

# VIBRANT YET UNDER-RESOURCED:

## LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND QUEER (LBQ) GROUPS AND MOVEMENTS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

### INTRODUCTION

This regional brief, one in a series of four<sup>1</sup>, supplements data presented in the report *Vibrant Yet Under-Resourced: The State Of Lesbian, Bisexual, And Queer Movements*, published in June 2020.

This data is drawn from respondents in Asia and the Pacific to a global survey

of activists. Of the total 378 LBQ groups that participated in the survey, 52 were located in Asia and the Pacific<sup>2</sup>, representing LBQ-led organizations in 15 countries (out of a total of 51 countries in the region).

### KEY FINDINGS

#### An actively growing movement

The global survey found that LBQ-led groups are organizing worldwide and that LBQ movements are growing rapidly, with a large majority of groups having been founded since 2000. Figure 1 (see page 2) confirms this finding for Asia and the Pacific: the large majority of LBQ organizations in this region (87%) have been established since 2000 (with 60% established since 2010), underscoring the growth and expansion of LBQ activism in this region during the last two decades.

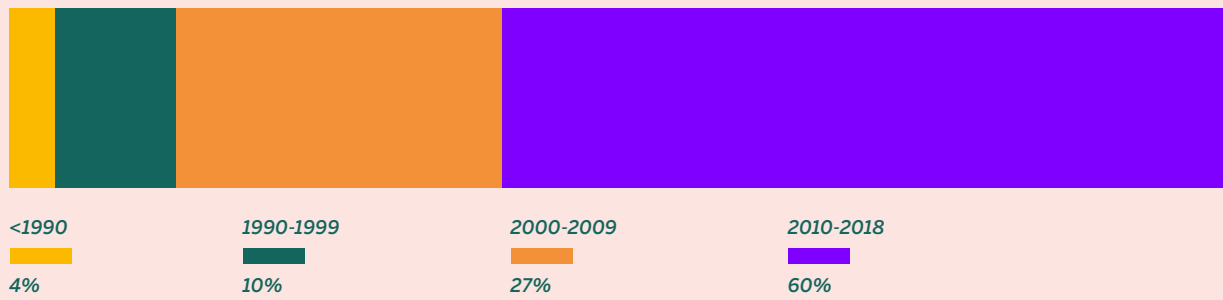
#### Registration status

Data from Asia and the Pacific show more non-registered groups than in other regions. A full half (50%) of the groups from Asia and the Pacific are not registered with their governments, which is higher than in the sample as a whole (globally, 31% reported being unregistered). Forty percent of the groups in Asia and the Pacific are registered with their governments, and 10% are in the process of registering.

1 – The four briefs present data from LBQ groups in: 1) Africa, 2) Asia and the Pacific, 3) Europe and Central Asia, and 4) Latin America and the Caribbean. There is no brief for the Middle East/Western Asia as the number of responses was too small to analyze.

2 – 43 were from Asia, and 9 were from the Pacific.

Figure 1. Year LBQ groups were established



**Access to resourcing**

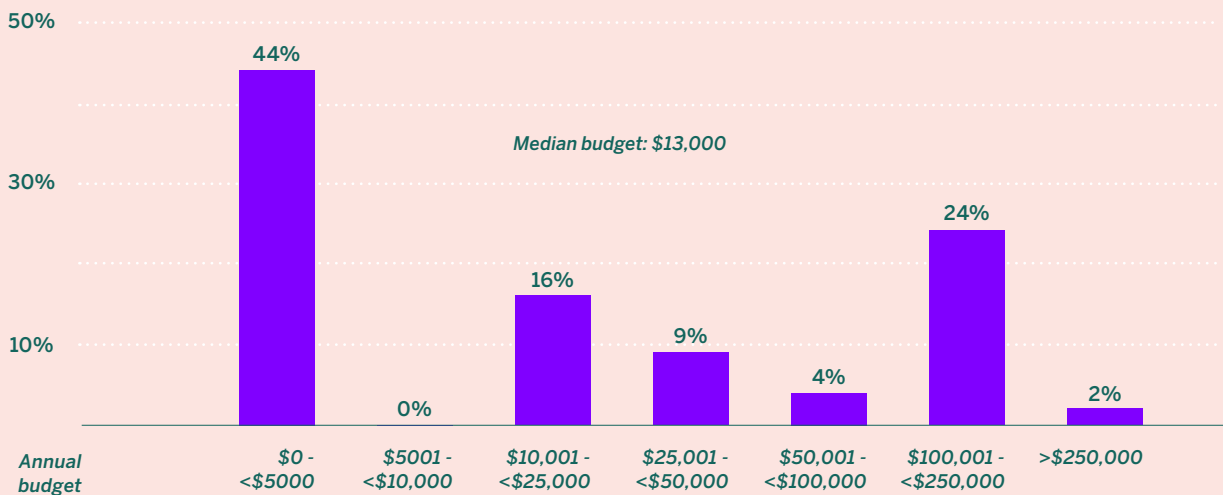
The groups from Asia and the Pacific that provided budget information confirmed the study’s overall findings that LBQ groups worldwide are working with extremely limited financial resources. Figure 2 illustrates how limited these annual budgets are: **two-thirds (69%) of groups reported budgets under \$50,000** (and 44% had budgets under \$5,000, based on 45 responses<sup>3</sup> to this question). **The median annual budget in Asia and the Pacific was \$13,000.**

access to external funding<sup>4</sup>. LBQ groups in Asia and the Pacific **reported median external funding of only \$1,170 annually**, underscoring the incredibly scarce resourcing that is available for their activism.

Organizations in Asia and the Pacific were more likely to report having received multi-year funding from donors than groups from other regions. Of the groups that responded to this question (n=39), more than 56% had been recipients of multi-year funding; 41% said they had never received multi-year funding.

Consistent with having low annual budgets, groups located in Asia and the Pacific reported very little

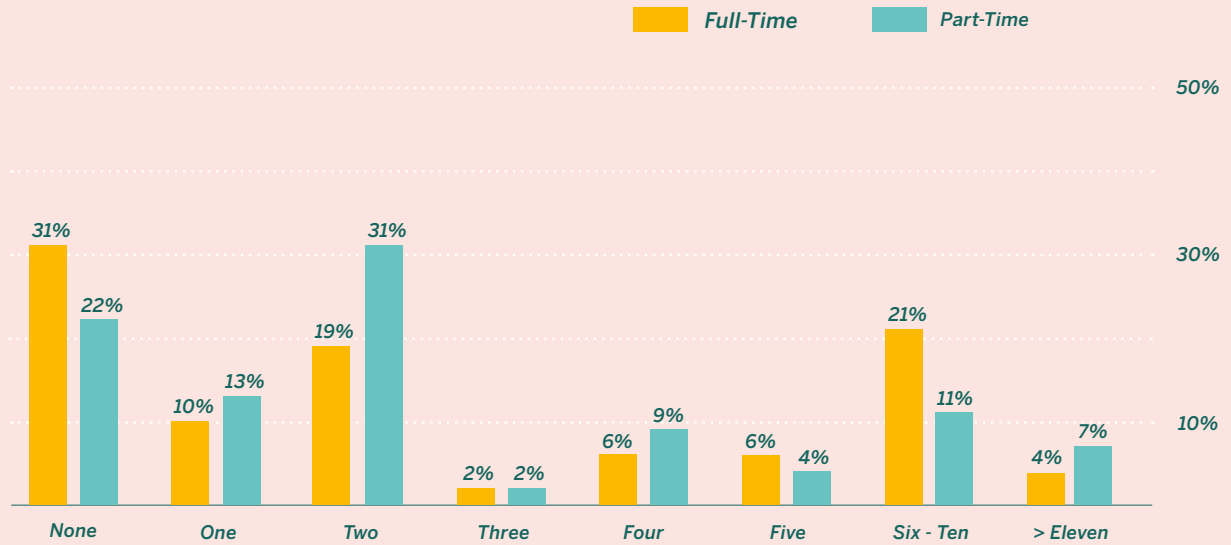
Figure 2. Annual budget sizes of LBQ groups



3 – Note: not all respondents answered every question in the survey. In cases where many respondents did not answer a question, we have noted the number of responses to the question.

4 – External funding was defined in the survey as government and foundation funding (e.g., grants), and excluded membership fees, community fundraisers, events, and individual contributions from founders or their family members.

Figure 3. Number of full-time staff / part-time staff

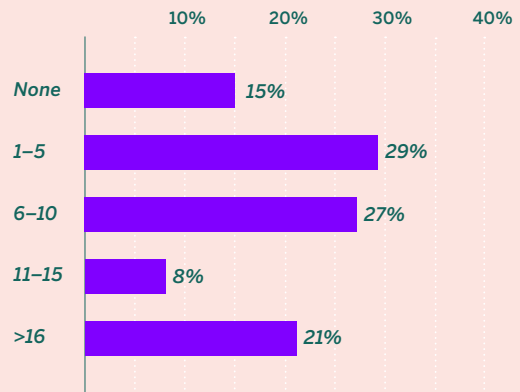


**Staffing**

The global data showed under-staffed LBQ organizations that rely on volunteer labor, and this is also the case for LBQ groups in Asia and the Pacific. Figure 3 shows that a majority of groups have two or fewer full-time staff members, and the situation is similar for part-time staff (based on 48 and 45 responses to these questions, respectively).

As in other regions, the lack of paid staff means that LBQ groups in Asia and the Pacific depend to a great extent on volunteers<sup>5</sup> (non-salaried but possibly receiving a stipend). As Figure 4 shows, almost all groups have a base of volunteers (48 responses to this question), and over half have at least six volunteers, suggesting that these LBQ groups may be well-anchored in their communities or have a vibrant base of committed constituents.

Figure 4. Number of volunteers



**Activist strategies**

Activists in Asia and the Pacific reported using a variety of tools and strategies to organize and demand rights and justice for their communities. In the global data set, advocacy, and community, movement and network building were the two most commonly used strategies

5 – The survey defined a volunteer as working 10 or more hours per week on a regular basis.

overall, and, as Figure 5 shows, all 33 groups that responded to these questions said that they use both of these strategies. In addition, virtually all respondents in Asia and the Pacific (29 of 30 groups that answered this question) also used capacity strengthening strategies in their work.<sup>6</sup>

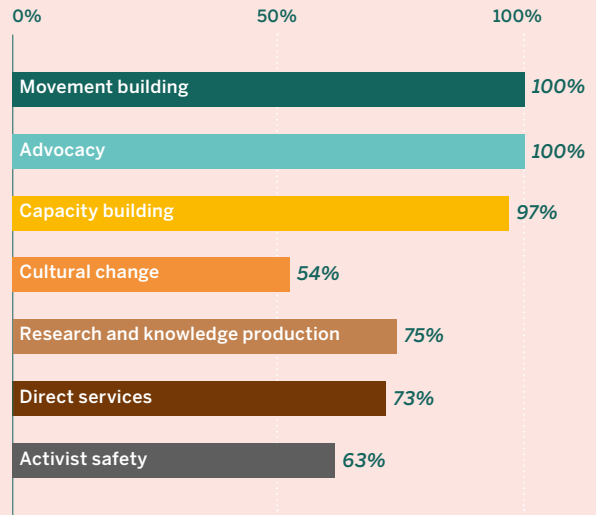
Based on data collected from funders (see the full report, chapter 5, pages 62-64), we know that a significant majority of donors reported providing funding for advocacy, capacity strengthening, and community and movement building, whereas fewer donors provided funding for research and knowledge production, activist safety, cultural change work and direct health and social services. This may explain, to some degree, why groups report using some of these other strategies less often.

**Resourcing challenges**

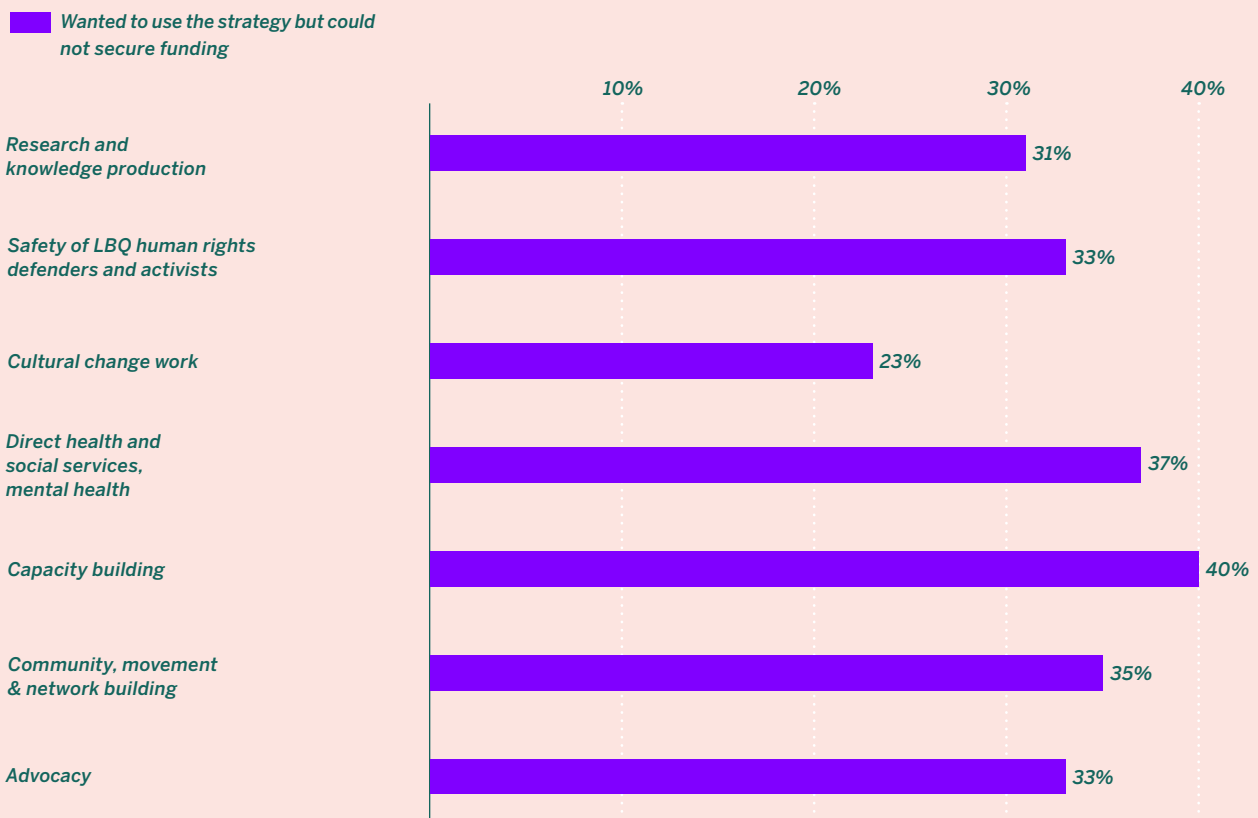
Many LBQ organizations are not able to secure funding for all of the strategies they would like to implement. Figure 6 shows the responses of groups in Asia and

the Pacific for each of the strategies they would like to have implemented but for which they were unable to secure resources.

**Figure 5. Strategies used by LBQ groups**



**Figure 6. Organizing strategies that LBQ groups could not secure funding for**



6 – Many respondents did not provide answers to all of the questions regarding the strategies that they used. The data presented here are based on the responses provided, between 24 to 33 responses, depending on the strategy in question.

## CONCLUSIONS

The data from Asia and the Pacific are consistent with the conclusions of the *Vibrant Yet Under-Resourced* report. Most of the LBQ-led organizations in the region have been established recently, with more than half founded since 2010.

LBQ groups report an acute lack of resourcing. The annual median budget is \$13,000, and two-thirds of groups are operating with annual budgets of less

than \$50,000. Most groups rely heavily on volunteer labor.

Despite the very limited resourcing they are able to access, LBQ groups are engaging in advocacy, community and movement building and other strategies in order to advocate for justice for their constituencies. The data suggests that more robust resourcing would support them to do so much more.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO DONORS <sup>7</sup>

- Increase funding for LBQ communities and direct it to LBQ-led groups**, especially under-funded groups based outside of North America.
- Make funding more accessible to LBQ groups.** Simplify application requirements and partner with public foundations and women's funds that have the capacity to support small and/or unregistered groups.
- Improve the quality of funding for LBQ groups.** Provide flexible, unrestricted and multi-year funding that allows LBQ groups to pursue their own agendas and to do long-term strategic work.
- Direct funding to regions where LBQ groups' access is especially limited**, including Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East/Southwest Asia, and Europe and Central Asia. The data shows that groups in Asia and the Pacific have very small budgets and also quite limited access to external funding.
- Invest in research and knowledge production, and in service provision**, two priorities of LBQ groups that are particularly under-funded. Knowledge building bolsters advocacy and movement-building, and direct services are critical for the well-being and sustainability of LBQ activists and movements.
- Increase non-financial support to LBQ groups and ensure it meets their needs**, investing in the organizational capacity of LBQ groups and connecting them with new donors.
- For donors without LBQ-specific portfolios, ensure that funding intended for LBQ communities reaches them** by developing specific and measurable strategies.
- Seek to "de-silo" funding to support LBQ groups' intersectional work.** Donors focused on women's rights, SRHR, HIV and AIDS, youth, sex workers, and other issues and constituencies can consider how LBQ groups fit into their portfolios.

7 – The full report discusses all eight recommendations in greater detail.

Read the full report *Vibrant Yet Under-Resourced* at [www.fundlbq.org](http://www.fundlbq.org).



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