



INTERNATIONAL
TRANS FUND
Resourcing Trans Movements Worldwide

FAQ

ALL ABOUT THE **ITF'S** GRANTMAKING

The International Trans Fund (ITF) is the only global participatory grantmaker that is exclusively dedicated to supporting trans-led groups as they work to secure rights for trans people and improve their lived realities. Our mission is to mobilize and facilitate sustainable resources for strong, trans-led movements and collective action, and to address and eliminate funding gaps impacting trans groups across the globe.

From the very beginning, the ITF has centered the voices of trans activists and espoused the ethos, “nothing about us, without us.” To live this value, the ITF works as a participatory activist fund, with all funding decisions—from what groups are funded to how much each group receives—made by a Grant Making Panel (GMP) that consists entirely of trans activists from various regions.



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1. What does the ITF fund?

The ITF provides general support and project grants to trans-led groups working to benefit the trans community and contributing to trans movement building. To be considered for funding, groups must be led by trans people and have trans people constitute at least 75% of staff and board (or other decision-making body); have an operating budget under US\$150,000 (this will be lowered to US\$100,000 in the 6th grant cycle); be focused on benefiting the trans community; and contribute to collective action and movement building.

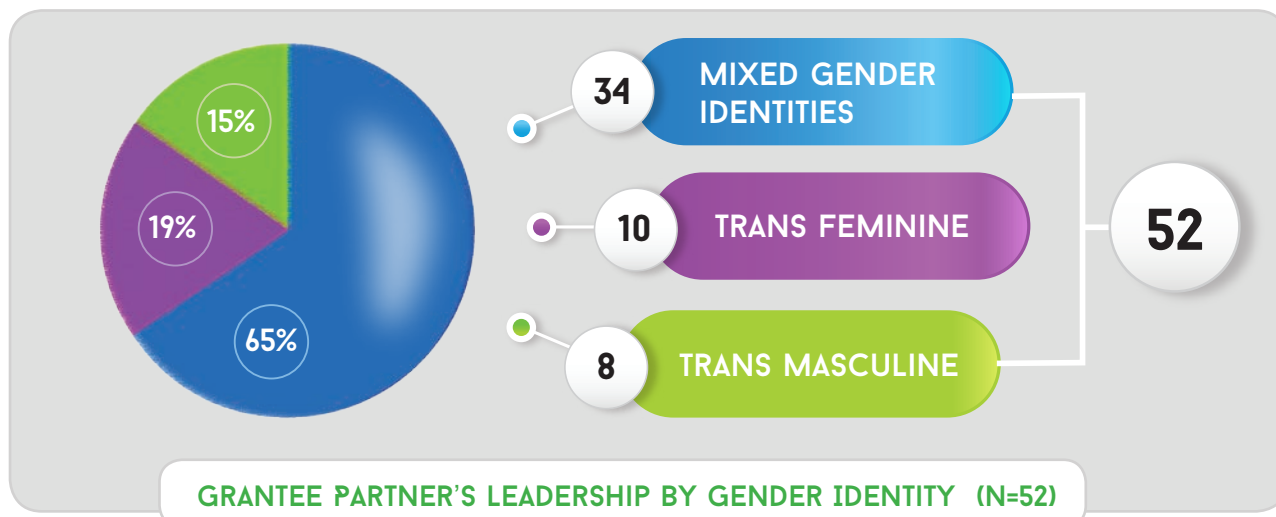
MOVEMENT BUILDING: There are many diverse trans communities across the globe and there is no singular way to build movements. At the ITF, we see movement building as working on the collective processes that create shared vision, strategy, and action to challenge oppressive power dynamics. We identify movement building activities as those that strengthen trans communities, influence public discourse and seek to change social norms and public policy.

Resourcing trans movements means supporting, sustaining and amplifying the work its leaders are already accomplishing. As a result, the ITF prefers to provide groups with core/general support and trust groups to know what they need. To that end, the ITF's grantmaking priorities are to:

1. Fund a diverse collection of groups, inclusive of various regions, languages, gender identities, strategies and issues;
2. Reach trans communities facing high levels of marginalization (e.g. racism, classism, ageism, ableism, misogyny, etc.);
3. Support trans groups whose work contributes to social justice, movement building and the liberation of trans people.

We recognize that our communities are diverse and have different needs and priorities. For this reason, the ITF supports a wide range of movement building activities, which can include awareness raising events, direct action, educational seminars, trainings, support groups, media projects, political advocacy, resource development, art and activism collaborations, community-based research, community spaces, skills sharing courses, leadership or personal development programs, educational campaigns, demonstrations, mobilizing communities and many other activities. We are happy to support creative and innovative activities not listed above.

In the **4th grant cycle we funded 52 trans-led groups** with the following characteristics:





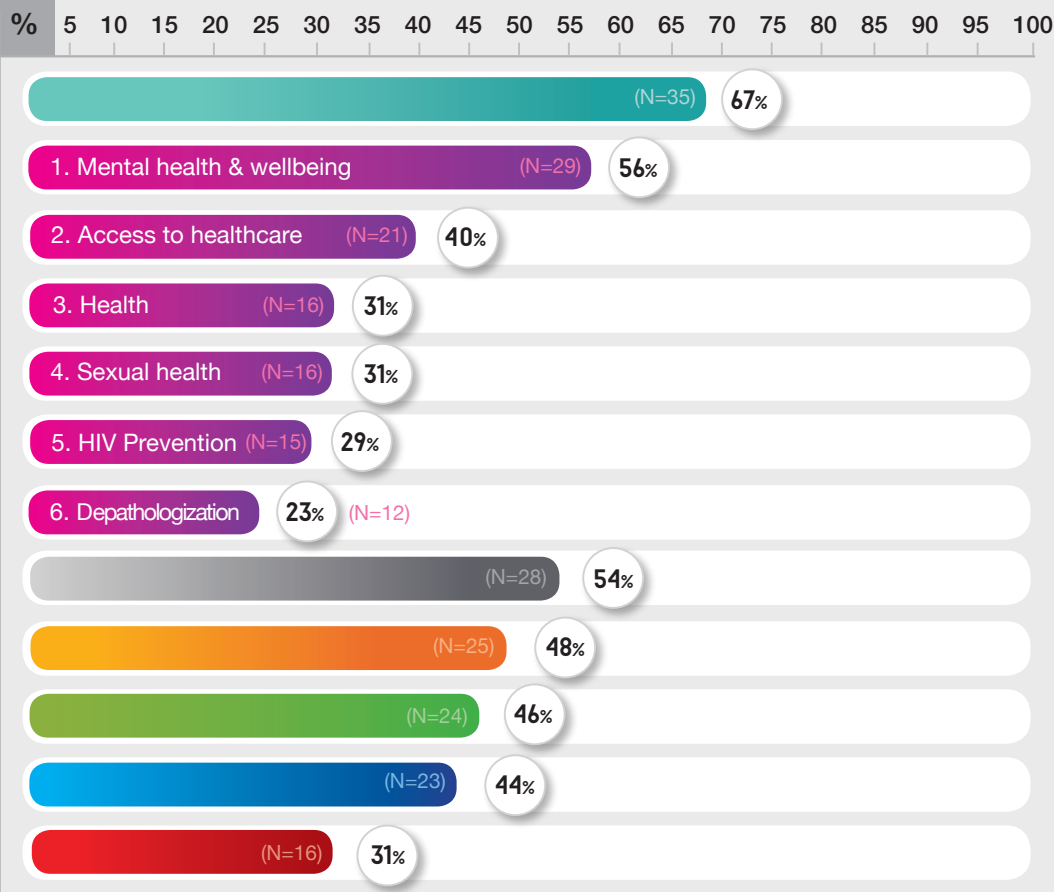
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THEMATIC AREAS



*Respondents could select multiple answers.

GRANTEE PARTNER WORK BY THEMATIC AREAS





2. How are decisions made about which groups get funded by the ITF?

The ITF is a participatory grantmaker and the decisions are made by the GMP, a group of 15 trans activists from across the globe that each serve on the ITF for a 2-year term. Each year the ITF has one open call for applications for funding and there are four stages to this process.

STAGE 1: The call for applications is open and the ITF accepts applications to SEED or THRIVE grants in five languages (English, French, Russian, Spanish and Simplified Chinese). All applications are reviewed by the staff to see if they meet the eligibility criteria. If they do, they go to stage 2.

STAGE 2: Every eligible application is reviewed and scored by two GMP members. We strive to have one GMP member from the region and one from outside the region review each application – this gives a nuanced insight into the work of the group. We have created a scorecard that aligns with the questions in the application, and each GMP member reviews the answers provided by the group and gives a score out of 10. These scorecards are completed for every application and the scores are used to select the applications that go to the third stage.

STAGE 3: All high scoring applications are reviewed and voted on by all GMP members. The GMP meets to select the groups that will receive funding and the amount they will receive. We structure this discussion according to the five regions that the ITF has defined, to ensure that funding flows to all corners of the globe. However, the GMP also prioritizes organizations that are working intersectionally and with the most marginalized trans communities. All funding decisions are made collectively by the GMP and all voices are equal in the process.



STAGE 4: Once the GMP has selected the grantee partners, this list of groups goes to the ITF's Steering Committee for discussion and ratification. The staff conducts reference checks and a due diligence review, and then grants are issued and funding disbursed.

The ITF staff communicates with applicants at each stage to inform them of their progress. If an applicant received a decline notification in the second or third stages, they can reach out for feedback. If requested, the staff will share the feedback that was provided by the GMP members on the scorecards without disclosing which GMP member it came from.

3. We're involved in a trans-led group, why wasn't our application funded?

Every year the ITF receives significantly more applications than we can fund. We have to raise the money we give out, and the demand always exceeds the funding available. For example, in the 5th grant cycle, we received 375 eligible applications which amounted to a request of \$11.6M. In general, we can fund about 10-20% of the applications that we receive each cycle – in this cycle, we are going to give out \$1.2M.

**FUNDING REQUEST VS
FUNDING AVAILABILITY IN
THE 5TH GRANT CYCLE**

REQUEST:

\$11.6M

AVAILABLE FUNDING:

\$1.2M

The GMP selects the applications that best meet our criteria and priorities, and actively supports grantee partners that are working from intersectional perspectives and with the most marginalized members of our communities.

There are many groups doing incredible work that apply for funding and have been declined. We know this is disappointing and disheartening, and can mean that the work can't get done. Some groups have expressed frustration that they did not receive funding, even though they have applied several years in a row. Each cycle is a new opportunity for funding, and each application is scored in a stand alone manner and is considered alongside the other applications from that cycle.

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We cannot guarantee that a group will receive funding no matter how many times they apply, or the urgency of the country situation they are facing. The best advice we can provide is that a group works collaboratively with their team to write a strong application, reviews the Application Guidelines we publish each year and participates in a funding webinar. We also hope that the experience of applying for ITF funds allows your group to develop similar applications to other funders. If you are looking for other funders that support trans-led groups, please reach out to the ITF staff.

The ITF is deeply committed to raising additional funds to support trans-led groups, as we recognize the urgent need for more resources to flow to global trans movements. As part of our strategy, we actively engage in philanthropic advocacy to support and persuade funders to resource our movements with bigger and better funding.

4. How long does the ITF's grantmaking take?

The ITF's grantmaking process takes approximately 8 months between the time a group applies and when a group receives a grant. We recognize this is a long time and do our best to communicate about the process at every stage.

We know that groups that work with traditional funders may be used to a faster decision-making process. However, the unique participatory nature of our work makes it a lengthier process. For example:

- The ITF accepts applications in five languages (English, French, Russian, simplified Chinese and Spanish). The applications in French, Russian and Chinese typically need to be translated prior to the first review. In the final stage, every application (60+) must be translated into English and Spanish so all GMP members can actively participate. We work with a variety of translators to help speed up this process, but there is a high volume of material to translate.

TRANS IS FREEDOM



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- GMP members are volunteers and active members in their own communities. We strive to provide a reasonable amount of time for the GMP to review the applications they are assigned (approximately 50-60 initially and another 60+ of the high scoring applications). As we want our GMP to conduct deep, intentional and considered reviews, we allocate considerable time to this part of the process.
- In the past, the in-person GMP meeting would take place over one week. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to change the way we do things. The virtual GMP meeting now takes place over one month and includes reviewing all high scoring applications, online discussions and allocation meetings. We strive to create a vibrant space of discussion and decision-making.

i. The timeline of the 5th grant cycle:

OCTOBER – DECEMBER:

The application period open; staff deliver funding webinars and Draft Review Service; staff inform applicants of eligibility

JANUARY – FEBRUARY:

Staff conduct intake and do the eligibility screen; translation of Chinese, French and Russian applications; staff deliver training to GMP members on the review process

FEBRUARY – APRIL:

GMP members review and score all eligible applications (each GMP member reviews approximately 50-60 applications)

APRIL – MAY:

All high scoring applications are translated into English and Spanish; staff inform applicants if they have moved to the final stage; GMP members review all high scoring applications; references are requested

MAY – JUNE:

In-person/virtual GMP meeting is held to select grantee partners; Steering Committee discusses and ratifies the list of grantee partners

JUNE – JULY:

Staff conduct due diligence checks (references, compliance documents, etc.) and inform all applicants of the decisions

JULY – AUGUST:

Staff issue approval letters and grant contracts; first installment (75%) of grants are disbursed





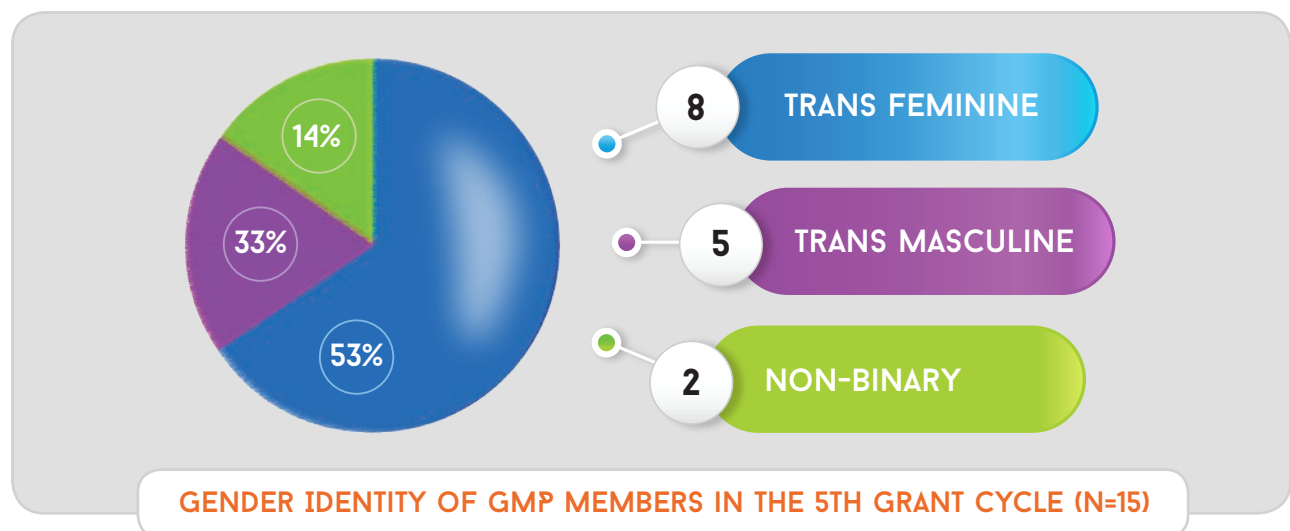
5. Who are the GMP members?

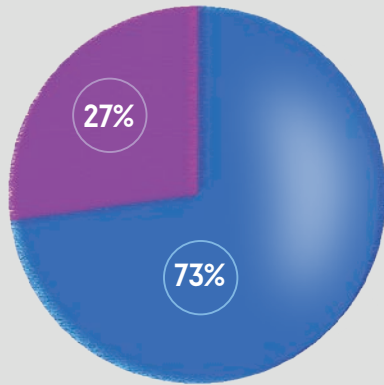
The role of the GMP is crucial to the ITF's process because it is their expertise, commitment and integrity as a collective body that makes our grantmaking possible. The ITF holds an open call for applications to the GMP each year, and these applications are reviewed by a Selection Committee that strives to balance expertise, regional representation and diverse identities and experiences.

GMP members are selected for two year terms, and each year half of the GMP members step off and are replaced. All GMP members sign conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements, and are provided guidelines and training on how to review and score applications. Each member receives US\$1,000 in compensation for their work each cycle that they participate in.

This is a position of great responsibility which requires a lot of work. In general, the GMP reviews about 50-60 applications in the second stage and then another 60 applications in the third stage. They also participate in trainings and the virtual GMP meeting that takes place over a month.

Our GMP is composed of diverse trans activists who are deeply embedded in their communities and represent a wide range of identities and experiences.





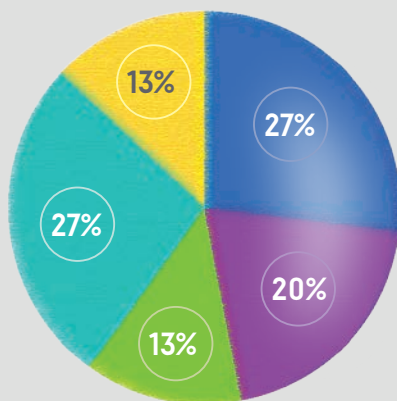
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FROM GLOBAL SOUTH

4

FROM GLOBAL NORTH

GMP MEMBERS FROM GLOBAL SOUTH VS GLOBAL NORTH IN THE 5TH GRANT CYCLE (N=15)



4

AFRICA AND WEST ASIA

4

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

3

EAST, SOUTH, SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

2

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

2

USA, EUROPE, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND CANADA

GMP MEMBERS BY ORIGIN AND REGIONAL EXPERTISE (N=15)



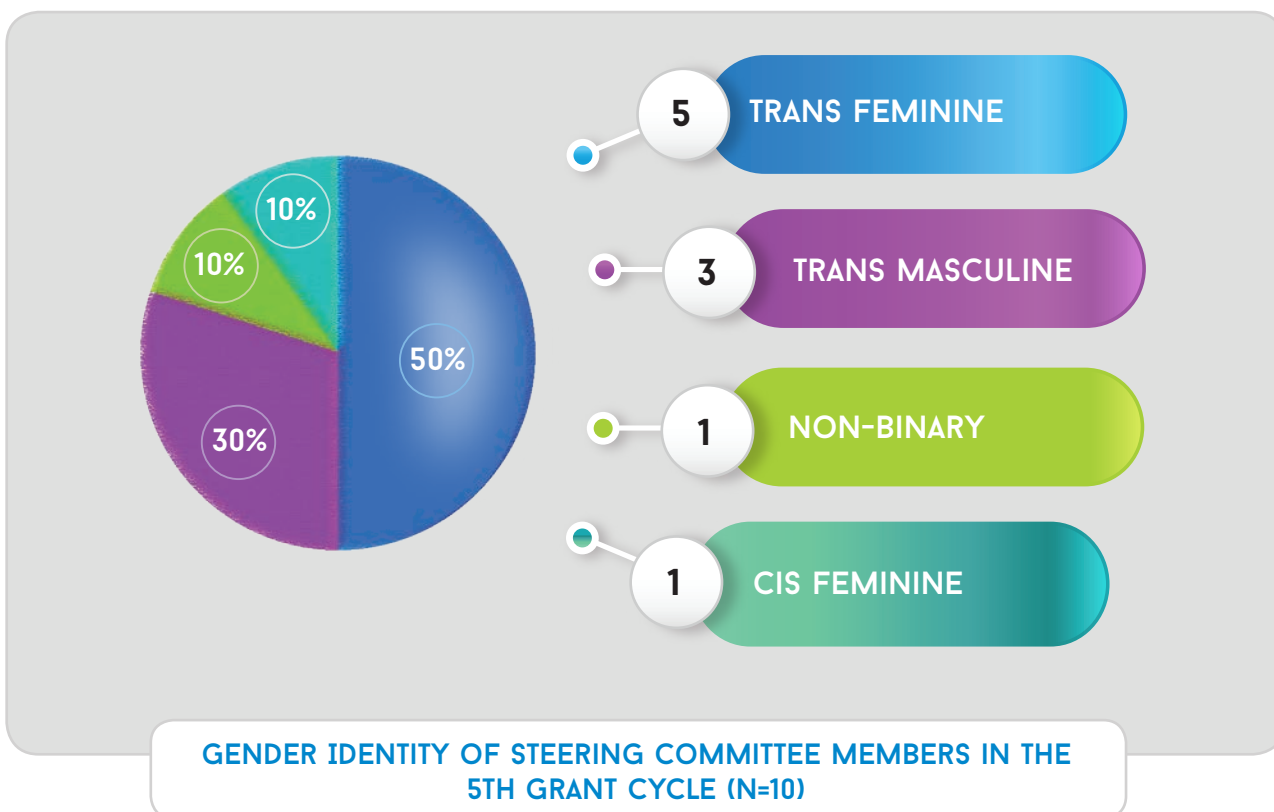
6. Who are the Steering Committee members?

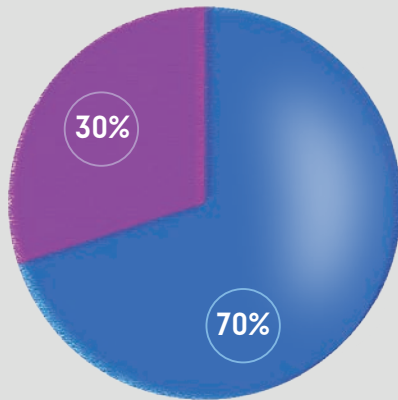
The ITF is governed by a 10- to 14-member Steering Committee composed of trans activists and funders from around the world. Defined by the leadership and engagement of grassroots trans activists, the Steering Committee provides critical support and guidance to the organization and oversees decisions related to strategy, governance and finance.

The ITF holds an open call for applications to the Steering Committee each year or when a place opens, and these applications are reviewed by a Selection Committee that strives to balance expertise, regional representation and diverse identities and experiences. The term for Steering Committee members is three years. All Steering Committee members sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement and receive US\$1,000 in compensation for their work each year.

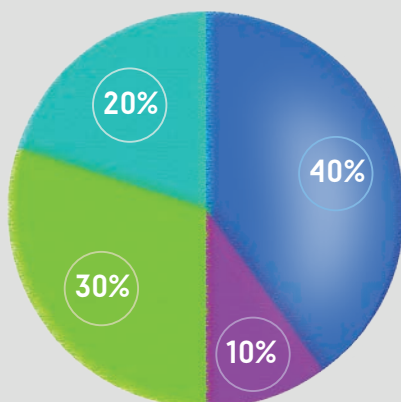
The Steering Committee is not directly involved in the selection of grantee partners – this is the sole responsibility of the GMP. In general, the Steering Committee ratifies the full list of proposed grantee partners at the end of the process. However, they do play an important role in oversight and due diligence and can request additional information or initiate an investigation if there are serious concerns.

Our Steering Committee is currently composed of eight trans activists and two funder representatives (one trans and one cis) who are deeply embedded in their communities and represent a wide range of identities and experiences.





STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH VS GLOBAL NORTH IN THE 5TH GRANT CYCLE (N=10)



STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS BY ORIGIN AND REGIONAL EXPERTISE (N=10)



7. What are the values that guide the ITF's grantmaking?

The ITF is a dynamic, responsive and intersectional organization. Collectively, we:

1. Come from multiple places, histories, experiences, politics and identities. We value the diversity of trans movements (including gender identity, bodily autonomy, gender expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, geography, age, disability, religion and class/socioeconomic status), and respect and honor our differences. We are intersectional in our approach.
2. Believe in working together to create a world where all people are valued, respected and celebrated.
3. Value the wellbeing, safety, security and sustainability of trans activists and movements, and strive to do no harm. We believe trans people should be equitably compensated for their expertise and labor.
4. Hold self-determination as a core value. Trans leadership, decision-making and power are critical to the ITF. We believe trans people are creative and resilient, and fully capable of creating, improving and sustaining their communities and movements.
5. Respect each other, acknowledging we have different levels of power and privilege. We work together with integrity and hold ourselves accountable to trans movements.
6. Strive to be transparent in our work while protecting the safety and confidentiality of activists and organizations.
7. Are audacious. We take calculated risks, break down barriers and embrace new initiatives inspired by our communities.
8. Are responsive to trans communities and believe the ITF's responses must be flexible and accessible to meet the needs of trans movements. Are part of the broader human rights and social justice communities.
9. Treat each other with kindness, generosity, humor and best intent.

