

VIBRANT YET UNDER-RESOURCED:

LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND QUEER (LBQ) GROUPS AND MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

INTRODUCTION

This regional brief, one in a series of four¹, 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 Europe and Central Asia to a global

survey of activists. Of the total 378 LBQ groups that participated in the survey, 92 were located in Europe and Central Asia², representing LBQ-led organizations in 30 countries (out of a total of 65 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 Europe and Central Asia: the large majority of LBQ organizations in this region (87%) have been established since 2000 (with 59% established since 2010), underscoring the growth and expansion of LBQ activism in this region during the last two decades.

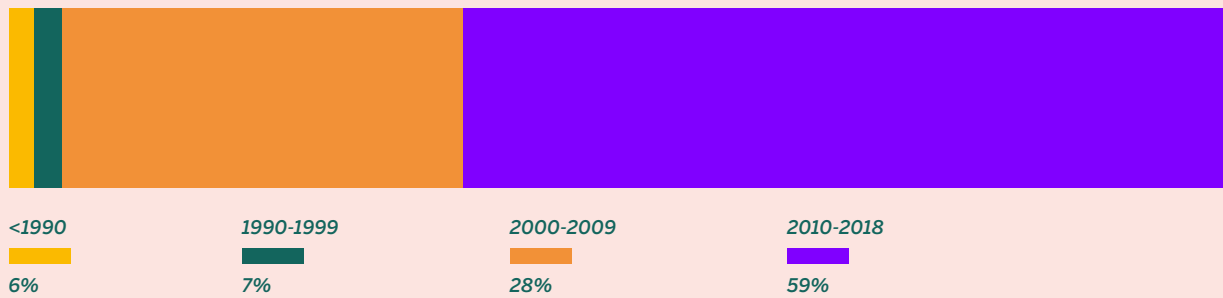
Registration status

Over half (57%) of the groups in Europe and Central Asia were registered or in the process of registering in the country where they are located, while 43% were not registered. This is a higher proportion of non-registered groups than in the sample as a whole (globally 31% of groups reported that they were unregistered). The data from this region also showed that more groups in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were unregistered (50%) than in Western Europe (30%).

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 – 30 were from Western Europe, 54 from Eastern Europe, and 8 from Central Asia.

Figure 1. Year LBQ groups were established



Access to resourcing

The respondents from Europe and Central Asia that provided information about their annual budget (n=62)³ offer a picture that is consistent with the global research finding that LBQ organizations are seriously under-resourced. Figure 2 illustrates the grim picture in this region: **nearly three-quarters (74%) of respondents reported that they operated on budgets of USD \$50,000 or less** (and nearly half reported budgets of under \$5,000), making this region quite severely under-resourced.

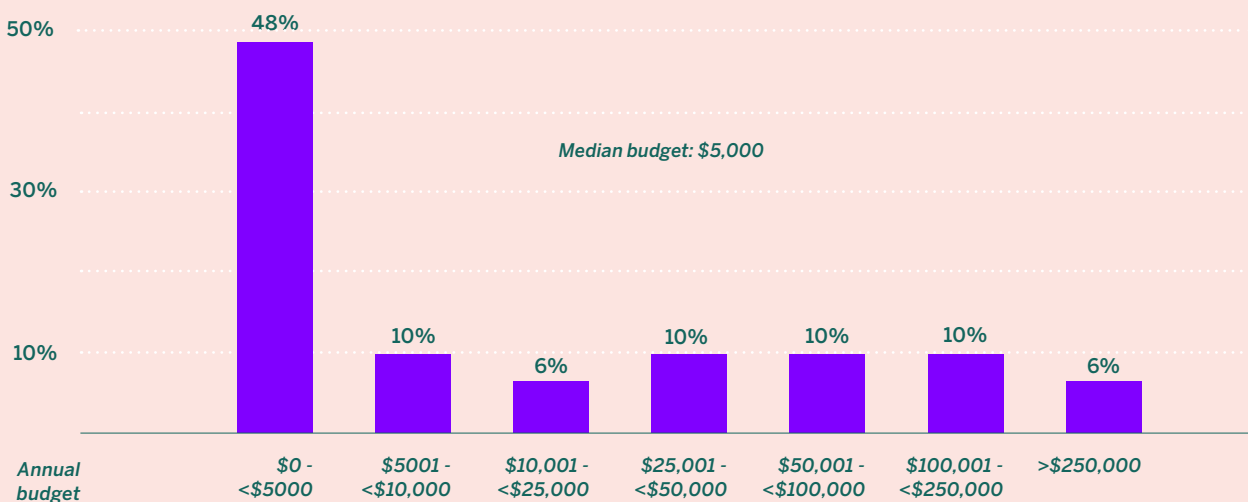
budgets of less than \$5,000 than in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (43%).

Consistent with very meagre annual budgets, groups located in Europe and Central Asia also reported extremely limited access to external funding⁴. LBQ groups in Europe and Central Asia reported **median external funding of a scant \$1,150 annually**, underscoring the incredibly scarce resourcing that is available for their activism.

Groups in Europe and Central Asia had a median budget of just \$5,000, the lowest median budget of any region. Groups are poorly resourced throughout the region; as noted in the full report (see pages 47-48), slightly more groups in Western Europe (53%) reported

Groups also struggle to access good quality funding. Of the 35 groups that provided data about their access to sustainable funding, a significant majority (n=24, or 69%) said that they had never received multi-year support (defined as a grant that provided a minimum of two years of funding).

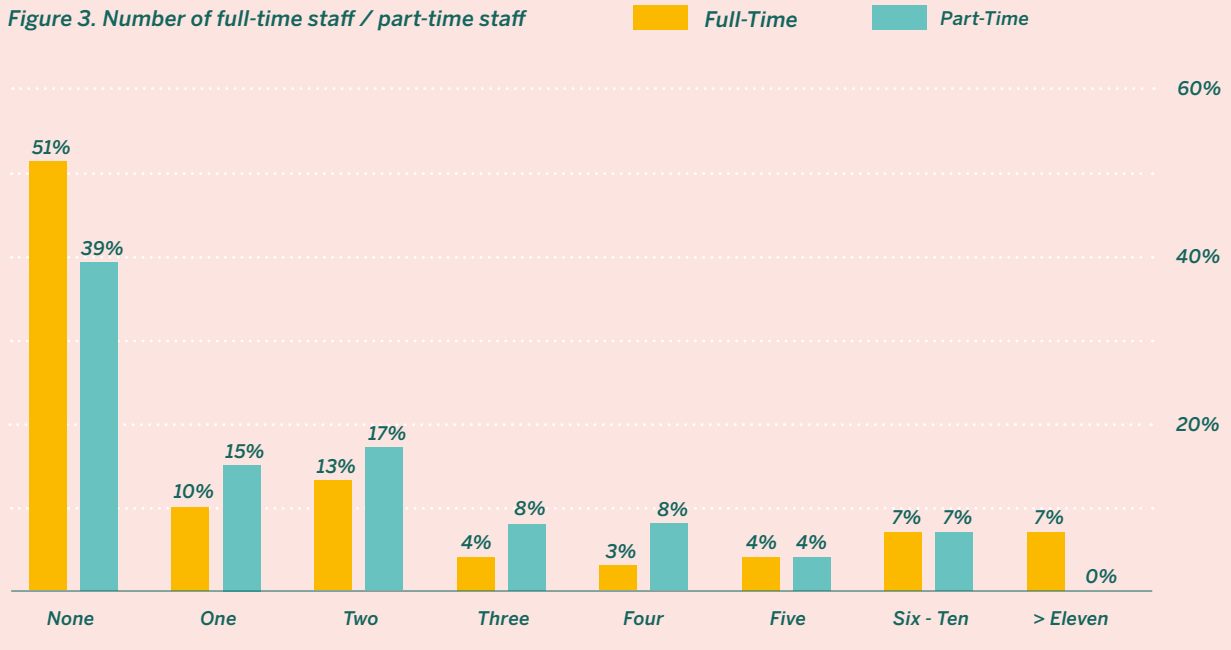
Figure 2. Annual budget sizes of LBQ groups



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

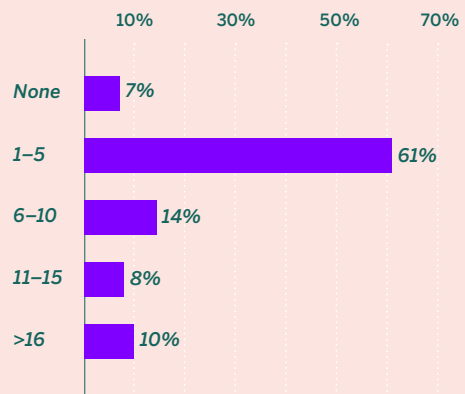


Staffing

Given the very small budgets that most groups in the region reported, it is not surprising that most LBQ organizations in Europe and Central Asia operated with very few staff members and often relied on the work of volunteers. Sixty-nine groups provided details about their full-time staff members, and as Figure 3 shows, fully half (51%) of these groups had no full-time staff (the highest percentage of groups in any region without the support of full-time staff). Similarly, the groups that provided data about part-time staff (n=71) also reported very few part-time staff members.

While they have few paid staff, LBQ organizations in Europe and Central Asia do receive support from volunteers⁵ (non-salaried workers who may receive a stipend). The majority of groups in this region reported working with volunteers to engage in their activism and to keep their organizations running. As Figure 4 shows, over half of the organizations that responded to this question (n=79) relied on a volunteer base of at least one to five volunteers, and about one-third of the groups had larger volunteer bases.

Figure 4. Number of volunteers



Activist strategies

Despite the challenges of being extremely under-resourced, LBQ groups in Europe and Central Asia reported using a variety of strategies to build their movements and push change agendas for their

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

communities. As Figure 5 shows, almost all groups reported using community, movement, and network building, and three-quarters used advocacy and capacity strengthening.⁶

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

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 Europe and Central Asia 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

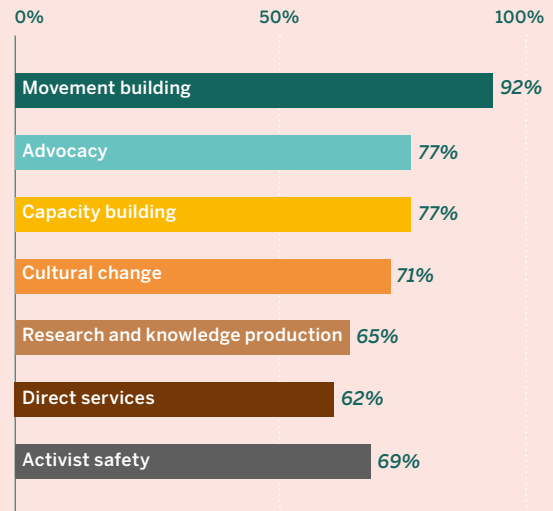
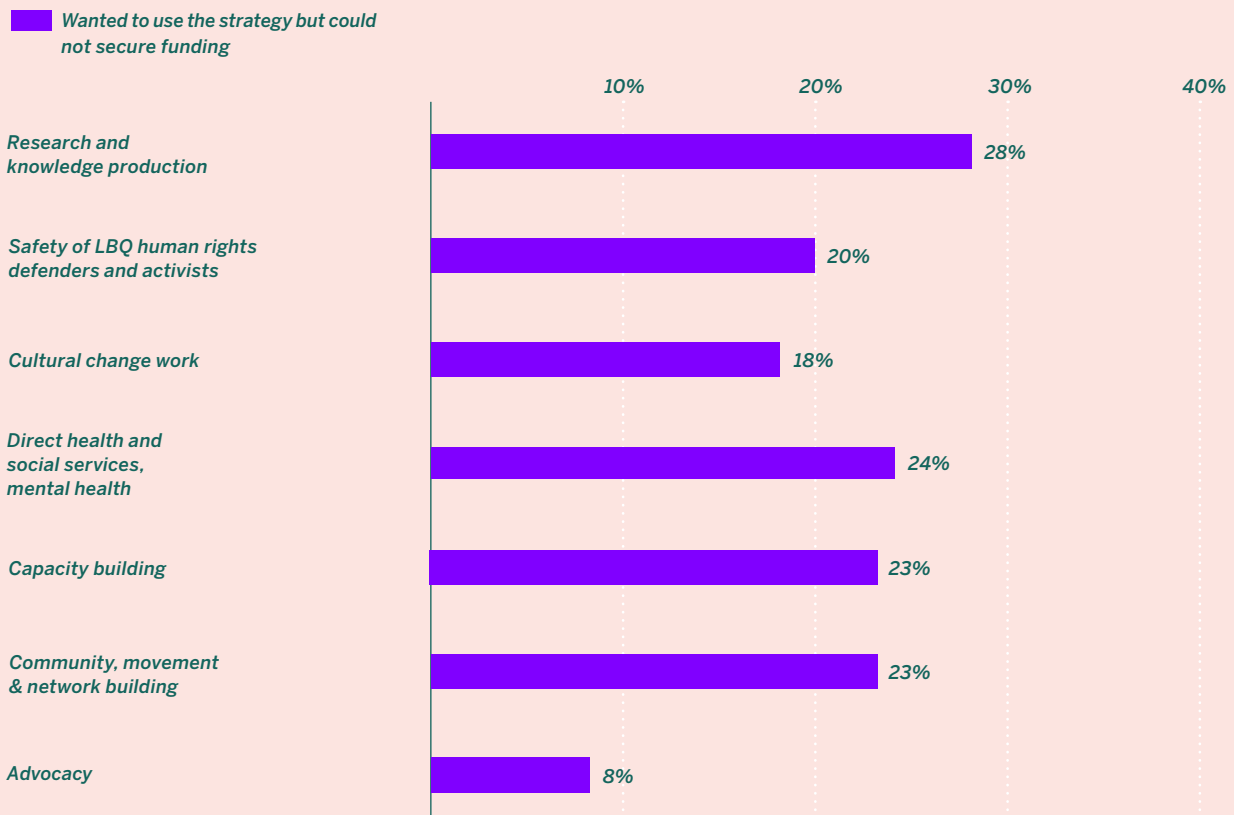


Figure 6. Organizing strategies that LBQ groups could not secure funding for



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 26 to 46 responses, depending on the strategy in question.

CONCLUSIONS

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

LBQ groups report an acute lack of resourcing. The annual median budget is just \$5,000, and nearly three-quarters of groups are operating with annual

budgets of less than \$50,000. Most groups have few, if any, paid staff and depend on volunteers.

Despite their limited resourcing, these LBQ groups are engaging in advocacy, community and movement building and other strategies to advocate for justice for their constituencies. The data suggest that more robust resourcing would support them to do so much more.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO DONORS ⁷

- 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. Groups in Europe and Central Asia reported having very limited access to multi-year funding.
- Direct funding to regions where LBQ groups' access is especially limited**, including Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East/Southwest Asia, and Asia and the Pacific. The data shows that groups in Europe and Central Asia have extremely small budgets and also very 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.



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