

Breaking Point:

The Urgent Need to Invest in Global LGBTIQ Movements

September 2026





About Outright

Outright International works with partners around the globe to strengthen the LGBTIQ human rights movement, document and amplify human rights violations against LGBTIQ people, and advocate for inclusion and equality.

Founded in 1990, Outright works with civil society organizations, the United Nations, regional human rights monitoring bodies, governments, humanitarian and development institutions, and philanthropic and corporate partners to create lasting change. With staff in over fifteen countries, Outright holds consultative status at the United Nations, where it serves as the secretariat of the UN LGBTI Core Group.

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Glossary

Bridge Funding: Short-term funding intended to cover a gap between grants or other funding streams, helping an organization maintain operations or services before longer-term funding is secured.

Bisexual: The word bisexual often refers to people who are attracted to women and men and/or to people who are attracted to more than one gender.

Cisgender: Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their sex assigned at birth.

Gay: A synonym for homosexual in many parts of the world. In this report, gay is used specifically to refer to the sexual orientation of a man whose primary sexual and/or romantic attraction is toward other men.

Gender: The social and cultural codes (linked to but not congruent with ideas about biological sex) used to distinguish between society's conceptions of "femininity" and "masculinity."

Gender-Based Violence: Any type of violence that is perpetrated against a person or group of people because of their actual or perceived sex, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, or any perceived violation of gender norms.

Gender-Diverse: A broad term used to refer to people whose gender identities or expressions fall outside dominant social expectations, including people who may not identify specifically as transgender or nonbinary.

Gender Expression: Gender expression is how we express our gender through actions and appearance, including attire, speech, and movement. Gender expression is on a spectrum. It can align with social constructs of what it means to be feminine, masculine, androgynous, or any combination thereof. It can also be fluid. For a lot of people, their gender expression aligns with characteristics that our societies deem to be appropriate for their gender or their sex assigned at birth. For other people, it does not. A person's gender expression is not always linked to the person's biological sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Gender Identity: A person's internal, deeply felt sense of being a woman or girl, a man or boy, a combination of these, neither, or something else.

Gender Nonconforming: Behaving or appearing in ways that do not fully conform to social expectations based on one's assigned sex.

Heterosexual: The sexual orientation of a person whose primary sexual and/or romantic attraction is toward men, if they are women, and toward women, if they are men.

Homophobia: Fear of, contempt of, and/or discrimination against homosexuals or homosexuality, usually based on negative stereotypes of homosexuality. Homophobia can be both individual and institutional. Entrenched damaging opinions about same-sex attraction may influence the enactment of discriminatory laws and policies, and how individuals, the government, organizations, the media, and society in general behave toward people perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer.

Homosexual: The sexual orientation of a person whose primary sexual and/or romantic attractions are toward people of the same sex.

Intermediary Funders: Organizations that receive funding from governments, foundations, or other donors and channel or regrant those resources to other organizations, often including smaller, local, or grassroots groups that may not have direct access to large institutional donors.

Intersex: An umbrella term that refers to a range of traits and conditions that cause individuals to be born with chromosomes, gonads, and/or genitals that vary from what is considered typical for female or male bodies.

LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer): An inclusive term used to categorize people whose identities or bodies do not meet cultural expectations of endosex, cisgender heteronormativity. Outright uses the term LGBTIQ as an umbrella term that includes people who may not themselves identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer. This can include “people of queer experience,” and, in certain contexts, “sexual and gender minorities.”

Men who have sex with men (MSM): Terms to describe those males who engage in sexual activity with other males, regardless of their personal sexual orientation or identity.

Nonbinary: A term to describe the gender identity of someone who does not identify exclusively as a woman or girl or as a man or boy. This term is sometimes used interchangeably with the term “genderqueer.”

PEPFAR: The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is a U.S. health funding mechanism designed to address the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, created in 2003 and funded through annual congressional appropriations.

PrEP: Pre-exposure prophylaxis is medication taken by people who do not have HIV to reduce their risk of acquiring HIV.

Queer: An inclusive umbrella term covering multiple identities, sometimes used interchangeably with “LGBTIQ,” as “people of queer experience” or “queer people.” It is also used to describe divergence from heterosexual and cisgender norms without specifying new identity categories. In this report, “queer men” is used to cover gay men, bisexual men, and other men of non-heterosexual sexual orientations, and “queer women” is used to cover lesbian women, bisexual women, and other women of non-heterosexual sexual orientations.

Regranting: The practice by which an organization receives funding from a donor and subsequently distributes some or all of those resources as grants to other organizations or groups.

Sexual and Gender Minorities: A category of individuals whose sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or sex characteristics differ from those of most of the population. In certain contexts, this can be used interchangeably with “LGBTIQ people” and “people of queer experience.”

Sexual Orientation: The sexual, romantic, and emotional attraction that one has the capacity to feel for others. An individual’s sexual orientation is indicated by one or more of the following: how a person self-identifies their sexual orientation, a person’s capacity for experiencing sexual and/or affectional attraction to people of the same and/or different gender, and/or a person’s sexual behavior with people of the same and/or different gender. People have diverse sexual orientations, including those who experience little to no sexual attraction.

Transgender: A term to describe people whose sex assigned at birth does not conform to their gender identity. A transgender person usually adopts, or would prefer to adopt, a gender expression in accordance with their gender identity, but may or may not desire to alter their physical characteristics to conform to their gender identity.

Transgender Men: People designated female at birth but who identify and may present themselves as men. Transgender men are generally referred to with male pronouns.

Transgender Women: People designated male at birth but who identify and may present themselves as women. Transgender women are generally referred to with female pronouns.

Executive Summary

In February 2025, days after the U.S. government froze nearly all of its foreign assistance, Outright International published *Defunding Freedom*, a rapid assessment of the initial shock to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) organizations worldwide.¹ Eighteen months later, this report returns to that question with evidence in hand, and the answer has changed in kind. What was initially framed as a temporary freeze has hardened into a structural transformation of the funding landscape.

The State Department terminated the programs of the Global Equality Fund, the public-private partnership it launched in 2011 with allied governments, companies, and foundations, which distributed more than US\$100 million in its first decade to LGBTIQ organizations and human rights defenders in over 100 countries.² The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. government's principal channel for development and humanitarian assistance since 1961, was dismantled on July 1, 2025, with its surviving programs absorbed into the State Department.³ The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), launched in 2003 by a Republican administration and reauthorized four times with bipartisan support, has narrowed its scope.⁴ Corporate, institutional, and philanthropic funders have pulled back as well, compounding the shock on a global LGBTIQ funding base that was already shrinking before this administration took office.

The portion of foreign assistance that governments in wealthy countries have allotted to LGBTIQ people's health, human rights, and inclusion has always been minuscule. The field barely existed fifteen years ago. In 2010, all documented LGBTI grantmaking in the Global South and East came to US\$36 million, awarded by 64 funders of every kind. Government aid agencies provided 35.6% of those dollars, and the two largest funders that year were European bilateral agencies.⁵ Total documented funding of LGBTIQ movements reached US\$347 million by 2024, but the government share of development assistance remains marginal: donor government funding for LGBTI communities came to four cents of every US\$100 in official development assistance in 2023–2024.⁶ But in a context in which many queer movements have few options to fundraise domestically due to criminalizing laws, social stigma, or hostility to civil society, such funding has allowed organizations to carry out crucial, sometimes lifesaving work.

US\$36M → US\$347M

2010

2024

Documented LGBTI funding in the Global South and East

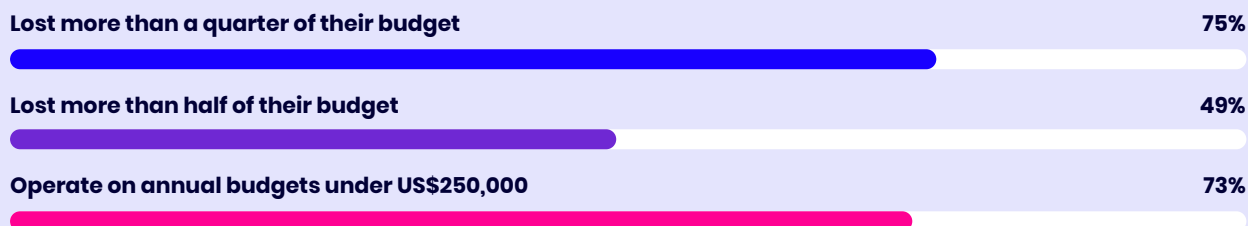
4¢

of every US\$100 in official
development assistance went to
LGBTI communities in 2023–2024

Breaking Point documents what this loss has meant on the ground, drawing on country-level analysis of where funding was suspended, a global survey of 229 LGBTIQ organizations in 94 countries, and 24 in-depth interviews, and focusing on the 203 organizations that reported a loss of funding since January 2025.

Five key findings define the crisis:

- 1 The funding cuts are deep, and they trace overwhelmingly to one government's decision.** Among affected organizations, 49% lost more than half of their total budget, and 75% lost more than a quarter. More than half identified U.S. government funding as the source of what they lost. The losses concentrate among small, community-rooted groups: 73% operate on annual budgets under US\$250,000, leaving no reserves to absorb a shortfall of this size.



Share of the 203 affected organizations surveyed, early 2026.

- 2 The cuts landed where the need was greatest.** While almost every country in the world has some form of queer organizing, those movements are funded differently. Where states actively protect the rights of sexual and gender minorities, LGBTIQ organizations can draw on funding from their own national or local governments; where the public broadly supports equality, they can raise money from private donors. Absent both, movements have depended heavily on the international funding that has now retracted, so the hardest-hit organizations are those working where the needs are most urgent. Organizations in countries with the harshest living conditions, the least impartial justice systems, the most widespread discrimination, and the deepest divisions between social groups were roughly two to three times more likely to have been affected by the cuts than those in countries at the other end of each measure. Organizations' own accounts match that picture: two in five affected organizations operate amid democratic backsliding or authoritarian governance, and 71% report high levels of anti-LGBTIQ violence.
- 3 Lifesaving services are contracting.** Half of the affected organizations have cut health services, including mental healthcare. On HIV specifically, 45% have reduced or discontinued prevention, treatment, or care, and 50% named LGBTIQ people living with HIV among the constituencies most affected by the reductions they made. Sixty-three percent can no longer respond to emergencies involving violence, arrests, displacement, or urgent relocation, a share that rises to 73% in countries experiencing conflict and humanitarian crises.
- 4 The heaviest consequences fall on the most marginalized.** Trans, nonbinary, and gender-diverse people (71%) and lesbian, bisexual, and queer women (61%) were named most frequently among those bearing the deepest impacts. For communities navigating overlapping forms of marginalization, LGBTIQ organizations were often the only system built to serve them at all.

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A substantial share of the movement may not survive the coming year. Asked to describe their outlook for the next 12 months, 40% of affected organizations placed themselves at severe or immediate risk, including 10% facing an immediate risk of closure. Only 3% described their organization as stable. Asked separately how likely they were to be forced to close entirely within that period, 36% answered likely or very likely. These risks concentrate where the cuts were deepest and the financial cushion thinnest.

63%

can no longer respond to emergencies involving violence, arrests, displacement, or urgent relocation

71%

named trans, nonbinary, and gender-diverse people among those bearing the deepest impacts

3%

of affected organizations described themselves as stable over the next 12 months

The organizations in this report are holding the line under extraordinary constraint: staff working unpaid for months, communities pooling money to cover legal aid, and services sustained by volunteers through community structures built over the years. Much has already been lost. Shelters and offices have closed, specialized staff have been let go, and organizations describe community trust shaken by services they could no longer deliver. What survives is harder to see and harder to destroy: the knowledge, relationships, and community structures that made the work possible in the first place. That is what funding can still sustain, and it is what rebuilding would have to start from. But resilience cannot substitute for resources, and it is being spent down.

Those who fund or have the capacity to fund global LGBTIQ movements, including governments, foundations, corporations, and individual donors, should be guided by five critical actions now:

Five critical actions

1 • Act immediately, outside standard grant cycles.

The closure timeline documented here is measured in months, a pace that annual funding cycles were never built to match. Emergency and bridge funding should move while there are still organizations left to fund.

2 • Provide multi-year, flexible funding.

Support should be usable for staff, operations, and reserves, so organizations can absorb funding shifts. Funding strategies should not depend on any single government's continued support, nor on assumptions about what other donors will keep covering.

3 • Restore community-led health services.

The U.S. withdrawal left HIV prevention and treatment for key populations unfunded, and community-led organizations are often the only providers that sexual and gender minorities can access safely.

4 • Fund protection directly.

Emergency response, shelters and safe houses, and relocation capacity require dedicated funding lines, and LGBTIQ organizations should be included in humanitarian response mechanisms.

5 • Direct resources to those bearing the heaviest impacts.

Trans and gender-diverse people and lesbian, bisexual, and queer (LBQ) women were named most often among the hardest hit. Flexible funding should keep flowing to grassroots organizations, including through the intermediary channels many depend on.

Resilience cannot substitute for resources, and it is being spent down.

Recommendations

The findings in this report point to an urgent need not only to address the damage caused by recent funding cuts, but to build a stronger and more resilient funding model for global LGBTIQ movements. That means sustaining critical organizations whose loss would leave major gaps in services, protection, advocacy, or movement capacity, restoring essential health and protection services, and expanding and diversifying the resources available to movements so they are less vulnerable to political shifts, donor concentration, and chronic underinvestment.

The goal should not be to recreate the funding landscape that existed before January 2025. It should be to build one that is larger, more diverse, more flexible, and able to reach organizations operating where LGBTIQ people face the greatest barriers.

To donor governments:

- **Sustain community-led health services, including HIV prevention and treatment for key populations.** Half of the affected organizations in this survey reduced or discontinued health services, including mental health and sexual and reproductive healthcare, and 45% have reduced or stopped HIV prevention, treatment, or care. Community-led organizations are often the most effective and sometimes the only way to reach people who avoid mainstream health systems because of stigma, discrimination, criminalization, or fear of exposure. Funding national health systems alone will not close these gaps.
- **Fund emergency response and protection as a dedicated priority.** Nearly two-thirds of affected organizations report being unable to respond to emergencies involving violence, arrests, displacement, or urgent relocation. Governments should provide dedicated funding for emergency grants, shelters and safe houses, relocation, legal assistance, psychosocial support, and other immediate protection needs.
- **Include LGBTIQ organizations in humanitarian funding and response.** In crisis and conflict settings, these organizations often serve as first responders, reaching people whom mainstream humanitarian systems miss or exclude. They should be eligible for direct humanitarian funding and meaningfully included in coordination and response mechanisms.
- **Protect advocacy and documentation.** Maintain funding for legal reform, monitoring of violations, strategic litigation, and participation in national and international policy processes. This is the work that addresses the root causes of the needs described above, and it is shrinking: 55% of affected organizations reported reduced legal and policy advocacy, and 38% reduced human rights documentation. Without this work, organizations lose the ability to address the laws, policies, and institutional practices that contribute to the harms documented in this report.

- **Base funding decisions on the conditions LGBTIQ people face, not national income level alone.** Gross domestic product (GDP) is one important indicator of need, but this report shows that violence, discrimination, weak access to justice, criminalization, restrictions on civil society, and the availability of domestic funding alternatives also determine where international support is most needed. Funding strategies should therefore include countries across income levels where LGBTIQ people face serious barriers or where opportunities for progress could be lost without sustained support.

To institutional donors and philanthropic actors:

- **Act quickly when organizations face immediate risk.** Thirty-six percent of affected organizations say they are likely or very likely to close within the next 12 months, and only 3% described themselves as stable. Donors with the ability to provide emergency or bridge funding should not require organizations facing imminent closure to wait for the next annual grant cycle.
- **Provide funding that can keep organizations functioning, not only projects running.** Among survey respondents, 71% of affected organizations have laid off staff or cut pay, and 49% lost more than half their budgets. Grants should allow organizations to pay staff, rent, finance and compliance costs, technology, security, and other essential operating expenses, and build reasonable reserves where possible.
- **Give organizations enough flexibility to respond when circumstances change.** Funders should permit reasonable reallocation of funds when emergencies, political changes, or sudden funding losses alter what organizations need. Restrictive project budgets can leave organizations with funding on paper while preventing them from using it for urgent staff, protection, or operational needs.
- **Fund cross-movement work alongside LGBTIQ-specific organizations, and make inclusion a condition of that funding.** Many of the people most affected by the cuts—refugees and displaced people, sex workers, people living with HIV, people with disabilities—depend on services provided by allied organizations working on migration, humanitarian response, and health. As those services collapse, their caseloads are shifting onto LGBTIQ groups that are themselves losing capacity. But funding the broader ecosystem is not enough on its own: this report documents shelters turning away sexual and gender minorities under political pressure, humanitarian response plans that exclude them, and mainstream health facilities they cannot safely use. Donors should require explicit inclusion of LGBTIQ people in the ecosystem work they fund, follow up on whether it is delivered, and treat exclusion as a compliance failure rather than a local inevitability.
- **Build funding strategies that do not rest on any single government's continued support.** The dependence many organizations had on one government's funding is what made a single policy decision capable of dismantling years of accumulated support in a matter of days. Donors should assess concentration risk across their portfolios and help organizations diversify their funding rather than assuming another donor will continue covering essential costs. This also applies to donor assumptions about what other donors will keep covering.

- **Sustain the intermediary infrastructure that moves resources to local organizations.** More than half of all grants to LGBTIQ movements in the Global South and East travel through intermediary funders, and this report documents what happens downstream when those channels are destabilized. When those mechanisms disappear, small, grassroots, and unregistered organizations may lose the only funding channels available to them.

To intermediary funders:

- **Pass as much flexibility as possible to grantees, and negotiate upstream for more.** Intermediaries should avoid adding restrictions that make already-limited funding harder to use and should advocate with their own donors for terms that allow local organizations to respond to changing circumstances. Organizations in this report described holding funds they could not use for the person in front of them.
- **Make emergency reallocation and bridge support easier.** Where possible, intermediaries should allow existing grantees to redirect funds toward urgent operating, staffing, health, or protection needs rather than requiring them to continue activities that are no longer the highest priority.
- **Protect grantee data.** Personal information collected through a grant can put staff and activists at risk if exposed. Funders and intermediaries must continue protecting that data even after the grant ends.
- **Preserve small and flexible grants to grassroots groups.** These groups do work that no other actor can replicate. They serve people invisible to formal systems—communities in hidden or remote locations, young LBQ mothers, sex workers, people afraid to enter a clinic or a police station—because they hold trust those systems lack. Many are unregistered or cannot meet the administrative requirements attached to larger grants. Intermediaries should preserve funding mechanisms designed for these organizations rather than shifting resources exclusively toward larger grants and organizations. When this channel closes, no other replaces it.

To the corporate sector:

- **Reconsider funding decisions made under political pressure.** Corporate giving to LGBTIQ organizations has retrenched alongside government and philanthropic funding, often quietly and without the scrutiny that government cuts received. Waiting for the political climate to shift before re-engaging prolongs damage that is already measurable. Visibility and funding are separate decisions: companies that judge public association too risky right now can still provide consistent funding, match employee donations, support trusted intermediary funds, and continue partnerships quietly rather than withdrawing altogether, and re-engage publicly as soon as they are able.
 - **Fund without requiring public visibility or branding.** Companies should offer grants that do not depend on logos, public campaigns, events, or promotional recognition. In hostile environments, low-profile support may be safer, more useful, and more responsive to what organizations actually need.
 - **Use corporate funding for needs that other donors may struggle to cover.** Flexible corporate funding can be particularly useful for staff, organizational operations, emergency response, small grants, and other needs that more restricted government funding may not support.
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“The message I would give to donors is not to think only in administrative terms, but to think about the protection they provide, the participation they support, and the lives they are helping to defend and to dignify.”

— Rodolfo Vargas, Colectivo TLGB Bolivia

Methodology

This report draws on three complementary sources of evidence: a global survey of LGBTIQ organizations, qualitative testimonies gathered through both the survey itself and follow-up interviews, and a country-level comparative context.

229 LGBTIQ organizations responded to the global survey	94 countries represented among respondents	203 organizations reported a loss of funding since January 2025	24 in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted in June 2026
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The global survey of LGBTIQ organizations was distributed through Outright International’s networks and grantees, with additional outreach to peer organizations across regions, and was available in Arabic, Bahasa, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, English, French, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Ukrainian. Fielded primarily between late February and late April 2026, it garnered responses from 229 LGBTIQ organizations from 94 countries. Respondents were asked about the scope and origin of funding losses since January 2025, the political and social context in which they operated, and the consequences of funding cuts for staffing and programs. Open-ended questions allowed organizational representatives to describe their experiences in their own words, and several of those responses appear as testimonies throughout this report. Organizations quoted from survey responses are identified by name only where they indicated they could be named. Responses are quoted as submitted, with obvious typographical errors lightly corrected for readability and without altering wording, meaning, or emphasis. As with most opt-in surveys, organizations affected by funding cuts likely had a stronger incentive to participate than those that were not; the implications of this potential selection bias for how the survey data should be read are addressed at the outset of Part 2.

Second, the report draws on qualitative testimonies and case studies obtained through open-ended survey responses and a set of semi-structured interviews conducted in June 2026. Interviewees were drawn exclusively from organizations that had indicated, through the survey, their willingness to be contacted for a follow-up conversation. Case selection prioritized diversity across regions, organization type, and thematic focus, favoring cases able to speak with particular depth to forms of impact documented elsewhere in the report.

At the start of each interview, participants confirmed how they wished to be identified—by individual name, organization name, and country, or with any of these withheld—and anonymity was honored accordingly in the drafting of this report. In a small number of cases, names have been withheld even where consent to be identified had been given, because the security situation facing the organization made publication inadvisable.

Third, the report draws on a country-level comparative analysis of where LGBTIQ funding was terminated, which underpins Part 1 of the Findings. This analysis uses the country as its unit of comparison: a country was classified as affected if at least one LGBTIQ organization operating there had funding terminated, and all other countries were classified as not affected. The list was compiled from Outright International's grantmaking records, survey responses received through early June 2026, and information shared by partner organizations. Because this list captures the terminations Outright was able to document rather than a complete count of every termination of LGBTIQ funding worldwide, the percentages reported below indicate where terminations were concentrated rather than how many occurred. The classification records whether a country experienced at least one documented termination; it does not measure how many organizations lost funding there, the amount lost, or the size of the country's LGBTIQ population.

To examine whether terminations were concentrated in places where sexual and gender minorities already faced particularly difficult conditions, this classification was matched against four measures drawn from three independent indices.⁷ All four comparisons draw on the same list of affected countries; countries without a score for a particular measure were excluded from that comparison, so the number of countries included varied across the four analyses. In each comparison, the universe is all countries in the world, not only those that received U.S. or other foreign assistance, because Outright's concern extends to LGBTIQ communities everywhere, and a universe defined by U.S. foreign policy priorities would answer a different question.

For each category, the suspension rate was calculated by dividing the number of countries that experienced at least one suspension by the total number of countries in that category. Relative risk was then calculated by dividing the suspension rate in the highest-vulnerability category by the rate in the lowest-vulnerability category. The combined analysis was limited to the 120 countries with data available for all four measures. Each country was classified according to whether it fell within the highest-vulnerability group on none, one, or at least two of the measures, and the suspension rate was calculated for each group.

These comparisons describe how funding suspensions were distributed across different national contexts. They identify whether suspensions were concentrated in countries where sexual and gender minorities faced greater structural barriers, but they do not, by themselves, establish causation or measure the effects experienced by individual LGBTIQ people. Because the analysis is country-based rather than population-weighted, each country is treated equally regardless of its population size.

Introduction

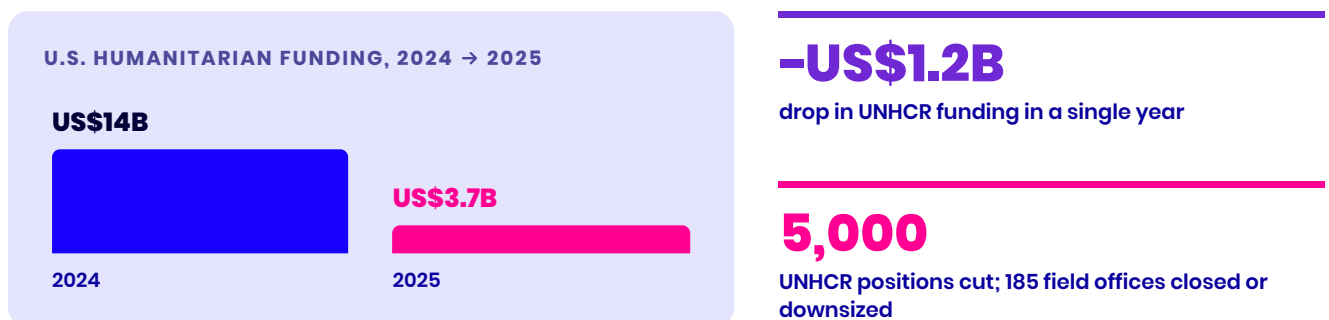
In January 2025, within hours of President Donald Trump's return to the White House, the United States government abruptly reversed fifteen years of foreign aid commitments to LGBTIQ communities around the world in the context of a broader upending of foreign aid.⁸ Executive Order 14169, signed on January 20, 2025, imposed a 90-day freeze on nearly all U.S. foreign assistance. Operationalized by Secretary of State Marco Rubio as a stop-work order, it forced organizations focused on development, human rights, and humanitarian action, across every region, to halt programs, lay off staff, close shelters, and turn away beneficiaries.⁹ By February 2025, termination notices were arriving—not pauses, but permanent cuts. The freeze hit USAID, the State Department's Global Equality Fund, PEPFAR, and a wide range of programs that had sustained LGBTIQ movements in more than 100 countries.

For global LGBTIQ movements, what had been built incrementally over more than a decade of U.S. government support for queer inclusion in sustainable development and human rights protection was being dismantled in a matter of weeks. The dismantling was later formalized: in July 2025, USAID ceased to exist as an independent agency, and its remaining functions were absorbed into the State Department. PEPFAR survived the transition, but sharply scaled down: HIV prevention support was restricted largely to pregnant and breastfeeding women, and community-led service delivery for key populations went unfunded. Within the State Department, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), which had housed the Global Equality Fund and managed the department's main human rights grantmaking, was restructured around a new Office of Natural Rights, while the offices that ran its global programming were eliminated.¹⁰ The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration was reorganized in parallel, shifting from refugee protection toward returns and creating an Office of Remigration.¹¹

HOW THE DISMANTLING UNFOLDED

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- Jan 20, 2025** Executive Order 14169 imposes a 90-day freeze on nearly all U.S. foreign assistance, operationalized as a stop-work order.
 - Jan 28, 2025** A waiver exempts narrowly defined "lifesaving humanitarian assistance"; DEI programs and "transgender surgeries" are excluded from the category of lifesaving work.
 - Feb 2025** Termination notices arrive—not pauses, but permanent cuts. Outright publishes *Defunding Freedom*, a rapid assessment of the initial shock.
 - Apr 2025** The Global Equality Fund is shut down entirely; the Dignity for All emergency assistance program has already come to a halt.
 - Jul 1, 2025** USAID ceases to exist as an independent agency; surviving programs are absorbed into the State Department. PEPFAR survives, sharply scaled down.

The U.S. retreat extended to the multilateral humanitarian system as well. Between 2024 and 2025, more than 30% of global humanitarian funding disappeared, driven largely by the collapse of U.S. support, which fell from roughly US\$14 billion to US\$3.7 billion. Other donors then reduced their contributions further, though more modestly.¹² UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, saw its funding drop by US\$1.2 billion in a single year—with the United States, historically its largest donor, cutting its contribution by half—and cut around 5,000 positions while closing or downsizing 185 field offices.¹³ These contractions matter for LGBTIQ communities because UN agencies are often the backbone of protection in refugee and displacement settings, and their retreat leaves the small, LGBTIQ-led organizations described in this report to absorb needs they cannot possibly meet, as the closure of Kaos GL’s UNHCR-linked refugee program in Türkiye illustrates.



From the outset, the administration insisted that the cuts would spare what mattered most. On January 28, 2025, Secretary Rubio approved a waiver exempting “lifesaving humanitarian assistance” from the freeze, defined narrowly as core medicine, medical services, food, shelter, and subsistence. The same memo excluded programs involving diversity, equity, and inclusion, along with what it termed “transgender surgeries,” from the category of lifesaving work.¹⁴ “We don’t want to see anybody die,” Rubio told reporters in early February.¹⁵ By May, testifying before Congress, he asserted that no one had died as a result of the cuts and dismissed reports to the contrary as false.¹⁶

The findings of this report challenge both the claim and the premise behind it. Organizations surveyed and interviewed for this report link the interruption of HIV treatment support directly to the deaths of community members, and describe the loss of shelter as leaving people to face, unprotected, the violence they had fled. And the broader record documented in these pages shows how much survival depends on work that the waiver’s definition treated as expendable: safe houses that stand between a threatened person and their aggressors, emergency relocation that removes people from active violence, mental healthcare in communities facing elevated suicide risk, livelihood programs that keep people out of destitution and unsafe survival strategies, and the community trust that makes all of these accessible. Measured by the standard the administration itself invoked—whether people remain alive—queer organizing belongs squarely within the category of lifesaving work.

In response to that initial shock, Outright International published a rapid assessment—*Defunding Freedom – Impacts of U.S. Foreign Aid Cuts on LGBTIQ People Worldwide*—documenting the immediate impacts of the cuts on 125 LGBTIQ organizations in 59 UN member states.¹⁷ That report captured a crisis in real time: organizations scrambling to understand which funding was frozen and which was terminated; staff being let go without warning; shelters closing; HIV programs stalling; activists left without the resources to respond to violence or simply keep their organizations alive. The picture it painted was one of acute, disorienting harm—but it was also necessarily incomplete. It was written at a moment when most organizations did not yet know the full scope of what they had lost, and when the longer-term consequences of the cuts had barely begun to materialize.

Eighteen months later, those consequences are no longer speculative. What was initially framed as a temporary freeze has become a structural disruption. The effects have cascaded far beyond U.S. government funding: corporate, institutional, and philanthropic donors have also shifted, stalled, or quietly withdrawn, often without public scrutiny. The broader environment in which LGBTIQ movements operate has continued to deteriorate—with democratic backsliding, anti-NGO legislation, rising violence, coordinated legislative attacks on trans and intersex people's rights, and emboldened anti-rights actors filling the space left by the retreat of U.S. global leadership.¹⁸ At the same time, LGBTIQ organizations have not stood still. They have continued to resist, adapt, and serve their communities under extraordinary pressure, often absorbing the costs of these funding shocks in ways that remain largely invisible. This report is an effort to make those costs—and that resilience—visible.

This new report is based on a global survey that drew responses from 229 LGBTIQ organizations from 94 countries. Unlike the rapid assessment that preceded it, this report had the benefit of time: time for the true scope of the cuts to become clear, for organizations to understand what they had lost, and for the secondary and structural effects to emerge. Of the 229 respondents, 203—nearly nine in ten—reported loss of funding since January 2025. Because participation was voluntary, that figure cannot be read as the share of all LGBTIQ organizations globally affected by the cuts; rather, it defines the population this report examines. The analysis throughout the following pages focuses on the experiences of those 203 organizations.

The survey was complemented by in-depth organizational profiles, interviews, and case studies drawn from partners across regions and thematic areas. Together, these sources allow the report to examine not only what was lost in the immediate aftermath of the funding freeze, but how that loss is reshaping—in some cases, permanently—the organizations, communities, and networks that make up the global LGBTIQ movement.

Of the 229 respondents, 203—nearly nine in ten—reported loss of funding since January 2025.

It joins a growing body of research documenting the funding crisis from different vantage points. The Global Philanthropy Project's (GPP) most recent *Global Resources Report*, which covers 2023–2024, shows that global LGBTIQ funding had begun to fall even before the current U.S. administration took office, the first documented decrease on record, with steeper declines anticipated for 2025 and beyond.¹⁹ The Williams Institute assessed the foreseeable consequences of the executive order within weeks of its signing, and GPP's survey of leading LGBTI intermediary funders documents how the elimination of U.S. government support destabilized the institutions that channel more than half of all grants to movements in the Global South and East.²⁰ Tracking the impact where it lands, the Global Black Gay Men Connect network, which spans more than 150 partners, has documented sweeping disruptions to HIV services for key populations: in its *Frozen Out* report, 77% of the key population organizations it surveyed reported interruptions to the supply of antiretrovirals, PrEP, and condoms.²¹ Looking ahead, the Human Rights Funders Network projected that rights-focused development assistance will fall by between US\$1.4 and US\$1.9 billion annually by 2026, with movements for LGBTIQ people's rights and gender equality among the hardest hit.²² What these analyses capture through funding flows and donor data, this report documents from the other end of the pipeline: the organizations absorbing the cuts, and the communities losing what those organizations can no longer provide.

The report moves from causes to consequences. The first two sections establish the scale and sources of the cuts and the hostile environments in which they are landing. Sections 3 and 4 document the toll on organizations themselves: the loss of staff, expertise, and specialized roles, and the closure of the shelters, offices, and community spaces they depend on. Sections 5 through 7 trace the contraction of health services, emergency response, and pathways to economic stability, and Section 8 examines the weakening of advocacy and documentation. Section 9 shows how these impacts concentrate on the most marginalized, and Section 10 assesses what the coming year holds for organizations at risk of disappearing. The report opens with recommendations for governments, philanthropic and institutional donors, intermediary funders, and corporations; the sections below provide the evidence behind them. Throughout, in-depth case studies drawn from interviews across every region ground the survey data in the trajectories of individual organizations.

The organizations and activists represented in these pages have continued to do remarkable work under severe constraints. Their creativity, expertise, and commitment to their communities in the face of severe resource loss deserve recognition. But resilience is not a substitute for resources, and adaptation has its limits. The damage documented in the pages that follow is real, cumulative, and—if left unaddressed—likely to define the landscape of LGBTIQ human rights and inclusion for years to come. This report is addressed to those who have the capacity to respond: governments, institutional donors, private philanthropy, and corporate funders who must understand not only the scale of what has been lost, but also why restoring and diversifying investment in LGBTIQ movements is both a moral imperative and a strategic necessity.

That second case reaches well past LGBTIQ people themselves. National health systems reach the populations most exposed to infection through community organizations that people can approach without risking arrest, and humanitarian and development programs meet their own commitments to serve those furthest behind through the same partners. The laws that limit queer organizing can silence civil society as a whole, restricting democratic space. Companies depend on markets where the rule of law holds and where they can recruit and retain the people they depend on. Every institution on this list has goals it cannot meet while leaving whole populations out, which means none of them can afford to lose the organizations that reach those populations.

Part 1

Funding Cuts in Global Perspective: Aid Withdrawn Where It Was Needed Most

LGBTIQ people live in every part of the world, but the countries they live in face very different contexts. While some countries offer greater safety and acceptance, others confront higher rates of violence, less effective governance, and poorer living conditions. Recognizing that LGBTIQ communities do not all live in similar contexts, this analysis asks a global question: How did these funding cuts impact sexual and gender minorities across a global range of different contexts? We find that the cuts impacted those who are the most vulnerable, where living conditions are the hardest, justice systems are the least impartial, discrimination is the most widespread, and divisions between social groups are the deepest.²³

Those four conditions have something in common. Each describes a setting in which the institutions that ordinarily protect people—courts, police, public services—either fail people of queer experience or actively work against them. In those settings, LGBTIQ organizations take on functions that no one else performs. Where living conditions are hardest, they become the shelter. Where violence and discrimination are widespread, they become the lawyer, the case file, the emergency number. Where divisions between social groups run deepest, they become the voice of a community whose members may otherwise not be able to speak—in the media, in the legislature, in the courts, and with allies. The measures that follow map where the funding was withdrawn from, and what the organizations in those countries had been doing with it.

HOUSING

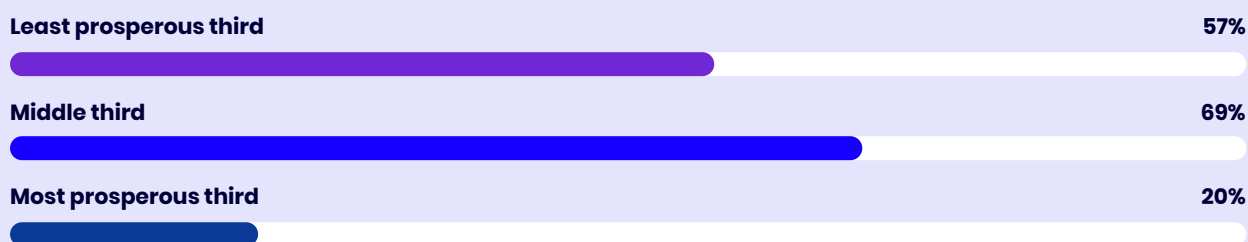
Housing and safe shelter are foundational to LGBTIQ well-being. People without stable housing face sharply elevated exposure to violence, discrimination, and barriers to essential services, and sexual and gender minorities experience disproportionate housing insecurity driven by family rejection, employment discrimination, and targeted harassment. The networks through which most people find housing—family, schools, the open market—are often the very networks that turn LGBTIQ people away, and a landlord who learns how a tenant earns a living or whom they love can end a tenancy overnight. Where basic living conditions are weakest, LGBTIQ organizations are frequently the institutions that fill the gap: pressing for nondiscrimination in housing and for inclusion in state housing programs, running crisis shelters, and connecting people to housing and livelihoods through community networks.

Among the third of countries where material living conditions are hardest—the poorest in terms of housing, basic services, and physical safety—57% experienced the suspension of LGBTIQ-related funding. That is 2.8 times the rate in the third of countries where those conditions are strongest, at 20%. The middle third recorded the highest rate of all, at 69%.

The organizational evidence in Part 2 tracks this closely. Shelters and safe houses have closed or come under threat in **Kenya, Peru, Ukraine, Saint Lucia, and Uganda**, and organizations that once housed people now describe referring them to state systems that take up to three months to respond, or to nowhere at all.

COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY LGBTIQ FUNDING SUSPENSIONS

By severity of living conditions



2.8*

Countries with the hardest living conditions were 2.8 times more likely to be affected than the strongest third.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Where investigations, prosecutions, and adjudications are shaped by corruption, political pressure, or bias, those who attack sexual and gender minorities face little accountability, and victims who report attacks risk being treated as offenders rather than as complainants. In these settings, LGBTIQ organizations often lead the response to violence themselves: monitoring abuses, documenting patterns of impunity, supporting survivors through the aftermath, helping secure legal representation, and drawing public and media attention to cases that would otherwise pass unremarked. Much of this work is unglamorous and slow—a case file kept current, a lawyer retained, a relationship with a police station maintained over years—and it is rarely replaceable once interrupted.

Countries with the least impartial criminal justice systems were 2.2 times more likely to have been affected by funding cuts than countries in the most impartial third—73% against 33%. Nearly three in four countries with the least impartial criminal systems saw LGBTIQ funding affected.

In Part 2, organizations in **Nigeria** described some fifty cases of homophobic attacks awaiting a response they can no longer provide, and a queer media organization from **Iraq** reported that rounds of arrests now pass undocumented because the journalists who covered them can no longer be paid.

2.2*

Least impartial justice systems: 73% of countries affected, against 33% in the most impartial third.



DISCRIMINATION

Equal treatment depends not only on what statutes say but on whether institutions enforce them without prejudice. Where discrimination against sexual and gender minorities is pervasive and tolerated by legal institutions, formal rights become hard to access, and disadvantages compound across employment, healthcare, housing, and family law. LGBTIQ organizations in these countries supply what makes rights reachable at all: legal assistance, advocacy for enforcement, documentation of abuses, and the everyday support that helps people navigate systems built without them in mind, or against them.

Countries with the highest levels of discrimination against marginalized groups across public services, employment, and legal norms were nearly two and a half times more likely to have experienced a suspension than countries in the least discriminatory third—79% against 32%.

The narrowing of legal capacity runs through Part 2: an organization in the Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) region whose three lawyers have become one, a collective in **Kyrgyzstan** reduced to hiring lawyers case by case as short-term funds allow, and a grassroots group in rural **Bangladesh** whose monthly legal clinic—one of the only routes to a lawyer for miles—has closed.



GROUP DIVISIONS

In societies marked by entrenched divisions along ethnic, religious, or political lines, sexual and gender minorities face compounded risk: hostility toward minorities is normalized, and the safeguards that would otherwise hold violence in check give way. LGBTIQ organizations working in these environments are often isolated and underresourced, and they operate where mainstream humanitarian systems tend not to operate for LGBTIQ people at all. Their loss removes one of the few footholds for building protection and visibility over time.

Countries with the highest levels of intergroup grievance, including historical grievances, persecution, scapegoating, and unequal access to resources and political participation, were 1.9 times more likely to have experienced a suspension than countries with social cohesion or managed differences—59% against 32%.

In societies already fractured along group lines, LGBTIQ people are rarely counted among the groups whose grievances register at all, and the organizations that served them were often the only actors treating them as a constituency worth protecting. Their defunding removes that recognition precisely where the surrounding tensions leave people of queer experience most exposed.

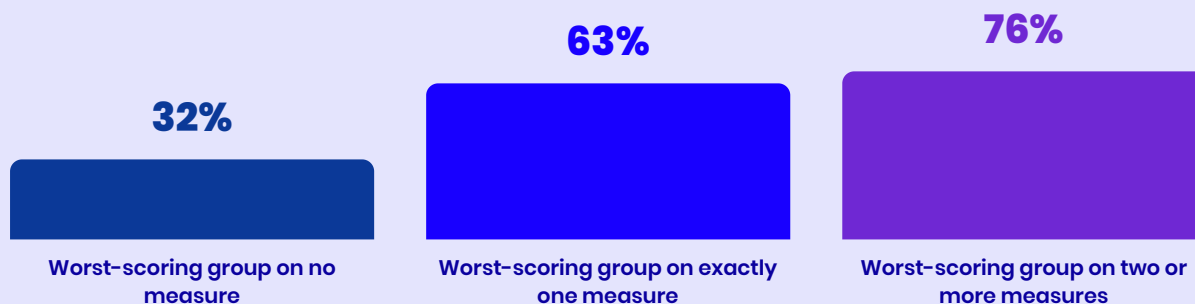
THE CHALLENGES COMPOUND

Many countries face several of the challenges described above at the same time: poor living conditions, widespread discrimination, weak criminal justice impartiality, and severe divisions between groups.

Among the 120 countries for which information was available across all four areas, the rate at which countries were affected increased with the number of areas in which a country fell into the worst-scoring group. Of those countries that were not in the worst-scoring group for any measure, 32% were affected by the funding cuts. The rate rose to 63% among countries in the worst-scoring group for exactly one measure and to 76% among countries in the worst-scoring group for two or more measures—more than twice the rate among countries facing none of these conditions.

SHARE OF COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY FUNDING SUSPENSIONS

By number of measures in which a country falls into the worst-scoring group



Based on the 120 countries with data available for all four measures: living conditions, criminal justice impartiality, discrimination, and group divisions.

Funding was pulled from the countries where LGBTIQ people have the fewest alternatives and where organizations carry the heaviest protective load.

Part 2 turns to what that has meant, in the words of the organizations living through it.

Part 2

The View From the Ground: What Affected Organizations Report

A total of 229 LGBTIQ organizations from 94 countries responded to this survey. Of these, 203 reported experiencing a loss of funding since January 2025—nearly nine in ten respondents. This does not mean that nine in ten LGBTIQ organizations globally have experienced funding cuts. Organizations affected by cuts likely had stronger incentives to respond to the survey than those that were not.

For that reason, the report uses the survey primarily to understand the experiences of organizations that have been affected by funding cuts. Unless otherwise stated, the analysis that follows focuses on the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported experiencing loss of funding since January 2025. This allows the report to examine how funding cuts are reshaping organizational survival, community infrastructure, health and HIV services, emergency response, advocacy, and the lives of the sexual and gender minorities these organizations serve.

1 The Scale and Source of the Cuts

Before turning to the specific impacts of the cuts, it is worth establishing their scale and origin. For most affected organizations, the funding lost since January 2025 was not marginal. Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported experiencing loss of funding, 49% lost more than half of their total budget, and 75% lost more than a quarter of it. For nearly half of the respondents, the cuts removed most of the resources that sustained the organization.

The cuts are also strikingly concentrated in their origin. Asked which funders had reduced, suspended, or withdrawn support, more than half pointed to a source tied to the United States government, including USAID, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and the Department of State. No other funder came close: Outright International was named by 17% of affected organizations, though this figure largely reflects U.S. government funding that Outright re-granted to partners rather than Outright's own institutional funds; in some cases, it also includes Outright grants that ended on their planned schedule. Beyond Outright, a smaller number of respondents named European, United Nations, and private donors as having withdrawn LGBTIQ funding in 2025. The withdrawal of a single dominant government donor has reverberated across queer movements on every continent, and for many organizations, there was no comparable alternative able to absorb the loss.



BUDGET LOST BY AFFECTED ORGANIZATIONS SINCE JANUARY 2025

- Lost more than half of their total budget **49%**
- Lost between a quarter and half **26%**

75% of affected organizations lost more than a quarter of their total budget.

The organizations bearing these losses are, for the most part, small and community-rooted. Among affected organizations that responded to the survey administered in early 2026, 73% were operating on an annual budget under US\$250,000, and fewer than one in twenty reported budgets above US\$1 million. Most described themselves as advocacy or legal reform organizations, as direct service providers, or as both at once. The cuts are therefore falling hardest on small, frontline organizations that work directly with communities and that have the least financial cushion to withstand a sudden loss of funding.

Several organizations described both the depth of the loss and where it came from. In **Peru**, the Association of Transvestites, Transsexuals, and Transgender People of Peru (ATTTPE) traced cuts that spread across more than one major funder:

We were working with support from the Global Fund, but funding cuts forced us to move to a smaller space and reduce our staff. We had a project in partnership with the World Council of Credit Unions, which receives funding from USAID; after the funding cuts, we had to set the project aside because it was canceled.²⁴

In **Chile**, the Homosexual Movement of Integration and Liberation (Movilh) described how the loss of foreign government funding undermined a service that had long anchored the country's response to anti-LGBTIQ discrimination:

Historically, Movilh has handled more than 90% of the reported cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in Chile, providing free legal, psychological, and peer support to those affected. This work has been seriously hindered. Since August 2025, this service has depended on the volunteer work of our activists due to cuts in state funding.²⁵

The experience of an LGBTIQ organization in **Tunisia**, unnamed here for its safety, adds a further dimension to the question of where the cuts come from. The organization provided mental health and psychosocial support, medical and legal services, emergency cash and food assistance, and support for queer migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, including queer and trans people from Libya and sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2025, it has lost most of its funding through three mechanisms at once. The first was the broad contraction in donor funding that followed the U.S. executive order freezing foreign assistance, which shrank the resources available across the sector and hit this organization as it hit others. Some funders conditioned continued support on the removal of the organization's public statements of solidarity with Palestine, and withdrew when it refused. And the Tunisian authorities' crackdown on foreign funding for civil society made receiving money from abroad hazardous in itself: transfers were blocked or treated as potentially criminal, the organization's director was summoned and interrogated by police, and the landlord, fearing the scrutiny, declined to continue hosting the organization's office.

The consequences compounded accordingly. Staff went unpaid, and six employees were let go; the office was given up, and work moved online, to the point that community members began asking whether the organization still existed; and emergency cash support for rent and food, the assistance most exposed to the authorities' suspicion of cross-border transfers, stopped almost entirely. People the organization used to house or feed, it reported, are now on the streets. The case makes visible something aggregate figures cannot: for some organizations, the funding crisis arrives as a convergence of donor retreat, political conditionality, and state restriction, each making the others harder to survive.²⁶

Collectively, these figures establish the basic shape of the crisis examined in the rest of this report: deep cuts, concentrated in a small number of major donors, falling disproportionately on small organizations with limited reserves. The sections that follow trace how losses of this scale translate into concrete harm—to organizations, to community infrastructure, to health and protection systems, and to the lives of the LGBTIQ people these organizations serve.

CASE STUDY · HUNGARY

Háttér Society: Funding Frozen, Pride Banned

The trajectory of Háttér Society in Hungary shows how the withdrawal of a single donor government can hit one organization through several channels at once. Háttér, the oldest and largest LGBTIQ organization in the country, combines mental health support, sexual health services, legal aid, and strategic litigation with advocacy, professional training, and public education. Before the cuts, it also served as a resource distribution hub, regranting funds to smaller queer organizations across Hungary. Its first loss arrived even before the January 2025 executive orders. A U.S. State Department grant of roughly US\$300,000, which had sustained the re-granting program, expired in September 2024 with the expectation that a renewal or a new grant of a similar size would follow. After the 2024 U.S. election, the organization was informed that the money would no longer be available.

The executive orders multiplied the damage. A stop-work order froze the closing phase of the State Department grant, including final payments owed for re-granting activities that had already been carried out. A smaller project, through which Háttér trained activists outside Budapest to respond to anti-gender discourse while attending to their mental health, was halted mid-implementation and never formally completed. Funding that flowed to the organization through ILGA-Europe, itself originating in U.S. State Department money, was disrupted as well: one grant could continue only with funds already transferred, and another, meant to lay the groundwork for a community center in Budapest, was never signed.

For Háttér, the most direct consequence was the loss of its capacity to move resources to smaller groups. The organization can still mentor them, collaborate with them, and apply jointly for projects, but it no longer has a dedicated budget to transfer funds directly—a significant contraction of its movement-building role. The disruption also lingered administratively. Months after the stop-work order, once it finally became clear which funds could still be paid out, Háttér had to reopen financial and reporting processes with grantees who had already considered their grants closed, in some cases after staff had changed. Even though most of the original funding was eventually recovered, the episode illustrates how a stop-work order keeps generating costs long after activities have stopped, for the organization itself and for the smaller groups that depend on it. (*continued*)

CASE STUDY · HUNGARY (CONTINUED)

These losses hit Háttér at an exceptionally demanding moment for Hungarian civil society. In March 2025, Hungary banned Pride marches under the banner of child protection.²⁷ In June, Budapest Pride went ahead regardless and became the largest march in Hungary's history, placing LGBTIQ organizations at the center of the country's struggle over civic space.²⁸ Then, in April 2026, parliamentary elections ended sixteen years of Viktor Orbán's rule, opening a window for legal reform and for rebuilding the independent institutions—courts, media, universities, and civil society organizations—that were weakened over more than a decade.²⁹ Háttér now faces both the aftermath of intensified repression and the opportunities of a democratic transition with fewer resources than before the cuts, and without the re-granting capacity that once allowed it to strengthen the smaller groups that any such rebuilding will require.³⁰

2 Funding Cuts in Hostile Contexts

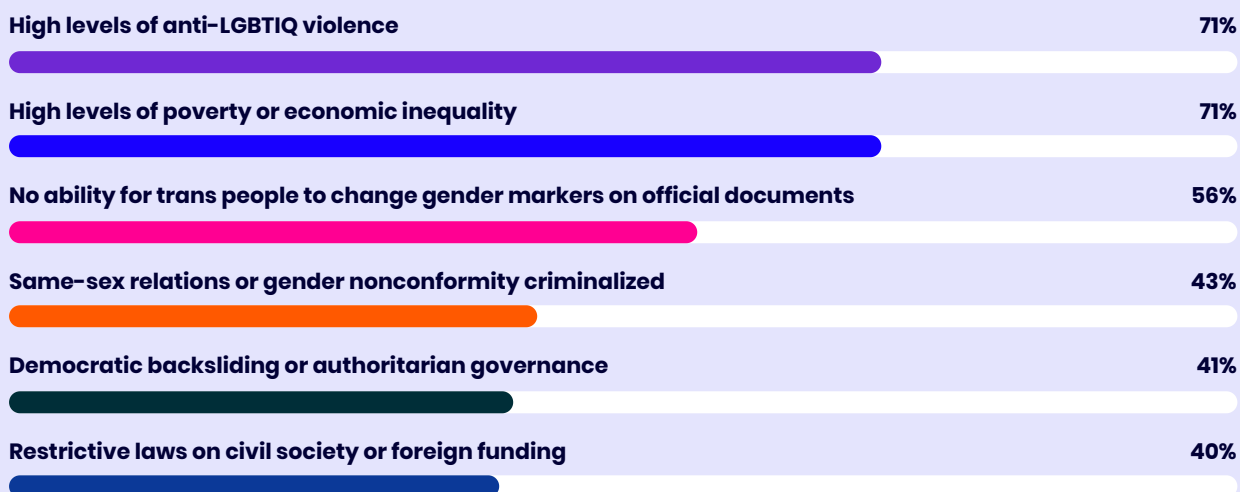
For many LGBTIQ organizations, the loss of funding arrived alongside democratic backsliding, authoritarian governance, anti-NGO laws, restrictions on foreign funding, criminalization, queerphobic rhetoric, and increasing violence. Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported loss of funding since January 2025, 41% reported operating in a context of democratic backsliding or authoritarian governance. In other words, more than two in five affected organizations are navigating funding cuts while operating in contexts where civic space, democratic institutions, or fundamental freedoms are under pressure.

Democratic backsliding is only one dimension of these hostile environments, and not the most common. The conditions most frequently reported by affected organizations were high levels of anti-LGBTIQ violence (71%) and high levels of poverty or economic inequality (71%). More than half (56%) reported operating in contexts where trans people have no ability to change their gender markers on official documents—a figure that rises to 66% among organizations working directly with trans communities, suggesting the overall number understates how widespread this barrier is. Another 43% reported operating where same-sex relations or gender nonconformity are criminalized, and 40% under restrictive laws on civil society or foreign funding. For most organizations, funding cuts are landing on several of these pressures at once.

In restrictive environments, funding cuts do not simply reduce programming. They can limit an organization's ability to comply with increasingly burdensome administrative requirements, respond to hostile laws, maintain legal status, protect activists, document rights violations, or challenge queerphobic narratives. They can also force organizations to scale back the very activities that help communities survive under repression: safety and security training, strategic litigation, legal support, public advocacy, community mobilization, and emergency response.

THE CONTEXTS IN WHICH THE CUTS ARE LANDING

Conditions reported by the 203 affected organizations



Among organizations working directly with trans communities, the gender-marker figure rises to 66%.

CASE STUDY · GLOBAL

The Loss of an Emergency Fund

Dignity for All: LGBTQI+ Assistance Program was created in 2012 as the rapid response mechanism of the Global Equality Fund, an LGBTQI+ funding platform managed by the U.S. State Department with a coalition of partner governments, businesses, and foundations.³¹ Its purpose was protection: emergency and preventive assistance to LGBTQI+-focused civil society organizations and human rights defenders facing physical threat or extreme harassment.

The program was delivered by a consortium led by the U.S.-based organization Freedom House, in partnership with ILGA-Europe, Outright International, UHAI EASHRI, Akahatá, and Synergia IHR.³² It provided small, short-term grants for temporary relocation, legal representation, prison visits, trial monitoring, medical expenses, dependent support, security measures, and equipment replacement, and accepted applications from groups without formal registration, provided they could document at least six months of activism.³³ It also funded rapid advocacy campaigns responding to anti-LGBTIQ legislation, violence, and discrimination, and supported organizations in identifying security risks, developing protection plans, and strengthening their digital, physical, and organizational security. As a member of the Dignity Consortium, Outright International served as one of the entry points through which requests for emergency assistance reached the program. *(continued)*

CASE STUDY · GLOBAL (CONTINUED)

The program was shut down in January 2025. The stop-work order reached all grants and programs under the Global Equality Fund, and the Fund was shut down entirely by April.³⁴ Freedom House's Emergency Assistance Program, which housed Dignity for All along with the Lifeline: Embattled CSOs Assistance Fund, came to a halt that same month, after having supported more than 17,000 defenders, organizations, and survivors since 2007.³⁵ Freedom House reported that the executive order ultimately terminated more than 80% of its programs and activities across more than 140 countries, leaving assistance for hundreds of individuals stranded at various stages of processing and approval.³⁶ The result is documented throughout this report: organizations describing threats they were unable to respond to, in a period in which the principal dedicated emergency mechanism for LGBTIQ defenders was itself suspended.

In **Iraq**, IraQueer described the interruption of a project designed to strengthen the safety and security of queer organizations and activists after the passage of a 2024 law that criminalized same-sex conduct and trans people's gender expression and set prison terms for the undefined offense of "promoting homosexuality":³⁷

After the law was passed, we had a project to cover all queer orgs and activists, so they could receive an extensive series of safety and security training/workshops, but the project stopped due to funding cuts.³⁸

Also in **Iraq**, funding gaps are deepening the silence that repression creates. Middle East Voice, a diaspora-based organization whose goal is to serve Iraqi queer communities through reporting, digital campaigns, community documentation of violations and arrests, and a program connecting people in Iraq with affirming healthcare professionals, operates in what its founder described as a legal environment that has hardened over the past four years, to the point where speaking publicly about these issues carries a risk of arrest and even an Arabic term used to refer to "gender," as opposed to "sex," is treated as suspect. In such a context, documentation is itself a form of protection, and its absence a form of exposure: many rounds of arrests, she noted, are never documented and never make it to the media or the public.

The funding cuts ended Middle East Voice's ability to pay the journalists who investigated and reported on violations, halted the development of its online platform, and stopped a healthcare campaign that had been building a directory of doctors willing to treat trans and gender nonconforming people safely. That campaign was interrupted at a moment when, according to the organization, some medical professionals were running social media pages against gender nonconforming people and urging colleagues to report them to the authorities—turning a search for care into a risk of exposure and arrest, in a country where same-sex conduct and trans people's gender expression are criminalized. "What worries me the most is that the laws are getting worse. Organizations are silenced in Iraq since 2025; they are rightfully scared to speak," the founder said.³⁹ Repression is escalating, and the infrastructure that would have made it visible is being defunded at the same time.

In **Argentina**, where the national government has dismantled the machinery of gender justice and antidiscrimination policy—closing the ministry responsible for gender and diversity and the national antidiscrimination institute, and trying to restrict gender-affirming care for minors by decree—a feminist LGBTIQ organization described having to cut back its own services as the state withdrew:

At a time when Argentina has ceased to implement public policies for LGBTI+ people and to reform laws, we deeply regret having had to cut back on direct support services for LGBTI+ people and having to limit our priorities to the most urgent needs.⁴⁰

In **Mexico**, an LGBTIQ organization connected funding cuts to broader restrictions on civic space, including tax and regulatory burdens that threaten organizations' legal and financial viability:

In addition to budget cuts, there has been a shrinking of civic space; tax laws are making it increasingly difficult to maintain our status as authorized grantees, with high taxes and increasingly specific regulations, and a large number of civil society organizations in Mexico have already been stripped of their status. We need the capacity to strengthen our administrative processes and ensure everything is in order to avoid fines or the loss of our status.⁴¹

Across these examples, funding cuts are weakening LGBTIQ organizations' ability to withstand hostile political environments, defend civic space, and protect communities at moments of heightened risk. In these contexts, defunding operates as a force multiplier: it does not create hostility from scratch, but it weakens the very organizations that are best positioned to respond to it. The result is a growing gap between community needs and organizational capacity: more threats, more legal and political attacks, more violence, and fewer resources to respond.

Defunding operates as a force multiplier: it does not create hostility from scratch, but it weakens the very organizations that are best positioned to respond to it.

CASE STUDY · KYRGYZSTAN

An Invisible Crisis

A feminist queer collective in Kyrgyzstan, unnamed here for its safety, faced these pressures one after another. The hostile environment came first. Under the country's 2023 law prohibiting the "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations"—widely known as a "gay propaganda" law modeled on Russian legislation—ordinary public education, media work, and community mobilization can expose an LGBTIQ organization to accusations of "promoting" such relations, while the 2024 law on "foreign representatives," widely compared to Russia's foreign agent legislation, allows the authorities to treat NGOs receiving international funds as politically suspect and place them under heavier state control. Media attacks, the persecution of activists, and obligations to disclose personal information to the authorities added personal risk to institutional risk, and the collective was forced to restructure in order to preserve its work and protect its staff. The funding cuts arrived only months later, abruptly removing around half of the collective's financial base at the very moment it was trying to re-establish institutional continuity.

The notification came in a letter announcing that funding channeled through a European intermediary, originating in U.S. government money, was suspended with immediate effect. Beyond the financial loss, the collective feared that the names and personal data of employees who had worked on U.S.-funded projects could be exposed under new U.S. regulations, in a country where such exposure carries real danger. For several months, six staff members continued the collective's core work without salaries: advocacy, documentation, community support, and the closure or continuation of existing projects. The organization survived, in effect, because its staff personally absorbed the shock.

The combination of legal hostility and lost funding then narrowed the support the collective could offer its community. Allied shelters that had previously received sexual and gender minorities in crisis grew reluctant to do so, fearing that association with LGBTIQ cases could invite government pressure on their own operations. Today, only one shelter remains accessible, already overcrowded and able to take in, occasionally, a single person for a short period. Legal aid followed a similar path. The number of lawyers willing to take LGBTIQ-related cases declined sharply after the adoption of the restrictive laws, and the collective can only pay freelance lawyers on a case-by-case basis, from short-term project funds. In some urgent situations, staff, partner organizations, and community members, including trans sex workers, have pooled their own money to pay for legal services.

Perhaps the hardest lesson of this case concerns visibility. The collective found international emergency funding difficult to access because its crisis was rarely recognized as "active": there was no single dramatic incident, no overnight shutdown, but rather a slow, cumulative emergency of legal risk, fear, shrinking services, and donor withdrawal, unfolding in a region that receives little international attention.

“Funders sometimes think that if a crisis is not actively murdering people, then it is not a crisis. But it is still a crisis for us. It is the situation we live in, and people continue trying to stay alive. The crisis in Central Asia is sometimes invisible because we do not have media coverage, or because we are a small region, but the work is still important.”⁴²

— A feminist queer collective in Kyrgyzstan

3 Organizational Survival Under Threat

For many organizations affected by funding cuts, the crisis has moved from individual projects to the basic ability to function. Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported experiencing loss of funding since January 2025, 71% reported staff layoffs or reduced staff pay. Among those organizations that reported staff layoffs or reduced pay, 72% said they are likely or very likely to experience significant staff attrition in the next 12 months.

71%

of affected organizations reported staff layoffs or reduced staff pay

72%

of those expect significant staff attrition in the next 12 months

These figures point to a deeper organizational crisis. Funding cuts are reducing staff teams, forcing specialized workers out of their roles, increasing dependence on unpaid labor, and pushing remaining staff and volunteers into unsustainable workloads. Beyond fewer activities, the losses impact institutional memory, technical expertise, community trust, and the human infrastructure that allows LGBTIQ organizations to respond to crises, provide services, document abuses, and sustain advocacy over time.

Several organizations described this pressure in stark terms. In **West Africa**, an intersex-led organization explained that the loss of funding had made it impossible to maintain office space and paid staff: “All staff members are therefore working as volunteers under the current financial situation.”⁴³ In **Kenya**, Mamboleo Peer Empowerment Group (MPEG) described how staff losses affected not only internal capacity, but also the organization’s direct relationship with the community:

Funding cuts hit us hard at the community level. We had to let go of 100 peer educators, caregivers, outreach workers, and paralegals, the people who were not just staff but trusted faces within the LGBTQ community. These were the individuals who checked in on clients, supported them to stay on HIV treatment, responded to GBV [gender-based violence] cases, and ensured no one felt alone. With their absence, outreach activities stopped almost overnight. Safe spaces went quiet, food support was disrupted, and emergency shelter and evacuation assistance became difficult to sustain...At the same time, staff exits, canceled contracts, and limited supplies from county and national systems made it even harder to respond. What we lost was not just services but connection, trust, and a vital lifeline for our community.⁴⁴

This testimony captures a recurring theme in the survey. Peer educators, paralegals, outreach workers, psychosocial support staff, and case managers often serve as the bridge between marginalized LGBTIQ communities and the few services that are accessible to them. When staff are laid off, the relationships, continuity, and trusted community links they held go with them. Other organizations described having to reduce staff time and service capacity simultaneously. MOSAIC, working in **Lebanon** and the broader SWANA region, compared what it could deliver under a 2023 UN Women-funded project with what the smaller grants still available in 2025 allow:

We reduced all our staff members to part-time, including social worker, MEAL [Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning], finance, and case manager. Our service providers are providing less than half the number of services they used to provide: 20 beneficiaries for mental health versus 80 previously, and 40 legal sessions versus 120. We had to relocate the office to a smaller one, lower rent, but also smaller for community gatherings and mobilisation.⁴⁵

In **Türkiye**, the May 17 Association described a similar pattern: staff cuts, program closures, reduced working hours, and the loss of physical space happening at the same time:

We used to have two organizational operation locations: one for the administrative and advocacy works, the other one was for service delivery acting as a psycho-social and legal counseling clinic. The number of staff of the organization including part-times were 12 people. Since January 2025, we had to close our climate crisis and emergency response program, let go of 5 of our staff members including from within advocacy and psychological counselors. We had to shut down one of our office spaces, rearrange the working hours and [salaries] of our remaining staff.⁴⁶

The burden on staff and volunteers can lead to burnout. In **Kenya**, the founder of Winam Chanua Dada CBO (CHADALA) reported “suffering from serious burnout due to the heavy workload, as I have to handle everything on my own.”⁴⁷

In **Mexico**, Rainbow Foundation for Respect for Sexual Diversity [Fundación Arcoiris por el Respeto a la Diversidad Sexual] described how the search for replacement funding has itself become a major drain on staff capacity:

The team is under severe pressure. More than half of their time is spent seeking funding sources and drafting grant proposals. This has significantly limited their ability to focus on their day-to-day work in research, advocacy, and outreach.⁴⁸

Specialized functions disappear the moment the grant that paid for them ends, and in the current environment, there is nothing to replace them with. The African Queer Youth Initiative (AQYI), a pan-African network of LGBTIQ youth activists, lost its monitoring, evaluation, and learning officer with the scheduled closure of a Dutch-funded Love Alliance grant.⁴⁹ The post was fully funded under that grant, and it became, in the network’s words, “a core function,” one that “ensured consistent outcome tracking, stronger documentation, safer data practices, internal learning, and credible donor reporting” across its programs. “When the funding ended, that capacity was lost almost immediately.”⁵⁰

The duties were passed to program and support staff who were already stretched, and what had been a dedicated role became one more task competing for attention. AQYI has since had “to scale back crucial work we previously started well, including structured outcome tracking and regular learning reviews”—precisely the evidence base on which both accountability and the next round of fundraising depend.

CASE STUDY · NORTH AFRICA

A Staff of One, After a Decade of Work

An LGBTIQ organization in North Africa, unnamed here for security reasons, put numbers to this contraction with painful precision. Operating for over a decade in one of the region's most restrictive environments, it lost roughly 70 to 80% of its budget when three donors withdrew after the executive order, ending four projects that spanned therapeutic support, well-being programming, legal aid, and community services. A team of around 12 people fell first to five and then, effectively, to one person carrying the remaining work, and the specialized legal and mental health capacity the organization had built up thinned out with it. Services that had extended beyond the capital retreated to a single city.

What remains is triage, and the organization's director described what triage does to a service built on trust: "I'm completely burnt out. We're having to prioritize the worst cases, which creates bias and lack of clarity." The organization identifies refugees and migrants from neighboring countries in crisis among those most affected by the loss of mental health, physical health, and legal support. After more than a decade of building services in a hostile context, its director described this as the worst period the organization has experienced, and framed the fear as a lasting condition rather than a single event: "What worries me the most is the situation staying like this. We're going backwards."⁵¹

In the **Dominican Republic**, Diversidad Dominicana's experience shows how extreme this survival cycle can become: an organization forced to spend so much of what little it has left on simply keeping its doors open—rent, utilities, a minimal staff, its legal registration—that almost nothing remains for its actual work. Over the years, the organization had expanded its territorial presence to all 32 provinces of the country. It sustained an unusually broad portfolio for its size: a School of Political Leadership that identified, prepared, and accompanied LGBTIQ candidates for elected office, legal aid, and strategic litigation reaching the Inter-American system, community education in working-class neighborhoods, and emergency assistance for people facing violence, homelessness, or mental health crises. The funding cuts hit nearly every one of these functions at once.

Today, the organization is holding on to its core. Its remaining resources go to keeping the office open, paying utilities, retaining a minimal administrative structure, and preserving its legal existence, so that it can rebuild when conditions allow. But the work that serves people directly has narrowed sharply. The rapid-response role it once played, accompanying people in crisis to trusted medical providers, helping women leave unsafe homes and access shelters or prosecutors' offices safely, and mobilizing small amounts of financial or in-kind assistance, can no longer be performed consistently. Provincial outreach has largely stopped because the organization can no longer cover fuel, transport, or materials, and the planned fifth cohort of the leadership school has been put on hold, interrupting a pipeline for queer political participation that has no equivalent in the country.

At the same time, the organization's leadership has faced direct threats. In September 2025, Diversidad Dominicana's director was forced into exile under the protection of Amnesty International, after sustained death threats tied to her human rights work—at the very moment when the organization's capacity to protect, accompany, and advocate has been sharply reduced.⁵²

Diversidad Dominicana now names closure as a real risk, one that it is actively working to avoid. Its loss would remove community infrastructure built over decades, just as its communities need it most. As the organization put it, the funding cuts “have directly impacted our lives in deeply harmful ways. We no longer have the resources to confront violence or provide the support our community needs.”⁵³

These examples go beyond reduced program budgets. The cuts are destabilizing organizations’ internal foundations: staff, offices, specialized roles, volunteer capacity, institutional knowledge, and the time needed to do substantive work. In many cases, organizations are being forced to choose among keeping their doors open, paying staff, maintaining core services, and searching for new funding. This creates a survival cycle in which organizations spend more time trying to remain operational and less time doing the work their communities urgently need.

The organizational impact of funding cuts is therefore cumulative: fewer paid staff, more unpaid labor, reduced expertise, higher burnout, and weaker capacity to sustain the community relationships on which LGBTIQ movements depend.

4 The Erosion of Community Infrastructure

Funding cuts are eroding the physical and relational infrastructure that queer communities rely on. Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported experiencing loss of funding since January 2025, 33% reported reduced or discontinued access to office space, including the closure of regional offices or shifts to remote work. This loss is felt directly by communities: reduced community spaces or support networks were the most commonly reported consequence in the entire survey, identified by 68% of affected organizations as one of the main ways the cuts have affected the people they work with.

68%

reported reduced community spaces or support networks—the most commonly reported consequence in the entire survey

33%

reported reduced or discontinued access to office space, including regional office closures or shifts to remote work

In many contexts, LGBTIQ organization offices are among the few spaces where people of queer experience can safely gather, receive information, access referrals, seek emergency support, or build collective power. A drop-in center or community hub is often where violence at home is first disclosed, where an eviction is caught before it becomes homelessness, and where someone finds the trusted referral that keeps a crisis from escalating. When these spaces close, the loss goes beyond operations: it is social, emotional, political, and protective. It weakens community visibility, interrupts leadership development, reduces territorial presence, and leaves people with fewer places to turn when they need help.

In **Ecuador**, an organization described the closure of a community house that had operated for nearly a decade as a safe space and leadership-development hub:

Since 2016, we have succeeded in creating a safe space for women and LGBTIQ+ individuals. In this space, groups would meet and various services were provided, but above all, new leaders were developed and the LGBTIQ+ organizational network in [our city] was strengthened. On February 1 of this year, shortly before celebrating 10 years of existence and comprehensive care, we were forced to close [our community house]. It has been a true loss for the LGBTIQ+ communities in our city and the country as a whole, as we were a model of self-management and resistance in one of Ecuador's most conservative cities.⁵⁴

This loss of physical space is also visible in reduced territorial presence. In **Indonesia**, an organization on Sulawesi island reported that funding constraints have limited its ability to reach “almost all parts of [the province], especially the most remote districts.”⁵⁵

CASE STUDY · THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TÜRKİYE

Defunding's Downstream Effects

The damage from funding cuts can also travel downstream. When regional and grantmaking organizations lose their funding, the grassroots groups they support lose the flexible resources that keep their own spaces and services running. ERA, the LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Türkiye, lost U.S. funding that had underwritten its support to member organizations across the region:

One concrete example is the loss of our ability to provide small grants and sustained peer-to-peer capacity support to member organisations across the Western Balkans and Turkey. For a regional network like ERA, this is not peripheral work. It is how local groups keep safe spaces open, maintain community services, exchange expertise and remain visible in increasingly hostile environments. When funding is cut, the first thing that disappears is flexible support for grassroots organisations, especially smaller groups working with trans people, sex workers, people living with HIV, migrants and others facing layered marginalisation. The result is not simply fewer activities. It is weaker community infrastructure, less protection, and fewer people reached where support is most urgently needed.⁵⁶

The decline is not always sudden. In Kuala Lumpur, **Malaysia**, KL Queer Space, a community hub serving queer youth and trans and gender-diverse people, including many who feel unwelcome even in mainstream queer spaces, has experienced the cuts as a gradual narrowing. Since January 2025, the organization has paused hires that were already approved and shortlisted, delayed its strategy and internal systems work, reduced stipends for facilitators and volunteers, and cut back community events and open space hours because fewer staff were available to hold them. The space's informal role as a first point of contact for people in difficulty has become harder to sustain, more dependent on volunteer goodwill, and the organization has stepped back from coalition and advocacy spaces for lack of time and energy, at a moment of intensifying conservative rhetoric and moral policing in Malaysia.

According to KL Queer Space, one of its beneficiaries had described the space as the only place they felt safe being themselves; when it had to close for a period, they had nowhere else to go. As the organization described it, the harm has arrived quietly, as a slow loss of availability: fewer open hours, fewer events, slower responses, and the gradual removal of a lifeline for people already at the margins.⁵⁷

At Noboprobhaat Foundation, a grassroots organization founded in 2018 in rural northern **Bangladesh** to empower young people of diverse genders and sexualities, Indigenous communities, and marginalized women, nearly everything hinged on a single rented office. Before receiving support through the USAID Equality Project, Noboprobhaat operated without an office or paid staff, holding its activities informally in marketplaces and open grounds. Renting premises changed the organization's scale. The office became a workspace, a coordination base, and, above all, a safe space where diverse rural youth could come after a day's work to spend time together, talk openly, and seek support—a rare trusted point of contact in a region marked by limited transport, poor connectivity, and the absence of any other queer infrastructure.

The funding cuts undid this in days. Notified without warning that the project would not continue, Noboprobhaat had to let its staff go and give up the premises almost immediately. In the organization's words, "everything was stopped overnight." And because so many functions were embedded in that single space, they all collapsed with it. The peer counseling sessions, where community members processed family rejection, pressure to marry, and threats from extremist groups, lost their physical setting. The monthly legal sessions with the organization's lawyer, who accompanied cases of violence and family rejection before police and courts, came to an end, removing a rare access-to-justice pathway in the region. The handicraft-based livelihood training, designed for trans people and others separated from their families, was interrupted. Some participants who had relied on sex work before the program had to return to it, and the organization has lost contact with others altogether.

The cuts also weakened Noboprobhaat’s ability to respond to rising digital threats. Its structured online safety training was created for people of queer experience who were using social media and dating apps for the first time, in a context marked by the threat of doxxing by extremist groups. The training now survives only in a reduced form, sustained by volunteers and small flexible funds. Engagement in a region where activists had spent years building informal referral networks and a volunteer base has narrowed again, leaving fewer pathways through which isolated sexual and gender minorities can find information, support, and connection. For Noboprobhaat, seven years of slow institutional construction were reversed in a matter of days, returning the organization to the conditions in which it started, at a moment when the risks facing its community are higher—anti-LGBTIQ violence in Bangladesh has continued to rise, part of an upward trend documented since 2022—and expectations of support have already been created.⁵⁸

These cases show that funding cuts are closing or weakening the spaces through which LGBTIQ movements become visible, accessible, and resilient. Community infrastructure is built slowly, through years of trust, presence, and relationship-building. Once lost, it cannot be quickly replaced. A shuttered office, a discontinued community hub, or a suspended small-grants program can leave entire communities with fewer places to gather, fewer trusted people to contact, and fewer pathways to safety and support.

The erosion of community infrastructure shows that, beyond reducing what LGBTIQ organizations do, funding cuts are shrinking the physical and social spaces that make collective survival, protection, and organizing possible.

“Everything was stopped overnight.”

— Noboprobhaat Foundation, Bangladesh

5 Emergency Response, Shelter, and Protection Gaps

Funding cuts are weakening the ability of LGBTIQ organizations to respond when community members face immediate threats to their safety, liberty, housing, or survival. Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported loss of funding since January 2025, 63% reported that they were unable to respond to emergencies or protection needs. This includes situations involving violence, threats, arrests, displacement, homelessness, loss of shelter, and urgent relocation needs.

Nowhere is this more immediate than in the loss of shelter. Shelters and safe houses are the point where the funding crisis translates most directly into physical danger: they are where a person sleeps on the night they flee violence, eviction, or family rejection, and when these spaces close, the alternatives are the street, the unsafe home, or the grasp of an aggressor. Survey responses and interviews document shelters closing or at risk on four continents, including in settings marked by armed conflict.

In **Kenya**, Nadharia CBO works with LBQ women, queer refugees and displaced people, youth, and people with disabilities, in a context of criminalization, poverty, and anti-LGBTIQ violence. The organization closed its shelter when the rent became unaffordable, and the office is now operating on borrowed time: “We have been given a grace period for our office, but if we do not pay, we will lose it as well.” Termination letters went out in December 2025, and the staff have worked as volunteers since.⁵⁹

In **Peru**, Féminas described the risk facing Hogar Féminas, a long-standing transitional shelter and community space for trans women, where an immediate safety net lies in the balance:

A concrete example is the case of Hogar Féminas, a community space that has worked tirelessly for more than 10 years to empower, raise awareness about, and defend the rights of transgender women in Peru. Located in Lima, this space was the first transitional shelter for transgender people, benefiting thousands of women who found refuge, support, and a safe community there where they could be themselves without fear. For a decade, we have held weekly meetings and provided comprehensive support; however, funding cuts have directly impacted our ability to sustain this work. Currently, the lack of resources limits access to the shelter and makes it difficult to cover basic needs such as electricity, water, and facility maintenance. This situation not only reduces the scope of our work but also puts the shelter at real risk of closure, which would leave many trans people without a safe space and essential support.⁶⁰

In **Saint Lucia**, Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia ran two safe houses, one for women and children and another for LGBTIQ people, in a country where a landlord who discovers or suspects a tenant’s sexual orientation or gender identity may force them out without warning. The shelters provided immediate housing while longer-term solutions were arranged, as part of a support pathway of six to eight months that could combine counseling, legal aid, rental assistance, food, medical care, and economic empowerment. The funding cuts forced the organization to give up both leases. Emergency shelter now depends on costlier stopgaps—a shared apartment, a guesthouse room paid by the night when funds allow—alongside referrals to government welfare systems that can take up to 90 days to respond. The comprehensive support pathway has given way to triage: the organization now takes in fewer people and weighs whether each person’s circumstances are “severe enough” to warrant assistance at all. As it put it in its survey response, it has gone from being an organization that helped people rebuild their lives to one that can only offer a band-aid. When the alternatives to the organization’s own shelter are a ninety-day welfare queue or a guesthouse rate it may not be able to cover, the organization framed what has been lost in the plainest terms available to it: as a matter of life and death.⁶¹

These are not isolated cases. As described below, in **Kenya**, an LBQ women’s shelter can no longer feed its residents and has been displaced to a rural area, and shelters serving LGBTIQ refugees have scaled down. An LGBTIQ-led refugee organization in **Uganda** has lost the emergency relocation support that once moved people facing immediate violence to safer locations. Organizations in **Indonesia** and **Tunisia** have stopped or reduced the housing support they once provided. Shelter is the form of protection whose loss is measured in immediate risk to life, and it is disappearing across regions at once.

WHERE CRISES OVERLAP

Among the 60 respondents who identified humanitarian crisis or armed conflict as part of the context in which they operate:



Across all 203 affected organizations, 63% reported being unable to respond to emergencies or protection needs.

These numbers suggest that funding cuts are reducing protection capacity in the very contexts where sexual and gender minorities face heightened risks and where mainstream humanitarian responses often fail to meet their needs. In these settings, LGBTIQ organizations frequently serve as first responders. They provide emergency shelter, safe relocation, psychosocial support, legal referrals, food assistance, rapid protection funds, documentation, and connection to trusted service providers. When these capacities disappear, community members are not simply referred elsewhere. In many cases, there is nowhere else safe, affirming, or accessible for them to go.

CASE STUDY · TANZANIA

“Weakened Trust” in Tanzania

Several organizations described this loss of emergency response capacity in concrete terms. In Tanzania, an organization in a small city in the country’s interior described how funding cuts disrupted its ability to relocate people facing immediate threats:

Funding cuts have directly disrupted our ability to provide emergency protection and relocation support for LGBTQ+ individuals facing immediate threats. We previously maintained a small but reliable emergency fund that allowed us to quickly relocate individuals at risk of arrest or violence to safe locations. Due to recent funding gaps, we were unable to respond adequately to a recent case involving five staff members and community activists who required urgent relocation. While we secured temporary shelter through partner support, we could not cover long-term relocation, security, or basic needs. This has left individuals in prolonged uncertainty and increased risk. The cuts have not only limited our responsiveness but also weakened trust within the community, as we are no longer able to guarantee timely and comprehensive support in crisis situations.⁶²

Middle East Voice, an Iraqi-led organization that documents human rights violations against LGBTIQ people in **Iraq** and works to make their experiences visible through reporting, investigative journalism, and public campaigns, told Outright:

Without funding, we have lost the ability to safely reach vulnerable individuals, document their experiences, or provide even minimal support in moments of crisis. In a country where LGBTQ+ voices are already silenced by fear and stigma, this means deeper isolation and invisibility.⁶³

In **West Africa**, a regional organization reported the impact of the closure of its emergency response fund:

We had an emergency response fund to support activists and grassroots organizations in crisis, but we had to close it. Since then, we have gotten about 100+ applications that are unsupported.⁶⁴

In **Malawi**, Ivy Foundation described how services for queer women, including safe spaces and emergency housing, were reduced or halted:

Funding cuts have significantly impacted our ability to carry out critical work that once provided safety and support to LBQ women in our communities. Previously, we were able to maintain safe spaces, offer emergency housing, and respond directly to cases of violence—services that are rarely available elsewhere in the country. With the loss of funding, these essential interventions have been scaled down or completely halted.⁶⁵

In **Ghana**, an organization supporting sex workers, LGBTIQ people, and gender nonconforming people, unnamed here for security reasons, has watched its emergency response capacity erode piece by piece rather than all at once. Many of the people it serves live and work in discreet, hidden, or semi-rural locations—slums, spaces behind markets, areas accessible only by motorbike—and are often reluctant or unable to seek protection from mainstream institutions. Its rapid response system rested on three conditions: trusted community contact, available hands to help, and resources to act quickly. When someone faced violence, harassment, or a sudden eviction by a landlord who discovered how they earned a living or whom they loved, they knew whom to call.

The funding cuts dismantled each of those conditions in turn. Field visits, once carried out around three days a week to distribute condoms, test kits, lubricants, and other health supplies, have fallen to one, sustained by roughly three volunteers, of whom the organization acknowledges only so much can reasonably be asked. Demand, meanwhile, is moving in the opposite direction: the organization receives growing reports of violence, of harassment of people perceived to be LGBTIQ or gender nonconforming, and of sex workers thrown out by landlords with nowhere to go. Behind this rising need is Ghana's anti-LGBTQ bill—passed by Parliament in May 2026 but still undergoing revision at the time of writing—which has already deepened fear, stigma, and trauma.⁶⁶

What worries the organization most is a quieter loss. Its protective role was built through repeated evidence, over the years, that someone would answer in a moment of crisis, and inconsistency is now dismantling that certainty:

These are people who have always put their trust in us. When they face emergencies, including violence, they call us. But now our rapid response system is no longer functioning as before. Now people ask, “If we need you in an emergency, will you be there?” Those questions alone break trust.⁶⁷

The protection gap is especially acute for LGBTIQ refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and displaced people. In **Kenya**, Resilient Hearts Africa described how cuts reduced shelter support:

One clear example is our shelter support for highly vulnerable refugee women and LGBTIQ individuals. Through Resilient Hearts Africa, we previously provided safe accommodation, basic food, and mental health support to those facing violence and displacement. However, due to recent funding cuts, we have been forced to scale down these services significantly. As a result, some beneficiaries who once relied on our shelter have been left without consistent access to safe housing and essential supplies. This has increased their exposure to homelessness, exploitation, and deteriorating mental health. This shift has directly limited our ability to offer immediate protection and holistic care—work that was central to our mission of ensuring safety, dignity, and resilience for marginalized refugees and asylum seekers.⁶⁸

CASE STUDY · TÜRKİYE

When a Partnership Ends Abruptly

When UN agencies retreat as a result of unanticipated funding shortfalls, their local partners absorb the shock. In Türkiye, Kaos GL, the country’s longest-standing queer organization, reported that UNHCR’s withdrawal from a collaborative project forced the closure of its Refugee Rights Program office, staff layoffs, and an 85% reduction in program activities:

The UNHCR in Türkiye unilaterally withdrew from our collaborative project for LGBTI+ refugees in 2025 which caused our association to shut down the Refugee Rights Program office, lay off staff members and reduced the program activities by 85%. This caused LGBTI+ refugees [to be] left alone without psycho-social and legal support, and community support.⁶⁹

In **Mexico**, the funding cuts hit the broader humanitarian and migration sector hard: UNHCR lost roughly 60% of its budget and closed four offices, and aid groups reported that some organizations ceased operations in Mexico entirely, leaving fewer services to refer people to.⁷⁰ Casa Frida, an LGBTIQ shelter serving refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced people, described how that contraction has concentrated pressure on the LGBTIQ organizations still standing:

Most humanitarian organizations working on migration and displacement in Mexico have closed operations, increasing the burden of services and protection on ours, which pushes us to bear a great responsibility to resist.⁷¹

In conflict-affected contexts, the cuts reduced already fragile support systems. In **Ukraine**, one queer-led organization that combines counseling and emergency response with legal advocacy and human rights documentation, working with displaced people, people living with HIV, and sex workers, among others, described how reduced staffing and hours have left some LGBTIQ people without timely support:

After the funding cuts, we were forced to stop paying some of our specialists and reduce our hours for handling inquiries...We used to be able to respond promptly to requests and support people throughout the entire process of resolving their issues, whereas now we are forced to limit ourselves to one-time consultations or refuse assistance altogether due to a lack of resources.⁷²

Also in **Ukraine**, LGBT Association LIGA reported that funding cuts were likely to interrupt medical and psychological services during wartime:

Our organization supported a medical team consisting of two family doctors, a psychiatrist, and two psychological counselors who provided high-quality counseling to people who often lack access to LGBTQ+-friendly medical and psychological services. Due to funding cuts, we cannot guarantee the continuation of this work—there will not be enough funds to cover specialists and rent. For many people, this will mean losing their only safe access to help.⁷³

Alliance Global, one of Ukraine's longest-standing LGBTIQ organizations, founded in 2002, present in seven regions and active in the National LGBTIQ+ Consortium of Ukraine, shows what sustaining protection under wartime defunding entails. Its infrastructure includes three shelters, safe spaces, a paralegal hub, humanitarian aid, HIV and STI services, and a mental health program that has involved thirteen psychologists and two psychiatrists. That infrastructure matters doubly because, in practice, few mainstream humanitarian providers offer services specifically for sexual and gender minorities—leaving national LGBTIQ organizations to fill the gap—and because the war itself constrains access: gay and bisexual men who fear military mobilization may be unable to travel, or even leave home, to get to services. When Alliance Global cannot reach them, in many cases, no one does.

The cuts are eroding this system from several directions at once. The Global Fund is reducing support by 15% this year and another 15% in 2027; protection projects have lost 30 to 40% of their budgets; some funding streams have ended entirely. Alliance Global has laid off staff, lost its procurement officer, and shut down its hotline. Its director also named a structural bias the crisis has exposed: donors fund visible project staff more readily than the operational roles that keep an organization functioning, and rarely fund mental health support for the workers themselves. “It’s very difficult to help other people when you have to help yourself,” he emphasized. His greatest worry concerns the physical infrastructure of protection: “What worries us the most is being able to sustain current levels of services, especially shelter and safe houses.”⁷⁴

Taken together, these testimonies place emergency response at the center of how communities survive hostile environments, violence, criminalization, displacement, and crisis. Funding cuts reduce not only the number of people organizations can help, but also the speed, consistency, and trustworthiness of that help. They transform organizations from actors able to intervene into actors that can only listen, refer, or turn people away.

As emergency funds, shelters, relocation support, and crisis response teams disappear, funding cuts are widening protection gaps for LGBTIQ people at precisely the moments when timely support can determine whether they remain safe, housed, connected, and alive.

6 Health Services Under Threat

Funding cuts are weakening community-led health systems that many people of queer experience rely on, particularly in contexts where government and private-sector health facilities are inaccessible, unsafe, or discriminatory. Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported loss of funding since January 2025, 51% reported reducing, suspending, or discontinuing health services, including those focused on mental health. A larger share, 58%, reported that LGBTIQ people they work with lost access to health services.

The cuts strike directly into lifesaving and dignity-affirming services: HIV testing, treatment adherence support, PrEP information, STI prevention, mental health counseling, psychosocial support, harm reduction tools, reproductive health services, health referrals, and safe community-based care. In many contexts, these services are effective because they are community-led: they are delivered by trusted organizations that understand the specific risks faced by LGBTIQ people and can help them navigate stigma, discrimination, criminalization, and fear of exposure.

HIV Services

The impact of the funding withdrawal on HIV-related work is substantial. Among affected organizations, 45% reported reductions, suspensions, or discontinuation of HIV prevention, treatment, or care, while 50% identified LGBTIQ people living with HIV as one of the constituencies most affected by the suspension or reduction of their work. Fifty-seven percent of affected organizations reported cuts to HIV-related services, identified LGBTIQ people living with HIV among the most affected groups, or both.

51%

reduced, suspended, or discontinued health services, including mental health

45%

reduced or discontinued HIV prevention, treatment, or care

50%

named LGBTIQ people living with HIV among the constituencies most affected

58%

reported that LGBTIQ people they work with lost access to health services

Several organizations described the immediate consequences of losing HIV-related funding. In **Zimbabwe**, one organization reported that funding cuts disrupted HIV testing, counseling, and access to medication for LGBTIQ people living with HIV:

The organisation was mobilising MSM [men who have sex with men] and Transwomen for HIV testing and counseling. With the funding cuts we are unable to refill medication for our constituents which has led to defaulting and in severe cases death of 2 of the people who defaulted.⁷⁵

In **Nigeria**, Community Health Initiative for Youths in Nigeria described how cuts affected its work in rural areas where sexual and gender minorities already have limited access to healthcare:

The funding cut has seriously affected our outreach program to the LGBTIQ community over here, which is focused on HIV treatment and prevention. Before the funding cut we usually conducted HIV testing, health education, condom distribution, prep administration and treated other STIs infection in rural areas where LGBTIQ community members have low access to healthcare. Due to funding cuts we no longer provide these services due to inadequate funds to cover the gaps created. Medical supplies, transportation and staffing are seriously limited.⁷⁶

In **Malawi**, an organization described the suspension of community-led programs that had connected men who have sex with men and transgender people to HIV testing, legal referrals, and psychosocial support:

A clear example is the suspension of our community-led outreach program for key populations in hard-to-reach districts such as Mangochi and Mzuzu. Previously, with adequate funding, we conducted regular mobile clinics offering HIV testing and referrals for legal and psychosocial support. These outreaches were critical in reaching MSM [men who have sex with men] and transgender individuals who face stigma in public health facilities. However, recent funding cuts have forced us to scale down these activities significantly. We are no longer able to sustain transport, outreach allowances and commodity distribution, resulting in zero clinics and no follow-up support. As a result, many community members have lost consistent access to life-saving services, increasing their vulnerability to HIV infection, untreated GBV [gender-based violence] cases and disengagement from care.⁷⁷

In **Ghana**, one organization connected HIV-related vulnerability to economic insecurity, noting that community members living with HIV struggled to adhere to treatment when they could not meet basic needs:

LGBTQ community members living with HIV/ AIDS find it difficult to be taking their medication because they complain of not having money to get 3 square meals a day. [My organization tries] to empower them with skills so that when they are masters on their own they can be able to provide for themselves but because of the funds cut we were not able to continue again.⁷⁸

In **Jordan**, a queer-led organization reported shortages in harm reduction supplies—tools and sterile equipment designed to minimize the negative health effects associated with substance use:

[We have] a limited amount of harm reduction tools and kits. The available stock doesn't meet the high demand which increases the risk of contracting HIV and other STIs.⁷⁹

The survey results demonstrate how health services, safe spaces, and protection systems are often interconnected. In **Eswatini**, HealthPlus 4 Men described the overlapping impacts of the closure of drop-in centers:

One concrete example is the shutdown of our safe space drop-in centers for the LGBTI community in Manzini and Mbabane. For years, these centers provided confidential HIV testing, mental health support, legal referrals and a safe environment for people facing stigma and violence. When funding was cut, we were forced to close the centers. Within months we noticed a decline in LGBTI clients accessing HIV prevention services at public facilities and community paralegals noted an increase in unreported cases of harassment because survivors no longer had a trusted place to seek help. The closure also disrupted our outreach to transgender individuals, who relied on the centers for linkage to gender affirming health information. This single loss illustrates how funding cuts have directly removed one of the few safe, affirming spaces available to LGBTI people in Eswatini, reversing progress in health access, protection, and community resilience.⁸⁰

In **Kenya**, Jinsiangu Kenya described how the withdrawal of funding disrupted access to services:

USAID PEPFAR funding cuts abruptly halted our implementation of Kenya’s National HIV/STI Guidelines for Transgender People, disrupting critical community-led health interventions. The funding withdrawal forced the suspension of outreach activities, sensitization forums, and safe community spaces that connected Intersex, Transgender, and Gender Non-Conforming (ITGNC) people to affirming HIV, [sexual and reproductive health], mental health and legal support services. We were compelled to lay off trained peer educators and paralegals at the same time that affirming health workers in link facilities were being let go, significantly weakening community access to care and justice pathways.⁸¹

CASE STUDY · NEPAL

Clinics Closed Overnight

In Nepal, Blue Diamond Society, the country’s pioneering LGBTIQ organization, founded in 2001, saw at the national scale where people are left when community-led HIV services vanish. The organization grew out of HIV outreach and went on to bring the litigation that led Nepal’s Supreme Court to order legal recognition of gender minorities in 2007.⁸² In 2024, the organization received USAID funding for an HIV service delivery program spanning 21 districts and 24 service sites, including clinic-based dispensing of PrEP. Blue Diamond Society described the program as part of its movement’s broader struggle “for the right to health, wellbeing, and accessible services.”

In February 2025, as the stop-work order took effect, Blue Diamond Society received instructions that shut down staff and community activity overnight: “Don’t go to the office. Lock your office. Don’t leave your house.” The instruction arrived in the same weeks that the organization was hosting the tenth ILGA Asia Conference in Kathmandu, the largest gathering of its kind ever held in Nepal, with roughly 600 participants from more than 150 countries.⁸³ The clinics closed, and with them went the supplies communities relied on—condoms, lubricant, PrEP. Blue Diamond Society estimated that 400 to 500 people connected to the program were affected.

Two consequences stand out. First, displacement into stigma. Nepal’s epidemic is concentrated among populations whom the general health system serves poorly, and the clinics worked because a trans woman or a man who has sex with men could use them without having to explain themselves. Queer people seeking treatment now “go to ART sites of government where they face stigma and discrimination,” while the organization has lost the ability to track what is happening. “Service is interrupted. We don’t know prevalence data.”⁸⁴ *(continued)*

CASE STUDY · NEPAL (CONTINUED)

Second, the loss of community employment: the clinics had employed doctors, health assistants, and lab workers alongside community members hired from the populations they served—grassroots peer and support staff, many with little formal education and few other job opportunities. Executive Director Manisha Dhakal identified the hardest moment as the one where the two losses became a single conversation: “Most difficult moment was telling them we had to close the clinic and tell everyone their jobs are gone. You have to go home.” In July 2026, the Associated Press reported that roughly 100 former aid workers in Nepal, including outreach workers from organizations in Blue Diamond Society’s network, had turned to sex work after losing that income.⁸⁵

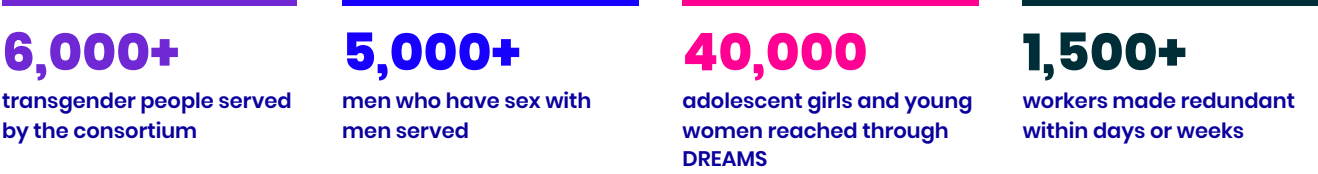
The disruption also spread beyond HIV services: Blue Diamond Society’s awareness programs on sexual and reproductive health and rights and on gender-based violence were interrupted, and the organization counts women sex workers and people experiencing gender-based violence among those most affected. A residue of milestone funds now sustains two or three people coordinating referrals into government services, and is expected to run out soon. The withdrawal carried a message as well as a budget decision. For Dhakal, the U.S. executive order recognizing only two sexes contributed to a shift that activists could feel in forums where she had worked for years: “When Trump said there are only two genders, it affected discourse and stakeholders. We faced more stigma in those forums.” Organizations came under pressure to present themselves in terms that would not disqualify them from the funding that remained, and she put the cost of that in the first person: “We had to lose our identity as transgender women.” Participation fell as well, because “people were scared to participate in the program.”

For an organization whose long-term goal was to strengthen the public system, the cuts have inverted the sequence: communities were pushed into government services before those services were made safe for them. Dhakal offered a message to philanthropies and corporate funders in the U.S.: “Please don’t do the same as your government is doing.”⁸⁶

“Most difficult moment was telling them we had to close the clinic and [telling] everyone their jobs are gone. You have to go home.”

— Manisha Dhakal, Blue Diamond Society, Nepal

What these losses can amount to at a national scale is visible in a country in **Southern Africa** where a consortium of public health, human rights, and key-population-led organizations, whose members are not named here for security reasons, had built one of the region’s most developed community-based HIV platforms with USAID and PEPFAR support. Its wellness centers and drop-in spaces operated as one-stop, key-population-friendly service points outside mainstream facilities, offering HIV testing, oral and long-acting injectable PrEP, treatment-related support, mental health services, and economic empowerment activities in environments shaped by confidentiality and peer trust. Its outreach followed the country’s main transport corridors, extending across multiple provinces from its border regions to its principal urban and mining hubs. The consortium served more than 6,000 transgender people, more than 5,000 men who have sex with men, and large numbers of female sex workers, while some 40,000 adolescent girls and young women benefited from PEPFAR’s DREAMS programming. It was also among the first implementers globally to provide long-acting injectable PrEP outside a study setting.



The stop-work orders of January 2025 dismantled this platform almost overnight. Instructed to stop work “until further notice,” the consortium had to close its wellness centers and drop-in spaces, ground its vehicles, and stop using supplies already in hand if they were associated with USAID funding. As the shutdown took hold, staff lost access to their work email accounts, with no guidance on how to contact clients who were due for medication refills, injections, or follow-up appointments. More than 1,500 workers, from clinicians to frontline outreach staff, were made redundant within days or weeks, without communication about salaries or contractual entitlements. Former employees described losing medical coverage, struggling with rent and loans, and withdrawing children from their schools.

What followed was not a transition but a rupture in care. Because the stop-work order required the consortium to halt all activity at once, there was no structured handover, no client-transition plan, and no mechanism to keep people in prevention or treatment pathways. In a limited effort to soften the transition, a small number of former staff were brought in as short-term consultants to help move clients and grants into the Ministry of Health system. They could not replace the specialized workforce behind the platform.

Public facilities, already stretched thin, were suddenly expected to absorb thousands of clients. Nor could those facilities replicate the trust on which uptake depended: many lacked training to serve men who have sex with men, transgender people, and sex workers in a context marked by stigma and criminalization. With client-tracking systems down and much of the consortium never permitted to resume operations, there was no longer any way to know who had continued treatment, who had defaulted or stopped PrEP, who might be developing drug resistance, and who had been lost to follow-up altogether.

For the public health specialist interviewed for this report, who had worked with U.S.-supported HIV programming in the Southern African country since the inception of PEPFAR in the early 2000s, the shutdown ruptured a partnership of more than two decades. He described it as “a sudden divorce,” delivered without warning or the chance to close the project cycle properly. His assessment of what was lost is sobering:

It takes one minute to destroy all that which you have built over years. PEPFAR had built its foundation deep-rooted in many countries, and its dismantling to the zero ground may take another 20 to 25 years to rebuild in terms of putting together strong human resources, strong people, management, and expertise.⁸⁷

CASE STUDY · TONGA

Cutting Prevention in the Pacific

In the Pacific, funding cuts are impacting HIV prevention in countries where the epidemic has so far remained contained. Tonga, a country of roughly one hundred thousand people, reported only five people living with HIV at the end of 2025, a record sustained in part by community-based testing, HIV education, prevention services, and early linkage to treatment delivered by organizations such as the Tonga Leitis Association (TLA), which works with leitis—Tongans assigned male at birth who live with a feminine gender expression—and other LGBTIQ people, sex workers, and older persons.⁸⁸

According to a representative of TLA, the withdrawal of funding reduces the number of activities the organization can run and erodes the prevention infrastructure behind that record—this, at a time when neighboring Fiji has declared a national HIV outbreak, with newly reported cases tripling in a single year.⁸⁹ Where testing and outreach become less accessible, infections are detected later, and opportunities to prevent transmission are missed. The representative also identified a consequence reaching beyond public health: a rise in infections would hand new material to those who already stigmatize leitis and other gender-diverse people in Tonga, by holding them responsible for it.⁹⁰

Mental Health and Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Health services focused on mental health are also being reduced, even as stress, violence, displacement, and economic insecurity increase. In **Kenya**, a community-based organization emphasized the importance of community spaces for psychosocial support, especially in rural areas:

The core of our work is health, specifically mental health and SRHR [sexual and reproductive health and rights]. With less to no funding our community does not access a community space we used to have and this has affected the quality of life. Queer people in the rural areas need a space to meet and talk about life issues especially in the current political climate. These safe spaces offer psycho-social support to our community which they need to thrive.⁹¹

The sexual and reproductive health of lesbian, bisexual, and queer women, trans men, and other sexual and gender minorities assigned female at birth occupies a particular blind spot in this crisis. Mainstream sexual and reproductive health systems are generally built around the assumptions of heterosexual, cisgender patients, while HIV funding streams have historically centered on gay, bisexual, and queer men and trans women. LBQ women and transmasculine people fall into a gap between the two categories: their needs, from gynecological and contraceptive care to fertility services, support for pregnant people, and care following gender-based violence, are often addressed only by community-led organizations, when they are addressed at all. Those organizations are among the least funded in the movement: within LGBTIQ funding, which is itself less than 1% of all foundation and government funding, only an estimated 5% is directed specifically to lesbian, bisexual, and queer issues.⁹² The cuts documented in this section are therefore falling on services that had few institutional alternatives to begin with.

For young LBQ women in **Kenya**, mental health support and physical safety came through the same door. Winam Chanua Dada CBO (CHADALA) is a community-based organization led by and serving young LBQ women, including teenage mothers and survivors of violence, who are served by few other organizations and whose sexual and reproductive health needs are largely invisible to both mainstream services and LGBTIQ-focused funding. CHADALA established its Salama Wadada shelter in 2021 with funding from a partner organization that was itself funded by USAID. The shelter combined safety, food, and mental health programming into holistic support that allowed women in crisis to stabilize, and it doubled as the organization's home and community space.

In 2025, CHADALA lost 100% of the funding it expected for the program. Unable to pay rent, it closed the shelter and relocated to another county, where access is harder and discrimination sharper. The mental health program could not be sustained, and the organization could no longer feed residents. Its representatives said the organization now receives cases from women reporting violence but can no longer offer them shelter, and that the entire team had to be let go, leaving two people to keep it running from home without salaries. One of them described the toll it has taken on the community and on herself: "It's overwhelming, discouraging."⁹³ For one of the constituencies the survey identifies as most affected, the arithmetic is simple: when an LBQ women's organization is defunded, psychological support, safety, shelter, and food disappear altogether.

In **Peru**, Fraternidad Trans Masculina Perú reported the cancellation of a regional project focused on trans men's health—an area encompassing gender-affirming care, reproductive health, and mental health support for people assigned female at birth who identify as men, and one that is routinely overlooked by mainstream health systems:

A concrete example is the cancellation of the regional project "Mi Salud Transmasculina," which funded working groups in Peru and regional partnerships with Brazil, Bolivia, and Ecuador to produce information, provide support, and develop materials on trans men's health, including research, communication, training, and advocacy efforts within health systems. Due to the cuts, these teams abruptly ceased operations, and we can no longer sustain the ongoing support we previously guaranteed.⁹⁴

The consequences are especially serious in contexts where people of queer experience avoid public systems because of stigma, discrimination, criminalization, or fear of mistreatment. In those contexts, community-led organizations are not an optional add-on to the health system; they are often the only pathway through which LGBTIQ people can safely access care at all.

Intersex Health

For intersex communities, the health impact of the funding cuts takes a distinct form. While access to affirming services is essential for intersex people's well-being, an even more pressing priority is protection from medical violence. In many countries, intersex infants and children are subjected to medically unnecessary surgeries and other interventions on their sex characteristics, without their consent.⁹⁵ The organizations working to end these practices are among the most underresourced in the global LGBTIQ movement, and several report that funding cuts have forced them to suspend their work documenting cases of medical violence, educating health providers, and supporting intersex children's families as they navigate medical bureaucracies. In **Zimbabwe**, one organization that had covered most of the cost of necessary medical care—the diagnostic tests and treatment that intersex children need but their families often cannot afford—saw that support collapse, leaving families unable to afford the tests that precede treatment. In **Angola**, Intersex Human Rights Angola [Direitos Humanos Intersexo Angola] described the existential threats to its work:

Until recently, we were able to carry out essential actions, such as collecting data on innate variations in sex characteristics, producing educational materials, and providing initial support to intersex people and their families. With the reduction in financial resources, it has become extremely difficult to maintain even a minimal presence.⁹⁶

Where these organizations disappear, so does the main source of accurate information and support available to intersex people and their families, in medical systems that too often treat intersex bodies as problems to be corrected.

Across these three areas—HIV services, mental healthcare, and intersex health—the pattern is the same. The cuts destroy more than programs: they threaten the very existence of the community-led organizations that made healthcare accessible at all. For people living with HIV, it means the trusted testing and treatment sites that public facilities have often failed to replicate. For those seeking mental healthcare, it means the counselors who understood their lives and the safe spaces where they could share their burdens without judgment. For intersex people, it means the few organizations standing between a child and an unwanted, harmful surgery. In each case, the service and the trust that made it usable were built together over years and are being lost together in months.

7 Economic Precarity and Lost Pathways to Stability

Funding cuts are deepening economic insecurity among LGBTIQ communities. Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported experiencing loss of funding since January 2025, 39% reported reductions, suspensions, or discontinuation of economic livelihoods or employment programs. At the same time, 58% reported increased poverty or economic precarity among the sexual and gender minorities they work with.

39%

reduced, suspended, or discontinued economic livelihoods or employment programs

58%

reported increased poverty or economic precarity among the people they work with

These figures point to a dual impact. On the one hand, people of queer experience are facing worsening economic vulnerability as the broader funding crisis reduces access to services, support networks, food assistance, shelter, education, and employment opportunities. On the other hand, the very programs designed to help community members build financial stability so that they are less dependent on emergency support—livelihood programs, vocational training, small business support, employment initiatives, educational support, and economic empowerment projects—are being reduced or suspended.

Reduced access to economic opportunity produces snowballing consequences for marginalized people. Economic insecurity is closely connected to other forms of vulnerability. For many people of queer experience, loss of income can increase exposure to homelessness, violence, exploitation, interrupted healthcare, food insecurity, and dependence on unsafe environments. Trans people, LBQ women, youth, sex workers, refugees, migrants, and people living with HIV face compounded risks.

The testimonies gathered for this report trace those links directly: participants in a livelihoods program in **Bangladesh** returned to sex work when the training was interrupted, community members in **Ghana** could not sustain HIV treatment without the means to eat, and young LBQ women in **Kenya** lost their housing when shelter funding ended. The survey data point in the same direction: among organizations that reduced economic livelihoods or employment programs, 88% operate in contexts of high poverty or economic inequality, and 76% in contexts of high anti-LGBTIQ violence.

Several organizations described how funding cuts interrupted concrete pathways to stability. In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Trinidad and Tobago Transgender Coalition described how the loss of funding halted an economic empowerment program for trans people after the intermediary that funded this program, Outright International, lost its funding from the USAID Alliance for Global Equality program:⁹⁷

At the start of 2025, the Trinidad and Tobago Transgender Coalition (3TC) experienced a significant setback with the loss of funding from Outright International—our first major grant. The grant supported a structured program, focused on economic empowerment for people of trans experience. This initiative was designed to build practical skills, improve employability, and create pathways to self-employment for community members who often face systemic barriers to formal work. The loss of this funding halted critical progress, leaving many without access to training opportunities that could have strengthened their financial independence and long-term stability.⁹⁸

In **Argentina**, Conectando Derechos described how the loss of expected funding delayed a project focused on the economic empowerment of queer women:

Conectando Derechos is a very young, volunteer-based organization. Against the backdrop of an economic crisis, the loss of the limited funding they had expected placed a heavy burden on the volunteers. Some held multiple jobs, while others had to focus on their primary job amid mass layoffs. This resulted in a one-year delay in a project aimed at the economic empowerment of 150 LGBTI women.⁹⁹

CASE STUDY · INDONESIA

Trans Entrepreneurship in Indonesia: “How Do We Stand On Our Own?”

In Indonesia, Yayasan Kebaya Yogyakarta, a trans women-led organization founded in 2006 that combines HIV care and shelter with economic empowerment, shows how an entire community economy can contract. Kebaya had built an economic ecosystem for trans women and people living with HIV: group and individual businesses, entrepreneurship training, a cooperative whose monthly meetings gathered around 38 members and extended small loans, and exhibitions and performances where trans women could sell and showcase their work, building public visibility for it in a context of exclusion from formal employment. Support for this programming, channeled through Outright International, had driven the organization’s growth after 2023. (*continued*)

In its survey response, Kebaya described what happened next:

Since the funding cuts in 2025, we have been forced to discontinue some of the economic empowerment programs that previously supported the LBQ and transgender communities, including small business assistance and regular mentoring. In some cases, community members who previously relied on this support to maintain their income are now once again in a precarious economic situation.

Kebaya’s program manager, in an interview with Outright, detailed the depth of that reversal. Kebaya’s operational accounts are empty, and it can now pay only three of its previously 11 team members. The entrepreneurship and skills training that once ran twice a week may now happen once every two months; technical support from consultants is unaffordable; and monitoring and evaluation have become nearly impossible without regular community interaction. According to the program manager, the organization’s more than 100 beneficiaries now receive far less assistance than before, shelter support has been reduced, and the number of trans women business owners is falling, with rising economic hardship among the people it serves. The organization is trying to build self-sustaining collective enterprises, including farming and creative arts, but the cuts have consumed the very capacity needed to build them. The program manager posed the question the crisis has imposed: “How do we stand on our own without support of funders or the government?”¹⁰⁰

What disappears when economic inclusion programs are cut is easiest to see in one that worked. In **Saint Lucia**, Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia built a skills-training and micro-enterprise pathway for LGBTIQ participants around a simple premise: vocational certification opens real employment in the country’s hospitality and food sectors, but vulnerable people rarely finish a six-month course unless the practical barriers are removed. The organization, therefore, combined life-skills preparation and technical training with wraparound support covering transportation, food, counseling, legal aid, and medical care. The timing was favorable, as the country moved toward decriminalizing same-sex relations and parts of the business sector showed signs of growing acceptance. Hospitality employers began approaching Raise Your Voice when looking to hire its trained candidates.

The results were remarkable: Raise Your Voice reported that of the first cohort of 22 participants, 21 entered employment or started small businesses. The organization described what that meant in individual lives:

Two of our successful cases are people who were almost homeless. We had to work hard on the foundational issues prior to us putting them in the program. One of them is now a front office person at one of the biggest hotels and he's doing really, really well. There is another member who has opened a small business, he does cocktails. If you had known him before, you wouldn't have expected that. He is doing really, really well and has hired two people. He even gave us a donation last week because he said he really wanted to say thank you.

The funding cuts hit while the first cohort was still underway. To avoid abandoning participants mid-course, Raise Your Voice reprogrammed activities, fundraised locally, and secured emergency support from the local utilities company, managing to see the cohort through to completion. The program itself survived, sustained by a small grant from Outright International, but at half its size: the second cohort had to be reduced from 22 to 11 participants so that each could still receive the full package of support across the six-to-eight-month cycle.

We got a small amount of funding from Outright and we are doing 11 people. The reason why we [are doing] 11 as opposed to 22 is because we don't have other funding to supplement. We had to do less so that we can manage and support all throughout the 6 to 8 months.¹⁰¹

FIRST COHORT, 22 PARTICIPANTS

21 of 22

entered employment or started small businesses

SECOND COHORT, AFTER THE CUTS

22 → 11

participants—halved so each could still receive the full support package

This is how the funding crisis works in miniature: a program with a proven record of moving people from near-homelessness into stable work now serves half as many, and the 11 left out remain in the precarity it was designed to end.

For the people these programs serve, a stable income is often what stands between them and far more dangerous arrangements: transactional or unsafe work, housing that depends on someone who can exploit them, staying in a violent home. The testimonies show income enabling people to stay in school, keep up with treatment, and build options beyond day-to-day survival. When the programs disappear, people do not simply lose earnings; they lose the alternative that kept them out of those situations, and the effects spread across health, housing, education, and safety.

The economic effects also extend to organizations themselves. As funding falls, staff and volunteers may be forced to take on additional jobs, reduce their availability, or cover organizational costs out of pocket. This weakens both the programs designed to support people of queer experience and the organizations that sustain them.

Funding cuts are therefore turning an organizational funding crisis into a population-level economic crisis, removing programs that helped LGBTIQ people move from survival toward stability, autonomy, and long-term security.

8 Weakened Advocacy, Documentation, and Political Voice

Funding cuts are weakening the ability of LGBTIQ organizations to document abuses, influence policy, participate in public debate, and hold institutions accountable. Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported experiencing loss of funding since January 2025, 55% reported reductions, suspensions, or discontinuation of law and policy advocacy work. In addition, 38% reported reductions, suspensions, or discontinuation of documentation or monitoring of human rights violations.

55%

reduced, suspended, or discontinued law and policy advocacy work

38%

reduced, suspended, or discontinued documentation or monitoring of human rights violations

This impact is particularly significant because advocacy, documentation, and political participation are often the work that allows queer movements to address the structural causes of violence, discrimination, criminalization, and exclusion. When organizations can no longer monitor human rights violations, produce evidence, support strategic litigation, engage policymakers, participate in electoral or legislative debates, or communicate with the public, the consequences extend beyond individual programs. The movement loses part of its capacity to contest harmful laws, defend existing rights, and push for long-term change.

Several organizations described how funding cuts have limited their advocacy and policy work. In **Malawi**, where same-sex conduct is criminalized, Nyasa Rainbow Alliance explained that the loss of funding has weakened its ability to influence policy changes that protect the rights of LGBTIQ individuals.¹⁰²

In **Peru**, Promsex, a feminist organization working on sexual and reproductive rights and LGBTIQ political participation, was affected by funding suspensions from at least two U.S.-based intermediary organizations that channeled U.S. government funds to advance democracy. Victory Institute, a U.S.-based organization that trains and supports queer and trans leaders to run for and hold public office, lost U.S. State Department funding for its Latin American LGBTIQ Political Leadership Meeting, which “was ultimately held in Lima, funded by the participants themselves.” A State Department stop-work order to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) meant that Promsex lost funding designated to raise public awareness around “developments regarding the Anti-NGO Law, particularly the crackdown on LGBTI organizations.”¹⁰³

In **Colombia**, Caribe Afirmativo Corporation reported having to end work supporting Venezuelan migrants and scale back political participation initiatives for queer people.¹⁰⁴ In **Chile**, one queer-led organization described how staff shortages limited its ability to shape public debate during an electoral year:

We have struggled to inform and raise awareness among the public, losing opportunities to bring [trans people’s human rights] to light in the Chilean media. The result is that these issues are becoming increasingly overlooked.¹⁰⁵

CASE STUDY · BOLIVIA

The Cost of Losing the Airwaves

In Bolivia, Colectivo TLGB, a national movement that brings together some 50 affiliated organizations and has coordinated Bolivia’s National Pride March since 2013, shows what the loss of political voice looks like in its most literal sense. For almost eight years, the Colectivo sustained Zona Rosa, a radio program that drew an audience of approximately 500,000 people every Saturday and through which it discussed sexual and gender diversity and promoted public dialogue on rights, discrimination, and community life. The funding cuts eliminated resources that had already been committed, and the program went off the air. Public education now happens through small in-person group activities, at a fraction of the former scale, in a context the organization describes as increasingly adverse: growing resistance to comprehensive sexuality education¹⁰⁶ and signs of institutional regression, including the reported elimination of La Paz’s municipal sexual diversity unit under the city’s new administration—which the mayor has characterized instead as a restructuring—even as units for other constituencies were maintained.¹⁰⁷

The cuts also shrank Colectivo TLGB’s territorial presence beyond Bolivia’s “Central Axis” of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. Travel to remote areas, in-person accompaniment, national coordination meetings, and modest connectivity stipends for volunteers had sustained trust with affiliated groups in dispersed and often conservative regions. With those resources gone, and with Bolivia’s economic crisis driving costs up, communication with territorial organizations has become administrative rather than substantive. The organization’s digital protection agenda was interrupted as well, including its responses to cyberviolence and its advocacy for a digital rights law, in a country where online hate against LGBTIQ people remains insufficiently regulated and where digital harassment, from deadnaming to the circulation of old photographs, has been deployed against trans candidates to damage their electoral prospects. (*continued*)

CASE STUDY · BOLIVIA (CONTINUED)

That in-person accompaniment reached people that few others reach. Colectivo TLGB described older LGBTIQ people living in isolation, often without family support and sometimes without sustained contact with civil society, their situation compounded by poverty, heightened exposure to violence, and barriers to housing, work, and healthcare. During the pandemic, the organization found three older people of queer experience who had died alone in their homes: a gay man, a lesbian woman, and a trans woman. More recently, an older community leader died after a period of isolation and insufficient state support, and the organization was unable to accompany her because she lived in a distant small city. Travel and follow-up are what that work consists of, and they are the first things a reduced budget removes.

Colectivo TLGB's role as a bridge between communities and public authorities has narrowed, too. The organization does not provide health services directly, but it helped push Bolivia's Ministry of Health to launch the country's PrEP pilot and worked to generate informed demand for it, producing materials, following up with interested people, and pressing for universal and stigma-free access. With its capacity reduced, that pressure has faded while the need has not:

The PrEP program in Bolivia is a small pilot that we pushed to get started. The pilot only covers 200 people, and those places are already taken. People who want to begin PrEP now have no medication and no accompaniment. When we raise this with the government, they tell us there is no money to buy the medication, that other issues have to be prioritized.

Asked what it would tell funders, the organization pointed beyond budgets:

“The message I would give to donors is not to think only in administrative terms, but to think about the protection they provide, the participation they support, and the lives they are helping to defend and to dignify.”¹⁰⁸

— Rodolfo Vargas, Colectivo TLGB Bolivia

The pressures on advocacy extend to environments seen as LGBTIQ “success stories.” Taiwan Equality Campaign, an organization central to the achievement of same-sex marriage in **Taiwan**, is facing a financial crisis that may force it to cut its work substantially. According to the organization, several funding sources thinned at once: a 2025 German government commitment for a political training project, channeled through the German Institute Taipei, was withdrawn after Germany cut its own aid budget. A project supported through U.S. government funding, for which it had received only an advance payment, could not be completed after the funds were frozen, while other funders have also scaled back. These losses compounded a domestic problem—administrative delays that have prevented it from fundraising within Taiwan, leaving it, in its deputy director's words, with close to “no money by the end of this year.”

Part of the difficulty is that a landmark victory has made the rest of the work harder to fund. Taiwan legalized same-sex marriage in 2019—the first jurisdiction in Asia to do so—but through a special law rather than the civil code, and full equality remained unfinished. As the deputy director put it, “Lots of people will think, oh, you already have equality, so we don’t need to fight for anything more.” Meanwhile, the organization continues to press for access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) for lesbian couples and single women, antidiscrimination protections, and the local implementation that turns legal rights into lived equality. According to the organization, it may now need to reduce its projects and staff substantially—decisions still under discussion with its board.¹⁰⁹

In **Latin America**, the Network of American Collectives of Trans Men and People Assigned Female at Birth [Red de Colectivos Americanos de Hombres Trans y Personas Asignadas al Género Femenino al Nacer] described the loss to documentation, along with related capacity-building work:

We can no longer maintain an observatory on violence against transgender people in Latin America, let alone the workshops and capacity-building courses for transgender organizations that focused on economic empowerment, leadership development, and other topics.¹¹⁰

CASE STUDY · CAMEROON

A Blow to Health Sector Oversight

In Cameroon, SOS Solidarity Rights and Health described how funding cuts affected its community-led monitoring (CLM) program, an approach in which members of affected communities systematically track the quality and accessibility of the health services they receive, used here to establish whether healthcare was being delivered without discrimination:

As part of the CLM project, we have been forced to reduce the number of LGBTI field investigators involved in monitoring the quality of care provided to the LGBTI community at health facilities and community organizations. This decision resulted from the closure of certain community programs, such as HIV prevention projects within LGBTI organizations, as well as the layoff of PEPFAR staff at several health facilities where LGBTI individuals were treated. In conclusion, the number of LGBTI staff serving as investigators in this project was reduced due to the discontinuation of PEPFAR projects targeting LGBTI individuals within organizations and health facilities.¹¹¹

Documentation and advocacy are distinct functions, and the cuts have not always hit both at once: some organizations describe losing the capacity to gather evidence, others the capacity to act on it. But each depends on the other. Without documentation, organizations have less evidence to support policy proposals, legal claims, donor engagement, media work, and public accountability. Without advocacy capacity, evidence is less likely to shape law, policy, institutional practice, or public debate. Funding cuts, therefore, weaken both the production of knowledge and the channels through which that knowledge becomes political action.

The consequences are especially serious in contexts where anti-equality laws, restrictions on civil society, election-related backlash, or public misinformation are intensifying. In those environments, LGBTIQ organizations need more capacity to document violations, communicate clearly, and challenge hostile narratives. Instead, many are being forced to narrow their work to immediate survival needs, leaving less time and fewer resources for the advocacy required to change the conditions that make those needs so urgent.

By weakening advocacy, documentation, and political participation, funding cuts are limiting not only what LGBTIQ organizations can do today, but also their ability to shape the laws, policies, evidence, and public narratives that determine the future of LGBTIQ people's fundamental human rights and inclusion.

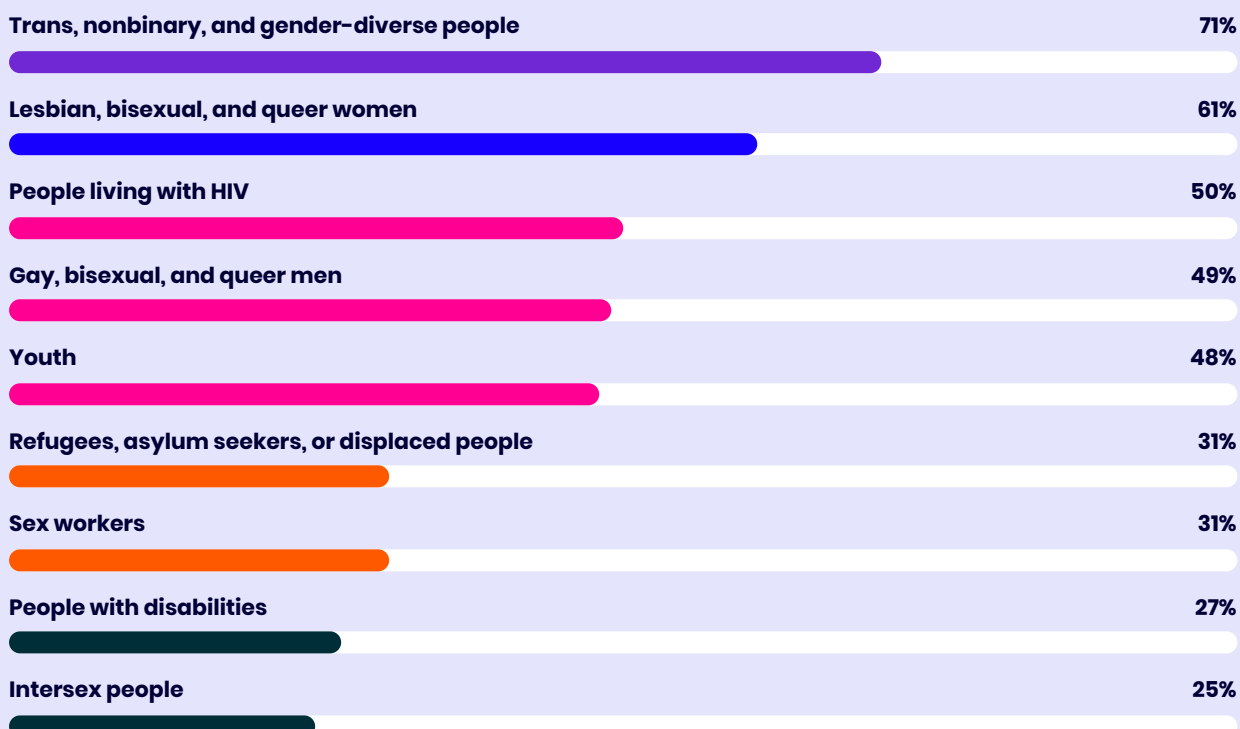
9 Compounded Impacts on the Most Marginalized

Funding cuts are affecting queer movements broadly, but the consequences are not evenly distributed. The survey responses show that the deepest impacts are often falling on people who face multiple and overlapping forms of marginalization, including trans, nonbinary, and gender-diverse people; lesbian, bisexual, and queer women; intersex people; people living with HIV; refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced people; sex workers; people with disabilities; and youth.

Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported experiencing loss of funding since January 2025, the groups within the queer umbrella that were most frequently identified as affected by the suspension or reduction of organizations' work were trans, nonbinary, and gender-diverse people, identified by 71% of affected organizations, and lesbian, bisexual, and queer women, identified by 61%. Half of the organizations identified people living with HIV (50%), 49% gay, bisexual, and queer men, and 48% youth.

Other LGBTIQ subgroups also appear prominently in the data: 31% of affected organizations identified refugees, asylum seekers, or displaced people; 31% identified sex workers; 27% identified people with disabilities; and 25% identified intersex people as among the constituencies most affected by the suspension or reduction of their work.

WHO IS BEARING THE DEEPEST IMPACTS

Constituencies most affected, as identified by the 203 affected organizations

These figures underscore a central finding of the survey: funding cuts do not land on an even field. They compound existing inequalities and weaken services that were often designed specifically to serve people excluded from mainstream systems. For communities already facing stigma, poverty, displacement, criminalization, violence, inaccessible healthcare, or lack of legal recognition, the loss of queer movement-led support can mean the loss of one of the few systems that recognized their needs.

The impact on intersex communities is especially illustrative, as described by Key Watch Ghana and Intersex Movement Ghana, two **Ghanaian** intersex organizations that work in tandem under shared leadership:

One of the most direct consequences of recent funding cuts has been the suspension of critical services for intersex children and the broader community in Ghana. Due to reduced financial resources, Key Watch Ghana has been forced to lay off approximately 50% of its staff, significantly weakening its operational capacity. Previously, the organization provided essential services, including community education on intersex variations, sensitization of healthcare providers, and direct psychosocial support for intersex children and their families. However, these activities have now come to a halt. At present, there are no active services available specifically targeting intersex children—leaving many without access to guidance, protection, or support in contexts where stigma and harmful practices remain prevalent.

In addition, public education campaigns that once helped reduce misinformation and discrimination around intersex issues have been discontinued. Advocacy efforts, including engagement with policymakers and community leaders, have also become severely limited due to lack of resources.¹¹²

CASE STUDY · BRAZIL

A State of Crisis, Entrenched: Intersex Organizing in Brazil

In Brazil, Intersexo Brasil emphasized that intersex movements were already structurally underfunded before the current crisis:

The main point is that intersex movements have never been adequately funded. We have always operated in a state of crisis. This is demonstrated by the fact that, until 2025, we functioned entirely on a voluntary basis, with no resources for our activities other than project-based partnerships with government institutions. But [funding is] now even more scarce.¹¹³

These are movements that never had a stable base to lose. The cuts hit while they were still trying to build one.

The survey also shows significant impacts on LGBTIQ people with disabilities. As noted above, 27% of affected organizations identified people with disabilities among sexual and gender minorities as one of the groups most affected. Among the 55 affected organizations that named LGBTIQ people with disabilities among the constituencies hit hardest by their cuts, 76% reported that LGBTIQ people with disabilities lost access to health or mental health services, 74% reported increased poverty or economic precarity, and 74% reported reduced community spaces or support networks.

In **Central Africa**, an organization working with young women and adolescent girls with disabilities has sought to provide inclusive programming for people of queer experience. Its representative described how cuts affected safe spaces, psychosocial support, and protection activities for queer girls and women with disabilities and those in displacement:

Budget cuts have directly impacted our ability to maintain safe spaces for LGBTIQ [young women and adolescents], particularly those living with disabilities and in situations of displacement. For example, certain psychosocial support and protection activities have been suspended, leaving beneficiaries without support as they face situations of violence and exclusion. In a context where inclusive services are already extremely limited, these disruptions have exacerbated their vulnerability. We have also had to scale back our advocacy and awareness-raising efforts, which weakens the visibility and defense of these communities' rights. This illustrates how budget cuts not only reduce programs but directly compromise the safety, dignity, and fundamental rights of marginalized LGBTIQ people.¹¹⁴

For LGBTIQ refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced people, the cuts often affect several needs at once: shelter, food, healthcare, legal support, psychosocial care, and community connection. This was already visible in testimonies from humanitarian and conflict-affected contexts, where organizations described being forced to reduce shelter, emergency response, refugee rights programs, and support for people facing violence and displacement.

Nowhere do these overlapping vulnerabilities converge more starkly than among the members of a queer refugee organization working in a camp setting in **Uganda**. They are refugees, with the restricted mobility, precarious legal protection, and scarce livelihood options that displacement entails; they are people of queer experience in a country whose 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act imposes some of the harshest penalties in the world; and they live in a camp where, according to the organization, hostility comes from surrounding communities and authorities alike, with members reporting severe violence against queer refugees.¹¹⁵ Before the cuts, the association had built an integrated response to this environment: rights awareness sessions, HIV and primary health support that covered around 50 members living with HIV, psychosocial counseling, personal and digital security training, vocational activities, and emergency relocation for members facing acute violence.

The funding cuts collapsed that system into near-total paralysis. The association's remaining work depends on unpaid volunteers and small community contributions, and assistance is now often limited to what those contributions can buy, such as over-the-counter painkillers or basic first-aid supplies. The roughly six trainings it used to run each year have largely ceased. Most consequential has been the end of the emergency relocation pathway, through which the organization covered transport, short-term accommodation, and urgent survival costs to move a threatened refugee temporarily to a safer location within Uganda while longer-term options were explored. People who have been assaulted or exposed now remain in the same environment where the violence occurred, visible to their aggressors and dependent on informal support that cannot protect them.

Access to healthcare has narrowed in a specific and telling way. The camp's health facilities are staffed by Ugandan nationals who, its residents say, can easily identify them as LGBTIQ, with discrimination and loss of confidentiality following. The organization had planned to establish a small LGBTIQ-friendly health center, staffed by trusted practitioners, where members could receive care without prejudice, reporting, or forced exposure. The project was canceled by the cuts before it could begin:

We sometimes face difficulties accessing care [at the facility] funded by UNHCR. All the staff are Ugandans; they are nationals. The doctors and nurses there know us and can easily identify that you are part of the LGBT community. And when you are, there is discrimination. We are discriminated against, we are marginalized, and there are services we cannot easily access. I was told we could find funding for a small center where we could treat our members, but the project was cut before it could begin.

The association's vulnerability following funding cuts has been compounded by state repression, in a context in which the Anti-Homosexuality Act punishes some forms of consensual same-sex conduct with the death penalty and prohibits "promotion" of homosexuality. In February 2026, according to the association, a senior official of the settlement administration, part of the Ugandan government, told the leaders of organizations working in the camp that he would shut it down because he had information that it was promoting homosexuality. No written order was ever issued, and the association was told that a closure would arrive without warning. Its staff stopped using the office that same month rather than risk arrest, and have since worked from an informal safe space in a member's home, too cramped for meetings, training, service delivery, or the safe storage of confidential documents. Defunding and repression have converged on the same population at the same time: for LGBTIQ refugees in the camp, the funding crisis has stripped away one of the only structures that recognized their existence at all, and the fear of arrest has pushed what remains of it out of sight.¹¹⁶

For LGBTIQ youth, funding cuts can mean loss of education support, community spaces, mental healthcare, leadership opportunities, and protection. For sex workers, they can mean reduced access to harm reduction, health services, safety networks, emergency funds, and rights-based outreach. For LGBTIQ people living with HIV, they can mean reduced access to HIV prevention, testing, treatment adherence support, food assistance, and trusted community-led care.

Youth LEAD **Mongolia**, a youth-led organization working with people of queer experience between the ages of 15 and 30, shows how these compounded pressures land on young people, and on young lesbian, bisexual, and queer women in particular. The organization lost 30 to 40% of its grant support, affecting its programming for LBQ women, psychosocial services, community events, and HIV prevention work, and it went from two full-time staff and a finance officer to a single unpaid executive director. The LBQ program, launched in 2024, was unable to obtain renewed funding in 2025, a gap the organization attributes to a structural problem that predates the crisis. As its representative said, "LBQ-specific funding is always difficult, competing with LGBT and feminist funding."

The cuts coincide with an intensifying backlash in Mongolia, where queerphobic narratives strengthened in early 2025 around family law debates. As Youth LEAD’s representative put it: “We observed men in power utilizing Trump’s rhetoric around these issues to attack LGBT communities.” Youth LEAD has watched participation shrink as the environment hardens: people of queer experience are more closeted, fewer people attend events, and LBQ women in particular have less confidence to come out to gatherings. For young people whose access to community, psychosocial support, and leadership development runs through precisely those gatherings, the combination of defunding and fear is narrowing the spaces where belonging begins.¹¹⁷

Across these groups, the pattern is consistent: the more marginalized the community, the more likely it is that LGBTIQ organizations are not just one support system among many, but one of the few accessible and affirming systems available. When funding cuts reduce or suspend that work, people lose not only services but also trust, visibility, community connection, and pathways to safety.

Funding cuts are therefore deepening inequality within LGBTIQ communities. They are not only reducing services in general; they are weakening the specific forms of support that allowed the most marginalized people to access care, protection, recognition, and community in contexts where mainstream systems often fail them.

The more marginalized the community, the more likely it is that LGBTIQ organizations are one of the few accessible and affirming systems available.

76%

of organizations naming LGBTIQ people with disabilities among the hardest hit reported they lost access to health or mental health services

74%

reported increased poverty or economic precarity among LGBTIQ people with disabilities

74%

reported reduced community spaces or support networks for them

Among the 55 affected organizations that named LGBTIQ people with disabilities among the constituencies hit hardest by their cuts.

10 Outlook: Organizations at Risk of Disappearing

The cuts examined throughout this report are not only reshaping what LGBTIQ organizations do today; they are calling into question whether many of them will still exist a year from now. Among the 203 LGBTIQ organizations that reported experiencing loss of funding since January 2025, 36% said it is likely or very likely that they will be forced to close entirely within the next 12 months. Asked to describe their overall outlook for the coming year, only 3% described their organization as stable. The overwhelming majority—96%—reported being at some level of risk, including 40% at severe or immediate risk and 10% facing an immediate risk of closure.

THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

How affected organizations describe their outlook



These risks are concentrated where the cuts were deepest and where organizations had the least cushion to absorb them. Among organizations that lost more than half of their budget, 46% reported that closure within a year was likely or very likely. The same was true of the smallest organizations: among those operating on under US\$50,000 a year, 46% anticipated that a closure would be likely or very likely. For these groups, the loss of a single grant is not a setback to be managed but a threat to their continued existence.

Compounding this fragility is the difficulty of replacing what was lost. While some organizations reported securing or actively pursuing new funding, a large share said they had not been able to offset the cuts at all, and many described pending applications with no confirmed outcome. For organizations already operating month-to-month, the gap between losing established funding and securing a replacement is itself an existential risk.

What operating at the edge of viability looks like in practice came through repeatedly in the survey responses. In **Kenya**, an organization that reported an immediate risk of closure described its position:

Staff layoffs have impacted the operations of the organisation and exposed the LGBTQ communities that we support to stigma and discrimination, the office is operating with barely any budget and the rate of HIV infections has spiked.¹¹⁸

The Search for New Funding

The uncertainty of replacement funding was a recurring theme. In **Paraguay**, one organization summarized a situation shared by many respondents:

Since January 2025, we have not been able to identify or secure new sources of funding to offset the cuts made to programs related to the LGBTQI+ community. We are currently continuing to explore funding opportunities, but so far, no new grants have been secured.¹¹⁹

In **Liberia**, the Lesbian and Gay Association of Liberia (LEGAL) is living through the stage that precedes disappearance. Before the cuts, LEGAL worked across several interconnected areas: human rights advocacy, access to justice, HIV prevention and treatment support, community outreach, economic empowerment, and emergency protection for sexual and gender minorities, in a country marked by criminalization of consensual same-sex conduct and shockingly high HIV rates among men who have sex with men and trans women.¹²⁰ That combination is what made LEGAL's holistic approach necessary: people who can be arrested for who they are, and who avoid public facilities because of it, were reached through community structures or not reached at all. The cuts removed the funding behind all of it. The organization's 11 staff members were laid off, and its office, which had served as a coordination base, meeting space, documentation point, and the place where staff and community members could "put ideas together," was lost because the rent could no longer be paid.

LEGAL now also faces a quieter threat. The taxes and annual sectoral clearances required to remain registered were previously covered through project funding, and with that funding gone, unpaid obligations are accumulating. If they cannot be met, the organization may lose the legal capacity to operate at all: a form of disappearance that unfolds through paperwork, invisible from the outside, and one that would erase in months an institutional standing built over years.

That LEGAL has not disappeared already is due to what it built before the crisis. Focal persons, peer educators, peer navigators, and protection officers continue parts of the work as unpaid volunteers, coordinating by phone and through occasional visits, following up on rights violations, and supporting medication access where possible. But the structures that took the longest to build are the ones falling silent first. The organization's advocacy channel with chiefs and traditional leaders, an unusual, county-level effort that had brought influential community figures into conversations on sexual and gender diversity and created local entry points for protection, has largely stopped, because sustaining those relationships requires travel, convening, and follow-up that volunteers cannot cover. Plans for a safe home for community members facing violence or displacement, including trans people described as especially exposed, were abandoned when the funding fell through. As the organization explained:

Right now, they are doing the work voluntarily because of their passion. But they also need to be compensated. Some of the work continues because of the structures we built at community level, but we do not have funding to continue with them. We still have lawyers we work with, but now it is very difficult because legal work requires resources and money.

Protection has narrowed in the same way. LEGAL had provided emergency relocation, transport, accompaniment, and rapid response for people facing threats, attacks, or arrest, coordinating with trained lawyers, police contacts, and community focal persons. Without funding for transport or field response, people in rural and hard-to-reach areas can no longer reach the organization, and the organization can no longer reach them. Its interviewees described a continuing pattern of attacks, arrests, evictions, and other violations, which means the protection function is contracting while the demand for it does not.

Behind the organizational question stands a human one. LEGAL's HIV support system, in which peer navigators helped clients collect medication or delivered it to their homes, has largely collapsed, and its interviewees linked the interruption of treatment and follow-up to deaths within the community:

A lot of deaths within our community, because most of them are not on their medication anymore. They are not on treatment...Before, our peer navigators were helping to get the medication for them and take it to their homes. Since the grants ended, they have not been able to get that medication...In the month of March, we lost two of the clients. We need healthcare. Our people are dying. The worst thing that can crush my heart is when I am sitting at home or somewhere, and I receive a call: "This person died, this person died." It breaks me.¹²¹

Two further losses compound the interruption. According to the organization, some clients had fallen out of care because they were ashamed or afraid to collect medication at a health facility themselves, which is the reason the home delivery system existed. And LEGAL had provided nutritional support that helped people stay on treatment, which it can no longer fund. Meanwhile, the legal risk is rising: a bill introduced in 2024 would reclassify consensual same-sex conduct as a felony and criminalize advocacy for the rights of LGBTIQ people, at a moment when the organization's capacity to respond is at its lowest.¹²² Asked what it most urgently needs, LEGAL named healthcare continuity first: medication, transport, peer navigation, and nutritional support for people who have fallen out of treatment. Safety came second. Third was flexible core funding to restore the office, meet its registration obligations, and compensate the people currently holding the work together without pay.

What disappearance would mean is starkest where an organization is the only one of its kind. A queer-led initiative in **Jordan**, unnamed here for security reasons, was established in 2016 to serve LGBTIQ people and other marginalized communities, including sex workers, people who use drugs, and people living with HIV, with particular attention to the hardest-to-reach geographic areas. Funding cuts in 2025 interrupted three main lifesaving programs, spanning mental health support, HIV prevention, and internal capacity-building. The team shrank to seven people working largely as volunteers, and the initiative stopped taking new cases, applying vulnerability criteria to ration what remains among existing ones: "We're operating in survival mode."

The initiative raised funds internally to keep from closing altogether, and sustains a basic flow of accurate health information and referrals through five community champions, community members trained in evidence-based approaches who meet every five weeks for refresher sessions and pass what they learn on to others. But its representative's greatest fear concerns the one piece of infrastructure still standing: "I'm very worried we have to close the office. If we do that, we're closing the last initiative in Jordan serving these communities."¹²³

Taken together, these findings point to a movement under acute strain. The organizations described in this report are not only absorbing the loss of services, staff, and space; a substantial share are confronting the possibility of disappearing altogether. Where that happens, the loss will not be confined to a single organization. In many of the contexts documented here, these groups are among the few—sometimes the only—sources of affirming services, protection, documentation, and community for the people they serve. Their disappearance would remove infrastructure that took years to build and that, once gone, cannot be quickly rebuilt. The coming year will therefore be decisive: without renewed and flexible support, the funding cuts that began in 2025 risk hardening into a lasting contraction of LGBTIQ movements worldwide.

“I’m very worried we have to close the office. If we do that, we’re closing the last initiative in Jordan serving these communities.”

— A queer-led initiative in Jordan

Part 3

Impact Beyond the Movement

The organizations documented in Part 2 performed functions that other institutions relied on, counted toward their own results, and often financed only indirectly, if at all. The arrangement was invisible while it worked. It becomes visible now, as the institutions that depended on it discover which parts of their own mandates were being carried by someone else's grant.

Public health offers the clearest case. A national health system reaches the people who can present themselves to a public facility without risking arrest, exposure, or humiliation. Where that condition fails, the people it fails do not stop acquiring infections or needing treatment; they stop being visible to the institutions responsible for both. Community-led organizations were the interface that closed the distance, and they were financed largely from outside the health budgets whose targets they were helping to meet. Interrupted treatment, drug resistance, and undetected transmission move through populations that public systems are accountable for as a whole. Health ministries are left with the same epidemiological problem, fewer instruments to address it, and a gap in their data that will take years to register as a measurable failure and longer to correct.

Community organizations also produced much of what health systems knew about these populations. Case records, referral data, and the accounts of peer workers who could ask questions a clinician could not ask were the raw material for national estimates, planning, and the targets against which programs were judged. Losing that stream degrades the evidence before it degrades the service, so the shortfall will be measured against a baseline that no longer describes the country. An organization that spent a decade establishing that a person could walk in without being reported cannot transfer that standing to a health ministry, and a new grant will not recreate it on the original timetable.

The arrangement was invisible while it worked. It becomes visible now, as the institutions that depended on it discover which parts of their own mandates were being carried by someone else's grant.

A parallel logic governs civic space. Legislation restricting foreign funding, tightening registration requirements, or penalizing "promotion" is often argued for in the language of protecting national values from sexual and gender diversity, and drafted in terms that reach civil society as a whole. Queer organizations tend to be the first tested against these rules, given the high political cost of defending them in public. Once the precedent holds, it is available for use against journalists, women's rights organizations, environmental groups, and any nonprofits that rely on international funding. Defunding the organizations most exposed to this legislation removes the litigation, the documentation, and the early warning that the rest of the sector has drawn on, whether or not it has said so publicly.

Legislators borrow drafting from one another, so precedent crosses borders as well. A restriction that survives in one jurisdiction arrives in the next already tested, with the arguments for it rehearsed and the objections to it answered. The organizations that are able to describe how such a law works once it is in force, and what it did to civil society where it passed first, are the ones losing their funding. They also supply much of what reaches UN mechanisms and regional human rights bodies from these countries. Those bodies act on what they receive, and a thinner record is not read as thinner reporting.

The same pressure runs through funding decisions themselves. Where donors come to treat association with LGBTIQ work as a liability, organizations that have never lost a grant begin editing their own proposals, and the space available to the sector narrows without any law being passed.

There is a political logic behind the pattern. Campaigns against “gender ideology” have become an organizing frame for movements whose ambitions extend well past sexual and gender minorities, offering a way to contest the authority of courts, the independence of the press, the standing of international human rights obligations, and the principle that minorities hold rights a majority cannot vote away. Queer people are useful to those campaigns because hostility toward them can be mobilized at low political cost, which makes LGBTIQ organizations both an early indicator of where a broader project is heading and the terrain on which it first demonstrates that it works. Governments that treat support for queer movements as marginal to their democracy assistance will pay for that demonstration elsewhere in the same portfolio.

Withdrawal is read as a signal in its own right. Governments watching a donor retreat from a commitment it spent 15 years urging on others will then draw conclusions about what that commitment was worth. States that offer an alternative model, one in which sovereignty includes deciding which citizens hold rights, gain an argument they no longer have to make themselves, and officials who took domestic political risks on the strength of the earlier partnership are left explaining why they did.

Development and humanitarian institutions have adopted commitments to reach the people furthest behind and measure themselves against them. Meeting those commitments requires partners who can find people that formal systems cannot: organizations trusted enough to receive disclosures that would be dangerous to make anywhere else. That capacity was built with money that has now been withdrawn, and it rarely appeared on the balance sheets of the institutions that used it. The result is a quiet contraction of coverage. Programs continue, and reports are filed, while the populations that have fallen out of reach drop out of the figures as well, so the shortfall registers nowhere.

Where mainstream institutions are asked to absorb the function, they inherit the difficulty without the means to handle it. Registration systems record the categories they were built to record, and intake staff are trained for the disclosures they expect, so someone with reason to fear what happens once information about them exists will disclose only what is safe. The resulting underreporting reads as evidence that the need was smaller than claimed, a conclusion that suits budgets under pressure while describing nothing except the instrument that was removed. Agencies then plan against a caseload that understates what is in front of them, and the case for restoring the service has to be made without the numbers that would support it.

The economic argument is made least often and is among the easiest to verify. Exclusion imposes costs that fall on national economies: labor lost to discrimination, human capital left undeveloped, and health expenditure that could have been avoided.¹²⁴ Companies operating in these markets carry a version of the same exposure. They recruit from populations shaped by these conditions; they need regulatory predictability and courts that function; and their own inclusion commitments are implemented, where they are implemented at all, through local organizations with the standing to convene employers and certify practice. Much of that partner infrastructure was financed by the terminated programs. Corporate retrenchment in this area, therefore, removes the mechanism through which corporate commitments were kept.

People and capital move away from hostile environments. Skilled workers who can leave a country that criminalizes them do leave, taking with them training that was often publicly financed, and firms deciding where to place operations read legal volatility toward any minority as information about how predictable the rules are in general. Governments raising the political temperature on sexual and gender minorities rarely account for those costs, which accumulate over years and appear in aggregate figures that name no one. The organizations that made this argument to ministries and chambers of commerce, in terms that those audiences act on, were funded by the programs that closed.

The case for funding queer movements rests on the rights and the lives documented in the preceding sections. The cuts were also a miscalculation on their authors' own terms: this funding was presented as spending on a narrow constituency, and much of it was paying for capacity that other institutions had stopped noticing they used. That capacity has not been reassigned. It has simply stopped existing, and the institutions that depended on it will encounter the gap in their own results before they trace it back to a decision they did not make.

**That capacity has not been reassigned.
It has simply stopped existing.**

Acknowledgments

This report was researched and written by Alberto de Belaunde, Director of Queer Legal Futures, with additional research and writing by Andrew Park, Senior Advisor, Inclusive Development. Rasha Younes and Lucas Ramón Mendos, external consultants, conducted interviews and drafted case studies. Neela Ghoshal, Senior Director for Law, Policy, and Research, and Maria Sjödin, Executive Director at Outright, reviewed and edited the report. Venus Aves, Research and Program Associate, proofread it, while Lui Iarocheski, Director of Marketing and Communications, provided the design.

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About the Cover



The cover of this report is a design based on a photograph by **Ray Valle Nagashiro** (Instagram: [@Rayvallnag](https://www.instagram.com/Rayvallnag)).

Outright International adapted the original photograph, cropping it and combining it with the organization's own graphic elements.

On May 31, 2025—the National Day to Combat Violence and Hate Crimes Against Lesbians, Trans People, Gays, and Bisexuals—activists gathered outside the Palace of Justice in Lima to weave the Quipu de la Memoria, as they have each year for the past two decades.

A quipu is an Andean recording device, a cord hung with knotted strings, used by the Inca state to count its people, its tribute, its harvests, and its dead; taken up by LGBTIQ activists around the work of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the form was turned around, and each knot is now tied for a person killed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, their name read aloud.

For Peruvian activists, it is an act of remembrance and of record-keeping at once, held up against a state that has never counted these deaths itself.

Photograph © Ray Valle Nagashiro (Instagram: [@Rayvallnag](https://www.instagram.com/Rayvallnag)). Cover design by Outright International, based on and adapted from the original photograph.

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