

A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A CARIBBEAN FUND FOR WOMEN'S AND LGBTQI+ RIGHTS

If not now, when?



Abbreviations

AWID	Association of Women's Rights in Development
CARICOM	Caribbean Community Secretariat
CBO	Community-based organization
CCWRP	Caribbean Women's Rights Project
CARIFLAGS	Caribbean Forum of Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays
CFLI	Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
CIWIL	Caribbean Women in Leadership
CPDC	Caribbean Policy Development Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EF	Equality Fund
FIAP	Feminist International Assistance Policy
FRIDA	Young Feminist Fund
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
IAF	Inter-American Foundation
IGDS	Institute for Gender and Development Studies
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGOS	International Non-Governmental Organizations
LGBTQI+	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Queer Intersex ¹
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WVL	Women's Voice and Leadership

¹ The Equality Fund acknowledges the challenges of using a specific acronym to represent the diversity of gender identities and diversities. There is a spectrum of gender identity and sexual diversities. Multiple terms are recognized and used both in Canada and around the world. We use both LGBTQI+ as it is widely understood in the international context.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, the Women's Voice and Leadership–Caribbean (WVL–Caribbean) team are grateful to the authors and consultants for the time, commitment, and dedication taken in the preparation of this report. We are grateful to all the activists, donors, advisors and supporters who contributed to this incredible body of work. The WVL–Caribbean project and this feasibility report is part of the ongoing commitment of the Equality Fund and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice to resource women's rights and LGBTQI+ movements in the Caribbean. We view this effort as the start of what we expect will further inform the financial sustainability of movements across the region.

We also acknowledge the Government of Canada for their support of the WVL–Caribbean project.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to establish the feasibility of a potential regional Caribbean fund for women's and LGBTQI+ rights. It seeks to expand on traditional notions of feasibility that are too often rooted in patriarchal and capitalist notions of worthiness that are often unequally applied across different geographic, gendered, and racialized contexts. As an endeavor rooted in feminist values, we begin with the premise that the lack of a fund in the Caribbean is not solely due to its feasibility, but is also related to the negotiation of power and what, whom, and what places are prioritized in philanthropic spaces. Therefore, this report relies on an interpretation of feasibility that aims to establish (1) the political and movement imperative for a regionally-led Caribbean women's rights and LGBTQI+ fund; (2) the logistical implications of developing such a fund; and (3) the potential to resource a fund. Rather than solely determining whether a Caribbean fund can be objectively successful, we examine how such a fund can be of most service to women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights movements in the region.

This report is both a culmination of the WWL–Caribbean project, a collaboration between the Equality Fund (formerly The MATCH International Women's Fund) and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice (Astraea), and an exploration of the next steps toward a regional fund. The five-year WWL–Caribbean project, enabled with the support of the Government of Canada under its Feminist International Assistance Program (FIAP), provides financing, technical assistance, capacity-building, and leadership support to organizations in Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligible countries in the CARICOM region: Jamaica, Belize, Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Suriname.

The WWL–Caribbean project and this report build on previous efforts to coordinate better funding to movements in the region, including efforts of higher education institutions like the University of West Indies, alliances

² AWID. (2013) *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots: The Status of Organizing for Women's Rights Organizing and Gender Equality*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/WTL_Starving_Roots.pdf

like The Consortium of Latin American and Caribbean Women's Funds (ConMujeres)², of grassroots and national groups who have contributed to this report, and of those global INGOs who have challenged the rigidly siloed funding that activists typically have available to them. Preceding the WWL–Caribbean project was a 2017 scoping study commissioned by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) that formed the basis of a Caribbean Women's Rights Project (CCWRP). The study assessed the situation of women's rights organizations and the women's movement in the Caribbean to identify capacity needs and responses to crises facing women in the region.³

In 2019, an inception research exercise was undertaken for the WWL–Caribbean project led by Alicia Wallace, a young Bahamian feminist activist⁴ which set the stage for the eventual design of the WWL–Caribbean program now in operation. The WWL–Caribbean program builds directly on those efforts by envisaging four areas of funding and capacity-building support: (1) multi-year funding for social change and advocacy; (2) responsive funding to facilitate strategic but unplanned advocacy ideas and opportunities; (3) capacity-building to support immediate needs and promote sustainability; and (4) network and alliance-building aimed at policy responses and social change.⁵

The WWL–Caribbean project design focused on the activism, organizing, and advocacy associated with sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status. It also included organizations and programs that address gender-based violence, abortion rights and access, legal reform, stigmas associated with adolescent pregnancy, barriers to mental health and wellness, discrimination against LGBTQI+ people, climate justice, and political participation.⁶ Particularly unique to the WWL–Caribbean project

³ Arab, Christine. (2017). Global Affairs Canada Scoping Study of Women's Rights Organizations and the Women's Movement in the Caribbean.

⁴ Wallace, Alicia. (2019) Op. Cit.

⁵ The MATCH International Women's Fund/Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. Women's Voice and Leadership Project Implementation Plan Revised Version. (2019)

⁶ Wallace, A. Op Cit. Issues identified at the June 2019 WWL–Caribbean convening held in St. Johns, Antigua.



Key Highlights

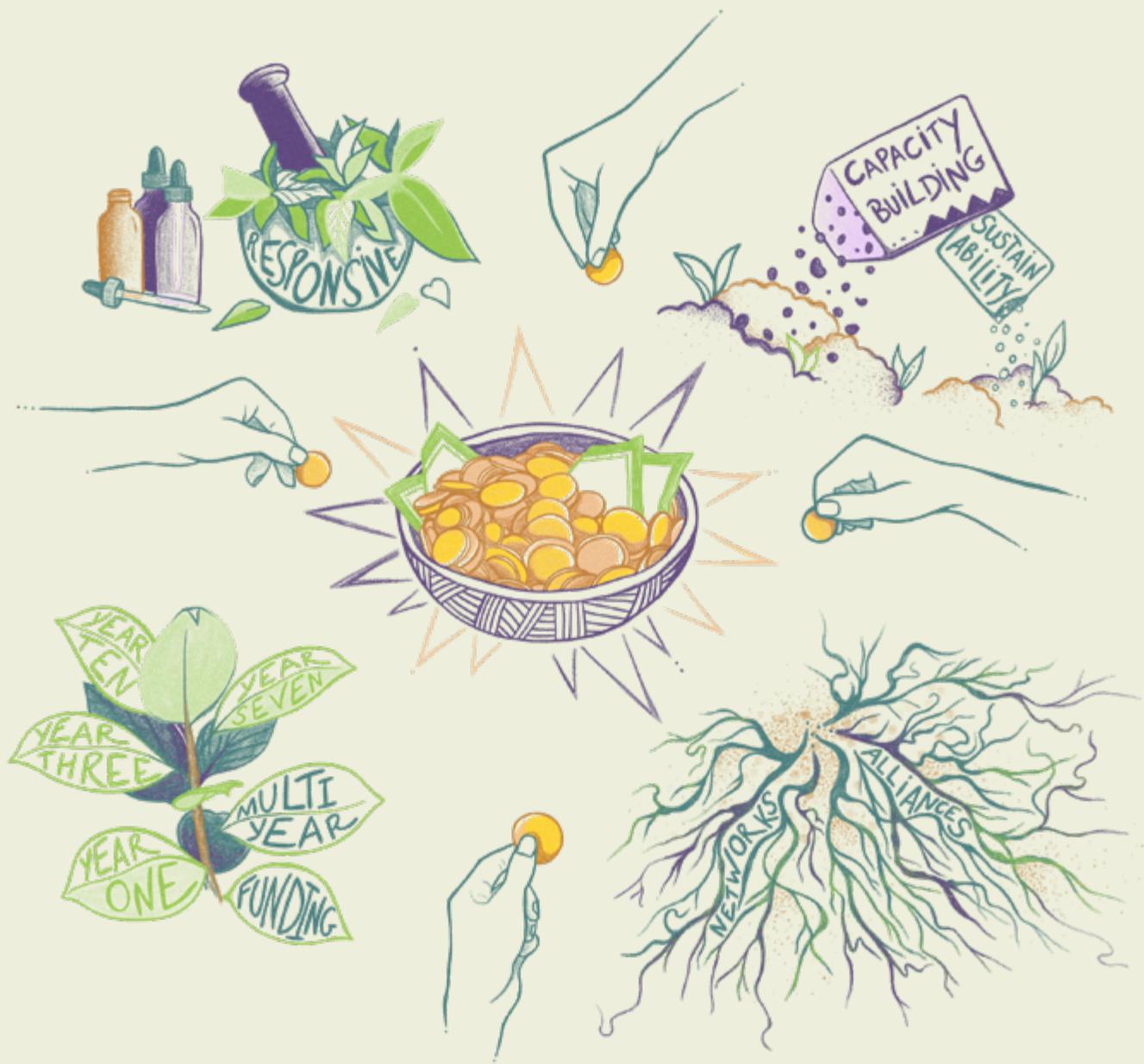
The largely successful WWL–Caribbean project is not the inception point for a Caribbean fund but the continuation of an exploration that this report hopes to further.

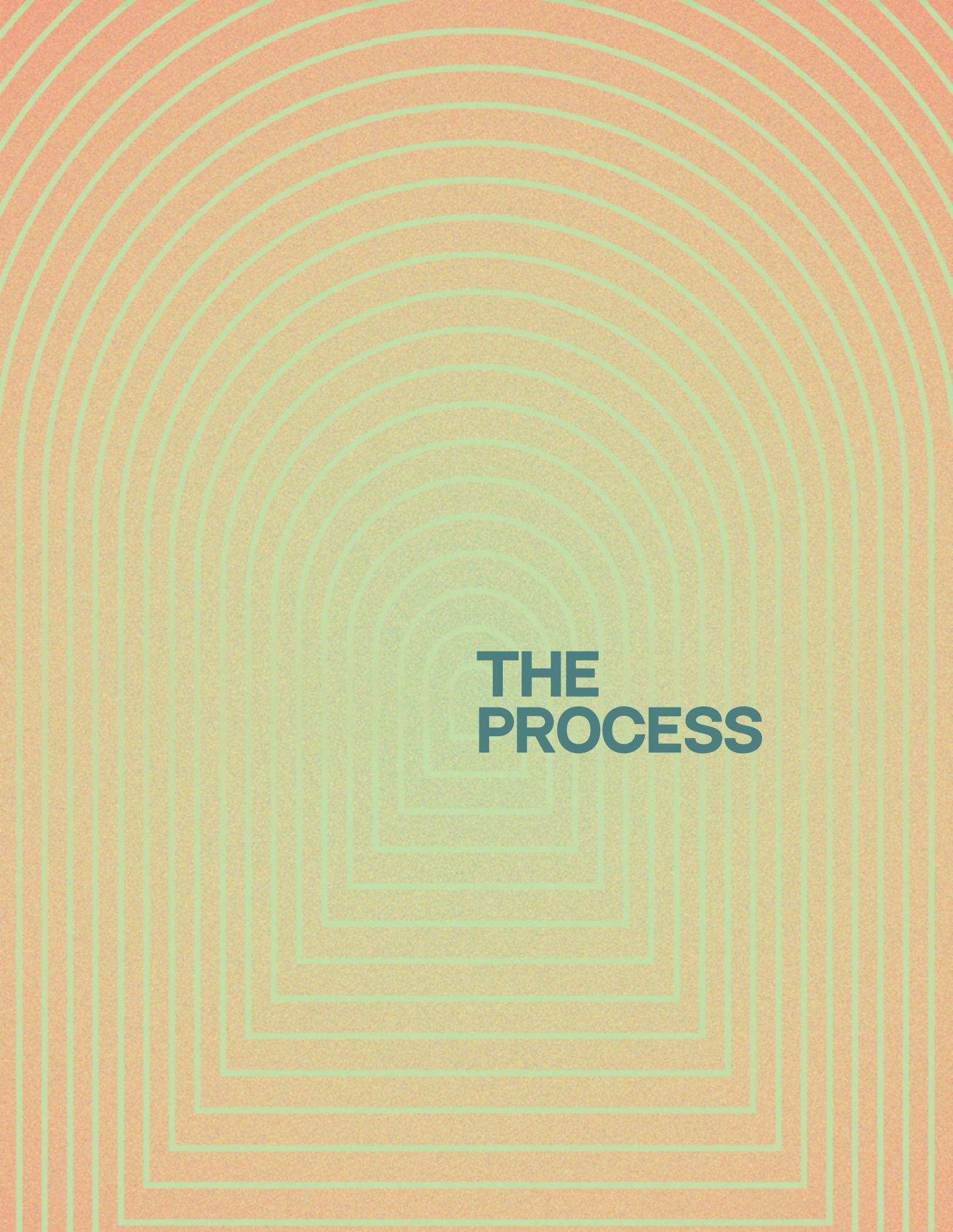
The WWL–Caribbean project highlights what is possible if sustained flexible funding is available to movements.

was the attention to cross-movement relationship-building and organizing between mainstream women's rights organising and LGBTQI+-led work in the region.

As the WWL–Caribbean project comes to a close in 2024, so much has been learned from the social movements across the region, the conditions that necessitate their work, and the current funding context. To the extent that the WWL–Caribbean project made progress in meeting goals and outcomes, the Equality Fund and Astraea also gained deeper insights into the powerful movements for women's and LGBTQI+ liberation that have been sustained by the sheer will and the unremunerated labour performed mainly by women; and the ingenuity and strategic prowess of activists in the Caribbean in the face of scarce and inconsistent funding. The landscaping and feasibility exercise was also undertaken during a global

pandemic which has exposed and in some cases heightened the social and economic vulnerabilities that women and LGBTQI+ people are living with, alongside grim threats of environmental insecurity in the region. **That said, to follow in this report is a resounding affirmation of the feasibility of a fund anchored in the leadership and vision of women's rights and LGBTQI+ movements in the Caribbean.**





**THE
PROCESS**

THE PROCESS



Key Highlights

The methodology allowed for input from multiple stakeholders across a variety of methods.

Participants were brought together because of their activism, their experience of receiving funding in the region, and commitment to exploring funding sustainability for the region.

This feasibility study is based on data gathered from a survey; three stakeholder sessions—with donor/philanthropists, grantee partners and the WVLC-Caribbean Advisory Committee; a public forum that attracted over 50 participants; as well as a review of literature and reports about women's rights and LGBTQI+ movements in the Caribbean, donor and philanthropic attitudes, and trends.

Outlined in this report are the findings of a participatory feasibility study designed to surface the opportunities, challenges, and nuances of building a fund in one of the few regions in the world where a dedicated women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights fund does not exist. This methodology held the rare opportunity to understand women's rights and LGBTQI+ movements in the region together as movements that are very often overlapping in their aspirations, the fundamentalist attacks they resist, and the misaligned funding deprivation they regularly face.

More specifically, the research team led by consultant Alicia Mondesire designed a methodology utilizing mixed research methods, contextual analysis, literature review, focus groups, and a public forum. These strategies yielded an array of views on whether and how a fund could operate in a region distinguished by diversity in its culture, geography, and economies. Researchers enlisted a cross-section of progressive donor and philanthropic organizations, current WVL–Caribbean project grantee partners, women's rights and LGBTQI+ organizations, civil society activist organizations, and activists. The study seeks to identify underlying trends in donor and philanthropic financing in the region and how that engagement (or lack thereof) is experienced by women's rights organizations and LGBTQI+ groups. With regard to a potential fund, specific areas of inquiry included sources of funding; structure, management, and governance; mandate and location; financial requirements; and a risk analysis.



Research Limitations

The study contended with a few limitations, including the number of surveyed respondents. As such, this study speaks of broader trends and analyses drawn from respondents. Despite the survey limitations, participants from across the region engaged during the open public forum and contributed to the findings. In fact, this cross-regional participatory forum garnered inputs from beyond the English-speaking Caribbean including the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Haiti and extended beyond the restrictions attributed to ODA through participation from activists from Trinidad and Tobago, the Bahamas and St. Kitts and Nevis.

Respondents to the survey were invited to participate because they were either currently engaged with the WVL–Caribbean activities or in a position to assess historical and contemporary trends.

Another challenge that affected contributions to the survey is the impact of the pandemic crisis on organizations and individuals. Many of the participants were experiencing sudden dislocation and changes in their workspace and family responsibilities, new communication protocols, and technological access challenges that posed obstacles especially for those in remote communities. Researchers recognized these limitations and that they might yield suboptimal responses in comparison to face-to-face encounters.





**THE
MOVEMENT
AND
FUNDING
CONTEXT**

The Sociopolitical and Movement Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the harsh realities faced by women as well as the systematic exclusion of members of the LGBTQI+ community from policies and programs designed to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic in the Caribbean.⁷ The global pandemic also complicates the regional response to environmental upheavals driven by climate change and its ensuing natural disasters. Further, the region remains a global destination for vulnerable populations including refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of human trafficking. The intersection of these ongoing phenomena has created both an urgency for women's rights organizations and LGBTQI+ organizations and the need for more complex and nuanced approaches to these issues. For example, as these conditions persist, women's rights and LGBTQI+ organizations are compelled to fill the gaps in financial and human investments as their governments fail to meet the complex needs of their populations.

The trajectory of women's rights and LGBTQI+ organizing against these policies is marked by stops, starts, and backlash punctuated by exclusion, discrimination, and violence. The criminalization of "non-normative" sexuality, gender expression, and/or same sex relationships has led to the enforcement of punitive laws that suppress human rights and subject citizens to stigma, violence, and other forms of abuse that endangers lives, with a particular focus on LGBTQI+ communities. Anglophone countries like Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent, and the Grenadines maintain discriminatory laws that also limit access to basic needs like affordable housing, livelihood opportunities, and social services, making civic representation elusive for many.

⁷ <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/leave-no-one-behind-gender-sexuality-and-the-sustainable-development-goals/>

Women's rights and gender equality-related organizations do crucial work to influence social change in the Caribbean by advocating for human rights, progressive legal and policy measures, and raising awareness of cultural norms that threaten the well-being of marginalized identities. Despite this relentless work across the region, the women's movement is still seen as an "informal entity" because its work does not overtly capture the attention of the public in a consistent way.⁸ That said, many of the frontline advocacy organizations have receded over the past 30 years while new activist formations have galvanized with the enabling contribution of technology including the use of social media. While the internet and social media provide important avenues for activism, particularly for younger activists, older activists shared concerns about the replenishment of an activist organizing base. Organizations that rely on the unpaid labour of volunteers expressed concerns of the attrition of younger activists. Intergenerational conflicts stemming from tactical and ideological differences can also alienate younger activists from movements, according to the 2017 Scoping Study.⁹



⁸ Arab, C. Op.Cit.

⁹ Arab, Christine. (2017). Global Affairs Canada Scoping Study of Women's Rights Organizations and the Women's Movement in the Caribbean.

“At a regional level, older women and young women have a shared interest, but different motivations, for bolstering the regional women’s movement/regional alliances. For older Feminists, the importance of regional integration and the history of the regional movement in relation to national movements is highly valued. For young women, who often feel marginalised or frustrated by their national women’s movement, regional coalitions provide space for their voice and leadership – examples are #MyLifeInLeggings; Walking into Walls; and Code Red for Gender Justice. A number of interviewees indicated that regional coalitions/alliances are often a safer space to discuss culturally sensitive issues, largely linked to SRHRs and LGBTI, but also allow for divergence in terms of how younger women approach feminist thought as compared to the stalwarts of the CARICOM Feminist movement, many of whom are globally renowned particularly within academia for their feminist literature and thought.”¹⁰

A Story of Scarcity:

THE QUANTITY OF FUNDING

Insecure financing has characterized movements for women's and LGBTQI+ rights in the Caribbean in the face of persistent gender inequality, human rights abuses, and a new global health crisis. The Caribbean is in fact one of the only regions in the world that currently doesn't have a feminist or women's fund. These factors have fostered dynamics of scarcity in the region including the attrition of young activists, burned out leaders who sustain their activism on evenings and weekends, competition for funding, ideological compromises made to sustain funding, and the humiliation of having agendas for one's region dictated from outsiders. Establishing a regional fund could play a critical role in supporting the sustainability and growth of women's rights and LGBTQI+ organizations at grassroots, local, and national levels, while also putting in place strategies to optimize resource mobilization, grantmaking, and capacity-building as conduits for supporting activism.

Data that aggregates funding for women's rights and/or LGBTQI+ rights across multiple sources is difficult to find for the Caribbean. Globally, philanthropic data shows that funding for women's rights is scarce, unreliable, and fragile. Half of women's rights organizations globally did not have dedicated or flexible funding for core operating costs, nor did they have dedicated funding for more than one year.¹¹ As little as a tenth of a percent of total Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments are made to women's rights organizations with slightly more, 0.4 percent, of all gender themed aid reaching the locally-led organizations.¹² This scarcity is replicated in the availability of foundation funding, where just 0.42 percent

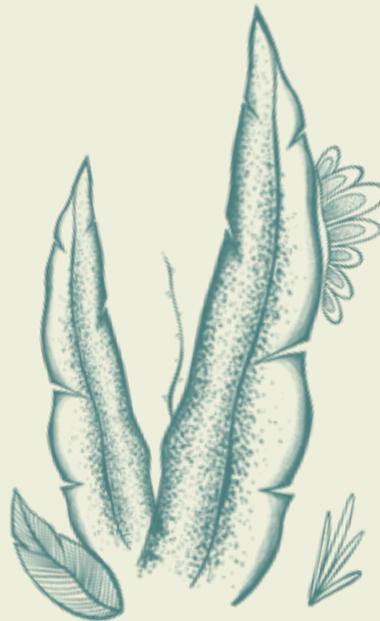
¹⁰ Ibid, page 29.

¹¹ AWID. (2021). Where is the money for feminist organizing? Available from: <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/new-brief-where-money-feminist-organizing>

¹² Ibid.

of grants are made to women's rights.¹³ Activists report the situation is more dire for organizations in the Caribbean as affirmed by data from AWID that indicates that 58 percent of feminist organizations in Latin America and Caribbean have median budgets of just \$30,000 USD annually.

Between 2013 and 2018, there was a global increase in funding for LGBTQI+-related issues, with a significant growth between 2017 and 2018 with \$6,803,880 USD of a possible \$560 million USD going to the Caribbean.¹⁴ Although funding to LBQ organizations (specifically) appears to be on a steady increase, most LBQ organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean operate with an annual budget of just \$10,000 USD.¹⁵ Approximately 70 percent of that funding went to project-specific grants to advocate for human rights. Health and well-being accounted for the second most funded issue, while funding initiatives targeting the mitigation and elimination of violence, homophobia, and transphobia followed third.



¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid. These figures were higher relative to previous cycles. For instance, there was approximately US\$ 3.54 million in funding during the 2013-14 cycle, while funding increased to approximately US\$ 5.4 million during the 2015-16 cycle.

¹⁵ Saleh, L and Sood, N, (2020). *Vibrant Yet Under-Resourced: The State of Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Movements*. New York and Amsterdam: Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice and Mama Cash.

The Funding Context: The Actors

With the lack of a regional fund, the women's rights and LGBTQI+ movements are funded by a patchwork of funders—each with their own parameters, limitations, and mandates. Below, we outline each of these actors and their impact on movements and their possible interaction with a potential fund.

BILATERALS AND MULTILATERALS

Bilateral aid is directly given from one government to another, while multilateral aid is money compiled from various governments and organizations and is usually arranged by an international organization such as the World Bank or the United Nations (UN). The Caribbean shares a longstanding relationship with numerous traditional donors, both bilateral and multilateral, that continue to support gender equality and women's rights. There are also emerging donors that contribute to development causes in the region, in some cases providing cash grants and technical support for programs that target women's and LGBTQI+ rights. Annex Table 3 lists the bilateral and multilateral organizations currently funding in the region.

A 2017 scoping study of women's rights organizations in the Caribbean¹⁶ found that the majority of grant contributions were flowing from the UN System including UN Women, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to a lesser degree, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), and the European Commission. A 2016 OECD report warned that most funds flowing into the region for women's rights were channelled through international NGOs headquartered in the Global North and multilateral organizations.¹⁷

¹⁶ Arab, Christine. (2017) Op. Cit.

¹⁷ OECD. (2016). Donor support to southern women's rights organisations. [Online]. Available at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/OECD-report-on-womens-rights-organisations.pdf>

GLOBAL WOMEN'S FUNDS AND OTHER THEMATIC FUNDS

Funds like Mama Cash, and the Global Fund for Women, International Planned Parenthood, and the WWL–Caribbean project partners, the Equality Fund and Astraea, raise funds from multiple sources and often have within their mandates to provide flexible funding to grassroots and locally-led work. The demand for this funding is particularly high given the higher potential for thematic and ideological alignment, the potential for more flexibility and the possibility of core support. For instance, between 2016 and 2018, Mama Cash received close to 6,000 applications for funding from gender-based and women's rights groups; however, funding was disbursed to approximately three percent.¹⁸

PRIVATE PHILANTHROPY

Private philanthropic giving originates with individuals, through their families or bequests upon death; while corporate philanthropy, some through foundations bearing the corporation's name, are part of a company's engagement with charitable social causes.¹⁹ Data obtained from AWID²⁰ suggest that women's rights and LGBTQI+ organizations are more likely to receive foundation funding often characterized by less rigid funding requirements that can mitigate the vulnerability to the shifting priorities of national government, INGOs, and bilateral governments. Within the sample of organizations surveyed for this feasibility study, about one third of grantee partners were accessing funds from foundations. Six of the 21 respondents to the survey reported receiving foundation funding.

¹⁸ Mama Cash, November 14, 2019. Report: Resourcing Feminist Activism

¹⁹ Global Philanthropic. (n.d.) Corporate philanthropy. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.globalphilanthropic.com/serving-our-clients/corporations/>

²⁰ AWID. (2020) High Hopes & High Expectations: Feminist Movement Recommendations to the Equality Fund. [Online]. Available from: https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/equality_fund_english.pdf

Siloed and Externally Directed:

THE QUALITY OF FUNDING

The feedback offered by participating activists points to the importance of both the quantity and the quality of funding. The quality of funding to women's rights and LGBTQI+ organizations in the Caribbean is marked with limited core funding, externally directed agendas, and short grant terms. The following section outlines the impact these dynamics have on activists in the region.

CORE FUNDING AND CONTROL

Core funding typically covers the overhead costs required for an organization to carry out its work. Depending on the funder and organization, it can also include administrative costs such as salaries, rent, utilities, equipment, and communications. Historically, many donors are only willing to provide a small portion of funding for administrative purposes, citing the weak absorptive capacity of small women's organizations, management of funds, and reporting weaknesses. The importance of core funding is not just its ability to cover costs typically not covered. It also allows organizations to sustain staff and operations and to have the stability to plan, to set agendas, and to respond to global and local attacks from the fundamentalists and the right.

Caribbean activists have long called for a concerted advocacy campaign to drive donor contributions to more locally-led activist causes, and adopt more flexible approaches to grant funding. Coordination among donors, increased levels of core funding, and less onerous reporting requirements are all considered important to sustain the activist organizations in the region. Increasingly, public foundations and women's funds, like Astraea, are promoting "flexible core funding because it enables grantee partners to self-determine their agendas, respond to changes in contexts, seize unanticipated opportunities, cover their operating costs, and invest funds where they are most needed."²¹

²¹ Astraea. (2019) Astraea's Feminist Funding Principles. [Online]. Available at: <https://astraeafoundation.org/microsites/feminist-funding-principles/>

CONTROL AND AGENDA SETTING

Receiving core funding can provide organizations the ability to set local agendas that allow for work to change oppressive policies, to develop systems of protection for activists, and to set agendas for the region. However, bilateral funding, for example, is driven by the political and economic agendas of the donor country.²² Prescriptive funding forces many women's rights and LGBTQI+ organizations to find innovative ways to redirect resources to those issues, programs, and campaigns that they find most critical in the ways they find most effective. Restrictions and parameters placed on bilateral funding (for example, obligations to purchase goods and services from the donor country, etc.)²³ can make them less attractive to some grant-seeking organizations.

DONOR POLICIES ON WOMEN AND LGBTQI+ RIGHTS

Gender equality movements have been successful at ensuring that major global conventions include women and girls in their goals. International conventions—like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)s, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Paris Accord, and the SIDS Samoa agreement—are important not only as tools that shape international, regional, and national agendas for women's and LGBTQI+ rights, but also as tools to influence the strategies, policies, and operations of many international donor organizations. These tools are meaningful to advance human rights, but activists also note that the absence of provisions for LGBTQI+ rights are notable and are a barrier to the fulfilment of gender equity.²⁴ For example, questions have also arisen about whether the CEDAW gives sufficient attention to LGBTQI+ rights²⁵, although it has proven to be a useful tool to secure accountability of many governments.

²² Ibid.

²³ Global Affairs Canada. (2021). [Online. Available from: <https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/development-developpement/bilateral-agencies-organismes-bilateraux.aspx?lang=eng>

²⁴ World Bank.

²⁵ Robina Gallagher. (2020) Redefining “CEDAW” to include LGBT rights: incorporating prohibitions against the discrimination of sexual orientation and gender identity. [Online]. Available from: <https://gould.usc.edu/why/students/orgs/ilj/assets/docs/29-4-Gallagher.pdf>

TIME AND GRANT TERMS

The participants in this study are more likely to receive funding with grant terms of either one year or funding tied to particular campaigns and events. Of those participating organizations receiving funding, 10 out of 14 of the WWL–Caribbean project grantee partners had no other multi-year grants. About a quarter of the responses from grantee partners specified receipt of other continuous grants over several years, with slightly more referring to event-driven grants. Further research would shed light on the extent to which funders offering multi-year grants are also providing those grants for core operations. While four responses expressed that money was received only from the WWL–Caribbean project, the majority, 76 percent, answered that funds had been received from other donors.

Table 1: Funding accessed by grantee partners

TYPE OF FUNDING	%	COUNT
Continuous over several years	23.53	4
Once a year	17.65	3
Every six months	5.88	1
Event-driven	29.41	5
Other	35.29	6



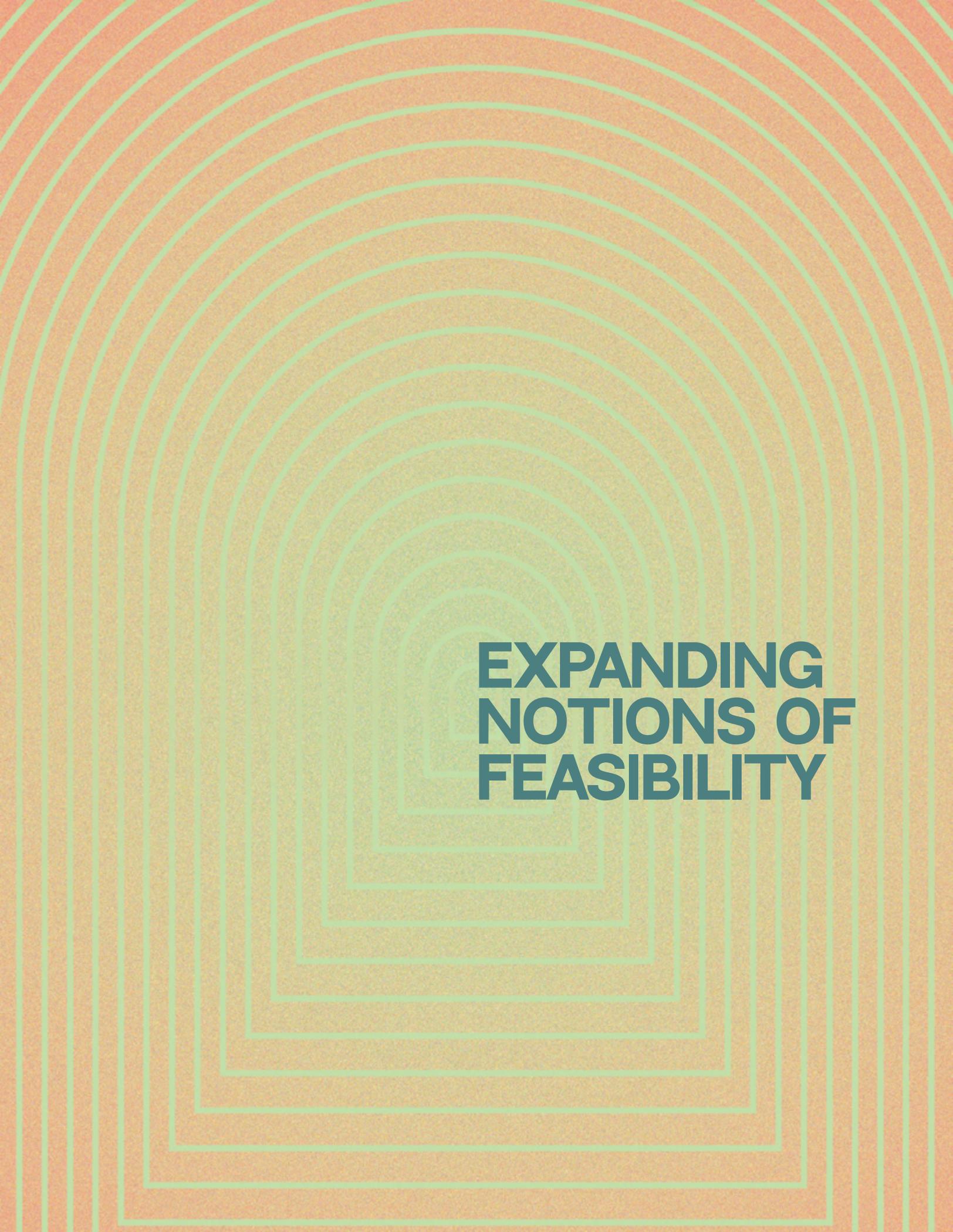
Key Highlights

The Caribbean is one of the only regions in the world without a dedicated, regionally focused women's rights and/or LGBTQI+ fund, which has direct correlation to how little funding goes to movements in the region.

There has been an uptick in global funding to LGBTQI+ movements in the last few years.

Funding in the region is still relatively small compared to similarly sized regions in the world.

Activists across the region report that insecure, short term, and project-based funding are the norms; and note that often funding agendas are set by external actors. A Caribbean-led fund would likely address these issues.



**EXPANDING
NOTIONS OF
FEASIBILITY**

EXPANDING NOTIONS OF FEASIBILITY

Key Highlights

There is resounding support for establishing a fund in the Caribbean.

Both the fund and the process towards its establishment must be well-resourced but absolutely movement-led.

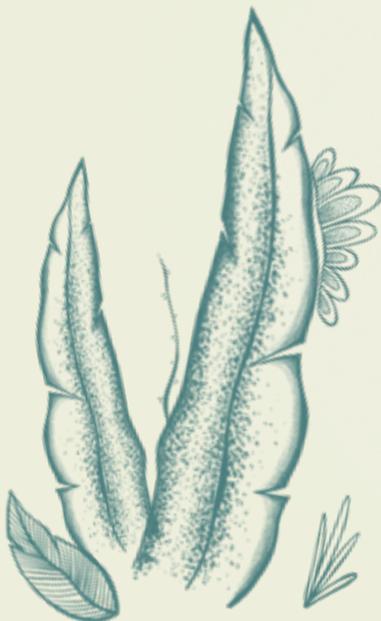
There is a political and movement moment that can be leveraged.

There are a number of challenges in the region that remain and are growing. Further research should be done to explore this.



A dedicated women's rights and/or LGBTQI+ fund in the Caribbean is critical and necessary. As one of the few regions in the world without such a fund, this report does not approach its feasibility as an open question because there is significant experiential and empirical data on what it can mean for the health of organizations and regional movements. There has already been a global case made for the importance of such funds, the importance of its location, and its relationship to the activists it funds. Rather, the findings in this section present the opportunities and challenges to the development and sustenance of such a fund by those it will support and serve.

The study participants also indicated that a locally-led fund is desired and necessary with almost unanimous agreement (97 percent) from activists in the region. One dissenting response, while acknowledging the benefits of a regional fund, suggested that more emphasis should be oriented toward financing and investment mechanisms, which may be more beneficial and sustainable in the long term. From the standpoint of respondents, a few important issues could be addressed by a fund with additional opinions shared in Annex 1:



“What’s needed is a women’s rights/ gender equality lens to analyse the larger developments in Caribbean society, e.g., politics, race/ethnicity, corruption, governance, climate change, etc. The fund could therefore have an important role to play in engaging the organizations it funds to discuss issues of ‘engendering’ or ‘gender mainstreaming’ and Caribbean society/development. With regard to LGBTQI organizations, they are still tiny and underfunded, face homophobia both with regard to the law and societal attitudes, etc. Issues of organization building/strengthening should be an important dimension of the new fund.”

- View from a regional activist.

The Political & Movement Imperative

The activists who participated in this study gave their resounding support for the development of a fund. However, its ultimate design must move at the pace of its primary stakeholders: movements and activists. Questions still remained about the subsequent sources of funding, structure, management and governance, mandate and the location. Survey responses from women's rights and LGBTQI+ activists revealed the state of activism in the region and how it is evolving in the current pandemic climate. Of the activists that participated in this study, 40 percent believed that the current environment for activism in the region has presented more opportunities than the past to organize, promote awareness, and bring visibility to the work of grassroots movements that are influencing social change. The feeling conveyed was that while there have been notable regional successes, more needs to be done to shape policy and to change damaging narratives. In contrast, 45 percent conveyed that the present environment has proven to be more challenging, especially considering the global COVID-19 outbreak. There are clear opportunities to place key issues on the policy agenda and advance changes in prevailing perspectives as it affects women's rights and LGBTQI+-related issues. This subsection outlines some of the political considerations specific to the women's rights and LGBTQI+ movements in the Caribbean, and the questions left to be answered in the design of a fund.

A "ONE CARIBBEAN" APPROACH

Participating activists were clear that a regional fund should not exclude certain countries in the region despite the exclusion of those countries in bilateral funding agreements. For some activists, this bilateral partiality resonates as a colonial entrapment that creates schisms in the region. A yearning for a "One Caribbean" approach was repeatedly aired in consultations and is deserving of a distinct strategy. Moreover, countries that are still in a colonial relationship, including Puerto Rico, the British and American Virgin Islands, face undue restrictions in access to regional resources.

“I think political culture [here] in the Anglophone Caribbean has retained its colonized characteristics (e.g., in the prejudicial values inherent in the structure of formal education, the legal system, the acceptance of gender-based violence, fear and hence policing of human sexuality). This translates in a class-based and gender biased hierarchical power structure that continues to benefit certain groups while the majority of people struggle in a wage labour system which is both inadequate to provide material needs where it exists at all (e.g., domestic labour, the ‘informal sector’, agricultural work, etc.). Gender and skin colour biases persist. And the inclination to status seeking tends to draw minds toward individualism and away from respect and a commitment to community empowerment.”

With a legacy of colonization affecting inter-country relationships in the Caribbean, the fund will have to overcome the geographical affinities that currently dictate funding relationships with existing and former colonial powers and access funds determined by eligibility criteria. There are substantive uncertainties with regard to the mechanisms of moving resources across the region with different policy and financial regulations.

INTERGENERATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Survey participants named that one significant challenge facing movements was the challenge of succession and transition planning between veteran and younger activists in an uncertain funding landscape. Still, elder activists found excitement in the tactics of younger organizers and saw an opportunity to mitigate the financial restraints the movements face and to build cross-issue alliances. Participants also named the opportunity presented by social media and the opportunities it offers to mobilize regionally and globally.



“In my view, the current environment is very challenging for activism in the Caribbean. The situation includes: aging activists of earlier generations, poor succession planning and mentoring of young activists, and an inadequate multigenerational approach to activism; inadequate access to funding (with regard to availability as well as the knowledge/capacity to access available funds); and the challenge of pandemic conditions (focus on individual survival; persons having greater care responsibilities (e.g., children, the sick, elderly, etc.)”

“Many feminist and social justice organizations in the Caribbean founded in the 1980s/1990s have declined significantly. They suffer from a number of the challenges discussed.... The new (generation of) organizations that have emerged are children of the new technologies, e.g., internet, social media, etc. And there hasn't been a serious dialogue between the different generational approaches to activism, or learning from each other.”

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a particular toll on activists. Organizational, working, and schooling conditions have shifted, throwing into question the infrastructure that many activists relied on to fulfill their work and remain well—including child care, internet connectivity, and physical office space. In addition, much of the caretaking responsibilities still remain in the hands of the primarily women-led movements in the region, in addition to the unremunerated labour they already offer. Even as activists are themselves impacted by COVID-19, they are the primary caretakers for so many. And, the feminized nature of these movements means that they are also most often called upon to close the gaps created by climate disaster, the lack of pandemic support, and an ongoing refugee crisis in the region.

“This generation of women that I think is currently the region’s greatest ‘opportunity’ and they are all interconnected on Twitter and IG so feminists are linked across the region. I think that the pandemic conditions will mean that it’s also more difficult to organize women as they get taken up with survival.”

A MORE INTERSECTIONAL FUND

A dedicated fund to the advancement of women’s rights and LGBTQI+ rights in the Caribbean is not only an opportunity to provide much needed funding and support to movements, but to lead the charge to strengthen both movements. A common tactic of fundamentalist and regressive campaigns is to create derision between women’s rights and LGBTQI+ movements despite the clear overlap in identities and the many shared issues and goals. Deliberately bringing women’s rights and LGBTQI+ under one political umbrella—while providing dedicated funding to each—offers global philanthropy another space to deepen the practice of intersectionality, working at the intersection of identity and political oppression.

THE GOOD NEWS: DONOR INTERESTS ARE ALIGNED WITH MOVEMENT PRIORITIES (FOR THE MOST PART)

The donors and philanthropic organizations surveyed affirmed their commitment to women's and LGBTQI+ rights generally, and a commitment to support specific thematic subcategories with women's rights and women's rights organizations (WROs); LGBTQI+ initiatives; and sexual and reproductive health-related causes being the most commonly named. Thematic priorities emerged in the rank order displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Ranking of thematic areas in Caribbean

THEMATIC AREA	# COUNTRIES
LGBTQI+	8
Women's rights and WROs	6
Economic empowerment of marginalized groups	5
Movement-building`	5
Empowerment of girls	4
Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)	4



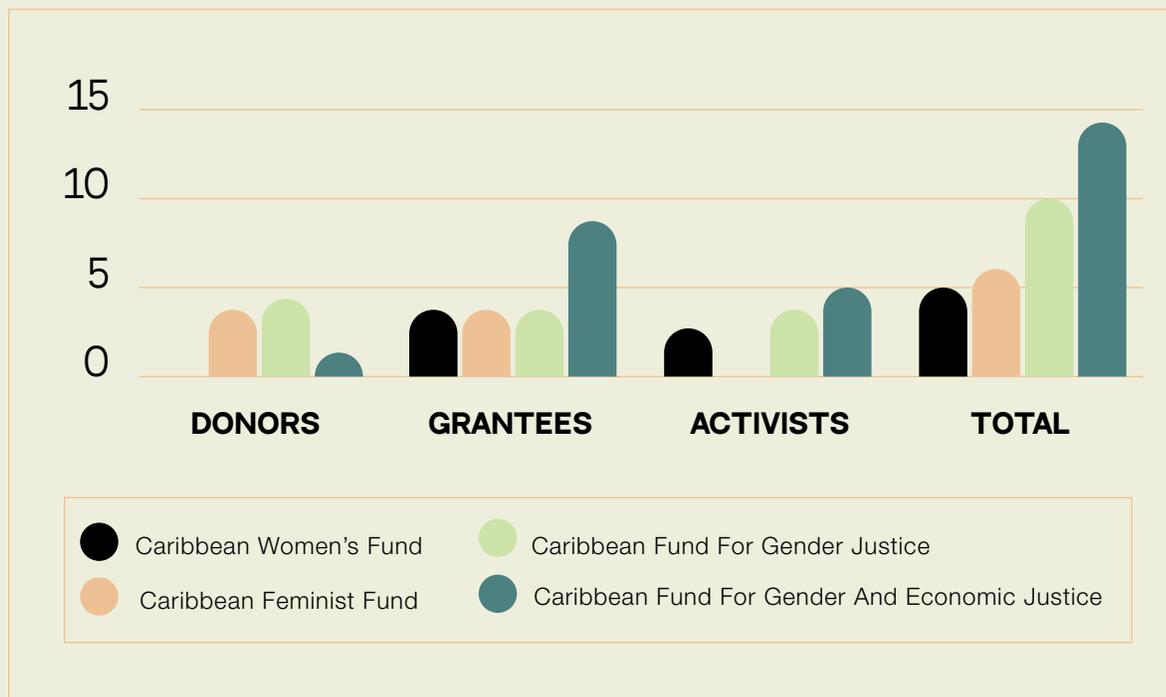
The Logistical Requirements

The logistical questions inherent in developing a fund include its naming, its home and configuration, its ability to move funding throughout the region, as well as its geographic priorities. The nature of these requirements are outlined here.

NAMING A FUND

The prospect of naming a fund elicited a variety of opinions from respondents. All agreed that the name should align with the overall vision and mission of the regional, national, and sub-national partners within the women’s rights and LGBTQI+ space. Respondents were provided with naming options and the opportunity to create a name of their choice.

Figure 6: Preferred name of a fund



Stakeholders’ opinions suggest preferences for two of the options provided. Specifically, 12 of the 35 respondents indicated that they would prefer the fund to be called the “Caribbean Fund for Gender and Economic Justice.” Ten respondents preferred “Caribbean Fund for Gender Justice.”

The importance of precision in the language, and the inclusion of a broader range of issues including climate change, were cited among the required qualifiers that should determine the language. Of all the qualifiers, “Caribbean Women’s Fund” was considered too vague and broad and was the least favoured, with “Caribbean Feminist Fund” in the next tier of the less favoured rankings. Feminism was perceived as not always inclusive of LGBTQI+ movements and carrying historical baggage.

Aggregate results from the surveys and from the public forum suggest an overall preference for the name “Caribbean Fund for Gender and Economic Justice.”

Despite reservations expressed by some about the terminology to be used, there is a prevailing sentiment that the word “woman” should be kept in a name; aligned to a concern that “gender” can obfuscate the already precarious position of women in some processes. The question of naming was also raised during a public forum with similar responses as can be seen in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Preferred name of a fund by survey respondent grouping

PREFERRED NAME	DONORS	GRANTEE PARTNERS	ACTIVISTS	TOTAL
Caribbean Women’s Fund	0	3	2	5
Caribbean Feminist Fund	3	3	0	6
Caribbean Fund for Gender Justice	4	3	3	10
Caribbean Fund for Gender and Economic Justice	1	8	5	14

Table 4: Preferred name of a fund from instant polling at the public forum

PREFERRED NAME	COUNT	%
Caribbean Women's Fund	5	13%
Caribbean Feminist Fund	5	15%
Caribbean Activist Fund	1	3%
Caribbean Fund for Gender Justice	13	33%
Caribbean Fund for Gender and Economic Justice	13	33%
Other	1	3%

GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES

Given the study's deliberate selection of funders who have some familiarity with the Caribbean, it was not surprising that donor and philanthropic respondents indicated they are currently funding programs and/or projects in the region. Still their geographical scope varies considerably. Only nine of 15 countries in the region reported more than 50 percent representation of different donor and philanthropic organizations. The highest donor presence was found in Trinidad and Tobago, followed by Jamaica. In contrast, two of the countries with the least donor representation were Montserrat and The Bahamas (12.5 percent). Reasons for the variances in the allocation of donor interests may relate to a greater number of registered activist organizations in some countries, like Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.

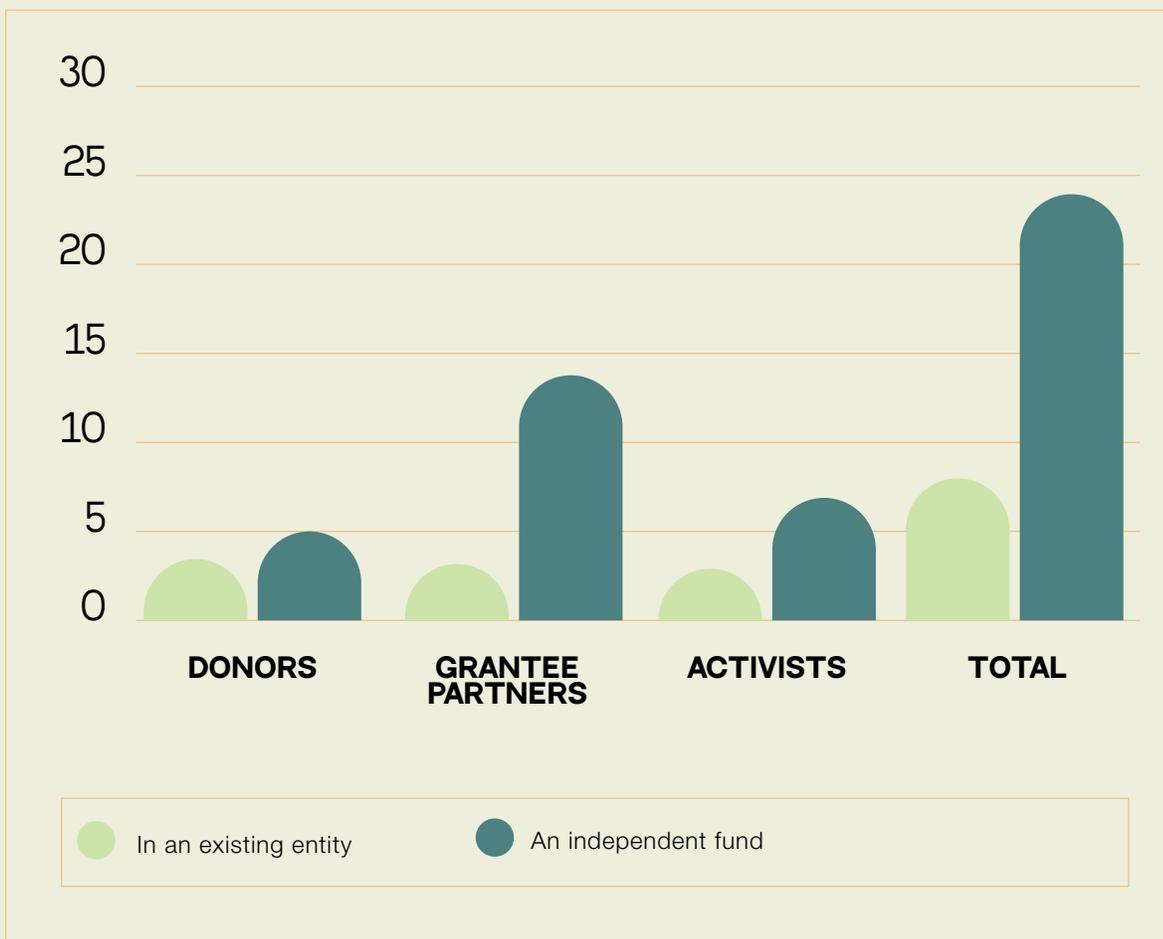
Table 5: Ranking of donor country presence in the Caribbean

COUNTRY/REGION/SUB-REGION	DONOR COUNT
Trinidad and Tobago	9
Jamaica	8
Belize	7
Saint Lucia	7
Guyana	7
Barbados	6
Dominica	4
Grenada	4
Haiti	4
Antigua and Barbuda	4
SVG	4
St Kitts and Nevis	2
Suriname	2
Bahamas	1
Montserrat	1
Sub-regional	2
Regional	8

AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY OR HOUSED IN AN EXISTING ORGANIZATION

Consultation participants offered compelling reasons for and against establishing a fund as an independent entity or hosting it in an existing organization. The preliminary data affirm overwhelming support for an independent fund with 24 respondents supporting the establishment of an independent fund, compared to eight who favoured hosting it in an existing organization.

Figure 7: Choice of existing organization or new entity

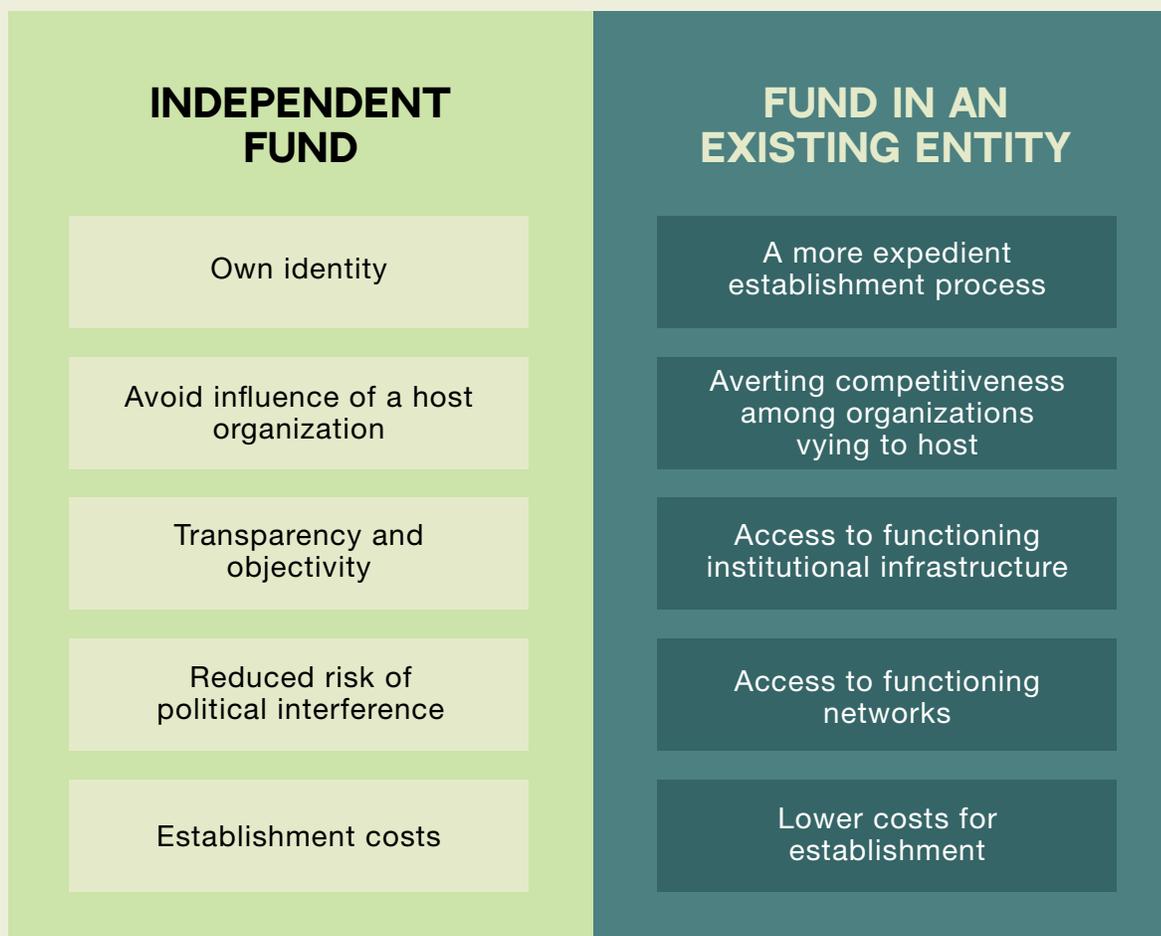


Of the donors consulted, four indicated they were likely to contribute funding to an independent entity, while three supported placing it with a host agency. In comparison, there was a greater disparity among activists. Of the nine activists that responded, seven favoured an independent fund, while two supported hosting it in an existing organization. Of the 16 grantee

partners who responded, 13 were in favour of establishing an independent fund, while three were in favour of a hosted fund. Results are displayed in Figure 7. In the subsequent polling during the public forum convened in September 2021, the participants' views were almost evenly divided between those favouring an independent fund and those advocating for a hosted fund.

Reasons for supporting an independent fund included the prospect of a fund having its own identity and ability to operate without the influence of a host organization. Transparency and objectivity, reducing the risk of political interference, and averting excessive bureaucracy were considered important attributes that an independent fund would confer. Another benefit of an independent fund was described as the freedom to operate and promote strategies to meet the diverse and evolving demands of constituents. There were also concerns that although affording a degree of autonomy, a new entity would require time to become functional while incurring establishment costs that could be minimized with an existing organization.

The alternative, a fund hosted in an existing organization, implied lower costs and a more expedient establishment process. Benefits of this option included access to an existing institutional structure and operating frameworks, name recognition, a readily available constituency, partners, and networks. Working with a transregional host organization offered the possibility of averting competitiveness among countries in the region. Potential risks in working through an existing organization included capacity issues, the challenge of finding a suitable organization, and the danger of locating a fund in an organization without a progressive outlook.

Figure 7: Choice of existing organization or new entity

It is worth noting that globally, women's funds tend to be structured as independent entities with management staff, boards of directors, and in some cases advisory bodies.²⁶ There are alternative scenarios including transitory or hybrid arrangements. A fund could be managed by a consortium from existing organizations with relevant capacity. If housed in an existing entity, an advisory/supervisory team could be set up with representation from grantee organizations. Another configuration is a fund initially located in an existing entity, and later transitioning to become an independent entity.

²⁶ See for example the women's funds in the Prospera network, available at: <https://www.prospera-inwf.org/#!/-member-funds/>

The position that emerges is of a fund being a gradually established entity, possibly located initially in an existing regional organization and transiting to an independent entity after a period of time. The period, at least one year, would be required to approach donors with both a record of accomplishments and prospects of what could be further realized with goals set in consultation with Caribbean activists. Regardless of whether the potential fund is placed in an independent fund or in an existing entity, participants strongly recommended that spaces be opened for consultation with activists in the country and the region, establishing processes that ensure accountability to activists, and building trusting relationships.



Case Study 1 – ISDAO-UHAI

East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative (EASHRI)/
Initiative Sankofa d’Afrique de l’Ouest (UHAI)

In 2014, a consortium of organizations²⁷ launched a “Brain Trust” initiative to explore the feasibility of creating a fund (The West Africa LGBTQ Activist Fund Brain Trust.) In a wide ranging consultative exercise that engaged LGBTQI+ activists and an examination of the donor environment, funding needs were identified. A research phase followed with a consulting team engaged to deepen the understanding of LGBTQI+ organizations in the West Africa region.

Significant milestones in the following years were:

Formation of an advisory body followed by a joint meeting of the advisory body and the formation of a “Brain Trust” to begin an exploratory and participatory process to shape the creation of the fund. The Brain Trust raises funds to conduct a scan of LGBTQI+ activism in West Africa, map the funding landscape, and hold in-depth consultations with West African LGBTQI+ activists and other stakeholders to identify funding priorities.

A team of six consultants begins the **research on LGBTQI+ organizing in West Africa**, reaching 50 groups and 180 activists from nine countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo.

An Interim Governing Body (IGB) made up of activists from Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, and Nigeria is created. The committee is tasked with shaping the fund’s identity, structure, mandate, and priorities.

A second activist convening is held in Senegal in November. Participants examine various participatory grantmaking models and governance structures, and define a “road map” to launch the fund.

The board commissions **a scan of the legal and fiscal environments** of several West African countries to determine where to register the fund.

²⁷ American Jewish World Service (AJWS), the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, Foundation for a Just Society (FJS), Queer African Youth Network (QAYN) and the East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative (UHAI-EASHRI)

Decision by the IGB to have UHAI-EASHRI as the fiscal host on an interim basis, with the expectation that ISDAO would transition to an independent organization in West Africa.

Development of a strategic framework for the fund by the ISC, with a vision, mission, guiding principles, key strategies, and long-term goals.

In 2019, recruitment of the first Executive Director and other staff members and awarding of the first cycle of grants decided by activists in the region.

Case Study 2 – The Pacific Feminist Fund

In the multi-island Pacific region, less than one percent of global grant funds reach Pacific women's organizations according to recent reports. With a view to closing funding gaps and mobilizing international funding, the Fiji Women's Fund and the Urgent Action Fund (UAF) Asia & Pacific collaborated on a scoping study and consultations to explore the feasibility of establishing a Pacific Feminist Fund. A concept paper was prepared, and the team spoke with potential funders. Over 100 feminists endorsed the concept. **Results of the scoping study led to some significant steps since 2020:**

Hiring of a Part-Time Coordinator in October 2020 to lead the inception of the PFF with funding enabled by UAF A&P and the Foundation for a Just Society.

Formation of a Steering Committee and an Advisory Group. The Steering Committee (PFFSC)'s mandate focuses on structure, strategies, and processes that would guide fund operations. Its membership includes a representative each from Urgent Action Fund Asia & Pacific (UAF A&P) and the Fiji Women's Fund (FWF) and four feminists from the Pacific region. The PFF Advisory Group has representation from Urgent Action Fund Asia & Pacific (UAF A&P) and the Fiji Women's Fund (FWF); two feminists that bring expertise on women's funds; and a representative from Prospera International Network of Women's Funds.

Resourcing a fund

The resourcing of a fund is one of the more significant factors in determining its feasibility. This study confirmed the interest of donors in providing strategic and operational support. There is also increased recognition among donors of the opportunity in this current moment, not only for resourcing movements to ensure dedicated funding mechanisms that can amplify the strategies and solutions of activists, but for donors to coordinate their funding towards a more robust regional and global ecosystem. In this section, we highlight the potential range of funding available to a fund and offer costing scenarios to guide further exploration.

SIZE OF THE DONOR COMMITMENT

Donor and philanthropic organizations that responded to the survey disclosed current annual commitments to the Caribbean that ranged between \$200,000 USD and \$26.9 million USD. As the COVID19 pandemic has begun to wane in some parts of the Global North, some donors have sustained their funding to the Caribbean, with just under half of the survey respondents showing similar commitments before and after the pandemic struck, while 33 percent reported an increase post-2020. Donor responses indicate that of their current budget commitments, 54 percent is dedicated to women's rights.

Participating donor/philanthropic organizations were asked if they would hypothetically support a locally-based Caribbean women's fund. Sixty-three percent said that they are likely to support a fund, while 37 percent were neither likely nor unlikely. Most of the donor organizations were unsure of the duration of a potential commitment (56 percent of responses) while 44 percent of the donors anticipated a medium-term commitment of three to 10 years. Limitations on whether donors would or would not support a fund were due to their own preferred thematic priorities, for example climate justice, supporting LGBTI issues exclusively, etc.

Over the last decade, some donor organizations have introduced Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) policies that forbid sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, yet the transmission and their enforcement appear to be lagging. Fewer than half of the donors responding had SOGI policies that informed their commitment to LGBTQI+ funding, with 44 percent reporting the existence of a policy, compared to 56 percent that reported having no such policy. One donor referred to a separate grantmaking portfolio on LGBTQI+ rights, and the eventual development of an LGBTQI+ grantmaking strategy, and another noted a predisposition to prioritize LGBTQI+ led movements and LGBTQI+ activist priorities as the core values of the organization.

COSTING SCENARIOS

Table 6 shows several costing scenarios for a fund with minimum, optimum, and maximum scenarios. Approximately \$1,125,000 USD would be needed to provide an estimated average grant of \$45,000 USD per partner per year for approximately 25 grantee partners. Adding operating costs of about \$200,000 USD per year would bring the annual total needed, at the highest costing level to \$1,325,000 USD. By reducing the size of grants and the number of grantee partners, a fund of \$1.2 million USD is feasible, based on an annual grant of \$30,000 USD or \$25,000 USD for 25 grantee partners. If a fund is created, the base of resources may expand over time.

While the responses reported by funders suggest a promising potential and feasibility for funding a Caribbean regional fund, it is important to acknowledge that the amounts specified in the donor/philanthropic responses must be further validated and discussed with individual organizations.

An earlier scoping study of the region found the annual average size of WROs' budgets to range from \$20,000 USD to \$100,000 USD.²⁸ Organizations with budgets exceeding \$200,000 USD annually were mainly held by INGOs and family planning associations.²⁹ Factors that might cause funding levels

²⁸ Arab, C. (2017) Op.cit,

to vary could include the unremunerated work performed by activists and that organizations rely on. These factors can drastically under-report what is actually needed for organizations and movements to fulfill their missions in the region. In addition, grantee partners will likely have varied degrees of funder diversity which could impact the size of grants and how the grant might impact the organizations funding absorptions capacity and their sustainability. For example, grants at higher levels might be a higher percentage of an organization's budget which can put the organization at risk if that funding is inconsistent.

Table 6: Projected costs of a fund (USD, 25 grantee partners)

OPTIONS	GRANTS	OPERATING COSTS	TOTAL
Costs per year <i>maximum</i> (\$45,000/grantee/year)	\$1,125,000	\$200,000	\$1,325,000
Costs per year <i>optimum</i> (\$40,000/grantee/year)	\$1,000,000	\$200,000	\$1,200,000
Costs per year <i>minimum</i> (\$35,000/grantee/year)	\$875,000	\$200,000	\$1,075,000
Costs per year minimum (\$30,000/grantee/year)	\$750,000	\$200,000	\$950,000

²⁹ *ibid.*

Key Messages

Rather than make a case for whether a Caribbean women's rights and LGBTQI+ fund should exist, we examine the political and movement imperative, the logistical requirements, and the possibilities of resourcing a Fund.

As one of the few regions in the world without a dedicated Caribbean women's rights and LGBTQI+ fund, there is a strong political and movement imperative for a fund.

This is an exciting opportunity for establishing a fund while also recognising that the logistics of operating a fund across such a culturally and linguistically diverse region with varied colonial legacies and funding regulations could be challenging (though these challenges are by no means insurmountable - as evidenced from other global, multi-lingual funds).

There is a growing consensus among activists, donors, and philanthropic organizations that now is the time for a Caribbean women's rights and LGBTQI+ fund.

This fund represents an exciting opportunity not only to increase the overall availability of resources for the region through direct grantmaking, but also creates an avenue for philanthropic advocacy that can leverage far greater resources from the field. This has consistently been the role of many activist-led or feminist funds and is certainly one a Caribbean fund could play.



**THE
NEXT
STEPS**

THE NEXT STEPS

This phase of the formation of the fund is an opportunity to set a tone of collaboration and co-creation among activists and one of courage and commitment among donors. This section is a summary of information from this report that will be useful to move the process forward, questions that need to be answered, as well as additional recommendations to support the process moving forward.

Passing the Baton: Continued Engagement

While the work of the WWL-Caribbean project initiated this feasibility report, a critical next step will be to transition the leadership and design of the fund to activists in the region on whose insights this report is based.

Support an Interim Steering Committee: As the process unfolds, the WWL-Caribbean project may consider supporting an Interim Steering Committee composed of a spectrum of regional stakeholders ensuring geographical, demographic, and ideological diversity. Similarly to the Steering Group established by the Pacific Feminist Fund, FRIDA | the Young Feminist Fund and others, the mandate of this group could be to focus on structure, strategies, and processes to guide the fund's initial design, development, political framing; to develop a working theory of change for the fund; and outline its resource mobilization efforts.

Conduct a Feasibility Study Validation Process: Convene a validation process with all stakeholders consulted to verify the findings reported. This has been partially achieved through the September 2021 public forum, focus group meetings with WWL-Caribbean grantee partners and regional advisory council members, discussions with regional activists, and donor/philanthropic organizations. This work, however, should continue.

Fundraising & Donor Cultivation

The following recommendations are offered to increase donor engagement and commitments to the fund and further research to close gaps in the understanding of the funding environment and prospects.

Launch consultations with selected funding organizations to more concretely assess their interest, with allyship and support by the Equality Fund and Astraea (if this is deemed valuable from the Steering Committee and regional activists);

Identify potential lead donor(s) and develop a fundraising strategy that includes opportunities for corporate and diaspora fundraising; and investment-based fundraising for grant-receiving organizations.

Conduct further desk research (scan) on financial and legal restrictions/ environment that might affect the ability of the fund to move resources around the region and/or to determine where to register the fund.



Communications & Building Community

There is much to be learned from colleagues operating women's rights and LGBTQI+ funds around the world. A strong communications and community-building strategy will allow an interim steering committee to leverage that learning for such a fund in the Caribbean. It will also allow those who have contributed to this report to become even more invested in the process.

Develop a communications strategy to inform the public, prospective donors including Caribbean diaspora about what WWL-Caribbean funded organizations have already achieved, and the purpose of a proposed fund.

Develop strategy to communicate with those who have already participated in the feasibility study.

Cultivate allies, mentors, and partners among the global community of women's rights and LGBTQI+ funds, including Astraea and the Equality Fund, Mama Cash, and others.

Risk Analysis

Understanding the risks and mitigation measures inherent in any new philanthropic and social movement venture is an important part of comprehensive planning. Study participants shared several risks to keep in mind. Annex Table 4 provides raw data on the risks and mitigation measures identified by the stakeholders consulted. Those considered of highest risk include donor-related and fundraising concerns including loss of donor interest, donor conditionalities, excessive bureaucracy, and sudden shifts in commitments to new emerging crises.

Additional Characteristics of the fund

Based on the totality of the data and insights presented in this report, the following are recommended characteristics of a fund.

- **Ethical, politically-oriented, and geared to transformational outcomes.**
- **Activist-driven and accountable.**
- **Multilingual, with provisions for translations in Dutch, Spanish, French.**
- **Inclusive of a broader cross-section of the Caribbean region.**
- **Responsive with technological sophistication.**
- **Does not rely on reimbursement but provides upfront funding.**
- **Well-versed in each participating country's financial regulations and any relevant legislation.**
- **Prioritized investment strategy towards longevity and sustainability.**
- **Inclusive of Indigenous People, people with disabilities, and sex workers.**
- **Committed to core funding and salaries aligned with industry trends.**

To conclude, this feasibility study finds that a locally-led, geographically-based women's and LGBTQI+ rights fund is not only desirable, but highly feasible. This study and report mark a point of exploration and engagement, but also a launching point to expand on that engagement to ensure that a fund is rooted, relevant, and of service to activists and organizations that have long been deprived of the level of resourcing to effectively meet goals of a movement. The clear message from the literature review and various consultations with donors and philanthropists, activists, and grantee partners is that many of the requisite dynamics are present: an energized and engaged movement, an in-depth donor analysis that captures both the possibilities and challenges, and an understanding of the strategic and operational considerations of what is needed for the fund to emerge.



ANNEX I - PERSONS & ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED

DONOR/PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS

Eliza Wethey, Inter-American Foundation
Cecilia Babb, Inter-American Foundation
The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), Barbados
Neish McLean, Astraea Foundation
Britt Jenkins, Astraea Foundation
Kerry-Jo Lyn, Astraea Foundation
Karina Claudio Betancourt, Open Society Foundation
Auro Fraser, Open Society Foundation
Erin Williams, Global Fund for Women
Ankit Gupta, Global Fund for Women
Leila Hessini, Global Fund for Women
Aissata Sall, Global Fund for Women
Heran Ayele , Spotlight Initiative
Erin Kenny, Spotlight Initiative
Zebib Kidane, Spotlight Initiative
Doug Graham, WUSC (World University Service of Canada)
Rob Gillberry, WUSC (World University Service of Canada)
Lorna Hayes, Frontline Defenders
Katrin Wilde, Chanel Foundation
Urooj Arshad, Freedom House
Beatriz Gonzalez, Equality Fund
Fiona Korwin-Pawlowski, Clara Lionel Foundation
Judith Anne Morrison, Inter-American Development Bank
Paige Andrew, FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund
Jen Bokoff, Disability Rights Fund
JoAnn Garnier, Disability Rights Fund
Jimena Soria, Mama Cash
Anne Delorme, Equitas
Tonni-Ann Brodber, UN Women

WVL-CARIBBEAN GRANTEE PARTNERS - EQUALITY FUND

Toledo Maya Women's Council, Belize
Raise Your Voice, Saint Lucia
Girls of a Feather, Saint Lucia
WROC, Jamaica
CIWIL Antigua and Barbuda/Regional
Sweet Water Foundation, Grenada
Wapichan Women's Movement, Guyana
Eve for Life, Jamaica

Red Thread, Guyana
Helen's Daughters, Saint Lucia
Dominica Planned Parenthood Association, Dominica
POWA, Belize
Jamaica Sex Workers Coalition, Jamaica
Integrated Health Outreach, Antigua and Barbuda
Makushi Research Unit, Guyana
Projekta, Suriname
Intersect, Antigua and Barbuda

GRANTEE PARTNERS - ASTRAEA FOUNDATION

CARIFLAGS, Regional
LEZ Connect, Saint Lucia
Our Circle, Belize
Tamùkke Feminist Rising, Guyana
Women's Way Foundation, Suriname
Guyana Trans United, Guyana
GuyBow, Guyana
PETAL, Belize
WE-Change, Jamaica

ACTIVIST ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

Peggy Antrobus, Activist/Course Tutor, Barbados
Course-Caribbean Society Economy Ecology
Alissa Trotz, Activist, Guyana/Canada
Beverly Mullings, Activist/Queens University, Canada
Tonya Haynes, Activist/IGDS, Barbados
Mariama Williams, Activist/Economist, Jamaica
Maya Trotz, Activist, CFAN
Rosina Wiltshire, Activist, CFAN
Alexander Girvan
Kenita M. Placide, ECADE
Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, Car. Family Planning Affil.
Rosina Wiltshire, Activist, Barbados
Alicia Wallace, Activist, Bahamas
Joan French, Activist, Jamaica
Audrey Roberts, Activist, Bahamas
Kimalee Phillip, Groundation Grenada/AWID
Gabrielle Hosein, IGDS, T&T
Rhoda Reddock, Activist/CAFRA T&T
Denise Noel De-Bique, Activist, Barbados

Nan Peacocke, Activist, Barbados/Canada
Leisa Perch, Activist/UN Women/OECS
Linnette Vassell, Activist/WROC, Jamaica
Taitu Heron, Women and Development Unit (WAND)
Élysse Marcellin, WOMANTRA, Trinidad and Tobago
Neish McLean, Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
Flavia Cherry, CAFRA, Saint Lucia
Nadine Louis, Fondation TOYA, Haiti

WVL-CARIBBEAN ADVISORY GROUP

Rawwida Baksh
Michele Irving
Stephanie Leitch
Ro-Ann Mohammed
Vanda Radzik
Judith Wedderburn
Robyn C. White

ATTENDEES AT PUBLIC FORUM, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

Alexandra Hertell
Alian Ollivierre, I Am A Girl Barbados
Ankit Gupta, Global Fund for Women
Angelique V Nixon, CAISO
Audrey Roberts, Consultant/Feminist,
Bahamas
Representative, AWID
Carla Bush
Carla López
Che
Representative, CIWiL
Claudia Bollwinkel
Connie Malloy
Deborah Duperly-Pinks, High Commission
of Canada
Émilie Diouf
Ezak Perez
Representative, FAU-AL
Gabrielle Bailey
Glenisse Pagán Ortiz
Gracia Goya
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ANNEX TABLE 1: WHAT COULD A FUND DO?

Legal and judicial interventions on behalf of vulnerable women and LGBTQI+ people. Removing discriminatory elements from our Constitution and laws; promote gender justice in the context of crime ridden communities

Organization-building/strengthening on LGBTQI+ rights, reproductive rights

Geographical coherence: decolonization of islands that are not yet independent, Intraregional and cross border migration

Capacity-building to close gaps in financial intelligence and accounting methods; staff support; developing sustainable models of operation and financial strategies

Strategizing building for community involvement/strategic partnerships and regional collaboration

Education including community access and support to children's education through online learning; scholarships for tertiary level for achievers from challenged communities

Communication: Brand identity and awareness; building feminist consciousness and awareness; public education on women/gender/LGBTQI+ issues

Challenging the anti-poor, anti-feminist construct of most funds currently available; broaden the scope of feminist/women's group social justice activism to transform gender relations

Gender socialization of children, women worker's rights, global political economy, rural women, social protection and social security issues

Grassroots/community women's leadership with women-led participation in social justice activism

Programming themes

- Ecological crises and the social consequences of these conditions; climate justice
- Intimate partner violence; harm reduction/Infrastructural support for safe spaces for women; advocacy and behaviour change communication to address violence against women
- Livelihood including food security/Precarity of women's labour in the formal and informal sectors/Basic needs advocacy...light and water often unaffordable in poor communities

ANNEX TABLE 2: NET OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA) TO SELECT CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	AMOUNT (USD)	YEAR
Antigua and Barbuda	27,440,001	2019
The Bahamas	4,480,000	2004
Barbados	15,580,000	2010
Belize	37,660,000	2019
Dominica	51,389,999	2019
Dominican Republic	134,440,002	2019
Grenada	14,680,000	2019
Guyana	113,269,997	2019
Haiti	726,469,971	2019
Jamaica	127,070,000	2019
St Kitts and Nevis	30,049,999	2019
Saint Lucia	32,110,001	2019
St Vincent and the Grenadines	84,480,003	2019
Suriname	23,379,999	2019
Trinidad and Tobago	4,340,000	2010
Turks and Caicos Islands	15,390,000	2007

Source: World Bank. (n.d.) Net official development assistance and official aid received (current US\$). [Online]. Available from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD>

ANNEX TABLE 3: BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENTS

BILATERAL DONORS	EMERGING DONORS	MULTILATERAL DONORS
Canada	South Korea	Inter-American Development Bank
United Kingdom	India	Caribbean Development Bank
United States of America	Singapore	World Bank
Spain	Mexico	Commonwealth Secretariat
Italy	Brazil	UNDP
Germany	Argentina	United Nations Environmental Programme
Japan	Turkey	Global Environment Fund
Australia	Russia	UN Women
European Union	Cuba	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
Austria	Chile	The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
		United Nations Children Fund

ANNEX TABLE 4: POTENTIAL RISKS IN ESTABLISHING A FUND AND RISK MITIGATION

DONOR-RELATED	
POTENTIAL RISK	HOW RISK CAN BE MITIGATED
Maintaining and sustaining the fund; not raising enough cash	Diversifying sources of funding and making sure that the resource mobilization team is strong
Lack of interest by potential investors resulting in low inputs to fund	Building strong commitment and partnership with donors who share values and principles of an activist, feminist-oriented approach to funding
Sustainability: The pressure to sustain the fund could potentially lead to a bureaucracy that matches existing donors and therefore reproduces the inaccessibility of funding for grassroots groups	Attracting more donors who are aligned to the cause
Donor conditionalities: Funds can come with specific requirements from donors, competing priorities and global economic crisis could affect funding sources. Unavailable, inflation and donor specifications	Finding interim or fiscal sponsors willing to receive grants for unregistered or CBOs
To fall into or continue with the status quo of not funding core programs for grassroots organizations	Identifying diverse sources for creation of the fund - including governments
Duration of grants: Short-term funding for organizations i.e., the funding is only available for a year	Multi-year funding for grantee partners

<p>Grantees' capacity/Capacity of CSOs to access funding</p>	<p>Empowering grantees and building capacity</p> <p>Capacity-building for CSOs in grant management</p> <p>A cadre of skilled volunteers who are able to provide support to applicants/grantee partners. Develop a cadre of expertise in developing proposals in a strictly participatory way with prospective grantee partners. For each grant work extra-closely with a designated person or persons in the organization applying for grant so as to build a "hands-on" learning by doing process. This is a very direct way of "building capacity." Added to this would be a practical course run annually or bi-annually for proposal-writing. Not just a one-day crappy workshop. A real, practical, capacity-building course with a certificate etc.</p>
<p>The fund becomes more donor-driven than focused on the movement and its needs</p>	<p>Participatory grantmaking so that members of the movement's input are considered and prioritized</p>
<p>Alienation of non-English speaking countries</p>	<p>Include staff and advisors from all languages and cultures to achieve a broad range of perspectives</p>
<p>Maintaining and sustaining the fund; not raising enough cash</p>	<p>Ensure that the process of receiving funding and managing said funding is made easier for smaller organizations</p>
	<p>A participatory approach to fund management</p>
	<p>Establish a small grants mechanism to reach unregistered or CBOs that are recognised and recommended by other NGOs/CSOs within the sector</p>

PROGRAM-RELATED	
POTENTIAL RISK	HOW RISK CAN BE MITIGATED
Continuously supporting thematic areas that have received support for decades while ignoring areas that are most in need of support such as sex work	Evaluate programs to assess their impact and relevance as conditions change Clearly articulate the mandate, vision and mission of the organization. Might entail public education
Priorities of small grassroots or community-based organizations are often excluded based on lack of capacity in grant writing, data collection and financial management	
OPERATIONAL	
High levels of bureaucracy	Compliance Project timeline Impact Transparency
Duplicating what already exists, setting up systems that are so cumbersome that the fund is not agile enough	Policy Verification Education Research Consultation
Failing to see opportunities with organizations/potential grantee partners by sticking rigidly to rules/application formats etc. Funds could quickly become ‘who knows who’- that familiar faces and organizations have an advantage over others	
Money laundering and mismanagement	Proper documentation to support spending/finances
MOVEMENT-RELATED	
High levels of competition among women’s organizations resulting in undermining collaboration and coordination within the movement – at national and regional levels	
EXTERNAL INFLUENCES	
Potential risk would be the market	

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