

# VIBRANT YET UNDER-RESOURCED:

## LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND QUEER (LBQ) GROUPS AND MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

### 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 Latin America and the Caribbean to a

global survey of activists. Of the total 378 LBQ groups that participated in the survey, 80 were located in Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>2</sup>, representing LBQ-led organizations in 24 countries (out of a total of 52 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 Latin America and the Caribbean: the large majority of LBQ organizations in this region (89%) have been established since 2000 (with 50% established since 2010), underscoring the growth and expansion of LBQ activism in this region during the last two decades.

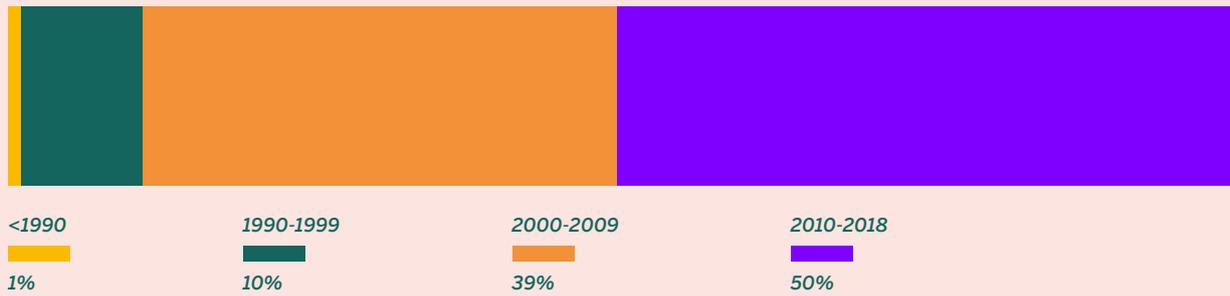
#### Registration status

In Latin America and the Caribbean, most of the LBQ organizations were registered: 68% reported being registered with their governments, while another 10% were in the process of registration. Twenty-three percent reported that they were not registered (lower than the 31% in the global sample as a whole).

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 – 62 were from Latin America, and 18 were from the Caribbean.

Figure 1. Year LBQ groups were established



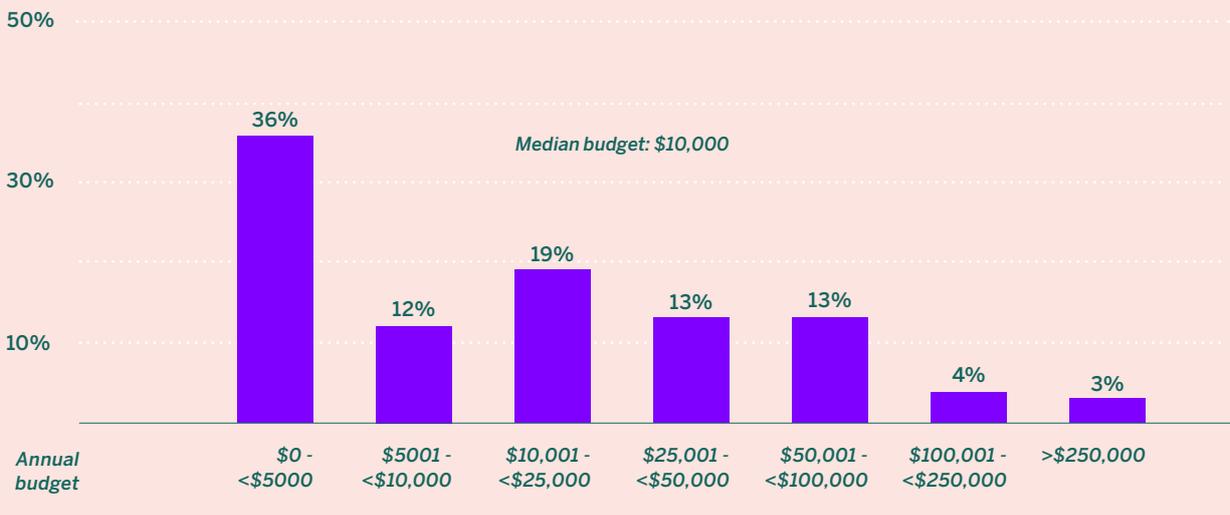
**Access to resourcing**

The respondents from Latin America and the Caribbean that provided information about their annual budget (n=69)<sup>3</sup> illustrated the overall research finding that LBQ organizations globally are poorly resourced. Figure 2 illustrates the lack of resourcing: **80% were working with annual budgets of \$50,000 or less** (36% had budgets of less than \$5,000). The **median annual budget in this region was \$10,000**.

Consistent with small annual budgets, groups located in Latin America and the Caribbean reported limited access to external funding<sup>4</sup>. In Latin America and the Caribbean, **the median external funding reported was \$6,000 annually**.

When asked if they had ever received multi-year funding, the groups from Latin America and the Caribbean that provided information (n=66) were evenly split: 48% said they had, and 48% had not.

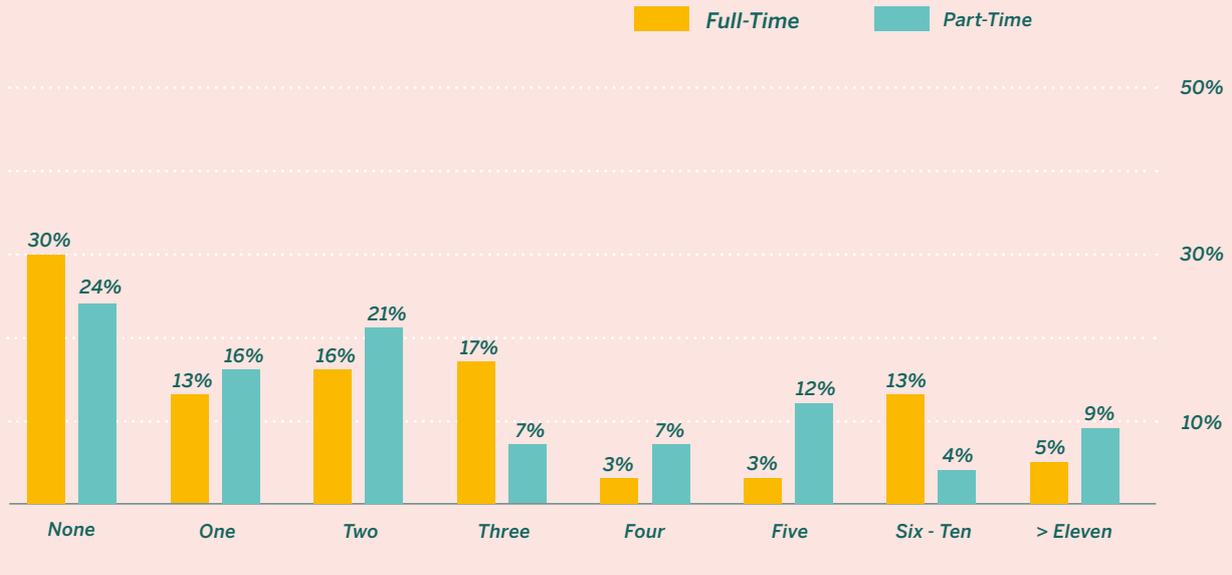
Figure 2. Annual budget sizes of LBQ groups



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**

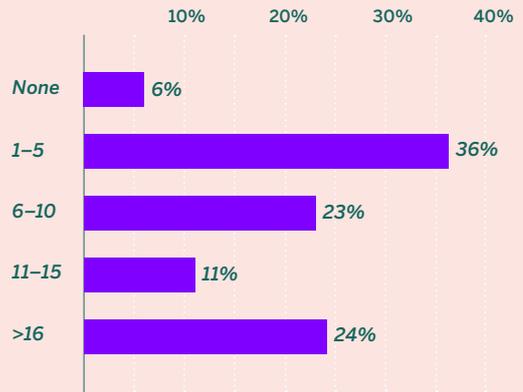
Limited budgets make it difficult for organizations to pay staff, and the data shows that groups in Latin America and the Caribbean engage in their activism with limited paid staff. Of the groups that answered the question about their full-time staff (n=63), nearly one-third (30%) indicated that they had no full-time staff members, and nearly half (46%) said that their organizations had only one to three full-time staff members. Figure 3 shows the number of full-time and part-time staff (68 groups provided information about their part-time staff).

As with other regions, most groups in Latin America and the Caribbean are supported by volunteers<sup>5</sup> (who receive no salary but may receive a stipend). Figure 4 shows that most groups are supported by volunteers, suggesting that these groups may be well-anchored in their communities or have a vibrant base of committed constituents.

**Activist strategies**

Like LBQ activists worldwide, activists in Latin America and the Caribbean deployed many strategies to push agendas for change for their communities. As Figure

Figure 4. Number of volunteers



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

5 shows, most of the groups that provided data about their strategies<sup>6</sup> used most of the range of activist strategies, though fewer reported providing direct services and working to promote activist safety.

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 provided funding for activist safety and direct health and social services. This may explain, to some degree, why groups reported using these strategies less often.

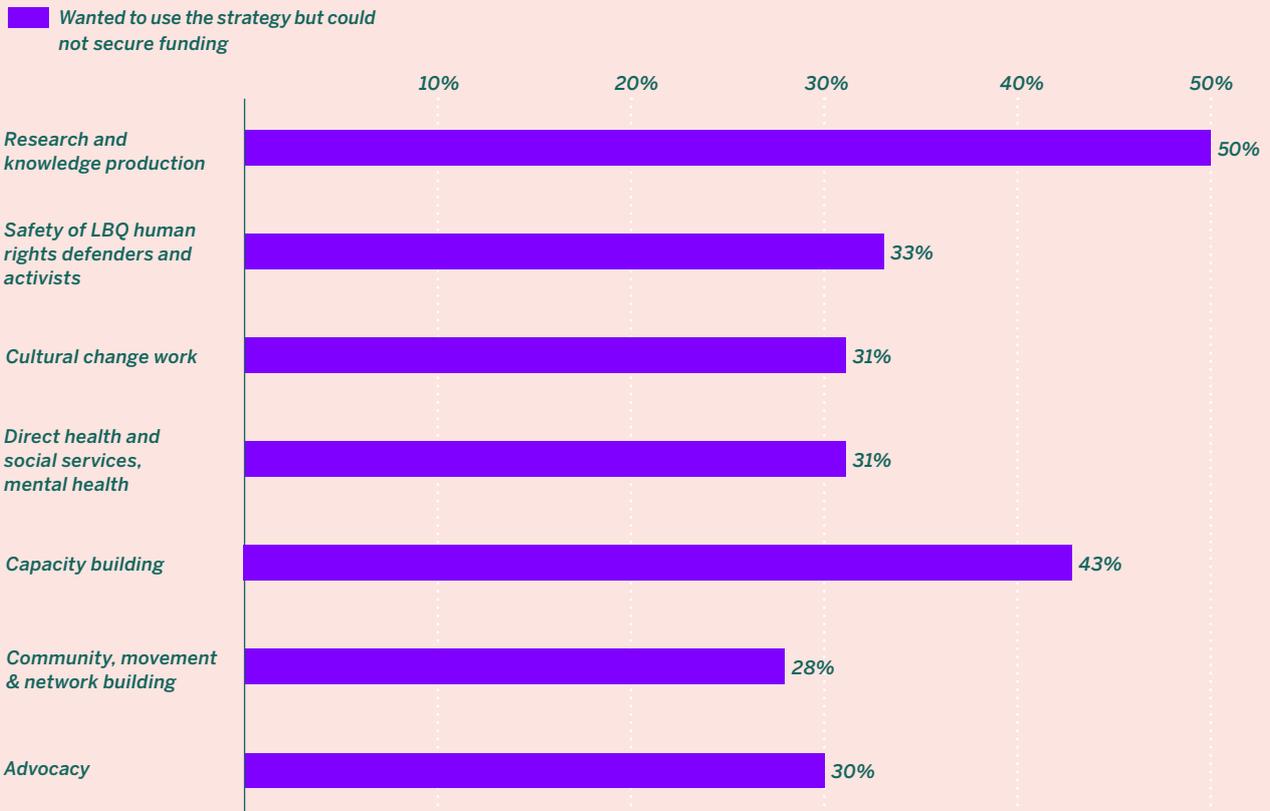
**Resourcing challenges**

Many LBQ organizations are not able to secure funding for all of the strategies they would like to implement. As Figure 6 shows, research and knowledge production and organizational capacity building particularly stood out among the LBQ groups in Latin America and the Caribbean as areas of work that they were challenged to resource.

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 they used. The data presented here are based on the responses provided, which varied from 40 to 56 responses, depending on the strategy in question.

## CONCLUSIONS

The data from Latin America and the Caribbean are consistent with the conclusions of the *Vibrant Yet Under-Resourced* report. The data show that most of the LBQ-led organizations in this region have been established recently, with half founded since 2010.

LBQ groups report an acute lack of resourcing. The median annual budget is just \$10,000, and 80% of groups reported annual budgets of less than

\$50,000. Most groups have few paid staff and rely on volunteers.

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:** the Middle East/Southwest Asia, Europe and Central Asia, and Asia and the Pacific.
- 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. The data shows that groups in Latin America and the Caribbean were particularly interested in implementing research and knowledge building, but had difficulty accessing funding for this work.
- Increase non-financial support to LBQ groups and ensure it meets their needs.** Make dedicated efforts to invest in the organizational capacity building of LBQ groups and to connect 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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