

The Baring Foundation

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2021-2025 EVALUATION REPORT

Executive summary

by Singizi Consulting Africa



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About the Baring Foundation

The Baring Foundation is an independent foundation which protects and advances human rights and promotes inclusion. Since 2015, our International Development programme has supported civil society organisations to address discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) individuals and communities in sub-Saharan Africa, with a specific focus on lesbian and transgender communities.

Find out more: baringfoundation.org.uk/programme/international-development-programme.

About the authors

Singizi Consulting Africa an inclusive feminist organisation that specialises in research and monitoring and evaluation, working in South Africa, Africa and globally. Singizi is committed to ensuring participative and user-focussed approaches which ensures that communities, including those that are often structurally silenced, have voice in ways that challenges power relations. By supporting learning and enabling civil society organisations, including community organisations, to strengthen their practices, Singizi aims to amplify their impact in advancing social and gender justice.



Acknowledgements

The Foundation would like to thank the Singizi team: Carmel Marock, Sally Field, Annette Atieno and Oluchi Ogwuegbu – and all those who responded to a survey and agreed to be interviewed for this evaluation.

This report was edited by Harriet Lowe, Communications and Research Manager at the Baring Foundation, and designed by Alex Valy.

Executive summary

£6,650,000

Total granted

39

Grants in total

18

Organisation

Grants in numbers 2021-2025

CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

Singizi Consulting Africa was appointed to evaluate the Baring Foundation's International Development Programme 2021–2025, which supports LGBTQI+ civil society across sub-Saharan Africa through three funding streams: local grantmakers, direct strategic civil society grants, and influencing/raising voices organisations.

The programme operates in a severely hostile context: 64 countries still criminalise homosexuality; Uganda's 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act imposed some of the world's harshest penalties; and the January 2025 withdrawal of US Government funding forced the closure of many LGBTQI+ organisations and/or organisations that

provided services to LGBTQI+ communities. The Foundation's £6,650,692 disbursed across 39 grants therefore represents critical and often irreplaceable support.

The evaluation used Outcome Harvesting as its core design, supplemented by realist-informed case studies (the Equal, Safe and Free Fund, The Other Foundation, and Forum for the Empowerment of Women). Data included a desk review, two surveys (89% direct grantee return¹; 60% from 85 onward grantees), key informant interviews, and 64 outcomes. A feminist lens guided all stages. (For more a more detailed explanation of Methodology, see both the full report and Appendix 1.)

KEY FINDINGS

Through the Outcome Harvesting process, 64 outcomes were identified across the portfolio, reflecting a wide range of change types and social actors. The graph on the right provides an overview of all changes across outcomes.

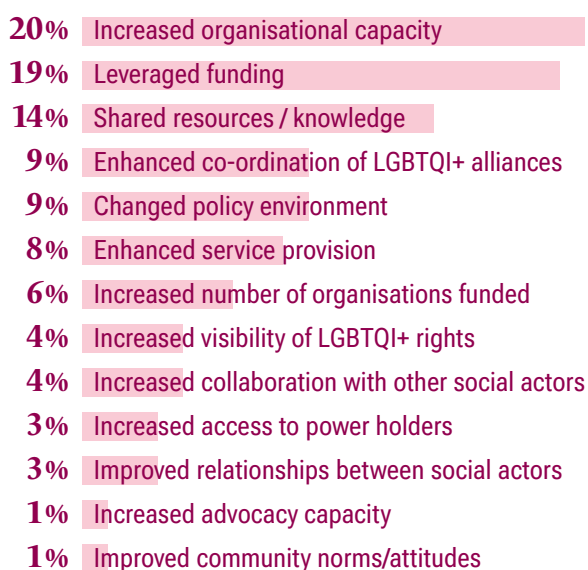
These findings were confirmed in the survey: 88% of direct grantee respondents reported the work strengthened the LGBTQI+ movement, 63% reported strengthened ability to work with allies, and 50% reported improved organisational systems.

“The support enabled us to undertake a comprehensive change management process, during which we reviewed and reflected on our previous strategy. As a result, we developed a new five-year strategic plan that is aligned with our long-term vision and the outcomes we aim to achieve.”

Grantee Partner Survey

¹ The Baring Foundation funds predominantly through local intermediary grant-makers, alongside a small number of direct grantees. Onward grantees, those funded through intermediaries, and direct grantees were consulted through the survey.

Kinds of outcome changes (n=80)



We also found that through the funding that the Baring Foundation has made to local grantmakers – UHAI, The Other Foundation (TOF), ISDAO, the Black Feminist Fund (BFF), and the International Trans Fund (ITF) – onward grants have been made to grassroots LGBTQI+ organisations across Africa. A survey of these onward grantees (n=51) provided a picture of who is being reached, how, and to what effect. Onward grantees (n=53, some had more than one funder) report that the **funding partnership has contributed towards a range of changes for their organisations**, with only 9% (n=5) reported receiving no support beyond the grant itself. This breadth of support – convening, peer learning, mentoring, and access to wider networks – reflects the added value that local intermediaries bring to the grantmaking relationship, going well beyond financial transfer.

EXAMPLES OF CHANGE

Examples of these changes at different levels include the following.

Individual level:

- In 2023-2024, in Burundi, a local grantmaker provided flexible rapid response funding that facilitated strategic litigation. This intervention led to the release of 24 LGBTQI+ individuals who had been arbitrarily arrested. Tragically, one person lost their life due to conditions during detention.
- In November 2025, in Zambia, several transgender asylum seekers enrolled in a technical institution, gaining vocational skills in tailoring, beauty and design, styling, catering, and computer studies.

Community level:

- In rural Kenya, families, friends, and community members of trans and gender non-conforming persons were directly engaged through safe space creation and community awareness sessions delivered by the organisation. As a result, community attitudes shifted, cases of violence and rejection reduced, and trans and Gender Non-Conforming (GNC) persons who had previously been driven from their homes were welcomed back into their communities.

- Between June and November 2025, the organisation delivered community awareness-raising, human rights documentation, and multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), amid a volatile context of violence and insecurity targeting LGBTQI+ people. As a direct result, at least two local healthcare facilities began adopting more inclusive, non-discriminatory practices in the reception and care of LGBTQI+ patients – a tangible shift in institutional behaviour.

Organisational level:

- Following funder investment in organisational capacity and systems strengthening from 2021, in Eastern Uganda, an organisation developed foundational governance and operational frameworks – including a Strategic Plan, M&E toolkit, Financial Manual, and HR and Risk policies – developed in partnership with members, board, staff, and consultants. With these systems in place, the organisation successfully attracted major partnerships including USAID and Global Fund-supported projects, enabling the organisation to reach over 3,000 Key Population persons across Eastern Uganda through 14 health facilities, peer leader training, support groups, and a Drop-In Centre.

- Between 2022 and 2024, across a region, one organisation provided sustained coaching, tools, and procedural support to four other civil society organisations, successfully transitioning them from ad-hoc administrative practices to structured, compliant financial management systems – with internal controls, expenditure traceability, regular reporting, and audit readiness. By the end of the period, all four organisations were independently managing their own accounts and meeting compliance requirements to a satisfactory standard.

Institutional / policy level:

- In 2023 and 2024, in four counties across Western Kenya, the organisation and its Gender Based Violence (GBV) service provider partners successfully created the first-ever government-recognised, transgender-friendly GBV centres in the region. This was achieved through sensitisation training for service providers on transgender-specific needs, and capacity-building for transgender individuals on navigating GBV processes safely.
- In 2025, in Zimbabwe, the organisation conducted a nationwide community-led documentation exercise producing a comprehensive Human Rights Violations Report capturing 15 verified cases of non-consensual surgeries, employment and education discrimination, identity document barriers, and community violence faced by intersex persons. This report was then used to engage government ministries, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, and other stakeholders – directly contributing to dialogue with the Ministry of Justice and ongoing legal consultative processes on intersex rights.

- A grant-making partner also shared an example of policy change in the survey: in August 2025, Kenya's High Court in Eldoret ruled in favour of transgender woman SC – supported by several organisations – affirming the right to gender self-identification and directing the government to introduce a Transgender Protection Rights Act. This landmark judgment established binding legal recognition for transgender persons and set a precedent limiting the state's ability to subject them to degrading treatment.

Regional / movement level:

- Between 2023 and 2024, in Ghana, an organisation implemented a nationwide advocacy and community engagement initiative spanning all 16 regions of the country — bringing together intersex persons, traditional leaders, community members, and partner organisations to challenge harmful cultural practices and promote intersex rights and dignity. This culminated in the formation of Intersex Movement Ghana, the country's first movement led solely by intersex people.
- The organisation successfully secured dedicated space at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Civil Society Forum – a key regional convening bringing together civil society stakeholders from across Southern Africa – to platform priority issues affecting LGBTQI+ communities before a broad audience.

WHY ARE THESE CHANGES SIGNIFICANT?

→ Funding innovation

New models are being tested: 8-year core grants with Black Feminist Fund (BFF), the £25m Equal, Safe and Free fund (ESF) co-funded with FCDO and private foundations, and capital grants through the new Home Fund. These reduce dependency on short-term restricted funding.

→ Power shifting

Resources are moving toward Southern-rooted intermediaries. UHAI secured an \$8m MacKenzie Scott grant; ISDAO grew from 3 to 8 staff and secured €8m from Love Alliance; The Other Foundation (TOF) sustained 49 onward grants despite being owed over US\$1.2m by the US Government.

→ Movement building

95% of onward grantees confirmed real and measurable positive change; 62% reported strengthened ability to work with allies. Civil society coalitions, regional networks, and LBQ and trans leadership continued to grow even as the wider environment worsened.

→ Political influence

Zimbabwe accepted SOGIESC UPR² recommendations for the first time (2022); President Ramaphosa affirmed LGBTQI+ rights in his 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA); Kenya's High Court ruled in favour of gender self-identification; the APPG for LGBTQI+ Rights was re-established in the UK Parliament.

→ Crisis protection

Flexible core funding enabled emergency food parcels and health linkages for trans communities following US funding cuts. The Foundation acted as fiscal host for Oak Foundation grants to UHAI, and the Equal, Safe and Free fund provided £1.335m emergency uplift to The Other Foundation.

→ Value of core funding

69% of direct grantees receive flexible funding covering both organisational and programme costs - enabling governance, HR, and financial systems investment that builds long-term resilience. All 16 direct grantee respondents agreed Foundation funding makes a positive difference.

HOW DID THE BARING FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTE TO THESE CHANGES?

Understanding what changed and why it matters is only part of the picture: we also explored the way in which the Baring Foundation contributes to these changes through its grantmaking and specifically its core and flexible funding, other forms of support including its direct advisory role, as well as through its convening and networking role and its direct advocacy work, which both assist organisations to leverage additional funding.

“By supporting us with core and flexible funding and allowing us autonomy to decide where it's most needed.”

Grantee Partner Survey

“Baring Foundation is our easiest funder as we can reach out to the programme officer in times of need. The flexibility of the grant assists us as community needs emerge during funding constraints.”

Grantee Partner Survey

OECD-DAC ASSESSMENT³

Relevance

Highly relevant. Flexible core funding directly addresses what grantees identify as most critical. The focus on LBQ and trans communities fills precise and acute gaps in the broader funding landscape.

Effectiveness

Effective across all three streams. UHAI awarded 210 grants in 2023 alone; 95% of onward grantees reported positive change; landmark policy milestones achieved in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya, and across the Caribbean.

Efficiency

Considerable reach relative to scale. The intermediary model multiplies impact far beyond direct grantmaking. Trust-based reporting reduces grantee burden, though programme management concentration in a single staff member is a noted risk.

Coherence

Strong internal coherence. The three funding streams reinforce each other: the ESF exemplifies how advocacy, intermediary support, and grassroots grantmaking combine to produce systemic change.

Sustainability

Positive trajectory. Core funding has built governance and staffing capacity. FCDO funding uncertainties underline the need to continue diversifying the public-private model with other governments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Communicate grant types clearly and introduce structured onboarding for new partners; maintain – and in some cases expand – flexibility and move decisively toward multi-year funding cycles.

Recommendation 2

Create structured learning opportunities across the portfolio – for grantees, private donors, and FCDO to share experiences including through creating opportunities for learning from direct grantees to be shared to support discussions about whether these insights can hold value in other regions. Plus consider small follow-up grants to sustain convening outcomes.

Recommendation 3

Maintain targeted prioritisation of LBQ, trans, and intersex communities; identify and fill emerging gaps by community type and geography.

Recommendation 4

Sustain efforts to mobilise resources, formalise the Foundation's network and brokering role and focus on ways to connect grantees with donors. Continue exploring replication of the Equal, Safe and Free (ESF) public-private model with other governments.

Recommendation 5

Review institutional capacity: programme management concentration with a single staff member presents succession risk; develop a continuity plan.

³ The OECD uses the DAC criteria to assess the merits of a development intervention: www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/development-co-operation-evaluation-and-effectiveness/evaluation-criteria.html.

CONCLUSION

The Baring Foundation's International Development Programme 2021–2025 has made a well-evidenced contribution to LGBTQI+ civil society during an exceptionally turbulent period. Sixty-four outcomes were harvested by the evaluation; all direct grantee survey respondents agreed that Foundation funding makes a positive difference; and the programme helped mobilise significantly larger funding flows – including the £25 million

Equal, Safe and Free fund (ESF) and the Global Philanthropy Project's \$182 million Fund Our Futures campaign.

In a landscape reshaped by the withdrawal of US Government support, the Foundation's role as a consistent, flexible, and principled partner is, for many organisations, essential to survival and sustained advocacy. Addressing the five recommendations identified in this evaluation will strengthen an already effective programme for the next five years.

FULL GRANTS LIST

All grants made under this programme in this period can be found on the baring foundation's website at: baringfoundation.org.uk/our-grant-making/funded-projects.

READ MORE

A longer report and supporting documents are also available to read at www.baringfoundation.org.uk.

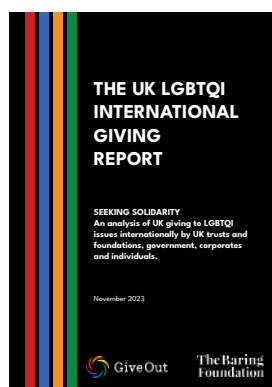
Research supported under this programme



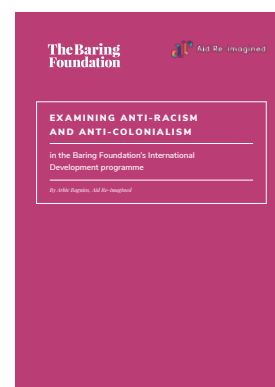
Breaking the Silence
Human Dignity Trust
2025



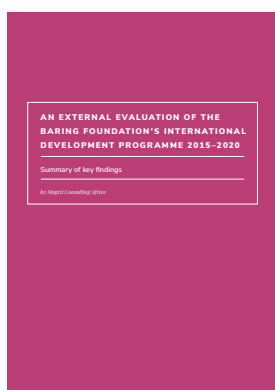
Global resources report
2023–2024
Global Philanthropy
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2026



The UK LGBTQI+
International Giving
Report
GiveOut
2023



Examining anti-racism and
anti-colonialism in the Baring
Foundation's International
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Arbie Baguios, Aid Re-imagined
2022



International
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Vibrant yet
underresourced:
The state of lesbian,
bisexual, and queer
movements
Mama Cash and Astraea
2020



Injustice exposed:
the criminalisation of
transgender people and
its impacts
Human Dignity Trust
2019

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