

MAY 19 - 22, 2015  
ISTANBUL, TURKEY

# INTERNATIONAL TRANS\* FUND CONVENING

A MEETING FOR FUNDERS & ACTIVISTS WORKING ON GENDER DIVERSITY

An aerial photograph of the Istanbul skyline, featuring several prominent skyscrapers and a dense urban landscape. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The word 'SUMMARY' is written vertically in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image. The word 'REPORT' is written vertically in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on the right side of the image, partially overlapping the 'SUMMARY' text.

**SUMMARY**  
**REPORT**

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## BACKGROUND

In December 2013, trans\*<sup>1</sup> activists and funders convened in Berlin to discuss the needs of the trans\* community and how to best financially support the global trans\* movement. As a follow-up to this meeting, a group of funders and activists—including Arcus Foundation, Global Action for Trans\* Equality (GATE), the Global Philanthropy Project (GPP), Open Society Foundations (OSF), and Wellspring Advisors—agreed to organize a working meeting of trans\* activists and funders to explore the possible creation of a new fund to support global trans\* communities.

In February 2015, the organizers contracted with Masen Davis to help develop, coordinate, and facilitate the International Trans\* Fund Convening. Additionally, a six-member working group was recruited to oversee the project. The working group members included:

**Julia Ehrt**, *TGEU*  
**Justus Eisfeld**, *GATE*  
**Rebecca Fox**, *Wellspring Advisors*  
**Anna Kirey**, *OSF*  
**Roz Lee**, *Arcus Foundation*  
**Jabu Pereira**, *lranti-org*

The Working Group met at key points throughout the planning process to inform the goals, focus, and content of the convening. In addition, the activist and funder members of the Working Group met separately (and sometimes with other activists or members of the Global Philanthropy Project) to discuss key decision points and engage more people in the planning process. Finally, GATE convened calls with activists who had participated in the December 2013 Berlin convening to gain their perspectives on a variety of decision points, including working group membership, intersex inclusion, and activist representation at the convening.

As a result of a February 2015 meeting with intersex activists who attended the 2013 Berlin convening, an early decision was made to limit the scope of a fund to trans\* issues. The intersex representatives felt it was important to support two separate funds. Because OSF was already convening intersex-specific meetings, and Astraea had started an intersex-specific fund, all agreed that the convening and possible fund should be trans\*-specific. There was further agreement to communicate to funders that both trans\* and intersex issues are important, and that the funds should not be constructed in such a way that other funding mechanisms would be unavailable to trans\* and intersex groups.

In April 2015, a Rapid Funder Assessment was conducted (Attachment A) to determine the parameters of the exploratory conversations at the International Trans\* Fund Convening. The assessment played a key role in understanding what could be feasible for a potential fund going into the Istanbul meeting. The project consultant interviewed fifteen funders to document their perspectives regarding the development of a trans\* fund.

The convening itself was held at the Taksim Gonen Hotel in Istanbul, Turkey from May 19 through May 22, 2015. In all, twenty-five people were in attendance: ten activists, ten funders, and five issue experts. Lisa Skeen from OSF coordinated travel and on-site logistics. Pre-meetings for activists and funders were organized for May 19th, and the full convening took place from May 20th to May 22nd.

<sup>1</sup> Trans\*: People whose gender identity or expression differs from the gender assigned at birth. Some trans\* people identify and present themselves as either a man or a woman; others identify with a non-binary gender category. Trans\* people define themselves by many terms, some of which are specific to local cultures, including transgender, transsexual, fa'faine, travesti, hijra, genderqueer, and transpinoy – to name just a few. Many global activists have started to use the abbreviation "trans\*", with an asterisk, denoting a placeholder for the entire range of possible gender identities that fall under the broad definition of trans\*.

# PURPOSE OF THE CONVENING

**The purpose** of the International Trans\* Fund Convening was to determine the feasibility of creating a new fund to support the global trans\* community. To this end, the organizers created a set of presentations and discussions to achieve a specific set of goals:

- **Understand the landscape** of funding for the global trans\* movement
- **Understand the benefits** and challenges of different collaborative funding structures
- **Identify strategies** for bringing additional funds into the field
- **Develop recommendations** for the goals, structure, parameters, and next steps for a trans\* fund

# PARTICIPANTS

Because the convening was narrowly focused and organized in a short time frame, participants were individually selected by the Working Group in consultation with GPP members and trans\* advocates from the Berlin convening.

## The criteria for **activist-participants** included:

- Experienced trans\* leaders and activists with donor relationship and fundraising experience
- Well-connected in at least one world region
- Proven ability to think strategically beyond their own organization
- Work well with others
- Geographic diversity
- Gender diversity

Fifteen activists were invited, thirteen confirmed their participation, and ten attended the convening. Unfortunately, all five individuals who could not attend (due to scheduling conflicts or health issues) were from countries in the Global South, and four of those five were trans\* women. The activists who were able to attend were:

- **Abhina Aher**, APTN/India HIV/AIDS Alliance (India)
- **Mauro Cabral**, GATE (Argentina)
- **Zhan Chiam**, ILGA (Singapore/Australia)
- **Julia Ehrt**, TGEU (Germany)
- **Justus Eisfeld**, GATE (U.S.)
- **Yuri Frank**, Insight (Ukraine)
- **Kim Mukasa**, Refugee Law Project (Uganda)
- **Kemalita Ordek**, Red Umbrella (Turkey)
- **Jabu Pereira**, Iranti-org (South Africa)
- **Joe Wong**, Asian Pacific Transgender Network (Thailand/Singapore)

For **funder-participants**, members of the GPP Trans\* Working Group were invited to attend the convening, and invitations were also issued to a handful of funders with experience supporting international trans\* groups. Invitations were made on a rolling basis to ensure funder representation did not outweigh activist representation. The final funder list was:

- **Kerry Ashforth**, U.S. Department of State
- **Namita Chad**, Astraea Foundation
- **Rebecca Fox**, Wellspring Advisors
- **Anne Gathumbi**, OSF Sexual Health and Rights Project (SHARP)
- **Michael Heflin**, OSF Human Rights Initiative
- **Happy Kinyili**, Mama Cash
- **Anna Kirey**, OSF SHARP
- **Roz Lee**, Arcus Foundation
- **Wanja Muguongo**, UHAI
- **Dave Scamell**, American Jewish World Service

Five **resource people** were also invited and attended to share their expertise and experience:

- **Pablo Aguilera**, Young HIV Leaders Fund
- **Gabriel Foster**, Trans Justice Funding Project
- **Matthew Hart**, The Lafayette Practice
- **Erin Howe**, Strength in Numbers
- **Nadia van der Linde**, Red Umbrella Fund

# THEMES

A number of recurring themes emerged through the convening, including many areas of consensus among participants. These areas of consensus include:

- 1. There is a clear need to increase funding for trans\* organizations.** According to a survey of 340 trans\* organizations conducted by GATE and American Jewish World Service, 1 in 5 trans\* organizations had zero budgets, and only 27% had foundation funding in 2013. Donors and activists alike agreed that increasing resources for trans\* groups is a priority and that a trans\* fund should be considered if it would increase the overall amount of resources available to the field, and not merely redistribute existing resources. There is strong interest in a mechanism that could increase the number of donors and amount of funds invested in trans\* work. For example, the trans\* fund could attract investments from bilateral and multilateral grants that would otherwise be unavailable to smaller trans\* organizations without the capacity to manage government contracts.
- 2. Coordination of funding through a funder collaborative could help fill gaps in the current funding environment.** Funder collaboratives provide structures in which donors can work together—often in partnership with activists—to coordinate resources and fill existing funding gaps. According to The Lafayette Practice, the benefits of funding collaboratives include: developing capacity and shared knowledge among partners, stronger grantee networks, increased funding, shared risk, and increased impact. Collaboratives can also bring together the resources needed to provide more support to grantees than any one funder could do on its own, such as funding in a particular region, offering capacity-building support, or investing in innovative strategies. For example, a collaborative trans\* fund could increase resources dedicated to direct services by attracting new donors, including those who may not have sexual orientation/ gender identity (SOGI) portfolios but who already invest in issues of particular concern for trans\* communities, such as healthcare access, economic equality, and social services. Similarly, a focused fund could integrate capacity building support that helps to build stronger and more sustainable trans\* groups and leaders, especially in regions that are currently underfunded, and facilitate more strategic and nuanced conversations about the future of trans\* movements.
- 3. Participatory grantmaking is an optimal way to distribute resources from a collaborative fund.** Participatory grantmaking funds are informed by the core belief that the people impacted by a fund's programs should make decisions about the direction and administration of the fund itself. These funds tend to be led by an intermediary organization that handles the fund's administration and participatory grantmaking processes. Typically, their grantmaking panels include activists who are selected through an application process, and they tend to support smaller organizations. In addition to grants, these funds often provide additional technical assistance and support to build the capacity of their grantees.
- 4. Clear values and principles must inform the development of any fund.** Values such as solidarity, social justice, and community representation are critical to consider in the development of a trans\* fund. At this moment in history, activists assert that there is no single global trans\* movement. Circumstances are varied on the ground, and activists have had few opportunities to begin developing a global trans\* agenda. As a result, any new funding mechanism will need to acknowledge the unique needs of trans\* people and activists in different regions. In addition, many trans\* activists have been doing years of work with very few resources, which is contributing to extreme burnout. A trans\* fund could challenge this dynamic by providing sufficient and sustainable support for activists.

**5. Donor and activists alike have ambitious aspirations that need to be prioritized through clear decision-making structures.** Participants share robust hopes and dreams for a trans\* fund, but also acknowledge a need to be realistic about what a fund could realistically accomplish. Articulated hopes for a trans\* fund include: increasing resources to trans\* groups, supporting the emergence of new trans\* leaders, supporting the sustainability of veteran trans\* leaders, providing capacity-building opportunities, creating a voice for the trans\* movement in donor spaces, and more. It is important to prioritize goals for any fund and to create a decision-making structure that reflects both activist and donor perspectives; for activists, it is especially important to be able to inform grantmaking decisions. There is great interest among both activists and donors in a participatory grantmaking model that supports leadership development and capacity-building goals.

**6. A trans\* fund could take many forms.** Collaborative funding and participatory grantmaking can take many different forms, each with their own benefits and drawbacks. Four collaborative models were considered:

- **Donor collaborative:** Donors make grantmaking decisions. Activists may be consulted as advisors, but are not in formal decision-making roles. [Donor-led fund]
- **Donor/activist fund:** Grantmaking decisions are shared among a group of both donors and activists:
  - Donor-Majority: Donors represent the majority of decision-makers [majority donor-led fund]
  - Activist-Majority: Activists represent the majority of decision-makers [majority activist-led fund]
- **Hybrid:** Blend of donor collaborative and donor/activist fund, in that it starts as donor-led fund with the intent to become activist-led fund in time.

Each model has advantages and disadvantages, and most donors are open to what form a trans\* fund might take. (See Attachment A: Rapid Funder Assessment for donor perspectives on different collaborative fund models).

Activists favored an activist-majority donor/activist fund or hybrid collaborative funding model, meaning one that starts with more funder leadership at the outset and intentionally transitions to more activist leadership over an agreed-upon time period.

# AGREEMENTS + RECOMMENDATIONS

After significant discussion, there was clear consensus among participants at the Istanbul convening that the development of an international trans\* fund is both possible and recommended. Funders and activists alike agreed that the time is right for the development of such a fund and are interested in working together to realize this vision. On the basis of this premise, the convening participants developed initial recommendations for a trans\* fund, including drafting the proposed mission, purpose, values, and structure for the International Trans\* Fund.

## MISSION, PURPOSE & VALUES

The working **mission** of the Trans\* Fund is to: (1) Increase the capacity of the trans\* movement, organizations, and activists to self-organize and advocate for their rights, self-determination, and wellbeing; and (2) address funding gaps impacting trans\* groups across the globe, with a focus on trans-led organizations with limited access to other funding sources.

The proposed **purpose** of the fund is three-fold:

1. Increase resources and enhance access to resources to support trans\* communities. This includes increasing financial resources dedicated to trans\*-led organizations through grantmaking and increasing access to other donors; increasing access to non-financial resources for trans\* organizations, such as skills building, technical support, and communications; and providing support for movement activists and organizations, such as coaching, wellness, and trauma support.
2. Provide a mechanism to support an ecosystem of trans\* groups, with a particular emphasis on small and emerging groups (including those that are not registered) working at the international, regional, country, and local levels.
3. Be a leader in the philanthropic community by serving as a thought leader on trans\* issues and engaging other funders in trans\*-related investments and strategies.

**Values and principles** to inform the creation and execution of the International Trans\* Fund include:

- Trans\* leadership and decision-making
- Human rights and social justice
- Self-determination
- Intersectionality, anti-oppression, and anti-colonialism
- Diversity and inclusion (e.g., gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, geography, age, disability, religion, class/socioeconomic status) and sensitivity to the multiple communities, identities, and issues affected by oppression
- Responsiveness to trans\* communities, including flexibility in the Fund's responses to community needs; support for trans\*-led innovative structures and strategies; and respect and compensation for the labor of trans\* people
- Value the wellbeing of activists and individuals
- Accountability and transparency to the movement and others while protecting the safety and security of grantees and activists
- Recognition of power dynamics between funders and activists, and understanding that a "fund" is not the best political space or structure to build the trans\* movement or a global network

## PROPOSED STRUCTURE

Initial thinking about the structure of the International Trans\* Fund includes recommendations for an Interim Steering Committee, or Planning Committee, to lead initial development of the Fund and make near-term decisions until other committees are established; a Board to set

priorities, secure funding commitments, and manage staff; a grantmaking committee to review grant applications and make funding recommendations; a host organization (chosen through a competitive selection process) to act as fiscal sponsor and manage grantmaking logistics; and staff to support the various committees and functions of the Fund.

An Interim Steering Committee (ISC) was empaneled to hone initial recommendations from the Istanbul convening and to continue planning for the development of the International Trans\* Fund. The Interim Steering Committee was charged with drafting the first year planning budget for the Trans\* Fund, creating a job description and hiring a consultant to staff the planning process, developing a process to recruit additional planning committee and board members for the Fund, informing any initial grantmaking criteria, and drafting operational and communications plans. Ideally, membership in the Interim Steering Committee (and any future planning committee) will consist of 80% of trans\*-identified people, and 80% activists. A temporary consultant will staff the ISC until longer-term staffing plans are developed.

## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Suggested impact measures and benchmarks for the Fund include:

1. **More resources dedicated to the field:** The donor-base supporting trans\* groups is larger and broader, including funders that support direct services (e.g., health, employment, economic development) and those that may not have LGBT or SOGI portfolios, but have broader interests. There is greater support for coordinated capacity building, such as a comprehensive capacity-building program (e.g., budgeting, financial management, program development, networking, and mentoring) for trans\* groups.
2. **Stronger trans\* groups and leaders:** There are more trans\* organizations that are trans\*-led with larger budgets, as well as greater sustainability for trans\* organizations and their leaders (e.g., diversified funding, benefit and retirement plans, and leaders with work-life balance).
3. **Stronger movements:** Increased support for a greater number and diversity of trans\* organizations and activists, including those in regions that are currently underfunded, and longer-term and more nuanced conversations about gender and the future of the trans\* movement
4. **Sustainability and participation:** Establishment of a participatory and sustainable fund that grows over time, provides a first point of contact for trans\* groups seeking funding, and adopts processes that support different kinds of participatory decision-making.

## FUNDING COMMITMENTS

Donors at the Istanbul convening, most of whom are members of the Global Philanthropy Project's Trans\* Working Group, agreed to secure up to \$250,000 USD to seed the International Trans\* Fund planning process. The Interim Steering Committee was charged with creating a budget for the planning process to be shared with GPP Trans\* Working Group members as needed in order to secure individual commitments from their institutions in 2015.

# NEXT STEPS

Creating a new fund to support international trans\* work will require dedicated and concentrated work by activists and donors alike. A number of concrete actions and accountabilities came out of the Istanbul convening that will inform the next steps for this project.

## 1. Form the Interim Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee shall consist of 7-11 voting members, the majority of whom should be trans\* activists. In Istanbul, activists Abhina Aher, Mauro Cabral, Julia Ehrt, and Kim Mukasa volunteered to serve on the steering committee and to recruit additional activists to that body. The GPP Trans\* Working Group agreed to select two donors who will have voting rights on the ISC. Ideally the donors on the ISC will include both public and private donors, as well as funders from both Global North and Global South countries.

## 2. Develop the plan for the International Trans\* Fund.

Once the ISC is formed, there are a number of start-up and planning tasks to prioritize, including developing a budget for a 9-12 month planning process; creating a job description and hiring a consultant; evaluating the planning process; crafting talking points for external communication regarding the development of a Trans\* Fund; revising recommendations for the Trans\* Fund; creating a process and timeline for consulting with other activists and donors about the creation of the Fund; refining the structure of the Fund; and clarifying next steps.

## 3. Hone and update recommendations.

The initial recommendations made in Istanbul will need to be updated based on the ISC's work and feedback from various stakeholders.

- Review mission, purpose, and values; define and elaborate on additional values; and define and expand “diversity and inclusion” within the Fund’s values.
- Clarify what it means to strengthen “the global trans\* movement” (e.g. Does that include global collaborations? Regional networks?).
- Identify baselines and create benchmarks to assess impact and track changes in resources (e.g., What does it mean to “increase” resources to support trans\* communities? How will the Fund increase support through direct grants and act as a conduit to other resources for trans\* organizations?).
- Define the Fund’s approach to capacity building and determine how capacity building fits into the Fund’s structure. Consider mapping current resources or conducting regional assessments to learn more about capacity building priorities.

- Clarify and define scope of support for movement activists (e.g. What is included and excluded? Support for individual activists? Coaching? Trauma support? Educational expenses? Healthcare benefits? Sabbatical or respite time? Mini-grants to cover transition-related care?).
- Develop glossary of terms to accompany information about the Fund, including “trans-led”, “trans\*”, and “communities.”
- Review and begin addressing additional questions raised by participants at the Istanbul convening (see Attachment D).

## 4. Consult other stakeholders.

The International Trans\* Fund will need support and buy-in from a wide range of trans\* activists, groups, and donors across the globe. Once a plan is developed by the steering committee, it will be important to begin engaging the broader trans\* movement in the development of the Fund. Ideally, consultancies will be held in several regions. To this end, GPP members and activists agreed to identify regional spaces and movement events where consultations could take place.

## 5. Secure commitment from donors.

Once an initial budget is developed for the International Trans\* Fund, it will be time to confirm funding partners and secure resources for both the planning process (up to \$250,000 USD in Year 1) and grantmaking budgets.

## 6. Secure host for the Fund.

The ISC is charged with developing a process for determining the host, or fiscal sponsor, for the International Trans\* Fund. Because the selection of the host organization will inform other structural decisions and grantmaking processes, it is recommended that the host be selected through a competitive and transparent process.

## ATTACHMENT A

# RAPID FUNDER ASSESSMENT

## INTERNATIONAL TRANS\* FUND CONVENING

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### BACKGROUND

In recent years, the need for transgender-specific organizations and programs has become increasingly apparent. So, too, has the need for increased and sustained funding for the global trans\* movement.

Research conducted by Global Action for Trans\* Equality and American Jewish World Service in 2013 found that trans\* people face significant human rights violations, including discrimination, violence, lack of access to healthcare, and lack of legal status or recognition. Among the 340 transgender and intersex groups surveyed – the majority of which were founded after 2005—more than half were working with budgets of less than \$10,000. The groups noted several barriers to funding, including:

- Lack of knowledge about trans-supportive funders and how to contact them;
- Complicated application procedures that surpass the capacity of applicants;
- A mismatch between groups' needs and donor priorities;
- Funding for trans\* programs directed to gay and lesbian groups or HIV service organizations that do not prioritize trans\* issues or leadership;
- Governments' lack of funding for trans\* and intersex issues;
- Ineligibility for funding due to location or constituency;
- Lack of understanding of trans\* issues among donors; and,
- Lack of data about trans\* people and issues.

Similarly, a 2013 survey of donors conducted by Open Society Foundations found that, “the number one barrier to funding trans\* and intersex groups is their lack of experience with funding and capacity to administer grants.”

In order to better understand and address these issues, a group of foundations, bilateral donors, and activists engaged in a dialogue at the Advancing Trans\* Movements Worldwide conference in Berlin, Germany in December 2013. Hosted by Global Action for Trans\* Equality, Open Society Foundations and Wellspring Advisors, the convening resulted in several recommendations to improve

and increase funding for trans\* and intersex movements. These recommendations included, among others: (1) exploring formal and informal mechanisms that foster donor-to-donor, activist-to-donor collaboration, learning, sharing and networking (including exploring the idea of a global solidarity fund for trans\* and intersex movements) and (2) continuing strategic dialogue with donors, with a clear goal on fund leveraging, coordination, education and/or movement funding.

In 2015, to further explore and build on the recommendations from the Berlin meeting, the Global Philanthropy Project, Arcus Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Wellspring Advisors, and Global Action for Trans\* Equality organized the International Trans\* Fund Convening to take place in Istanbul, Turkey from May 19 to May 22, 2015. The purpose of the convening is to determine the feasibility of creating a new fund to support the global trans\* community. Additional objectives for the meeting include:

- Ensuring funders and activists understand the landscape of funding for the global trans\* movement;
- Understanding the benefits and challenges of different collaborative funding structures;
- Identifying strategies for bringing additional funds into the field; and,
- Developing recommendations for the goals, structure, parameters, and next steps for a trans\* fund.

A Rapid Funder Assessment was conducted in April 2015 to help determine the parameters of the exploratory conversations at the convening, and to better understand what could be feasible for a potential fund going into the Istanbul meeting.

## METHODOLOGY

Project Consultant Masen Davis conducted the Rapid Funder Assessment to document funder perspectives regarding a trans\* fund. Interviews ranging from 30 to 60 minutes were conducted with fifteen funders, all of whom have a history of or interest in supporting international trans\* organizations. Funds participating in the rapid assessment included:

### Private Foundations:<sup>1</sup>

- Arcus Foundation
- The Baring Foundation
- Dreilinden
- Elton John Foundation
- Open Society Foundations – Human Rights Initiative
- Open Society Foundations – SHARP
- Wellspring Advisors

### Public Foundations:<sup>2</sup>

- American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR)
- American Jewish World Service (AJWS)
- Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
- Hivos
- Mama Cash
- UHAI EASHRI
- Urgent Action Fund

### Bilateral Funders:<sup>3</sup>

- U.S. State Department – Global Equality Fund

Each funder was asked to share their goals for the convening, preferences regarding the structure of a trans\* fund, whether their foundation would be likely to support the development of a trans\* fund, and any funding restrictions that could impact the funder's investment in a trans\* fund. Interviews were conducted from April 6, 2015 to May 1, 2015. All interviewees were informed that their responses would be aggregated and summarized for participants of the convening.

## FINDINGS

### GOALS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TRANS\* FUND CONVENING

Respondents were asked to share their thoughts about and goals for the International Trans\* Fund Convening. Three goals were consistently noted among the funders interviewed:

#### 1) Identify strategies to increase resources for trans\* groups

All respondents noted that trans\* funding is under-resourced, and are interested in seeing more financial and non-financial resources flowing to trans\* groups. Many consider the development of a trans\* fund as one of potentially many strategies towards a larger goal of increasing funding for the global trans\* movement. Several noted that attracting new donors to trans\* work is a priority. At the same time, several respondents expressed fears that a trans-specific fund could result in a reallocation of existing funds, or a concentration of resources in one pooled fund that may not actually increase trans\* funding.

*“Can we bring in people who haven't invested in this space before? We need to structure this in a way that will help do that so funders feel safe; we need to hit enough issue areas to be of interest without diluting it.”*

*“We would not be into a pooled fund that did not increase resources.”*

*“I have mixed feelings about a collaborative fund. I want to get a shared understanding and plan of next steps to determine whether or not a fund will really help grow the pie.”*

*“How can we bring in more resource? We need to structure it in a way that can appeal to and bring in new funders, HIV funders, corporate funders.... We need a strong mechanism that can become a tool for increasing funders at the table, including unusual suspects.”*

#### 2) Decide on the creation of a trans\* fund and develop recommendations for it

Many respondents noted that a trans\* fund has been discussed for some time, and they are eager to move forward with a concrete decision and recommendations for the fund. Whatever decision is made, there is a strong appetite for concrete and actionable recommendations to come out of the convening.

*“We need a decision.”*

*“I want to see a set of recommendations about how to support and strengthen the trans\* movement.... Who will be charged with making it happen so that by end of 2016 we some way to get resources to groups?”*

1 A private foundation derives its money from a family, an individual, or a corporation.

2 A grantmaking public charity (sometimes referred to as a “public foundation”) derives its support from several sources, which may include foundations, individuals, and government agencies. Most community foundations are also grantmaking public charities.

3 A bilateral organization is a government agency or nonprofit organization based in a single country that provides aid for people in other countries.

*"I want for the trans\* movement to articulate how it wants to resource itself. Does it mean setting up a fund? Does it mean not a fund but more funder education?"*  
*"I'm ready for us to make a decision. We need clarity to know where this is going."*

### 3) Understand current funding gaps that could be met by a trans\* fund

Some funders want to learn more about the gaps in current funding (e.g., geography, issues supported, etc.) and understand what resources are needed compared to what resources are available. Several want to reach some consensus at the meeting regarding how to fill those gaps.

*"The ability to fund small groups is biggest reason to do this."*

*"I want everyone to have a shared understanding of what the landscape is. What is happening? We need to look at regional contexts because it is not possible to fund country-by-country and it's not enough to just look global."*

*"We are hoping to have an honest conversation based on an analysis of what funding is available at the moment. There's good data based on the global trans\* mapping report. That should tell us how much money is available for the sector, how much money is needed by sector, and best way to bridge the gap."*

*"It's clear from the data: We need to set up a dedicated fund."*

Respondents noted a wide range of other goals, but none were expressed as consistently as the first three. These included:

- Increase the quality of what is funded.
- Understand activist goals and expectations for a Fund.
- Assess activist capacity to inform the development and implementation of a Fund.
- Explore how to make decisions that build and don't divide the field
- Build the trans\* movement.
- Identify smaller, grassroots groups for grantmaking portfolios.
- Increase accessibility of government funding.

## STRUCTURAL PREFERENCES

Interviewees were asked to share any preferences they or their foundations have in terms of the structure of the fund. The following structural options were considered:<sup>4</sup>

- 1) **Donor collaborative fund:** Contributions from different donors are pooled in a collective fund administered by a lead donor or a third party. Each contributor has a voice in the grantmaking decisions and funding is provided from the pool. Non-donor activists may be consulted as advisors, but are not in formal decision-making roles. This model may also be described as a donor-led fund.
- 2) **Donor/activist fund (with donor majority control):** Contributions from different donors are pooled in a collective fund administered by a lead donor or a third party. Grantmaking decisions are shared among a group of both donors and activists, with donors representing the majority. Funding is provided from the pool. This model could also be described as a predominantly donor-led fund.
- 3) **Donor/activist fund (with activist majority control):** Contributions from different donors are pooled in a collective fund administered by a lead donor or a third party. Grantmaking decisions are shared among a group of both donors and activists, with activists representing the majority. Funding is provided from the pool. This model could also be described as a predominantly activist-led fund.
- 4) **Hybrid Fund:** A blend of the donor collaborative and donor/activist fund models. This experimental model would start as a donor collaborative fund or donor/activist fund (donor majority) with an expressed purpose of becoming a donor/activist fund (activist majority) over time. This hybrid could also be described as a donor-led fund with aspirations to become an activist-led fund.

Of the 15 donors surveyed, six (40%) preferred a fund with activist-majority control; three (20%) preferred a donor/activist model with majority donor control; and three (20%) preferred a hybrid model that would begin with donor control and transition to become an activist-majority fund over time. Three others (20%) were open to different options or had no preference going into the convening.

There was a notable difference between the perspectives of representatives from public and private foundations. The majority of public foundation respondents prefer an activist-led fund, while the majority of private foundations preferred a hybrid or donor-centric approach. Interviewees from private foundations noted that they need to have some level of decision-making power in order to get support for the fund within their institutions. As one funder noted, "It is hard to make the case to give funds and all decision making to activists because we still need to link the grant to [our foundation's] program strategies.... Our program staff are held accountable to that." The size of grant seemed to make a difference to

<sup>4</sup> These models and descriptions are provided to facilitate a shared language for the assessment and convening. There are many potential variations within these models, and different interpretations of how each model could be administered.

these funders; for example, one private funder anticipated they could give \$100,000 to an activist-led fund or \$300,000 to a fund where they had some input as a donor. As another private foundation respondent said, “The amount of money matters.”

There was also a distinction in responses among funders who indicated that their foundation was likely to support the development of a Trans\* Fund. Among that subset of six funders, three (50%) preferred a donor/activist fund with donor majority; however, only one preferred an activist-majority fund, one preferred a hybrid, and one had no preference. It is important to note, though, that many of these funders were open to more than one possible fund structure and were eager to discuss the pros and cons of different models at the convening.

## VARYING PERSPECTIVES ON ACTIVIST INPUT

Every funder noted that activist input was important for the Fund to be successful, but there were different views about what that input should look like. Many of the public funders felt it was critical for activists to set the priorities for the Fund (and would only support the Fund if that was the case), while others were more comfortable with activist participation limited to more of a consultative or advisory role.

*“Activists should be the core. The core focus of any fund cannot be pleasing its donors – that’s what a donor collaborative would become.”*

*“I want to invest in a trans\* fund. But [to give a] larger amount, [it would take a]... donor table with some activist representation.”*

*“I prefer donor/activist with donor majority or a hybrid model. [Some activist-controlled funds] make it hard to make decisions because they are so consultative and democratic. I value that openness, but it slows down some of the interventions we care about.”*

*“My personal preference is a participatory model with power for activists to make decisions.”*

When activists have to grapple with everything, it’s very powerful—a form of capacity building in itself. It also opens up the wallets of funders in ways that might not happen otherwise, and helps activists understand funding dilemmas. So, I prefer shared power with an understanding of parameters.”

*“Hire people, or set up a fund to guarantee trans\* decision making.”*

*“Consider a pilot model – 2-3 years of a donor model with a commitment to develop trans\* leadership capacity to the point where evaluate and renegotiate it. Then move to a 50/50 [activist/donor split], then 80/20 [activist/donor split] over time. “*

*“If the point is to simply resource the movement, then any mechanism is ok. If the point is to get money out and shift how perceptions are held, who makes decisions, to change the terms of engagement, then activist-controlled is good. But with the cost that donors often step back.”*

*“Funders and activists need to have a lot of trust in the fund. Activists need to trust this is best decision for the movement. Go with the structure that creates the most trust.”*

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## PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF DIFFERENT DECISION-MAKING MODELS

Many respondents acknowledged that each decision-making structure has strengths and weaknesses. The perceived advantages and disadvantages of different models cited by different interviewees are provided below.

- 1) **Donor Collaborative:** Decision-making in a donor collaborative is typically centralized among the donors to the fund, and the fund is administered by one of the donor-collaborators.

Perceived **advantages** of a donor collaborative fund include:

1. Ease and speed: Respondents asserted that this type of fund would be the easiest and fastest to establish; for example, one funder noted that the Intersex Fund at Astraea (a donor collaborative) took only six months to create, whereas the Red Umbrella Fund (a donor/activist fund with activists in a decision-making role) took more than two years to establish.
2. Streamlined decision-making: Decision-making is generally easier and faster because investors (or an advisory committee of donors) make decisions.
3. Least restrictive: Because donors would have decision-making power, there is a sense that this model would be the least restrictive regarding what donors could contribute.
4. Facilitates fundraising: Given the other benefits, some respondents think this model is the most likely to raise large funds from existing and new funders.

Perceived **disadvantages** of a donor collaborative fund include:

1. Lack of trans\* involvement in decision-making: Given the current scarcity of trans\* program officers, this model could mean that few trans\* people are involved in decision-making with regards to the resourcing of their own movement. Even if trans\* activists served in an advisory capacity, there

would likely be few (if any) trans\* decision-makers. This raised ethical and values-related questions for some funders.

2. Knowledge gap: This model would not fully benefit from the wisdom and expertise of trans\* activists.
3. Misses opportunity to address multiple goals: While the donor collaborative could get resources out to trans\* groups quickly, it is less likely to promote other goals (e.g., leadership development and movement building) compared to other models.
4. Less attractive to public foundations: Given the likely lack of engagement of trans\* people, many public foundations reported they would be less likely to contribute to this model.

## 2) Donor/activist fund (with donor majority control):

Contributions from different donors are pooled in a collective fund administered by a lead donor or a third party with grantmaking decisions shared among donors and activists.

Perceived **advantages** of a donor/activist fund (donor majority) include:

1. Streamlined yet inclusive decision-making: Decision-making is more inclusive than the donor collaborative model because activists have actual decision-making power (and are not just advisors); however, the presence of a donor majority makes it easier for donors to ensure their restrictions or regulations are met.
2. Facilitates fundraising: Donors would be more able to fund (compared to activist-majority models) because they still have significant control over final decisions.
3. Limited impact on activists: This type of model still relies on the infrastructure of donors; as a result, it would not take as much capacity from activists compared to an activist-majority model.

Perceived **disadvantages** of a donor/activist fund (donor majority) include:

1. Relative lack of trans\* involvement in decision-making: Trans\* people would still represent a minority of members on the decision-making body and would have less power than donors.
2. Representation challenges: The process of selecting who the trans\* representatives would be could be difficult, especially if there is a desire to ensure fair representation across the movement.
3. Longer decision-making: A greater diversity in perspectives, and need to identify, recruit, and train trans\* representatives to serve on the fund, would slow set-up and decision-making.

4. Less attractive to public foundations: Given the limited engagement of trans\* people, many public foundations reported they may be less likely to contribute to this model.

## 3) Donor/activist fund (with activist majority control):

Contributions from different donors are pooled in a collective fund administered by a lead donor or a third party with grantmaking decisions shared among donors and activists.

Perceived **advantages** of a donor/activist fund (activist majority) include:

1. On-the-ground knowledge: Because this model would likely be led by trans\* people who regularly work on trans\* issues, it would have the potential to be more responsive to the needs of the movement. As one respondent quoted, "The person who wears the shoes knows where it pinches the most." Another funder noted that this model would likely make it easier to connect with smaller, grassroots groups.
2. Inclusive and transparent decision-making: Trans\* activists would be deeply engaged in decision-making about the fund's priorities and grants, while also benefiting from the experience of grantmakers. There is also a sense that this model would lead to more transparent decision-making.
3. Fill staffing gaps: By increasing the decision-making power of trans\* activists, this model could help address the fact that few foundations have trans\* program officers to set priorities or make decisions about their trans\*-related grantmaking.
4. Addresses multiple goals: While focused on grantmaking to trans\* groups, this model has the potential of building the capacity for trans\* leadership and training for new grantmakers. It could begin to change the power dynamic between funders and activists.

Perceived **disadvantages** of a donor/activist fund (activist majority) include:

1. Long start-up time: Due to the collaborative and inclusive nature of many activist-led funds, it is likely that start-up and decision-making would take significantly longer than other models.
2. Less funder engagement: If the fund were created so that foundations felt they had little decision-making power, some foundations would likely become more restrictive about what and how much they give compared to other models.
3. Sustainability: As one respondent noted, "Fundraising challenges happen when funders are less engaged." The need for a sustainable model

was raised by many interviewees, including those concerned that private foundations might be less likely to contribute to this model.

4. Capacity concerns: This model could take considerable time and energy to establish and manage; many respondents feared that this could take experienced activists from their existing work.
5. Representation challenges: The process of selecting who the trans\* representatives would be could be difficult, especially if there is a desire to ensure fair representation across the movement. It can be difficult and time consuming to create a structure that builds trust, avoids cliques, and is truly representative.

**4) Hybrid Model:** An experimental model that would start as a donor collaborative fund or donor/activist fund (donor majority) with plans to become a donor/activist fund (activist majority control) over time.

Perceived **advantages** of a hybrid model include:

1. Initial ease and speed: Relative ease of startup and initial decision-making, maximizing the benefits of the donor collaborative and donor-majority models. This could take advantage of the momentum to start a fund while creating a pathway to increase activist decision-making over time.
2. Streamlined decision-making at launch: Decision-making in the first year would be easier and faster because donors would have stronger decision-making power.
3. Balances advantages and disadvantages: Leverages the strengths of donor collaborative and donor-majority models and minimizes potential weaknesses of the activist-majority model during initial development of the fund; maximizes benefits of activist-led fund over time.
4. Addresses multiple goals: While focused on grantmaking to trans\* groups, this model also has the potential of building the capacity for trans\* leadership and training for new grantmakers.

Perceived **disadvantages** of a hybrid model include:

1. Lack of trans\* ownership and involvement in decision-making: Given the relative lack of trans\* program officers, this model could mean that no (or few) trans\* people are involved in priority setting and decision-making as the fund is created and launched.
2. Mistrust: Many respondents expressed skepticism that a hybrid donor collaborative would actually transition to an activist-majority fund. As one interviewee said, "It is hard to have funders give up power once they have it." Similarly, another skeptic

of this model shared, "If donors don't start off trusting activists, that will not change.... Once you begin with that, there's not much that will happen within the fund that will increase the trust." Given these sentiments by donors, this model would likely face skepticism from activists, too, who may distrust donors' commitment to transition from a donor collaborative to an donor/activist fund.

## DESIRED INPUT & DECISION-MAKING CONTROL

Funders were asked what level of decision-making control or input their foundation would want or need if they invested in a trans\* fund. In all, eight of the fifteen funders said they would need some level of input in a trans\* fund. Six said they needed no input, and one funder noted that their need for input would depend on grant size. Again, private foundation staff tended to feel a greater need for more input than public foundation staff due to their need to meet specific goals and secure internal support within their organizations. Specific responses, though, provide some additional insight to the needs of these funders.

*"In order to give \$100,000 I would need a very clear set of guidelines about kind of grants would be considered: what end goals look like, topic areas, decision-making process, checks and balances. For \$300,000, I would need the same as \$100,000 while also serving on a decision-making body. I wouldn't need to have more or less say than others on that body, though. But I would have to have some serious input if an activist-majority structure."*

*"We would need to make sure our geography needs addressed, and would be interested in how data was collected. For us, input would be more about measurement of impact."*

*"I would want to be part of the steering committee, if there is one."*

*"We would say, 'Here's the money – go spend it.'"*

*"We would need to review grants against our regulations and be able to approve that expenditures are allowable for projects supported by our dollars."*

*"If fully activist-led fund, then [our foundation] may not have active control. We would want to ensure that the guidelines of the fund and regrating criteria are agreed upon up front. We would need clear boundaries to clarify what's allowed, possible, etc. Once that's agreed upon, we are happy to step back."*

Among the eight funders that would need input, it is interesting to note that only two (both of whom are private funders) asserted they would need to be on a decision-making body, while one (a public foundation) would want to be on a steering committee. Three of the funders who would need to provide input are primarily concerned with ensuring that funds they commit to a collaborative fund carry mandated restrictions or priorities from their own institutions. In most of these cases, the funders

did not feel like they needed to be in a decision-making role about individual grants as long as their specific constraints were addressed in some way. This is especially true for any government funds that may be subject to regulatory oversight. Finally, one foundation would want input because their foundation's leadership urges staff to serve on the boards of programs they support.

## FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

The funders were asked specifically about restrictions or constraints that would need to be addressed if they contributed to a trans\* fund. These conversations focused on their institutions' openness to supporting an activist-majority fund, geographic restrictions, and openness to different types of grants.

## ABILITY TO SUPPORT ACTIVIST-LED FUND

None of the funders interviewed are prohibited from contributing to an activist-led fund; however, two private foundation representatives noted that it would be harder to build internal support for sizable grants to collaborative funds in which they had no decision making role; one said it would be hard for them to recommend a grant to a fund where they had no power; and several raised personal questions about the efficiency of an activist-led fund due to the consensus-based approach of similarly-structured funds.

## GEOGRAPHIC CONSTRAINTS

Five of the funds (38%) have geographic restrictions that would need to be met in order to contribute to a collaborative fund. Regions important to those with explicit restrictions include:

- Africa
- Middle East, Southeast Asia, East and Southern Africa, Latin America
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Prohibition from funding in the U.S.

Eight (62%) do not have explicit geographic restrictions; however, two of those funders noted that it would be easier for them to "make the case" to support a fund if it reflected their foundation's geographic priorities. Two others said they would need to know the locations of grantees before making the grant because international and domestic funds come from different programs within their institutions. Priority areas noted by the funders without explicit restrictions included:

- Global South, including Latin and South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia
- Central and East Europe
- East and Southern Africa

Several funders noted that the geographic focus of the fund should be based on mapping and identification of regions that need more funding, while other funders asserted that the fund should not have any geographic constraints because all regions are under-funded when it comes to trans\* work.

## TYPE OF GRANTS SUPPORTED

Surveys of trans\* groups have shown a keen interest in providing more direct services and healthcare services, while donor-related surveys have suggested a potential mismatch between the strategic and programmatic priorities of funders and trans\* activists.

Funders surveyed were split when it came to their prioritization of different strategies. Almost half of respondents (6 of 13) noted no programmatic restrictions, while the other half (6 of 13) asserted that certain strategies needed to be prioritized for funding by their foundation. One funder did not know if their funds would be programmatically restricted, and one other did not answer this question.

The main issue for funders with programmatic restrictions was related to service provision; in fact, none of these funders typically support service delivery. Four of these six funders, though, noted that service provision might be allowable as long as it was part of a larger changemaking strategy.

Several noted, too, that the fund might be able to provide a range of grants as long as specific grants or resources could be tracked to their foundation's program strategies (e.g., human rights advocacy, HIV advocacy, etc.).

*"Service provision can help build advocacy. Think about service provision as a building block for advocacy. Be clear about its role, and how it plays into advocacy goals. Concrete goals are important."*

*"We have a preference for advocacy, capacity strengthening, ...activities to support growth of the movement. We are not inclined to support service delivery. Hopefully other funds would be willing to support that. I just need to be upfront about that."*

*"Social services are not out of the question, but it need to be linked to advocacy work."*

*"It would have to have some kind of change making component in it, but there is some flexibility in what that is.... A good administrator should be able to manage that."*

## INTEREST IN SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT OF TRANS\* FUND

Six funders surveyed (40%) believed their institution was likely to support the development of a Trans\* Fund— typically in the form of a financial investment. Five other funders (36%) said their foundation was unlikely to provide financial support to a trans-specific collaborative fund. The final four (28%) were uncertain about their institution's support.

*“Would we give? It depends on what it looks like. If it’s a donor collaborative, no. That would just be diverting funding from other grants [the funder] makes. We would consider funding an activist-led fund.... But if activist-led means no we lose money from 5 major foundations, don’t go with activist-led just for us.”*

Private foundations represent four of the six funders prepared to support the development of a fund. This has potential implications for a Trans\* Fund given a pattern of differential responses between public and private foundation representatives to the Rapid Funder Assessment. A disaggregation of interview responses from the foundations who said they were likely to support the Fund shows:

- Three of the six preferred donor-led or hybrid model with donor majority at the onset of the fund; one preferred a donor/activist fund (regardless of majority control); one preferred activist-led or hybrid structure; and one had no preference.
- Two noted that their contributions would likely be significantly smaller with an activist-led fund due to internal dynamics in their organization.
- All six would need to have some level of input in the Fund, especially if contributing a significant amount of money; however, the extent of their preferred input varied significantly.
- Only one would need funds to be geographically restricted.
- Four would need their programmatic priorities reflected in the fund in some way.

If established, a Fund also has the potential of attracting support from bilateral/government funders. These funders bring additional complexities with their dollars. Because their revenue comes from public taxes, there are many regulations and approvals needed for expenditures made with their dollars. A government funder will typically need to approve budgets for subawards to ensure that all expenditures meet their regulatory guidelines and restrictions, including ensuring their funds are not used to support projects in their own country. If government funds are secured for the trans\* fund, they could be significant; however, such funding would likely demand a lengthy approval process.

## POTENTIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Based on rough estimates from the interviewees, and depending on how a trans\* fund would be structured, it is projected that annual monies could range from \$195,000 (as a conservative estimate for an activist-led fund) to \$2,075,000 (a best-case estimate for a hybrid or donor-majority fund). These estimates are based on the sum of average or projected grant sizes among those funders who seemed most optimistic about their foundation's ability to support a Fund. Most of these donors would not be able to recommend grants until 2016.

- Activist led: From \$195,000 to \$1,595,000
- Hybrid or donor-led: From \$685,000 to \$2,075,000

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THESE ARE ESTIMATED PROJECTIONS ONLY. No firm commitments have been made to a trans\* fund, and in many cases the fund would need to apply to the foundation like any other grantee.

The actual dollars invested would depend on many factors, including those most cited by the respondents: alignment with funders' strategic priorities, internal buy-in, adequate infrastructure for the fund, and trust in the fund's leadership.

Beyond direct contributions, many funders noted their interest in providing non-monetary support to a fund, including fiscal sponsorship, donated staff time, infrastructure development, capacity building support for trans\* organizations, convening support, board service, coaching, and technical support.

## OTHER INPUT

Beyond the structured questions, interviewees provided a number of additional aspirations, constraints and suggestions. Common themes included:

### • Embrace complexity

- “People need to appreciate this is a complex and time consuming process. We need a sizable number of funders willing to commit or this is not going to happen. Can we bring in new money? That’s critical. Not good to just shift existing funds. That’s a zero sum game. We are all committed to increasing funding, but this will be a painful process and expectations may need to be managed at time. I hope people don’t come with expectations that this is happening now. A process of conversations is critical and will lead us to where we want to be.”
- “Creating a fund is a very expensive thing for any movement. Some work effectively in 2-3 years. The average is five years to start moving large amounts of money.... It will take a while before more groups will get serious money out of this.”

### • Consider Global v Regional Approaches

- “Consider the global decision making process. A fund will have a hard time recruiting people from Eastern Europe and Latin America because of language issues; yet won’t be large enough to regionalize. That costs a lot.”
- “Consider whether it makes sense to have a global fund versus regional funds. It can be hard to earn trust and build relationships if you are global and have no local roots. How to get deep links like a group like UHAI while keeping travel and coordination costs down? What is the value add of global fund v regional funds developing over time? Do you need to prioritize areas where that funding doesn’t exist?”
- It can be difficult to start as a truly global fund. As one respondent noted, “If you try to have a global program with 300k-400k euros, you are only able to fund 10-15 groups in different countries. That’s why many funds start with country focus with clear sense of what they want to work on – clear objectives, a few countries – then build from there.”
- “Many global funds currently invest 30% of their funds (on average) to regional networks.”

### • Grow the Pie

- Many respondents noted that some peer-led funds have struggled for sustainability; they want to talk openly about this issue at the convening to ensure the Trans\* Fund, if created, is sustainable over time.
- Donors expressed concerns that the development of a trans\* fund could inadvertently constrain giving to trans\* groups across the field. To avoid this, respondents suggested setting a clear baseline and benchmarks to track aggregate trans\* giving over time so funders can be held accountable.
- “It’s up to the funders to make sure it doesn’t reduce funding from our foundations.”
- “Is a fund the right vehicle? What are other ways for funders to participate more in grantmaking if a fund isn’t created? Can we ask our colleagues to increase their trans\* giving by 5% to 10%?”

### • Find the Right Host

- “The host of the fund should not be a trans\* group, but a funder with good experience working with different funds. The Fund can have strong point on something; for example, it can decide to only support groups who agree with depathologization. But not [succumb to infighting and decided to fund] X group because they have a problem with their leaders.”

### • Consider Overhead

- One funder said they could not contribute to a fund that had an overhead rate beyond 30%
- “Among most participatory funds, 60-70% is typical of grantmaking; the rest of their funds are dedicated to administration and securing more funds.”

### • Questions for the Activists

- What are the activists’ expectations for a fund? Is the priority to move money, or is there some other political intent in the creation of a fund?
- Do they have capacity to absorb this money? If not, what needs to be done to build capacity?
- Is a new fund the best way to achieve activists’ goals, or should we work with what we have to build the field’s capacity?
- Who would be eligible to apply? MSM groups? Sex workers?
- How much time and capacity do the activists have to develop, manage, and participate in a fund? How would they want to be involved? Capacity and time for the activists is a concern – many are already overwhelmed with demands. How do we support activist participation so a Fund doesn’t contribute to burnout?

i Einfeld, J, Gunther, S and Shlasko, D. (2013) *The State of Trans\* and Intersex Organizing: A case for increased support for growing but under-funded movements for human rights*. New York: Global Action for Trans\* Equality and American Jewish World Service.

ii *Advancing Trans\* Movements Worldwide: Lessons from a Dialogue Between Funders & Activists Working on Gender Diversity* (2014). New York: Global Action for Trans\* Equality and Open Society Foundations.

iii *Donor Collaboration: Power in Numbers*. Boston, MA: The Philanthropic Initiative. Accessed at [http://www.tremainefoundation.org/News/customer-files/TPI\\_Collaboration\\_Primer.pdf](http://www.tremainefoundation.org/News/customer-files/TPI_Collaboration_Primer.pdf)



# AGENDA

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Wednesday 5.20	2:00 pm	<b>SESSION 3:</b> <b>Collaborative Funding Models</b>  <b>Objective:</b> All participants understand how different types of collaborative funding models work, including strengths and challenges of each.  <b>Moderator(s):</b> Happy Kinvili & Masen Davis <b>Presenters:</b> Matthew Hart, The Lafayette Practice; Representatives of collaborative funds	Taksim Gonen Hotel
	2:00 pm	<b>Presentation on collaborative funding options</b>	
	2:45 pm	<b>Conversations with collaborative funds</b>	
	3:40 pm	<b>Break</b>	
	4:00 pm	<b>Session 3, continued</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Group Discussions</b></li> <li>• <b>Straw Poll:</b> Given what we know, does a Trans* Fund seem possible?</li> </ul>	
	5:30 pm	<b>Break + Dinner on your own</b>	
Thursday 5.21	8:00 am	<b>Breakfast</b>	Taksim Gonen Hotel
	9:00 am	<b>SESSION 4:</b> <b>Reflections</b>  <b>Objective:</b> Review prior day discussions and prepare for working meeting.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warm-up icebreaker</li> <li>• Summary &amp; reflections on Wednesday's sessions</li> </ul>	Taksim Gonen Hotel
	9:30 am	<b>SESSION 5:</b> <b>Recommendations for a Trans Fund</b>  <b>Objective:</b> Brainstorm realistic goals and parameters for a Trans* Fund; balance power and perspectives between activists and funders while allowing the experience of both groups to inform each other.  <b>Group Facilitators:</b> ITFC Working Group Members  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm recommendations in activist- and funder-specific groups</li> </ul>	Taksim Gonen Hotel
	11:00 am	<b>Break</b>	

# AGENDA

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Thursday 5.21	11:30 am	<b>Session 5, continued</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large group report-backs</li> <li>• World Café</li> </ul>	Taksim Gonen Hotel
	12:30 pm	<b>Lunch</b>	
	2:00 pm	<b>SESSION 6: Building Together</b> <p><b>Objective: Begin prioritizing Session 5 recommendations for the development of a Trans* Fund.</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Masen Davis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large group discussion</li> <li>• Initial prioritization of recommendations</li> </ul>	Taksim Gonen Hotel
	3:30 pm	<b>Break</b>	
	4:00 pm	<b>Session 6, continued</b>	
	5:00 pm	<b>Working group convenes</b>	
	8:30 pm	<b>Explore/Dinner on your own</b> <b>Reception</b>	
Friday 5.22	8:00 pm	<b>Breakfast</b>	Taksim Gonen Hotel
	9:00 am	<b>SESSION 7: Taking it Home</b> <p><b>Objective:</b> Identify concrete steps and actions to increase access to trans* funding and hone recommendations for a Trans* Fund.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Masen Davis</p> <p><b>Presenters:</b> Drafting Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafting Group report + Q&amp;A</li> <li>• Identify next steps in this process</li> </ul>	Taksim Gonen Hotel
	10:30 am	<b>Break out groups:</b> Activists + Funders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss recommendations</li> <li>• Identify next steps + commitments for activists/funders</li> </ul>	
	11:45 am	<b>Full-Group report-backs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document agreements + next steps</li> <li>• Determine what will be communicated and when (internally and externally)</li> </ul>	
	12:00 pm	<b>Wrap Up</b>	
	12:30 pm	<b>Closing + Lunch</b>	

## ATTACHMENT C

# PANEL SUMMARIES

## BRINGING MORE RESOURCES FOR TRANS\* JUSTICE

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Erin Howe from Strength in Numbers presented key findings from the Trans\* Advocacy Strategy & Mapping report based on data from 340 trans\* organizations and 38 donors (see Attachment B for the executive summary and Attachments C-L for the fact sheets). Moderator Jabu Pereira and panelists Justus Eisfeld, Rebecca Fox, and Roz Lee built on Howe's findings to consider how funder collaborations, including the development of a trans\* fund, could help fill gaps illuminated by the research.

Among 38 donors surveyed by the Global Philanthropy Project's Trans\* Working Group, 95% funded trans\* work in 2013, and all expressed interest in donor coordination. Nearly \$9 million was dedicated to trans\* organizations in 2013 (up from \$2.4 million in 2012), and 71% of donor respondents added at least one new trans\* organization to their portfolio in 2013. Nearly 3 in 4 donors surveyed track their trans\* funding, and almost half provide at least 50% of their funds as general operating or unrestricted support. The majority give no multi-year grants to trans\* organizations, and few (7%) added five or more new trans\* organizations to their portfolios in 2013.

Even with relative increases in foundation investment, trans\*-specific organizations continue to be under-resourced. Among the 340 groups surveyed, 1 in 5 trans\* organizations had zero budgets, 27% had foundation funding, and 45% are programs or projects of larger organizations where trans\* staff are less likely to have ultimate decision-making power. Donors with the largest portfolios are more likely to give a larger proportion of funds to LGBT organizations than to trans\*-led or trans\*-focused groups. This can present leadership challenges, especially because trans\* women are particularly marginalized in leadership within larger organizations – among organizations that serve mostly or exclusively trans\* women, trans\* women are 2.6 times more likely to be in leadership at independent organizations rather than at projects of larger organizations. Another critical leadership challenge is preventing burnout and secondary trauma among trans\* activists.

Barriers to securing funds most frequently reported by trans\* groups included lack of staff or volunteers who know how to fundraise or write grants (41%) and lack of knowledge regarding where to look for applicable funding (38%). These barriers could be overcome with capacity-building support for program staff and simplification of application requirements. In addition, about 1 in 5 trans\* groups said language was a barrier and that they would like application materials translated into Spanish, French, and Russian.

Trans\* organizations would like more skills training in fundraising, budgeting, financial management, and program strategy and development. These opportunities may not need to be trans\*-specific, as they are core nonprofit management skills. Nevertheless, relatively few donors offer this type of skills training to trans\* groups. Of the 23 donors who indicated that they support some kind of skills training, the largest number said they support advocacy training (57%) or community organizing training (52%). These were of lower priority for most trans\* organizations, with the exception of the Asia and Pacific Island region, where trans\* advocates would like more policy advocacy training. Given different capacity-building needs, regional networks could be used or formed to provide non-financial support to groups.

### OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

*Masen Davis presented key findings from the Rapid Funder Assessment conducted for the International Trans\* Fund convening. Moderator Mauro Cabral and panelists Julia Ehrst and Dave Scamell reflected on the implications of the assessment.*

A Rapid Funder Assessment (Attachment A) was conducted from April 6, 2015 to May 1, 2015 to better understand what could be feasible for a potential trans\* fund. Fifteen donors were interviewed and asked to share their goals for the convening, preferences regarding the structure of a trans\* fund, whether their foundation would be likely to support the development of a trans\* fund, and any funding restrictions that could impact the funder's investment in a trans\* fund.

All respondents believed trans\* funding is under-resourced and wanted to see more resources going to trans\* groups. All respondents said they would be interested in a collaborative fund assuming it increased support for trans\* groups. Funders were eager to hear directly from trans\* activists regarding

their needs, and several funders noted that a collaborative fund could help to fill several funding gaps. While there was significant openness to working more collaboratively with other donors, there were differing opinions regarding the likely impact and best decision-making structure of a trans\* fund. Four collaborative models were considered:

- Donor collaborative: Donors have voice in grantmaking decisions. Activists may be consulted as advisors, but are not in formal decision-making roles. [Donor-led fund]
- Donor/activist fund: Grantmaking decisions are shared among a group of both donors and activists:
  - Donor-Majority: Donors represent the majority of decision-makers [majority donor-led fund]
  - Activist-Majority: Activists represent the majority of decision-makers [majority activist-led fund]
- Hybrid: Blend of donor collaborative and donor/activist fund. Starts as donor-led with intent to become activist-led in time.

There was no clear consensus regarding what form a trans\*-specific funding collaborative should take. Each model has advantages and disadvantages, and most donors are open to considering different models. Given the opportunities and constraints unearthed by the assessment, a number of reflections were made:

- Investments in any new fund should come from new money, not simply a reallocation of existing resources; it's important that new donors not use a trans\* fund as an excuse to not fund on trans\* issues through other channels.
- Activist input is essential to the development of a trans\* fund. Like donors, trans\* activists want to increase resources to trans\* groups; however, activists are also interested in having a fund that allows more direct trans\* representation in donor spaces.
- There has hardly been an opportunity for a global trans\* movement to form, as there are very few opportunities for activists to meet. This should be taken into account in establishing a trans\* fund.
- Many funders would be open to funding service delivery as long as it is connected to a broader advocacy strategy.
- The format and structures of a fund can be customized/ designed to meet various preferences and constraints. There are many different ways to engage donors and activists in the work, including helping with setup, sustainability, and grantmaking.

## COLLABORATIVE FUNDING MODELS

Matthew Hart from The Lafayette Practice presented key findings from his research on collaborative funds and participatory grantmaking. Moderator Happy Kinvili and panelists representing different types of collaborative funds (Pablo Aguilera, Namita Chad, Michael Heflin, Gabriel Foster, and Nadia van der Linde) shared their experiences,

including advantages and disadvantages of various decision-making structures.

Funding collaboratives are structures for donors who want to work together to coordinate resources in some way. Benefits of funding collaboratives include developing capacity and shared knowledge among partners, stronger grantee networks, increased funding, shared risk, increased impact, and reduced cost. Drawbacks include more time needed to manage multi-stakeholder processes, less independence and autonomy for donors, interpersonal tensions, and the perception of the fund as a “gatekeeper” by grantees.

### Best practices for funding collaboratives include:

- Dedicated staff with a high level of coordination and management
- An assigned host organization that administers funds, documents process, and maintains communication with grantees
- Equitable decision-making: many funds set a minimum contribution for membership, and all members have an equal role in decision-making
- Shared fundraising responsibilities that involve both senior and project-specific staff
- Shared goals and metrics, including intentional discussions and documentation of success metrics; data-driven decisions; and clear criteria for funding
- A minimum time commitment that encourages intentional investments, paired with a defined exit process with clear guidelines for how a member of the collaborative can withdraw; together, these design decisions can help reduce investment risks and lower barriers to entry

Participatory grantmaking represents one way to distribute resources from a collaborative fund.<sup>5</sup> Participatory grantmaking funds (e.g., UHAI, HIV Young Leaders Fund, Red Umbrella Fund, and the Trans Justice Funding Project) are informed by the core belief that the people impacted by a fund's programs should make decisions about the fund itself. These funds tend to be led by an intermediary organization that handles the fund's administration and participatory grantmaking processes. Typically, their grantmaking panels include activists who are selected through an application process, and they tend to support smaller organizations. In addition to grants, these funds often provide additional technical assistance and support to build the capacity of their grantees.

Benefits of participatory grantmaking include innovation and flexibility, transparency, participation, capacity building, leadership development, accountability, cost-effectiveness, and solidarity building. Challenges of participatory grantmaking include perceived conflicts of interest, lack of diversity of income streams (it can be hard to attract mainstream donors), and complex logistics (translation, travel, and complex decision-making processes).

<sup>5</sup> For more information about participatory grantmaking, see “Who Decides” at <http://www.thelafayettepractice.com/whodecides>

## COMPARISON OF COLLABORATIVE FUNDS

FUND	STRUCTURE	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
<p><b>RED UMBRELLA FUND</b></p> <p><i>An activist-led fund created to build sex worker rights movements</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Steering Committee (majority sex workers + some donors) makes strategic decisions to guide grant-making</li> <li>• Peer review panel (majority sex workers + allies) makes grantmaking decisions</li> <li>• Staff: 2-3 people hosted by Mama Cash (50% sex workers; 50% non sex workers) facilitate governance bodies, manage the fund, administer grants, conduct donor education, and fundraise for the fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex worker-led; sex workers set the agenda</li> <li>• Offers learning opportunities and capacity building through grants and operating structures</li> <li>• Increases movement access to donor spaces</li> <li>• Mutual learning and understanding between donors and activists</li> <li>• Grants are more accessible to sex workers, including simple systems (e.g., Skype reporting) and translation</li> <li>• Reaches groups that donors cannot reach themselves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing expectations, especially when funding does not meet needs and groups cannot be funded</li> <li>• Geographic distance from grantees (based in Amsterdam). They are having conversations around regionalizing decision-making structures, but there are benefits to being global (builds solidarity, encourages cross-regional learning and avoids on-the-ground conflicts within regions)</li> <li>• Not all funders are sold on participatory grantmaking (so RUF focuses on showing the results of their investments)</li> <li>• Navigating funder restrictions and allocating the right grants to the right groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>HIV YOUNG LEADERS FUND</b></p> <p><i>An activist-led participatory grantmaking fund.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 99% youth-led (50%+ are people living with HIV/AIDS)</li> <li>• Context analysis at secretariat level</li> <li>• Advisory board sets funding priorities (divided by region with different focus areas)</li> <li>• Community Review Panel—varies regional according to focus areas (strong capacity building/training component)</li> <li>• Peer Support Program—identify young leaders to work with grantees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embraces failure</li> <li>• Strong community representation</li> <li>• Makes application process a learning opportunity for applicants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funders set the bar higher for community-led collaborative funds; they want to see impact</li> <li>• HYLFF has to be more specific about regional needs and programs to implement (can't support everything)</li> </ul>
<p><b>UHAI</b></p> <p><i>An activist-led participatory fund focused on LGBTI and sex workers in Africa.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activists lead and manage the fund; 60-70% of grantmaking determined by group of 9 activists</li> <li>• Secretariat reviews grants that are urgent and can't wait for participatory review process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional representation addresses reality that many donors do not live in the region</li> <li>• Activist decisions are final</li> <li>• Avoids conflict of interest</li> <li>• Anonymity of peer review committee members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not available</li> </ul>

*Continued on next page*

## COMPARISON OF COLLABORATIVE FUNDS

FUND	STRUCTURE	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
<p><b>DISABILITY RIGHTS FUND</b></p> <p><i>A collaborative fund housed at OSF</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anchor organizations helped shape the agenda</li> <li>• Twelve-member Advisory Board vets proposals and presents a docket to the Global Board</li> <li>• Seven-member global board makes final decisions and includes representation of people with disabilities</li> <li>• Fund includes a mix of different types of decision makers (activists, donors, others with content expertise)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift from charity model to rights-based model</li> <li>• Donors have learned from each other</li> <li>• Smarter advocacy work at national level</li> <li>• Application process includes extensive, individualized support for applicants during the application process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding funding to the field and getting new donors to commit has been difficult; should have focused more on bilateral/multilateral donors</li> </ul>
<p><b>LGBTQ RACIAL JUSTICE FUND</b></p> <p><i>A funder-led collaborative to increase resources for people of color-led organizations in the U.S., with a focus on southeastern U.S.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four initial donors; two new donors joined in the second year</li> <li>• Minimum US \$50,000 required to commit to the fund; funders make 10-year commitment</li> <li>• One donor = one vote</li> <li>• 12-18 month process talking to activists about their priorities, capacities, and challenges</li> <li>• Call for proposals in 2013 resulted in \$780,000 of grants to twelve organizations in Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi</li> <li>• 81% of funding is used for direct grants</li> <li>• Convening of grantee partners to focus on leadership &amp; skills building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund delivers dollars and builds capacity for POC-led partners</li> <li>• Has increased funding in an under-resourced community and region</li> <li>• Donors that are part of the collaborative continue with their own grantmaking</li> <li>• Capacity building is a big benefit</li> <li>• Intermediary partner (Astraea) was critical in that they are trusted by donors and activists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still cannot support really small organizations</li> <li>• Lack of public foundation participation (due to US\$50,000 threshold)</li> <li>• Lack of coordination of small grants</li> </ul>
<p><b>TRANS JUSTICE FUNDING PROJECT:</b></p> <p><i>An independent, activist-led fund to support grassroots, trans-led, trans justice groups in the U.S.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffed by two people</li> <li>• Grantmaking decided by funding panel made up of activists; panel is paid for their time</li> <li>• Focus on trans* organizations with budgets less than \$250,000USD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports both registered and unregistered NGOs with general operating funds</li> <li>• Simple application process: two-page application; no budget requirement; pictures and videos accepted</li> <li>• Uses Submittables, an online program to review grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a flexible yet effective structure for fundraising and grantmaking</li> <li>• Hard conversations with panelists from rural areas about putting a monetary value on people's worth and work</li> <li>• Making application process accessible to people with disabilities</li> </ul>

## ATTACHMENT D

# ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

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## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS RAISED BY CONVENING PARTICIPANTS FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE(S) TO CONSIDER:

### PURPOSE

- What is the Fund trying to change in the world?
- What unique gap would the Fund fill?
- How can the Fund change philanthropy to better support trans\* communities?

### STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

- What is the theory of change for the Fund?
- How should the advisory committee be developed?
- How could local and regional input help shape the Fund?
- Who will coordinate the Fund? Should it be housed in the Global South or Global North?
- Will funding (and funding decisions) be made globally or regionally?
- Will the community be happy with the creation of the fund? What are the trans\* communities' expectations and how can the Fund organizers manage those expectations?
- How will the Fund deal with opportunistic grant seekers – new groups or projects that emerge in order to apply to the Fund?
- Should there be a supplementary mechanism to the fund (regulations/protocols) necessary to support the mission/mitigate risks?

### FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

- What commitment will donors make to the fund and for how long?
- How long would a fund last? How sustainable is it?
- What is the minimal capital base?
- How can we ensure the Fund is aligned with trans\* community needs and not merely following a mainstream funder agenda?
- What are the priority areas of funders and trans\* communities? How can the Fund help bridge any gaps that may exist?
- How can the Fund overcome external funding requirements, such as support for groups that are not formally registered?
- Will the Fund accept bilateral and multilateral donors? Government funding could both increase and hamper access to funds.

