements. Its value lies not in scale alone, but in how well it aligns with the ways communities already resource themselves.

Across contexts, the most effective external support was described as funding that listens, adapts, and reinforces existing systems of care, solidarity, and collective ownership. When funders recognise community philanthropy, invest in resource mobilisation, and work through trust-based relationships, external resources can help stabilise movements, extend their reach, and absorb shocks without displacing local agency.

As funding landscapes shift and risks intensify, the challenge for external actors is not simply to give, but to give differently.

5. CONCLUSION

This report has shown that LGBTQI movements are not simply waiting to be resourced. Across contexts, communities are mobilising resources through mutual aid, pooled giving, care infrastructures, livelihoods, and community-led funds — often in environments where visibility is dangerous and formal funding systems are inaccessible. Diaspora giving adds a further layer, bringing transnational solidarity, identity-based connection, and flexible support that can move quickly in moments of need. External funding, when designed and delivered well, remains vital.

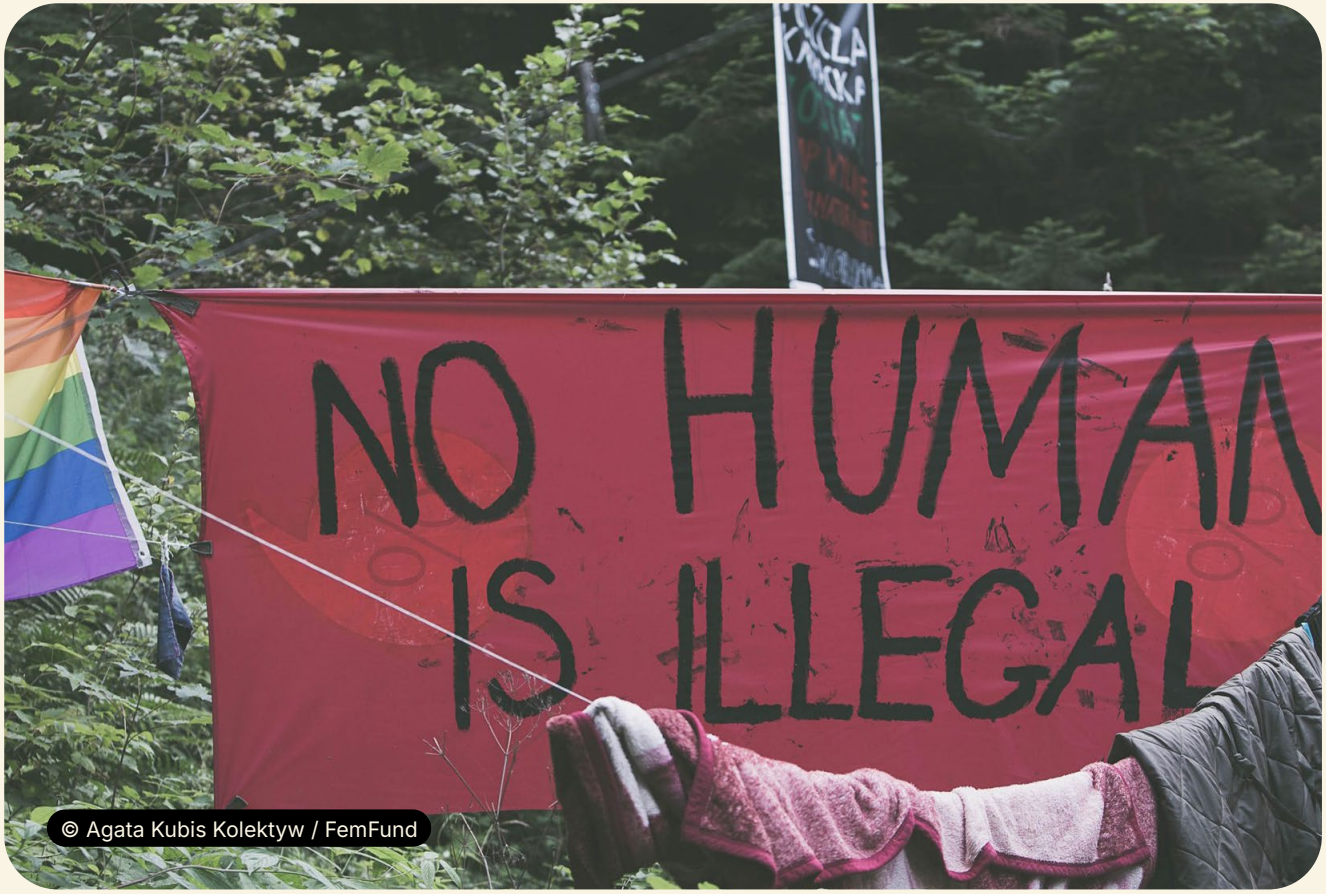
Taken together, these flows should not be understood as separate or competing streams. They form a broader resourcing ecosystem. Each plays a distinct role. Internal flows provide immediacy, trust, and deep legitimacy. Diaspora contributions bring solidarity, flexibility, and cross-border ties. External funding offers the potential for scale, infrastructure, and longer-term investment. The central question is not which source matters most, but how they interact — and whether they reinforce or undermine one another.

In a moment marked by funding cuts, political backlash, and growing pressure on civil society, this ecosystem perspective is particularly urgent. As external funding becomes more fragile, there is a risk that community resourcing is treated as a fallback or substitute, or that external resources — when they do arrive — disrupt the systems of care and accountability that communities have built over time. This report argues for a different approach: one in which external funding recognises what is already happening, supports it deliberately, and complements rather than overrides community-led strategies.

> “More than ever … we need to collectively think about shifting power and resources.”
>
> Olumide Makanjuola, Director of Programmes, Initiative Sankofa d’Afrique de l’Ouest (ISDAO)[116]

LGBTQI movements also have much to offer beyond their own contexts. Decades of organising under constraint have produced practical models of trust-based resourcing, collective care, and resilience that hold relevance for other movements and for philanthropy more broadly. These practices demonstrate that sustainability is not only a question of money, but of relationships, legitimacy, and shared responsibility.

This report is offered as a contribution to that conversation. By making visible some of the internal, diaspora, and external resource flows that sustain LGBTQI movements — and by examining how they can better align — it seeks to support more resilient, connected, and community-led resourcing ecosystems. At a time when the stakes are high and resources are under pressure, how funding works matters as much as how much is given.



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