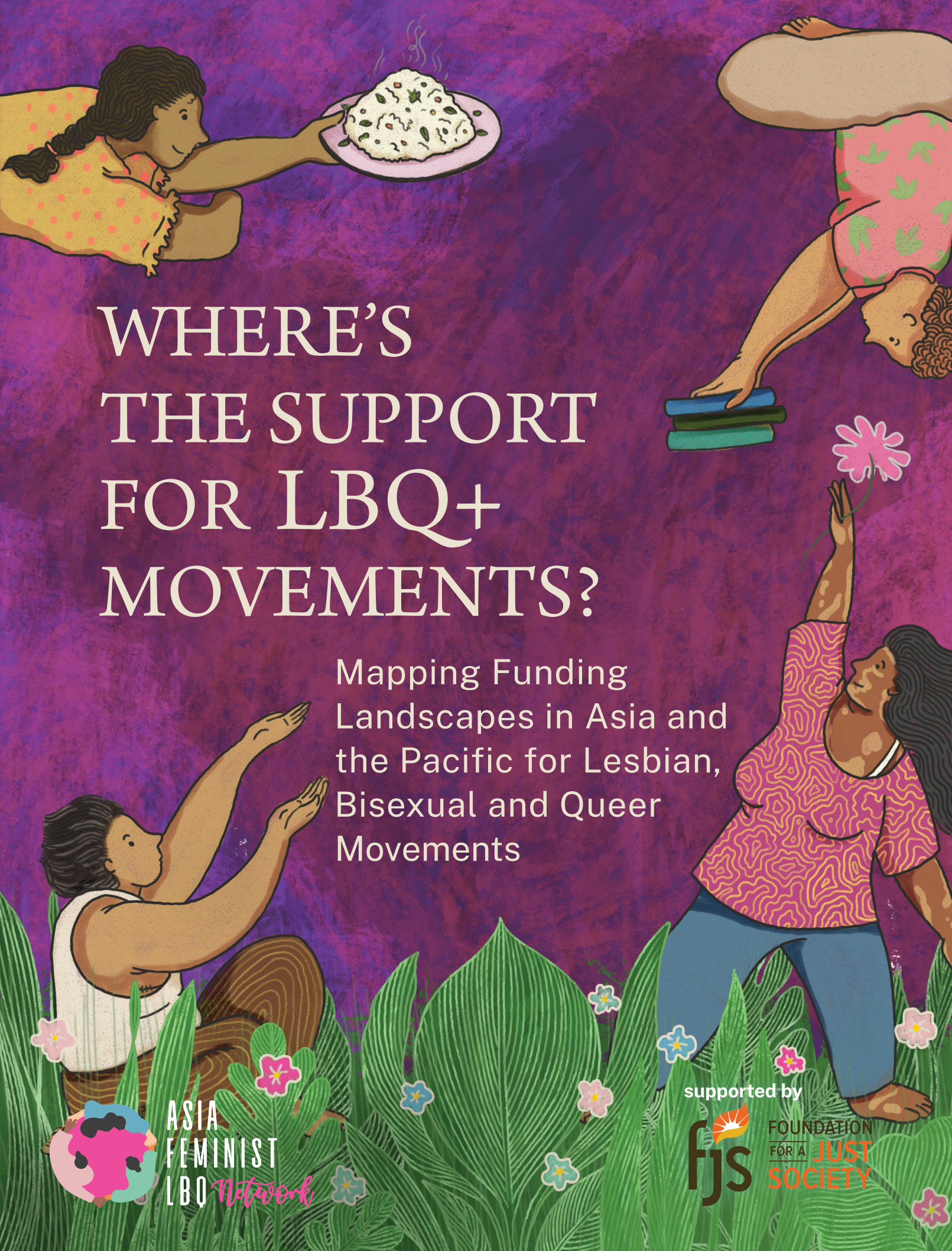




WHERE'S THE SUPPORT FOR LBQ+ MOVEMENTS?

Mapping Funding
Landscapes in Asia and
the Pacific for Lesbian,
Bisexual and Queer
Movements



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Where's the Support for LBQ+ Movements?

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	4
Acknowledgements	5
Foreword	6
Key terms and abbreviations	7
Introduction	8
Methodology	10
Limitations	13
Funding Landscape - Brief Overview	14
Movement Perspectives	18
Who took the survey - a snapshot	19
LBQ+ organizing history in Asia and the Pacific: A snapshot	24
Financial resources	28
Number of people benefiting from LBQ+ activism	40
The issues they work on	41
Strategies employed	50
Resource mobilization perspectives and experiences	54
Funder Perspectives	78
Who took the survey - a snapshot	79
Issues they fund	85
Strategies they fund	87
Challenges they face when trying to fund	89
Good practices	94
What funders think LBQ+ activists and movements need	98
What funders need themselves	101
Opportunities for queer feminist funding	102
To have or not to have a dedicated fund?	103
Recommendations from research participants	108
Conclusions	114
Key findings	115
Next steps: Consultation, Conversation and Collaboration	116
Annex A. Country list	118

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We are also grateful to our trusted friends and colleagues in LBQ+ movements in Asia and the Pacific who offered nominations for the Advisory Group, freely engaging with our requests and criteria and offering a wide range of contacts from within their own communities and networks. Allies from LBQ+ movements in other regions also extended their support and solidarity, for which we are grateful.

Finally, we wish to thank the entire team at The Asia Feminist LBQ Network for their trust and support throughout the research process.

-Devi Leiper O'Malley, Neha Sood and Subha Wijesiriwardena.



Foreword

At the heart of feminist justice lies a simple truth: the people most impacted by inequality must be the ones leading the solutions. For too long, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and trans (LBQ+) communities across Asia and the Pacific have been organizing for survival, healing, joy, and transformation — while receiving only a fraction of the recognition and resourcing they deserve.

This research was born out of that contradiction and struggle.

For decades, LBQ+ activists have demanded that the violence and discrimination they face — in their homes, streets, workplaces, and institutions — be seen and addressed. Yet funding landscapes continue to overlook their work, often treating it as marginal to broader women's rights or LGBTQI agendas. Our movements have made powerful contributions to feminist, queer, anti-violence, and social justice work across this region. But those contributions have often been made invisible, underfunded, or co-opted.

Through this research on the funding landscapes in Asia and the Pacific, we set out to map this terrain — to name the funding gaps, hear directly from activists, understand the experiences of funders, and co-create knowledge that will help shift the power dynamics within philanthropy. What emerged from this process is not only a detailed picture of inequity but a resounding call to reimagine how resources flow: from transactional funding to transformative trust, from piecemeal grants to long-term commitments, from exclusion to solidarity.

Above all, we affirm that funding intended to support LBQ+ communities must go directly to LBQ+-led organizations — those with the lived experience, political clarity, and movement roots to lead this work.

The insights in this report come from those living and organizing at the margins and intersections — people who face the double erasure of patriarchy and heteronormativity. Their voices, strategies, and visions for change must guide how we move forward.

We hope this research will be a tool to challenge donor practices, deepen accountability, and strengthen our collective push for a Queer Feminist Fund rooted in our queer feminist political values. Because resourcing is not neutral — it is a political act. It can either sustain systems of dominance or support movements that dare to dismantle them.

In solidarity,

Jean Chong

Executive Director
Asia Feminist LBQ Network

Key terms and abbreviations

LBQ+	Refers to lesbian, bisexual and queer women, trans, intersex and gender-diverse people
LBQ+-led organizations	Refers to entities led by LBQ+ people. This can mean groups, organizations, collectives, and/or networks, registered or unregistered.
Ally organizations	Refers to organizations that are not specifically led by LBQ+ people, but work towards the rights of LBQ+ people
LGBTQIA+	Refers to people with diverse marginalized sexual orientations, gender identities and sex characteristics, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex and asexual
Asia	Refers to the full continent comprising the subregions of West Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia used in this report (refer to Annex A for country list)
NGO	non-governmental organization
FGD	focus group discussion

Introduction



Around the world, lesbian, bisexual and queer women, trans, intersex and gender-diverse people (hereinafter “LBQ+ people”) continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, violence, and socioeconomic marginalization, including forced marriage, sexual violence, limits on property rights and restrictions on mobility, amongst others.¹ These experiences remain largely invisible and unaddressed by both broader LGBTQIA+ and women’s rights movements. In this context, LBQ+-led organizing is critical for advancing the rights of LBQ+ people.

LBQ+-led movements are vibrant and intersectional, informed by the perspectives of LBQ+ people and focused on collective liberation. Yet, the invisibility of LBQ+ rights violations and organizing has manifested in a lack of funding for LBQ+-led movements. A 2020 global study by Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice and Mama Cash found that LBQ groups in Asia and the Pacific had a median budget of USD 13,000 and median external funding of USD 1,170,² and only 8% of global grants to LBQ groups reached the region.³ A 2024 global study by Global Philanthropy Project found that LBQ-focused funding in Asia and the Pacific in 2021-2022 totaled USD 2.8 million, which was only 0.31% of global LGBTI funding during that period (USD 905.5 million).⁴

In light of the persistent under-resourcing of LBQ+-led movements in Asia and the Pacific, the Asia Feminist LBQ Network (AFLN) decided to undertake a research project to learn more deeply about the resource gaps in the region, the barriers LBQ+ movements face in accessing funds, the challenges funders face in supporting LBQ+ movements, and funder practices that are necessary to sustain strong and effective movements in the region. Further, the study examined the potential value-add of creating a queer feminist fund dedicated to supporting LBQ+ movements in the region.

1 Human Rights Watch (2023). *“This Is Why We Became Activists” Violence Against Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Women and Non-Binary People*.

2 Saleh, L and Sood, N, (2020). *Vibrant Yet Under-Resourced: The State of Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Movements*, p.47-48. New York and Amsterdam: Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice and Mama Cash.

3 Ibid, p. 61.

4 Global Philanthropy Project (2024). *2021-2022 Global Resources Report - Government and Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities*, p. 28, 65.

Methodology

Objectives of the research

The research sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To document the current funding experiences of LBQ+ organizations in Asia and the Pacific, and identify gaps, challenges, opportunities, and ideas for the future.
- To examine the potential added value of the creation of a queer feminist fund to serve LBQ+ organizations in Asia and the Pacific, and explore the potential parameters of such a mechanism (for example, geographic scope).

Geographic scope

The research has a broad geographic scope. It includes the Asian subregions of West, Central, South, Southeast, and East Asia, as well as the region of the Pacific.⁵ The full list of included countries can be found in Annex A.

A broad scope was proposed by the researchers since there are a variety of funding policies and mechanisms that cover both Asia and the Pacific or varied combinations of subregions therein. The researchers felt that the selection of some of these sub/regions for the study and not others would be arbitrary given the politics of national borders as well as the physical movement of LBQ+ activists and communities across borders. Given the scarcity of resources for LBQ+ movements across the globe, the researchers thought more inclusion would be an advantage, so that different institutions could use the data to inform their geographic-based decision-making.

Research participants

The research draws on several different perspectives to answer these questions. Broadly, the research sought the experiences, perspectives and insights of four groups:

- LBQ+-led groups/organizations/networks/collectives, registered or unregistered in Asia and/or the Pacific (hereinafter “LBQ+-led groups”)
- Groups/organizations/networks/collectives not led by LBQ+ people but having dedicated programs or projects focused on the rights of LBQ+ people in Asia and/or the Pacific (hereinafter “ally organizations”)
- Individual LBQ+ activists who work primarily as individuals and/or may engage with several different organizations/groups/networks/collectives (hereinafter “individual LBQ+ activists”)
- Diverse funders - including feminist funds, women’s funds, private foundations, bilateral agencies and international non-government organizations that may be providing funds and

⁵ This includes all the subregions of the Pacific: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Whilst recognizing the diversity of these subregions, the Pacific was treated as one region for the purpose of the research.

resources as part of their larger programs or offering fiscal sponsorship services to LBQ+ groups. This included funding institutions that currently support LBQ+ activism in Asia and the Pacific, institutions who may not currently support LBQ+ activism in Asia and the Pacific but are interested in doing so in the near future, and institutions who may not currently support LBQ+ activism in Asia and the Pacific but have done so in the recent past (5 years).

Data collection

The research used a mixed method approach including surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and desk research.

To achieve the first objective of understanding current funding experiences and trends, the research used two online surveys:

The 'Activist survey' was open to LBQ+-led groups, ally organizations, and individual LBQ+ activists. To reach as many perspectives as possible across the regions, this survey was offered in nine languages: English, Thai, Bahasa Indonesia, Tamil, Hindi, Nepali, Chinese, Arabic, and Russian.

The 'Funder survey' was open to funders and NGOs that have funding programs. This survey was offered in English only.

The surveys were available on SurveyMonkey and open for at least 4 weeks for all languages. The English language surveys were open for the longest period of 6 weeks. Information on the number and types of survey respondents is shared at the start of each of the following sections. Only fully completed survey responses were included in data analysis.

To gather deeper insights and address the second research objective of examining the potential value of a queer feminist fund, the researchers used focus group discussions and interviews. Focus group discussions were organized by the six geographic sub-regions mentioned above, inviting 7-9 activists from each of these regions to participate. These activists were chosen based on their participation in the survey and indication of wanting to participate further, as well as input from the Research Advisory Group (more information below) and AFLN.

Interviews were held with a range of funding institutions working within Asia and the Pacific. This list was also created based on survey responses from both the activist and funder surveys, as well as input from AFLN. It included nine interviews with bilateral funders, private foundations, feminist funds, a donor network and NGO professionals, and one group discussion with three feminist funds working within or across Asia and/or the Pacific.

Desk research was conducted to review existing literature about the state of organizing and funding for LBQ and allied (e.g. women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights) movements globally and in Asia and the Pacific. Literature related to the recent establishment of feminist funds was also reviewed to learn about the research methodologies used (where applicable) and the movement perspectives documented in those contexts.

Research Advisory Group

A Research Advisory Group was created to inform the research design, support researchers in identifying high-quality interpreters and translators, pilot and test the surveys, facilitate outreach to potential research participants, and finally, to participate in ‘sense-making’ discussions in the final phase of analysis.

Eight LBQ+ activists representing each of the Asia subregions and the Pacific were part of the Advisory Group. They were selected through a rigorous process, which entailed the creation of a long-list, with input from AFLN and other trusted regionally-based LBQ+ activists. From the long-list, a short-list was created by the researchers. The final selection was made based on candidates’ experience of working in LBQ+ movements in Asia and the Pacific, especially at the local or national level in their regions where they are from. The researchers ensured that there was an intergenerational mix among the advisors, as well as representation of a range of issue-specific knowledge.



Limitations

Whilst the researchers, the Advisory Group and AFLN did extensive distribution to ensure the surveys reached the greatest number of potential respondents possible, there could have been a larger data set, given the wide geographic scope the research tried to cover. Only a convenience sample was possible, and therefore the research does not claim to represent the whole Asia and Pacific region.

The outreach was reliant on existing networks, and may not have reached certain groups. AFLN supported especially with advertising the survey, but the primary scope of its work only on Southeast Asia. The survey may not have reached activists with limited access to technology and the internet, or activists working in highly restrictive contexts. Some potential respondents may not see themselves as part of the Asia and Pacific regions and thus may not have engaged with the survey announcement.

Furthermore, the current situation in certain countries and subregions may have prevented activists from having the time and capacity to fill the survey. For instance, the survey was launched during Israel's bombing of Lebanon in 2024, Israel's genocide in Palestine, increased state and military violence in Myanmar's ongoing civil war, and heavy flooding in Northern Thailand and parts of Indonesia.

The individual activists that took part in the survey did not clarify at times whether they were answering the questions based on their individual activism or the work of organizations they are affiliated with. This proved challenging at times when it came to analysis.

There were challenges in finalizing translations of the survey, so some survey languages were available earlier than others. In other words, surveys in some languages were not available for the full survey period, which may have affected some participation. The researchers ensured that each language was available for at least 4 weeks and the majority of the respondents used the English language survey. Given the linguistic diversity of the regions, some perspectives may have been lost due to language-based limitations in relation to the surveys and focus group discussions.

Similarly, the funder survey did not receive as many responses as was hoped, nor as much variety in the types of funders who ultimately took the survey. Not many NGOs took the funder survey - this is a limitation of the overall data, especially since many LBQ+-led organizations reported that funding for their work comes from other NGOs. The role of NGOs in the LBQ+ funding ecosystem, therefore, warrants further study.

Some survey questions were optional to facilitate completion of the surveys, resulting in substantial numbers of missing responses. Finally, only fully completed survey responses were included in data analysis to ensure integrity of the data. However, this did mean that the research ultimately saw a reduced dataset.

Funding Landscape



Brief Overview

Discussions with activists and funders revealed a number of funding trends that affected LBQ+ activism in Asia and the Pacific. Since LBQ+ movements are part of and intrinsically connected to broader LGBTQIA+ movements, there has been an assumption that LBQ+ movements would be sufficiently resourced through funding streams earmarked for LGBTQIA+ movements. However, this assumption has not held true.

“This is something that’s not my original thought, but has come from conversations with LBQ movements and activists in the region, which is the current funding strategy of situating LBQ movements within broader LGBTQI rights funding umbrella hasn’t been working successfully.”

- Interview, funder

“In our region LBTIQ activism has been very intersectional. Funding is seldom intersectional. Funding is more identity driven and less intersectional.”

- FGD, funder

Many participants expressed the view that key priorities of LBQ+-led movements — for example, addressing family violence and other forms of gender-based violence and its impact on LBQ+ persons — were not often supported by existing LGBTIQ+ funding frameworks. This perception can be substantiated by research which shows that only 2% of LGBTI funding in Asia and the Pacific goes to anti-violence work.⁶

Some participants reflected on how historical patterns in LGBTIQ+ funding — for example, mobilizing resources to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS — disadvantaged LBQ+-led organizations, and even tended to favor organizations led by and working with other communities within the LGBTIQ+ spectrum. While HIV/AIDS funding is itself beginning to decline,⁷ research participants opined that the issue of HIV/AIDS had dominated the global LGBTIQ+ funding landscape and had remained a major priority for LGBTIQ+ funders over many years - often at the cost of other issues that are a priority for LBQ+ movements.

⁶ Global Philanthropy Project (2024), p.98.

⁷ Ibid, p.58.

“The difficulties are that most of the donors who are funding Pakistan right now are...HIV centric, and from 2013 till now, I believe that the LBQ sector has been suppressed the most.”

- FGD participant, activist (South Asia)

“It has always been an issue that LBQ women are not highlighted even in the movement as well, because, you know, most of the funding is focused on HIV and prevention. But when it comes to gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, mental health issues, sexual and reproductive health rights of LBQ women - these are the issues that were never discussed. Even when it comes to funding opportunities in SRHR, even in that context, the funding prioritizes HIV prevention, but is not focused on [other] SRHR issues”

- FGD participant, activist (South Asia)

LBQ+ movements have remained under-resourced for decades.⁸ Participants reflected that in recent years, with the strengthening of the feminist-funded architecture, LBQ+ movements have received more resources than decades prior, especially from women's / feminist funds. For example, in 2021-2022, Women's Fund Asia gave the 7th highest LGBTI funding in Asia and the Pacific.⁹ They shared that approximately 20% of their grant-making was to LBTIQ organizations. Urgent Action Fund Asia and Pacific shared that approximately 13% of their grants went to LBTIQ defenders in 20 countries. Grantee partners of women's/feminist funds reflected that they were 'extremely supportive', listened to LBQ+ communities and sought to understand the situation on the ground so they could meet needs effectively.

Other funders are less flexible. Participants shared that funders such as the EU and national embassies prioritize giving to big organizations and those that work with the full spectrum of LGBTQIA+ communities, often resulting, unfortunately, in the exclusion of LBQ+-focused groups. Others noted that funders requiring organizations to be registered in order to access funding posed a challenge to groups that either chose not to register for political reasons or could not register due to the political and/or legal contexts they operate within.

8 Saleh, L and Sood, N, (2020), p.13.

9 Global Philanthropy Project (2024), p.95.

“Funders shifted priorities to funding large “host” organizations - LGBTIQ organizations which can host large amounts of money and redistribute the funding to members only. The more members your organization has, the more likely you are to receive the funding.”

- FGD participant, activist (Southeast Asia)

“The EU only funds very big organizations. And their requirements are insane. And they require you to partner with EU organizations. We share our ideas with them and then we don't get (funding). We have tried and we have given up. We don't want it. We don't want to be tokenized.”

- FGD participant, activist (East Asia)

Recent years have seen some of the largest bilateral donors — including the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and U.S.A., amongst others — slashing their official development assistance budgets. This affects social movements at large, including LBQ+ movements. Giving by two private philanthropic institutions, considered champions of LGBTQIA+ movements, is changing: Open Society Foundations recently cut more than 65% of their staff, which will affect their ability to fund smaller organizations, and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund has announced that they are winding down their grant-making by 2028. These developments, coupled with increasing restrictions on funding from foreign sources in several countries in the region, moved discussants to opine that raising money from sources within the region — for example, corporate funding, high net worth individuals, diaspora and community members — is very important.

The Australian government announced in 2023 the development of a strategy on LGBT human rights and its first ever dedicated funding program for LGBT civil society, human rights defenders and networks. They shared that in the absence of a dedicated LGBTQIA+ intermediary, they decided together with civil society partners to channel the funding through women's/feminist funds — Women's Fund Asia for Southeast Asia and the Pacific Feminist Fund for the Pacific — as these are already trusted partners for the Australian government and have a focus on serving 'the LBTL part of the movement'. However, grant-making to the full spectrum of LGBTQIA+ movements, including organizations led by and working with cis men, is problematic for these women's/feminist funds as their mandates limited to supporting women, trans and intersex communities.

Movement Perspectives



Who took the survey - a snapshot

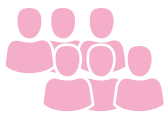
Over a hundred respondents participated in the survey (n=103). Of these, a vast majority, 81.6%, represented LBQ+ organizations and activists in Asia and the Pacific, and the remaining 18.4% represented ally organizations (see Figure 1). Half the respondents work at the local level, and 59% work at the national level (see Figure 2). Hence, the findings from the study may be considered to reflect the experiences, insights and needs of people from and closest to LBQ+ communities in the region.

There was a notable disparity between the subregions that respondents reported working in. Southeast Asia had the highest number of interventions reported (37%), followed by South Asia (24%) (see Figure 3). Central Asia and West Asia had the fewest (4.2% each). It is possible that survey participation from West Asia was affected by the crises created by the wars underway at the time of the administration of the survey. The highest number of respondents worked in the following countries: Indonesia and Thailand (12% each), followed by China (9.6%) and Sri Lanka (7.7%) (see Table 1). A further geographic breakdown is provided per category.

Categories of respondents



Group/organization/network/collective led by and working on the rights of LBQ+ people in Asia and/or the Pacific



Group/organization/network/collective not led by LBQ+ people, but has a project/program focused on the rights of LBQ+ people in Asia and/or the Pacific



Myself - an individual LBQ+ activist working in Asia and/or the Pacific

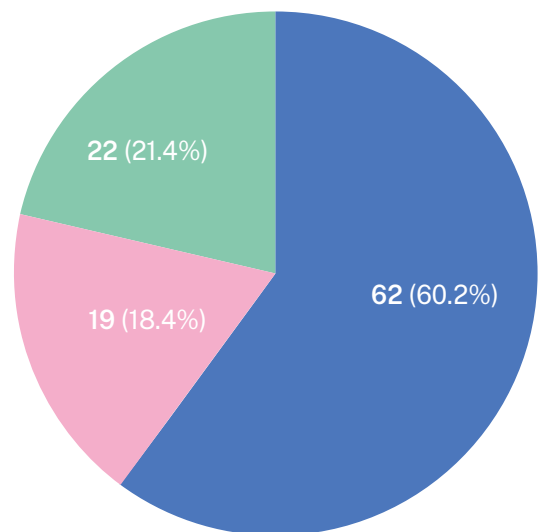


Figure 1: Categories of respondents to the activist survey

Geographic scope of work

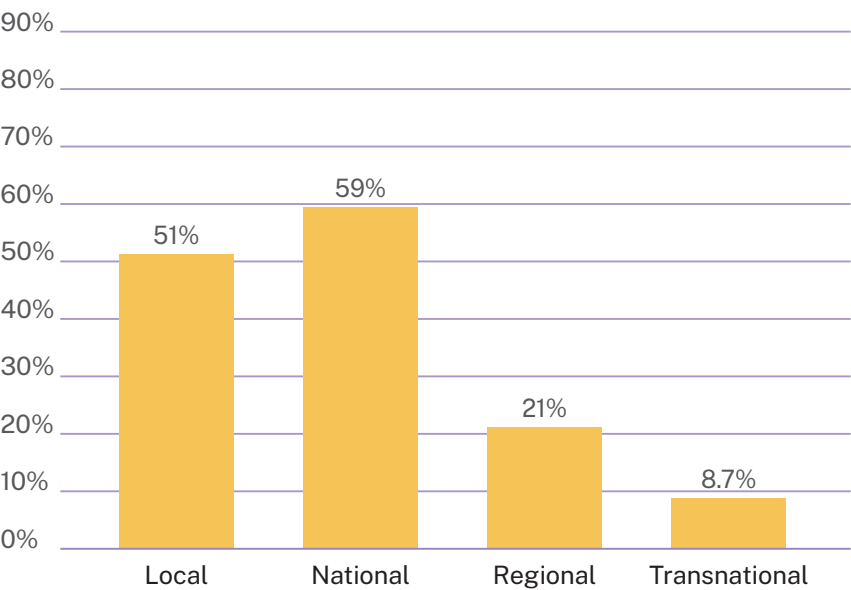


Figure 2: Geographic scope of work of respondents to the activist survey

Regions respondents work in

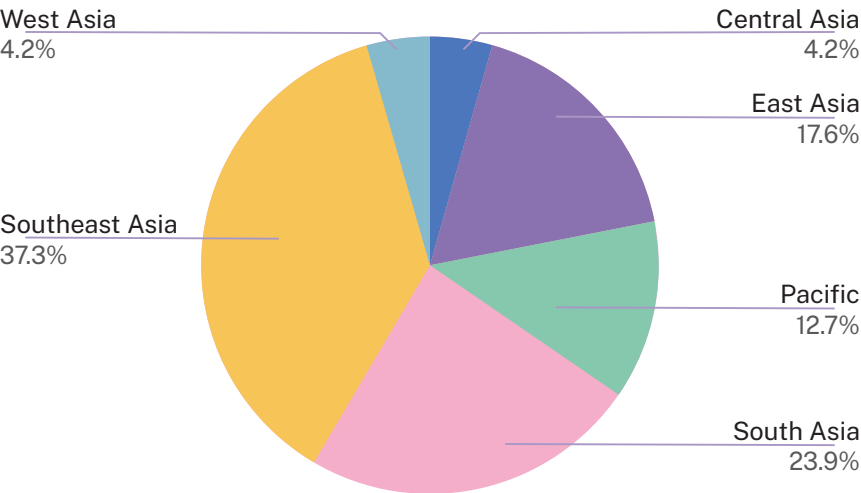


Figure 3: Regions respondents to the activist survey work in



Table 1: Countries respondents to the activist survey work in

Countries respondents work in	Frequency	Percentage
Indonesia, Thailand	12	11.7%
China	10	9.7%
Sri Lanka	8	7.8%
Bangladesh, Cambodia	7	6.8%
Nepal, Pakistan	6	5.8%
India	5	4.9%
Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Vietnam	4	3.9%
Hong Kong, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan	3	2.9%
Fiji, Afghanistan, Kiribati, Laos, Lebanon, Mongolia, Palau, Solomon Islands, Turkey	2	1.9%
Azerbaijan, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Iran, Marshall Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tajikistan, UAE, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu	1	1.0%

Country breakdown by category

Most LBQ+-led groups that participated in the survey worked in Thailand (17%), followed by Indonesia (13%) (see Figure 4); most ally organizations worked in Indonesia (20%) (see Figure 5); and most individual LBQ+ activist respondents worked in China (26%), followed by Thailand (22%) (see Figure 6).

The high participation from Thailand and Indonesia may be explained by the location and networks of AFLN who played a major role in disseminating the survey. It is interesting to note participation from China, which made up only 6% of participating LBQ+-led groups but 26% of individual LBQ+ activists; written-in responses indicate the participation of diaspora activists, which may have contributed to the latter. Another possible reason is due to the Chinese government's crackdown on civil society organizations - activists may have felt safer identifying as individuals rather than as part of an organization, especially when engaging with foreign funding sources.

Countries they work in: LBQ+ led groups

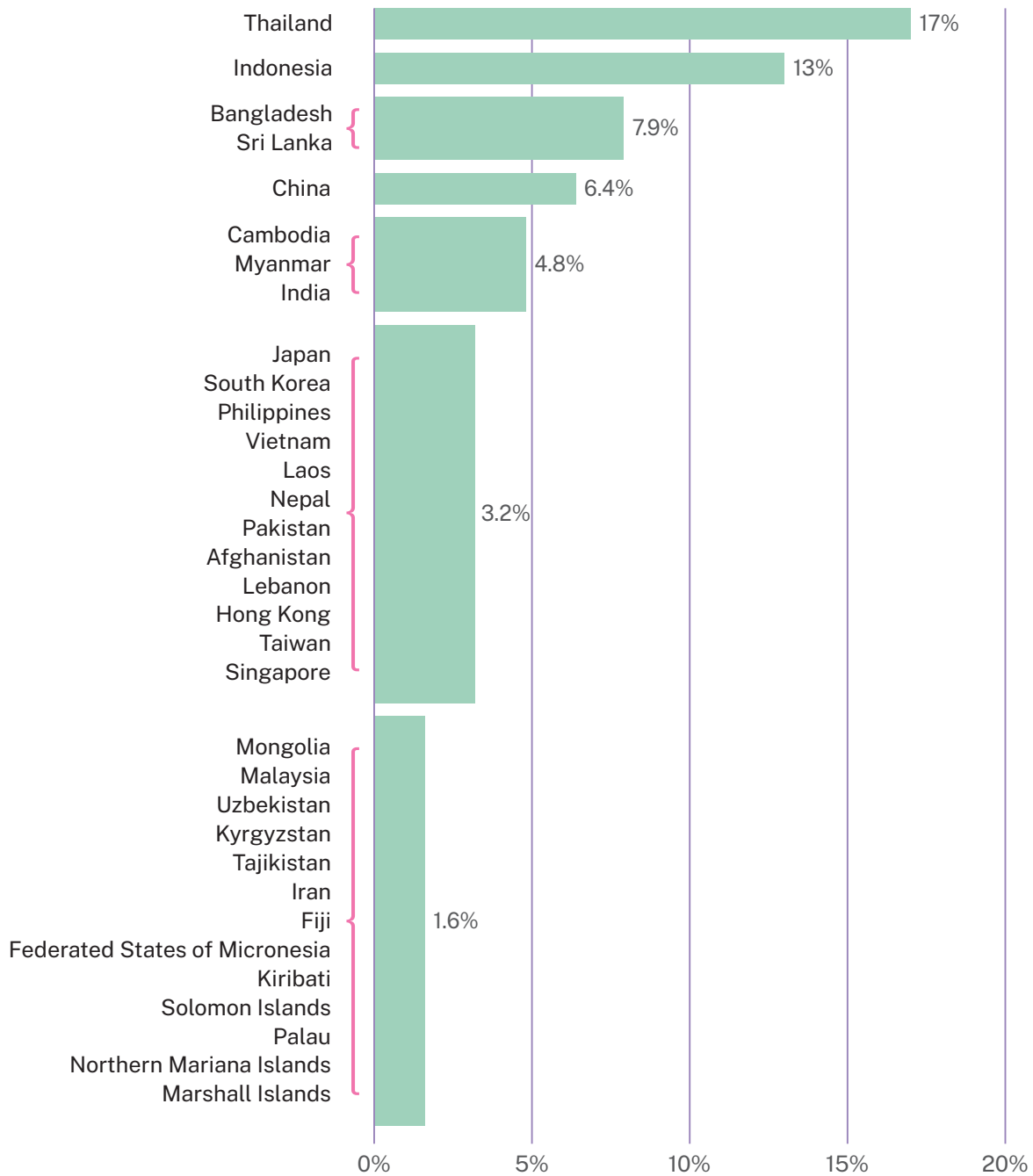


Figure 4: Countries LBQ+-led groups work in

Countries they work in: Ally organizations

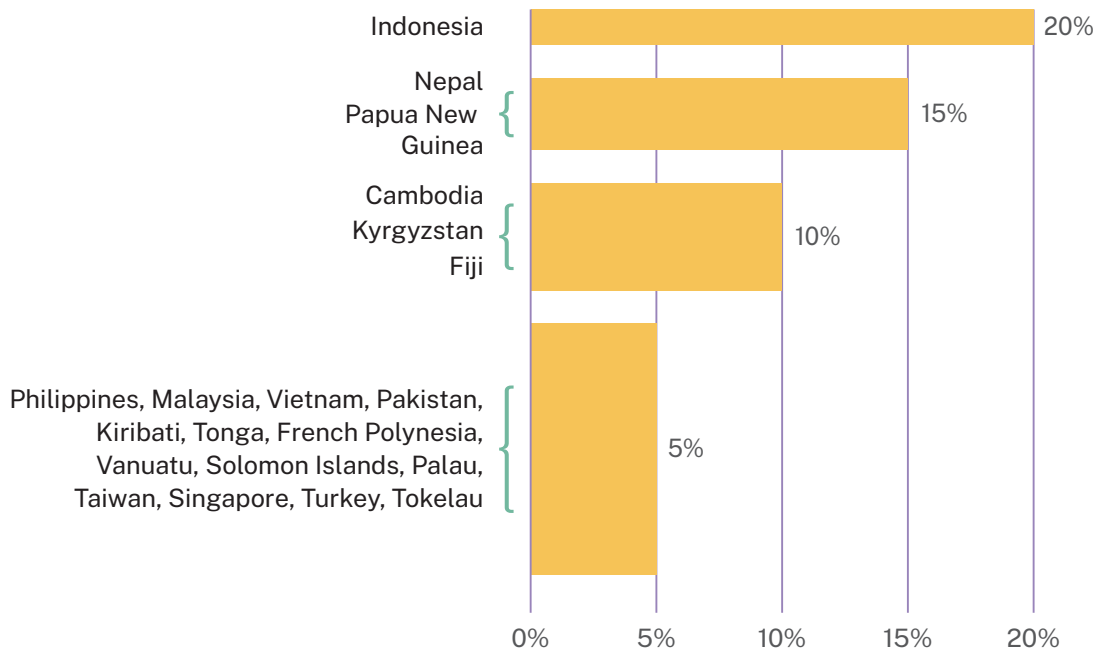


Figure 5: Countries ally organizations work in

Countries they work in: LBQ+ activists

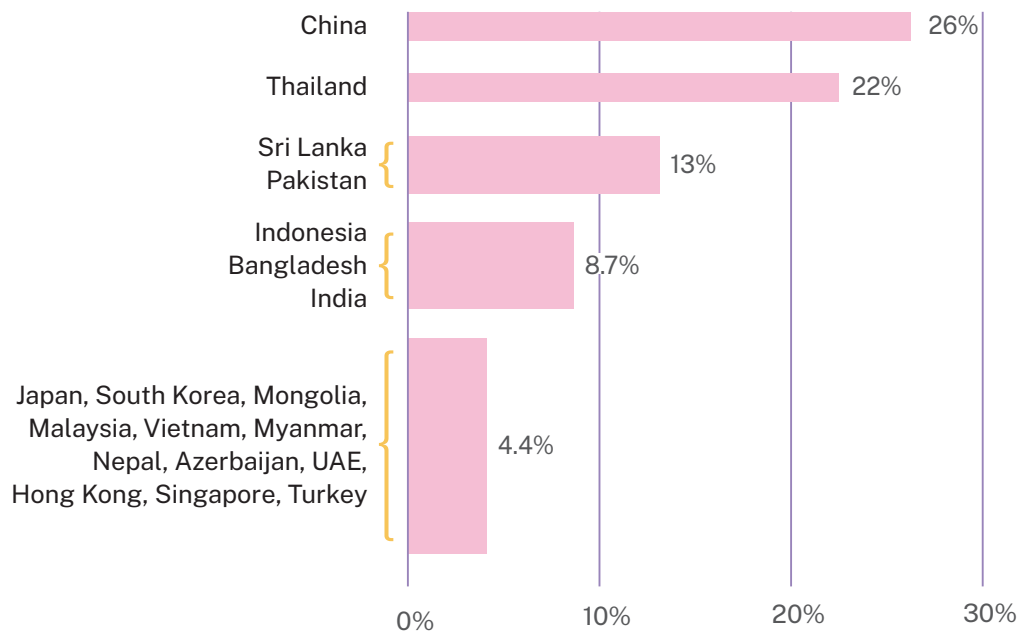


Figure 6: Countries LBQ+ activists work in

LBQ+ organizing history in Asia and the Pacific: A snapshot

The decade between 2010 and 2019 saw significant developments in the Asia and Pacific regions¹⁰. For example, in South Asia, the armed conflict in Sri Lanka between the Sri Lankan armed forces and an armed separatist group, the LTTE (The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), came to a brutal end in 2009 with major civilian casualties, and the Sri Lankan military and political leaders being accused of war crimes.¹¹ The months and years following this period saw Sri Lanka move towards authoritarianism and increased militarization, with major changes across the region, where the decades-long conflict had a resounding impact.

Xi Jinping became President of China in 2013, and in May of 2014, Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of India. In 2016, Rodrigo Duterte was elected as President of the Philippines - he lasted a six-year term. During his tenure, about 27,000 people were killed under his policies and orders.

During this period, numerous laws were brought into effect across the region/s, regulating and at times, criminalizing NGOs' ability to function, and especially to receive international funding. This pattern disrupted LBQ+ movement organizations' ability to keep working, and in some cases, sent activists into exile.

For example, China's 2017 so-called "Foreign NGO Management" law had devastating implications for Chinese civil society and broader human rights movements, completely fragmenting and dismantling the landscape. As OutRight International explained, "Previously, the larger domestic LGBT NGOs had received support from international NGOs and foundations. The draconian requirements of the law have, as the government likely intended, decimated foreign NGOs' cooperative relationships in China."¹² Similar so-called 'anti-foreign interference' laws have since been adopted across the region/s, particularly in Southeast Asia. For example, Singapore passed its own Foreign Interference Act in 2021, stifling journalism, dissent and civil society activity.¹³

In Central Asia, many governments are taking Russia's 'foreign agents' law as inspiration and passing similar, repressive laws - for example, in Kyrgyzstan, where President Japarov ratified a law requiring journalists, human rights organizations and other non-profits receiving foreign funding to register as 'foreign representatives' in 2024.¹⁴

10 See "A decade in the Asia-Pacific region: 2010 to 2019" (2019, Dec 31). Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/31/a-decade-in-the-asia-pacific-region-2010-to-2019>

11 "Sri Lanka 'war crimes': Main allegations". (2011, Jun 17). BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-13158916>

12 Outright International. (2023). Precarious Progress: Advocacy for the Human Rights of LGBT People in China. Outright International. https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Precarious_Progress_China.pdf

13 Asia Centre (2022). *Foreign Interference Laws in Southeast Asia; Deepening the Shrinkage of Civic Space.* <https://asiacentre.org/report-summary-foreign-interference-laws-in-southeast-asia/>

14 "Kyrgyzstan president signs Russian-style 'foreign agents' law." (2024, Apr 2). Committee to Protect Journalists. <https://cpj.org/2024/04/kyrgyzstan-president-signs-russian-style-foreign-agents-law/>

In South Asia, India's Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), passed in 2020, and was decried by activists, journalists and human rights organizations nationally and internationally as obstructing the work of NGOs through surveillance and by creating unnecessary obstacles.¹⁵

The decade between 2010 and 2019 also saw significant shifts in the region in terms of militarization and democracy. In 2015, after nearly four decades of military rule, Myanmar held elections, and the party led by Aung Sun Suu Kyi won by a landslide - just a year later, starting in 2016, the Myanmar military began a brutal campaign of genocide, attacking and persecuting the Rohingya community, sending hundreds of thousands of people across the Myanmar border as refugees, fleeing across Asia into countries such as Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Malaysia and various other parts of South and Southeast Asia.¹⁶

LBQ+-led organizations

Data from the activist survey reflects a notable increase in LBQ+-led organizations in Asia and the Pacific during the decade between 2010 and 2019. Despite challenging and volatile political, economic and social conditions during this period, the data shows that LBQ+-led organizations worked hard to establish themselves during this time. In the following four years, from 2019 to 2024 — in less than half a decade and amidst a global pandemic — LBQ+ organizing continued a steady growth, contributing to an already rich ecosystem of local, national and regional formations.

LBQ+ led groups: when they were formed

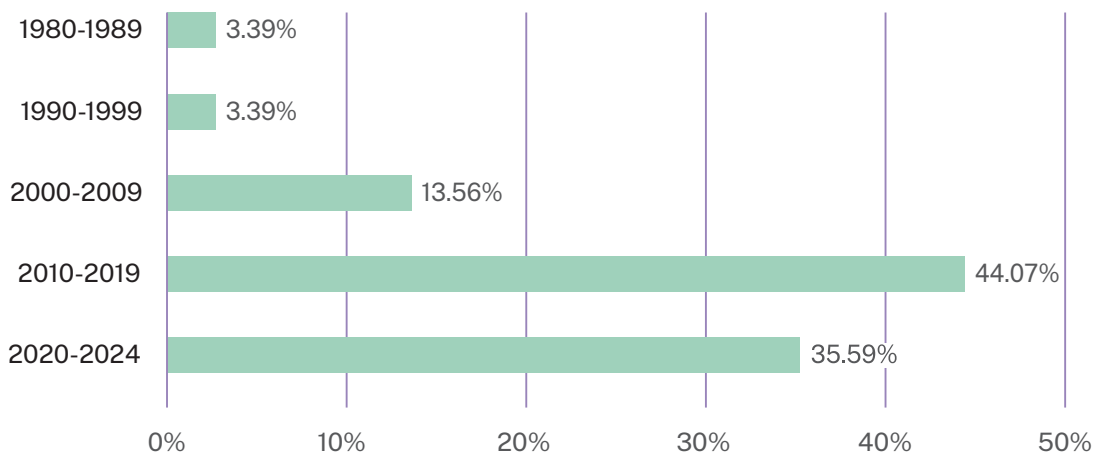


Figure 7: Decade when LBQ+-led organizations were formed

15 Swart, M. (2020, Nov 13). "Indian law on foreign funding a 'tool to silence' civil society". Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/13/restrictions-on-funding-of-indian-civil-society>

16 "Myanmar Rohingya: What you need to know about the crisis" (2020). BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41566561>

Ally organizations

Ally organizations who completed the survey also reported the decade between the years 2010 and 2019 to be a significant period in terms of formation. These organizations include predominantly a range of national-level and local women's rights organizations, as well as LGBTQIA+ organizations. Taking into consideration the geographic variety in the organizations represented in this data set — from Kyrgyzstan to Tonga — Figure 8 gives us an interesting peek into the changes happening to the social, cultural and political landscape in these contexts.

Ally organizations: when they were formed

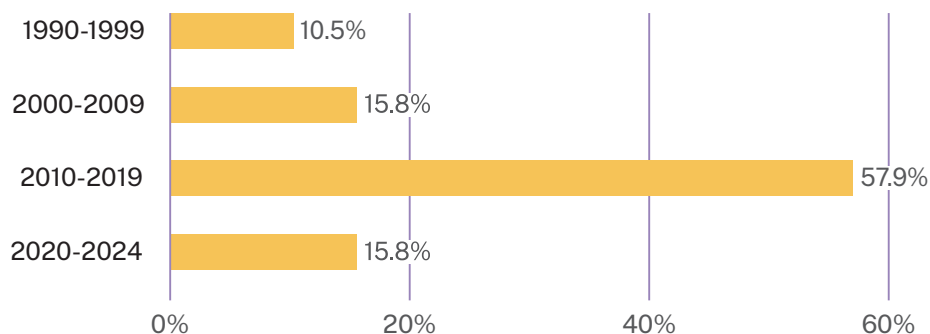
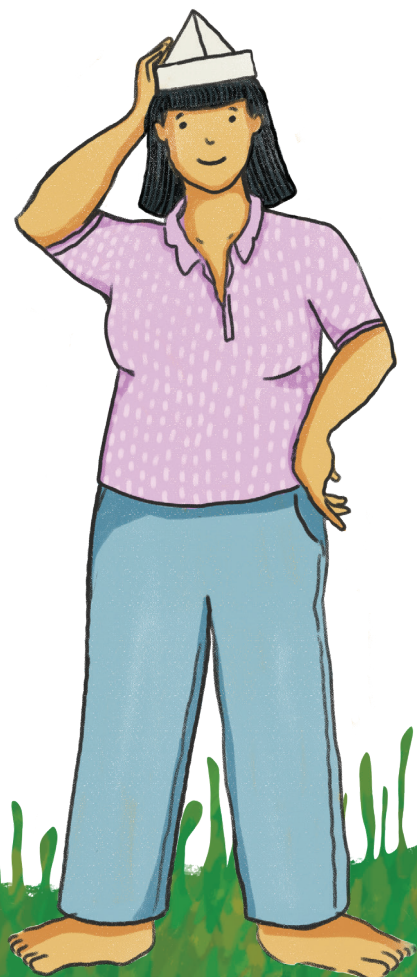


Figure 8: Decade when ally organizations were formed

Leadership in ally organizations

Ally organizations that have a project/program focused on the rights of LBQ+ people, constituting 18% of respondents, were asked how LBQ+ people are involved in the program's leadership and/or decision-making. Few respondents reported having LBQ+ leadership in the past or current governance of the organization (n=3), which contributes to shaping program strategies, or in the implementation of the program (n=2), which contributes to designing programs with greater acceptability among the community. Respondents also cited consultation with community members (n=3) and seeking feedback (n=2) as ways to ensure relevance and efficacy of the programs, which are forms of community engagement but fall short of leadership.



“In our projects at [name of organization], LBQ+ individuals play a central role in leadership and decision-making. Our initiatives, and the LBQ Story Book project, are led by LBQ+ team members who ensure that the programs reflect the needs, perspectives, and lived experiences of the community. From concept development to execution, LBQ+ leaders are involved in every phase, ensuring that each project is inclusive, representative, and community-driven.

We actively foster a participatory environment where LBQ+ voices guide the strategic direction and program decisions. Regular consultations and feedback sessions with LBQ+ stakeholders ensure that our activities are relevant and impactful. By placing LBQ+ individuals in key leadership roles, we ensure that our projects not only serve the community but are also shaped by the people they aim to empower, ensuring sustainability and ownership from within.”

- Survey respondent

Individual LBQ+ activists

Individual LBQ+ activists across Asia and the Pacific who took the survey also responded to the question, “What year did you begin organizing/working for the rights of LBQ+?” According to this data, individual LBQ+ activists became most active in their organizing for LBQ+ rights in the most recent half a decade, beginning in 2020.

LBQ+ activists: when they began organizing

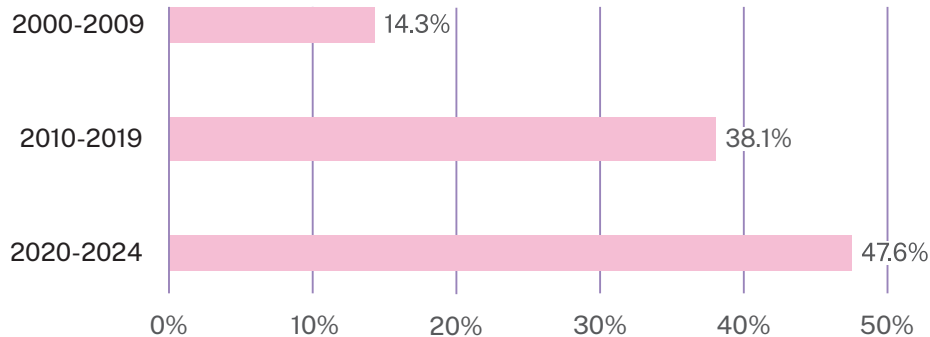


Figure 9: Decade when LBQ+ activists began organizing

Financial resources

LBQ+-led organizations

Annual budget

Nearly a quarter (22%) of the sample had an annual budget of less than USD 5,000, and more than half (54%), less than USD 30,000. Six respondents (9.5%) reported that they had zero or no annual budgets (See Figure 10). Notably, 4 out of 6 organizations with zero budgets were formed post 2020. The median budget amongst the survey respondents was between USD 10,001 to 30,000. An overwhelming majority of respondents (95%) reported that they did not have sufficient resources to achieve their goals, and more than half of respondents (61%) said resources were not at all sufficient (Figure 11).

Organizations that work at the local level tended to have smaller budgets; most had budgets between USD 10,001-30,000, followed by those with budgets less than USD 5,000. On the other hand, most organizations working transnationally had budgets between USD 50,001-100,000. Organizations working nationally had budget sizes across the spectrum.

LBQ+ led groups: organizational budget

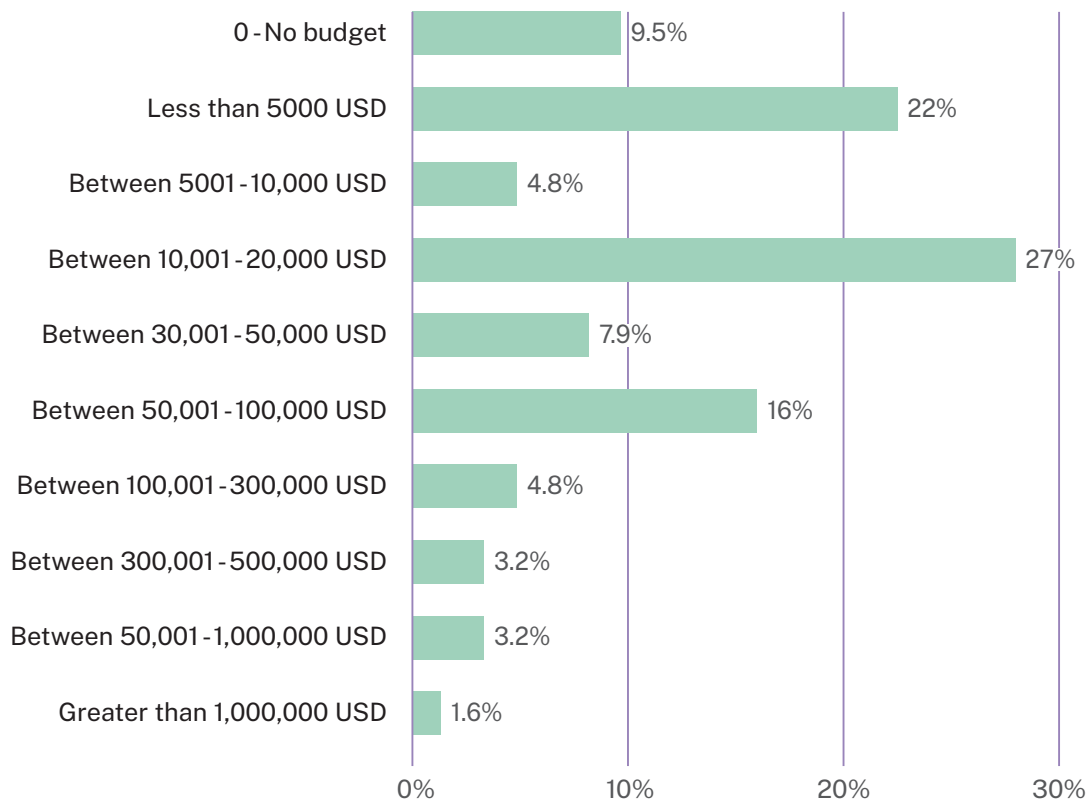


Figure 10: Organizational budget of LBQ+-led groups

Do you have sufficient funds to achieve your goals?

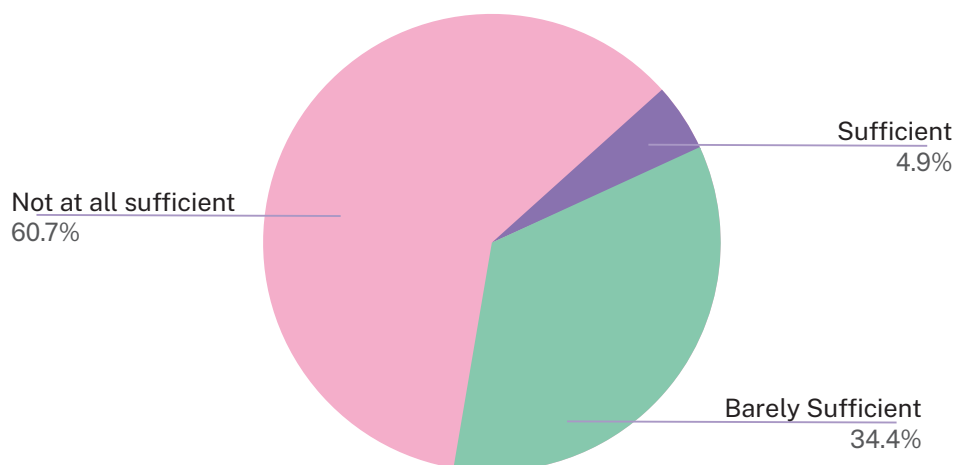


Figure 11: Sufficiency of funds among LBQ+-led groups

Funds allocated to LBQ+ programming

With responses ranging from USD 200 to USD 238,000, the median amount that groups reported spending on programs serving LBQ+ people in a year were USD 6,500. Almost an equal number of groups reported that their spending was significantly higher compared to past years (n=17) or significantly lower (n=19). Amongst the groups reporting higher spending than previous years, common reasons included receiving external funds for the first time, and strengthened fundraising experience and capacity over time. Among the groups reporting decreased spending, the most common reason cited was that there is a dearth of LBQ+-focused funding and funders.

“Because of the LBQ focus only, the amount of available grants decreases, but the competition for these grants grows drastically. There are more chances to receive funding if the project is presented under the umbrella of LGBTIQ+.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

“It has been very hard to get funding on LBQ focused work. Funders don’t understand our work and developed countries are often overlooked.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

Staffing

The global finding from 2020 that the majority of LBQ groups are understaffed and rely heavily on volunteers¹⁷ still holds true for Asia and the Pacific. The majority of this study's respondents rely on volunteers (63%) to do the work of the organization and nearly a third of respondents (30%) reported relying on unpaid staff, which reiterates the inadequacy of their financial resources. Unsurprisingly, those who relied on unpaid staff also reported that the funds they have access to are "not at all sufficient" (14 out of 18 respondents). Relying on unpaid staff is an unsustainable practice for an organization and affects their ability to progress towards their visions of liberation. Nearly half the respondents (49%) reported having a team of less than ten people.

Who do you rely on to do the work?

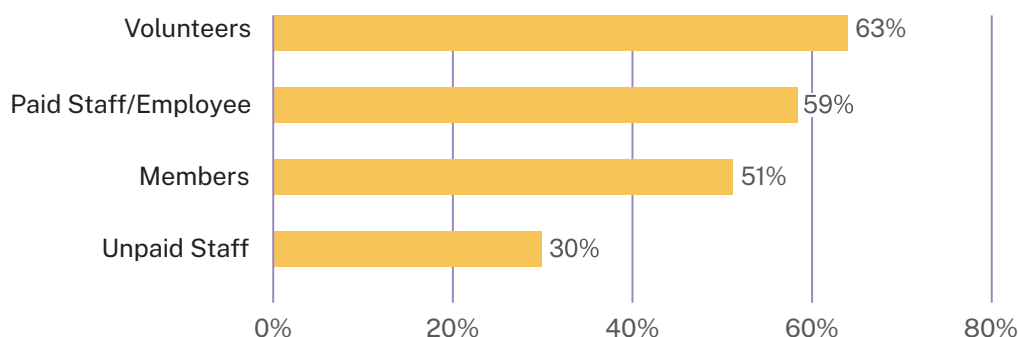


Figure 12: Staffing of LBQ+-led organizations

Current size of the organization

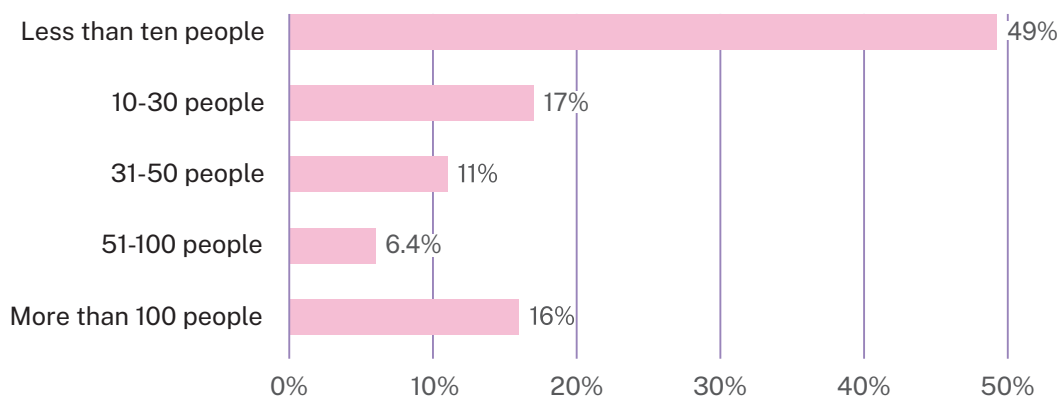


Figure 13: Staff size of LBQ+-led organizations

Predictably, organizations that have existed longer are larger in size. Organizations formed in the 1980s had either 51-100 or more than 100 people. Most organizations formed in the 2010s or 2020s had less than ten people.

17 Saleh, L and Sood, N, (2020).

Funding sources

The survey asked, “What are your primary sources of funding in the last three years? (Check all that apply)”. The top five common sources of funding for respondents in this category were: Other non-government organizations (37%), donations from local individuals (31%), private foundations working internationally (27%), intermediary funders working internationally (27%), and intermediary funders working regionally (26%). (See Figure 14.)

Top sources of funding for LBQ+ groups overall

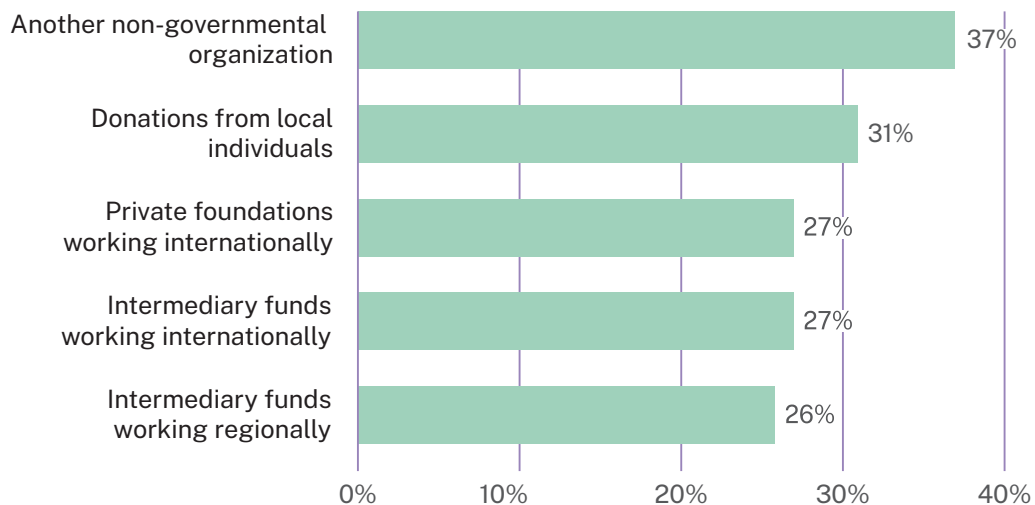


Figure 14: Top 5 sources of funding for LBQ+-led groups

Other sources of funding

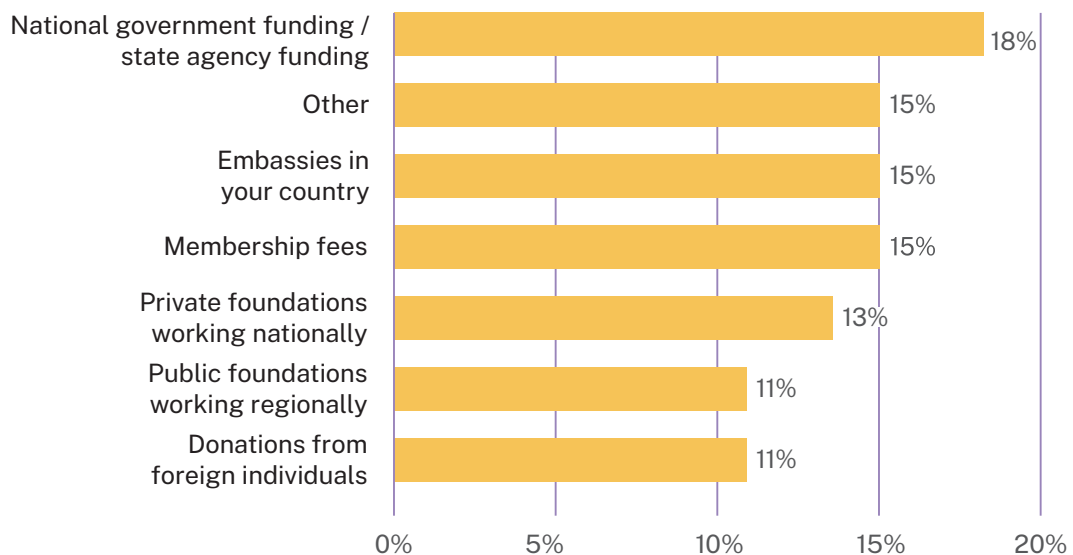


Figure 15: Other sources of funding for LBQ+-led groups

Other less common sources of funding were national governments (18%), embassies (15%), and membership fees (15%). Only 11% of respondents chose individual donations. Interestingly, whilst still a small percentage, when asked to provide specific details when selecting the answer “Other” (15%), respondents frequently wrote “Self-income”. (See Figure 15.)

The least common sources of funding were foreign governments (6%), public foundations working nationally (5%) or internationally (5%), national level UN funds, and public foundations working regionally (0%). (See Figure 16.)

Examining the responses more deeply by the level at which the organization is working (locally, nationally, regionally, or transnationally), there are a few notable trends. Private foundations working internationally were the most common source of funding for organizations working nationally, regionally and transnationally (>40%). This suggests that these organizations had more capacity or visibility with private foundations compared to more local organizations who were less likely to access this source (only 25%). For local organizations, other NGOs were the most common source of funding (31%), followed by national governments, local individuals, and private foundations working internationally (25% each). Regional intermediary funds were their fifth most common source of funding (22%).

In terms of age of organization, there were also some patterns. Older organizations (formed between 1980 to 2009) tended to access funding from intermediary funds more often than from other sources. Organizations formed in the 2010s had more diverse sources of funding; the most common was other NGOs (35%), followed by private foundations working internationally (31%) and donations from local individuals (23%).

Least common sources of funds

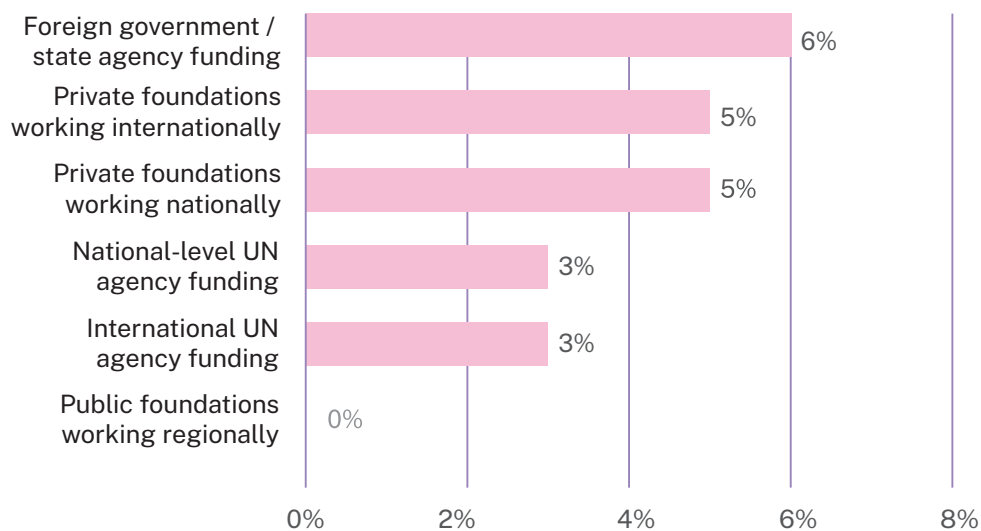


Figure 16: Least common sources of funding for LBQ+-led groups

How funds are received

Overall, the majority of survey respondents relied on formal bank transfers to receive funds. However, among LBQ+-led organizations, there was a higher trend of using individual bank accounts (33%) compared to ally organizations (16%). LBQ+-led organizations also made more use of fiscal sponsorships and agents (31%) than ally organizations (26%).

“There is a lack of professional fiscal sponsorship services, or willingness to do this as we are unregistered. If they do, they take a big percentage of our funds but do not provide the professional services we needed. What is offered is often haphazard or messy.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

Ally organizations

Annual budget

Ally organizations: organizational budget

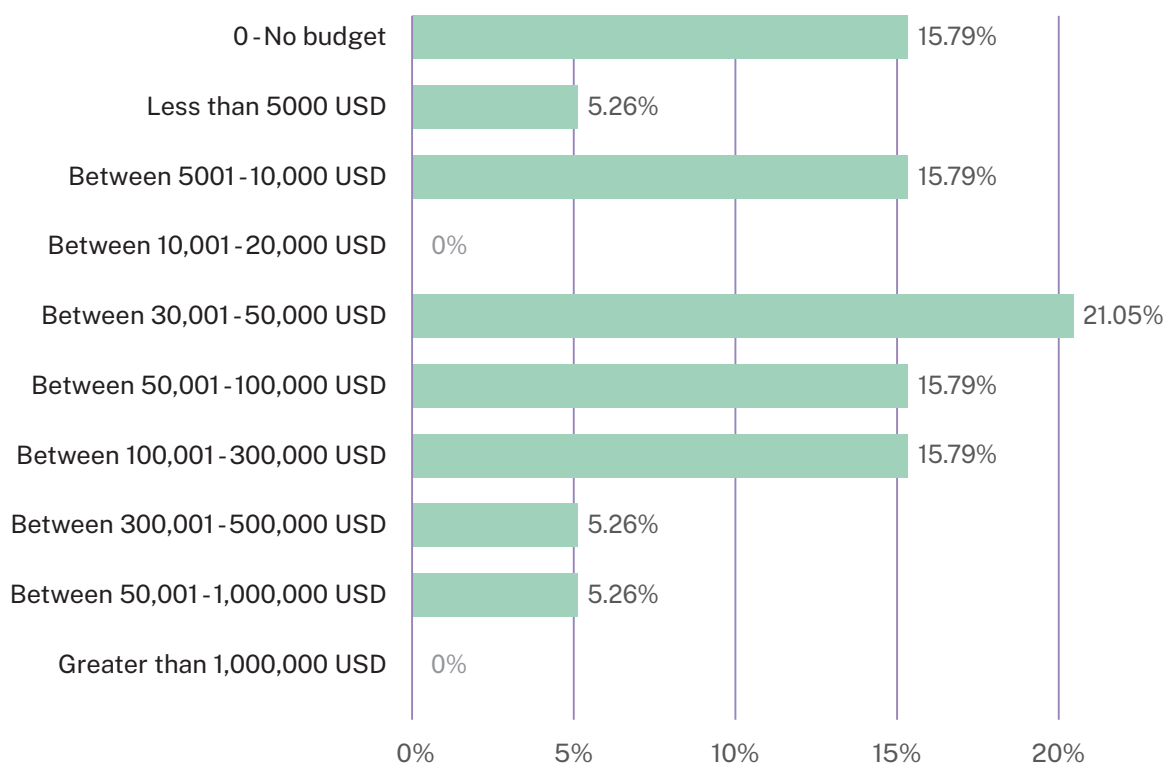


Figure 17: Organizational budget of ally organizations

The most frequently selected response was a budget range of between USD 30,001 to 50,000; this was also the median value selected (see Figure 17.) Ally organizations have higher

organizational budgets than LBQ+ groups; this might be because they are able to access a wider range of funders and funding portfolios.

Funds allocated to LBQ+ programming

With responses ranging from USD 300 to 85,000, the median amount that ally organizations reported spending on programs serving LBQ+ people in a year were USD 7,500 - most organizations allocated between USD 1,000 to 5,000. The median spending was only marginally higher than that of LBQ+ groups (USD 6,500), despite having larger organizational budgets.

Staffing

Ally organizations tend to have larger teams and rely on paid staff more often than LBQ+ groups. Close to half of the sample of ally organizations (42%) has a team of between 10-30 people. Three in four respondents (74%) rely on paid staff to do the work of the organization. However, 42% reported relying on unpaid staff, and 50% of these respondents also reported that their funds are “not at all sufficient”, signaling a concerning trend that stretches beyond LBQ+ movements to allies as well.

Who do you rely on to do the work?

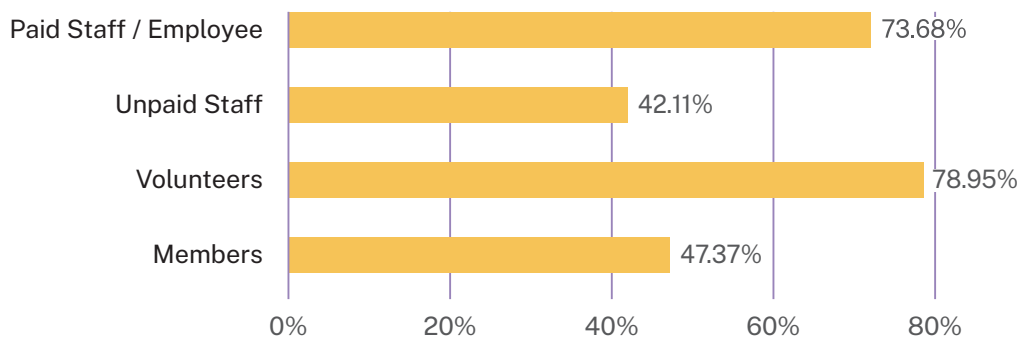


Figure 18: Staffing of ally organizations

Current size of the organization

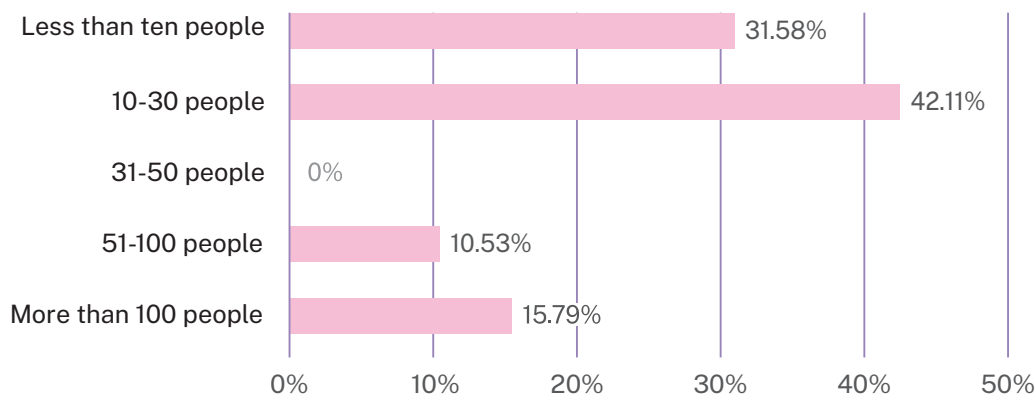


Figure 19 : Staff size of ally organizations

Funding sources

The survey asked, “What are your primary sources of funding in the last three years? (Check all that apply)”. The top five common sources of funding for ally organizations were: private foundations working internationally (26%), donations from foreign individuals (26%), national government funding (21%), other (21%), and foreign government funding (16%). Unfortunately, most respondents did not specify what types of funding they categorized as “Other”. (See Figure 20.)

The other types of funding sources for ally organizations were embassies, private foundations working nationally, and national level UN agencies (all 16%). Less common were regional intermediary funds, donations from local individuals, and regional private foundations (all 11%). (See Figure 21.)

Top sources of funding for ally organizations

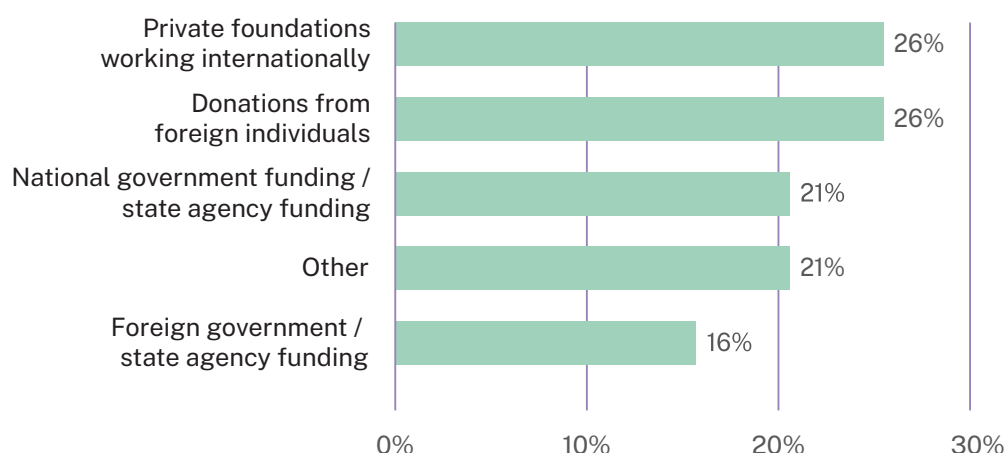


Figure 20: Top 5 sources of funding for ally organizations

Other sources of funding

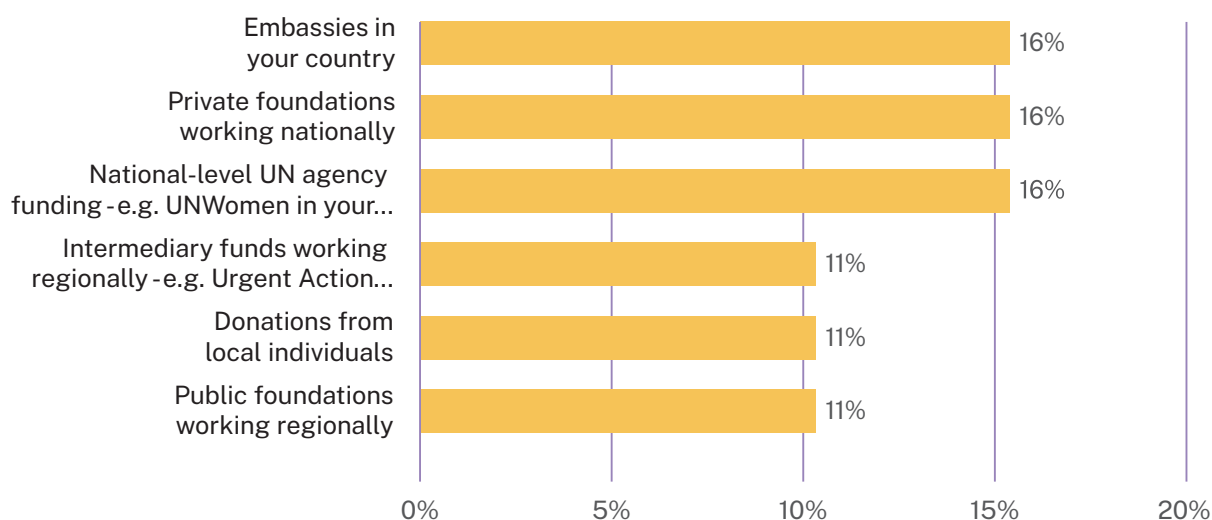


Figure 21: Other sources of funding for ally organizations

The least common types of sources were other NGOs, intermediary funds working internationally, membership fees, international UN agency funding, and public foundations at multiple levels (only 5% of respondents selected each of these sources). (See Figure 22.)

Least common sources of funding

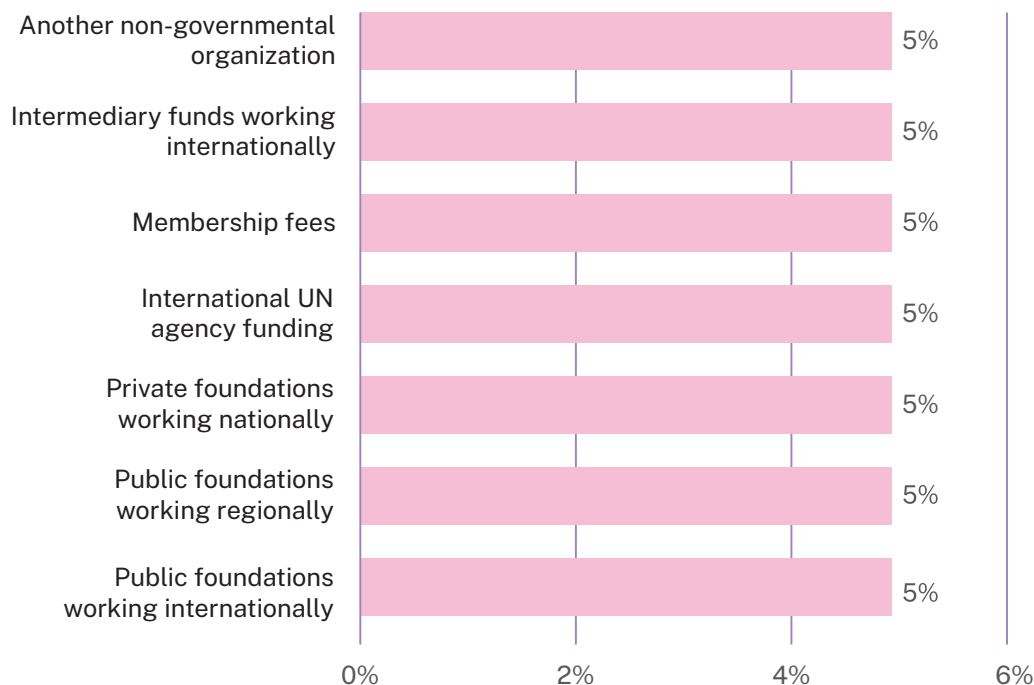


Figure 22: Least common sources of funding for ally organizations

Compared to the other respondent categories, ally organizations were more commonly able to raise funds from foreign individuals (26%) compared to 11% for LBQ+-led organizations and 16% for LBQ+ individual activists. Ally organizations also tended to be more likely to be able to access funds from governments both national (21%) and foreign (16%). These trends are likely related to ally organizations having larger budgets and staff sizes.

How funds are received (and sent)

Ally organizations primarily received their funds via their group's bank account (63%). Though far less common, some ally organizations would also receive funds from a fiscal sponsor or partner, and have also used individual bank accounts (16%) and informal banking channels (16%).

When looking at how diverse types of funders distribute funding to their grantees ("pathways for receiving funding"), we learned that private foundations working internationally, other NGOs, intermediary funds working regionally, UN agencies and public foundations working nationally all demonstrate some flexibility when it comes to funding pathways - for example, by sending money to their grantees via informal banking channels. This is a good practice that funders can offer their grantees, according to the data we gathered from the activist survey and FGDs, as increasingly hostile political and legal contexts leave activists with few other choices at times.

How have you been able to receive funds? (Check all that apply)

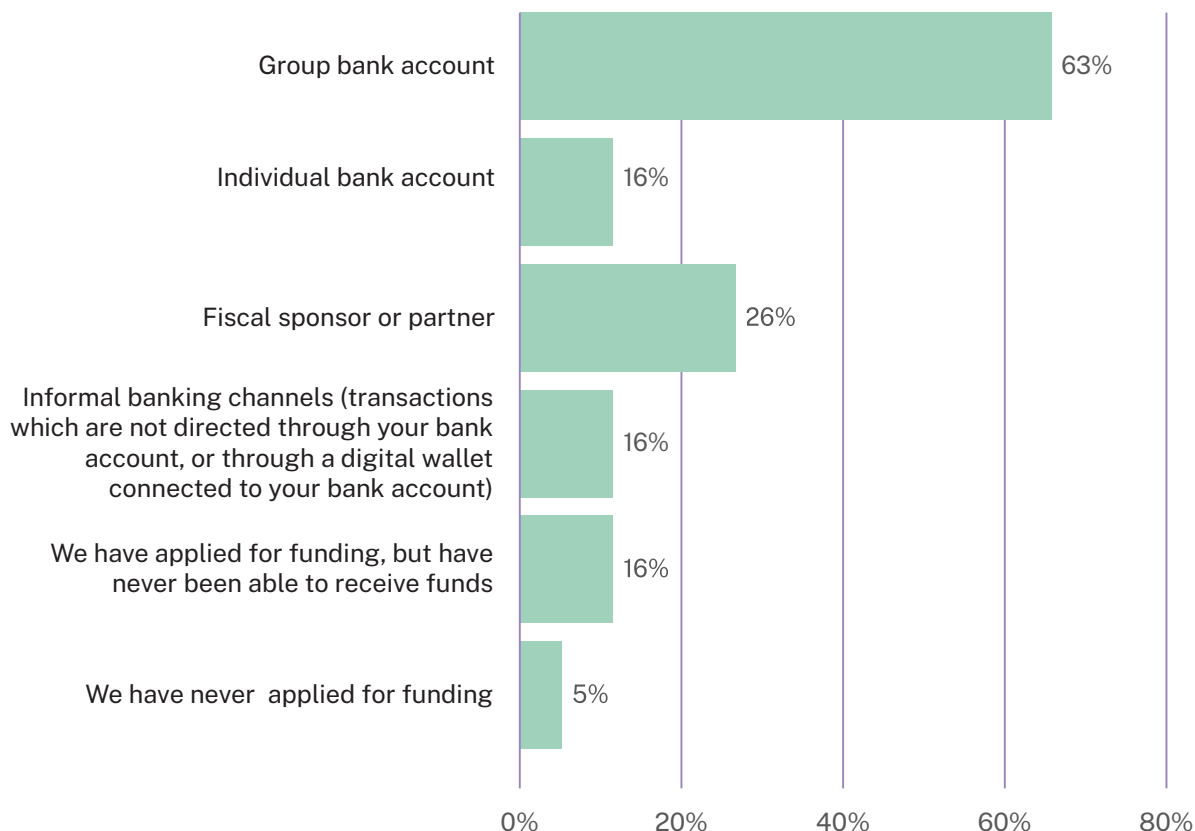


Figure 23: How all organizations receive funds

Individual LBQ+ activists

Annual budget

Close to half of the individual LBQ+ activists (43%) reported raising no funds for their activism and just over a third (35%) raised less than USD 5,000. The latter was also the median value selected.

Donations from local individuals were the primary source of funding for most respondents operating with no budget and most respondents with budgets less than USD 5,000. Embassies were the primary source of funding for respondents operating with larger budgets; most respondents with budgets between USD 10,000 and 100,000 reported receiving funds from embassies.

Funds allocated to LBQ+ programming

With responses ranging from USD 0 to 70,000, the median amount that individual LBQ+ activists reported spending on programs serving LBQ+ people in a year was USD 2,000 - most activists allocated between USD 0 to 500.

Funding sources

The number of respondents in this category was lower than the others, but some findings are worth noting. The most common source of funding for individual LBQ+ activists was donations from local individuals (42%). Written answers to explain “Other” were primarily self-income in the form of the individual’s own salary, or profit from their own business.

Top sources of funding: individual LBQ+ activists

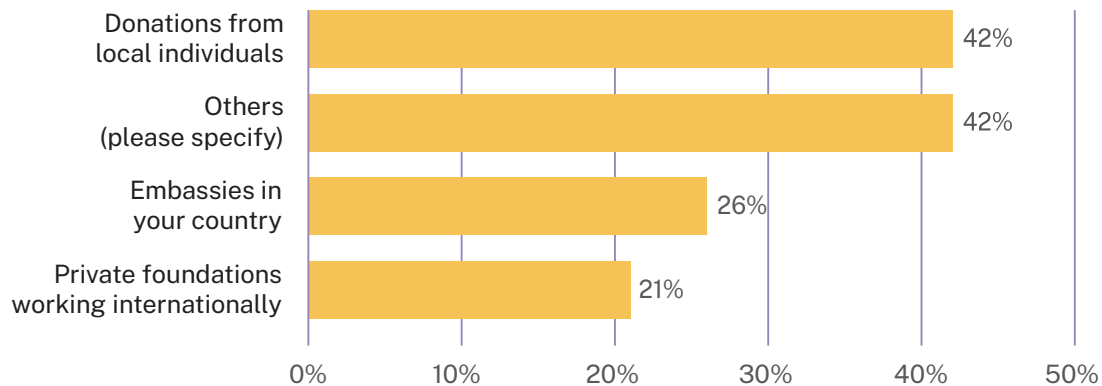


Figure 24: Top sources of funding for individual LBQ+ activists

Other sources of funding: individual LBQ+ activists

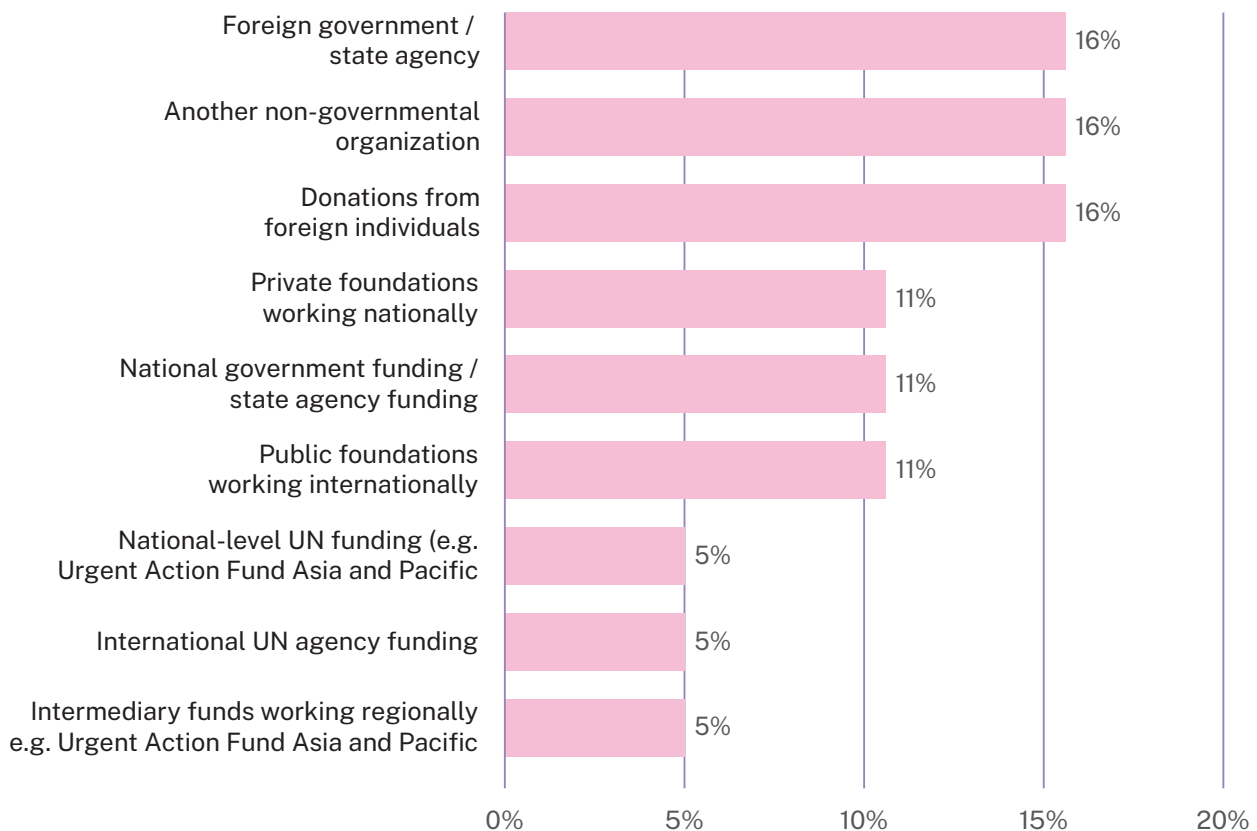


Figure 25: Other sources of funding for individual LBQ+ activists

Other sources of funding included foreign governments, NGOs, and donations from foreign individuals (all 16%), and private foundations working nationally, national government funding, and public foundations working internationally (all 11%). Finally, less than 5% of individual activists reported national and international level UN agencies and intermediary funds as a source of funding. This would make sense given that most of these institutions do not provide funds to private individuals, or individuals not associated with a group.

How funds are received

As discussed in the section on annual budget, approximately 40% of individual LBQ+ activists reported that they have never been able to receive funds and therefore cannot fully answer the question on methods for receiving funds. Meanwhile, 48% of respondents say that they have used their personal bank account to receive funds. Another method is using a fiscal sponsor or partner (24%) or informal banking channels (10%). Respondents chose not to specify the 'other' means of receiving funds.

How have you been able to receive funds?

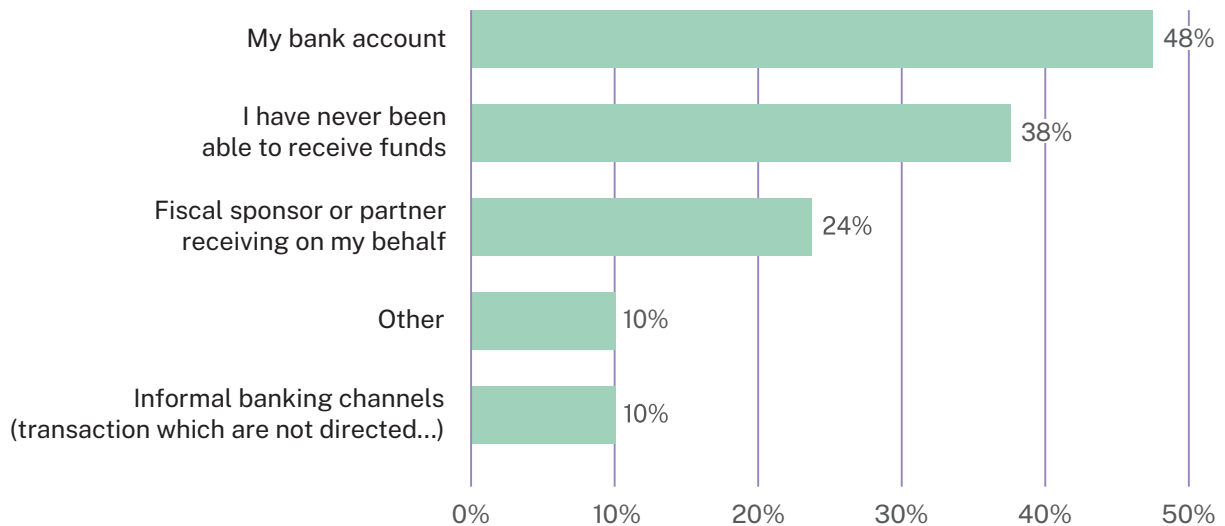


Figure 26: How individual LBQ+ activists receive funds

Number of people benefiting from LBQ+ activism

LBQ+-led organizations

The survey asked, “How many people do you think directly benefit from your programs or projects?”, leaving it to respondents to interpret the term ‘benefit’ and utilize their own measures of impact. LBQ+-led organizations gave a wide range of responses, reflecting the diversity of their work. Many said that they believed that their programs directly benefited anywhere from 50 persons (8 respondents), to 100 persons (7 respondents). Four respondents said they believed their programs benefited 500 persons, 3 respondents said 5,000 persons. The numbers 15,000, 30,000, 100,000, 500,000, 600,000 and 1,000,000 were each given by 1 respondent.

With 61 responses to this question, it can be estimated that over 2 million persons are benefiting directly from the programs of LBQ+-led groups across Asia and the Pacific. This must be understood in the context of the LBQ+ movements’ survey also showing that a majority of LBQ+-led organizations who responded are functioning with less than 10 people, and that most are working with an annual budget of USD 10,001 to 30,000.

Ally organizations

The data surfaced from the ally organizations who took the activist survey reflects a diverse range of responses -ranging from 40,000 persons (1 respondent) to 5 persons (1 respondent). Three respondents said they believed that their programs benefit 25 persons, and 2 respondents each said 500 and 1,000. This programmatic work must also be understood in the context of most of the surveyed organizations working with an annual budget of USD 30,001 to 50,000.

When reviewing the dataset of ally organizations as a whole, and cross-referencing budget sizes with how many people they are able to impact with their programs, the data shows clearly that the bigger the annual budget an organization has, the more people they are able to impact. For example, the highest number of reported impacted persons was reported by the ally organization which reported the biggest annual budget.

However, it’s important to note that even with limited budgets, ally organizations are able to create far-reaching impact - for example, the combined number of people impacted by organizations working with a budget of between USD 30,001 to 50,000 annually (22% of respondents), was nearly 8,000 persons. In 3 respondents’ cases, they reported having 0 USD annual budget, and were still able to have a combined impact on at least 35 persons. Working with budgets between USD 5,001 and 10,000, 3 respondents reported being able to collectively impact over 1,000 people.

Individual LBQ+ activists

Individual LBQ+ activists who took the survey are impacting a large number of persons - especially relative to the fact that they are working as individual activists. One respondent said they believed their work benefited 160,000 persons. Two respondents said they believed over

2,000 persons were benefiting directly from their work, and one was very specifically able to say that 13,593 benefited from their programs. These variances are also likely explained by the different kinds of work individual activists do, and how they measure impact - for instance, sharing information to an online audience versus directly assisting people.

This must be understood in the context of 10 respondents in the individual LBQ+ activist respondents category saying that they have been able to raise no money at all for their work in the last year, and 8 respondents saying that they were able to raise less than 5,000 USD.

The issues they work on

LBQ+-led organizations

The data from the activist survey show that LBQ+-led organizations in Asia and the Pacific see their work as primarily focused on “Sexual and gender diversity”. As can be seen in Figure 27, the top 10 issues (most selected answer choices) include gender-based violence (over 70% of respondents), and trans rights (66% of respondents). On the other hand, only 29% of LBQ+-led organizations said they work specifically on intersex rights.

It is interesting to note here that the highest number of respondents who reported working on sexual and gender diversity have a budget of either less than 5,000 USD (14 respondents or 23% of the sample) or between 10,000 to 30,000 USD (16 respondents or 26% of the sample).

Top 10 issues LBQ+ led groups work on

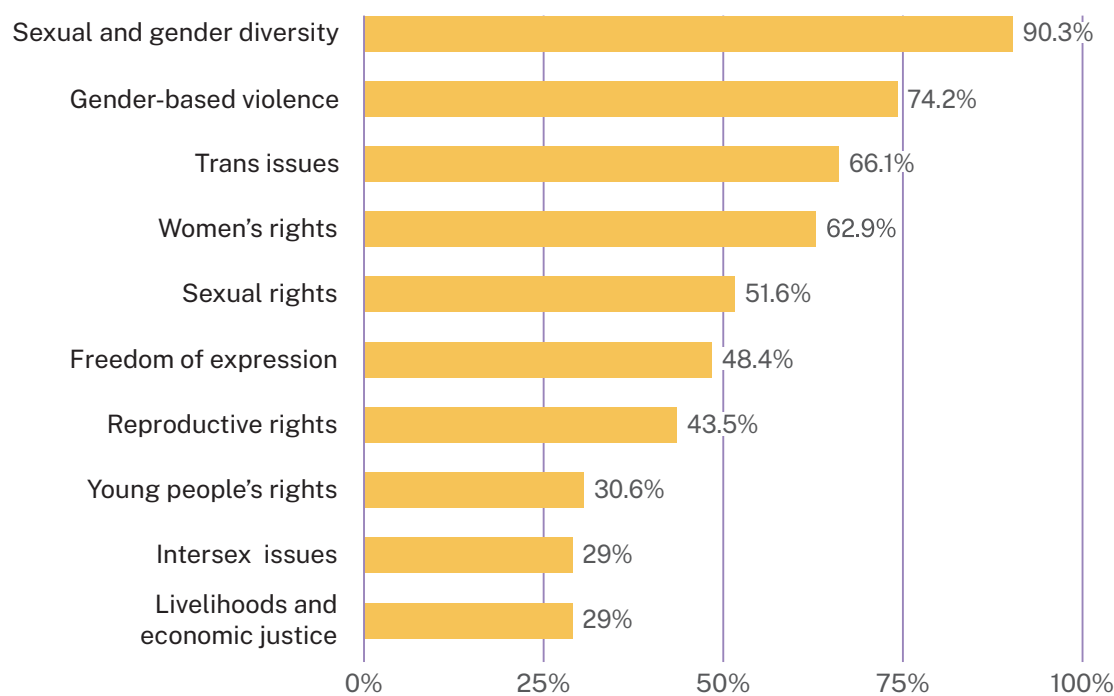


Figure 27: Top 10 issues LBQ+-led organizations work on

Respondents also prioritize working on “women’s rights” (over 60% of respondents) and “reproductive rights” (about 40% of respondents). This could be a potent message to women’s rights funders and/or other funders interested in funding gender justice, who may not specifically focus on supporting LBQ+-led groups.

In a second tier of priority were a range of issues, from livelihoods and economic justice work, to cultural rights. Figure 28 shows the seven next most prioritized issues that LBQ+-led organizations said they work on.

On the lower end of the spectrum, we saw climate change and environmental justice (just about 13% of respondents chose this), with work on “freedom of the press” getting about the same number of responses. (See Figure 29.)

This presents a picture worth further interrogating, given the challenges to freedom of expression and a free press across the Asia and Pacific regions, and the significant vulnerability to climate change faced by populations in these regions.

Other issues that LBQ+ led groups work on

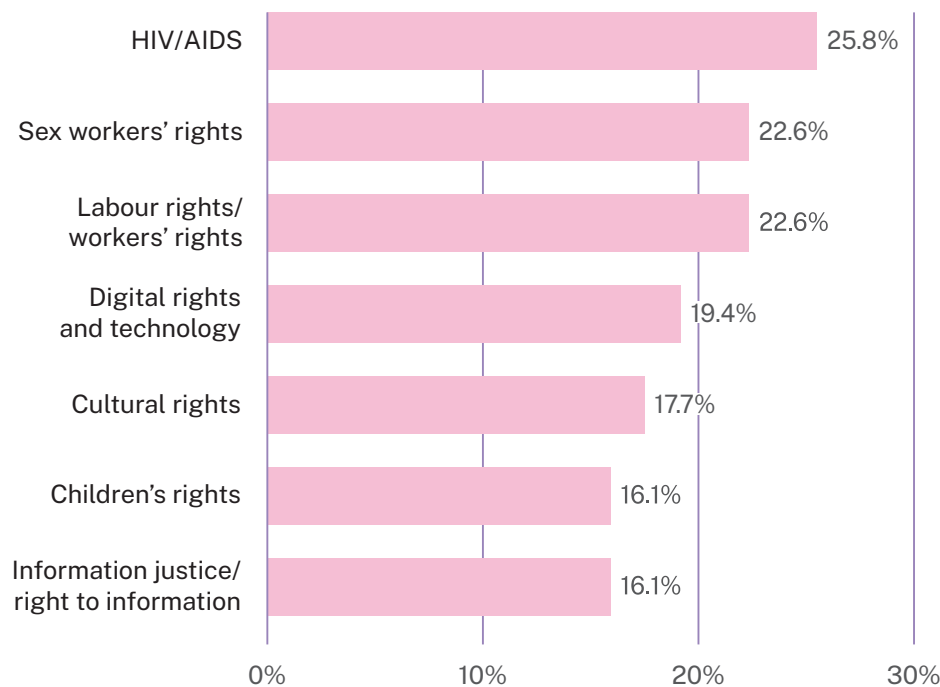


Figure 28: Other issues LBQ+-led organizations work on

Issues LBQ+ led groups work on, least chosen answers

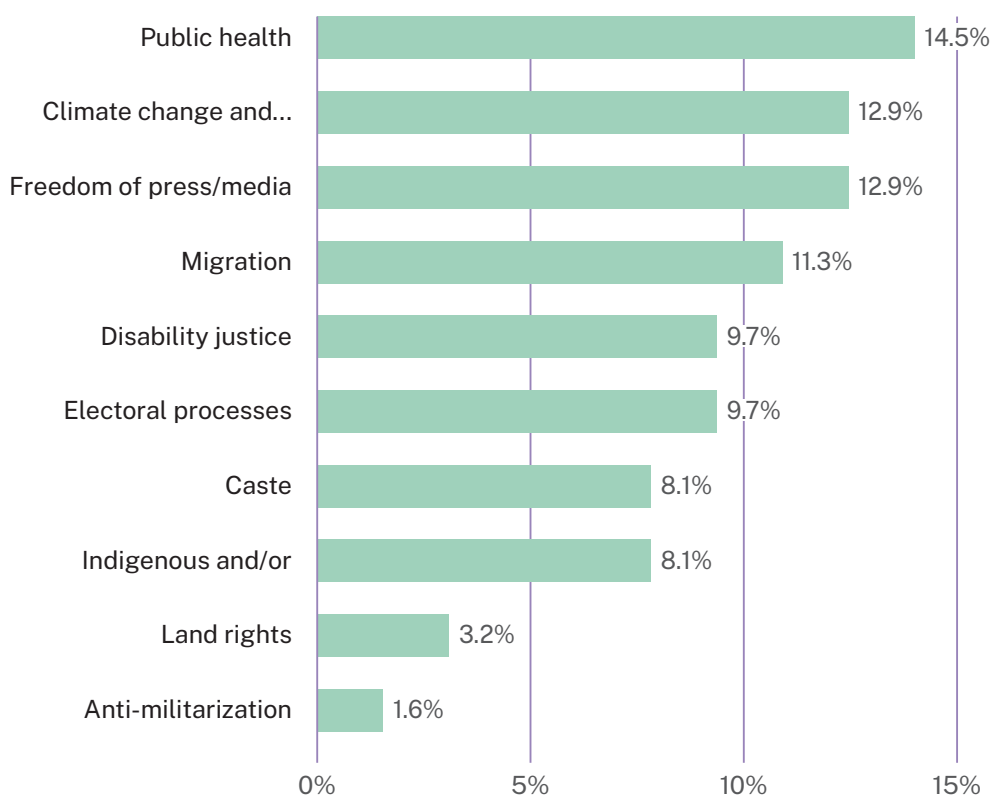


Figure 29: Least common issues LBQ+-led organizations work on

China and North Korea, as indexed by Reporters Without Borders, are two of the most restrictive contexts for journalists to operate in, with near “mass incarceration” policies in place for the media in both countries. Additionally, various parts of Asia and the Pacific — such as West Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia — are considered to be some of the worst environments for journalists. For example, the Israeli genocide in Palestine has worsened an already dire situation for Palestinian journalists, many of whom have been targeted and killed in the last year. Things are also severe for journalists in Lebanon, Qatar and Syria.¹⁸ Countries such as Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are also extremely hostile for journalists across South Asia, while countries such as Cambodia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar are hostile for journalists across Southeast Asia.¹⁹

Numerous UN agencies such as the UNDP note that the Asia and Pacific regions are the world’s most disaster-prone regions.²⁰ With the severe impact of climate change seen across the regions, there is a clear opportunity for LBQ+-led organizations to be supported to do more climate-related work in their communities.

18 Reporters Without Borders, “World Press Freedom Index 2024,” accessed Mar 6, 2025, <https://rsf.org/en/classement/2024/asia-pacific>

19 Ibid.

20 United Nations Development Program, “Climate Change In Asia and The Pacific. What’s At Stake?” accessed Mar 6, 2025, <https://www.undp.org/asia-pacific/news/climate-change-asia-and-pacific-whats-stake>

Respondents also chose a number of other critical issues such as disability justice, land rights, anti-caste organizing, migration, electoral processes and anti-militarization/peace activism least frequently, when asked about the issues they worked on. Similarly, funders who took the funders survey also chose these answers less frequently when asked about which issues they prioritize when funding LBQ+ activists and organizations.

Very few LBQ+-led organizations who took the survey said they work on disability justice, -just over 9%. The response below captures funding challenges faced by an LBQ+-led organization that works on disability rights.

“My and my organization’s activism on LBQ rights and queer disability rights and its promotion to make it inclusive in the mainstream of human rights in Nepal is a newly emerging subject matter. Disability and its issues are the least priority here and we can only imagine how difficult it is to help LBQ citizens to assert their identity openly in the community. Because of funding challenges, we are not able to disseminate knowledge and resources to the LBQ movement in Nepal with special focus on disabled women.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

Only 1.6% respondents in this category said they work on the issue of peace and on anti-militarization activism. Only 8% of respondents said they work on “Caste justice/Organizing against caste and descent-based oppression” and the same proportion of respondents said they work on “Indigenous and/or tribal communities’ issues”. Similarly, just over 3% said they work on land rights. Close to just 10% of respondents said they work on electoral processes.

These issues are critical and urgent across Asia and the Pacific -with numerous heavily militarized contexts and many countries in which the military have long-since held sway over political and public life, and governance decisions (e.g. Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, India, Taiwan, North Korea, South Korea, Afghanistan).²¹ In many of these contexts, Indigenous communities, forest-dwelling communities, land rights activists and environmental justice activists come under attack by military forces, or state and military-supported vigilantism.

Migration is excessive across the region, particularly because the persecution of the Rohingyas in Myanmar and the Muslims in India, as well as the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, have significantly deteriorated the quality of life of those communities and put them at risk.

Election processes and systems have seen subversion and erosion across the regions, and this issue demands urgent activism. For example, Sheikh Hasina has held on to power in Bangladesh since 2009 despite widespread public discontentment, and amidst allegations of election rigging. In Pakistan, Imran Khan, a leading political figure who had fallen out of favour with the heavy-handed and politically influential Pakistani military, was incarcerated last year amid violent

21 Westcott, B and Cheung, E. (2021, Nov 21). “Asia’s quiet militarization threatens to turn the region into a powder keg”. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/11/19/asia/china-taiwan-asia-us-militarization-intl-dst-hnk-ml/index.html>

clashes between his supporters and military-favored political factions.²² In Cambodia in 2023, a sham election was staged and the main opposition was effectively banned. In Thailand, the progressive and popular Move Forward party was blocked by the military and monarchy-favored parties from naming its leader as Prime Minister.²³

How then are we to understand the data that LBQ+-led organizations do not see themselves as focused on these issues? One way is to begin by making sense of the data from the activist and funder surveys together - both datasets show that, overall, respondents least frequently chose these answer choices when asked about what issues they work on, and what issues they fund, respectively. Are funders not funding this work? Are LBQ+ groups not fundraising for this work?

A South Asia-based advisor to this research project noted that, in their experience, "There is very little funding available [for this work] - the intersection with caste is unfunded. There is little conversation about caste, religion, ethnicity in those spaces - LBQ+ organizations are being funded, but this particular discourse is not present."

Another advisor from South Asia also recognized, "A lot of the focus in LBQ+ communities right now is on surviving - the issues which we raise as having low responses could come after when survival needs are met." They also said, "When we talk about the issue of "migration", we rarely talk about internal displacement - many trans, queer women migrate to bigger cities etc. for safety - this doesn't really get addressed." An advisor from West Asia also agreed with the idea that survival needs were high priority for LBQ+ organizing in Asia and the Pacific, and also said, "The terms [in the survey] may have been interpreted differently - for example, Syrian queer people may not see migration as their work because it is thought of more in terms of displacement."

There was nearly unanimous agreement among the advisors to this project that "strategic visibility and invisibility" could be playing a role in this data.

"LBQ+ women are involved in a lot of different kinds of activism; they are also involved in urban and environmental justice issues, animal rights, electoral issues. They are not doing so as LBQ+ persons - they are strategically choosing not to be visible in some contexts. For example, when we work on broader civil society campaigns, we created a lot of goodwill from the broader civil society. Because we did this work, we felt more protected when we do work with our LGBTIQ community which we have to do secretly. It is about the inability to work openly, inability to register, to openly speak etc."

- Advisor to research project, Central Asia

22 Mogul, R. (2023, Dec 30). "More than a billion people will head to the polls across South Asia in 2024" CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/31/asia/india-pakistan-bangladesh-srilanka-elections-2024-intl-hnk/index.html>

23 Kurlantzick, J. (2023, Aug 9). "The State of Democracy in Southeast Asia Is Bad and Getting Worse" World Politics Review. <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/southeast-asia-economy-democracy-thailand-philippines-myanmar/>

An advisor from South Asia also agreed - “When it comes to working on electoral processes, visibility is a liability. Safety is a concern - LBQ+ persons might not want to be visible. Transwomen have to some extent stepped into the electoral political sphere [in my context], but not many others.”

Ally organizations

Responses from ally organizations showed a slightly different picture, with over 84% of respondents saying they worked on “women’s rights”, 79% on “gender-based violence” and 68.4% on “sexual and gender diversity” (see Figure 30).

The lowest responses in this dataset were received for answer choices such as “caste justice”, “electoral processes” and “freedom of the press”, which all received just 15.7% of responses each, with “anti-militarization/peace activism” and “migration” both receiving just 5.3% of responses each (see Figure 31).

Top 10 issues ally organizations work on

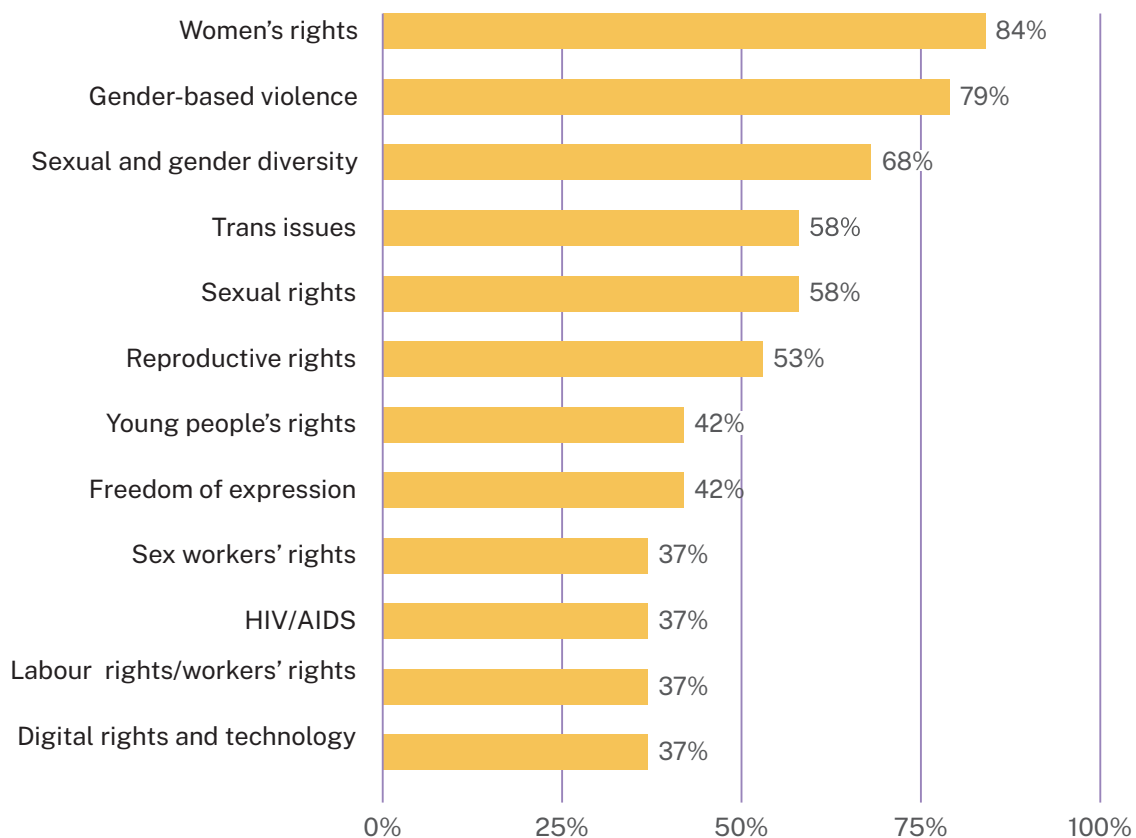


Figure 30: Top 10 issues ally organizations work on

Least common issues ally organizations work on

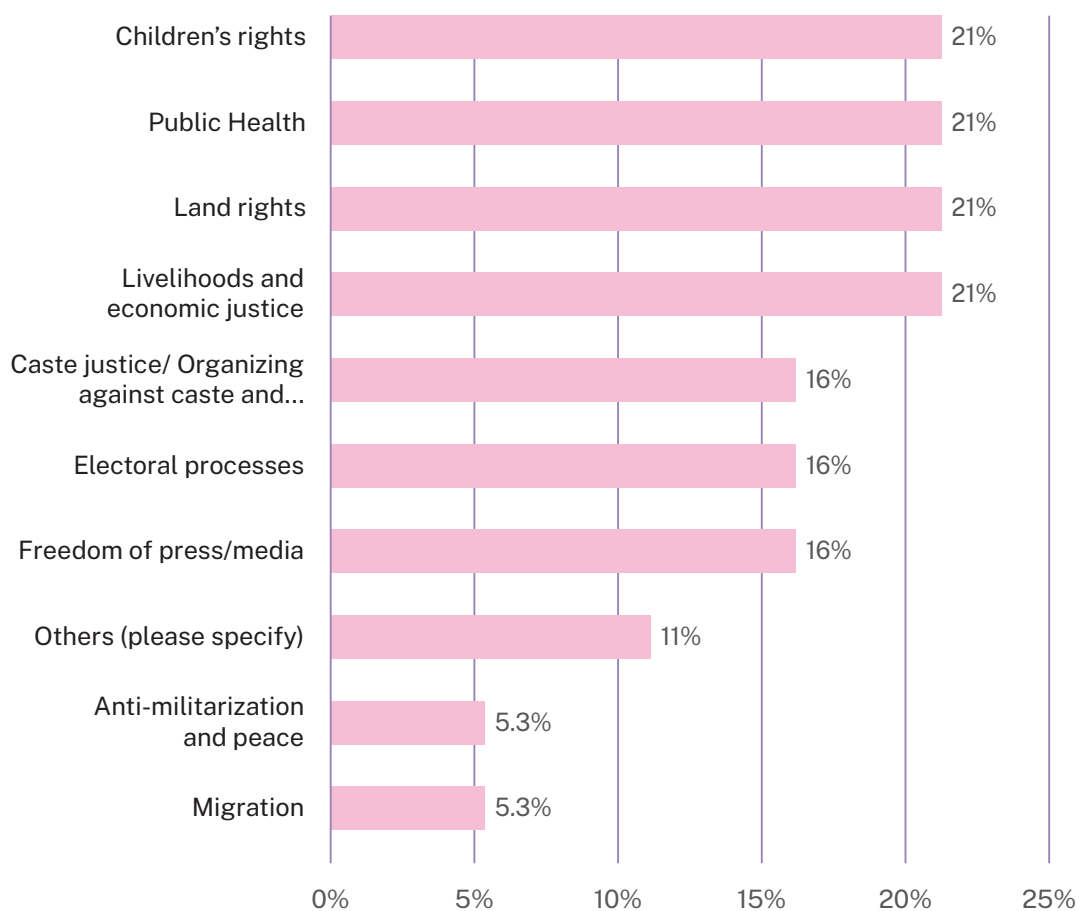


Figure 31: Least common issues ally organizations work on



Individual LBQ+ activists

Individual LBQ+ activist respondents' answers gave us a similar picture, with “sexual and gender diversity” and “gender-based violence” scoring high, and with no respondents saying they work on anti-caste organizing or on elections. However, in this dataset, we also had one respondent who named “peasant feminism” and “class-based struggles” as issues they work on, with another respondent naming “housing security” - these responses provide a small in-road into a bigger picture which shows us the very intersectional nature of LBQ+ activist work, presumably, with some measure of focus on economic justice, and class and caste issues.

Overall, examining the datasets from the three categories of respondents, there emerged a focus on mental health and mental health provision. Both LBQ+-led organizations and ally organizations said they worked on mental health and/or mental health service provision. Addressing housing security and/or homelessness was also named as a common issue that LBQ+-led organizations and the LBQ+ individual activists worked on. Service provision in general — whether it is legal aid, or healthcare services — emerged as a common focus across the three datasets

Top 10 issues individual LBQ+ activists work on

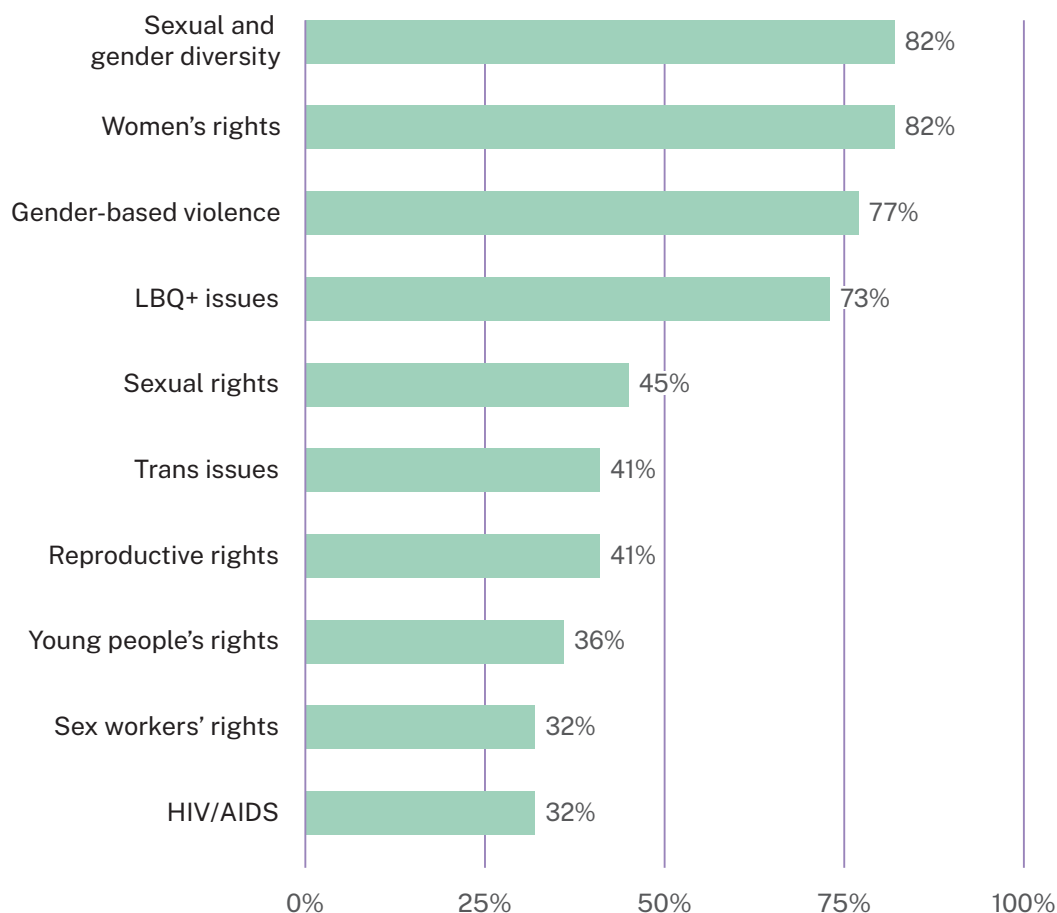


Figure 32: Top 10 issues individual LBQ+ activists work on

Least common issues individual LBQ+ activists work on

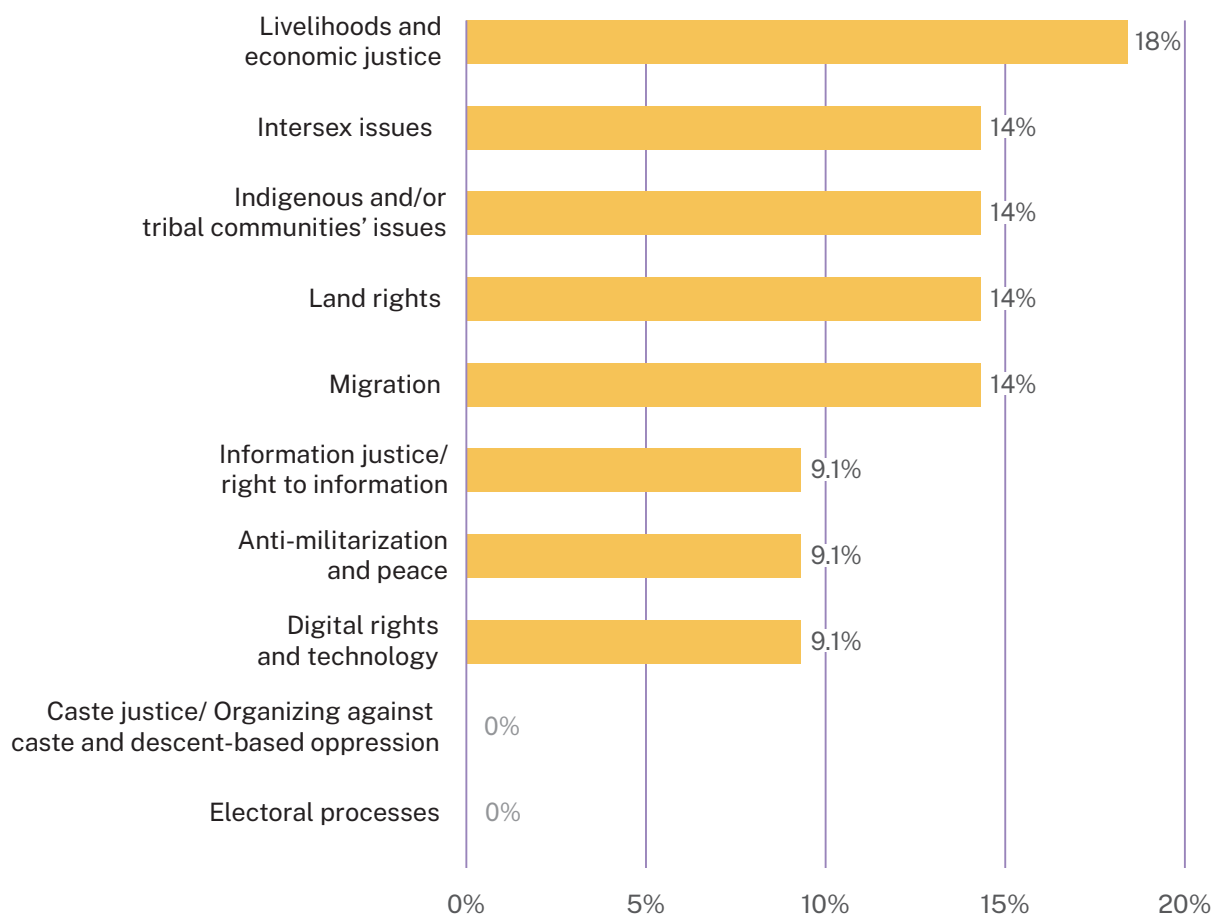


Figure 33: Least common issues individual LBQ+ activists work on



Strategies employed

LBQ+-led organizations

LBQ+-led organization respondents said that the main activity/strategy they most use to achieve their goals was “Community gatherings/discussions”, with 73% of respondents choosing this response. The proportion of organizations employing these strategies is highest locally or nationally. For example, 28 out of 36 respondents, or 78%, who use “community gatherings/discussions” as a strategy reported working nationally, and 23 out of 32 respondents, or 72%, reported working locally.

Almost 70% of respondents also chose “Leadership training and/or mentoring programs”, and 68% selected “Advocacy for law and policy change and/or reform”. Whilst advocacy is important for organizations that work nationally (46%), it is the most common strategy for those organizations that work regionally (7 out of 8 respondents, or 87.5%) as well as for those working transnationally (4 out of 5 respondents, or 80%).

Top 10 strategies: LBQ+ led organizations

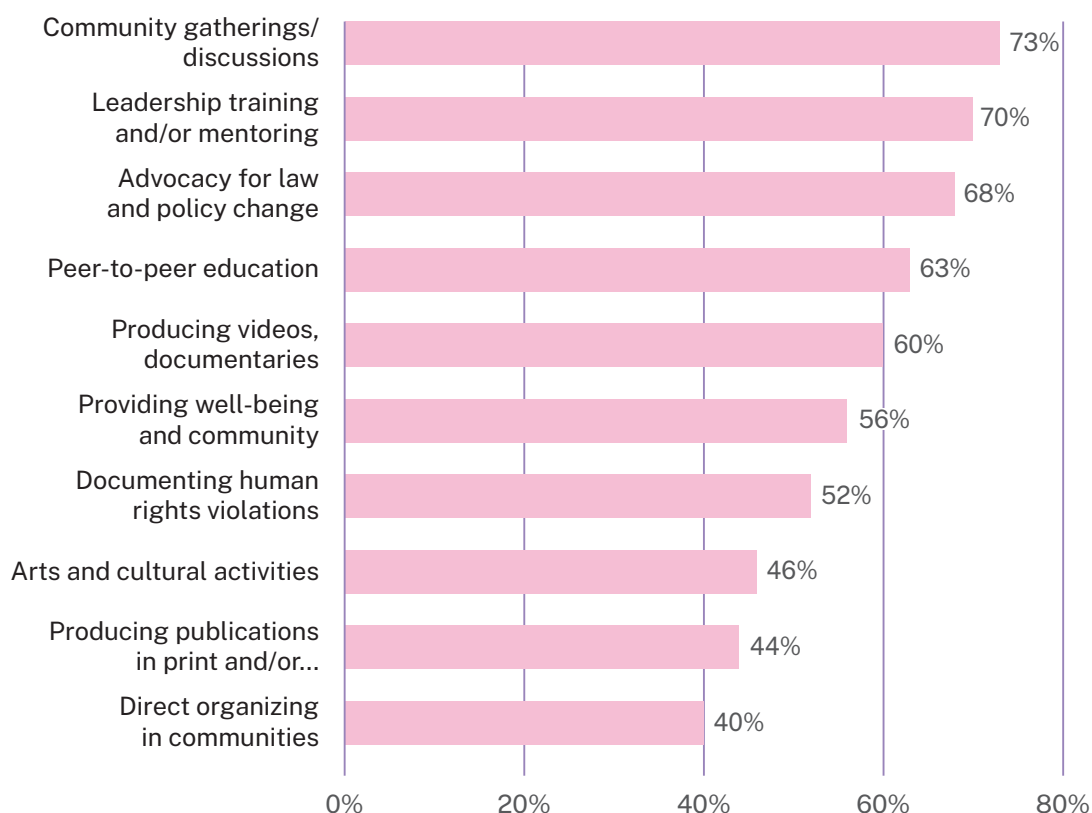


Figure 34: Top 10 strategies employed by LBQ+-led organizations

The least selected responses were “Skills building (e.g., financial skills)” and “Research and knowledge production”, with 38% responses each and “Services and direct assistance (e.g., legal

services, health services, etc.)” with 37% of responses.

However, respondents also named “Economic support activities through savings and loans”, “Direct cash assistance; Referrals to assistance and services (NGOs, health centers...)” and “LBQ+ Case Assistance works with legal service organizations, psychologists, etc.” as some “Other” strategies they use. These named strategies also show that service-provision and direct assistance to community members is a common strand in the respondents’ work.

Least frequently employed strategies: LBQ+ led organizations

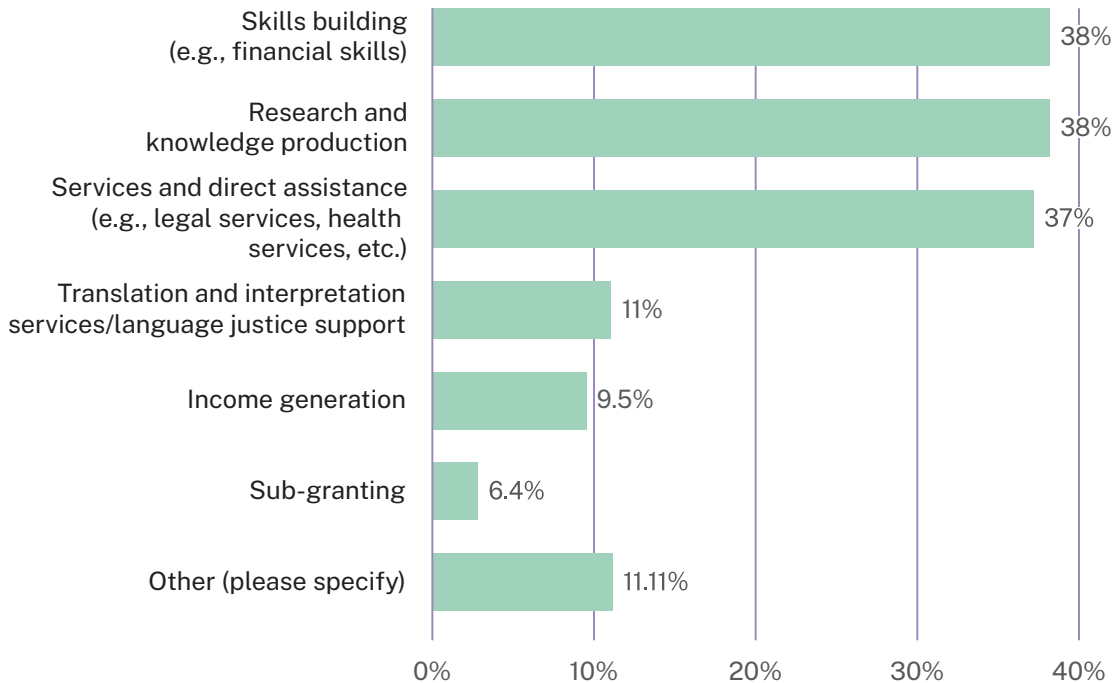


Figure 35: Strategies least frequently employed by LBQ+-led organizations

Ally organizations

A few of the strategies most frequently employed by ally organizations mirror those of LBQ+-led organizations. “Community gatherings” and “leadership training” were each selected by 68% of ally organization respondents, “advocacy for law and policy change and/or reform” by 63%, and “peer-to-peer education” by 53%.

The least selected responses were “translation / language justice” and “sub-granting”, with each answer getting just 5% of responses. The low number of respondents in this category who reported that they do sub-granting as a core strategy confirm that many non-governmental organizations who play a key role in the LBQ+ funding ecosystem are not captured in these data. This is a limitation of this data, especially as many LBQ+-led organizations reported that funding for their work comes from other NGOs. (See “Funding sources”, where we report that nearly 37% of LBQ+-led organization respondents said that their primary source of funding is other NGOs). The role of NGOs in the LBQ+ funding ecosystem warrants further study.

Top 10 strategies: Ally organizations

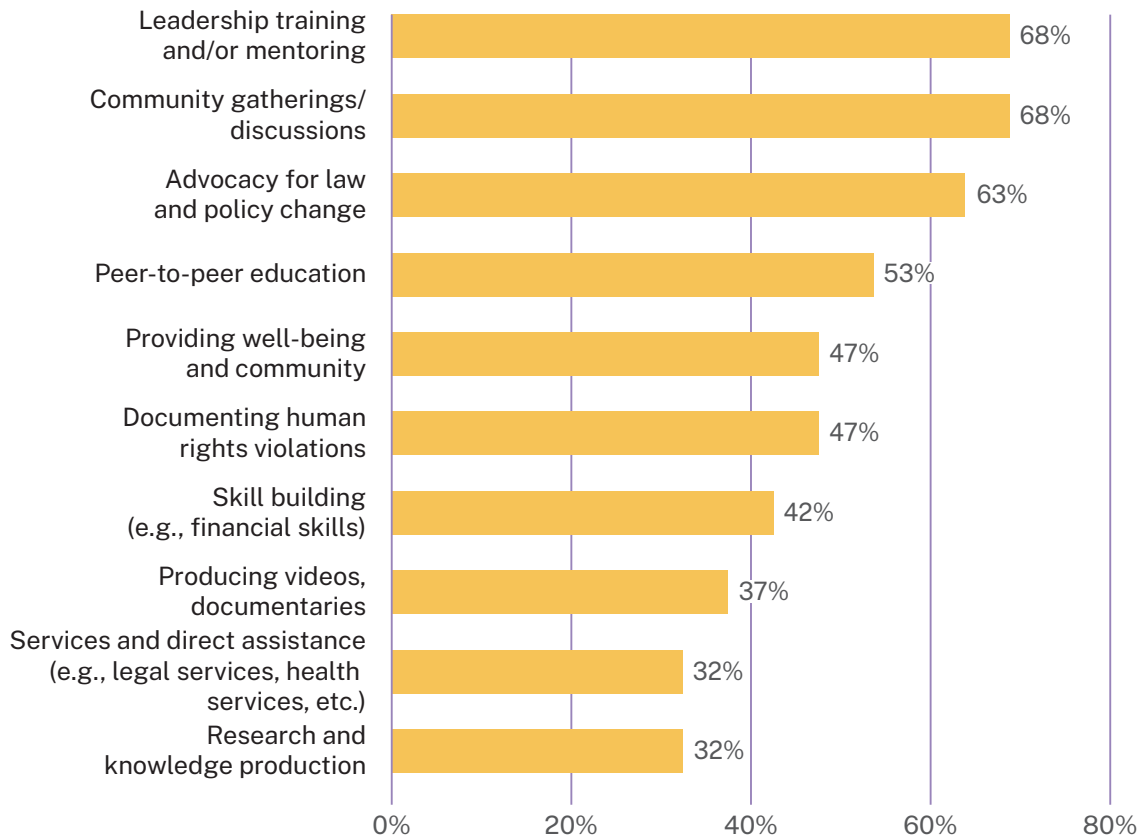


Figure 36: Top 10 strategies employed by ally organizations

Least frequently employed strategies: Ally organizations

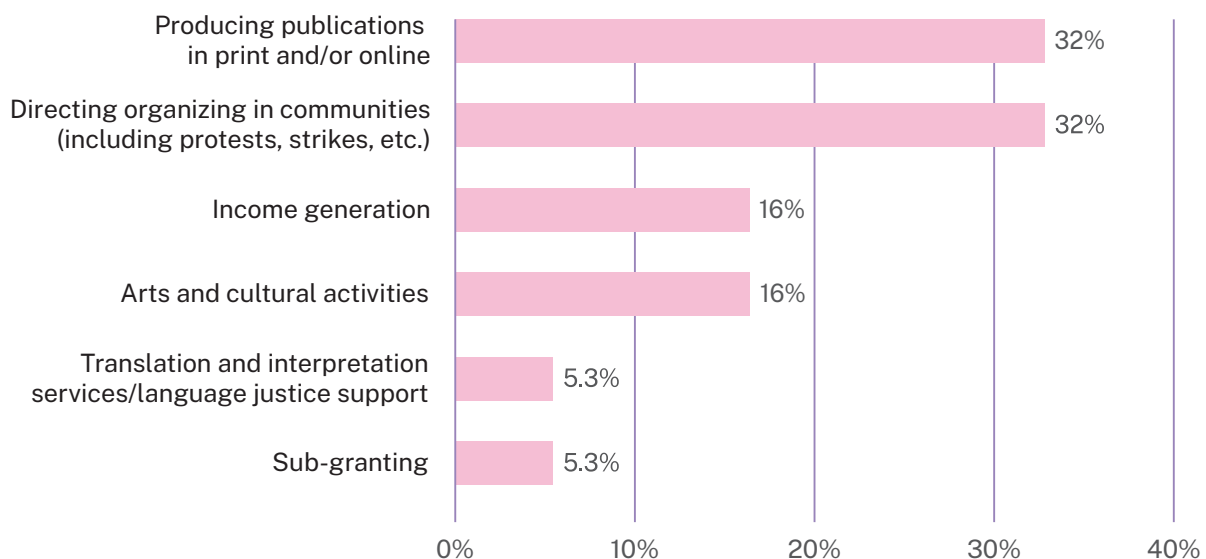


Figure 37: Strategies least frequently employed by ally organizations

Individual LBQ+ activists

72% of individual LBQ+ activists reported that their primary strategy is “Community gatherings / discussions”, whilst “Advocacy for law and policy change and/or reform” and “Providing well-being and community care support” garnered 50% of responses each. In this dataset, 40% of respondents said they employ “Arts and cultural activities” as a strategy, with no respondents reporting “Income generation” as a strategy.

Top 10 strategies: Individual LBQ+ activists

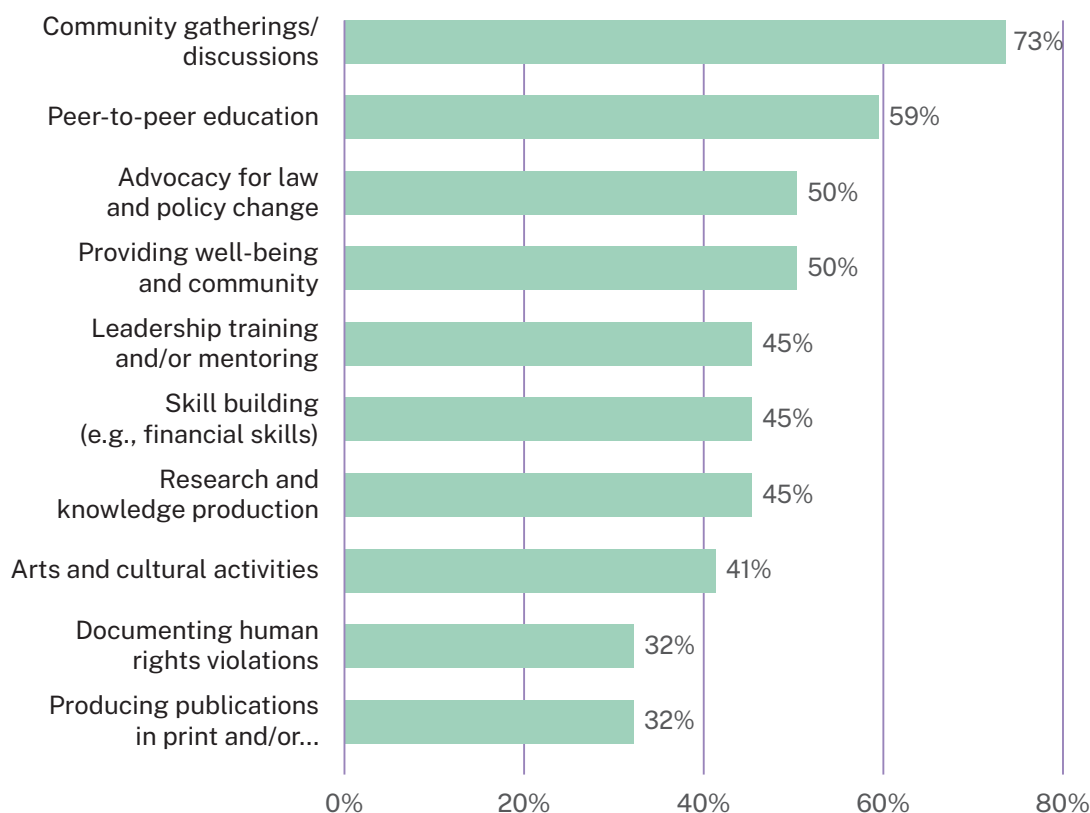


Figure 38: Top 10 strategies employed by LBQ+ activists

Overall

Across the three categories of survey respondents (this is, LBQ+-led organizations, ally organizations and individual LBQ+ activists), “Community gatherings” was the most frequently used strategy in their work, with 73% of all respondents choosing this. “Leadership training” and “Advocacy for law and policy change” were the next most common strategies, receiving 65% and 64% of responses respectively from across all the respondents.

Top 10 strategies employed by all respondents

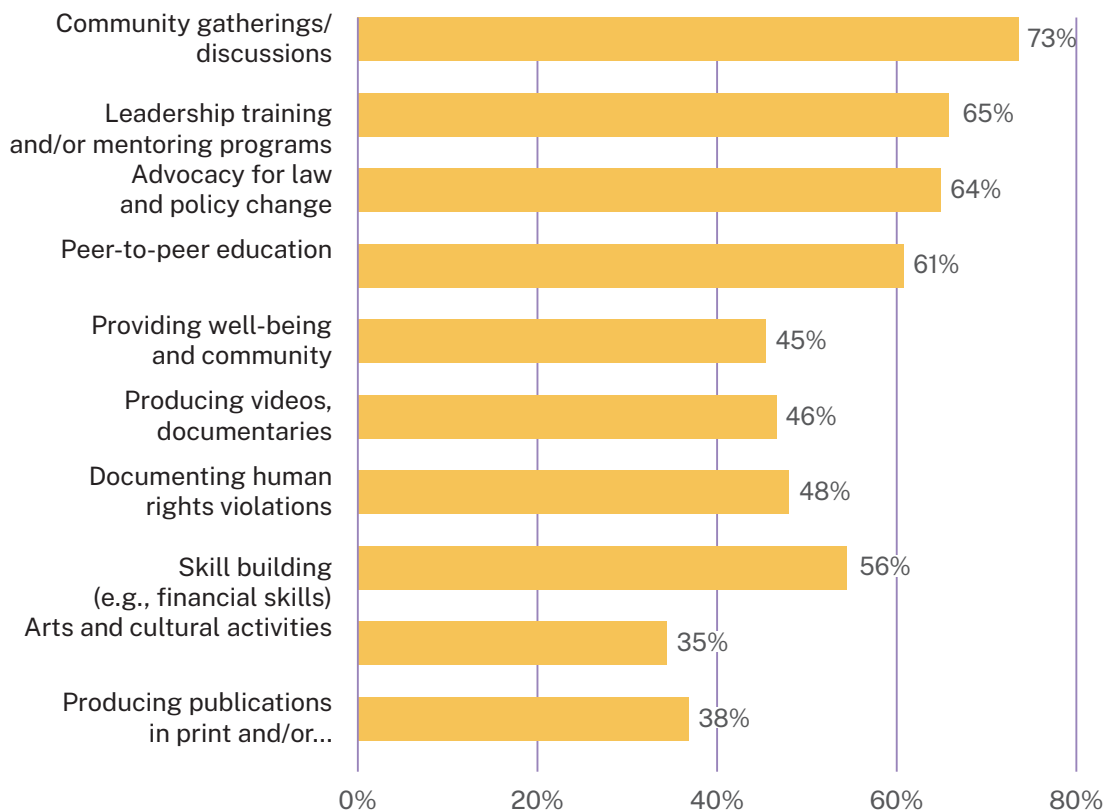


Figure 39: Top 10 strategies employed by all respondents of activist survey

Resource mobilization perspectives and experiences

LBQ+-led organizations

Challenges

There is an overwhelming feeling of scarcity and competition among respondents. The vast majority of respondents (74%) working across all levels (local, national, regional, and transnational) perceive that there is too much competition and too few resources to share between all applicants. They describe this to be a major drawback of the current funding ecosystem and existing models of funding available to LBQ+ organizations. When describing the challenges they face in raising funds for their activism in their own words, many of the LBQ+-led organization respondents talked about an atmosphere of “competing” with each other, a struggle to sustain their livelihoods as well as a struggle to sustain their own capacities, and their ability to keep doing the work amidst feelings of exhaustion when dealing with the financial and economic realities of running an organization. For example, one respondent said:

“We want to change the world, but that passion soon fizzles as we have to take care of our lives and responsibilities. Activists are burnt out and we cannot sustain our commitment.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

Focus group discussions (FGDs) also revealed that this was a commonly held concern. Furthermore, there was a common experience across FGD participants that a lack of information about LBQ+ funding opportunities was a persistent challenge in fundraising.

“First, we don’t know enough about the organizations who fund LBQ work. There is a lack of information. But this is not just a problem with the funding organizations - how much do we share generally, openly, transparently? Only those who are a part of regional LGBTIQ or SRHR networks have access to this knowledge. Sometimes, even then we do not share info openly. I always compare - seeking funding or doing partnerships is like a “one-night stand” - Even in our so-called movement! I don’t want a one-night stand. How can we build a stronger movement, honest, genuine?”

- FGD participant, activist (Southeast Asia)

Research participants expressed that this feeling of competition was not just an obstacle to having LBQ+ activism funded, but that the fragmentation was eroding the overall strength of the movement.

“One challenge we face is competition among ourselves. A second challenge we face is we live in fear of losing our funding, so we cannot practice transparency. We need to unpack the unhealthy relationships of the movement - then we can challenge the funding model, which does not fit our existing needs. If we are not having one voice, then we do not have bargaining power. Our bargaining power is weak.”

- FGD participant, activist (Southeast Asia)

In terms of the economic and financial realities of running LBQ+-led organizations, many FGD respondents seemed to feel that funding realities did not often support material needs of activists and LBQ+ leaders. “LBQT people are not able to get good salaries or jobs anyways. If they do, their salary is lower. Whilst mental health work is important, the economic needs are still

fundamental,” said one participant from South Asia. A participant from Central Asia also noted, “50, 60 or even 70% of the grant is meant for activities, and we have no way of paying salaries.” A Central Asia FGD participant also noted, “Fundraising takes us away from our actual jobs.”

“Women burn out more. Leave activism completely and hate it and never go back. Most of the important and invisible labor is done by women, LBQ women. Tired, underpaid, underappreciated.”

- FGD Participant, activist (Central Asia)

The FGDs revealed how LBQ+ activists have to continuously navigate the politics of visibility and invisibility - invisibility is frustrating, and yet, in some cases provided protection. Visibility is necessary for fundraising, and on the other hand, can expose them to security risks.

“We’re not visible on an international level. Our work is very niche, the way we work and what we work on..we’re not visibly queer - but everything we do is inclusive of queer people. We work with a queer feminist framework and we work with queer communities in a very central way. This lack of visible queer identity protects us in many ways but also limits visibility”

- FGD participant, activist (West Asia)

Groups at the local (75%) and national (69%) level felt there was a lack of visibility for their organization among international/regional funders. However, groups working at the regional level believed visibility was less of an issue (38%) compared to groups working at other levels. A large number of groups across all levels (>58%) agreed that gatekeeping was a reason they were denied visibility and access to these funders, and groups working at regional and transnational levels perceived this even more strongly (>75%).

Other major challenges cited were: funds being given for short periods (67%), restricted to specific activities (61%), and not covering operating costs (60%). This may all contribute to the perception from half of the respondents that funders do not recognize the value of their group’s work (52%). Transnational groups thought especially that their work did not fit funders’ criteria (80%) compared to groups working at other levels (<38%).

Respondents also raised that funders had high eligibility requirements (56%) and were not knowledgeable about the context in which respondents are working (e.g. security contexts) and therefore are not aware of their needs (60%). Finally, groups noted that they had limited knowledge themselves of where to apply for or seek funding (65%).

Top 10 challenges with mobilizing resources: LBQ+ led organizations

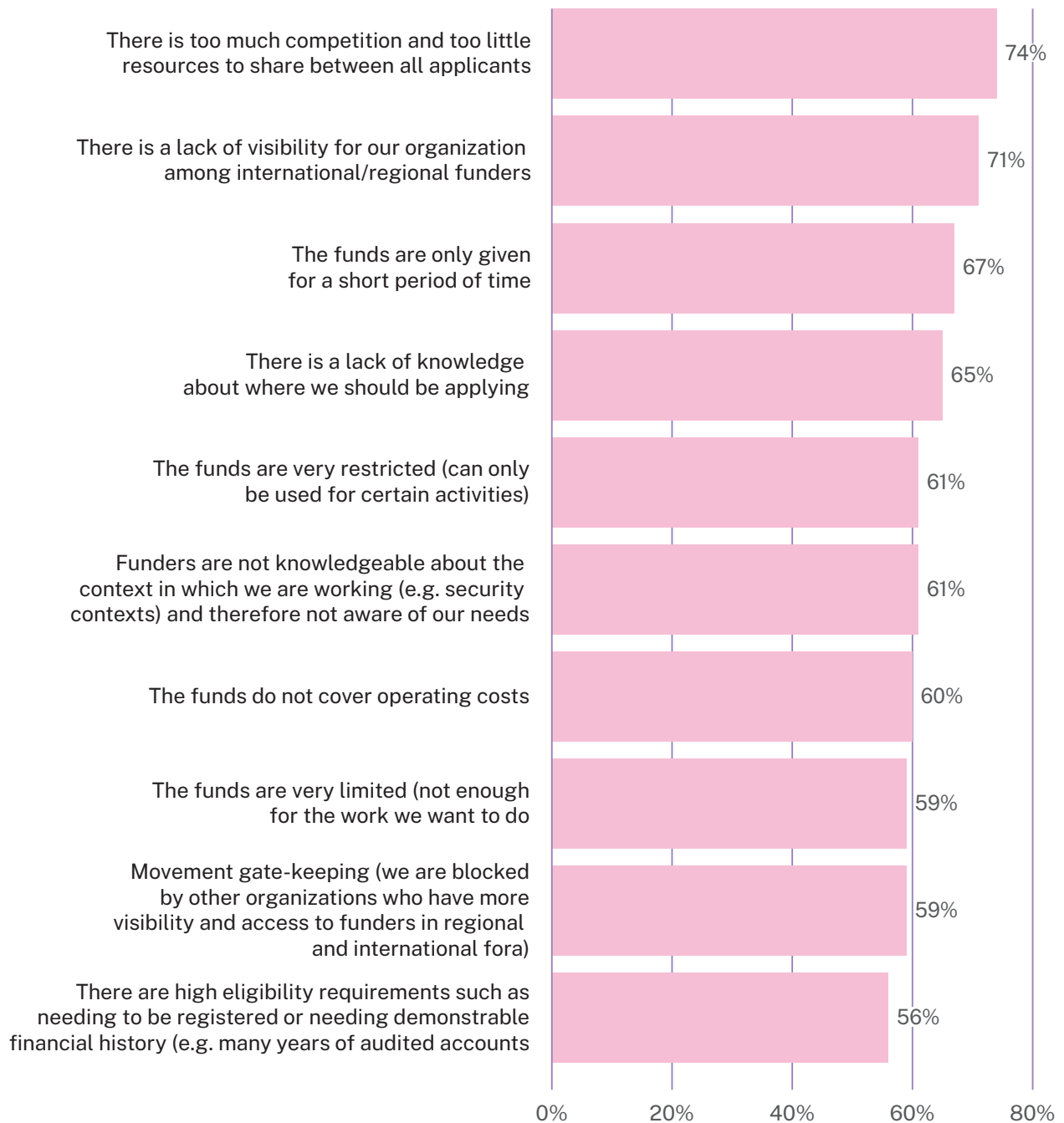


Figure 40: Top 10 challenges faced by LBQ+-led organizations in mobilizing resources

“Donors ask for five years audits, statements. We don’t have the capacity for the audits, for example. This is the only way we can access donors, however. That’s why the funding which comes to Indonesia - comes to LGBTIQ orgs.”

- FGD participant, activist (Southeast Asia)

“There is a lack of an intermediary queer fund in Asia that understands the activism and the region we are in. We find it a struggle to explain to donors outside of the region what we face. There is a lack of donors who understand our context and activism that is also based in our region. In short, there is no queer fund in Asia.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

Respondents also noted that they heavily rely on volunteers or unpaid staff, and many named burdensome funding application processes — which take specific skills, time and resources — are seen as a major hindrance. Survey participants explained:

“Funding often comes with too many conditions, making it difficult for small groups to receive support.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

“We entirely rely on volunteer work and lack qualified personnel to write proposals. We have little contact to funders or foreign consulates. Compared to other organizations, our lack of professional and English language skills has brought to us huge barriers.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

This was a concern echoed by others as well. Some respondents also noted that the need for registration obstructs some LBQ+ groups from accessing funding - for example, “Registration requirements limit funding applications”, one said.

Our challenges with mobilizing resources: LBQ+ led organizations

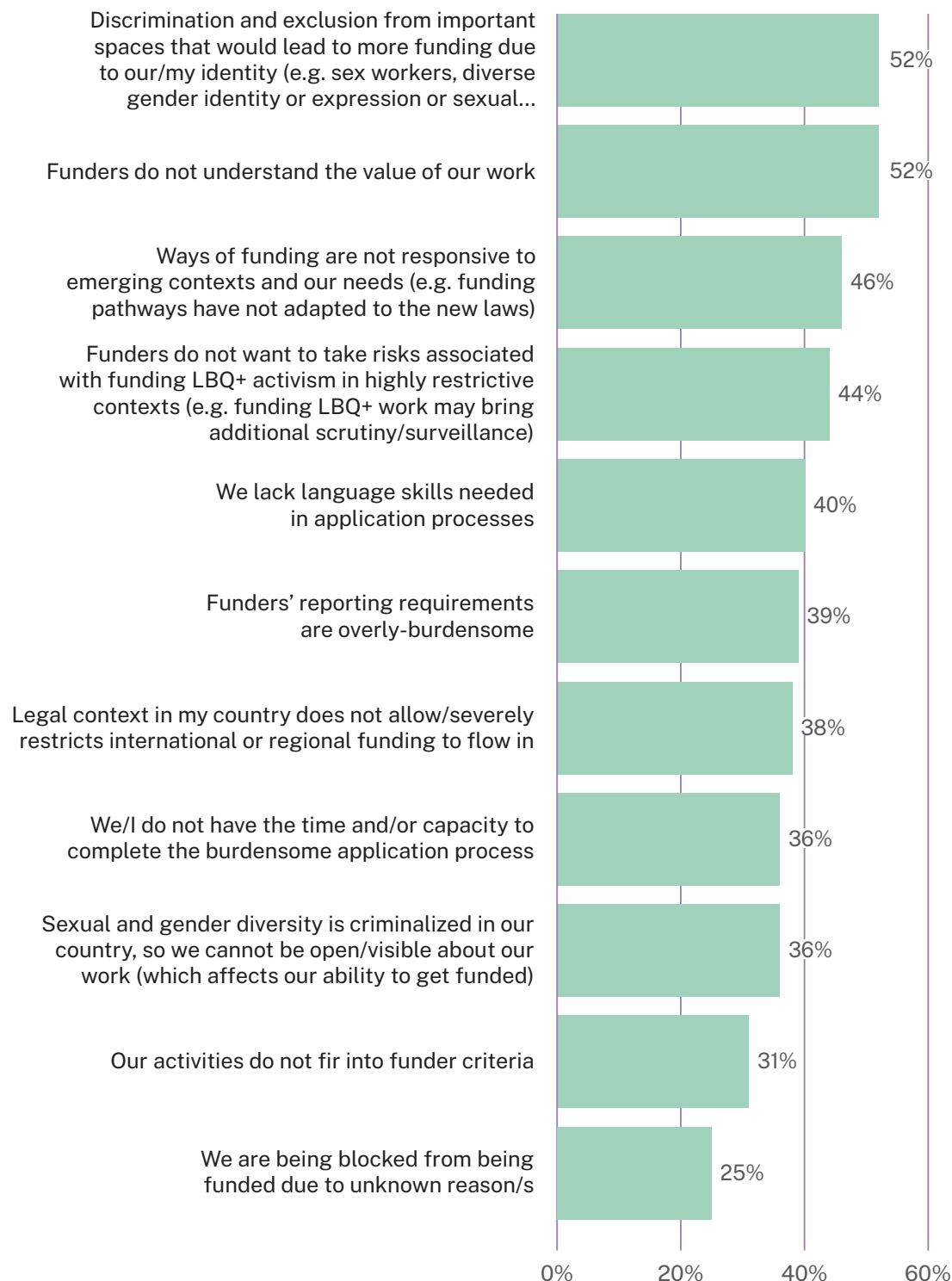


Figure 41: Other challenges faced by LBQ+-led organizations in mobilizing resources

One respondent named the local laws as an impediment to covering core costs:

“Since we are an FCRA organization there is 80-20 percent bracket where only 20 percent fund can be expended on core costs like salaries, rents, admin etc. It is becoming increasingly difficult to be able to maintain, pay staff and retain good employees.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

Focus group discussions (FGDs) at the subregional level also revealed that some of the key challenges that LBQ+ movements face, when trying to access funding for their work, are legal, social and political contexts, dynamics of competition within movements, lack of knowledge and information about funding opportunities, language barriers and issues of visibility. Across the subregions, LBQ+ activists talked both about laws which criminalize LBQ+ communities — for example, laws against same-sex sexual conduct — and laws which restrict NGOs’ ability to work, as being obstacles to their fundraising goals. Many talked about prevailing legal, social and political contexts in which being visible as LBQ+ carried significant risks, thereby producing further challenges to LBQ+ movements.

For example, in South Asia, many FGD participants said that their organizations present themselves simply as “women’s rights” or “women’s empowerment” groups. Because of the local laws, society and culture, they are only able to access foreign funding for their work, and much of the local funding available is not accessible to them for their work. In Central Asia, activists talked about so-called “foreign agent” laws being passed across the subregion, borrowing from Russia. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, in 2024, a similar bill was passed. “Because of the law, many organizations shut down”, one FGD participant from Central Asia said.

“[In China] LBQ groups can’t register according to the NGO law. My organization operates as a business company. Companies used to be able to launch crowdfunding but recently the regulations have become very strict that you have to be an NGO to crowdfund so that leaves a lot of LGBT groups unable to do it.”

- FGD participant, activist (East Asia)

FGD participants also highlighted the way in which geopolitics and foreign policy of other countries play a role in creating conditions which make it hard for local LBQ+-led organizations to thrive.

“Sanctions on Iran makes it almost impossible - it makes it impossible for us to work in Iran or pay people in Iran for their work, or to distribute money for their needs.”

- FGD participant, activist (West Asia)

LBQ+-led organizations spoke about language barriers as a hurdle to effective fundraising. “Language really matters; the way you construct a sentence can make or break an application. Part of it is knowing the language of the funder and using it,” said a participant from West Asia.

LBQ+ activists articulated a range of tactics they use to navigate complex funding challenges. They relied on building strong relationships with individuals in funding organizations, formulating their work in a way that allows them to fly under the radar of state surveillance, strategically selecting and focusing on funders that they believe truly understand their contexts, and spending more time and energy on funders who are interested in institutional strengthening and movement-building rather than those who fund at the activity or program level. In East Asia, activists named a range of tactics — for example, doing ticketed events, introducing sub-granting into their programming, and providing paid services — as tactics for sustaining LBQ+ organizations financially.

LBQ+ activists also spoke about how LBQ+ movements’ needs are often overlooked in existing LGBTIQ+ funding frameworks. For example, many highlighted that the consistent prioritizing of HIV-prevention funding at the cost of addressing a range of other issues, has been a problem for LBQ+ organizations who are fundraising. This dynamic also produces the problem of fragmenting the broader movement and creating competition between communities along the LGBTIQ+ spectrum. The research unearthed tensions within movement-spaces, where some groups are perceived as receiving more funding than others.

Overall, funders’ priorities have a significant impact on movements, at times causing division and strain. Advisors to the research project noted this problem, as well.

“There are lots of funds coming into the larger LGBTQTI community, but the LBQ focus gets lost. There is also a lot of “pink washing”, and grantmaking strategies are not rooted in the actual issues - it’s for people who are already visible and vocal. The funds that are available are not going where they should. The issues that are important don’t get represented.”

- Research Advisor

“Most of the funding coming in is focused on HIV, and then from there emerges the focus on particular demographic groups. When that happens - those groups get to be leading the conversation... Therefore, NGOs themselves become very bifurcated, and build institutions only based on addressing the needs of a single community”.

- Research Advisor

Another Advisor noted, “Funders also have a lot of assumptions on who can get HIV, and then they focus only on that group”. Yet another Advisor spoke to the challenges that LBQ+ groups face in making their work “fit” frameworks made by funders, which can end up producing artificial silos within movements:

“This discourse [pitting one community’s needs against another’s] exists because it’s linked to specific funding opportunities. It reflects reality, it’s not imagined, groups have to speak this ‘language’ to make their needs seen, heard”.

Experiences of good funding practices

‘Good’ funder practices least experienced by LBQ+ led organizations

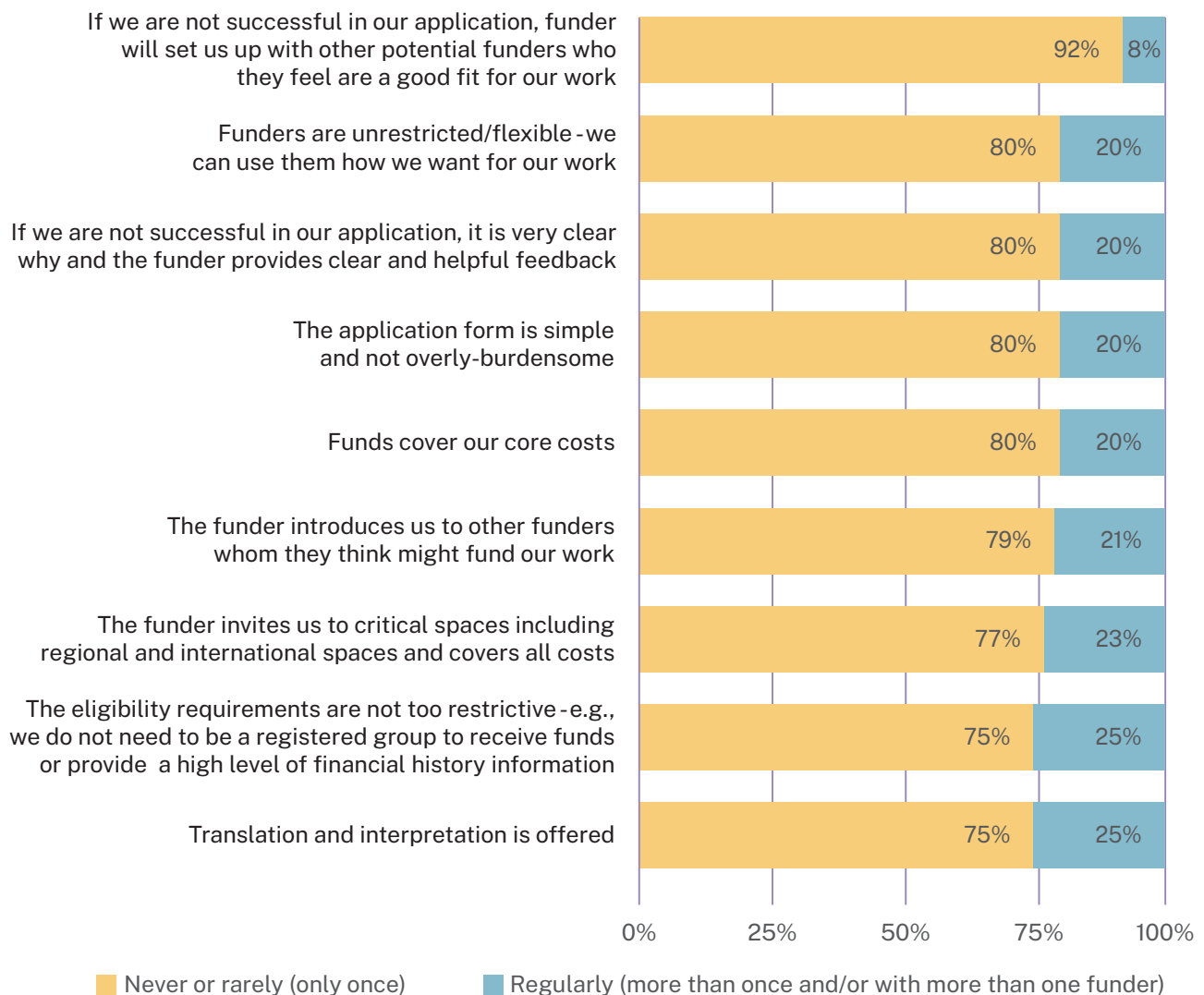


Figure 42: Experience of good funder practices by LBQ+-led organizations (part 1)

Overwhelmingly, LBQ+-led organizations did not report regularly experiencing good funder practices. Most LBQ+ led groups report that funders do not provide clear and helpful feedback as to why applications are unsuccessful (80%), nor do they support groups by connecting them with other funders that might be a good fit (92%). A majority of respondents said that funding applications were never or rarely simple to complete (80%) and eligibility requirements were often restrictive - for example, they require too much financial history or that groups be registered (75%). (See Figure 42.) Groups also thought that funders rarely or never advertised their opportunities clearly and openly, nor made it easy to seek out information about the opportunity (64%) (see Figure 43).

Other 'good' funder practices experienced by LBQ+ led organizations (or not)

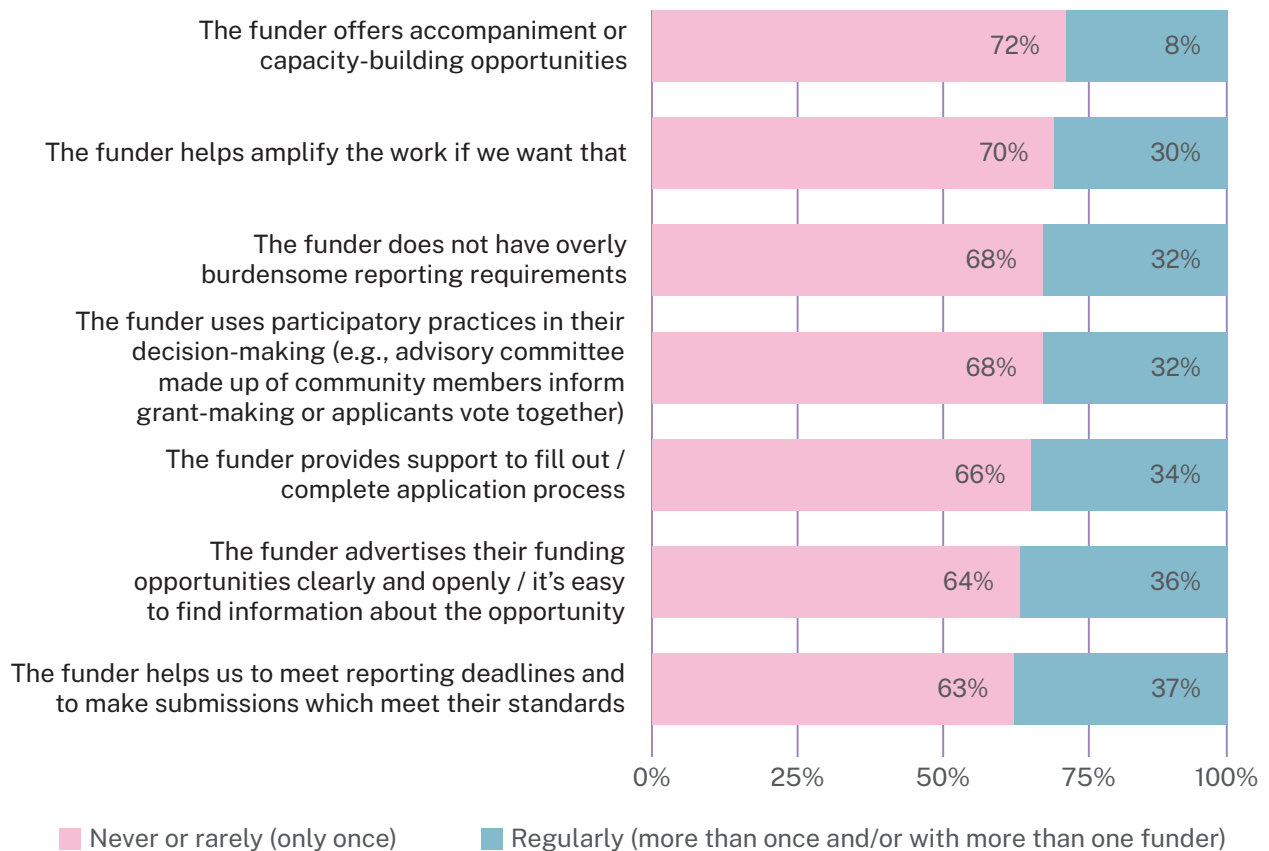


Figure 43: Experience of good funder practices by LBQ+-led organizations (part 2)

‘Good’ funder practices most experienced by LBQ+ led organizations

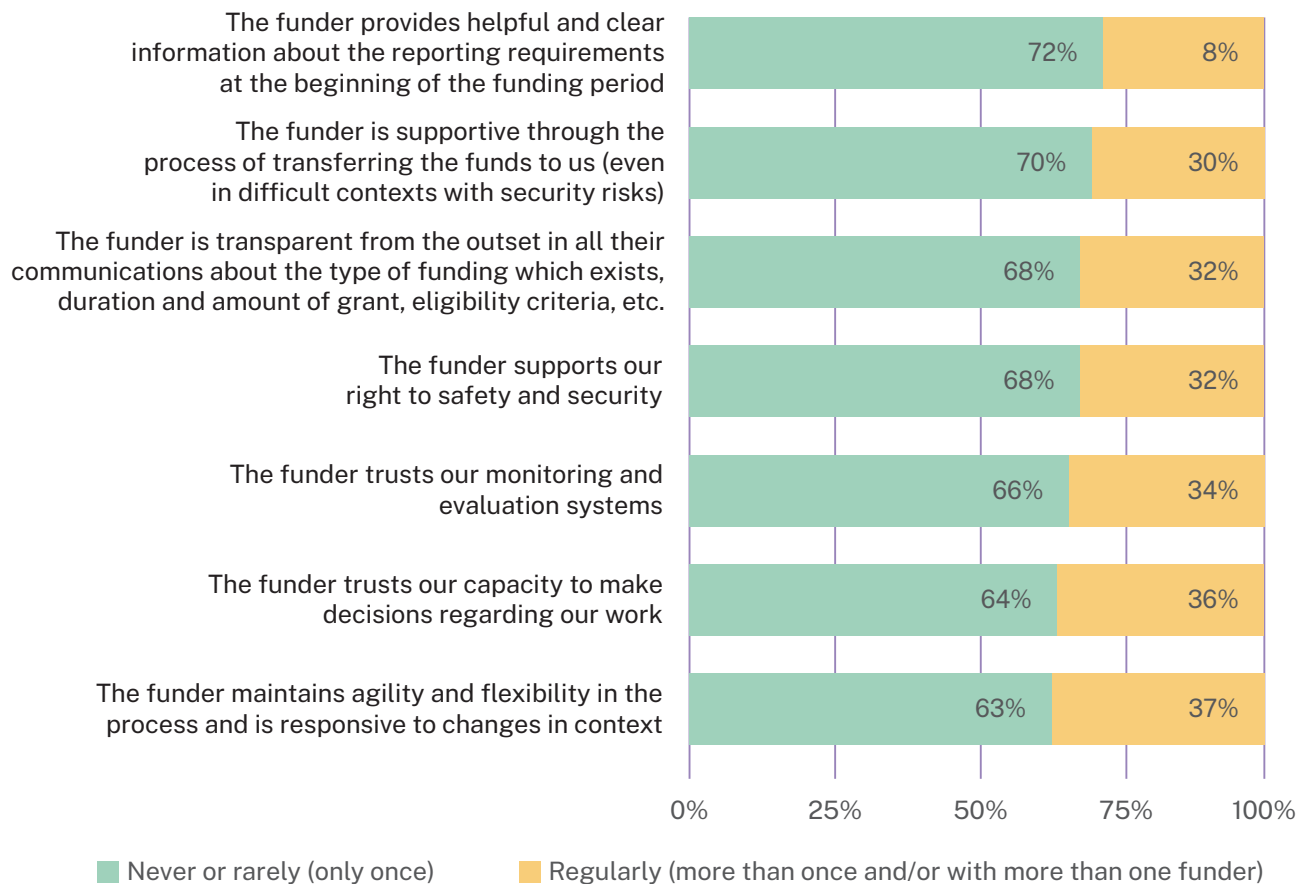


Figure 44: Experience of good funder practices by LBQ+-led organizations (part 3)

When asked to write in their own words about good experiences they had with funders, one respondent said, “It’s important to note that while we answered “regularly” for many of the named practices, they all refer to the same 2 or 3 funders that have been supportive in these ways over the years. It is not common practice,” making a clear case that good practices are experienced all too rarely, even when they are positive experiences.

Many responses showed that, in summary, good experiences are founded on trust-based relationships and flexibility on the side of the funder. Some respondents noted that flexibility from the funder, and showing care and concern, can positively shape outcomes for LBQ+-led organizations, even when the funding itself is restricted.

The responses also showed that strong values-alignment between funder and grantee make the basis for a really strong and positive relationship with good outcomes.

“The best experiences we’ve had with funders include our contact person checking in with us regularly or when need be, including to remind us to apply for renewal grants, as well as being flexible about reporting deadlines (as long as we are communicative about it).”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

“The funders offered detailed explanations when calling for applications and assisted us to clarify the content of our proposals. After granting us the funding, they also actively engaged in the discussion of project implementation, and eventually confirmed with us the unclear components in our report.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

“Usually the feminist funders like Astraea, offer the best practices but they are incredibly hard to get because the need is so great in a region that is the most underfunded yet so large. So we try to apply for other funds but they do not offer core funding or support staff cost and are inflexible. This makes our work very difficult. However, we almost never get them as we are LBQ and we are in Asia. Funders don’t get it.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

“We were once not sure about our direction of organizational development and we had a discussion with Her Fund. They offered their opinions as funders as well as accompaniment and support as friends. This has helped us to form a clear vision on our projects.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

Needs

Survey respondents were asked, “What do LBQ+ activists and movements in Asia and the Pacific most need to fund their work? [Select one option]”. LBQ+-led organizations were extremely articulate and clear in their analysis about what LBQ+ movements most need to get their activism funded. They were able to concisely create the foundation of a contextual analysis, which revealed the social and political contexts within which many of them work. For example, many talked about government surveillance and censorship, and security and safety issues.

The most frequently cited needs were: core funding, more diverse types of funding opportunities to cover different types of strategies and activities, flexible/unrestricted funding, and, finally, more multi-year support. These are all naturally related.

“While many forms of funding support already exist, the most crucial support LBQ+ activists and movements in Asia and the Pacific need is core funding. Core funding grants groups the agency and stability to operate sustainably, make strategic decisions, and adapt their work to shifting challenges. Unlike project-based funding, which can be restrictive, core funding empowers organizations to cover essential costs, invest in long-term goals, and build the resilience needed to create lasting change.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

The other need notable in the quantitative data, though not as frequently selected (5%), was funders that are knowledgeable of the local contexts and take security into account. In their qualitative responses, most respondents in this category seemed to agree that funders need to have a deep understanding of this context, to have a commitment to advancing the human rights of LBQ+ persons, and to fund from a rights-based perspective.

“LBQ+ activists and movements in Asia and the Pacific most need increased visibility, recognition, and tailored support from funders who understand the unique challenges and contexts they face. This includes more flexible and sustained funding models that allow for grassroots movements to grow and adapt. Additionally, they would benefit from funders who prioritize intersectionality and inclusivity, ensuring that the diverse voices within LBQ+ communities are heard and supported. Capacity-building opportunities, networking platforms, and advocacy training are also crucial to help these movements effectively communicate their needs and impact to potential donors.”

- Survey participant, LBQ+-led organization

What LBQ+ activists and movements in Asia and the Pacific most need to fund their work: LBQ+ led groups

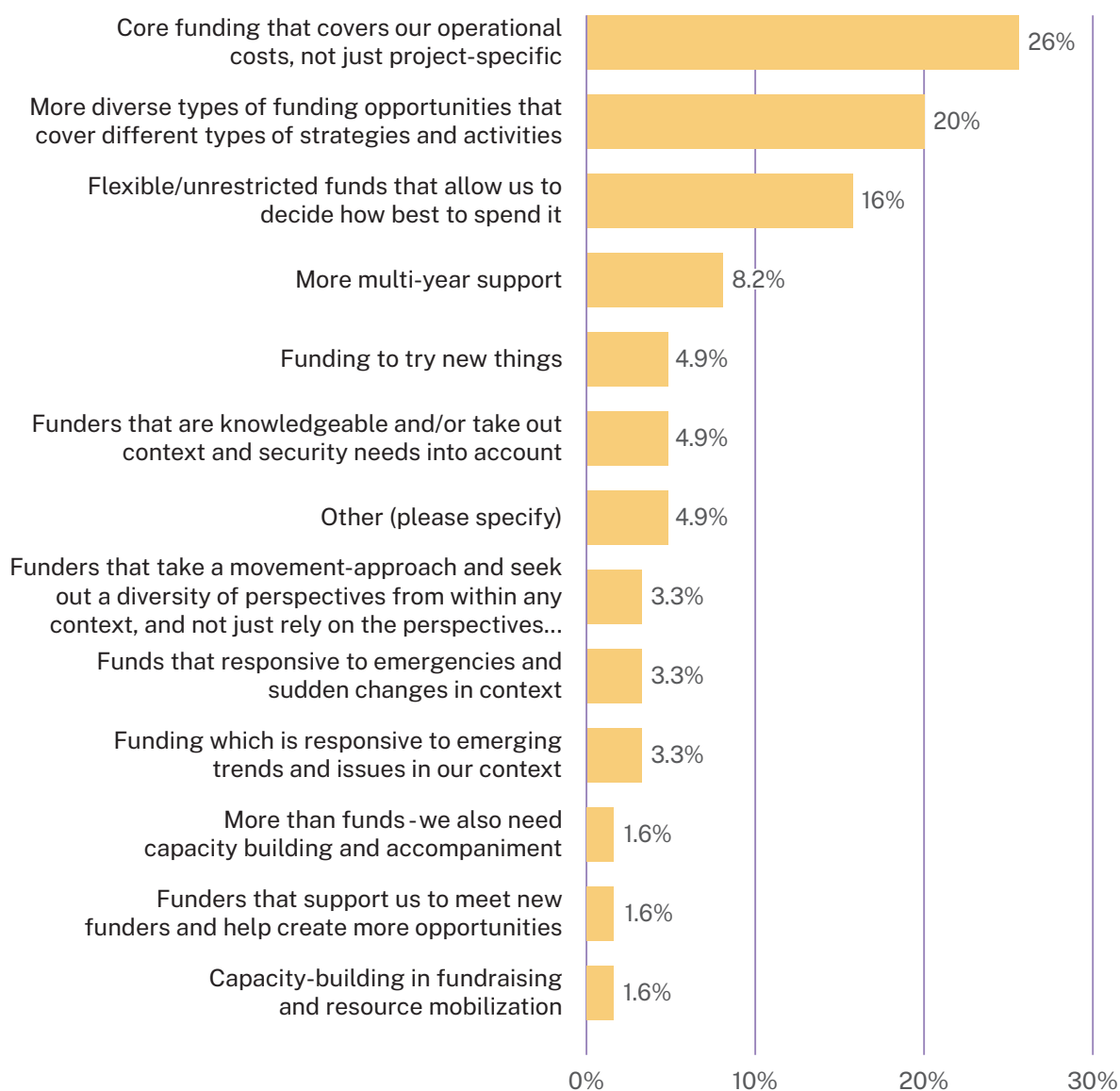


Figure 45: Needs expressed by LBQ+-led organizations



Ally organizations

Challenges

These groups had less notable trends compared to LBQ+ led organizations but shared similar challenges regarding visibility, funding restricted to projects and not covering core costs, etc. Nearly half the respondents (47%) reported that sexual and gender diversity is criminalized in their country, and so they cannot be open / visible about their work, which affects their ability to get funded.

Top 10 challenges faced with mobilizing resources: Ally organizations

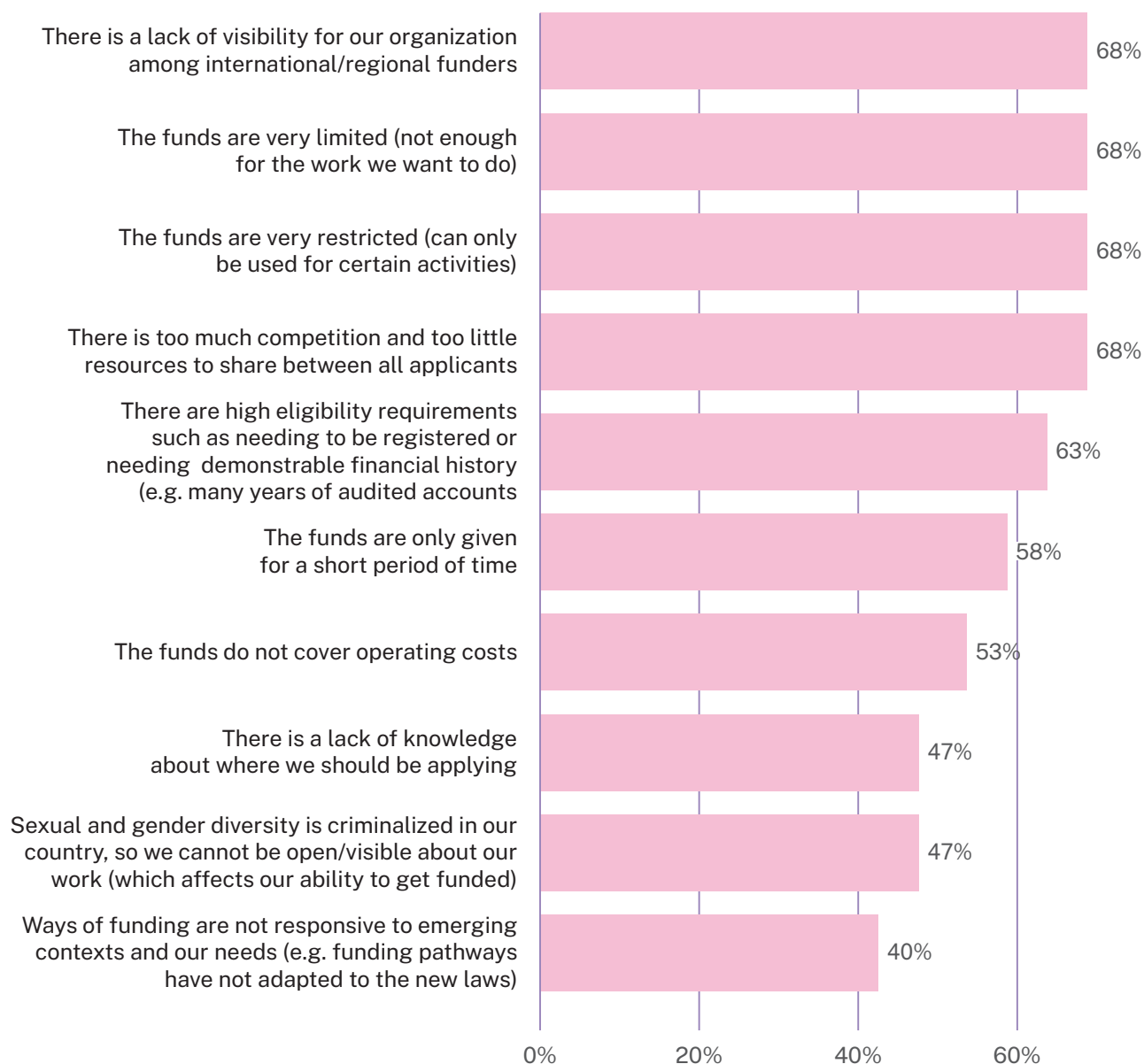


Figure 46: Top 10 challenges faced by ally organizations in mobilizing resources

Similar to LBQ+-led organizations, ally organizations also noted that the atmosphere of “competition” was a challenge in getting their work funded. For example, one respondent in this category noted, “a high level of competition among the potential grant receivers” as a problem.

The data from the respondents in this category clearly show that organizations with bigger budget sizes reported fewer challenges when it comes to fundraising, and operationalizing their programs with the funding they have. For example, the ally organization with the biggest annual budget (over 500,000 USD) only reported one challenge: “There are high eligibility requirements such as needing to be registered or needing demonstrable financial history (e.g. many years of audited accounts)”. Organizations who reported having a zero budget as well as organizations who reported having an annual budget between 30,000-50,000 USD chose the most number of challenges.

Experiences of good funding practices

Similar to LBQ+-led organizations, ally organizations frequently reported that they never or rarely experienced good funding practices: funds are rarely or never unrestricted (84%) nor cover core costs (83%). Funders are rarely or never transparent in their communications from the outset (74%), and rarely or never provide feedback for unsuccessful applications (84%). In addition, respondents report that translation and interpretation are rarely or never provided (72%).

Needs

What LBQ+ activists and movements in Asia and the Pacific most need to fund their work: Ally organizations

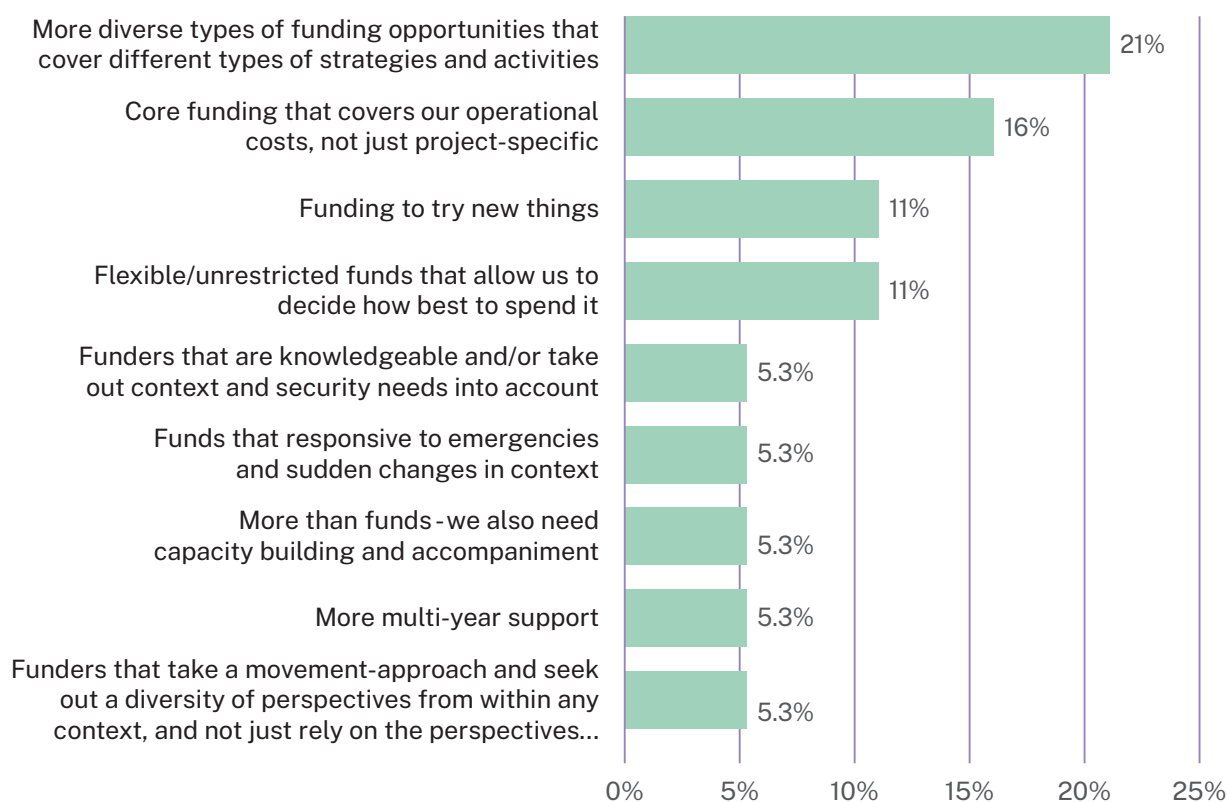


Figure 47: Needs expressed by ally organizations

Out of a provided list, respondents could select one answer regarding what they thought LBQ+ activists and movements needed to fund their work. The top needs were: More diverse types of funds (21%), core funding (16%), and flexible, unrestricted funds, as well as funds to try new things (11%)

Many ally organizations spoke eloquently to the needs of LBQ+ movements in the regions of Asia and the Pacific, from their vantage point. Their concerns, such as flexible funding, are closely aligned with LBQ+-led organizations' responses. One respondent explained this in detail:

“LBQ+ activists and movements in Asia and the Pacific most need funders who genuinely understand the unique challenges and intersectional experiences of this community. First, flexible funding is crucial. Many LBQ+ initiatives are grassroots and may not fit neatly into traditional funding structures that demand rigid frameworks or immediate large-scale impact. Providing unrestricted or long-term funding would allow LBQ+ groups to adapt to community needs, focus on sustainable growth, and pursue innovative approaches without constant pressure for quick results.

Second, funders need to recognize the importance of building trust and relationships with LBQ+ activists. By actively listening to the community and investing in their capacity-building, funders can help these movements strengthen their organizational resilience and leadership. This could include offering technical assistance, networking opportunities, and mentorship.

Lastly, visibility and representation matter. Funders need to advocate for LBQ+ inclusion in regional and global spaces, amplifying their voices and making them part of broader funding discussions, which often overlook the specific needs of LBQ+ movements.”

- Survey participant, ally organization

Several respondents in this category spoke to the importance of “networks” and networking for LBQ+ movements, from their perspective.

“Activists working in this field are in dire need of financial support and capacity building as well as networks that support their work.”

- Survey respondent, ally organization

As noted in the quote above, respondents in this category also spoke about the need for visibility and representation for LBQ+ activists and organizations.

Individual LBQ+ activists

Challenges

Top resource mobilizing challenges faced by individual LBQ+ activists

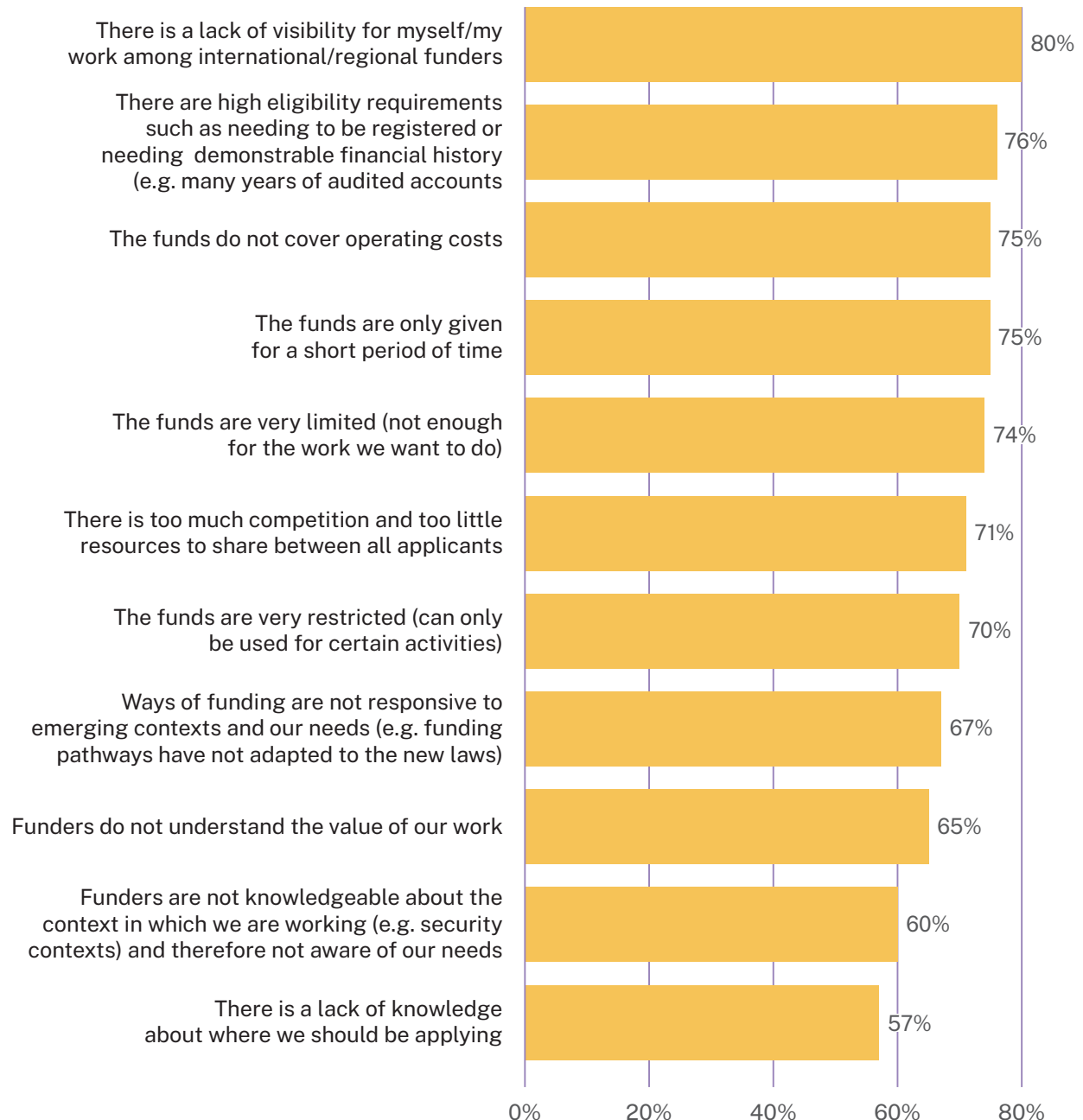


Figure 48: Top challenges faced by individual LBQ+ activists in mobilizing resources

The top three resource mobilization challenges for individual activists was a lack of visibility for their work among international and regional funders (80%), high eligibility requirements (76%),

and funds not covering operating costs (75%). Figure 48 shows the numerous other challenges faced.

Several respondents also provided answers related to the challenge of government censorship and surveillance as major obstacles to seeking and pursuing funding — especially international funding — as this would risk their own security.

Individual LBQ+ activist respondents also spoke about the time and energy required for fundraising, as well as about the challenges of being “unregistered”. Their responses unveil numerous complex challenges faced by individual activists, reflecting the kind of legitimacy automatically and somewhat arbitrarily associated with being affiliated to an institution.

“I think as an individual activist, there is less credibility and therefore less opportunity as well. A lot of the funding opportunities I see are often for organizations or networks, not individual activists.”

- Survey respondent, individual LBQ+ activist

Like LBQ+-led organizations, they also grappled with the competing demands of being visible and ensuring one’s own safety.

“Funding often seems dependent on (not-just-a-good-CV, but) the visibility of queer individuals. The more people know you and your work, the more likely you are to receive support. However, this creates a problem for queer individuals who cannot be visible due to safety concerns—risking their life.”

- Survey respondent, individual LBQ+ activist

“The small LBQ+ groups often go unnoticed because the larger organizations that have been operating longer receive most of the funding. The smaller are left with fewer resources, making it difficult for them to produce content that gains more visibility, perpetuating their lack of recognition. / Funders often do not provide grants to groups that are not officially registered or have frequently changing membership. / Funders do not value the ‘compensation’ for workers, as much as content they created.”

- Survey participant, individual LBQ+ activist

Experiences of good funding practices

Good practices least experienced by individual LBQ+ activists

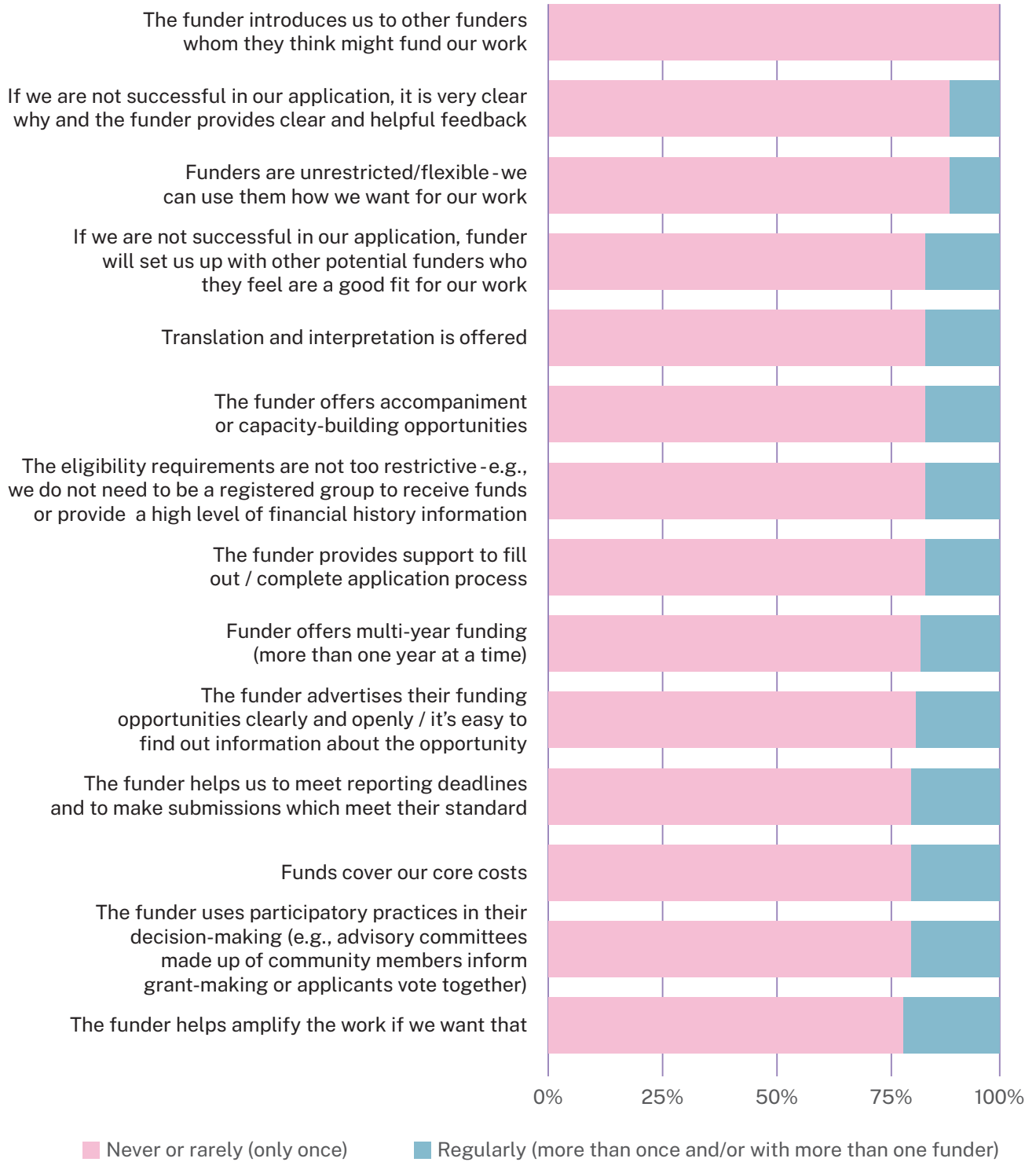


Figure 49: Experience of good funder practices by individual LBQ+ activists (part 1)

Like other respondent categories, individual LBQ+ activists reported that they never (61%) or rarely (39%) have experienced funders introducing them to other funders whom they think might fund their work. In addition, they never or rarely experienced getting clarity on unsuccessful applications (89%), flexible funds (89%), translation or interpretation (89%), and accompaniment and capacity-building opportunities (89%).

Only about half of the respondents said they regularly felt that the funder trusts their capacity to make decisions regarding their funding (47%). Some respondents said funders have been supportive through the process of transferring funds (37%) and support rights to safety and security (37%).

Good practices most experienced by individual LBQ+ activists



Figure 50: Experience of good funder practices by individual LBQ+ activists (part 2)

Needs

Like all other respondent categories, a commonly identified need was “More diverse types of funding opportunities that cover different types of strategies and activities”. They also selected “funders that support us to meet new funders” (14%), which would support them to overcome the challenge of visibility.

What LBQ+ activists and movements in Asia and the Pacific most need to fund their work: Individual activists

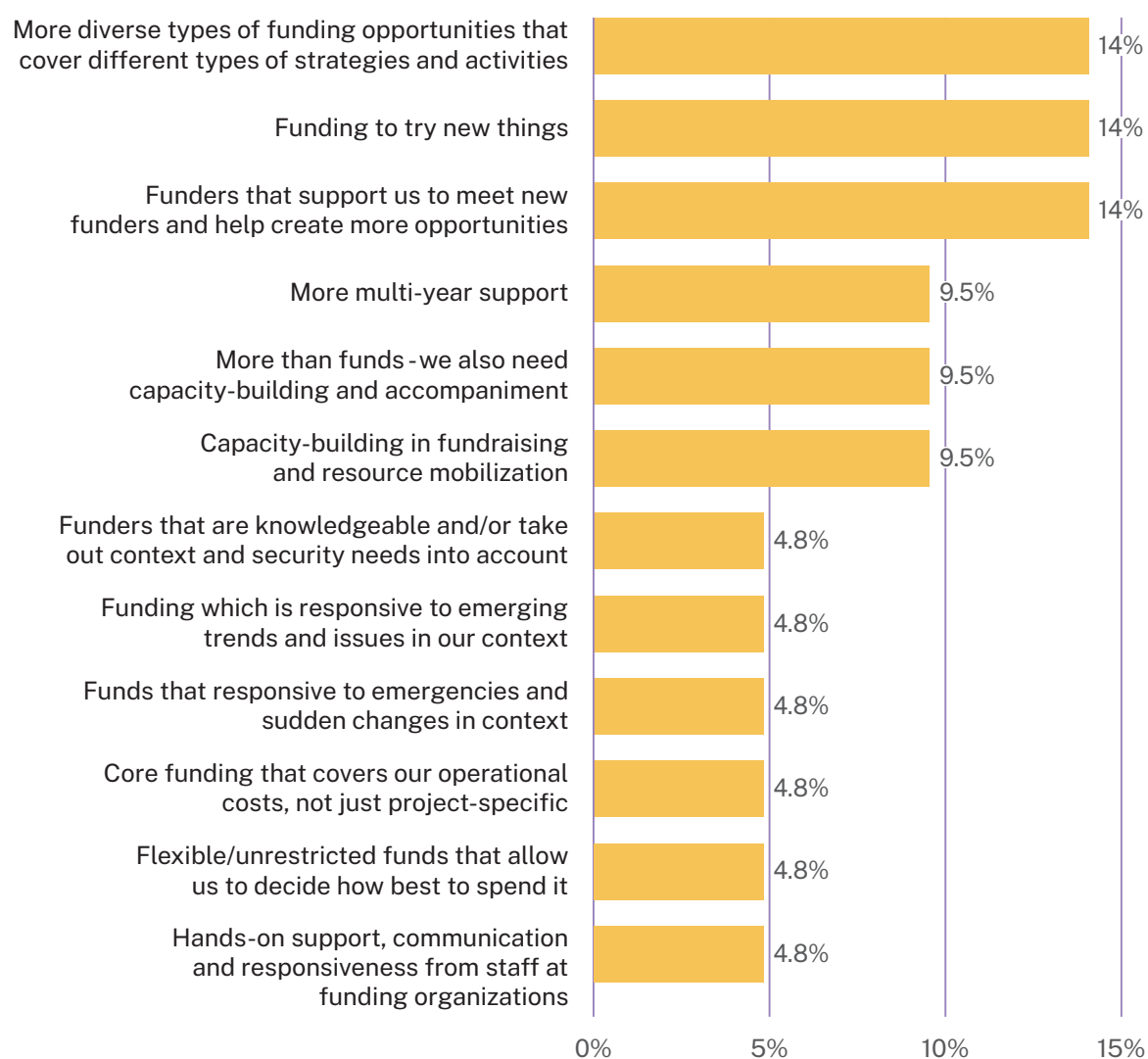


Figure 51: Needs expressed by individual LBQ+ activists

When writing about what they thought LBQ+ movements most needed to get their work funded, one noted, “Conflict resolution within the movement, empowerment and collective care”, and another noted, “Community building, creating safe spaces and awareness of their LBQ+ identities (many still think something is wrong with them or it is a disease of some sort)”.

This combination of reflections shows that LBQ+ activists present an interesting set of challenges to LBQ+ movements: challenges concerning both outward advocacy needed to change social attitudes towards the LBQ+ community, and inward-looking reflective work that is needed within movements.

This clear-eyed reflection about what would make movements stronger was present across several responses. A common issue raised was the need for movements to work on their own dynamics, community-building and narratives for funding advocacy. One example of this response:

“To get their work funded, these movements need to build strong narratives that highlight the urgency and relevance of their work... Funders need to see the value in supporting grassroots initiatives that directly impact marginalized communities, which means activists must invest in strategic communications, showcasing the impact of their work through compelling stories, data, and evidence of change... Ultimately, funders are more likely to invest in movements that are resilient, innovative, and clearly aligned with broader goals of human rights, gender equality, and social justice.”

- Survey participant, individual LBQ+ activist

A few of the respondents highlighted the need for dedicated mechanisms and other resources:

“We need a regional mechanism to fund the region LBQ work, a mechanism that led by LBQ and for LBQ.”

- Survey participant, individual LBQ+ activist

“Having a directory of open calls (like they do in the arts world) would be great.”

- Survey participant, individual LBQ+ activist

"Human rights is contagious work. We always can learn from each other from good and bad. And we need each other's help within and outside of the home country. So in my perspective, a platform which gathers all the power and resources continuously is very essential. This platform should be a place for everyone can reach out for help, recourse, fund, research with detailed information."

- Survey participant, individual LBQ+ activist



Funder Perspectives



Who took the survey - a snapshot

Thirteen funders that currently fund LBQ+ groups and activists in Asia and the Pacific completed the survey. These included private foundations, women's and feminist funds, a non-government organization, an intermediary fund and a public foundation. Women's / feminist funds were well represented in the sample; eight funds, comprising 62% of the respondents, completed the survey. (see Figure 52).

Funders had organizational budgets of varying sizes (see Figure 53). Five funders (38%) had budgets greater than USD 10 million, whilst two had budgets smaller than USD 500,000.

Funders operating transnationally / globally tended to have large organizational budgets; all the funders having budgets exceeding USD 10 million worked transnationally / globally. The respondents having budgets smaller than USD 500,000 operated solely at the national level.

Type of institution

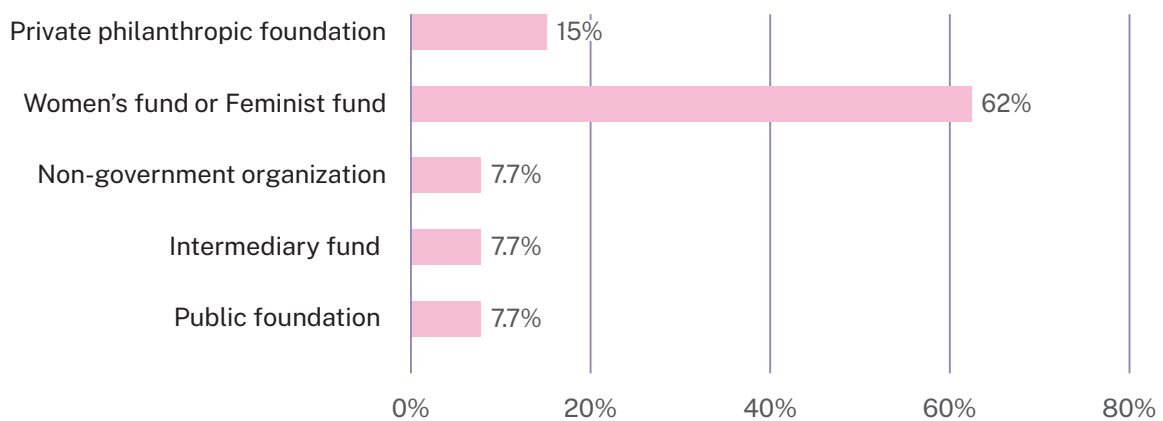


Figure 52: Types of funders that completed the survey

Organizational budgets

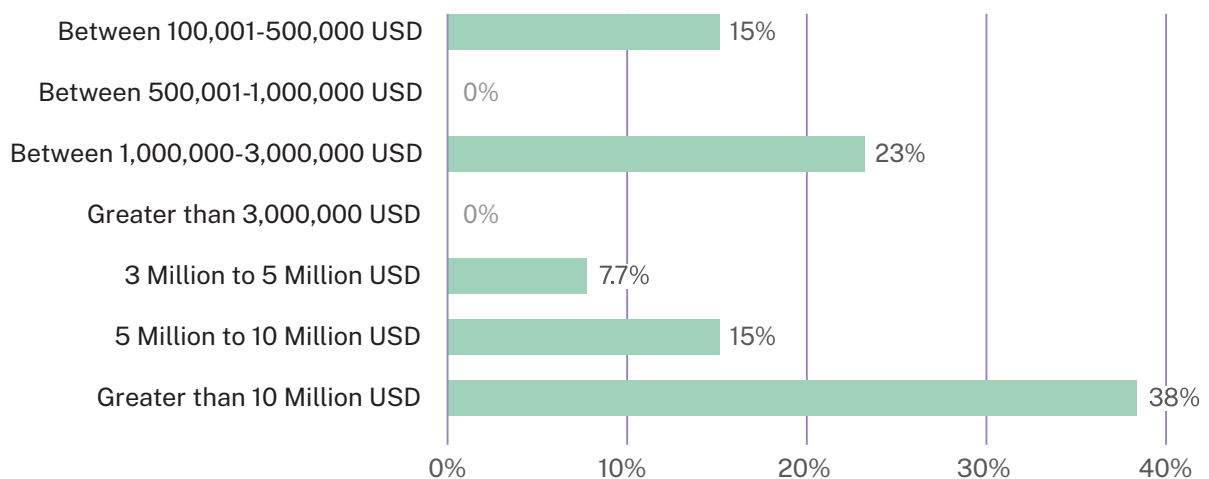


Figure 53: Organizational budgets of funders

Funding levels

Among the pool of funders that took the survey, the most recent funding levels for LBQ+ movements in Asia and the Pacific ranged from USD 5,000 to USD 1.5 million. The median amount was USD 200,000. Their funding for LBQ+ movements constituted between 1.3% to 100% of their total budget for the region, showing very varied levels of investment in LBQ+ movements.

Among the funders working globally, their funding of LBQ+ movements globally ranged from USD 35,236 to USD 2.955 million and their funding of LBQ+ movements in Asia and the Pacific constituted between 14% to 51% of this, showing healthy levels of investment in the region on their part.

Only 23% of respondents had a strategy dedicated to LBQ+ movements, while the majority answered “to some extent” (62%). The remaining said they do not have a strategy dedicated to LBQ+ movements (15%).

Where they fund

Majority of the respondents fund LBQ+ activism at the national (69%), transnational (69%) and regional (54%) levels. Fewer than half indicated that they fund at the local level (46%).

The highest number of respondents reported funding LBQ+ movements in Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand (54%, n=7), followed by India and Malaysia (46%, n=6). The disparity between countries in the region was great with over 15 countries, territories and jurisdictions simply not being funded by the sample. (See Table 2.) This disparity was replicated between subregions (see Figure 55) — the most responses pertained to countries in Southeast Asia (29%) and South Asia (26%), whilst East Asia (7.5%) and West Asia (6.8%) had the fewest — and also within subregions (see Figures 56-61).



Table 2: Countries where funders fund

Countries	Number of respondents that fund there	Percentage
Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand	7	54%
India, Malaysia	6	46%
Armenia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan	5	38%
Georgia, Lebanon, Palestine	4	31%
Afghanistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Turkey, Vietnam	3	23%
Cambodia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Iraq, Jordan, Singapore, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Timor Leste, Uzbekistan	2	15%
American Samoa, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bhutan, French Polynesia, Guam, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Laos, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna	1	7.7%
Brunei, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Kuwait, Macau, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Tibet, UAE, Wake Island, Yemen	0	0.0%

Level at which they fund

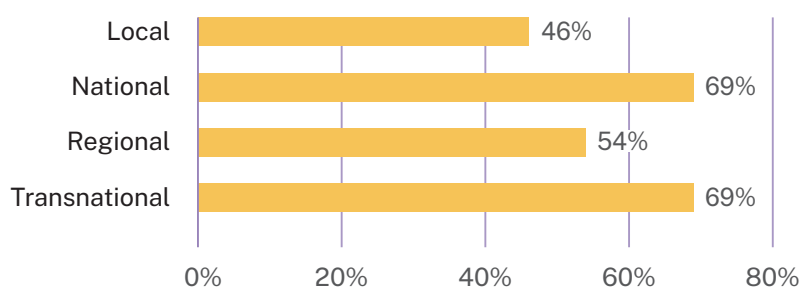


Figure 54: Level at which funders fund

Where they fund - subregions

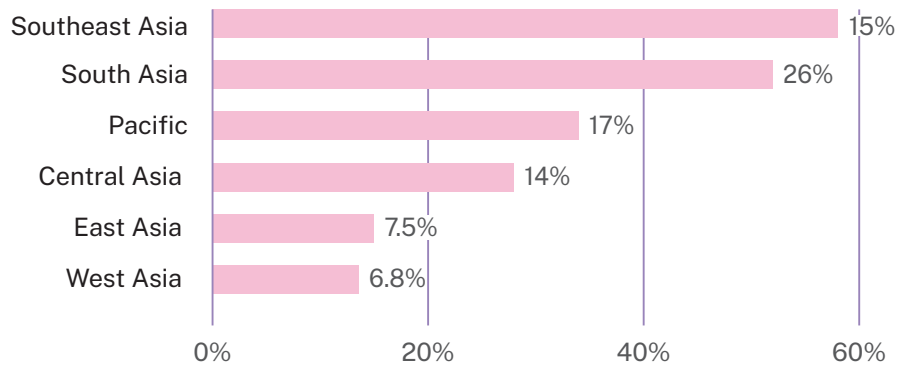


Figure 55: Subregions where funders fund

Where they fund - East Asia

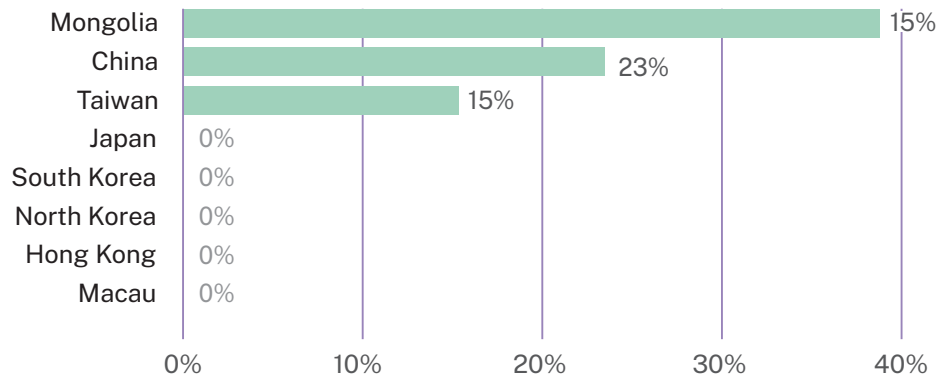


Figure 56: Countries in East Asia where funders fund

Where they fund - Southeast Asia

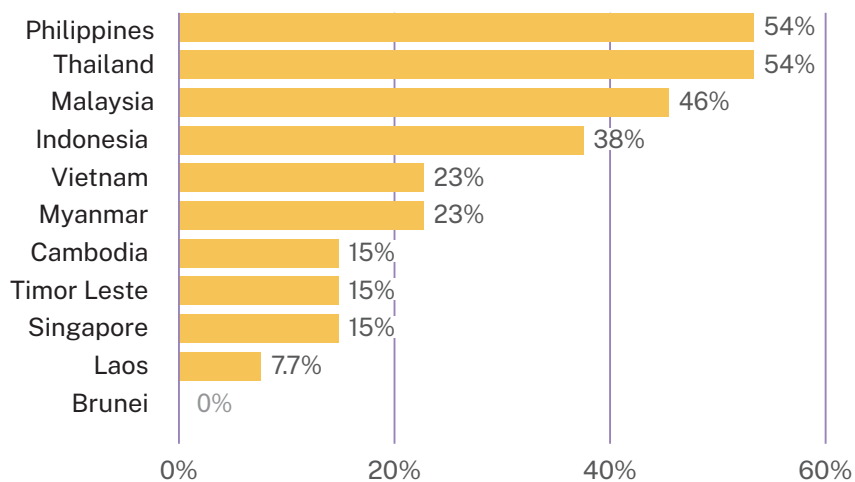


Figure 57: Countries in Southeast Asia where funders fund

Where they fund - South Asia

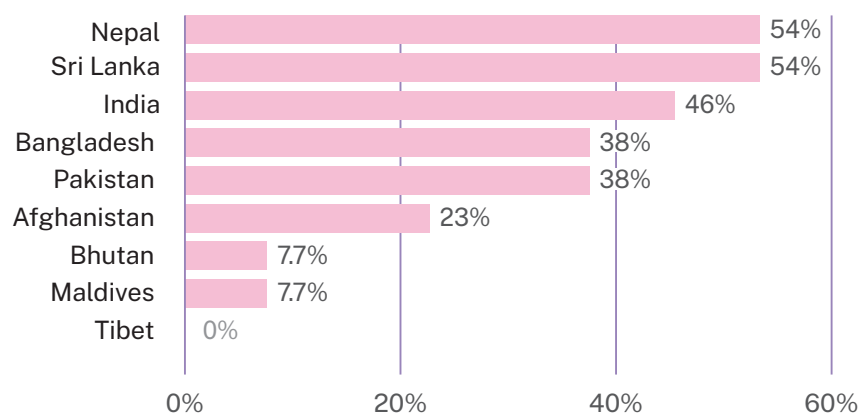


Figure 58: Countries in South Asia where funders fund

Where they fund - Central Asia

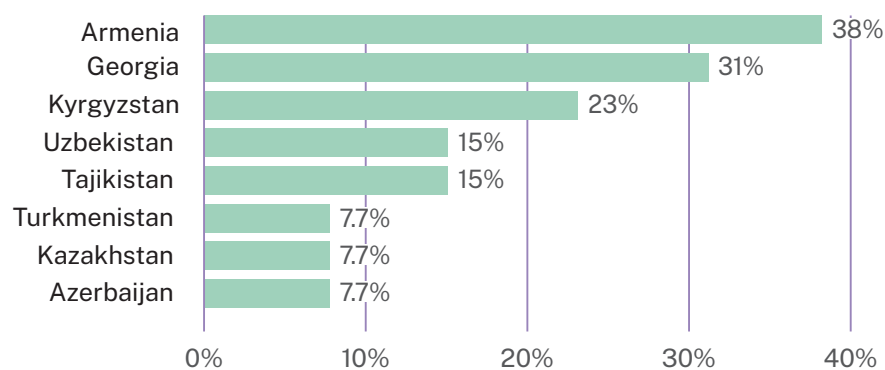


Figure 59: Countries in Central Asia where funders fund

Where they fund - West Asia

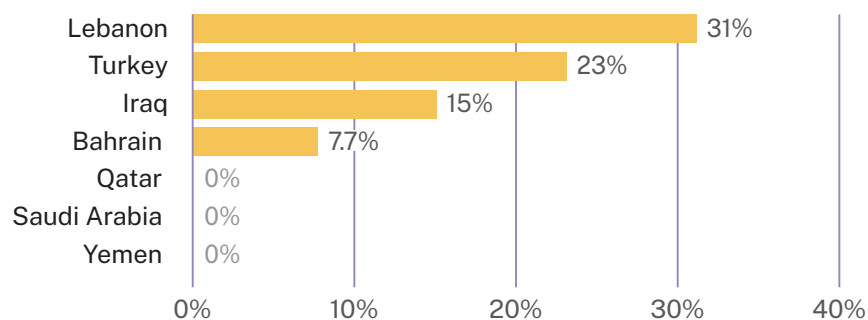


Figure 60: Countries in West Asia where funders fund

Where they fund - Pacific

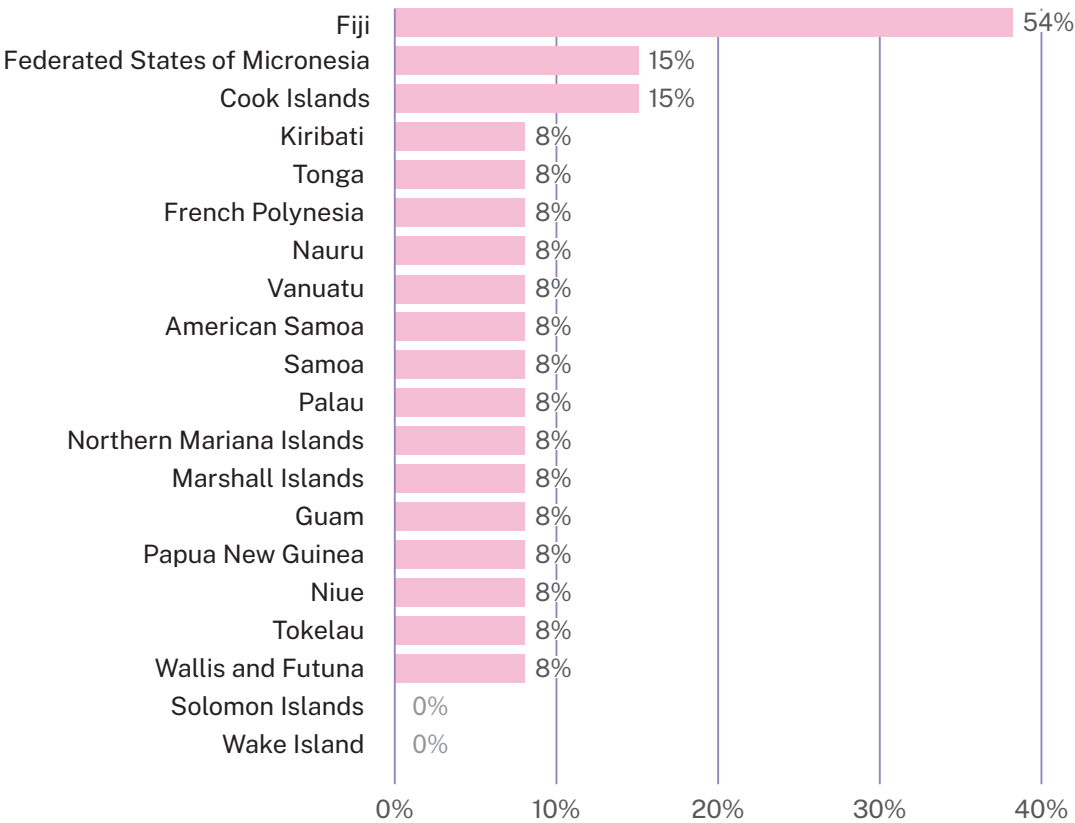


Figure 61: Countries in the Pacific where funders fund

Pathways of funding

More than half of the survey respondents said that they are able to fund unregistered LBQ+ groups (69%). Half of them have used fiscal sponsors (53%). About a third fund LBQ+ programs under an organization that is not LBQ-led (31%) and similarly only a third fund individual LBQ+ activists (31%).



Issues they fund

An overwhelming majority of funders who responded to the survey (92%) said they fund work on the category of “sexual and gender diversity”. Clearly reflected is an ongoing, strong commitment to funding work on gender-based violence - a major issue foregrounded by LBQ movements in Asia for many years. A majority of funders (77%) said they support work on gender-based violence. This could be because a majority of the respondents (62%) were women's / feminist funds. However, gender-based violence clearly emerged as an explicit priority for LBQ+ activists across Asia, in the early-to-mid 2000s. For example, an interview participant, a former employee of an international LGBTQIA+ rights organization who had worked across Asia said, “In 2007 - there was not much funding for LBQ+ work in Asia. I did a tour of multiple countries across Asia and met with LBQ people - and asked them if you had funding, what would you use it for? Regardless of country and regardless of group - they all said ‘violence.’” They noted that funders at first were largely uninterested, “Funders said ‘*why that - why not focus on discrimination, state violence*’. But LBQ people were saying family violence was also an issue.”

Asian LBQ+ movements have a rich history of working with international partner organizations and intermediary organizations on gender-based violence issues, as evidenced, for example, by many years of policy and legal advocacy work done across the continent in a partnership with the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, or IGLHRC (now known as Outright International). This LBQ-led feminist work on gender-based violence began in the mid 2010s with community-centred research, much of which unearthed and documented that LBT* (the term used at the time) people across Asia face family and domestic violence, in addition to state violence.²⁴

The same percentage of respondents also said they support work on economic justice and livelihoods (77%) - a much needed core strategy at a time when most of the continent is in the grips of devastating economic decline and climate crises. These interlocking and interconnected crises are the results of decades of privatization of natural resources, land and forests, in favor of private ownership and private management of state resources and wealth, combined with state disinvestment from health, education and local, sustainable industry.²⁵ For example, the Feminist Collective for Economic Justice in Sri Lanka posits that alarming levels of food insecurity, attacks on worker collectives and unions, wage repression and so-called “austerity” measures — which only impact the poor and working classes — are all by-design decisions made by successive governments.²⁶ This picture is similar across Asia.

24 International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) (2014). “Violence: Through the Lens of Lesbians, Bisexual Women and Trans People in Asia.” IGLHRC. <https://outrightinternational.org/our-work/human-rights-research/violence-through-lens-lesbians-bisexual-women-and-trans-people-asia>

25 Wijesiriwardena, S. (2024, Sep). “Roots of Hate: Fascist and Fundamentalist Narratives and Actors in South Asia and Southeast Asia Regions.” Noor. <https://wearenoor.org/roots-of-hate-ssea/>

26 Feminist Collective for Economic Justice. (2024, Sep 6). “Elections, finally! A Statement by the Feminist Collective for Economic Justice Sri Lanka on the upcoming Presidential Elections 2024” https://www.srilankafeministcollective.org/_files/ugd/06bf48_64e4793c006c46d8b0af697356fb3c57.pdf

Issues they fund: Top 10

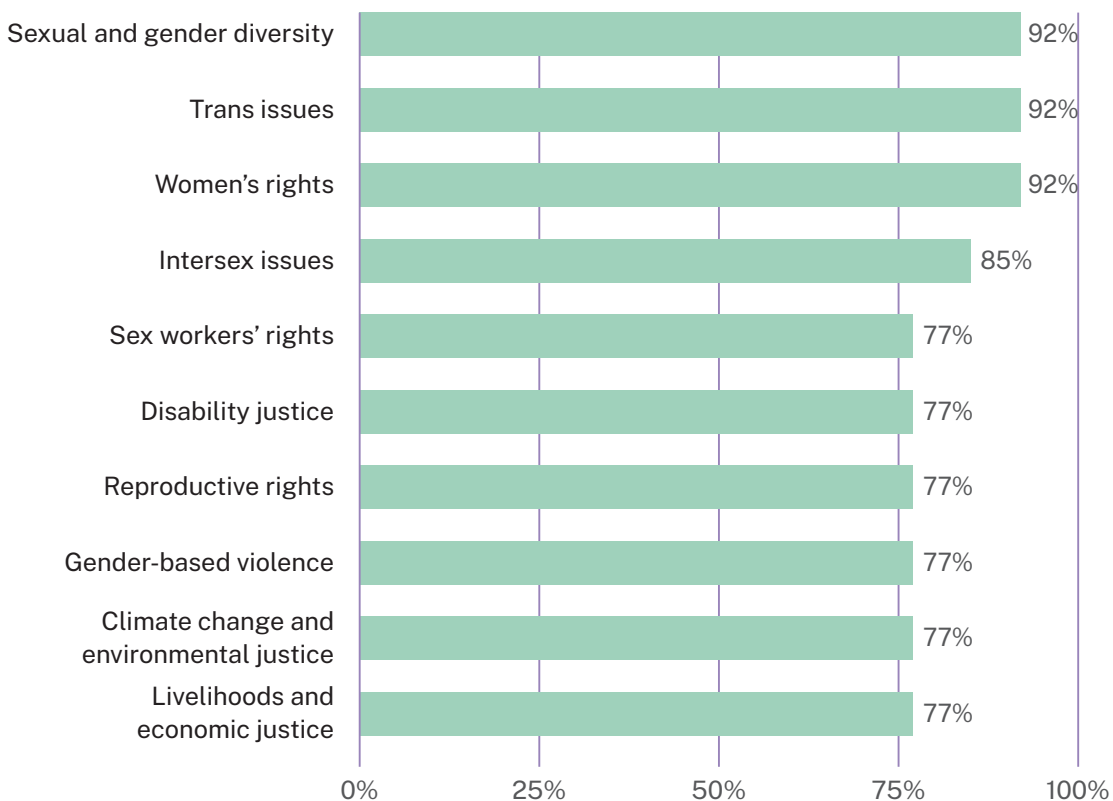


Figure 62: Top 10 issues funders fund

Disability justice also ranked high among funder survey respondents, with 77% of funders who took the survey marking “disability justice” as an issue they fund. This data sits somewhat in contrast to the data from those who took the LBQ+ movements and activists survey. Aggregating that data across all three categories (LBQ+-led organizations, ally organizations and individual LBQ+ activists) showed that only 9.7% of activist survey respondents chose disability justice as an issue they work on.

However, qualitative data from activists in some cases showed a need for greater funding which can function at the intersection of queer rights and disability justice - for example, one survey respondent from an LBQ+-led organization from South Asia said “No support seem visible with regard to queer disability rights promotion.”

Similar to the activist and movement survey respondents, not many funder respondents said they fund anti-caste organizing (what is called “Caste justice/Organizing against caste and descent-based oppression” in the survey). In a continent where caste hierarchies remain a significant source of state and social violence, discrimination and entrenched inequality, this strikes us as concerning, with only 38% of funder survey respondents saying they supported this type of work.

The intersections between caste identity and LBQ+ lives are deeply felt by LBQ+ persons who are caste or descent-oppressed persons in numerous parts of Asia — from East Asia (e.g. Japan), to

South Asia (e.g. India, Sri Lanka), to West Asia — where modern migration patterns have created a caste system.²⁷

There was a strong recommendation for funders to “invest in processes, not outcomes.” A South Asian advisor to this project said, “There must be funds available for recognizing caste and other issues within LBQ+ community”. They went on to say, “The pool of resources is already very low for LGBTIQ communities - within that, the funding becomes even smaller if you want to work on caste, religion, ethnicity”.

Unfortunately, only about a third of the respondents said they fund work on migration (31%), whilst migration is increasing across Asia. Militarization, persecution, poor economic conditions, climate crisis and armed conflict is leading many people across Asia to seek asylum or migrate in the hopes of better labor opportunities. Refugees from Myanmar (Rohingya communities) and Afghanistan have fled their own horrific circumstances brought on by conditions of genocide, war and violence, refugees from the Maldives flee political persecution, and refugees from the Pacific islands or from the Philippines flee climate catastrophes - just to name some of the materializations of this complex reality.

Even fewer funders said they fund work on the right to information/information justice (15%), and on electoral processes (7.7%). This is also particularly troubling, given the significant trends of attacks on democracy and the erosion of democratic processes, including a trend of subversion of elections across the region.

In summary, funders’ responses regarding these answer choices aligned closely with that of LBQ+ movements, with some important issues being least selected in both datasets. There is a strong message emerging for funders to take a more intersectional approach in their funding, and to remain flexible and responsive to the real issues facing LBQ+ activists in the region/s.

Strategies they fund

In the funder survey, funders responded to a question about which LBQ+ activist-employed strategies / tactics they funded (they could select all that applied). “Advocacy for law and policy change”, “Community gatherings”, “Leadership training and/or mentoring programs”, “Skills-building (e.g. financial skills)”, “Research and knowledge production” and “Producing videos, documentaries, podcasts, and/or other digital media” were each selected by 84% of respondents. These responses put funders in significant alignment with the LBQ+ movement respondents, who said that the strategies they most frequently employed were community gatherings, leadership training and advocacy. This should be noted in the context that a majority of the respondents to the funder survey were women’s/ feminist funds.

27 Abou Zaher, Y. (2023, May 1). “A Modern-Day Caste System: Migrant Labor Crisis in the Arabian Gulf.” *Zeitgeist, the New York University Politics Society*. <https://www.politicsatnyu.org/editorial/zeitgeist/2023/05/a-modern-day-caste-system-migrant-labor-working-crisis-in-the-arabian-gulf/>

Strategies they fund: Top 10

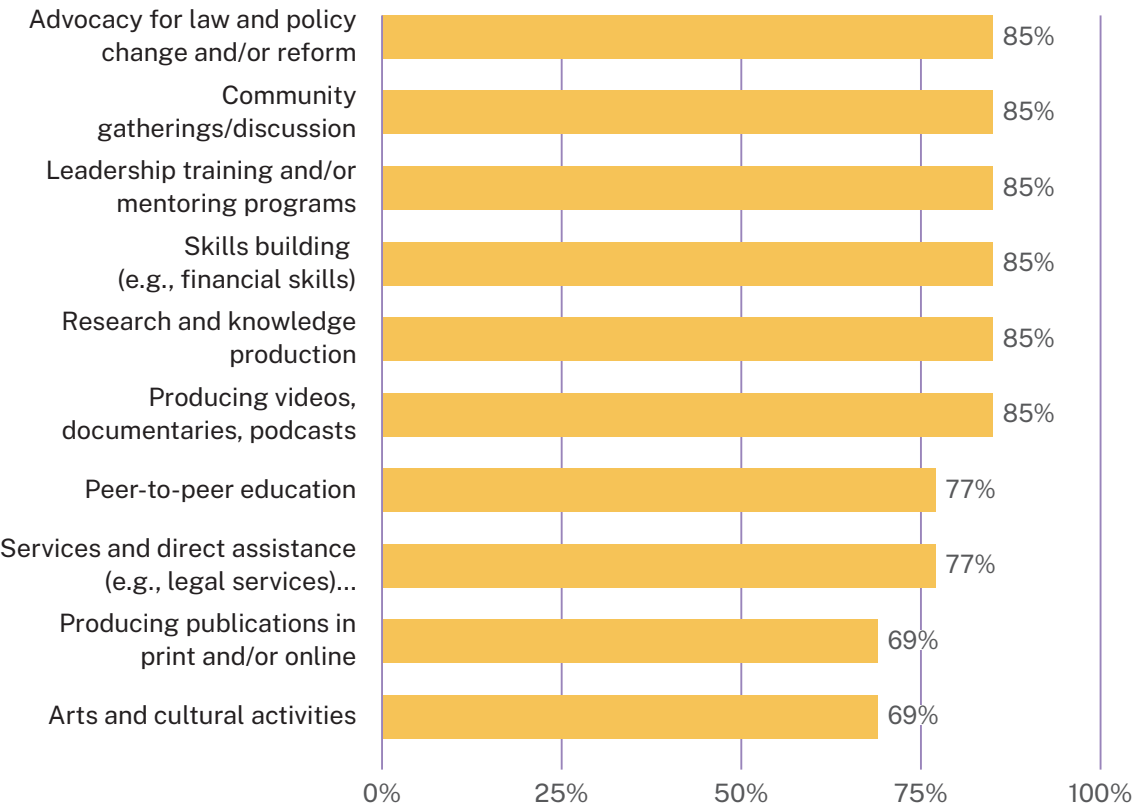
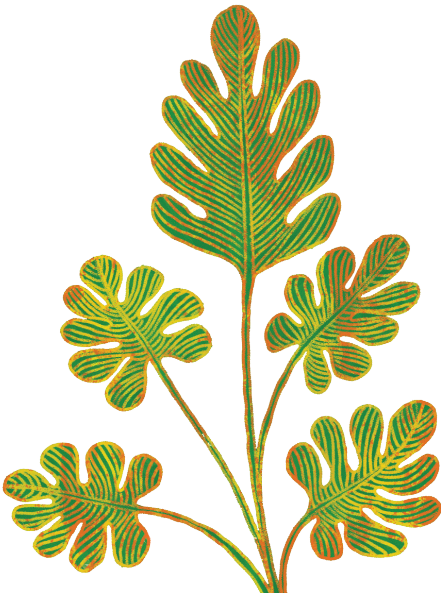


Figure 63: Top 10 strategies funders fund

On the other hand, fewer respondents chose “Direct organizing in communities (including protests, strikes, etc.)”, “Documenting human rights violations”, “Income generation” and “Providing well-being and community care support” (62% each). These all figure in the middle of the scale. At the bottom, with the fewest respondents choosing them, were “Translation and interpretation services/language justice support” (46%), and “Sub-granting” (31%). 15% of respondents chose “Other,” in which they noted that they support Narrative Change, Safety and Security, Technical Assistance and Resisting Anti-Gender Oppression, and that they give Core (unrestricted) funding, and flexible and long-term support.



Strategies they fund: least responses

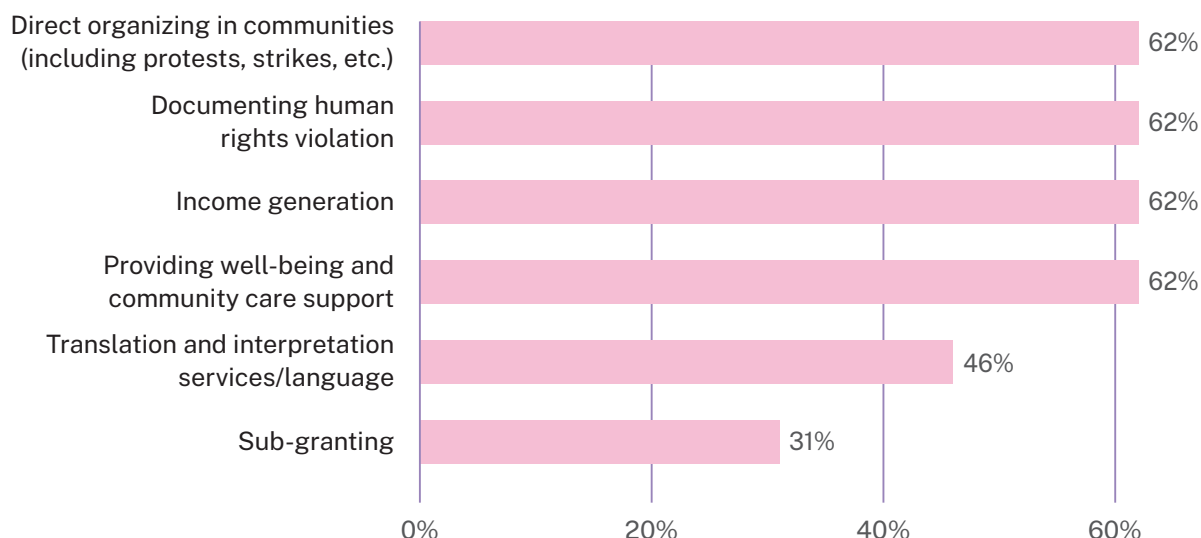


Figure 64: Least funded strategies

Challenges they face when trying to fund

With regards to challenges funders face when trying to fund LBQ+ activism in Asia and the Pacific, the survey offered respondents a number of options to select from, ranging from challenges arising from the broader political contexts within which they were operating, and internal, institutional issues they may be facing in their own organizations. They could select all that applied to their organizations.

Most respondents (62%) indicated that “Legal restrictions in many countries regarding foreign funding” was a challenge they faced. Interestingly, of those who selected legal restrictions as a challenge, 5 respondents or 63% of them were those organizations with budgets greater than 10 million USD. Over half of respondents (54%) confirmed that “Criminalization of sexual and gender diversity in countries where funding is most needed, making funders vulnerable to greater state scrutiny and surveillance” was a challenge for their organization.

“The surveillance by governments of organizations funding LGBT activism is challenging as we want to fund important work but we don’t want to compromise our ability to continue to be registered in the country. Recent rollbacks on LGBTQI+ rights in countries like Indonesia have made this commitment even more challenging.”

- Survey participant, funder

Close to half (46%) cited “insufficient budget” as a challenge. Only one of these organizations who selected “insufficient budget” as a challenge said that they have a dedicated funding strategy on LBQ+ activism, which could partially explain why this is a challenge – “partially”, because a third of the respondents who said this was a challenge had an organizational budget of USD 100,001-500,000.

“As a community foundation, our ability to grant depends entirely on donations from individuals and companies. To date, we’ve seen limited interest in contributions specifically directed toward supporting LBQ activism, though we’re actively working to shift this and engage more donors in this critical area.”

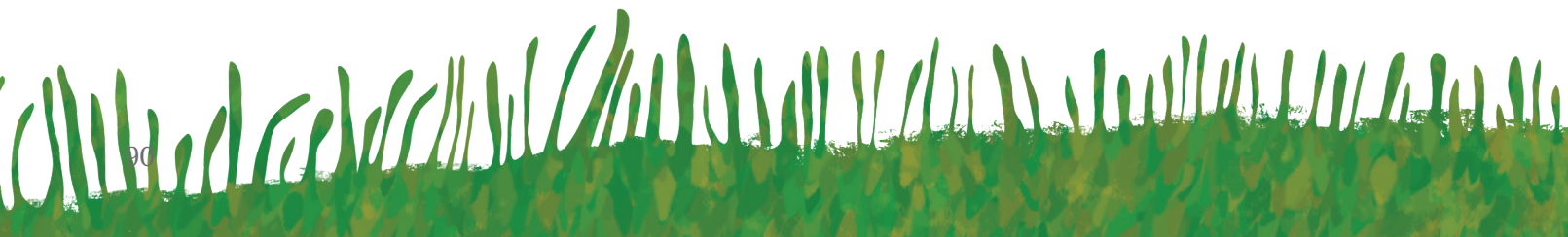
- Survey participant, funder

About a third of respondents (31%) cited “Insufficient capacity and knowledge to fund these groups” as a challenge. Nearly a quarter (23%) indicated that they “do not receive many applications from LBQ+ groups”, which corresponds to the finding regarding LBQ+ groups’ lack of knowledge and information about funding opportunities.

Interviews and a focus group discussion with funders helped to flesh out the picture even more. In these settings, funders talked about a range of challenges, such as funding institutions having too narrow a definition of “results” and not enough appetite for risk.

“Where there is already energy and a clear signpost for change - that is where the grantmakers will gravitate towards. You’re putting money there because you know it will be successful, regardless of your money, and then you take credit for the entire operation. Funders are accountable to their chair/board - that pattern is difficult to break away from. You want to support movements, activists in such a way that they can imagine a future 10-15 years away, even if you don’t exist, but we do grantmaking for our existence rather than the field’s existence.”

- Interviewee, private philanthropy



Challenges funders face

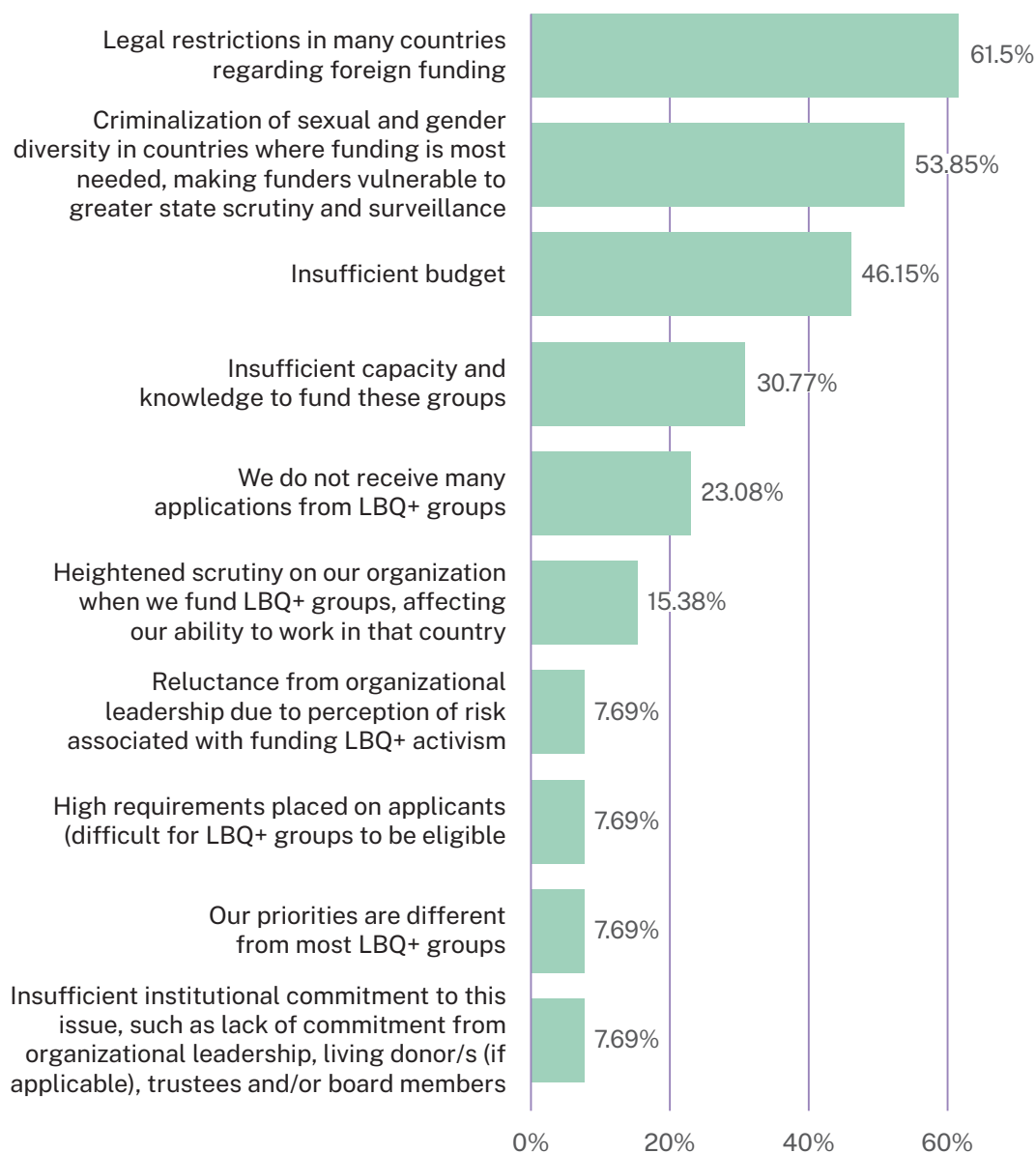
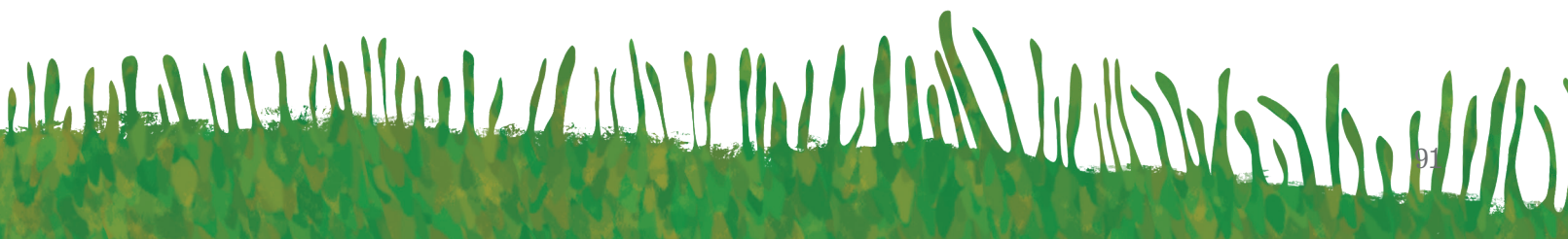


Figure 65: Challenges funders face when trying to fund LBQ+ activism



Interviews and a focus group discussion with funders helped to flesh out the picture even more. In these settings, funders talked about a range of challenges, such as funding institutions having too narrow a definition of “results” and not enough appetite for risk.

“Where there is already energy and a clear signpost for change - that is where the grantmakers will gravitate towards. You’re putting money there because you know it will be successful, regardless of your money, and then you take credit for the entire operation. Funders are accountable to their chair/board - that pattern is difficult to break away from. You want to support movements, activists in such a way that they can imagine a future 10-15 years away, even if you don’t exist, but we do grantmaking for our existence rather than the field’s existence.”

- Interviewee, private philanthropy

Interviewees also noted the role of NGOs or international NGOs who play a role as funders by acting as intermediaries, and called on these intermediaries to act as allies to LBQ+ activists and movements rather than as funders:

“Intermediary organizations... think that they might be improving the situation by acting as an intermediary [believing that they have a better] understanding the local context and the partners, while also understanding the funders and playing this role of being an intermediary. Unfortunately, they often tend to go with what the funders want. Intermediary organizations need to educate funders and do more than simply hand-holding and doing consultations. They need to really push back because funders need us as much as we need them, and I think that intermediary organizations feel that they are so obligated to the funding that they’re afraid to say no or afraid to say this does not make sense.”

- Interviewee, former employee of an international NGO that funds LBQ+ movements

The unequal power relationships between intermediary organizations and their grantees was also acknowledged:

“There is a tendency to see favorable versus less favorable partnerships. And I’ve always chafed against how favorable is defined, because again, it comes to what is a good investment, and that question is usually answered by, what capacity do people have? And that is such a loaded question, because we don’t unpack the word capacity, because people want certain kinds of capacity. Who is trainable and not trainable? Which language versus which not? Who is going to do the training? Would it be global North trainers, or would it be south-south, which is also problematic, because Asia is not a monolith. Who gets to define the acceptable activities? What is considered very valuable activity by partners on the ground is not fundable because funders don’t like to fund it, like trainings for instance, or convenings for instance, or certain types of trainings, but not others, because I’m always shocked that people don’t want to fund trainings, because they say the outcomes are not predictable with trainings.”

- Interviewee, former employee of an international NGO

Funders interviewed also pointed to an understanding that LBQ+ activists work intersectionally, for example, one interviewee noted, “LBQ activists are working across movements on different issues. The number of groups that focus just on LBQ and form themselves as LBQ are fewer. Especially younger groups. This is a challenge, or a trend... it doesn’t have to be resolved but it needs to be acknowledged and we need to be responsive to it.”

Interviews with funders also revealed the lack of commitment they perceived from governments as far as LBQ+ movement funding was concerned, with many interviewees noting the lack of commitment from governments in their own regions towards the issue. Interviewees noted that their own governments dedicated 0\$ to funding LBQ+ issues, whilst stressing that bilateral funding was essential to movements, since bilateral funding tended to come in larger amounts than private philanthropy.

“When it comes to bilateral funding - there are new offices, desks established which claim they are dedicated to LGBTIQ rights. For example, New Zealand has a Gender Equality desk - they want to show the country’s commitment to LGBTIQ rights. But often these offices and positions don’t really have a lot of power. They’re just reallocating existing funding - it’s not new money for LBTIQ movements.”

- FGD participant, funder

This was confirmed when we interviewed those employed with donor governments who broadly claim to support LBQ+ movements; they also noted a lack of coordination and information-sharing within their own spaces as a challenge to their own work, and a hurdle to building institutional commitment to LBQ+ issues:

“First time I heard that only 5% of total funding to LGBTIQ right is targeting LBQ, I was very surprised. I think most - even among my human rights colleagues - don’t know about this. I raised this recently with my colleagues and they said there are so many fractions in this sector - that’s true, and it’s hierarchical and so on. But it is women and those who identify as women, so it is not a minor group, it’s close to 40% of the whole community. If we want to have relevant LGBTIQ support as [agency name] or [country], we have to have those lenses.”

- Interviewee, bilateral agency

Funders articulated the drastic changes happening overall to the gender equality funding landscape, as well as security concerns arising from the increasing hostility being aimed at progressive social movements around the world. Funders also spoke at length about political, social and legal contexts which restrict or make challenging their ability to fund LBQ+ movements:

“The Dutch government is making headlines for budget cuts, but if you look where they are actually putting their money, it’s being impacted by wars.. Ukraine, Palestine. There’s a pushback against all the work of feminist movements. This has been highlighted after October 7th when it’s been the feminist funds who have made statements and protests and have been impacted. You could see the Right push back around that time.”

- FGD participant, funder

Laws which restrict foreign funding — aimed at regulating and surveilling NGOs — were named as a significant challenge by funders. Russia-style so-called “foreign agent” laws sweeping across Central Asia, and India’s Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act were given as examples. “We are foreign funders -so there is a limitation in terms of funding communities especially where they are criminalized,” said an interviewee from a regional women’s fund.

Social contexts which tend to lean towards patriarchal norms were also seen as a challenge by funders. “There are difficult intersections all over the world -particularly in Asia it must be difficult to fund them [LBQ+ movements], as well as for funders who want to support them. Because across Asia, we are coming from patriarchal roots. Because I think LBQ+ work is not celebrated,” said an interviewee from a national-level women’s fund.

Funders appeared very sensitive to security and safety concerns as it relates to LBQ+ activists, acknowledging that their roles as funders also carried risks for them, depending on the context. “At any time, the government can turn against us. NGOs are blamed - saying that we are funded by international organizations,” said an interviewee from a national-level women’s fund. Funders interviewed also spoke about how they work closely with LBQ+-led organizations to ensure that safety and security can be prioritized at all times. For example, they did not demand visibility for themselves as funders if it meant it would increase scrutiny on the grantee.

Good practices

The funders that took part in this survey reported a strong frequency of good practices. This would correlate to the fact that a majority of the respondents (62%) were women’s or feminist funds who are dedicated to values-driven processes. An overwhelming majority reported that they cover core costs for applicants (92%), provided funds that were unrestricted (85%), trust the capacity of applicants to make decisions regarding their work (85%) and do not have overly burdensome reporting requirements (85%). It is important to remember that most of the respondents of the funder survey were feminist funds, already committed to good practices. However, they are not a major source of funding for activists (refer to chapter on ‘Movement Perspectives’, section on ‘Resource mobilization perspectives and experiences’).

A majority of survey respondents report that they offer multi-year funding (77%). One dedicated LBQ+ funder explained that by ensuring groups renewed funding, this helped diminish a feeling of competition between groups. Long grant periods were also advocated by one interviewee because of the reality that it takes time for specific interventions to begin because community- and trust-building must take place first. This is particularly relevant in contexts where LBQ+ identities and organizing is criminalized or extremely marginalized such as in rural areas or oppressive regimes.

A majority of respondents also believe that their eligibility requirements were not too restrictive - for example, applicants do not need to be a registered group or provide a high level of financial history information (77%). The same number of respondents said that they support the safety and security of the groups they fund (77%).

Only half of the respondents reported that they offer translation and interpretation throughout their processes and relationship (54%). Less than half of the funders in the survey advertise their funding opportunities clearly and openly (46%).

The practices that were least frequent were: supporting successful applicants to connect with other funding opportunities (15%) and support for filling out applications (23%).

Top 10 good practices funder survey
respondents are committed to

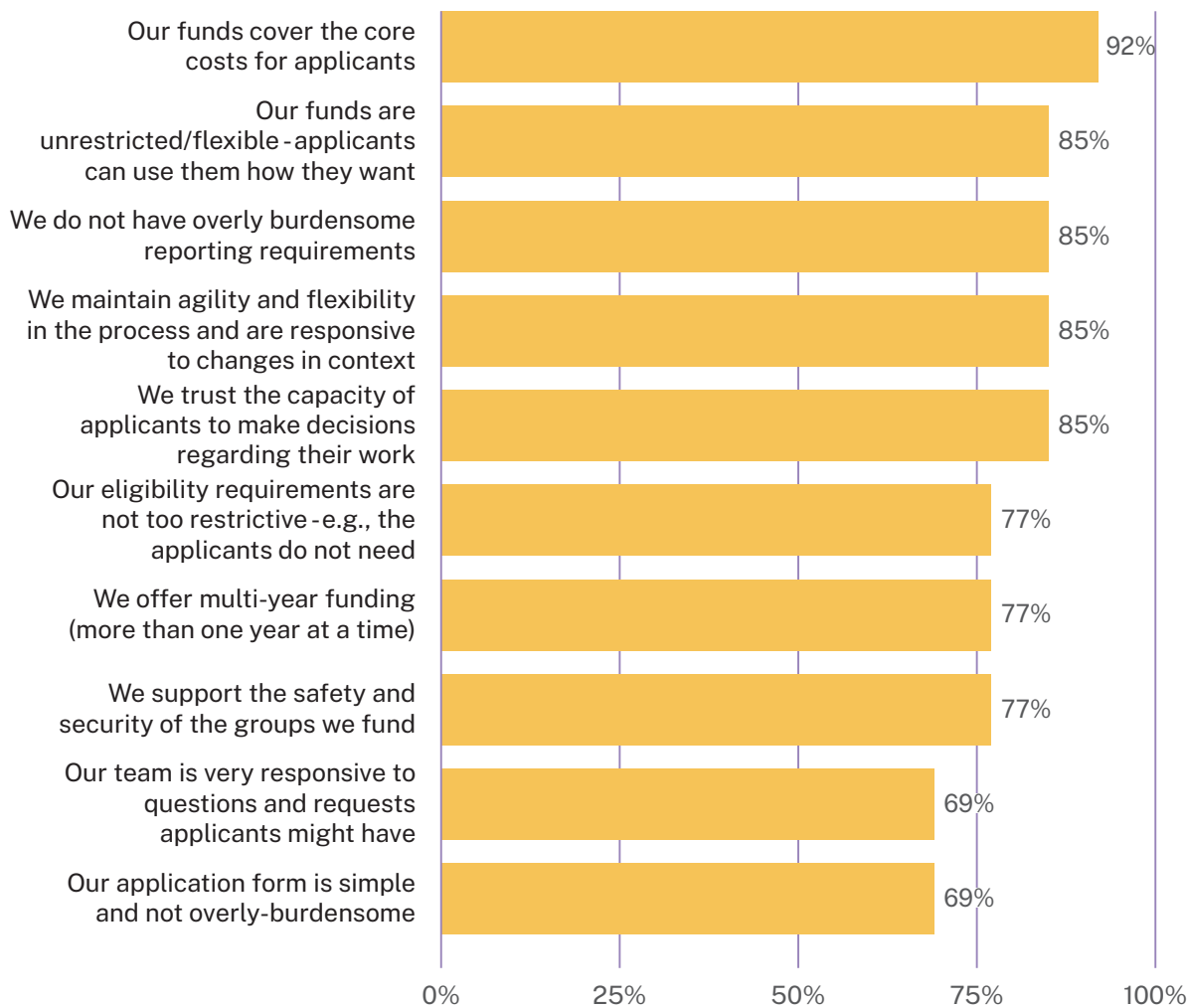
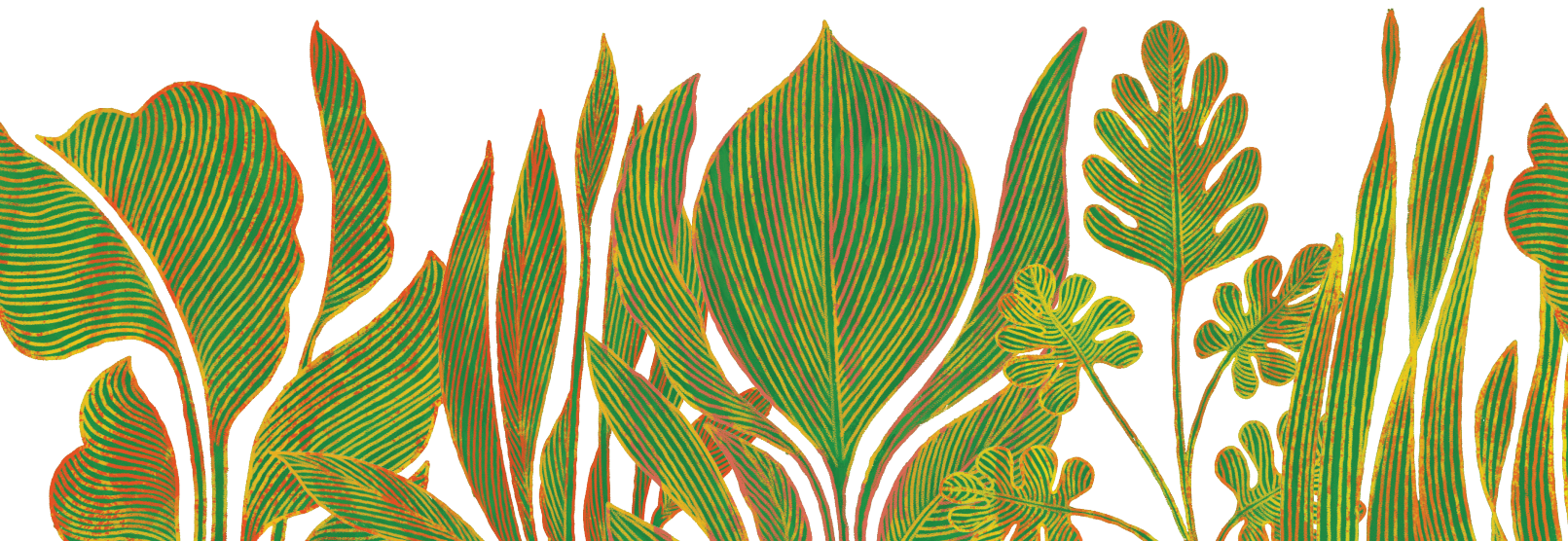


Figure 66: Top 10 good practices reported by funders



Commitments to other good practices

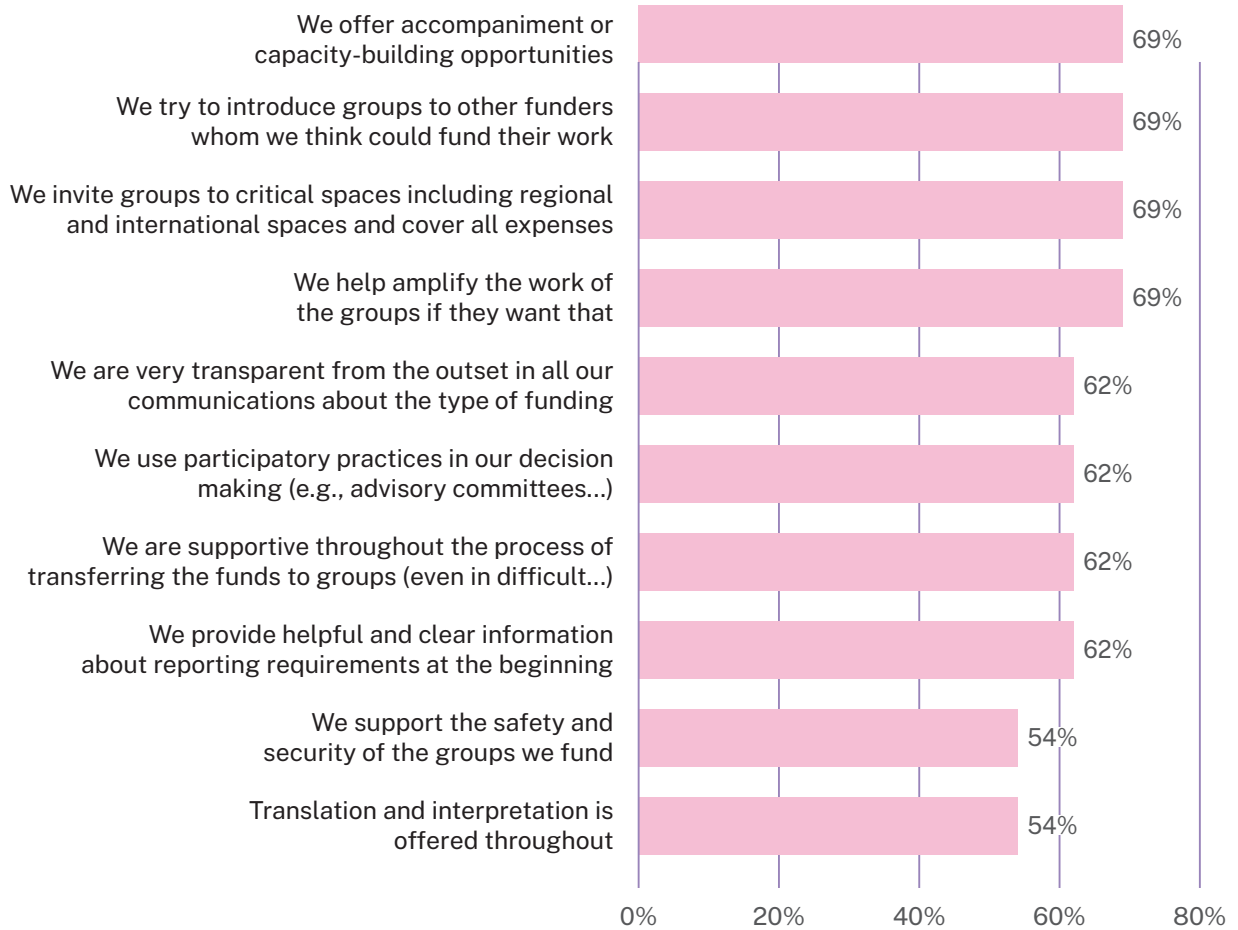


Figure 67: Other good practices reported by funders



Good practices with the least commitment



Figure 68: Good practices least reported by funders

The survey invited funders to provide written examples of good practices. One funder shared:

“Our best experiences have come from LBQ+ groups who view us as genuine partners, working alongside us to deepen our understanding of the unique challenges and successes within the LBQ+ movement. This partnership not only enriches our perspective but also strengthens our ability to advocate for increased funding in this critical area.”

- Survey participant, funder

Another funder elaborated on the benefits of a deeper relationship explaining, “We learn more about the important work they do, the challenges they face, and thus, the reason why we should continue supporting them.”

One of the funders shared a unique offering to groups besides direct grants:

“Our organization signed an agreement with LGBT centre to use a part of our office for 3 years without paying rent because they faced challenge to rent office to continue their operation. We also talk to them about their strategy and annual plans, and try to connect them with potential donors and supporting organizations.”

- Survey participant, funder

What funders think LBQ+ activists and movements need

The question was first posed as a multiple choice question, with an additional open question for respondents to elaborate further. The most common perspective of the funders who took part in the survey is that LBQ+ groups mainly need flexible and unrestricted funds (69%). This aligns well with what activists and groups indicated in their survey responses.

What funders think movements need

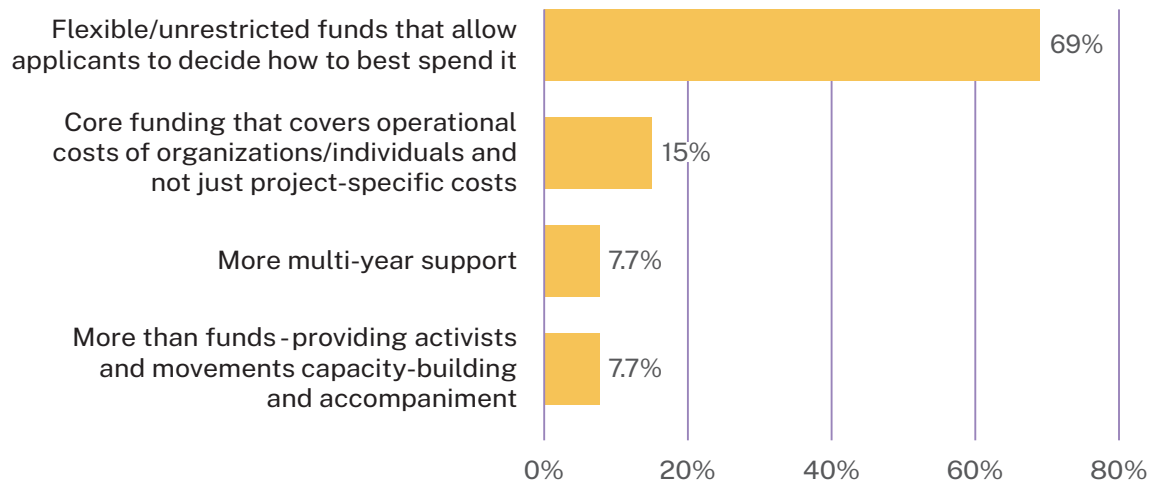


Figure 69: What funders think LBQ+ movements need

As funder respondents elaborated further, they emphasized that the contexts within which LBQ+ groups work demand adaptability that can be supported through this kind of funding.

“Funders should prioritize flexible, unrestricted funding that allows LBQ+ organizations to allocate resources according to their unique needs and strategic priorities. Many LBQ+ groups in the region face fluctuating challenges — from political restrictions to urgent safety concerns — that require adaptable responses. Additionally, funders could focus on multi-year grants to provide stability, enabling LBQ+ organizations to plan for long-term impact rather than operating in survival mode.”

- Survey participant, funder

“LBQ+ organizations often operate in unstable political and social environments where risks are high, and the context can change rapidly. Providing flexible, multi-year funding is crucial, as it allows these organizations to adapt their strategies, respond to emerging needs, and plan more effectively. It also gives them the stability to build their internal capacity and sustainability.”

- Survey participant, funder

In the checklist, respondents did not select other needs such as core funding, multi-year support, or non-financial support as frequently. These were less important from these funders' perspectives (less than 20% of respondents selected each of the answer choices). However, in the open comment section, a number of them raised the need for more convening spaces for groups, as well as capacity-building.

“Many LBQ+ groups start as grassroots collectives with limited experience in areas like financial management, governance, strategic planning, or advocacy. Funders should offer support beyond just financial resources, such as capacity-building opportunities on organizational development, fiscal management and compliance, fundraising, advocacy skills, and holistic security (including digital security). This can be done either through sessions organized by the funder or through Linking & Learning/capacity strengthening grants. This investment can significantly increase the effectiveness and sustainability of these groups. [...] Funders should actively support opportunities for LBQ+ organizations to connect, share experiences, and learn from one another, fostering solidarity and strengthening collective action across the region. This can be achieved through regional convenings, learning exchanges, or online platforms. Emphasizing cross-movement learning across diverse issues, geographies, and contexts is key to enriching these connections. Additionally, funders should prioritize linking and learning grants, which offer dedicated resources for organizations to engage in collaborative knowledge-sharing, develop innovative strategies, and draw from the collective expertise of peers working across intersecting areas. This approach amplifies shared best practices and fortifies LBQ+ movements with broader insights and resilience.”

- Survey participant, funder

Several respondents mentioned that funders could support more capacity-building and accompaniment to help strengthen LBQ+ organizations and leadership.

What funders need themselves

The question on what funders need themselves was posted as an open question inviting written comments. The most common response was a better understanding of the unique experiences and specific needs of LBQ+ groups. One survey participant shared:

“As a funder, we need a deeper understanding of the unique experiences and specific needs of LBQ+ groups to advocate effectively for increased resources dedicated to their work. By gaining insights into the distinct challenges and priorities of LBQ+ communities, separate from broader LGBTQI activism or other subgroups, we can make a stronger case to our donors and partners about the critical importance of funding in this area. This knowledge would empower us to better communicate the value of targeted support, thereby building a more sustainable foundation for LBQ+ activism.”

- Survey participant, funder

Relatedly, another respondent particularly listed the need for more data, saying “As a funder, we need data, we need engagement with activists to better understand their context and their needs, including resourcing needs.” Similarly, during an interview, a different funder emphasized a reason for this in more detail, explaining that the individual donors, high net worth individuals, and venture philanthropists that they work with do not necessarily come from a human rights perspective and are used to having a lot of data to justify their support for LBQ+ women. In addition to justifying funding to external donors, one funder also mentioned that greater internal commitment is needed from their organization.

One survey participant added that convening spaces were also needed for funders to engage with LBQ+ groups and better understand their contexts and how they operate so they could learn how to best support them. Additionally, one funder pointed out that they needed better outreach to reach more LBQ+ groups. Lastly, two funders pointed out specifically that all staff in their organization need to better understand the needs of LBQ+ activists.

Finally, another group of responses focused on funders needing more money themselves to ensure that they could provide stable and unrestricted funding to LBQ+ groups. One respondent put it simply: “We’d like more money.” This is likely to do with the fact that most funders who took the survey were women’s/ feminist funds and intermediary funds who are constantly fundraising themselves. One funder explained that they want to support resource mobilization for LBQ+ groups and “grow that pot of money” overall.

Opportunities for queer feminist funding



This section is focused on dedicated funding for LBQ+ movements in Asia and the Pacific. A specific question on whether there should be a dedicated/stand-alone fund for LBQ+ movements in the regions was posed in focus group discussions and interviews with activists and funders. Follow-up questions were asked regarding scope, challenges, opportunities and recommendations for dedicated funding.

To have or not to have a dedicated fund?

Activists expressed a range of opinions about the idea of a dedicated queer feminist fund - there was excitement and enthusiasm, but also a lot of caution and worry. Funders were more positive overall and offered many recommendations and some reservations.

There were a number of positive reactions to the idea of a dedicated queer feminist fund. One FGD participant exclaimed simply:

“Yes, of course! To have any funding for the LBQ movement would be great. We have so little funding. We want dedicated funds as sometimes we are left behind.”

- FGD participant, activist

Additionally, different participants highlighted the opportunities presented by a dedicated fund that not only increased financial resources, but also aligned with LBQ+ organizing needs - for example, more resources to fund advocacy, communications, and cross-border meetings and travel decided by activists themselves. One participant highlighted that there was a real need to create a new network that was LBQ+-led, since existing LGBTQI+ networks were still perceived to not fully reflect the needs and perspectives of LBQ+ communities.

Similar to the survey responses, activists in the FGDs highlighted the need for any current or potential mechanism to be more knowledgeable about local contexts and grounded in grassroots. Furthermore, it should be driven by activists - they said:

“[We need a] donor who can go with us rather than their own intentions or goals.”

- FGD participant, activist

“Funding agenda / priorities should be set by movements and not by funders. They have to be accountable to who they serve.”

- FGD participant, activist

“I think funders don’t choose East Asia due to lack of understanding. International donors usually don’t understand Asia. So any fund should involve people who understand the region and activists should be involved in designing the mechanism.”

- FGD participant, activist (East Asia)

On the funders’ side, these were the positive sentiments shared about a dedicated mechanism:

“Where there is a drought, any injection of resources is a good thing.”

- Interview, funder

“It will be fantastic to have a queer feminist fund [in the region]. Activist funds play a very critical role in the flow of money, but also in philanthropic advocacy by voicing the needs and demands of the movements very clearly to the philanthropic world. There is a great need for more activist funds... To ensure that other bigger funders are actually hearing more from the work on the ground through these activists.”

- Interview, funder

“Value of having a queer feminist fund in the region is simply that it will reach more movements, and movement groups. We know the data is very stark around the funding and the resourcing.”

- Interview, funder

“[Feminist movements] want new funding streams - there is value in identifying new funding streams. If [a dedicated fund] can unlock new funding streams then there is an immense value add.”

- FGD participant, funder

One funder who is already dedicated to funding LBQ+ communities globally, raised the importance of representation:

“We would like to see more LBQ women and feminist queer organizations, and have more representatives. I don’t know that there’s anybody at [an existing organization] that focuses exclusively on LBQ women, although maybe a couple. And certainly there are a couple [organizations] who have a project within their overall funding program. But the more the better.”

- Interview, funder

Even when the reactions were positive, participants always were quick to raise that it was not just about the quantity of funds, but the *quality* of it. As one funder who has been funding LGBTQI+ movements for several years remarked:

“Resources are good - but the way you distribute it has to be thought about. The LGBTIQ field is so contentious. Those determinations will make the fund useful in the long term... How do you do it in such a way that it is transparently distributed to the field? As opposed to that one big group, who can report in English, or satisfy those reporting requirements...”

- Interview, funder

Meanwhile, an activist put it like this:

“It’s not just about funding us - if funders care about improving lives in our countries, it should show in their other actions. It’s about providing other resources and support, for example emergency support, when an activist is incarcerated, released, and needs to be resettled.”

- FGD participant, activist

There were numerous recommendations for the agenda, shape, form, and character of a funding mechanism. These are discussed in more detail in the section below.

Finally, there were research participants that expressed their reservations and hesitations about a new dedicated fund and its impact on the larger LGBTQIA+ movement - there was worry that a dedicated fund could further divide resources between LGBTQIA+ identities.

As one activist mused:

“It’s a dilemma for me - Should we have a LBQ focused funding mechanism? Is this modality healthy or are we dividing the movement? The ultimate goal is to build a feminist LBQ leadership in the broader movement, particularly the broader LGBTIQ movement, so are we weakening the feminist movement [if we do something separate]?”

- FGD participant, activist

However, an Advisor to the research pushed back on this idea:

“I don’t like this question of fragmentation [caused by a new fund] being put on movements - this burden is not on us. If we’re asking for a specific fund then it means that it’s because we haven’t been getting money. There is already fragmentation.”

- Research Advisor



Another concern that was raised was whether a dedicated fund would draw unwanted attention. As one activist put it:

"It's not always positive to have funding dedicated to us, or visibly supporting us. It causes conflicts within the community and with other activists. It could also draw more attention, which could be a security issue."

- FGD participant, activist

One funder also picked up on security issues and whether existing structures help with this:

"It's important to consider the geopolitics at the moment - do women's funds provide a protective shield against the identity based politics making LBQ networks more targeted. I recognize the value of having a distinct and separate entity but am considering the climate at the moment. Perhaps we look at whether there are other options to seek funding through umbrella orgs that perhaps don't identify as specifically LBQ, but still recognizes intersectionality and that when we reach the most marginalized communities with the least access to resources, everyone benefits."

- Interview, funder

Indeed, some activist participants raised the question: "if some good feminist funds exist in the region(s), why not channel through them?" But one feminist fund acknowledged something had to change:

"[We] have established quite clearly that the feminist funds / regional funds and national funds as well as other formations, e.g. SOGIE orgs, feminist orgs - ILGA Asia, CREA, JASS, Forum Asia - all of this is going in service of LBQ movements, if not exclusively at least from our feminist framing of things... We also know that maybe we are not meeting all the demand. In the overall LGBT funding - we agree it is very dominated by cis, gay, male, white. So this is a problem. I completely hear the call to action from LBQ movements that the existing structures - even as feminist funds - are heteronormative, it is cis, and it is not always serving LBQ defenders completely."

- FGD participant, funder

Many of the funders offered ideas for further exploration to support the decision of what ‘form’ a new fund could take. One funder remarked that LBQ+ dedicated funds have existed in some form in different places and times, so it is necessary to study those programs further and see what was successful or not about them. Similarly, another funder said to consider looking at the model of dedicated funds that have been created within larger ones - for example the Intersex Fund within Astraea Foundation or the Red Umbrella Fund within Mama Cash. This would be a way to “build partnership without losing autonomy.” Feminist funds kindly warned that setting up a new fund takes a large amount of resources and said they would love to share resources, ensure that no wheels are being reinvented, and discuss how the existing ecosystem can play a role in supporting new infrastructure. Finally, one funder reflected “Because of funders’ volatility, it may be better to have an autonomous pooled resource.”

Recommendations from research participants

This section shares some of the common themes raised by the research participants, both activist and funder.

Agenda and focus

Research participants reflected the larger conversations going on about inclusion and intersectionality, especially regarding gender and sexual identities, caste, and issue focus (such as migration, militarization and climate change).

In the South Asia activist FGD, after discussing different funding trends and dynamics within the LGBTQI+ movements, one participant concluded:

“There seems to be some kind of focus only on narrowing the definition of queerness or what the queer funding may look like. There needs to be a larger focus on the queer identity, which encompasses other sorts of sexual minorities and caste as well.. We need funds that can look at the broad and intersectional spectrum because if not, funds can create more rifts than solidarity. So how do we focus on solidarity building through funding?”

- FGD participant, activist (South Asia)

Whilst recognizing that LBQ+ communities and issues exist within larger gender power structures, activists promoted broad and expansive agendas - especially highlighting basic needs and economic justice. As one activist said, “There should not be restrictions on LBQ activists to force them to work only on what the funder considers ‘LBQ issues’”. Similarly, one funder warned: “Make sure to not just focus on national policy change, which is an issue/mistake of the past.”

Geographic scope

This research took an expansive definition of Asia so that it would include West, Central, South, Southeast and East Asia. It also included the Pacific in its scope. Funder and activist participants were invited to think about the geographic reach of a dedicated fund. Overwhelmingly, participants pointed out that the sheer size and diversity across all these regions would need to be taken into serious account.

“Asia is so vast, so diverse and so big, even with the population.. demands the question of how much resources are enough - even with a specific thematic focus on LBQ - to satisfy the needs of these communities across the various countries?”

- Interview, funder

“Similar to our own [Asia] strategy - which is 60% of the world's population - we tend to think through smaller regions, to make it more manageable - South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The needs are different. Different windows probably make sense - might be difficult to have a broad geographic approach”

- Interview, funder

Some activists and funders from smaller, less funded countries were excited at the prospect of the inclusion of their country in a larger fund, but were wary of ensuring equity. Their comments below reflect the history of funding not reaching certain regions, i.e., Central Asia and East Asia.

“It would be great to have that kind of fund - but where will small countries like Mongolia be alongside bigger active communities such as India... The region is quite big - but at least I think Asia and Pacific needs one big fund, where all countries are included - not to the size of the population, but some other method. Some countries are frequently covered by donors - India, Nepal, Philippines. Mongolia is not on the map for donors.”

- Interview, funder

“We know the LBQ movements in other countries and subregions in Asia are stronger, but we [in Kyrgyzstan] want to be part of this.”

- FGD participant, activist

“It can be challenging, but very exciting. Expansive definitions are always exciting, and they can lead to a lot more. A lot of work will be needed to make sure all sub-regions feel there is equity amongst them, and that enough work has been put in to understand each sub-region”.

- Interview, funder

One funder said that funders often have a flawed analysis in how they determine their geographic scope:

“Funders tend to look at a region or countries by income levels, which is problematic... Even if a country is supposedly high income, the reality for LBQ people in that country may not be high income. So it’s quite ridiculous when these decisions are made. Gay men, for instance, have a higher income level, are doing better than LBQ people. And then not all LBQ are equally privileged or disadvantaged.”

- Interview, funder

This aligns with how one activist in East Asia explained:

“East Asia is considered rich and impossible to work in. I think funders don’t choose East Asia due to lack of understanding. I hope East Asia will be included in designing and grantmaking [in a potential dedicated fund].

- FGD participant, activist (East Asia)

There were also some comments about the Pacific specifically:

“[How would you] make the fund not just Asia centered, but also flip the narrative, like, “Pacific and Asia, rather than Asia and Pacific. And that’s not just empty rhetoric. I think it’s also acknowledging if there were a fund that were to include the Pacific, to include a more equitable model, to fund more Pacific groups that haven’t been historically.”

- Interview, funder

"I think it's important to separate Asia and the Pacific, it would have to be separate because they have so distinct power dynamics, politics, the way they work - they are completely different from each other."

- Interview, funder

Whilst it was not discussed by many research participants, it is important to highlight an important reality for LBQ+ movements whose participants are also part of migrant groups, refugees, and/or displaced by increasing crises around the world. One NGO funder mentioned that any "possible funding has to take into account diaspora collectives."

Lastly, one funder pointed out that funding flows are often dependent on proximity to the existing regional fund's or network's headquarters. They argued:

"Unless you have someone in each subregion, with real community connections in the different countries in each subregion.. it will be hard to catch the small nuances at the local political levels. One way to do that is to have a network or community who could advise you on how the funds are spent... [it could be] Time bound? Rotating membership? Geographic and physical presence in the sub regional level is very important."

- Interview, funder

This last comment resonates with what many activists called for throughout the survey and FGDs - that no matter what, funding institutions need to be closely in touch with the needs on the ground in each context, and/or be flexible and trusting enough to let groups determine more of the parameters.

More than funds

Activists emphasized that a fund should provide resources beyond funding:

"If the fund covers all of Asia and even the Pacific - regions that are dissimilar - they should intentionally create transnational solidarities and networks. Knowing so many groups, they should connect groups doing similar work and using similar strategies. Donors don't need to be at the centre of the relationship - they just need to set up, facilitate and support the relationship building."

- FGD participant, activist

“[The fund should support] gatherings with different LBQ activists - learning, capacity building, gathering activists and aspiring activists who are eager to learn some professional skills and set them up to lead their projects in their communities.”

- FGD participant, activist

A funder already dedicated to LBQ+ movements agreed:

“Focus on more than just funding but also create opportunities for people to come together, to work on strategies together, to collaborate. Create a fund that actually funds collaborations.”

- Interview, funder

Language and reporting

Activists in the FGDs pointed out the importance of language justice and that funders should ensure that groups are able to submit and communicate their work in their own language. Furthermore, since some cultures have a stronger oral tradition, funders should be more open to audio-visual formats. “I really like the idea of just being able to take a video of a day of work and having that show what we’ve done,” said one activist. Another activist explained that:

“It’s not just language in a literal sense but also the politics. Funders need to find other ways to be more inclusive taking into account the capacity and resources of groups. E.g. different ways of taking applications - to be more conscious of the barriers that smaller and less-resourced groups face”

. - FGD participant, activist

One funder that has been embedded in movements for a long time understood this deeply, sharing that “Terminology is important, because terminology affects expectations. When funders say things like milestones and outputs and outcomes, my personal frustration and the frustration of partners I’ve worked with is, we see process as a milestone.”

Aligning with the activist survey finding that movements find funder reporting to be burdensome, one activist said that funders “should include a systematic MEL (monitoring, evaluation and learning) plan so groups are supported in learning about the impact they are having and progress made. MEL should not increase administrative burden but lead to learning.”

Transferring funds

The issue of the actual mechanics of transferring money came up for both activists and funders. Activists raised it mainly to discuss tactics in overcoming government surveillance and demand that funders be more open and flexible to different methods of transferring funds. Their hope is that a dedicated, activist-led fund would be cognizant of this situation. Meanwhile funders reflected more specifically on where the fund's bank account could be opened in order to influence or facilitate funding flows. One funder felt that it would be more political and autonomous for the fund to be situated in Asia. Another said it would be more prudent to set up the fund in a location from which funds can pragmatically move, concluding that a fund based in the region(s) does not need to have its bank account there.

A Research Advisor raised security challenges in the context of transferring funds, for example, noting, "In high-risk environments, some groups face financial losses due to the need to transfer funds through multiple intermediaries, and currency exchange fluctuations can further increase the costs. When structuring the future fund, I believe it would be important to consider currency to use, determine whether and how this fund can help absorb or mitigate some of these logistical costs of transferring funds, which vary depending on the political and economic barriers different groups face." This highlights the need for further discussion and exploration of this particular issue in the context of a new fund.

Mobilizing funds

Funders more than activists tended to discuss how a new potential fund could help bring new funds to the overall 'pot' and help organizations navigate the current funding context. One funder was enthusiastic about a dedicated regional fund that would be a mechanism for increasing education and awareness with individual philanthropists. Feminist funds felt that dedicated philanthropic advocacy would be one of the key value-adds. But one funder particularly raised the importance of determining the resource mobilization principles of the fund from the outset:

"It will be useful from the beginning to figure out the approach around resource mobilization that addresses questions around where to get money and what kind of funding they want to have. A lot of what donors are talking about right now is unlikely allies or corporate funding, non human rights funding, etc. It's important to answer those questions rigorously, so that the fund is able to operate autonomously and with its values intact, and at the same time it could be really a good learning opportunity for broader resource mobilization and growing the pot outside of the usual actors too."

- Interview, funder

Conclusions



Key findings

This research paints a picture of a harsh funding reality facing LBQ+ movements in Asia and the Pacific. It indicates the desire for greater, more informed funding decisions that are based on localized knowledge and movement-based wisdom so that funds safely reach activists and respond holistically to the pressing needs of communities.

The research findings also create a stark picture of the current state of the world today - the overwhelming consequences of climate and economic catastrophes and the impacts of authoritarianism and right-wing forces across the Asia and the Pacific regions, and indeed, the rest of the world. These intersecting crises have devastating consequences for LBQ+ persons and their human rights. Research participants spoke in great detail about contexts of war, genocide, militarization, rapidly declining support structures available for marginalized persons, and increasingly harsh conditions faced by LBQ+ people everywhere.

Survival was a resounding theme across the research and one that cannot be ignored - LBQ+ communities are pushed to further marginalization and precarity in numerous contexts, with violence against them being made more and more invisible and socially permissible. Funders are called on to step up to the task of the moment - to truly and deeply recognize the conditions that many LBQ+ activists are living and working in as inherently not life-sustaining, to understand their needs better, and to support them in a holistic way that includes supporting their material needs.

A thread which emerged throughout the research process was the tussle for identity and recognition. Numerous participants consistently observed their own experiences of being sidelined, ignored or overlooked in favor of other groups, be it mainstream feminist groups or those led by cis gay men. They pointed to an ongoing invisibilization of LBQ+ activism in the larger ecosystem of LGBTQIA+ funding as well as women's rights funding, though many agreed that feminist funds/women's funds were some of their best allies. The research, therefore, aims to highlight these voices that are not often heard, and are often invisibilized in society and sadly even in social justice movements. It amplifies the call for greater participation of LBQ+ people in leadership and in decision-making structures and processes when it comes to funding.

Existing funding structures and cultures are categorically making activists more wary of each other, pushing each other to compete and "other" one another - throughout the research, it became clear that unless drastic changes are made to funding practices and within funding institutions overall, irreparable harm will be done to LBQ+ movements and broader gender justice movements, creating and enabling more fragmentation and fracturing. Within the current context, movements are often left with no clear pathway for the future while being over-reliant on opaque funding institutions.

Finally, the research illuminates an appetite for change from LBQ+ movements, allies, and funders, but it does not provide one obvious pathway to overcoming the current resourcing gaps. All of the activists and funders who participated in this research agreed that this funding reality needs to change. However, not everyone agreed that a new stand-alone fund was the best

solution. Research participants expressed caution in creating a new fund for different reasons. Some worried that a separate fund would cause more fragmentation within the larger feminist and/or LGBTQIA+ communities. Others were especially concerned about the practicality of setting up a stand-alone fund.

Next steps: Consultation, Conversation and Collaboration

The perspective of the researchers is that further consultation, conversation, and collaboration are needed to determine the way forward. These consultations should gather LBQ+ activists together to reflect on the data this research provides, in order to make the important decisions of what mechanism makes most sense, what geography it could cover, and how the mechanism should be designed in terms of its grantmaking, accompaniment programs, advocacy, resource-mobilization, and governance.

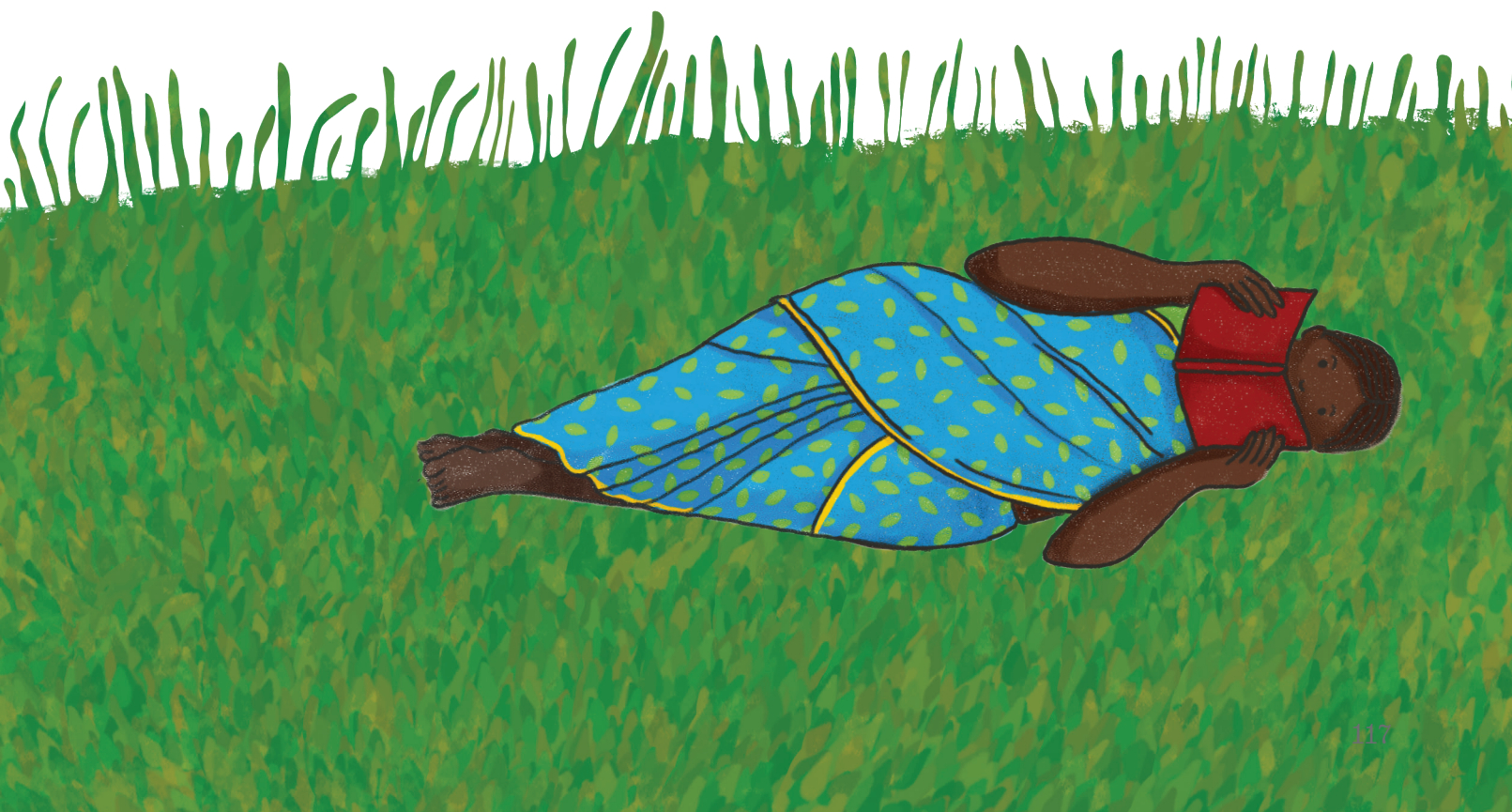
Further conversation could involve more discussion of the pros and cons of each of the possible modalities that were suggested over the course of this research - specifically, a stand-alone fund, a fund embedded in an existing fund(s), and funds utilizing different kinds of participatory grantmaking practices. Solidarity discussions with representatives from existing allied funds could provide pragmatic clarity about the operational steps involved in setting up and managing each of these types of modalities. Fortunately, these models already exist in different parts of the world and are already part of LGBTQIA+ and feminist movements. Many of the funders consulted in this study warmly expressed their support in offering their experiences and learnings to help inform decisions.

A dedicated group of people — say, a steering committee — could be constituted to consider the research findings and the outcomes of consultations and solidarity discussions, make decisions regarding the future funding mechanism(s), and collaborate on how to enact these decisions. This group of people should reflect the multiple levels and kinds of organizing by LBQ+ activists. It should also make sure that both ‘usual’ and ‘unusual’ voices are in the room to ensure that the conversation is embedded in the current funding ecosystem, and that it brings in new experiences from those who are most often ‘left out’.

In addition to including perspectives related to social and political marginalization and increased state authoritarianism, there should be care in inviting activists that can bring experiences of grassroots communities that are grappling with stark economic inequalities and the impacts of militarized conflict.

Furthermore, the researchers suggest that meaningful, intentional collaboration and bridge-building with other funders — such as regional feminist funds, and/or funders with an interest in deeper investment in the region/s — may yield promising results for any new fund or funding mechanism. Long-term collaboration beginning in the institution-building stage can lead to a more long-lasting, effective and responsive funding strategy and the creation of funding infrastructure that builds on lessons learned, and that responds with resilience and abundance to the needs of movements and the resourcing ecosystem.

The researchers believe that this research constitutes an important step in a larger feminist decision-making process -one that is rooted in community voices, lived experiences, and awareness of power. Moving forward, greater, deeper and broader consultation with LBQ+ communities will help realize outcomes that are aligned with their needs and visions for liberation.



Annex A. Country list

The countries below were included in this research's definition of Asia and the Pacific. Participants from these countries were eligible to take part in the survey.

Afghanistan	Kiribati	Saudi Arabia
American Samoa	Kuwait	Singapore
Armenia	Kyrgyzstan	Solomon Islands
Azerbaijan	Laos	South Korea
Bahrain	Lebanon	Sri Lanka
Bangladesh	Macau	Syria
Bhutan	Malaysia	Taiwan
Brunei	Maldives	Tajikistan
Cambodia	Marshall Islands	Thailand
China	Mongolia	Tibet
Cook Islands	Myanmar	Timor Leste
Federated States of Micronesia	Nauru	Tokelau
Fiji	Nepal	Tonga
French Polynesia	Niue	Turkey
Georgia	North Korea	Turkmenistan
Guam	Northern Mariana Islands	United Arab Emirates
Hong Kong	Oman	Uzbekistan
India	Pakistan	Vanuatu
Indonesia	Palau	Vietnam
Iran	Palestine	Wake Islands
Iraq	Papua New Guinea	Wallis and Futuna
Japan	Philippines	Yemen
Jordan	Qatar	
Kazakhstan	Samoa	

