

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2021-2025 EVALUATION REPORT

Full report

by Singizi Consulting Africa

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2021-2025 EVALUATION REPORT

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

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

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List of acronyms

APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group
BF	Baring Foundation (the Foundation)
BFF	Black Feminist Fund
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CMO	Context-Mechanism-Outcome
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (as in OECD-DAC)
DoHA	Department of Home Affairs (South Africa)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EASHRI	East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative
ESF	Equal, Safe and Free Fund
FAU LAC	Fondo de Acción Urgente para América Latina y el Caribe (Urgent Action Fund Latin America and the Caribbean)
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
FEW	Forum for the Empowerment of Women
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDX	Gender DynamiX
GNC	Gender Non-Conforming
GPP	Global Philanthropy Project
HDT	Human Dignity Trust
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Resources
ILGA	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
IPT	Initial Programme Theory
ISDAO	Initiative Sankofa d'Afrique de l'Ouest
ITF	International Trans Fund
ITO	International Trans Organisation
JASS	Just Associates
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal

LBQ	Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and others
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
NGLHRC	National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAI	Pan African ILGA
RE	Realist Evaluation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAIF	Southern African Intersex Forum
SATF	Southern Africa Trans Forum
SHE	Social, Health and Empowerment Feminist Collective
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics
SONA	State of the Nation Address (South Africa)
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TB	Tuberculosis
TEA	Trans Empowerment Association (unconfirmed — not expanded in report)
TIAMON	Trans organisation — full name not expanded in the report
TIRZ	Trans Intersex Raising Zimbabwe
TOF	The Other Foundation
TREAT	Trans Research Education Advocacy Training
UHAI EASHRI	UHAI East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Introduction

CONTEXT

The context in which the Baring Foundation is undertaking this work is one that is **increasingly hostile**. Globally, LGBTQI+ communities continue to face systematic discrimination and violence, with 64 countries worldwide still criminalising homosexuality, and 12 countries imposing possible death sentences for private, consensual same-sex sexual activity.¹ This criminalisation is heavily concentrated in Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia². The landscape has deteriorated significantly, with 2024 witnessing intensified crackdowns, including Mali and Burkina Faso newly criminalising homosexuality³. Uganda's 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act represents one of the world's harshest legislative responses, imposing death penalties for "aggravated homosexuality" and criminalising medical care, accommodation, and legal representation for LGBTQI+ individuals.⁴

In this worsening context, we have also seen a decrease in funding available to support the rights of LGBTQI+ persons. While there was an increase in funding, as shown in the 2021-2022 Global Resources Report, since 2022, the funding landscape has undergone a dramatic decline. Following President Trump's election in January 2025 and the suspension and cutting of USAID funding together with executive orders opposing "gender

ideology", we have seen a drastic reduction of services for LGBTQI+ communities.⁵ For example, approximately 97% of 127 Ugandan organisations conducting HIV prevention work with LGBTQI+ communities lost USAID funding, forcing most to close.⁶ A July 2025 survey of 29 leading LGBTI intermediary funders revealed profound instability following major donor withdrawals. While crisis funding has alleviated some of this pressure, the negative impact on organisations is likely to be understood over time.

BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

Singizi Consulting Africa (Singizi) was appointed by the Baring Foundation (the Foundation) in January 2026 to conduct an external evaluation of their International Development Programme 2021-2025. The International Development Programme aims to support civil society organisations to address discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) individuals and communities in sub-Saharan Africa with a particular focus on lesbian and transgender communities. The Foundation funds work that supports and champions:

- the development of the operations of local grantmakers who are rooted in local LGBTI communities and involve activists in decision making;

¹ The Week UK, *The countries where homosexuality is still illegal*, *The Week*. 2025: [theweek.com/96298/the-countries-where-homosexuality-is-still-illegal](https://www.theweek.com/96298/the-countries-where-homosexuality-is-still-illegal).

² Amnesty International, *Africa: Barrage of discriminatory laws stoking hate against LGBTI persons*. 2024: www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/01/africa-barrage-of-discriminatory-laws-stoking-hate-against-lgbti-persons.

³ Salako, P., *LGBTQ+ rights in Africa 2024: Progress and setbacks*. 2024, Thomson Reuters Foundation. www.context.news/socioeconomic-inclusion/lgbtq-rights-in-africa-2024-progress-and-setbacks.

⁴ Sun, N., M. McLemore, and J.J. Amon, *Pushing Back: Civil Society Strategies to Address Punitive Anti-LGBTQI Laws in Uganda, Ghana, and Kenya*. Health and human rights, 2024. 26(2): p. 61. <https://www.hhrjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/12/sun-1.pdf>.

⁵ Global Philanthropy Project, *Shocks & Shifts: Impact of Major Donor Funding Cuts on LGBTI Intermediary Infrastructure – Summary Report*. 2025, Global Philanthropy Project. globalphilanthropyproject.org/2025/11/26/shocks-shifts-summary-report.

⁶ Cahill, S.R., *A severe dismantling of LGBTQI+ health equity and equality: impact of new U.S. policies on the global response to HIV*. J Int AIDS Soc, 2025. 28(5): p.e26485. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40375596.

- strategic frontline civil society organisations to build their capacity to make change;
- the role of local civil society – working as influencers to develop an evidence base for the impact of local civil society and attract further resources to support development.

The intention, summarised from the programme's Terms of Reference, is that successful activities will lead to:

- a clear focus on the particular challenges faced by LBQ and trans communities and individuals by local grantmakers and programming designed to address them;
- evidence of when, where and how local civil society can achieve policy change or cultural change and how effective tactics might be replicated;
- further access to local grantmakers for civil society, increasing the coverage of relevant organisations and the resources available to them;
- increasing focus on African LGBTI civil society in the UK, particularly in the public sector and among trusts and foundations which leads to further resources for African LGBTI civil society from funders of all kinds; and;
- a local LGBTI civil society more able to advocate for policy and cultural change and to provide community support through robust and sustainable organisations and individuals.

During the period 2021-2025, the Foundation disbursed **£6,650,692 through 39 grants to 18 organisations.**

The purpose of the evaluation and the key learning questions

The purpose of the evaluation is to inform the strategic direction of the International Development programme over the next five years. To do this, the Baring Foundation wishes to understand the influence and impact of

their work in relation to local grantmakers that they work with directly, with civil society more broadly (both through direct grant support to strategic partners and indirectly through onward grantees) and then through influencing and 'raising voices' to mobilise resources. In addition, following recent partnerships with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and private foundations, as well as new local grantmaking partnerships, the Foundation wishes to understand the contribution of the partnerships to their aims and the resilience of partners in a changing funding landscape.

These learning questions were developed from the Terms of Reference and build on the findings of a [previous evaluation of the 2015–2020 International Development Programme](#) (Singizi Consulting Africa). (See Table 1, page 9.)

REPORT OVERVIEW

This report covers: evaluation design and methodology; findings on funding, outcomes, and the Foundation's contribution; and key learning questions, OECD-DAC assessment, and recommendations. Supporting materials are provided as appendices.

An executive summary is available as a separate document from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The infographic on page 10 outlines the evaluation design and methodology used by Singizi to answer the key learning questions. Appendix 1 provides a more detailed description of the feminist principles that guided the approach, the rationale for selecting Outcome Harvesting as the primary evaluation design, the methods used to collect and analyse data, and the analytical framework applied to interpret findings.

Table 1: Learning questions

What we want to answer
LOCAL GRANTMAKERS ▪ Has the Foundation been an effective partner for local grantmakers? ▪ How has the partnership with the Foundation impacted strategies and operations for local grantmakers? ▪ How has the partnership with the Foundation impacted strategies and operations for local grantmakers? ▪ What can Foundations [similar to the Baring Foundation] learn about grantmaking from local grantmakers? ▪ What is the resilience of grantmaking partners in the changing funding landscape? ▪ What has the contribution of new partnerships with local grantmakers made to the funding landscape?
CIVIL SOCIETY (through direct strategic grants and indirect onward grants) ▪ For civil society partners in Africa that receive grants directly from the Foundation: What general contributions have these organisations made to LBQ & Trans people? ▪ What general contributions have local grantmakers made to LBQ & Trans people? ▪ How have local grantmakers supported civil society? ▪ How have grants from local grantmakers shaped LBQ & Trans civil society? ▪ How has the Foundation supported civil society? ▪ Has the partnership with the Foundation supported other levels of collaboration and collective learning?
INFLUENCING AND RAISING VOICES ▪ How has the Foundation's support to organisations that 'Raise Voices' such as ILGA and PAI contributed to championing the role of civil society? ▪ How has the work of the Foundation influenced other funders in the UK – e.g. where funding is made, the amount of funding and how funding is allocated? ▪ What contribution have new partners (with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and private foundations) made through the Equal, Safe and Free Fund to the grantmaking landscape? ▪ Has the work of the Foundation led to an increase in resources to partners in local and civil society?

Design and methodology

Feminist lens and principles

Participatory and context-appropriate methods.
Addresses power dynamics and gender justice.
Minimises burden on role players.
Fosters reflective, evaluative thinking.
Findings inform future strategic direction.

Dual evaluation design

Outcome Harvesting (Primary)

Collects evidence of what changed and how grants contributed (when, where, who, how, what).

Realist Case Studies (CMO)

Examines mechanisms, context & outcomes – explaining why and how change occurs.

Methods

Desk review

Grant applications, reporting, research & meeting reports.
Preliminary outcomes harvest + grantmaking overview.

Surveys (2)

Direct grantees: 16/18 (89% return). Onward grantees: 51/85 (60% return). Available in English, French, Portuguese & Swahili.

Outcome harvest

64 outcomes harvested;
12 outputs flagged for monitoring.
Partners reviewed, revised and substantiated outcomes.

Interviews and focus groups

Local grantmakers, strategic grantees, global role players & Foundation staff/board members.

Realist informed cases

Three cases: Equal, Safe and Free Fund, The Other Foundation & Forum for the Empowerment of Women. CMO analysis: context, mechanisms and outcomes. Additional focused interviews per case.

Data analysis approach

Thematic analysis

All data analysed thematically across sources.

Descriptive statistics

Quantitative data summarised with descriptive stats; open-ended responses analysed qualitatively.

Outcome coding

Coded by kind of change (e.g policy, capacity, visibility etc) and Social Actor (12+ categories each).

CMO framework

Case data structured via Context (circumstance) – Mechanism (resources and reactions) – Outcome (change).

Data triangulation

All voices triangulated against OECD-DAC criteria: Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance, Coherence, Impact and Sustainability.

Three in-depth realist cases

Equal, Safe and Free Fund (ESF)

Influencer / funding partnership model

The Other Foundation (TOF)

Local grantmaking partner

Forum for Empowerment of Women (FEW)

Direct Civil Society support

89%

Direct partner returns

60%

Onward grantee returns

64

Outcomes harvested

18

Partners (2021–2025)

FINDINGS

Overview of funding

Before examining what changed and why, it is useful to understand the scale, distribution, and character of the funding that the Foundation disbursed during the 2021–2025 period.

As indicated previously, between 2021-2025, the Foundation disbursed **£6,650,692 through 39 grants provided to 18 organisations**. A breakdown of the organisations funded, year of funding and size of grant is shown in the table provided as Appendix 3. The Foundation supports three categories of grantee partner, local grantmakers, direct grants to civil society organisations (strategic grants), and ‘influencers’/Raising Voices, and provides three types of grants, core, project and Equal, Safe and Free (ESF) grants.

As indicated in Graph 1, £5,650,600 (85% of the total disbursed) was allocated to local grantmakers. This was granted across six organisations over 15 grants. £519,500 (8%) went to ten direct, strategic grants for four civil society grantee partners. The Influencer / Raising Voices category was provided with £519,500 (7%) in 14 grants to eight organisations.

Graph 1: Grant allocation by grantee category

LOCAL GRANTMAKERS	£5,650,600
DIRECT STRATEGIC CIVIL SOCIETY	£519,500
INFLUENCERS/RAISING VOICES	£480,592

Funds spent per grantee are indicated in Table 2.

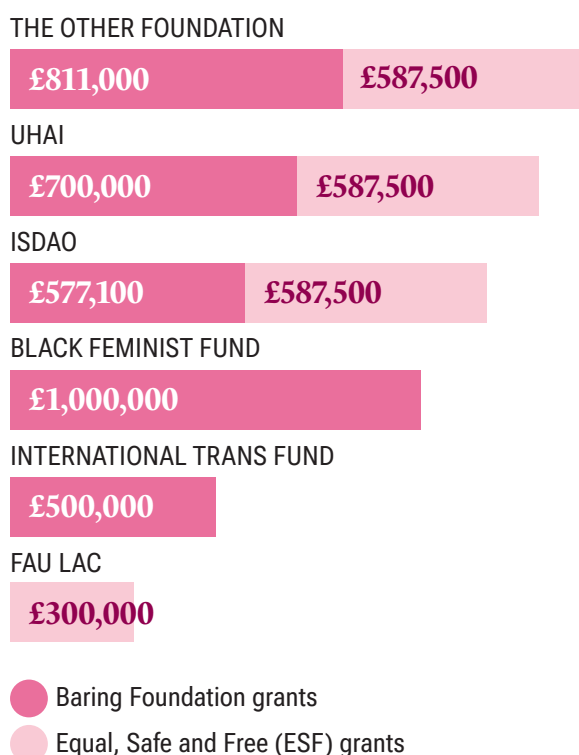
When looking at the grants provided to local grantmakers, we have disaggregated further to indicate those grants made by the Baring

Foundation and those that were made through the Equal, Safe and Free Fund (ESF). The disbursements are shown in Graph 2.

Table 2: Funds per grantee

LOCAL GRANTMAKERS	AMOUNT
The Other Foundation	£1,398,500
UHAI	£1,287,500
ISDAO	£1,164,600
Black Feminist Fund	£1,000,000
International Trans Fund	£500,000
FAU LAC	£300,000
Total	£5,650,600
DIRECT STRATEGIC CIVIL SOCIETY GRANTEEES	AMOUNT
GDX	£164,000
Irant	£145,000
SHE	£116,000
FEW	£94,500
Total	£519,500
INFLUENCERS / RAISING VOICES	AMOUNT
Kaleidoscope	£124,893
GiveOut	£115,000
GPP	£75,000
PAI	£60,000
HDT	£50,699
All Out	£20,000
Stonewall	£20,000
ILGA World	£15,000
Total	£480,592

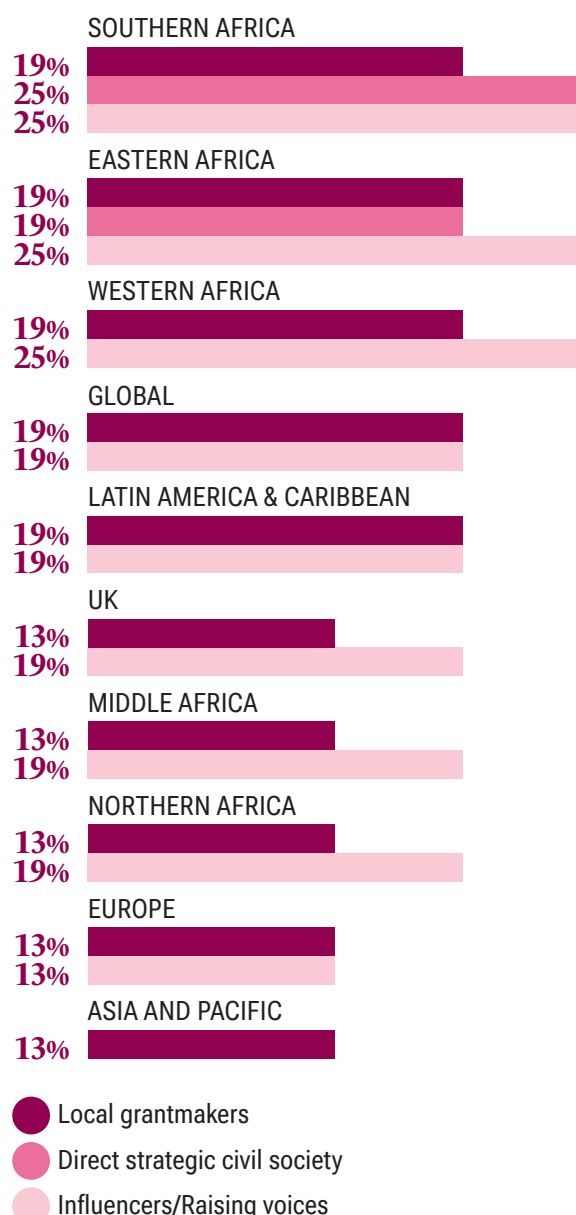
Graph 2: Funding for local grantmakers
(total: £5,650,600)



REACH (GEOGRAPHIC AND COMMUNITY)

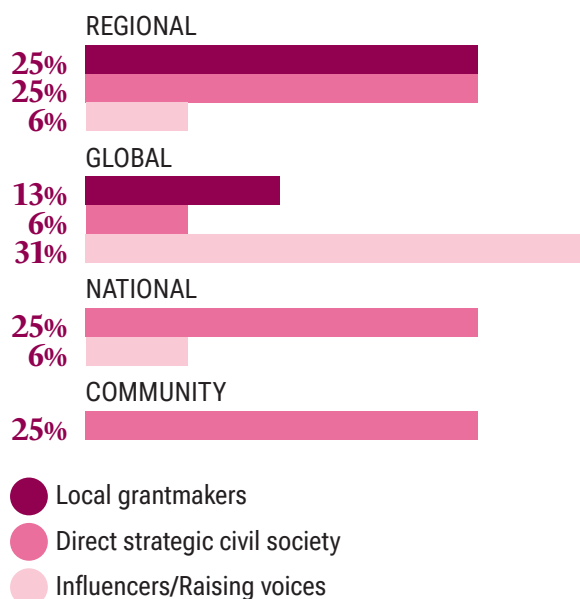
The following analysis of grantee geographic and community reach draws on survey responses from 16 of the 18 funded organisations, offering a representative picture of where grantee partners work and the communities they serve. The survey findings indicate that grantee partners work predominantly in Southern Africa, with 69% (n=11) indicating this as their region of work. Grantee partners may work in multiple regions. All regions and types of grantee partners working in the regions are indicated in the graph below. Direct civil society grantees are only working in Southern and Eastern Africa, while Influencers and local grantmakers work across other regions. Grantmakers, the Black Feminist Fund and the International Trans Fund, work internationally explaining the picture for the reach of work for this category of grantees. (See Graph 3.)

Graph 3: Grantee partners regions of work
(n=16, multiple responses allowed)

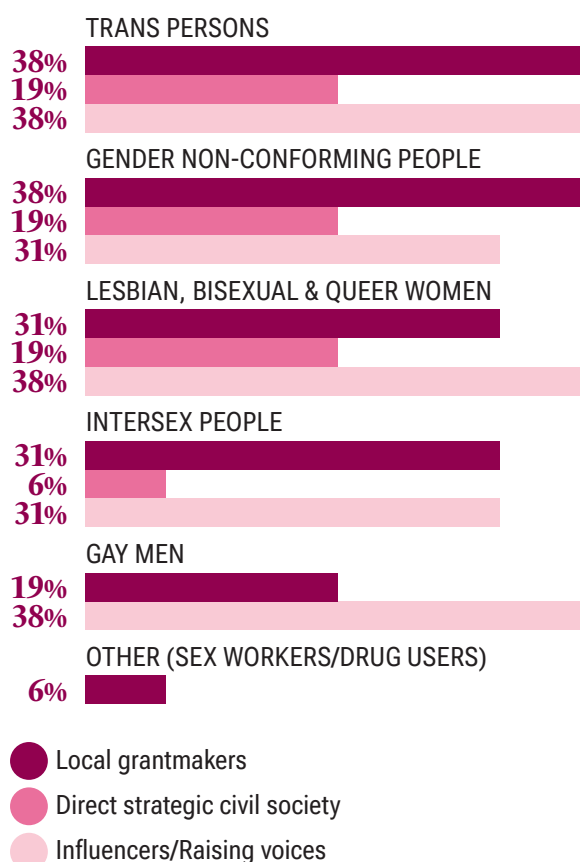


Most survey respondents (n=9, 56%) indicate that they work regionally, with 50% (n=8) working across a global context. Again, the grantee partners may work at several levels as shown in Graph 4, page 24.

Graph 4: Grantee partners level of work
(n=16, multiple responses allowed)



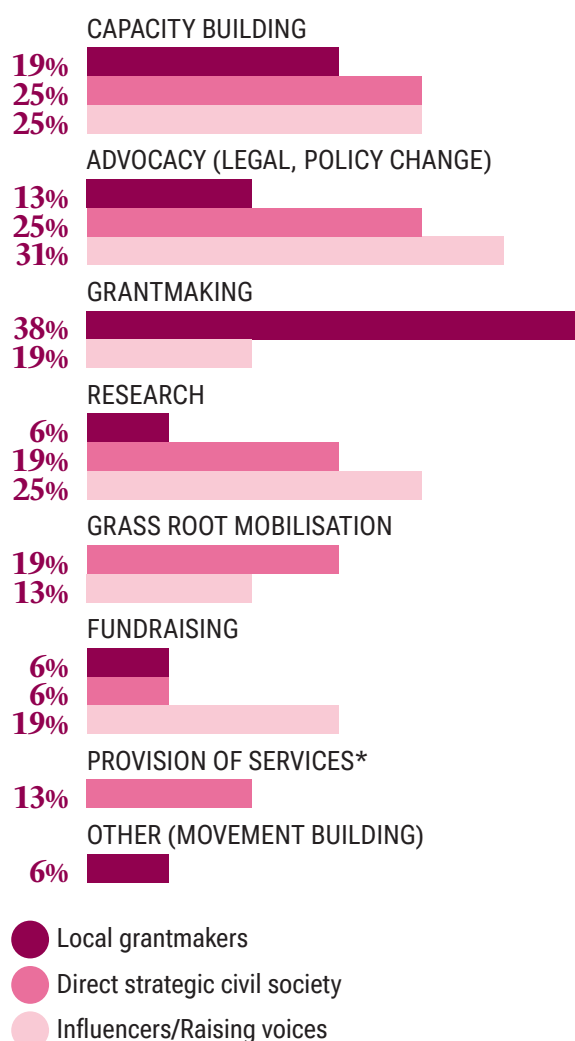
Graph 5: Grantee partners communities worked with (n=16, multiple responses allowed)



Graph 4 demonstrates that direct civil society grantees work at all levels, from community through to regional. While local grantmakers may fund regional, national and local organisations, they describe their work as being located at a regional level with some global work, and influencers work mostly at global level with some regional and national work.

A more detailed picture of the communities who benefit from the Foundation's grant making is provided in Graph 5. Grantee partners indicated that 94% (n=15) work with trans people in most cases as well as other communities. This is reflected in the responses which show that most grantees work with several communities.

Graph 6: Grantee partners core focus of work (n=16, multiple responses allowed)



*e.g. Health, psycho-social support, etc.

FOCUS OF WORK

To understand more about who the grantees are, we reviewed the primary focus of their work. From the survey responses, we found that several categories of work were indicated by most partners: the majority of grantee partners focus on capacity building (n=11, 69%) and advocacy (legal, policy change) (n=11, 69%). Grantmaking was reported as the core focus for 9 respondents (56%). These results are shown in Graph 6 (page 14).

Of interest is that only the direct strategic civil society partners focus on the provision of services while only local grantmakers focus on movement building. However, local grantmakers have not indicated that they address grassroots mobilisation as an area of focus, which is integral to movement building.

Outcomes emerging

This section presents the outcomes harvested across the portfolio, drawing on evidence gathered through the desk review, outcome harvest process, surveys, and interviews. It describes both the breadth of change achieved and the social actors who were changed, before turning to a more in-depth analysis of why these outcomes are significant.

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY GRANTEE PARTNERS

Through the Outcome Harvesting process, 64 outcomes were identified across the portfolio, reflecting a wide range of change types and social actors. The outcome description list is included in Appendix 4.

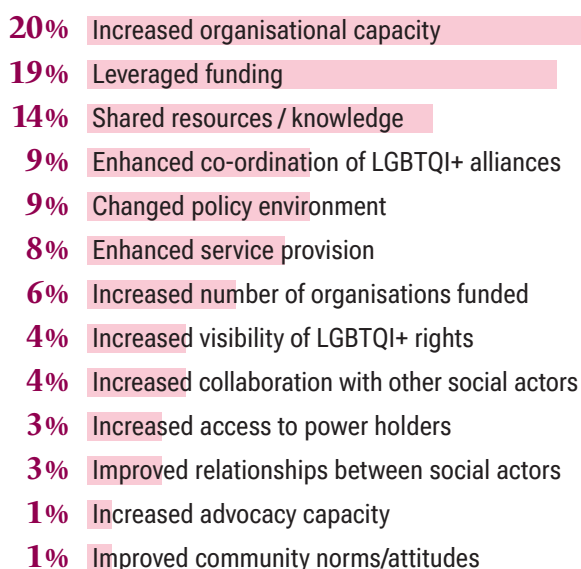
Kinds of change

As indicated, a single outcome may relate to more than one change: thus the 64 outcomes represent 80 changes realised through the contribution made by the Foundation (through direct grant funding). We found that 20% of these changes (based on the 80 changes) are increased organisational capacity and 19% are changes relating to leveraged funding. On the other end of the continuum, only one per cent of the change is about improved community norms / attitudes. This may be because this kind of change is more difficult to observe but it may also suggest that this has not been the focus of the work funded by the direct grants. This is discussed further when considering the kind of changes realised through the onward grants. Graph 7 provides an overview of all changes across outcomes.

These findings were confirmed in the survey where 50% (n=8) of grantee survey respondents indicated their grant has strengthened organisational overarching capacity and systems and 63% (n=10) reported that it had strengthened their programmatic work including their ability to work with LGBTQI+ organisations and individuals in their country or region and to challenge

opposition and negative perceptions of LGBTQI+ individuals (94%). As indicated in the Harvest, changes were realised relating to increased coordination and, consistent with this, 88% (n=14) of survey respondents stated that this work had strengthened the LGBTQI+ movement, 63% (n=10) reported it has strengthened their ability to work with allies and counter opposition, and 44% (n=7) said it has increased their voice as part of advocacy work.

Graph 7: Kinds of outcome changes (n=80)



Who changed?

As noted above, one outcome may represent change in more than one social actor. We noted changes for 90 social actors across the 64 outcomes, with changes in direct grantee organisations being noted in 20% of changes and changes for grantmaking partners accounting for 17% of changes: these percentages are broadly consistent with the % of increased organisational capacity. We have also seen important change in coalitions/ alliances/ and government.

On the other end of the continuum, only 1% of the social actors identified as changed were academics/journalists. (See Graph 8.)

Graph 8: Social actors changed (n=90)



Graph 8 highlights the range of players that have changed through this work and specifically points to the extent that the interventions have realised what could be termed internal changes including the LGBTIQ+ community, grantees and the movement, and then those that are external to movement and include allies and other social partners.

A DEEPER DIVE: CHANGES REALISED THROUGH THE WORK OF THE ONWARD GRANT-MAKING

A central strand of the Baring Foundation's grantmaking approach involves funding local grantmakers – UHAI, The Other Foundation (TOF), ISDAO, the Black Feminist Fund (BFF), and the International Trans Fund (ITF) – to make grants onward to grassroots LGBTIQ+ organisations across Africa. A survey of these onward grantees (n=51) provides a picture of who is being reached, how, and to what effect.

Geographically, the portfolio is concentrated in Southern Africa (51%, n=26), with substantial coverage across Central (33%, n=17) and Western Africa (16%, n=8), and a smaller presence in Eastern (14%, n=7) and Northern Africa (2%, n=1). Most onward grantees are working at national (65%, n=33) and community (57%, n=29) level, with a significant proportion also engaged regionally (27%, n=14).

Most grantees **work across multiple core areas** including 76% advocacy (legal, policy change), 73% capacity building, 57% grassroots mobilisation, 47% provision of services (health, psychosocial support, etc) and 43% on research. Other areas of work include: arts and cultural production; popular education; building alternatives; communication and social media; safe space/convening space; archiving, documenting, contributing to advocacy by means of information; and economic development / livelihoods / financial literacy.

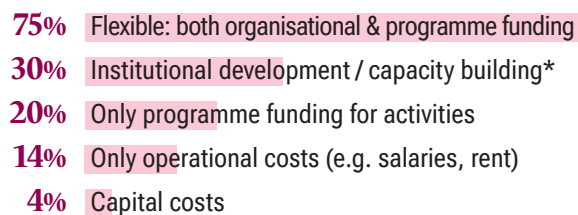
Most (78%, n=40) organisations indicate they are **working with multiple population groups** with 78% focusing on trans persons; 69% focusing on Gender Non-Conforming People; 61% LBQ women; 53% on Intersex people; and 33% with gay men.

Many organisations also reported reaching populations beyond these categories – including sex workers, people with disabilities, asylum seekers, people living with HIV, domestic workers, and those in rural areas – demonstrating that the onward grantmaking model is successfully directing resources toward the intersection of multiple forms of vulnerability.

The vast majority of grantees are formally registered (88%, n=45), with six organisations being unregistered. The majority of onward grantees (86%, n=44) first received funding between 2021 and 2025, **reflecting the importance of local grantmakers who can reach a wide pool of grantees**. 16 organisations received their first grant in 2025 alone. Grant lengths vary considerably: while most current grants are for one year (23 organisations), seven organisations hold eight-year grants and eleven hold two-year grants, pointing to differentiated approaches across grantmaking partners.

As some organisations (n=51) are funded by more than one funder, the 'n' may change to reflect the responses about grants from different grantmakers. From 56 grants, three quarters (75%, n=42) of onward grantees report receiving flexible funding covering both organisational and programme costs – the single most common grant type. (See Graph 9 on page 18.)

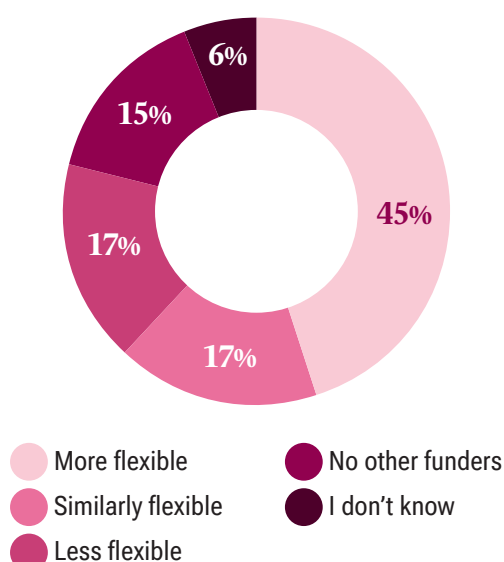
Graph 9: Costs covered by onward grantmaking (n=56, more than one option allowed)



* e.g. Systems and leadership

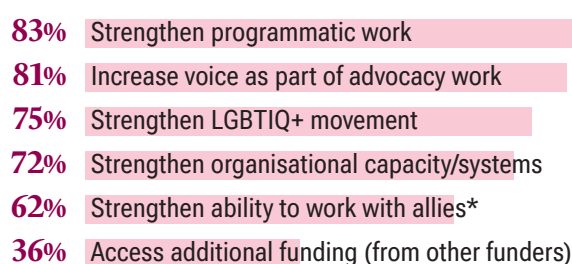
When compared with their other funders, 45% (n=24) of **onward grantees** (n=53, not all respondents completed all answers for each grant), while 17% (n=9) find them similar and 17% (n=9) less so. A further 15% (n=8) report having no other funders, making these grants their primary or sole source of support, underscoring the critical importance of this funding for some organisations. The proportion describing their grantmaking partners as more flexible than average is a positive indicator of the extent to which the Baring-funded intermediaries have absorbed and transmitted Baring's trust-based, flexible approach down the grantmaking chain. (See Graph 10.)

Graph 10: Flexibility of onward grants (n=53)



Onward grantees (n=53) report that the **funding partnership has contributed towards a range of changes for their organisations**, with only 9% (n=5) reporting 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. (See Graph 11.)

Graph 11: Ways in which onward grantmaking has strengthened the ecosystem (n=53)



* Strengthen the ability of the LGBTIQ+ movement to work with allies and counter the opposition

The onward grantee survey (n=55) shows that 95% (n=52) agreed that the **grant and support have resulted in real and measurable positive changes for their organisation**, with only 4% (n=2) neither agreeing nor disagreeing and none disagreeing. One indicated 'I don't know'. Notably, 62% (n=33 of 53 responses) reported that the support has strengthened the ability of the LGBTIQ+ movement to work with allies and counter opposition – and 36% (n=19 of 53 responses) reported being supported to access additional funding from other funders, demonstrating a leverage effect at the grassroots level.

The **type of changes that were realised through this onward grantmaking** can be seen at multiple levels: individual, community, organisational, institutional / policy and regional / movement. From the onward grantee survey, examples of these were provided by organisations as stories of significant change.

EXAMPLES OF CHANGE

Examples of change 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.

These changes highlight the kinds of changes that have been realised through the onward grant making that has been supported by local grant makers through grants made by the Baring Foundation. This highlights the value of this approach and the kinds of impact that it realised.

Why are these changes significant?

This section examines why the harvested outcomes are significant, across five inter-related themes reflecting the depth and strategic coherence of the Foundation's contribution.

FUNDING INNOVATION

In the context of shrinking funding spaces finding **new models that support sustainable grantmaking** is critical. The changes realised through the International Programme, as reflected in the Outcome Harvest, highlight that the Baring Foundation is succeeding in actively

testing and piloting innovative ways to enable funding to reach movements. Some examples of the kinds of changes achieved include:

- changing the duration of grants to include multi-year core grants (through a new partnership in 2024 with Black Feminist Fund which provides eight-year core grants);
- co-funding with governments and private foundations (as demonstrated in the ESF case in the box below, the case has been written up in Appendix 5);
- funding for capital projects (through the new partnership with Dreilinden, formed in 2023, and the establishment of The Home Fund).

Realist Evaluation Informed Case: the Baring Foundation – Equal, Safe and Free Fund (ESF)

The Equal, Safe and Free (ESF) Fund was established in 2024 as a £25 million, four-year partnership between the Baring Foundation, three private foundations (Oak Foundation, Foundation for a Just Society, and Foundation for a Just Society International), and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The fund supports local LGBTIQ+ grantmakers in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean and Pacific islands.

The fund emerged during a period of sharply deteriorating conditions – US funding cuts, legislation criminalising same-sex consensual acts across multiple African countries, as well as a shrinking civic space. The Baring Foundation responded by building a rigorous evidence base, convening an alliance of influential policy figures to advocate to UK parliamentarians, and creating spaces for Southern grant makers to have voice in key international forums. It then brokered and sustained the public-private partnership, including negotiating reduced reporting burdens to make FCDO funding more accessible for local grantmakers.

Donor partners engaged because of long-standing relationships with the Foundation, strategic alignment, and the opportunity to expand their reach through government leverage. The fund has already enabled local grantmakers to expand grant making and assist grantees to absorb US funding shocks and advance LGBTIQ+ rights across the region.

The **Context – Mechanism – Outcome (CMO)** emerging from the case is demonstrated as follows. Even amid diminishing resources and growing backlash against LGBTIQ+ rights (**Context**), an alliance of influential people engaged in evidence-based advocacy that highlighted the scale of challenges and made the case for public-private partnerships. This was coupled with grantee support (**Mechanism – Resources**). The alliance's strong relationships with both private and government funders, combined with the alignment of this work with funders' own missions, meant that local grantmakers were seen as credible and trusted intermediaries (**Mechanism – Reaction**). Together, these mechanisms mobilised significant government funding, complemented by private funding, leading to the establishment of the ESF which is able to channel resources directly to LGBTIQ+ movements (**Outcome**).

Realist Evaluation Informed Case: the Baring Foundation – The Other Foundation (TOF)

The Other Foundation is a Southern African grant maker supporting LGBTI organisations across 13 countries. When the Trump administration suspended USAID grants in January 2025, frontline organisations across the region lost funding almost overnight.

TOF was able to respond rapidly because of two reinforcing investments. First, the Baring Foundation's long-term flexible core support had built TOF's institutional infrastructure, participatory grant-making systems, and grantee relationships over years. Second, TOF had been selected as a delivery partner for the £25 million Equal, Safe and Free (ESF) Fund – a public-private partnership co-designed by the Baring Foundation and the UK FCDO. Together, these enabled TOF to disburse 49 emergency grants within ten weeks of the crisis, receiving £2.2 million from the ESF against an original Year 1 commitment of £800,000.

The impact at community level was tangible: a trans organisation in Botswana convened its first high-level policy roundtable; an intersex rights group in Zimbabwe opened a formal dialogue with the Ministry of Justice; and a

women's organisation in Namibia conducted the country's first comprehensive hate speech survey.

The **Context – Mechanism – Outcome (CMO)** emerging from the case also demonstrates that within a context of intensifying anti-rights backlash, shifting private philanthropy and the sudden bilateral donor withdrawal (**context**), the combination of the Baring Foundation's flexible core support that enabled TOF to build its capacity, and efforts to establish the ESF, which was co-designed through years of joint advocacy between the Baring Foundation and FCDO with input from partners, led to the awarding of a grant to TOF which was able to move quickly to award grants to mitigate the negative impact of the cuts in funding (**mechanism: resources**). This was possible because TOF was credible and had a trusting relationship with its grantees and a capacity for participatory grant-making that supports both inclusivity and accountability (**mechanism: reaction**). This allowed TOF to rapidly respond and allocate 49 grants in ten weeks which served to contribute to the increased stability of the Southern Africa LGBTI field at a moment of acute crisis, and enabled frontline organisations to continue and in some cases deepen their advocacy work (**outcome**).

The innovative approach to funding is also demonstrated in The Other Foundation (TOF) case (see above and in Appendix 6), which highlights the extent that trust has been built with grantees through the ways in which TOF has worked over sustained periods of time. This case illustrates that the institutional stability that TOF has built has allowed it to respond quickly in a crisis: but it also shows the value of the grant making models that TOF has developed, which go beyond financial support to include technical assistance as well as the convening of LGBTIQ+ organisations to share learning and develop collective strategies. This grant-making represents a move away from the provision of short-term restricted funding towards grants that more holistically support LGBTIQ+ organisations and the movement to grow.

POWER SHIFTING

The changes are also significant as they demonstrate **real progress in shifting power towards local grantmakers** in Africa and the Caribbean. Ensuring the organisational capacity of local grantmakers, such as UHAI, ISDAO, and FAU LAC, and enabling these institutions to leverage additional funding such that they are emerging as financially secure indigenous funds, was found to be really significant in building the resilience of grant making in the South (highlighted in the TOF Case). Other examples of outcomes that show the importance of these changes are:

- in 2022, in Kenya, UHAI faced serious organisational challenges and was able to implement “Muamko Mpya” (New Dawn), an organisational development process that successfully stabilised the organisation by 2023;

- in 2025, joint FCDO–Baring Foundation support enabled a step-change in how FAU LAC resource and accompany Caribbean LGBTQ+ grassroots movements: they increased their ability to move rapid-response funding in moments of heightened risk, expanded outreach across the Caribbean to reach more groups, and strengthened their Caribbean-focused pipeline so groups could access support faster. A concrete shift was improving language justice and accessibility in the application system, which helped more Caribbean-based groups to apply.

MOVEMENT BUILDING

The changes are also important as they show that, even in the face of greater backlash and increased levels of discrimination, the movement continues to **grow with increased levels of coordination within and across civil society**. The outcomes illustrate the way that the Foundation provides grants that allows for, and encourages, the implementation of coordinated regional advocacy strategies. Building coalitions, strengthening alliances, expanding rainbow organisations, and supporting leadership development are together creating a civil society ecosystem capable of sustained pressure on policy and cultural change. A few of the outcomes harvested are provided below to illustrate the importance of these changes.

- In 2021/2022, Gender DynamiX (GDX) delivered training for six regional partners building a new collaboration. Participants reported that they had improved confidence and practical skills, and organisations which remained active partners in 2022/3/4, were also supported to document human rights enabling them to contribute to regional human rights reports, UPR submissions etc.
- In 2025, FEW scaled up project funding that enabled more support to grassroots organisation in rural provinces, supporting newly established pride advocacy events and introducing high-level advocacy linked to UN reporting mechanisms.

Taken together, the outcomes realised suggest the possibilities related to creating an interconnected ecosystem of leadership that can play an important role in navigating the difficult environment.

POLITICAL INFLUENCE

Related to the above, the changes realised point to the extent that – again even in this difficult context – partners have been able to **translate advocacy into measurable policy and institutional change**. Some of these changes realised through direct grants made by the Foundation include the following.

- In 2022, GDX provided support to regional partners in Zimbabwe to prepare a UPR shadow report specific to the realities, risks and needs of trans and gender diverse people. The impact of continuously engaging in UPR processes is, among others, illuminated by Zimbabwe accepting – for the first time in 2022 – recommendations related to SOGIESC.
- 2022 Queer SONA: ‘We won’t be ignored’ State of the Nation Address. Iranti embarked on a campaign to draw attention to queer people as voters and as politically engaged people whose needs must be addressed by political leaders. The campaign continued in 2023 and 2024, reaching people on a number of platforms and mainstreaming queer people’s political engagement and demand for accountability. In his 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Cyril Ramaphosa reaffirmed South Africa’s commitment to LGBTQI+ rights, stating, “We stand for equal rights for women, for persons with disabilities, and for members of the LGBTQI+ community”.
- Kaleidoscope re-established the APPG for LGBTQI+ rights after a time of significant political turmoil and have successfully tabled parliamentary moments regarding the importance of funding global LGBT+ rights.

These demonstrate that sustained, evidence-based advocacy in concert with well-resourced civil society produces measurable wins at the highest levels of government.

CRISIS PROTECTION

Finally, the importance of the changes realised relates to the extent that they highlight that **it was possible to alleviate some of the most severe gaps created by the funding freeze and political backlash**. Through the core grant and linkages and networks created, partners state that it was possible to meet community

needs, as demonstrated in an example of a direct grantee partner who, in 2025, was able to use funds from the Baring Foundation to provide food parcels and links for affected clients to mainstream health facilities following the abrupt closure of trans-specific clinics due to US funding cuts. The quotes below further illustrate the importance of these changes:

“ We have been able to respond to community needs in particular linkage to health services when the Trump funding cuts came into effect. The general grant has also been really incredibly useful for achieving our objectives. Baring Foundation is our easiest funder as we can reach out to the program officer in times of need. The flexibility of the grant also assists us as the community needs emerge during the funding constraints. ”

Grantee Partner Survey

“ During the global financial cuts the Foundation actively reached out on how they can support during this crisis. This includes the Foundation having conversation with other funding partners on how best to support. ”

Grantee Partner Survey

The Equal Safe and Free Fund case (see page 21) also shows how the Foundation mobilised private funders and leveraged FCDO funding, which ensured that the resource gap that was created by the wider funding crisis could be alleviated. This funding could in turn be absorbed by local grantmakers, such as the TOF, that had sufficient capacity and resilience to ensure the disbursement of these grants to grantees that were most negatively impacted by the USAID funding cuts. In this phase, during 2025, TOF was able to allocate 49 grants despite being owed over US\$1.2 million by the US Government.

How did the Baring Foundation contribute to these changes?

Understanding what changed and why it matters is only part of the picture – this section examines the way in which the Baring Foundation contributes to these changes through its grantmaking, other forms of support as well as through its networking and direct advocacy work. The Foundation provides three different categories of grants – core, project and Equal, Safe and Free funding – to assist and support grantee partners. An overarching analysis of the ways in which they contributed to change is provided below. In addition to financial support, other forms of assistance emerge from the data. These are also discussed in more detail below.

CORE AND FLEXIBLE FUNDING

When reviewing the changes and how the Foundation contributed to realising this change, the single most consistent factor that was highlighted relates to the value of core and unrestricted funding. As observed by one grantee:

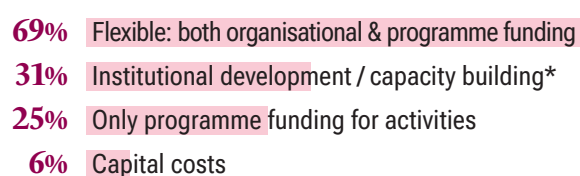
“By supporting us with core and flexible funding and allowing us autonomy to decide where it's most needed.”

Grantee Partner Survey

We found that this flexibility enables grantees to invest in internal capacity, enabling partners to develop the resilience that they required to respond to the changing environment. This is assisted by the agreement with the Foundation that allows them to pivot their strategy. In addition, this funding approach enables grantees to respond to emergencies.

Graph 12 highlights how grantees indicate they were able to use these funds.

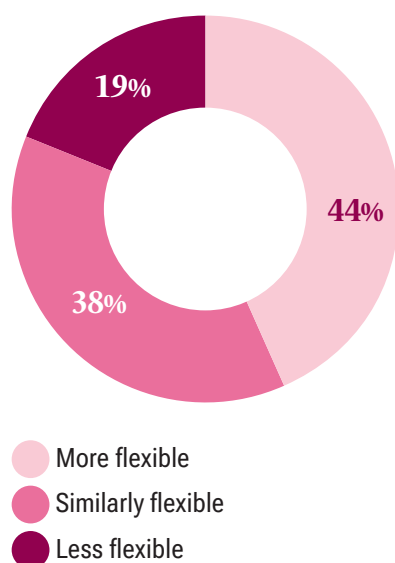
Graph 12: Costs covered by Foundation grants (n=16, multiple options allowed)



* e.g. Systems and leadership

The extent to which partners value this flexible approach is evidenced in the survey: as highlighted in the table the majority of respondents (69%, n=11) reported receiving flexible funding covering both organisational and programme costs – reflecting the Foundation's deliberate commitment to core, unrestricted support rather than narrow project funding. A smaller percentage of grantees used funds for institutional development and capacity building support (systems and leadership) (31%/n=5), and 25% (n=4) received programme-only funding for activities. Of these four, three were in the 'Influencer/Raising Voices' category of grantee who received project related funding. 6% (n=1) reported grants covering capital costs. These findings reinforce the views highlighted by grantee partners that the funds are flexible although it also highlights that there are dedicated grants that take forward specific imperatives. (See Graph 13 on page 26.)

Graph 13: Comparison of Foundation funding flexibility (n=16)



When examining these responses more closely, we found that all respondents who indicated that the funding was less flexible were from the 'Influencer/Raising Voices' category of grantee, which is consistent with the fact that these grantees were provided with grants for specific projects.

Overall, these figures reinforce a clear pattern: by giving grants that are flexible, rather than funding discrete activities – outside of the influencing organisations where organisations are requested to undertake specific activities to support a more enabling environment – allows grantees to focus on organisational strengthening holistically, which has been identified as a key enabler of sustained impact. Grantees spoke to how core, flexible funding has allowed organisations to invest in themselves – HR capacity and expertise, staff travel for in-person team building, staff wellness, governance, physical premises, archival preservation, database management, governance strengthening and staffing such as the communications staff hired by GiveOut. The appreciation for this space for organisational growth is illustrated in the following comments.

“ With funding from the Foundation, since 2024, we have been able to engage an experienced human resources consultant on retainer, who is supporting the organization on critical areas around People & Culture. While we have been able to raise other funds for our work over the past two years, these are most often restricted and specifically support programmatic work, but the funding from the Foundation helps us to respond to core organizational strengthening needs. ”

“ 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

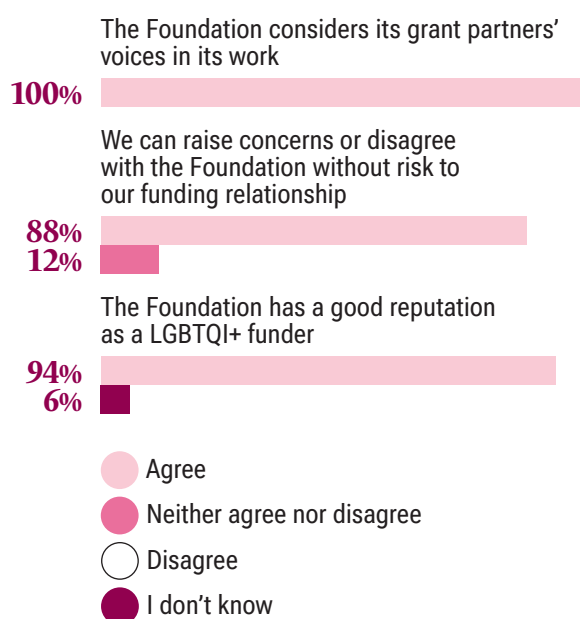
We also found that long-term consistent core support has also been critical for building resilience. UHA1 notes that since 2015, with the long-term grant, they have built their institutional maturity enabling them to manage large-scale philanthropy. This reinforces the finding that the Foundation supports the organisational development that grantees need to become sustainable, well-governed entities, not just the programmes they deliver.

DIRECT ADVISORY ROLE

Direct grantee survey respondents commented on the way in which the Foundation works with them and indicates that this has contributed to their ability to realise change. They observe that a defining feature of the Foundation's contribution is its willingness to maintain – and sometimes deepen – support precisely when organisations are most vulnerable. Grantees indicate that this trust-based stance plays an important role in building the resilience of organisations and enabling further changes to be made: it also signals confidence that attracts other funders and creates the stability grantees need to navigate turbulence.

All 16 direct grantee respondents confirmed the Foundation considers their voices in its work, and 88% stated they can raise concerns without risk to their funding relationship (See Graph 14).

Graph 14: Perceptions of the Foundation as a funder (n=16)



Several comments from the grantee partner survey indicate the importance of the trust-based relationship to partners.

“We feel the Foundation is a strong donor partner, is understanding of our context and needs.”

“The Foundation's staff is already doing everything that we could hope/expect, including through philanthropic advocacy, connecting us with other funders, etc.”

“They give in understanding and responsiveness. I haven't met someone as humble as [Foundation staff member] in a really long time. Always responsive and helpful.”

Grantee Partner Survey

These comments point to the importance of trust-building in placing the Foundation in a position where it can provide these different forms of support.

LEVERAGING ADDITIONAL FUNDS

Beyond direct grantmaking, the Foundation acts as a resource mobilisation advocate through several mechanisms, these include:

Providing matching funds

- The £1 million grant that was allocated to the Black Feminist Fund (BFF) was designed to unlock a 2:1 match from BFF's own fundraising.
- In the survey, 56% of respondents (n=9) indicate that they have been able to attract other sources of funding due to their support from the Baring Foundation. They note that this was specifically for work with LBQ and Trans persons.
- A respondent observed that this percentage appears to be low and highlights the need to understand how best to strengthen these efforts. This is discussed further in the recommendations included in this report.

Another way that organisations were supported to access additional funding was by **enabling grantees to bring in human resources** to support fundraising.

- In 2023, the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW) was provided with a direct grant specifically to fund a fundraising consultant to assist them to leverage additional funds. This enabled FEW to expand their reach into rural areas, ensure access to services and support and become more sustainable. The case is summarised in the box on page 28, and provided as Appendix 7.

Further, by providing **long-term core funding** it has been possible to help build the institutional maturity of grantees that is required to receive and manage large-scale philanthropy.

- The value of this approach was already demonstrated in the Other Foundation case (see page 22). It is also seen by the success achieved in 2022 by UHAI which secured an unrestricted grant of \$8 million from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott to build a reserve fund/endowment.

Informed Case: Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW)

FEW is a South African Black LBQ-led organisation founded in 2002, known for coordinating Soweto Pride and responding to hate crimes against LBQ individuals. By 2022 it was in institutional crisis – just two staff remained, governance had weakened, and donor confidence had collapsed. The Baring Foundation intervened in early 2023 with flexible core funding to stabilise salaries and infrastructure, alongside support for a dedicated fundraising consultant to diversify income and rebuild donor relations. This combination of unrestricted funding and targeted technical support created the space for institutional renewal.

FEW rebuilt its governance, established operating systems, and attracted new donors. With its footing restored, it expanded its Women in Inclusive Leadership and Advocacy Programme (WILAP) into rural provinces, drawing on deep pre-existing community trust. Rural LBQ women gained skills to engage police and justice systems independently, hate crime reporting improved, and a “pass the baton” culture emerged – WILAP graduates training others in their communities. FEW also gained broader recognition through contributions to UN mechanisms and regional collaborations across Southern Africa.

The **Context – Mechanism – Outcome (CMO)** for this case highlights that the **context** of this change was one in which the organisation (FEW) was extremely vulnerable, minimal staff, weakened governance, and eroded donor trust, in a national environment marked by rising anti-gender sentiment and localised violence against queer people and in particular queer women. To address this, the organisation – with the support of the flexible core funding provided by the Baring Foundation – was able to bring in technical capacity to support fundraising efforts, pay staff and replace outdated infrastructure (**mechanism – resources**). This was effective as it created the space for the organisation to think and plan and rebuild trust at their own pace: both with respect to institutional redesign and the development of a clear strategy for expanding reach and also renewed the credibility of the organisation with donors and also with partners in rural areas (**mechanism – reaction**). This strengthened the sustainability of FEW in terms of its governance, management systems and staffing and its ability to access additional funding enabling the organisation to expand the reach of its leadership training into rural areas, leading to increased LBQ community voice and improved access to justice systems in rural communities.

- The value of this flexible funding for leveraging resources is also seen in the example of ISDAO, when in 2021 the organisation was able to grow its team from three to eight staff and secure major new funding (€8m from the Love Alliance). This was also supported by the Foundation which **provided linkages with other donors**.

The value of **direct advocacy work** in leveraging additional funds also emerged strongly in this evaluation.

- As highlighted in the case of the Equal, Safe and Free Fund (ESF): through the Baring Foundation’s ongoing engagement with the UK FCDO coupled with its close collaboration with the Global Philanthropy Project (GPP), success was realised in establishing the £25 million Equal, Safe and Free Fund. In addition, the Foundation’s co-design of the ESF Fund with FCDO and GPP, including direct advice on the business case and

legal structure, positions it as a strategic actor that contributes to shaping the philanthropic ecosystem.

Supporting **other organisations to mobilise resources** has also yielded important successes.

- GPP’s Fund Our Futures campaign leveraged multi-year commitments from foundations and governments globally.

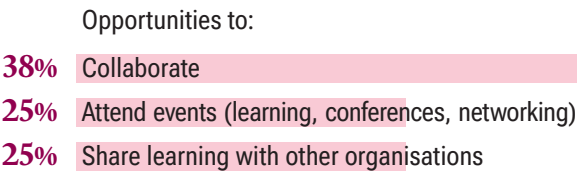
Further, the Baring Foundation has **stepped in to play a role when needed to protect existing funding**. For example, as reflected in one of the outcomes harvested, “In 2025, the turbulence around US funding led to a shift in relationship between the Oak Foundation and Baring – where Baring acts as fiscal host for an Oak Foundation grant to UHAI to protect funds.”

CONVENING AND NETWORKING

The Baring Foundation is actively involved in convening and supporting a range of events, from high-level summits and parliamentary briefings to regional and global conferences. Examples of these include YFem Namibia convening, ILGA World, Pan African ILGA and APPG Parliamentary events. Working with Give Out, the UK International LGBTQI Giving Summit was designed to engage trusts and foundations, corporates and individuals, with the Foundation taking the lead on engaging trusts and foundations. Biannual meeting between ESF partners are convened.

The Foundation’s funding also enables grantees to bring people together across borders by supporting individual activists to attend networking events and supporting learning events. Grantee partner survey respondents (n=16) shared their views about the extent that the grant they received from the Baring Foundation supported networking opportunities: 38% reported opportunities to collaborate, 25% indicated they has opportunities to attend learning / conferences / networking events, and 25% had opportunities to share learning with other organisations. (See Graph 15.)

Graph 15: Grantee partner networking (n=16)



Ways that the Baring Foundation has enabled the above as shared by grantees include:

- **Core funding** allows grantees to facilitate convenings: for example, with the Baring Foundation’s core support grantees were able to cover the costs of sustained convening and alliance-building across regions. An example of this is from a strategic direct grantee partner, Iranti, which participated in new regional engagements by hosting a two-day learning and wellness camp in Botswana to share best practice on movement building and community organising.
- In other cases, such as that of GDX, funding **supports the organisation to play a secretariat role** for the National Gender Diversity Coalition and travel to regional events.

The Baring Foundation also directly funds LBQ activists to participate in key events: this includes funding for activists to attend the Pan-African ILGA Regional Conference.

The contribution to GPP’s networking infrastructure has also contributed to the building of funder coordination as well as movement coordination.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate real and measurable change across all three funding streams, with the intermediary model, direct strategic grants, and influencing work each proving effective.

The Foundation's flexible, trust-based approach permeates through to onward grantees, who rate their local grantmaker partners as more flexible than average. They also state that they receive substantive non-financial support alongside their grants.

There were however some challenges that emerged during the evaluation with respect to capacity of the Foundation and the need to create space for private donors and the FCDO to reflect on ways to strengthen the reach of the ESF, as well as grow related initiatives. Onward grantee feedback also points to areas for continued attention – longer grant cycles, greater budget flexibility, simpler application processes, and more personalised funder relationships. These issues are taken up in the following sections including those relating to the Key Learning Questions over the 2021–2025 period, the assessment against the OECD-DAC criteria and the recommendations.

ANSWERING THE KEY LEARNING QUESTIONS

The evaluation set out to answer learning questions across three areas: the Foundation's effectiveness as a partner to local grantmakers; the contribution of the Foundation's direct grantmaking to LBQ and trans civil society; and the Foundation's influence on the broader funding landscape. The evidence gathered through the outcomes harvest, surveys, interviews, and case studies allows the evaluation to answer these questions as follows.

Local grantmakers

The evaluation finds that the Foundation has been an effective partner for local grantmakers. The partnership has shaped both strategies

and operations across the portfolio – evidenced through governance strengthening, improved financial systems, expanded grantmaking reach, and the ability of organisations such as UHAI, TOF, and ISDAO to sustain and grow their work during a period of significant external disruption. The Foundation's trust-based, flexible approach has been consistently valued by grantmaking partners, with all respondents agreeing that the Foundation considers their voices in its work.

Civil society – direct strategic grants and onward grantees

The Foundation's direct support to strategic civil society organisations – FEW, SHE, GDX, and Iranti – has strengthened their capacity to deliver services, document human rights violations, build regional networks, and engage in policy processes. Collaboration and collective learning across grantee partners have been supported through regional convenings, shared advocacy platforms, and the Foundation's active role in connecting partners to one another and to wider networks.

The evaluation has also shown that grants from local grantmakers have meaningfully contributed to strengthening LBQ and trans civil society across the region. This is evidenced in the stories of change that were outlined by grantees, which highlight the various kinds of changes that have taken place at multiple levels – individual, community, organisational, institutional, and regional as well as across thematic areas ranging from safety and shelter to legal reform and movement building.

There is however a question as to whether the work that has been supported by the Foundation and implemented by organisations based in South Africa can inform similar interventions in other regions where the context is very different: we have seen, for example, in the case developed about the work of FEW (see page 28) the ways in which an organisation can strengthen its capacity

institutionally and programmatically in a way that builds greater resilience. The ways in which this was achieved – as highlighted in the case – should be shared with other partners across regions so that similar strategies could be explored. This is touched upon again in the recommendations included in this report.

Influencing and raising voices

The evaluation finds that the Foundation, through its own direct advocacy work and through the work of grantee partners it has supported, has played a significant and distinctive influencing role within the UK and global philanthropic landscape. Notably, this evaluation has highlighted the importance of the achievement of the Equal, Safe and Free Fund and the extent of the resources that it has mobilised. It has also indicated the ways in which the Global Philanthropy Project's Fund Our Futures campaign has contributed to mobilising resources and securing commitments from philanthropic institutions and governments globally.

These achievements also highlight the value of the Foundation's consistent advocacy with UK parliamentarians, including the work supported by Kaleidoscope's re-establishment of the APPG for LGBTQI+ rights. This advocacy has maintained political visibility for global LGBTQI+ funding at a time of significant donor retreat.

The Foundation's support in enabling grantee partners to attend key engagements has also been important in ensuring that these voices shape funding priorities. It is though noted that this represents a delicate balance in terms of ensuring voice without over burdening grantees.

We have also found that support to GPP has also produced technical assistance to the governments of the USA, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, Canada, and Denmark on LGBTQI+ funding strategies. There may be a need to consider the extent that the Foundation supports the sharing of learning from the ESF in these spaces to encourage the implementation of similar models elsewhere. Considering whether additional levels of effort could yield results could also be considered.

OECD CRITERIA

The following section assesses the Foundation's International Development Programme against the six OECD-DAC⁷ evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, drawing on evidence gathered across all data sources.

Relevance

The Foundation's International Development Programme is highly relevant to the needs of LGBTQI+ civil society in sub-Saharan Africa. The evaluation has found that the support from the Foundation has been essential in the context of the worsening legal and policy environment, the high level of backlash and the growing funding crisis. The flexibility of the Foundation's grants, reported by 69% of direct grantee survey respondents as covering both organisational and programme costs, directly responds to what grantees identify as their most critical need: core, unrestricted funding that enables strategic planning rather than crisis management. The programme's responsiveness to the rapidly changing context – including acting as fiscal host for Oak Foundation funds during the US funding freeze and rapidly deploying emergency support to affected organisations in 2025 – further demonstrates its relevance as conditions on the ground shifted during the evaluation period. Further, the Foundation's deliberate focus on LBQ and trans communities – groups that are frequently marginalised even within broader LGBTQI+ movements – reflects a precise alignment between the programme's design and the most acute gaps in the funding landscape.

Effectiveness

The programme has been effective in enabling grantees – direct and onward – to strengthen civil society including through building organisations, strengthening collaboration and the movement and growing relationships with allies and all 16 direct grantee survey respondents agreed that the Foundation's funding makes a positive difference to work with LGBTQI+ organisations and individuals in their country or region. We have also

⁷ 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.

found that the advocacy work has enabled local organisations to contribute to policy milestones including Zimbabwe's acceptance of SOGIESC-related UPR recommendations and President Ramaphosa's explicit acknowledgement of LGBTQI+ rights in his 2025 State of the Nation Address.

We also found that the work has been effective in enabling the Foundation to achieve its intended outcomes across all three funding streams. At the local grantmaker level, UHAI disbursed over \$5 million annually between 2022 and 2024, shifting to multi-year general support grants by 2023 and awarding 210 grants in that year alone. TOF sustained 49 onward grants in 2025 despite severe funding shocks, while ISDAO grew from three to eight staff and secured key new funding including an €8 million grant from the Love Alliance. Further, there is a view that the Foundation has effectively supported these local grantmakers to meet the requirements of the FCDO and to navigate their way through the government systems. At the civil society level, 95% of onward grantee survey respondents agreed that the grant and support received resulted in real and measurable positive changes, with 62% reporting strengthened ability to work with allies and counter opposition.

At the influencing level, the Equal, Safe and Free Fund and the Global Philanthropy Project mobilised significant funds through advocacy work while other partners, such as GiveOut and All Out have assisted to mobilise other substantial sources of funding through UK-based fundraising campaigns. The inclusion of private donors and the FCDO have also contributed to improvements in the funding landscape and there are also positive indications regarding other countries adopting a public/private model to support the LGBTQI+ movement.

There was though a question raised by a few respondents as to whether the work could be more effective if there was more space for donor partners to leverage their experience and expertise in informing the work of the Foundation.

Efficiency

The Foundation has achieved considerable reach and impact relative to the scale of its investment. A total of £6,650,692 disbursed

through 39 grants to 18 organisations over the five-year period has leveraged significantly larger funding flows. The intermediary model is a key driver of efficiency: by channelling resources through local grantmakers, the Foundation is able to reach a far greater number, and type, of grassroots organisations than direct grantmaking would allow. This includes creating space for organisations that were able to receive funding for the first time and in some cases, because they were not registered, may not have been able to access this funding.

The trust-based approach also contributes to efficiency by reducing the administrative burden on grantees – 69% of direct grantees receive flexible core funding, enabling organisations to allocate resources where they are most needed without lengthy approval processes. Further, there were positive views expressed about the simplicity of the reporting requirements. There are however areas where grantees suggest efficiency could be improved, including simplified application processes and longer grant cycles to reduce the frequency of reapplication.

The one concern highlighted is that programme management within the Baring Foundation is concentrated in a single staff member – this role and the way it is played is widely appreciated by grantees, but could present a succession risk. This is addressed in Recommendation 5.

Coherence

The programme demonstrates strong internal coherence, with its three funding streams – local grantmakers, direct civil society support, and influencing – operating in a mutually reinforcing manner. Funding to local grantmakers such as UHAI, TOF, ISDAO, ITF and BFF extends the Foundation's reach to grassroots organisations it could not fund directly, while direct support to organisations such as GDX, FEW, SHE and Iranti strengthens the civil society ecosystem that local grantmakers serve. Influencing work through organisations such as GPP, GiveOut, and Kaleidoscope creates the enabling funding environment in which both local grantmakers and civil society organisations operate. The ESF Fund exemplifies this coherence in practice: advocacy by the Foundation and GPP with the UK FCDO created a new public-private

funding mechanism, which then channelled resources through local grantmakers to grassroots organisations. The programme also demonstrates external coherence with broader international human rights and development frameworks, with multiple outcomes contributing to UPR processes, SOGIESC recommendations, and regional human rights mechanisms.

Sustainability

The programme demonstrates a strong orientation towards sustainability in the design of its grantmaking, in its willingness to fund grantees for a sustained period and to explore innovations that could support sustainability, such as the infrastructure grant, and in the outcomes that have been realised. The Foundation's consistent provision of core, flexible funding has enabled organisations to invest in governance, financial systems, physical premises, and staff capacity, which have contributed to their resilience and capacity to manage the current challenging environment.

While these gains are important, the sustainability of some outcomes remains uncertain given the current context. Partners suggest that the establishment of a public-private partnership could offer a route to increased sustainability. However, the shock of USAID, and the threat of FCDO cuts, highlight that even with government funding there is a degree of precariousness. Never-the-less, partners believe it is an important strategy for sustainability and suggest that the potential to replicate this model that has already emerged should continue to be explored and supported.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed at the Foundation and draw on evidence gathered across all data sources during the evaluation. They are offered alongside the suggestions made by grantee partners, and are intended to inform the strategic direction of the Baring Foundation's International Development programme over the next five years.

Onward grantee recommendations for local grantmakers (covering grant length, flexibility, and application processes) are summarised in Appendix 8.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

There would be value in making sure the type of grants available are clearly communicated.

While it appears that the issue of flexibility was only highlighted by influencers who have more focused grants, there is still a view that as new grantees come on board there would be value in putting in place a structured onboarding process for these organisations that clearly communicates the Foundation's funding philosophy, values and ways of working, ensuring that expectations and approach are understood from the outset.

Grantee partners also indicate that while they value the flexibility that the Foundation already provides, several ask for this to be expanded suggesting flexible funding rather than being constrained by project-specific budgets. As the evaluation team, our view is that this is particularly important in regional contexts where policy moments, protection crises, and advocacy opportunities arise quickly and without warning.

Grantee partners suggested that there is a need to move decisively toward multi-year funding. The most consistent request across grantee partners is for longer, more predictable funding cycles. We note that the Foundation is shifting in this direction and the views offered by grantees indicate that the decision to shift from single-year grants to

multi-year commitments is one that would be appreciated and would allow partners to plan with confidence and sustain the continuity of relationships and advocacy that produce lasting impact.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

There would be value in considering different ways to support learning amongst different partners including donors (private and government) and with and amongst grantee partners.

Increased opportunities for partners to share their own experiences should be prioritised:

there was a view that, for example, with the Equal, Safe and Free Fund there should be spaces for donors to reflect on, for example, whether there are ways to bring new grantees into the portfolio using the time to grow their capacity. There was also a concern that where grantmakers have got together with the FCDO, private donors have not consistently been included and it was felt that this represented a missed opportunity. Further, there was a view that donors would benefit from more regular structured conversations with grantees: it was felt that this should not be too often given competing time pressures but that there should be consideration as to when these could be scheduled.

Develop a more structured approach to learning across the portfolio:

While the Foundation facilitates networking and convening and local grantmakers confirm that there are opportunities created for them to connect indicating that they value these interactions, it is not evident whether there are spaces for the different types of grantees to share experiences. A light-touch annual learning process – structured around key learning questions – may generate insights that benefit the whole portfolio. This could include intentional spaces for grantees to connect with each other and build informal channels of peer

learning. Further, this learning could be coupled with systematic mechanisms for capturing and sharing learning across grantee partners.

Grantee partners also suggest **introducing small follow-up grants to sustain convening outcomes**. Conferences and cross-border convenings generate alliances and momentum, but these often dissipate without follow-up resources. Small, flexible grants to support post-convening collaboration, joint advocacy, or peer learning could help convert one-off participation into durable network relationships.

Cutting across this recommendation, specifically with respect to the strategic direct grantees is that there is a need to consider (i) when there is sufficient evidence of the value of the models implemented and (ii) how this can be documented and shared to allow partners to reflect on the extent that these insights could hold value in other regions and what it would take to contextualise, adapt and implement these approaches in other regions. This is seen as critical to the realisation of the intention of this strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Targeted approaches are even more important in this current context.

The strategy employed by the Foundation of prioritising LBQ women and trans people is seen as even more important in this current context. The extent of the backlash highlights the importance of continuing to support efforts to grow the movement in an inclusive manner whilst ensuring that wherever funding gaps are identified, in terms of specific LGBTQI+ communities and even themes, these receive a particular focus.

Grantee partners suggest there is **value in maintaining deliberate prioritisation of under-represented groups and contexts**. Grantees affirm that the Foundation's targeted support for activists from restrictive or under-resourced contexts has been highly impactful. Continuing – and where possible deepening – this equitable access approach remains critical for building genuinely representative movements, particularly across the African region.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Sustain efforts to mobilise resources through both direct advocacy work as well as through the continued support for partner grantees that play varied roles in the funding ecosystem.

Grantee partners suggest that there would be value in **strengthening brokering and networking support**. Several grantee partners highlight the value of the Foundation facilitating strategic introductions – to aligned donors, peer organisations, and networks – as a form of contribution that goes beyond the grant itself. They suggest that formalising or expanding this role, particularly for partners seeking to diversify their funding base, could increase sustainability and leverage across the portfolio.

Finding ways to grow the partnership model in ways that integrate the experiences of partners: this includes continued reflection about ways to strengthen the Equal, Safe and Free Fund, taking into account the learning from this review and recognising the competing pressures on the funding within the FCDO. This evaluation also suggests that there would be value in continuing to explore and support work to replicate this model with other governments.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Review whether the relative advantage and disadvantages associated with increasing human resource capacity within the International Development Programme.

Address institutional risk within the

Foundation: During the evaluation, interviewees highlighted that the management of complex, multi-partner funding relationships rests primarily with a single staff member. The recommendations included here, and missed opportunities for sharing of learning, may relate to the extent of the pressure on a single staff member. While all respondents express appreciation for the work of this staff member and much admiration, there is a concern about the extent of the pressure on an individual and – equally – a concern about whether the Foundation has a plan in place in the event the individual chooses to play a different role inside or outside of the Foundation.

Conclusions

The Baring Foundation's International Development programme 2021–2025 has made a well-evidenced contribution to LGBTQI+ civil society in sub-Saharan Africa during a period of significant external disruption. Working across its three categories of funding partner – local grantmakers, direct civil society organisations, and influencing and raising voices organisations – the Foundation's flexible, trust-based approach has supported real and measurable change, from organisational strengthening and movement building through to policy influence and crisis response. The 64 outcomes harvested and the high levels of satisfaction reported by both direct and onward grantees reflect the value of this approach.

At the same time, the evaluation identifies areas for attention in the next programme period: ensuring that the type and philosophy

of grants available is clearly communicated to incoming partners; creating more structured opportunities for learning across the portfolio, including amongst donors and grantee partners; and addressing the institutional risk associated with the concentration of programme management within a single staff member. In a funding landscape dramatically reshaped by the withdrawal of US government support, the Foundation's role as a consistent, responsive, and principled partner is, for many organisations, essential to survival and sustained advocacy.

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.

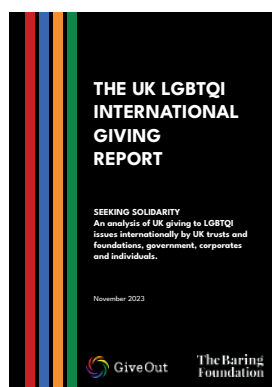
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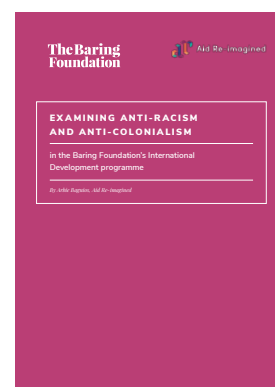
Global resources report
2023–2024
Global Philanthropy
Project
2026



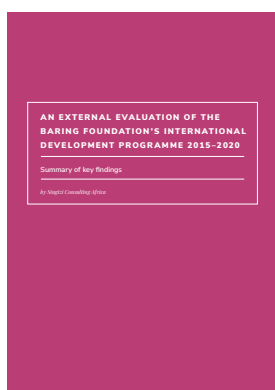
Breaking the Silence
Human Dignity Trust
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The UK LGBTQI+
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Examining anti-racism and
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Vibrant yet
underresourced:
The state of lesbian,
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Injustice exposed:
the criminalisation of
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