

# ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS

Annual Review of Global Foundation Grantmaking

2019 KEY FINDINGS



Produced by

**Candid.** and  **HRFN** Human Rights Funders Network

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# KEY FINDINGS

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Every year, Candid and Human Rights Funders Network's (HRFN's) *Advancing Human Rights* research reveals insights from the latest, most comprehensive data available for global human rights philanthropy. Our goal is to provide long-term evidence to understand gaps, changes, and new possibilities in resourcing human rights.

In this year's analysis, we track the \$4.1 billion that foundations granted in 2019 in support of human rights.<sup>1</sup> This represents a 10% increase from the previous year and points to several hopeful and surprising trends.

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<sup>1</sup>This figure excludes 341 grants totaling \$104 million awarded by foundations to other foundations included in the 2019 data set. Generally, these awards were made to either support regranting programs or build the capacity of recipient foundations. These grants have been removed to avoid double counting of grant dollars.

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## What do the latest findings teach us and how can they inform philanthropy today?

### 1. Human rights funding continues to increase.

Over the past decade, we have seen sustained yet diminishing growth in human rights grant dollars. This report documents \$4.1 billion in human rights funding in 2019, a 10% increase from 2018 and a 242% increase over the past ten years. While encouraging, human rights funding is a fraction of what's needed – and what's possible.

**2. Funders' changing priorities have a substantial impact on the field.** The top 12 human rights funders account for 46% of total grant dollars. Time and again, our analysis points to areas where increased funder support has been instrumental and where reduced funder support has significant impacts for particular communities, regions, or issues.

### 3. There are considerable regional funding disparities.

In North America, growth in grant dollars far surpassed growth in other regions and is tied to increased funding from several donors with large North American portfolios. In Sub-Saharan Africa, funding declined for a second year in a row among funders who shared grants data in 2018 and 2019, and was stagnant the year before that.

### 4. Funding increased for six of nine populations.

Among funders who shared grants data in 2018 and 2019, support for racial and ethnic groups grew the most. Nearly three out of four funders that fund with a racial or ethnic lens increased their spending. Funding decreased for three groups: Indigenous peoples, human rights defenders, and children and youth, after growth in each of these areas the previous year.

**5. The majority of human rights grants focus on one population.** Of the more than 26,000 human rights grants awarded in 2019, only 28% were intended to benefit more than one population and just 7% reference three or more – for example women of color who identify as LGBTQI. This suggests that the bulk of human rights funding is failing to consider intersectional identities or support critical cross-movement work.

**6. Funding from foundations in the Global South and East is increasing.** While the proportion of funding that is controlled by Global South and East funders continues to hover at around 1% of total human rights grant dollars, a notable three fourths of these foundations increased their grantmaking since the previous year. Global South and East funders represent a vital source of resourcing for locally-led initiatives, with 93% of grants by these funders staying within these regions.

**7. Trust remains an issue.** We continue to see more restricted, less direct funding for grants to the Global South and East. Groups that are awarded human rights grants in North America are five times more likely to receive direct, flexible support than those in Sub-Saharan Africa and seven times more likely than groups in the Caribbean.

**8. Networks matter in resourcing human rights movements globally.** Funders who associate with human rights donor networks play a leading role in delivering direct resources to movements. Thirty-eight percent of the human rights funding from network members is granted as flexible general support, as compared to 15% of the human rights funding from non-members. Network members also provide significantly more funding to organizations based in the Global South and East: One in two human rights grants from members in the Global North reaches an organization based in the Global South and East, as compared to just one in 21 human rights grants from non-members.

**9. There is room for growth.** Though the field of human rights philanthropy has grown, human rights grants are still just 2% to 8% of total foundation funding each year. This report highlights potential to bring more resources to the field, especially from funds and foundations that support human rights in small ways, but do not yet see themselves as human rights funders. It also highlights areas where there is room to improve existing resources, including by getting more direct, flexible funding into the hands of movements; adopting more intersectional approaches to match the complex ways we live and organize; and addressing the global imbalance in resourcing, from who holds money to where and how grants move around the world.



# THE STATE OF FOUNDATION FUNDING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN 2019

We cannot begin our analysis without acknowledging the immense changes that have occurred since these grants were made – all before the COVID-19 pandemic upended how we organize and, in some cases, how movements are resourced. HRFN, Candid, and many others have provided real-time data and analyses on pressing issues, from [initial analysis of the COVID-19 funding response to reflections two years later](#); to following the money in the [Ukraine crisis](#); to tracking [racial equity commitments](#) in response to movements for Black lives. These snapshots are vital for orienting action. But, alone, they do not give us the complete picture of global funding for human rights.

*Advancing Human Rights* is a ballast and a baseline. This analysis, based on a review of roughly 170,000 grants made in 2019, shows the breadth of foundation funding. In it, we see a mark of the times and a foreboding of what was to come. In 2019, populist leaders from India to Brazil to China were attempting to dismantle rights, silence opposition, shutter civic space, and surveil citizens – all of which kicked into high gear during the pandemic.<sup>(A)(B)(C)</sup> The global refugee crisis we are witnessing today was also in effect, with more people forcibly displaced than ever before as armed conflicts continued in Afghanistan, Syria, and South Sudan and asylum-seekers fled violence in Central America.<sup>(D)</sup> Climate justice was a mix: Carbon emissions hit an all-time high at the same time that the Philippines ruled that 47 companies could be held accountable for their role in climate change.<sup>(E)(F)</sup> Intersectional organizing exploded as waves of protesters around the world took to the streets to demand racial justice, climate justice, economic justice, and more.<sup>(G)</sup> At the same time, human rights funders modestly increased their cross-movement support.<sup>2</sup>

Looking back, we know these struggles didn't end there. They were shaped, transformed, and in some cases amplified during the pandemic. The connections between these mobilizations – and the resources they garnered – remind us again that the road to meaningful, lasting change demands sustained philanthropic investment in human rights movements. In the pages to come, we set our analysis within this context, highlighting the human

## FUNDING OVERVIEW



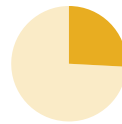
In 2019, 761 funders made



26,621 human rights grants totaling \$4.1 B



to 15,629 recipients.



26% of the funding was reported as flexible general support.

<sup>2</sup> In our analysis of funding for [intersectional organizing](#), we found that just 18% of human rights grants made in 2018 named two populations and less than 5% supported three or more populations. In 2019, those percentages increased to 21% and 7%, respectively.

rights funding priorities that stood out, along with gaps. We explore who has access to resources and highlight major trends and their implications for the state of philanthropy today.

Our global view is by design. *Advancing Human Rights* constructs a picture across locations and issues around the world. While we look at distinct areas and populations in this work, we also try to weave the connections together. As we enter this annual analysis, our tenth in 12 years, we at HRFN believe that an intersectional approach to resourcing human rights actions is needed if we are going to fund movements responsibly, powerfully, and fully. We acknowledge the critical role that Global South and East movements play in advancing human rights everywhere. And we affirm that all struggles for justice and human rights are deeply intertwined and that care for our communities cannot be separated from care for our planet.<sup>(H)</sup>

As always, we submit this research as an offering to the field. We aim to make our findings useful for foundations and movements in advancing human rights. Through our research, we strive to provide data that is accessible and reliable. Most of all, we are here to learn with and from you – partners, peers, and movements for justice.

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## WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS GRANTS?

Human rights grants promote structural change to ensure the protection and enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent human rights treaties. We include any grant that meets this definition in our research, regardless of whether funders consider their work to be human rights focused.

# WHO MAKES HUMAN RIGHTS GRANTS?

*Advancing Human Rights* provides an expansive picture of human rights funding by looking grant by grant to determine how much money supports human rights each year. The research combines grants data collected from 182 members of three donor networks – HRFN, Ariadne–European Funders For Social Change and Human Rights, and Prospera–International Network of Women’s Funds – with data Candid compiles annually from 1,000 of the largest U.S. foundations.<sup>3</sup> Many funders captured in Candid’s database may not consider themselves human rights grantmakers. However, almost 60% of them funded at least one grant in 2019 that meets our definition.

While total human rights funding increased, the number of funders that made human rights grants decreased by 8% between 2018 and 2019. This reflects a decrease in the number of one-off grants to support human rights from U.S. foundations and is due in part to a change in our methodology where we more rigorously reviewed spending from funders that made just one or two grants that met our human rights criteria. The decline also raises questions about what more can be done to engage with institutions where pockets of human rights funding exist to encourage increased, sustained support, but does not raise concerns about the overall dollars reaching movements.

The 761 funders<sup>4</sup> included in this report are based in 51 countries, with 85% located in North America.<sup>5</sup> This is in part a reflection of the philanthropic field, in which wealth is disproportionately held in the Global North.<sup>6</sup> It is also a reflection of data availability: U.S. foundations are required to publicly report their grants, which means their data is more easily accessible than grants data in most other contexts. As described in our methodology, we intentionally bring funders from around the world into the analysis by encouraging members of HRFN, Ariadne, and Prospera to submit grants data directly. Since our last report, the number of funders contributing to the research has increased in every region except North America and the Middle East and North Africa. This year’s pool includes 47 funders based in the Global South and East,<sup>7</sup> reflecting a 24% increase over last year. Expanding our reach remains a priority for us as we work to build a more comprehensive picture of the global funding landscape.

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<sup>3</sup> Nine foundations that are included in Candid’s Foundation 1000 data set are also members of HRFN or Ariadne.

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<sup>4</sup> Visit our research hub to see a [list of the 761 funders included in the research](#).

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<sup>5</sup> In our analysis, North America is limited to Canada and the United States. One Canadian funder contributed 2019 grants data: Equality Fund.

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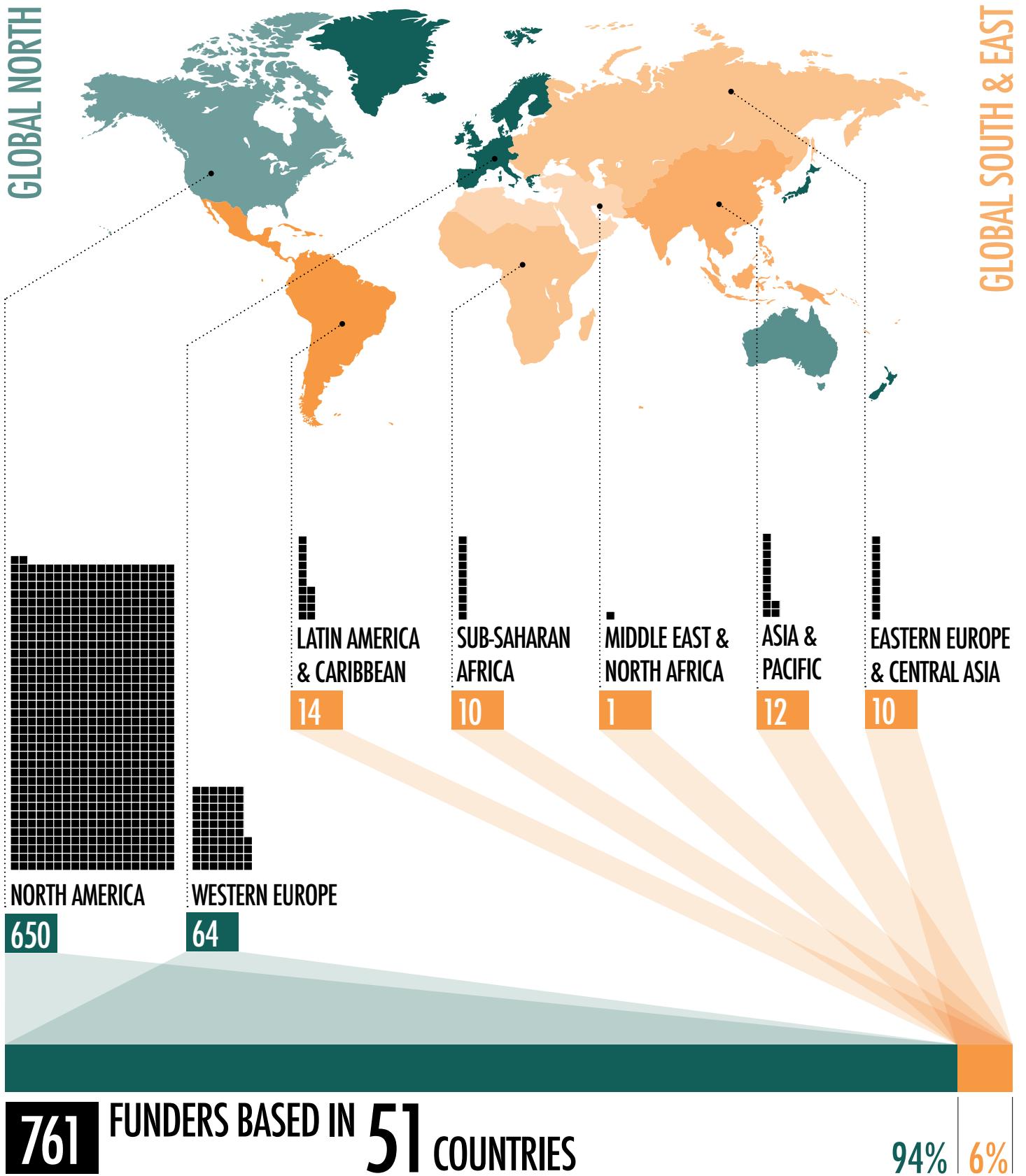
<sup>6</sup> A study of global philanthropy estimates that 60% of all foundations are based in Europe and 35% are based in North America.

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<sup>7</sup> For this analysis, the Global South and East includes all countries outside of Western Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

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# HUMAN RIGHTS FUNDERS BY REGION





## NETWORK MEMBER VS. NON-MEMBER FUNDING

As members of HRFN, Ariadne, and Prospera, foundations stake their claim explicitly as human rights funders. Every year, we try to understand whether membership in these networks indicates different patterns of giving. Digging into the data, we see that members of our three networks continue to provide more support for human rights movements in the Global South and East and more flexible funding than other human rights donors, but trail behind non-members in the length of their grants.

### Network Members Fund More Groups Based in the Global South and East

For several years, we have tracked a “trust gap”: significant disparities in funding directed to groups in the Global South and East versus those in the Global North. (See page 22.) Hearteningly, members of human rights donor networks buck the trend. Approximately 30% of the human rights funding from members based in the Global North is meant to benefit the Global South and East, compared to just 10% of the human rights funding from non-members based in the Global North.<sup>8</sup> Overall, one in two grants from network members in the Global North reaches an organization based in the Global South and East, as compared to just one in 21 grants from non-members.

As we explore in the “trust gap” section, funding to the Global South and East often travels through intermediaries or other groups based in the Global North, reinforcing imbalances in access to grant monies. Inspiringly, funders in our networks are more likely to provide direct funding for work intended to benefit the Global South and East. For instance, 84% of grants from Global North members for work in the Global South and East are provided directly to organizations based in the Global South and East, as compared to 56% of non-member grants. For Global South and East-based members, 93% of their grants stay within these regions, underscoring the importance of locally-based funds.

Together, these findings affirm that funders who associate with and identify as human rights funders play a leading role in delivering direct resources to movements around the world.

**1 in 2 grants from network members in the Global North reaches an organization in the Global South and East, as compared to just 1 in 21 grants from non-members.**

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<sup>8</sup> We analyzed 19,170 grants from 464 foundations based in the Global North, representing 72% of the grants in our data set. We excluded U.S. foundations whose data was sourced through 990 tax forms (since the returns that public charities file may not include itemized international grants) and grants that did not specify a region of benefit.

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## Network Members Provide More Flexible Funding, but Non-Members Give Longer Grants

In addition to direct support, long-term flexible funding is critical for adequately resourcing human rights movements. Our members are more likely to provide flexible general support than non-members, granting 38% of their funding this way as compared to 15% of the funding from non-members. However, grant length does not follow this trajectory. Members' grants average 14.6 months, three months shorter than non-member grants, which average 17.5 months. The gap has widened since 2018, as non-member grants have gotten longer and member grants have remained roughly the same.<sup>9</sup>

At first glance, the grant-length disparity surprised us given the well-documented benefits of multi-year funding.<sup>(I)(J)(K)</sup> When we segment our members by location, we find that those based in the Global North give significantly longer grants on average (16.5 months) than our Global South and East members (8.6 months). Global South and East members also give considerably less of their funding – just 13% – as flexible general support.

These disparities may be related to foundation size and type. Many of our Global North members are large private foundations, and non-member data comes from Candid's research on 1,000 of the largest U.S. foundations. Conversely, many of our Global South and East members are smaller public funds that may have fewer discretionary resources, limiting their ability to make multi-year commitments or provide unrestricted funding. We also know that many Global South and East members receive resources that themselves come with significant restrictions. A number of these funds also provide rapid-response grants for human rights defenders that are often short term by design. Still, these gaps are significant and will be part of our deep-dive analysis on the trust gap (forthcoming in 2023).

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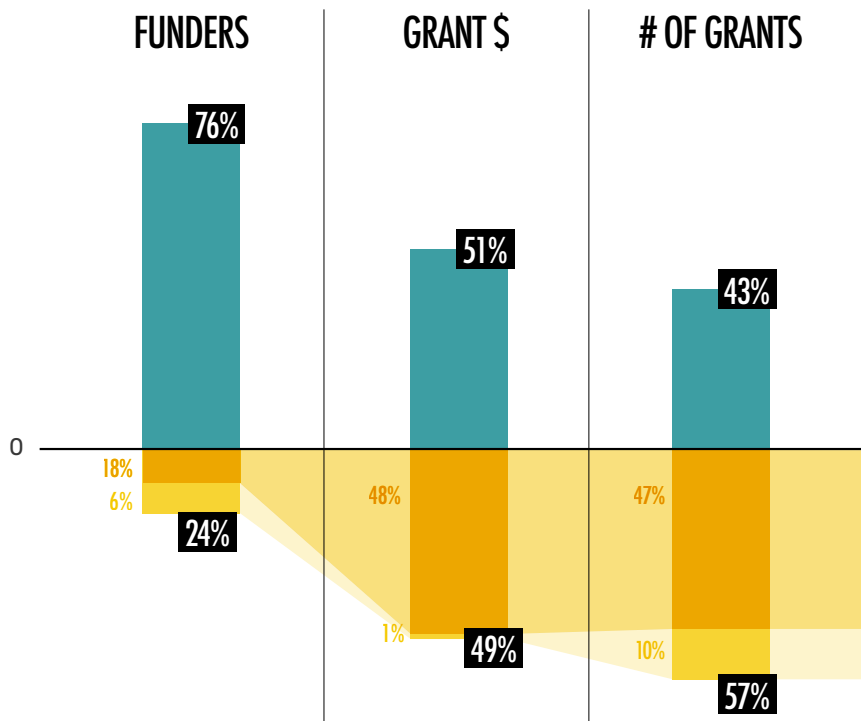
<sup>9</sup> We analyzed 6,732 grants, representing 25% of the grants in our data set, that funders 1) submitted directly to HRFN, Candid, Ariadne, or Prospera, and 2) indicated were authorized grants (rather than amounts paid) that capture multi-year commitments. Only 14 foundations based in the Global South and East met this criteria.

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**Network members based in the Global South and East provide less flexible funding and shorter grants than network members based in the Global North. This may be a sign of their more limited access to discretionary resources.**

# HOW DOES NETWORK MEMBER AND NON-MEMBER FUNDING COMPARE?

## Funding Overview



NON-MEMBERS<sup>10</sup>



GLOBAL NORTH



NETWORK MEMBERS<sup>11</sup>

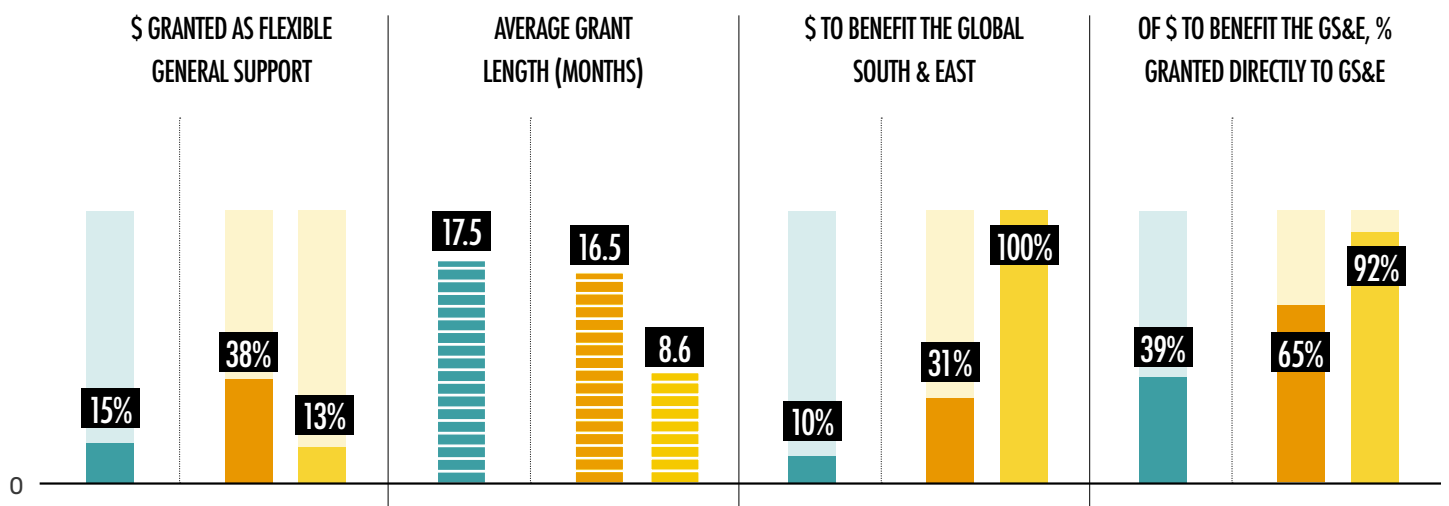
GLOBAL SOUTH & EAST



<sup>10</sup> Data from non-members is based on Candid's Foundation 1000 data set, which represents roughly half of all U.S. private and community foundation grantmaking. There are no non-members from the Global South and East.

<sup>11</sup> Network members include any foundations that contribute membership dues or submit grants data directly to HRFN, Ariadne, or Prospera for this research.

## Grantmaking Practices



Network members in the Global North provide more support for human rights movements in the Global South and East and more flexible funding than non-members, but trail behind non-members in the length of their grants.

Network members based in the Global South and East provide less flexible funding and shorter grants than network members based in the Global North. This may be a sign of their more limited access to discretionary resources.

# CONTEXTUALIZING THE FUNDING

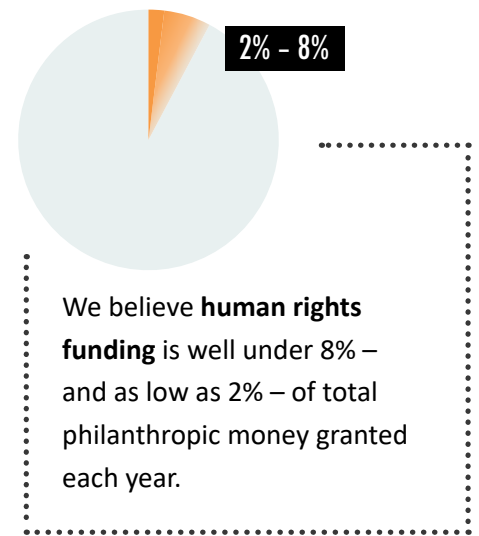
It is difficult to know exactly how much philanthropic support exists globally. The [Global Philanthropy Report](#) calculates that foundations spend an estimated \$150 billion annually.<sup>12</sup> [Global Philanthropy Project's \(GPP's\) Global Resources Report on LGBTI funding](#) places total giving by U.S. foundations at \$75.69 billion for 2019. We also have the figures from Candid's Foundation 1000 data set, which represents roughly half of all U.S. private and community foundation grantmaking and totaled almost \$36 billion in 2019.<sup>13</sup> In all, these sources suggest U.S. giving alone is over \$75 billion annually and that global giving is likely to exceed \$150 billion.

Based on these numbers, we estimate that human rights funding represented between 2% and 8% of total foundation grantmaking in 2019. Our most conservative estimate – looking solely within Candid's Foundation 1000 data set for human rights versus non-human rights grants – places funding for human rights at 8%. The lowest estimate (2%) comes from comparing all the human rights grants we found in this research (\$4.1 billion) to the Global Philanthropy Report estimate.

As we discuss extensively in our methodology, we recognize that these estimates are based on the available data on human rights funding and global philanthropy, both of which may miss vital contributions, particularly outside of the United States. Despite these possible gaps, we sadly but confidently believe that human rights funding is well under 8% – and as low as 2% – of total philanthropic money granted each year.

Taking these numbers further, we see that funding for any one issue or community is a tiny fraction of philanthropic giving. For instance, grant dollars to advance the rights of women and girls (\$929 million, or 23% of the human rights funding mapped in this report) represent between just 0.62% to 1.8% of foundation giving. Funding for LGBTQI rights hovers between 0.14% and 0.37%, in line with GPP's estimate of 0.35%.<sup>14</sup> Even in our biggest category, funding for racial and ethnic groups, our most conservative estimate puts grants at 2.2% of total global giving, but this could be as low as 0.66% of total funding.

Moreover, foundation funding is far outstripped by the resources available through the private sector. For comparison, the total human rights funding captured in this report is equivalent to just 2% of Apple's total operating expenses and just 1.5% of Amazon's. More directly, the broader resources that sit within the field of



<sup>12</sup> This includes the costs of grants and other financial support to third parties, foundation-led programming, and administrative costs. The authors of the study estimate that actual amounts of annual philanthropic expenditure are likely significantly higher.

<sup>13</sup> The Foundation 1000 includes all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 1,000 of the largest U.S. private and community foundations. Of the 761 funders included in our analysis, 581 were also included in the Foundation 1000 data set. Candid estimates that total funding from U.S. private and community foundations was approximately \$82 billion in 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Our research helps to situate LGBTQI funding within the broader funding landscape while GPP's analysis provides more nuanced insights on the scope of LGBTI support. We include any human rights grant where LGBTQI people are intended beneficiaries. In contrast, GPP only includes grants that focus on an LGBTI issue or population. Even with our differing methodologies, our similar findings mutually reinforce the limited availability of resources for LGBTQI communities.

philanthropy itself are often considered separate from grantmaking goals. Global foundations' assets, often invested in the private sector, are estimated to be more than \$1.5 trillion.<sup>(L)</sup> The potential for foundations to align these resources with their values remains largely untapped. What would it mean to harness even a fraction of these resources for human rights movements? How can we influence this broader system of how money flows to create a more just funding ecosystem?

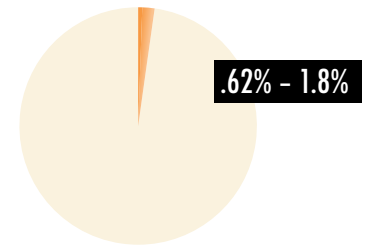
Even as we applaud growth in the field and new areas of resourcing, we cannot ignore the bleak picture – or the potential to move significantly more money toward human rights. In the pages ahead, we analyze funding patterns, look for trends, and repeatedly face a familiar conclusion: The need for resources for any single region, issue, or population far exceeds the available funding. Our sincere hope is that this report can be used to bring donors to the fore, deepen existing support, catalyze new resources, and meet the human rights challenges of today.

## HOW HAS HUMAN RIGHTS FUNDING CHANGED?

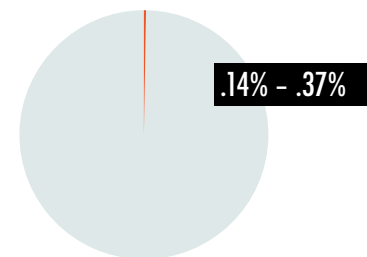
Since our first analysis, we have seen a steady increase in human rights funding from \$1.2 billion in 2010 to \$4.1 billion in 2019, with the exception of a small dip in 2015. Some of the increase reflects our methodology: The number of funders that submit grants data for our research has grown by 8% since our initial analysis. However, that alone does not explain the 242% increase in grant dollars. Based on verification by a matched subset, described below, and our knowledge of the field, we see this growth as a reliable trend in human rights philanthropy.

To understand year-to-year changes in foundation funding, we look at the subset of funders for whom we have data for both 2018 and 2019.<sup>15</sup> This “matched subset” controls for annual variations in the list of funders that submit grants data and gives us a reasonable and reliable measure of actual change. In this report, we have 533 funders in the matched subset. Among them, grant dollars for human rights rose 15% and the number of grants increased by 6% between 2018 and 2019, affirming the trajectory we see in our larger data set. This has been consistent in past matched subsets: The total grant

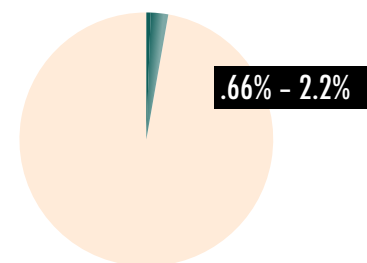
## FUNDING FOR ANY ONE ISSUE OR COMMUNITY IS A TINY FRACTION OF PHILANTHROPIC GIVING



Funding for **women and girls' rights**



Funding for **LGBTQI rights**

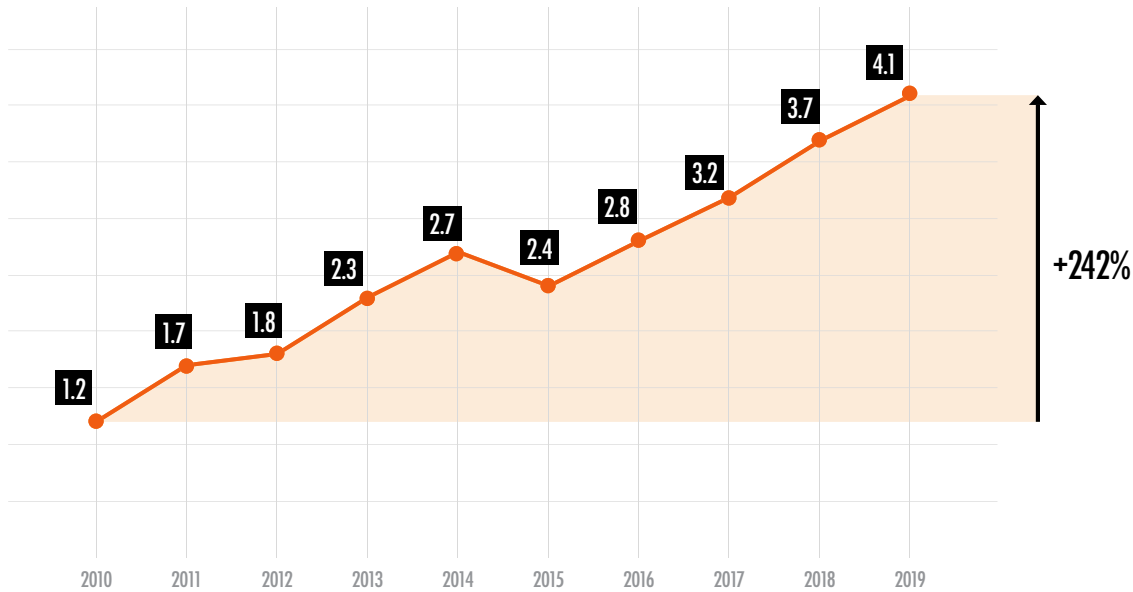


Funding for **racial and ethnic groups' rights**

<sup>15</sup> Grant dollars from these matched subset funders represent 89% of human rights funding in 2018 and 93% in 2019.



# HUMAN RIGHTS FUNDING OVER TIME (BILLIONS \$)



dollars in the matched subset increased 34% from 2015 to 2016, 23% from 2016 to 2017, and 13% from 2017 to 2018 – suggesting sustained, if diminishing gains.

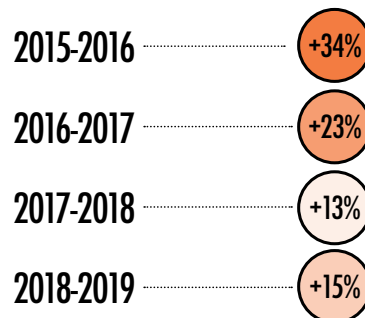
We are still cautious about drawing long-term conclusions. Year-to-year changes can be influenced by a number of factors, including the actions of one or a few foundations, more multi-year grants awarded in a single year, a small number of very large grants, or a foundation submitting more detailed grants data.



## MATCHED SUBSET

Throughout this report we refer to our “matched subset.” This is a group of 533 funders that shared their grants data in both 2018 and 2019 and made at least one human rights grant in both years. By focusing on the grantmaking of this narrower group, we can control for annual variations in the list of funders that submit grants data and establish a reasonable and reliable measure of actual year-to-year changes in foundation funding.

Total grant dollars in the matched subset have increased over time, suggesting sustained, if diminishing gains.



**533** Funders → **2018/2019**

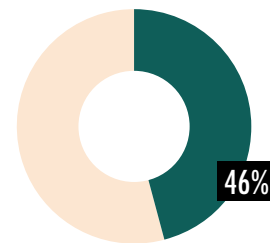
# WHO ARE THE LARGEST FUNDERS BY GRANT DOLLARS?

The top 12 funders made \$1.9 billion in human rights grants in 2019 and accounted for 46% of total human rights grant dollars. While there are some shifts in their order from year to year, these large contributors are a major force in human rights philanthropy, and their priorities have considerable influence on what issues and movements receive funding.

Among the top 12 funders, we see significant increases in human rights funding from five of them, most notably the Ford Foundation, which grew by the most grant dollars (\$172M) since our last analysis, and the MacArthur Foundation, whose funding rose by the largest proportion (122%). Ford's increase is related to a combination of factors, including two grants that are considerably larger than any it made in 2018, coupled with internal efforts to strengthen how it captures grantmaking data, which brought more of its grants into our data set. For MacArthur, the growth is related to its work to address over incarceration in U.S. jails and promote climate solutions.

On the flip side, we see significant decreases in human rights funding from the NoVo Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. For NoVo, the decline reflects changes in its grant reporting<sup>16</sup> and significant shifts in its grantmaking,<sup>(M)</sup> while for Gates, the decrease is closely tied to shifts in strategy to provide smaller grants in the areas of education and reproductive rights. While Gates made the same number of grants in both areas in 2018 and 2019, its level of support decreased by \$45 million for grants related to the right to education and \$26 million for reproductive rights. Again, these examples show how small changes in large foundations can have ripple effects on the types of work that are funded and the field overall.

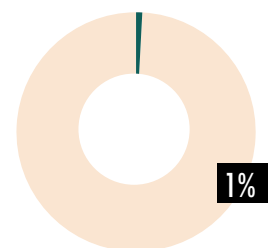
The 47 human rights funders in our analysis that are based in the Global South and East made \$45 million in human rights grants in 2019. While the proportion of human rights funding that is controlled by Global South and East funders continues to hover at around 1%, we see a marked increase in grant dollars from these foundations since our last analysis. Seventy-six percent of foundations based in the Global South and East increased their grantmaking,<sup>17</sup> which translated into \$12 million additional dollars to support human rights. More funding in the hands of locally-based foundations is a development to celebrate.



The **top 12 human rights funders** accounted for 46% of the overall \$4.1 B of all human rights funding.

<sup>16</sup> The NoVo Foundation did not submit its 2019 grants data so we used tax forms to capture its grantmaking. When grants are shared directly, they tend to offer more detail and allow for better categorization than those sourced from tax forms.

<sup>17</sup> We looked at the 38 foundations in the Global South and East that shared grants data for our analysis in both 2018 and 2019. Twenty-nine of them increased their human rights funding.



**47 funders based in the Global South and East** accounted for 1% of all human rights funding.

## TOP FUNDERS BY GRANT DOLLARS<sup>18</sup>

Funder	Location	Scope	\$ 2019	% of All \$ 2019	% Change 2018-2019
1 Ford Foundation*	United States	global	\$459 M	11%	60%
2 Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation	United States	global	\$211 M	5%	45%
3 Foundation to Promote Open Society*	United States	global	\$197 M	5%	-4%
4 MacArthur Foundation*	United States	global	\$141 M	3%	122%
5 Oak Foundation*	Switzerland	global	\$138 M	3%	4%
6 Wellspring Philanthropic Fund*	United States	global	\$137 M	3%	11%
7 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	United States	global	\$129 M	3%	-37%
8 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	United States	national	\$124 M	3%	85%
9 William and Flora Hewlett Foundation*	United States	global	\$115 M	3%	91%
10 Silicon Valley Community Foundation	United States	global	\$110 M	3%	-3%
11 NoVo Foundation*	United States	global	\$93 M	2%	-50%
12 California Endowment	United States	local	\$66 M	2%	7%

## TOP FUNDERS BASED IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND EAST BY GRANT DOLLARS

Funder	Location	Scope	\$ 2019	% of All \$ 2019	% Change 2018-2019
1 African Women's Development Fund*	Ghana	regional	\$7.5 M	0.18%	26%
2 Foundation for Civil Society*	Tanzania	national	\$3.5 M	0.08%	
3 Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres*	Costa Rica	regional	\$3.4 M	0.08%	95%
4 Fondo de Mujeres del Sur*	Argentina	regional	\$2.8 M	0.07%	455%
5 TrustAfrica*	Senegal	regional	\$2.0 M	0.05%	198%
6 Fundo Socioambiental CASA*	Brazil	regional	\$2.0 M	0.05%	147%
7 Ukrainian Women's Fund*	Ukraine	national	\$2.0 M	0.05%	258%
8 Korea Foundation for Women*	Republic of Korea	national	\$1.9 M	0.05%	71%
9 Fondo Semillas*	Mexico	national	\$1.9 M	0.05%	49%
10 Brazil Human Rights Fund*	Brazil	national	\$1.7 M	0.04%	155%
11 FRIDA   The Young Feminist Fund*	Panama	global	\$1.4 M	0.03%	21%
12 Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises*	Democratic Republic of the Congo	national	\$1.3 M	0.03%	248%

The shading provides a comparison of grant dollars. \*Denotes membership in HRFN, Ariadne, and/or Prospera.

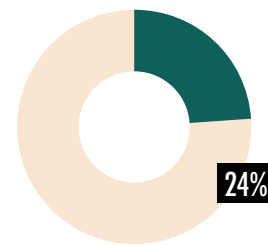
<sup>18</sup> The amounts presented here and in the other top funder lists reflect the full value of each funder's grantmaking for human rights, including grants to other foundations in the data set. Visit our methodology for details on how we address potential double counting to arrive at the total grantmaking figures in this report.

# WHO ARE THE LARGEST FUNDERS BY GRANT NUMBERS?

While the majority of grant dollars remain relatively concentrated in the hands of a few large foundations, the number of grants is more widely distributed across foundations. The top 12 funders by number of grants accounted for 24% of all human rights grants awarded in 2019.

That said, we see very different levels of human rights support. Nine percent of funders made 100 or more grants to advance human rights, showing a focused commitment to human rights funding. Half of the funders made fewer than 10 human rights grants, and a quarter made just one or two. These findings underscore the untapped potential within philanthropy among funders that may be persuaded to increase their human rights investments.

The proportion of human rights grants to benefit North America consistently outstrips support for other regions. This is no surprise, given that the majority of funders in our analysis are based in the U.S. and many have a domestic focus, addressing the numerous human rights concerns in the U.S. context. However, even those funders with an international mandate keep significant resources in the Global North. For instance, of grants from the 11 top funders listed below that support international work, 43% solely benefit human rights actions in North America. This finding, paired with our analysis on the trust gap, illustrates how challenging it is for human rights movements around the world to access resources in general and flexible, direct support in particular.



The **top 12 human rights funders** accounted for 24% of the more than 26,000 human rights grants.

**Of grants from the top 11 funders that support international work, 43% solely benefit human rights actions in North America.**

## TOP FUNDERS BY NUMBER OF GRANTS

	Funder	Location	Scope	# of Grants 2019	% of All Grants 2019
1	Ford Foundation*	United States	global	975	3.6
2	Global Greengrants Fund*	United States	global	923	3.4
3	Foundation to Promote Open Society*	United States	global	745	2.8
4	Silicon Valley Community Foundation	United States	global	605	2.2
5	American Jewish World Service*	United States	global	565	2.1
6	Wellspring Philanthropic Fund*	United States	global	528	2.0
7	Fund for Global Human Rights*	United States	global	386	1.4
8	California Endowment	United States	local	347	1.3
9	Tides Foundation	United States	global	344	1.3
10	Astraea Foundation*	United States	global	335	1.2
11	NoVo Foundation*	United States	global	322	1.2
12	Seattle Foundation	United States	global	314	1.2

## TOP FUNDERS BASED IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND EAST BY NUMBER OF GRANTS

	Funder	Location	Scope	# of Grants 2019	% of All Grants 2019
1	Fondo de Mujeres del Sur*	Argentina	regional	206	0.8
2	Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises*	Democratic Republic of the Congo	national	206	0.8
3	Urgent Action Fund Africa*	Kenya	regional	184	0.7
4	FRIDA   The Young Feminist Fund*	Panama	global	170	0.6
5	Urgent Action Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean*	Colombia	regional	166	0.6
6	Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres*	Costa Rica	regional	165	0.6
7	Fondo Semillas*	Mexico	national	139	0.5
8	Fondo Lunaria Mujer*	Colombia	national	123	0.5
9	UHAI EASHRI*	Kenya	regional	97	0.4
10	Brazil Human Rights Fund*	Brazil	national	94	0.3
11	Mongolian Women's Fund*	Mongolia	national	84	0.3
12	African Women's Development Fund*	Ghana	regional	83	0.3

The shading provides a comparison of grant numbers. \*Denotes membership in HRFN, Ariadne, and/or Prospera.



# WHERE DO HUMAN RIGHTS GRANTS GO?

The regional allocation of grants sheds light on where funders are contributing to human rights activities. The totals for each region represent human rights grants for activities focused on that region, regardless of the recipient location. For example, if an organization based in the Netherlands received a grant for a project in Kenya we would allocate that funding to the region Sub-Saharan Africa and vice versa. This helps us understand the scale of funding meant to benefit each region. (We take a more critical view of direct versus indirect funding on pages 22-24.)

Funding for North America always surpasses funding for the other regions in our analysis. As we've explained, this is in part because the majority of the funders in our data set are based in the United States. However, it also reflects an entrenched history of inequality in the field, where wealth and philanthropic spending is concentrated in the Global North. Two out of every three human rights grants focus exclusively on North America or Western Europe. This concentration would likely be even higher if we had more grants data from European funders.

**2 out of every 3 human rights grants focus exclusively on North America or Western Europe.**

## MATCHED SUBSET COMPARISONS

From 2018 to 2019, funding notably increased for three regions: North America (\$387M, 19%), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (\$29M, 52%), and Western Europe (\$13M, 8%). This dovetails with the trends we see in our overall data set. In North America, the growth in grant dollars far surpassed growth in other regions. It is tied to increased funding from several donors whose grant dollars primarily focused on North America, including the Ford Foundation (73% of Ford's funding was focused on North America), MacArthur Foundation (67%), and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (99%). For Eastern Europe and Central Asia, much of the increase is linked to the funding cycles of EEA and Norway Grants, which awarded significantly more funding in 2019 than the previous year.<sup>19</sup> This illustrates the impact a single funder can have on year-to-year funding trends, especially in a region where just 64 funders made human rights grants in 2019. For Western Europe, the modest funding growth is tied to larger investments from the Oak Foundation and the Foundation to Promote Open Society, and may be partly linked to changes in grant reporting.<sup>20</sup> Despite the steady growth in human rights grant dollars, North America and Eastern Europe and Central Asia are the only two regions where we have seen marked funding increases for three years in a row.

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<sup>19</sup> The EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation is a grantmaking mechanism funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway to reduce social and economic inequalities throughout the European Economic Area (EEA).

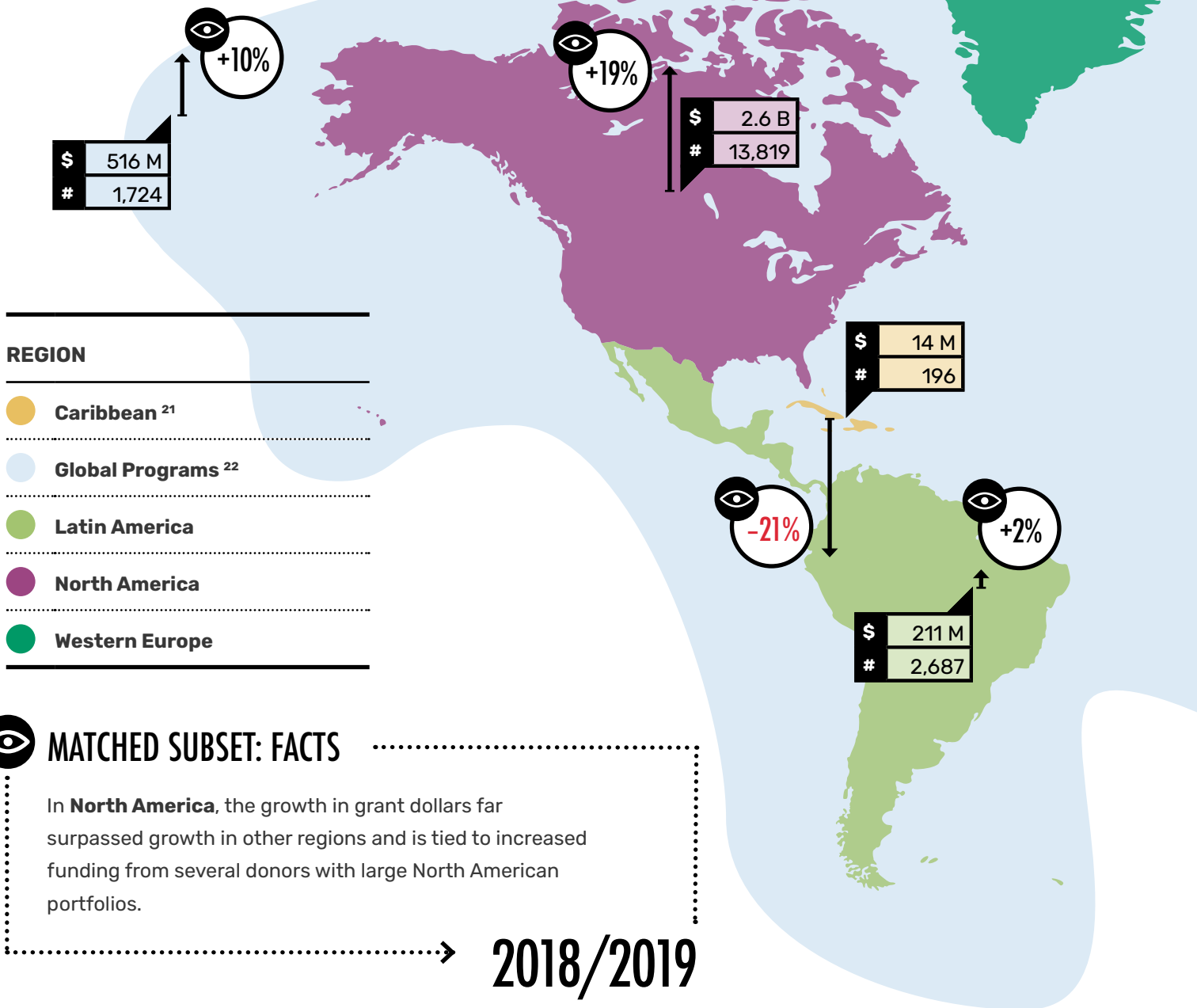
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<sup>20</sup> The Foundation to Promote Open Society did not submit its 2018 grants data so we used tax forms to capture its grantmaking. When grants are shared directly, they tend to offer more detail and allow for better categorization than those sourced from tax forms.

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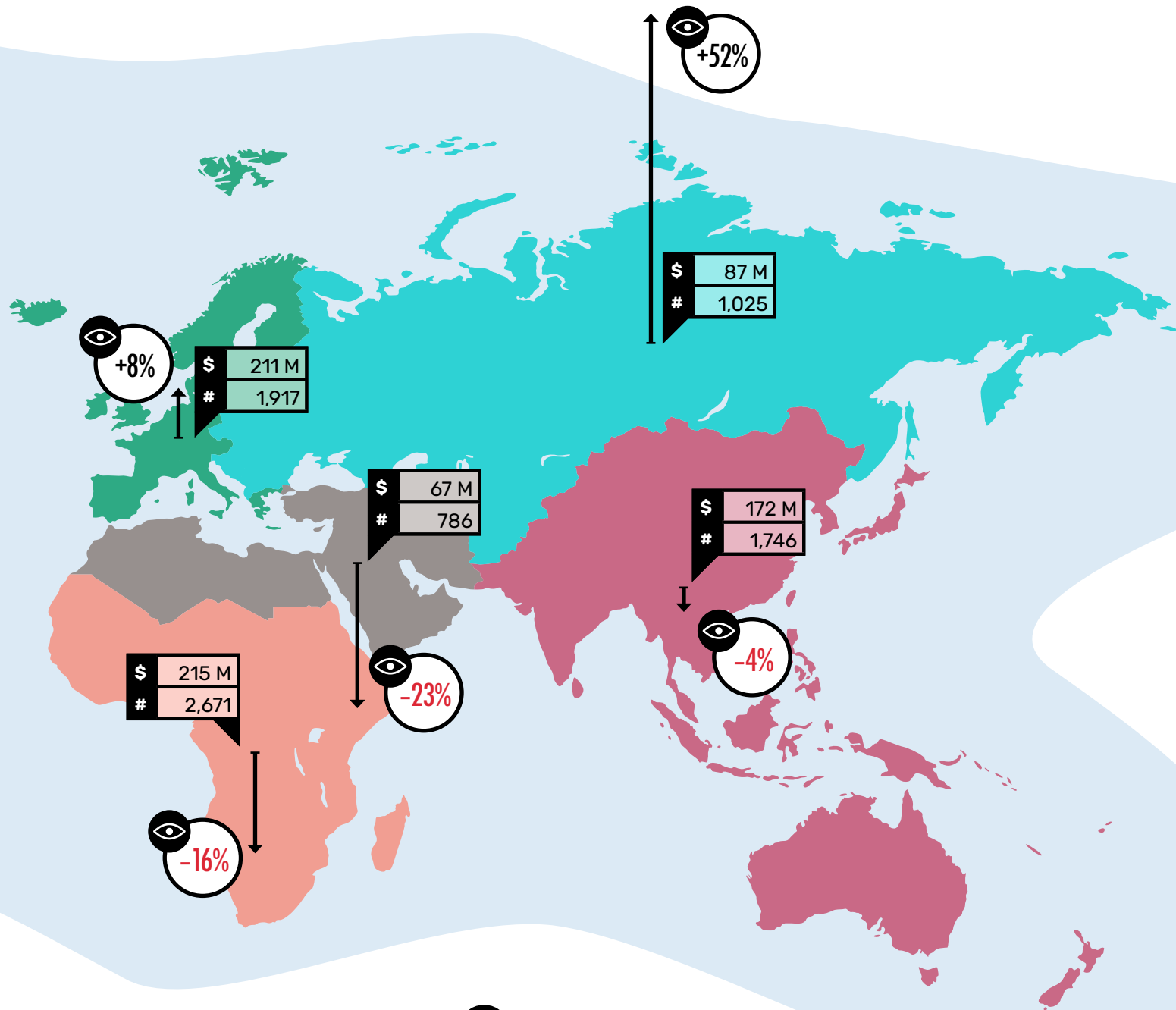
# FOUNDATION FUNDING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS BY REGION

\$ = FUNDING AMOUNT  
 # = NUMBER OF GRANTS  
 👁 = % \$ Change 2018-2019



<sup>21</sup> In past analyses we have tracked funding for the Caribbean separately from funding for Latin America so we have continued to do so here.

<sup>22</sup> Human rights grants generally benefit a specific country or region. However, because grants that focus on multiple regions do not specify how much money goes where, the full value of these grants is counted in the totals for each region. In 2019, multi-region grants accounted for 520 grants totaling \$147 million. The category “global” includes grants intended to support human rights globally. Human rights grants totaling \$84 million that specified “developing countries” as the region of benefit are not reflected in this graphic.



**REGION**

- Asia & Pacific
- Eastern Europe & Central Asia
- Middle East & North Africa
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Western Europe


**MATCHED SUBSET: FACTS**

In the **Middle East and North Africa**, the drop in funding follows two years where funding grew by more than a third each year and may simply indicate that funding is leveling out.

In **Sub-Saharan Africa**, funding declined for a second year in a row and was stagnant the year before that, which signals more reason for alarm.

**2018/2019**

In contrast, we see notable decreases in funding from 2018 to 2019 for Sub-Saharan Africa (-\$44M, -16%), the Middle East and North Africa (-\$20M, -23%), and the Caribbean (-\$4M, -21%), which echo the declines we see for these regions in our overall data set. For the Middle East and North Africa, the drop in funding follows two years in which funding grew by more than a third each year. This return to closer to 2017 levels after large growth may indicate that the increase in those years was an anomaly. In Sub-Saharan Africa, funding declined for a second year in a row and was stagnant the year before that, which signals more reason for alarm. Here, increases in grant dollars from the Hewlett and MacArthur foundations (\$24M) were not enough to offset reductions from the Gates Foundation and the Foundation to Promote Open Society (-\$61M). For the Caribbean, a comparatively small region where minor funding shifts can have an outsized impact, 58% of funders decreased their support, another concerning development.

 **MATCHED SUBSET: CHANGE IN REGIONAL FUNDING** \$ Increase ■ \$ Decrease ■

Region	% Change 2016-2017	% Change 2017-2018	% Change 2018-2019	\$ Change 2018-2019
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	13%	7%	52%	\$29 M
North America	34%	16%	19%	\$387 M
Western Europe	-20%	16%	8%	\$13 M
Latin America	26%	6%	2%	\$4 M
Asia & Pacific	50%	-21%	-4%	-\$7 M
Sub-Saharan Africa	1%	-11%	-16%	-\$44 M
Caribbean	-48%	41%	-21%	-\$4 M
Middle East & North Africa	39%	37%	-23%	-\$20 M

## THE PERSISTENT TRUST GAP

We have written about the troubling “trust gap” in philanthropy in previous reports. We continue to see funders providing more restricted, less direct funding when grants are focused on human rights actions in the Global South and East.

Rather than directly support locally-led activities, some funders make grants through international intermediaries or to groups

outside of a given region. In 2019, 24% of human rights funding was awarded to recipients based somewhere other than the region the funding was intended to benefit. The trust gap comes into play when we compare funding for human rights in the Global North to funding for human rights in the Global South and East. For instance, organizations based in Sub-Saharan Africa receive just 36% of the grant dollars meant to benefit their region. The other 63% go to organizations based elsewhere to do work that impacts Sub-Saharan Africa. In contrast, 91% of the funding meant to benefit Western Europe and 100% of the funding for North America is granted to groups based in those regions.

There are a number of reasons why funders might not fund locally-based organizations directly, like regulations that make international grants more cumbersome or, in some cases, impossible. However, this alone does not account for the substantial and persistent disparities we see, nor the implications for social movements around the world.

Our analysis and other research finds that recipients based in North America are significantly more likely to have access to flexible general support than recipients in other locations.<sup>(N)</sup> Twenty-nine percent of direct funding to benefit North America is granted as flexible general support. In comparison, just 6% of the funding to benefit Sub-Saharan Africa is awarded to locally-based groups as flexible general support. This proportion is even lower for the Caribbean, at a mere 4% of funding for the region coming to locally-based groups in the form of flexible support. This means that groups located in and focused on North America are five times more likely to receive direct, flexible support than those in Sub-Saharan Africa and seven times more likely than groups in the Caribbean.

The impact – more restricted, less direct funding for the Global South and East – bolsters calls to decolonize philanthropy and to understand how power shapes grantmaking in a global context.

These findings warrant a deeper dive. How much do intermediaries play a role and when are they passing along restrictions, versus transforming resources into more flexible support? Are the same funders making flexible grants in their own regions, but restricting funds elsewhere? Does direct and flexible funding vary by the type of funder (say, public foundations versus private foundations)? Are certain issues or communities more likely to receive flexible support?

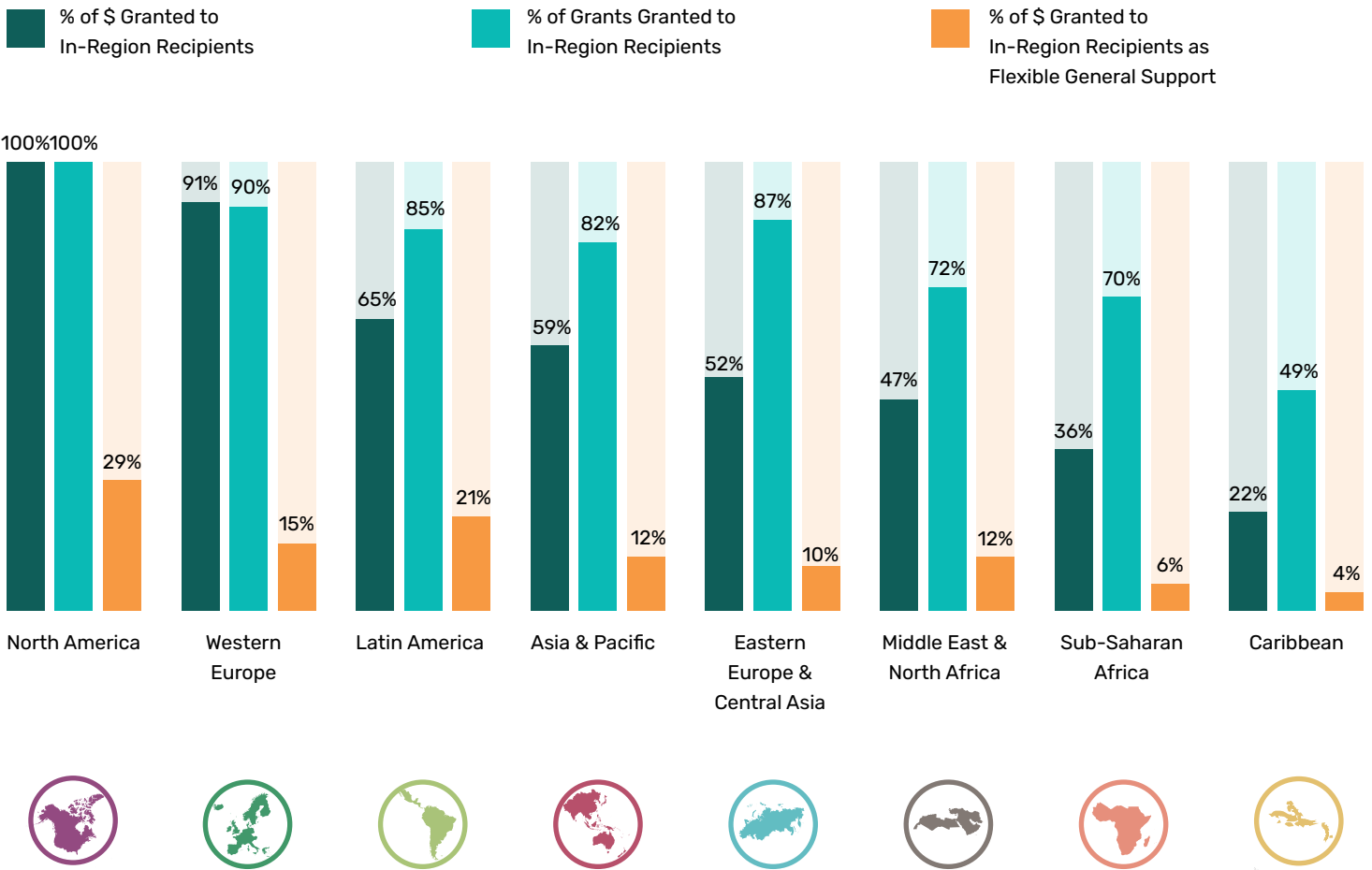
**24% of human rights funding was awarded to recipients based somewhere other than the region the funding was intended to benefit.**

**The impact – more restricted, less direct funding for the Global South and East – bolsters calls to decolonize philanthropy and to understand how power shapes grantmaking in a global context.**



Over the coming year, we will conduct focused analysis on the trust gap to understand where, how, and why funders restrict rather than open up resources. As always, our goal is to provide evidence to inform funding practices and strengthen resourcing for human rights actions around the world.

## FUNDING TO RECIPIENTS BASED ON REGION OF BENEFIT



# WHAT ISSUES DO HUMAN RIGHTS GRANTS ADDRESS?

We assign all grants to one of [27 unique human rights issues](#), grouped into 13 overarching categories. This single-issue approach helps us to better conceptualize how funding is divided among human rights needs. We also understand that many of these issues are complex and interrelated and provide additional insight through this report and on our [research hub](#) about the relationships between different issues and populations.

## MATCHED SUBSET COMPARISONS

From 2018 to 2019, the proportion of funding in the matched subset markedly increased for six issues, decreased for two issues, and stayed relatively consistent for the remaining five issues. The direction of these shifts matches what we see in our broader data set, though at varying magnitudes. Economic and labor rights grew by significantly more funding (\$295M, 278%) than any other issue. As the issue that declined by the most grant dollars and largest percentage in our last analysis (-\$24M, -19%), this growth fills that deficit and considerably surpasses it. These fluctuations are partly related to year-to-year shifts by the Ford Foundation – the largest supporter of economic and labor rights – but the growth also reflects an increase of almost \$147 million more grant dollars from other foundations and a 64% increase in the number of funders supporting this issue. This suggests that support for economic and labor rights may be gaining more traction.

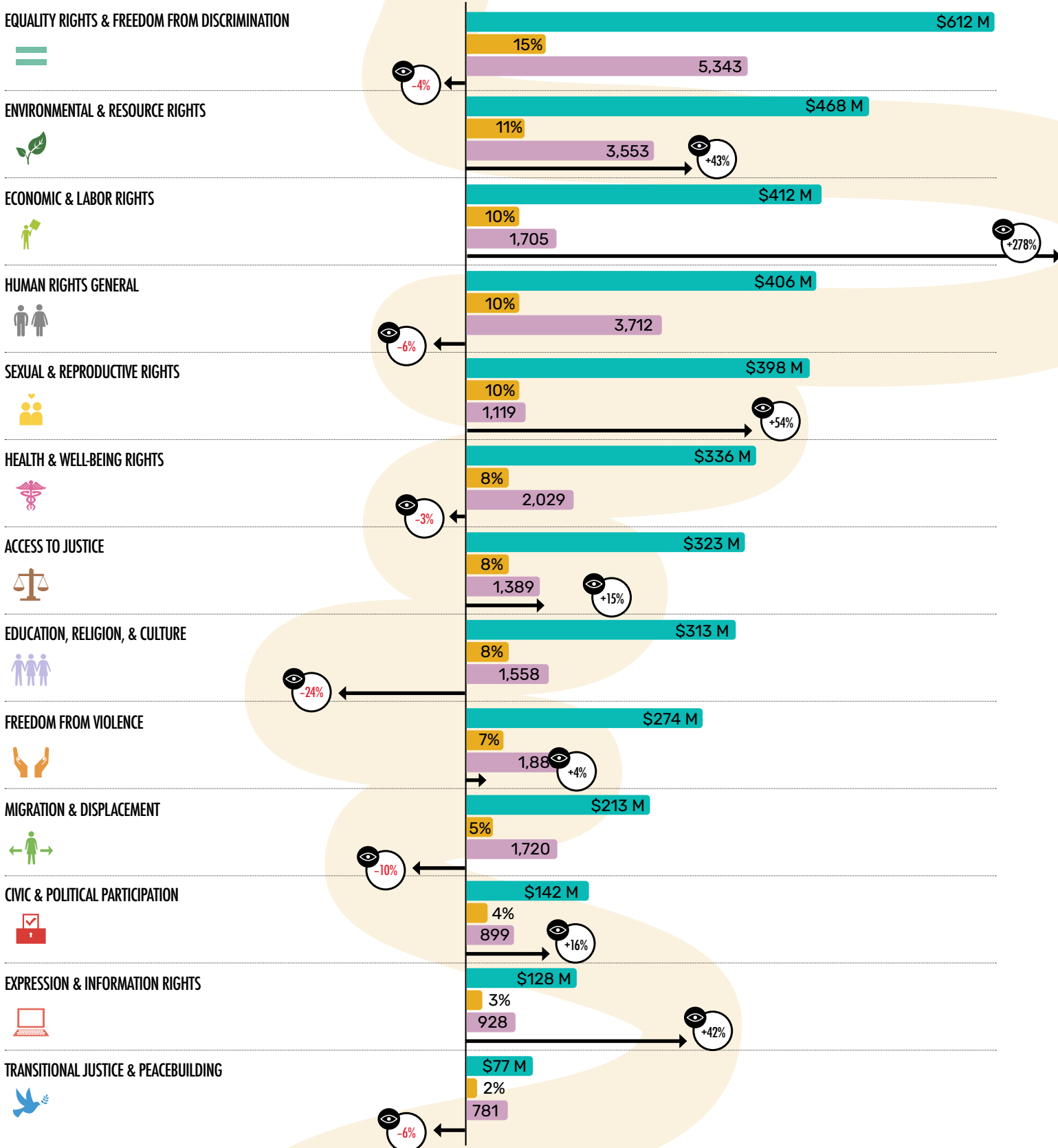
Sexual and reproductive rights (\$135M, 54%) and environmental and resource rights (\$131M, 43%) are the other two issues that saw the most growth, but the growth varied considerably by location. Funding for sexual and reproductive rights actually decreased in four of eight regions, including by a third in the Middle East and North Africa, and Asia and Pacific, by almost half in Sub-Saharan Africa, and by 94% in Western Europe. In contrast, support for environmental and resource rights either grew or remained stable in seven regions, but declined 41% for the Middle East and North Africa, a region where funding for environmental rights is already extremely limited. While it's encouraging to see increased funding for these rights over the last several years, the regional disparities raise questions about who the growth benefits and who it obscures.

**While it's encouraging to see increased funding for these rights over the last several years, the regional disparities raise questions about who the growth benefits and who it obscures.**

# FOUNDATION FUNDING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS BY ISSUE














# 2019

■ \$    
 ■ % of Overall \$    
 ■ # of Grants    
 👁️ % \$ Change 2018-2019



The only two issues to see a marked decline in funding were migration and displacement (-\$23M, -10%) and education, religion, and culture (-\$91M, -24%). For the former, eight of the top 10 funders for this issue in 2018 reduced their funding in 2019; only the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation increased their support. For the latter, the decrease is tied to reduced investment in the right to education, which dropped by \$83 million between 2018 and 2019 and mirrors a decline in support for children and youth rights. These decreases follow two years of growth for both of these categories, so signal trends to watch rather than immediate cause for concern.

**MATCHED SUBSET: CHANGE IN ISSUE FUNDING** \$ Increase █ \$ Decrease █

Issue	% Change 2016-2017	% Change 2017-2018	% Change 2018-2019	\$ Change 2018-2019
 Economic & Labor Rights	-19%	15%	278%	\$295 M
 Sexual & Reproductive Rights	11%	23%	54%	\$135 M
 Environmental & Resource Rights	-4%	33%	43%	\$131 M
 Expression & Information Rights	2%	-25%	42%	\$33 M
 Civic & Political Participation	-5%	7%	16%	\$19 M
 Access to Justice	14%	23%	15%	\$39 M
 Freedom from Violence	25%	16%	4%	\$11 M
 Health & Well-being Rights	11%	21%	-3%	-\$11 M
 Equality Rights & Freedom from Discrimination	19%	16%	-4%	-\$24 M
 Transitional Justice & Peacebuilding	-2%	109%	-6%	-\$5 M
 Human Rights General	25%	58%	-6%	-\$22 M
 Migration & Displacement	9%	60%	-10%	-\$23 M
 Education, Religion, & Culture	35%	11%	-24%	-\$91 M

# WHAT POPULATIONS DO HUMAN RIGHTS GRANTS SUPPORT?

To understand who funding reaches, we map support for nine populations that are often the focus of human rights movements and funders.

In 2019, 83% of human rights grants included an explicit focus on one or more of these groups.<sup>23</sup> The proportion of grants that mentioned any of these populations increased from 64% in 2018, which is an encouraging sign, particularly in the quality of grants data being reported.

## MATCHED SUBSET COMPARISONS

Based on the matched subset of funders, we see that funding increased for six of nine populations from 2018 to 2019. This mirrors the funding increases and decreases we see in our data set as a whole.

Support for racial and ethnic groups<sup>24</sup> grew by most grant dollars and largest percentage (\$352M, 60%), as almost three out of four funders that fund with a racial or ethnic lens increased the amount of their spending. This is encouraging, and echoes rising commitments from human rights funders to respond to systemic racism and inequality. (P) Yet, the growth varied considerably by geography: Funding only increased in North America (\$314M, 61%), Western Europe (\$18M, 24%), and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (\$7M, 80%). It declined between \$2.3 million and \$4.6 million in all other regions, which is likely related to how racial justice work is conceptualized, prioritized, and tracked on a more global scale.

Persons with disabilities saw the next largest percentage increase (\$26M, 38%). This was driven by the Ford Foundation's recent commitment to including persons with disabilities across its grantmaking.(P) and is especially encouraging given that this was the only population for whom funding declined in our last analysis. Still, we remain cautious here: If we remove Ford's contributions, funding for disability rights increased by a more modest 6% (\$4M) from 2018.

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<sup>23</sup> In our analysis, the full value of a grant is counted toward each population named as a focus for the grant. For example, if a grant mentions girls, its full amount is counted in the funding totals for both "children and youth" and "women and girls."

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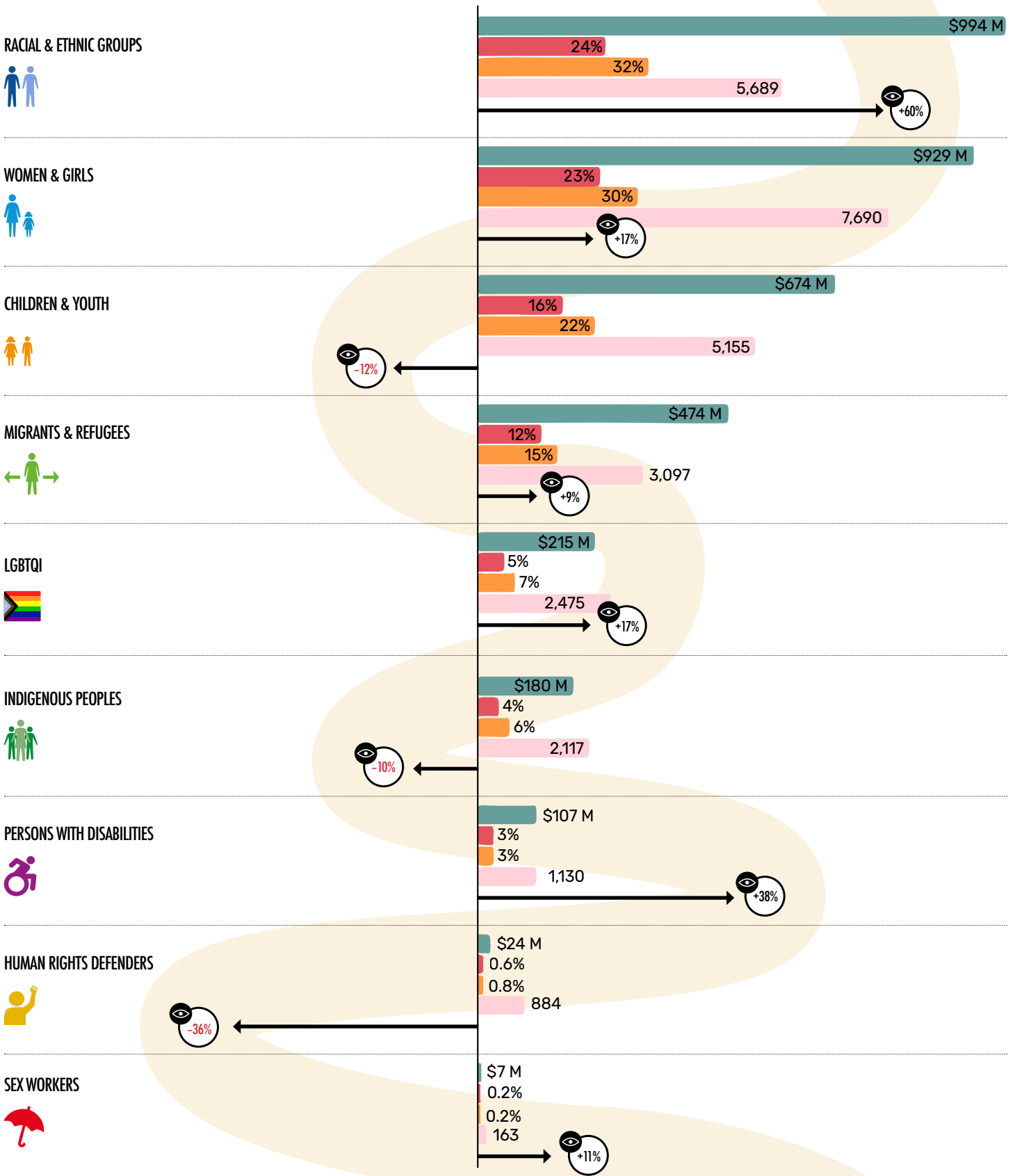
<sup>24</sup> This includes people of African, Latin American, and Middle Eastern descent. In our research, we make an effort to address the complexity of mapping data related to race and ethnicity, especially in a global context. For example, while the majority of grants meant to benefit Sub-Saharan Africa would benefit people of African descent, we do not include all of them as supporting racial and ethnic groups. Rather, we include grants where race or ethnicity, or racial or ethnic identity, are an explicit focus of the funding. We continue to work with peers and partners on our methodology for capturing the range of activism for racial and ethnic justice taking place around the world.

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# FOUNDATION FUNDING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS BY POPULATION

# 2019

■ \$    
 ■ % of Overall \$    
 ■ % of \$ with Populations Specified    
 ■ # of Grants    
 👁️ % \$ Change 2018-2019





Matched subset funding increased for a third year in a row for women and girls (\$125M, 17%) and migrants and refugees (\$37M, 9%), and a second year in a row for LGBTQI people (\$30M, 17%) and sex workers (\$585K, 11%). These trends are positive. Still we note that, as the population with the fewest funders in our research, sex worker rights groups are particularly vulnerable when foundations change priorities and reduce or end their support. Fewer than half of the 43 funders that made at least one grant to support sex workers supported them both years.

On the other side of the spectrum, funding in the matched subset declined for Indigenous peoples<sup>25</sup> (-\$18M, -10%), children and youth (-\$88M, -12%), and human rights defenders (HRDs) (-\$12M, -36%). For Indigenous peoples, the change is largely due to shifts in funding from the NoVo Foundation, whose support dropped by \$49 million. If we omit NoVo’s contributions, the picture is more positive: Funding from the remaining donors increased by 23% and 19 additional foundations provided grants. Children and youth saw the largest increase in grant dollars in the previous year (\$166M, 33%), so this reduction may just mean that funding shifts are leveling out after a big jump. Roughly the same number of funders made the same amount of grants to support children and youth both years, but average grant size declined by 14%. The drop in funding for HRDs is due to a number of large, multi-year grants awarded in 2018 – a year of significant growth in HRD grant dollars. The number of grants and funders that explicitly referenced HRDs actually increased by 45% and 17%, respectively, in 2019. This suggests that, despite the decrease in grant dollars, funders’ commitment to resourcing human rights activists is growing.

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<sup>25</sup> Indigenous peoples are represented in a separate category from racial and ethnic groups, and reflect grants in which funders identify the population as Indigenous, or the funders or recipients have a specific focus on Indigenous communities.

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## MATCHED SUBSET: FACTS

- Three out of four funders that fund with a **racial or ethnic** lens increased the amount of their spending.
- The drop in funding for **human rights defenders** is due to a number of large, multi-year grants awarded in 2018. The number of grants and funders actually increased by 45% and 17%, respectively.
- The funding decrease for **Indigenous peoples** is largely due to shifts in funding from the NoVo Foundation. Funding from the remaining donors increased by 23% and 19 additional foundations provided grants.










➔ 2018/2019



# MATCHED SUBSET: CHANGE IN POPULATION FUNDING

\$ Increase

\$ Decrease

Population	% Change 2016-2017	% Change 2017-2018	% Change 2018-2019	\$ Change 2018-2019
 Racial & Ethnic Groups			60%	\$352 M
 Persons with Disabilities	-6%	-14%	38%	\$26 M
 LGBTIQ	-2%	43%	17%	\$30 M
 Women & Girls	16%	11%	17%	\$125 M
 Sex Workers	-11%	4%	11%	\$585 K
 Migrants & Refugees	28%	16%	9%	\$37 M
 Indigenous Peoples	46%	9%	-10%	-\$18 M
 Children & Youth	15%	33%	-12%	-\$88 M
 Human Rights Defenders	-14%	186%	-36%	-\$12 M

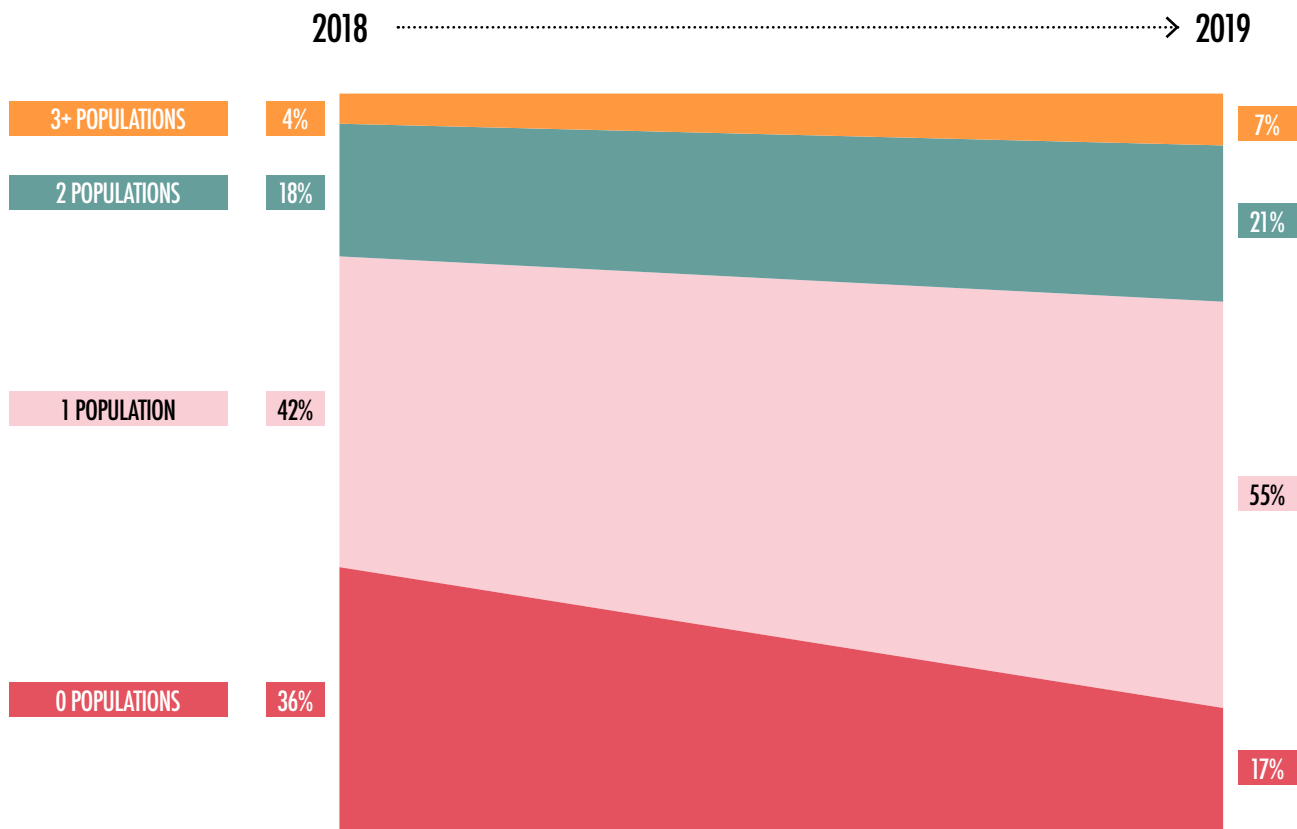
## INTERSECTIONALITY

Building on our [benchmark report](#) of intersectional funding, we now look at how different populations interact. It is important to recognize from the outset that our findings show where funding is and isn't reaching across communities. This is not a perfect measure of funding for intersectionality, which is a much more complex confluence of forms of identity and power. Still, what we can show on this global scale is an indication of where we see funding approaches that begin to move beyond a single community. We see this as an important bellwether of where funding for intersectionality may truly exist.

As we've stated previously, this year's grants data show a positive trend: More funders are specifying the population(s) their grants aim to support. In 2018, we had no population information for 36% of grants. For 2019, the percentage drops to 17%, with approximately one in six grants that do not specify any populations.

This unfortunately does not translate into equally encouraging news on the state of intersectional funding. Most of the shift is to single-identity grants, which have swelled and now make up over half (55%) of the grants in our analysis, as opposed to 42% in 2018. The proportion of grants that reference two or more identities increased from 22% in 2018 to 28% and this is a modest development.

## % OF HUMAN RIGHTS GRANTS BY THE NUMBER OF POPULATIONS SPECIFIED\*












\*Out of 9 populations.

Promisingly, we see notable increases in the proportion of grants that reference additional identities for six of the nine populations: LGBTQI people, human rights defenders, women and girls, persons with disabilities, children and youth, and migrants and refugees. The levels of overlap remain largely consistent across the two years for the three remaining populations: Indigenous peoples, racial and ethnic groups, and sex workers.

Human rights defenders and sex workers continue to exhibit the most overlap with other populations. Though funding for persons with disabilities and LGBTQI people is still more siloed than funding for most other groups, approximately half of all grants for both communities name at least one other identity.

## NUMBER OF HUMAN RIGHTS GRANTS FOR EACH POPULATION AND THE % THAT OVERLAP WITH OTHER POPULATIONS

 High Overlap  Medium Overlap

Populations	Total Grants	1 Population	2+ Populations	% Change 2018-2019
 Human Rights Defenders	884	22%	78%	13%
 Sex Workers	163	28%	72%	-4%
 Children & Youth	5,155	31%	69%	10%
 Migrants & Refugees	3,097	36%	64%	7%
 Women & Girls	7,690	37%	63%	12%
 Indigenous Peoples	2,117	42%	58%	5%
 Racial & Ethnic Groups	5,689	47%	53%	0%
 LGBTQI	2,475	48%	53%	20%
 Persons with Disabilities	1,130	51%	49%	12%

We are also interested in which populations are considered most and least often together. The category LGBTQI, for example, has medium overlap in general with other populations: 53% of the grants to support LGBTQI people consider at least one additional identity. However, we see considerable differences in which identities are mentioned in the same grants as LGBTQI people, from 35% of LGBTQI grants that name women and girls, to 14% that name racial and ethnic groups, to just 3% that name Indigenous peoples. We suspect that even fewer grants support work at the intersection of multiple identities (i.e. funding for Indigenous women who identify as LGBTQI). If intersecting identities are not considered when human rights actions are conceptualized and grants are awarded, there is a risk that these individuals will be overlooked, their needs won't be met, and the actions and outcomes will fall short of their potential. The gaps highlighted here – and throughout the following table – suggest opportunities for more deliberate investment.

## % OF HUMAN RIGHTS GRANTS BY INTERSECTING POPULATIONS

	Children & Youth	Human Rights Defenders	Indigenous Peoples	LGBTQI	Migrants & Refugees	Persons with Disabilities	Racial & Ethnic Groups	Sex Workers	Women & Girls
Children & Youth		6%	24%	13%	15%	20%	20%	7%	28%
Human Rights Defenders	1%		5%	7%	2%	2%	1%	11%	8%
Indigenous Peoples	10%	11%		3%	3%	6%	1%	0.6%	14%
LGBTQI	6%	20%	4%		7%	7%	6%	38%	11%
Migrants & Refugees	9%	6%	5%	8%		4%	22%	11%	8%
Persons with Disabilities	4%	3%	3%	3%	1%		1%	2%	4%
Racial & Ethnic Groups	22%	8%	3%	14%	41%	8%		6%	13%
Sex Workers	0.2%	2%	0.1%	3%	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%		1%
Women & Girls	43%	68%	49%	35%	20%	28%	18%	50%	

# WHAT STRATEGIES DO HUMAN RIGHTS GRANTS SUPPORT?

In addition to analyzing grants by regions, issues, and populations, we also look at the strategies funders support through their grantmaking. For example, a grant to advance environmental and resource rights might focus on strategic litigation, grassroots organizing, the security of environmental defenders, or some combination of these needs. In 2019, 59% of human rights grants provided sufficient information for us to map them to at least one funding strategy.<sup>26</sup> Of the grants with strategies, over a third included multiple strategies.

In this mapping we see strategies that are receiving more attention and strategies that are receiving less. This does two things. First, it gives us some insight into strategies undertaken within the human rights field. Second, it provides a high-level view of the types of support donors prioritize and fund.

This analysis should always be set against the backdrop of the reality of human rights struggles and the individuals and movements most affected by them. While we paint part of the picture, we must continue to ask if and how funders' priorities are informed by movements for change. We suspect that some of the more tangible strategies – such as capacity building and technical assistance – garner more funder resources than areas like grassroots organizing or arts and culture because they are easier to conceptualize, measure, and track, rather than because they rank higher on a scale of need. These findings broach questions that this data alone can't answer. We hope this report spurs reflection and deeper discussion between funders and movements about what work is prioritized and supported.

## MATCHED SUBSET COMPARISONS

From 2018 to 2019, advocacy, systems reform, and implementation increased by the most grant dollars (\$103M, 7%) in the matched subset and remains the top-funded strategy in our analysis overall, amassing three times the resources of the next-most-funded category. This growth mirrors what we see in our full data set. Much of this funding supports high-level national, regional, and international advocacy with a focus on governments and other

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<sup>26</sup> In our analysis, the full value of a grant is counted toward each strategy named as a focus for the grant. For example, if a grant mentions documenting human rights abuses to support strategic litigation, its full amount is counted in the funding total for both research and litigation and legal aid.

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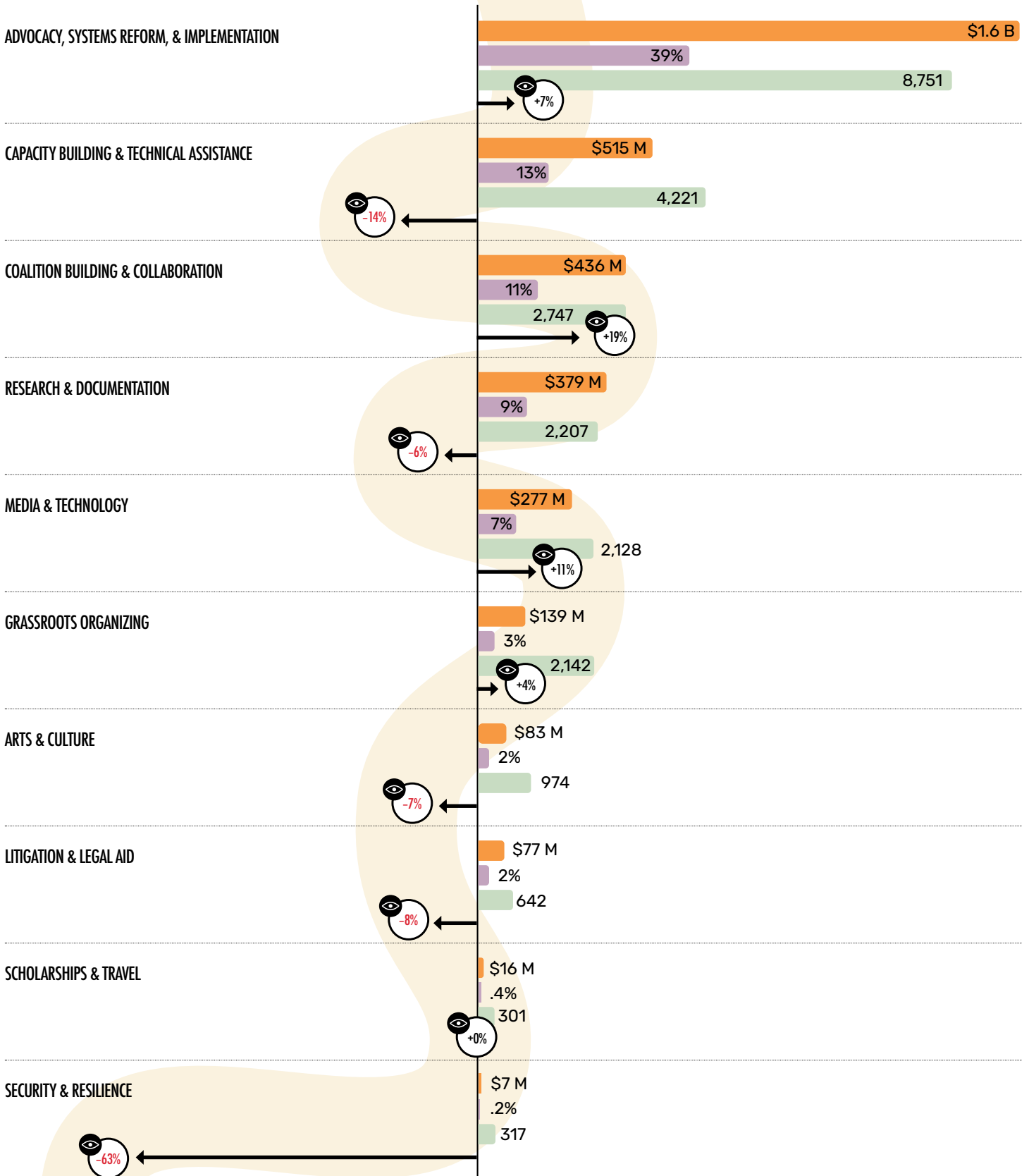
**This analysis should always be set against the backdrop of the reality of human rights struggles and the individuals and movements most affected by them.**



# FOUNDATION FUNDING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS BY STRATEGY

# 2019

■ \$    
 ■ % of Overall \$    
 ■ # of Grants    
 % \$ Change 2018-2019



policy-setting bodies, but some supports work to change local systems and structures. The continued dominance of this strategy points to underlying ideas among grantmakers – and possibly some grant seekers – about how change happens. Two thirds of the funders in our overall data set made grants that incorporate advocacy, systems reform, and implementation, showing that it cuts across foundation types and locations. In comparison, just half of funders supported coalition building and collaboration (the second most prevalent strategy), and a quarter funded grassroots organizing. Only 12% of advocacy grants included a grassroots organizing component, reinforcing concerns over the limited access social movements have to this support.

**MATCHED SUBSET: CHANGE IN STRATEGY FUNDING** ■ \$ Increase   ■ \$ Decrease

Strategy	% Change 2016-2017	% Change 2017-2018	% Change 2018-2019	\$ Change 2018-2019
Coalition Building & Collaboration	1%	20%	19%	\$66 M
Media & Technology	-8%	10%	11%	\$24 M
Advocacy, Systems Reform, & Implementation	24%	6%	7%	\$103 M
Grassroots Organizing	-57%	33%	4%	\$5 M
Scholarships & Travel	-1%	100%	0%	-\$1 K
Research & Documentation	30%	-5%	-6%	-\$25 M
Arts & Culture	10%	57%	-7%	-\$6 M
Litigation & Legal Aid	2%	-11%	-8%	-\$6 M
Capacity Building & Technical Assistance	79%	-4%	-14%	-\$75 M
Security & Resilience	40%	189%	-63%	-\$10 M

The strategy for coalition building and collaboration grew by the largest percentage (\$66M, 19%) in the matched subset, again echoing the increase we see in our data set overall. These grants support coalitions, networks, pooled funds, and other mechanisms for exchanging information and achieving shared aims. We see the most pronounced increases for coordination on economic and labor rights and sexual and reproductive rights – the two issues that saw the largest funding increases in our matched subset analysis. For the former, the increase is directly related to an increase in funders: Almost twice as many funders supported coordination mechanisms related to economic mobility and security, employment barriers,

and labor protections as the previous year. For the latter, the jump reflects the establishment of the donor Collaborative for Gender + Reproductive Equity, founded in 2018 and focused on the United States. Advocacy and coalition building are the only two strategies to see consistent funding growth over the last three years in the matched subset.

In contrast, capacity building and technical assistance – the strategy with the second largest funding share overall – decreased by the most grant dollars (-\$75M, -14%) in the matched subset, and saw a similar decline in the overall data set. Capacity building support decreased for all regions in 2019 except Western Europe, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. It dropped by the largest percentages in the Middle East and North Africa (-54%) and the Caribbean (-51%), and the most grant dollars in North America (-\$51M) and Latin America (-\$22M). The number of capacity building grants in the matched subset declined a modest 5%, but their average size dropped by 18%: This means smaller grants for fewer organizations. Notably, funders based in the Global South and East increased their capacity building and technical assistance support by 5% from 2018 to 2019 in the matched subset. This is an important reminder that the funders in our analysis vary by size, scope, and location, and have different priorities and approaches.

Support for security and resilience decreased by a larger percentage (-\$10M, -63%) than any other strategy in the matched subset, and also decreased in our overall data set. The change is rooted in an \$11 million decline from the NoVo Foundation, and comes on the heels of a year of exceptional growth, echoing the shifts we see in funding for human rights defenders. When we omit NoVo's contributions, funding for security and resilience actually grew an encouraging 15% and the number of grants mentioning "self care," "collective care," or "healing" increased threefold. This suggests that safety, care, and healing are continuing to gain traction in the field, but NoVo's impact raises concerns about the shallow bench of funders prioritizing this work. Just 37 funders – 5% of the funders in our analysis – provided grants in this area.

# LOOKING FORWARD

This report enters a changing field and a changing world. Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, our interconnections – and philanthropy’s critical role – have never been clearer: All struggles for justice and human rights are deeply woven together and require a sustained, coordinated, well-resourced response.

As we undertook this research, we were struck by how much of what we unearthed resonates with what we are seeing in the field today. We chart growth in human rights philanthropy as it expands to meet major moments of change – much as it has in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, following crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine, and in response to righteous uprisings to advance racial justice. We track efforts to support a range of movements, from climate justice to women’s and LGBTQI rights to racial justice and beyond, but raise a flag of concern when it comes to truly intersectional approaches that weave these funding streams together. We also shine a light on a persistent and alarming global imbalance in resourcing, from who holds money to where grants go and how little flexible funding is available for human rights actions in the Global South and East.

In some of these areas, HRFN and Candid will broaden and deepen the conversation. Our recent [report on intersectionality](#) substantially expands the findings presented in this research. In 2023, our annual *Advancing Human Rights* mapping will provide a global picture of funders’ response to the pandemic. We will also undertake much more detailed analysis on the trust gap to better understand the global funding ecosystem.

We welcome partners and peers to the table. Use [our data](#). Bring [your analysis to bear](#). Tell us what you want and need to inform your grantmaking or your advocacy. Share your own story. As we’ve [said before](#), “No stories without data, no data without stories.”

Whether you have read this report word for word or zoomed in on areas of interest, we hope it has served your learning. At the outset of this report, we wrote:

We submit this research as an offering to the field. We aim to make our findings useful for foundations and movements in advancing human rights. Through our research, we strive to provide data that is accessible and reliable. Most of all, we are here to learn with and from you – partners, peers, and movements for justice.

**All struggles for justice and human rights are deeply woven together and require a sustained, coordinated, well-resourced response.**

**We shine a light on a persistent and alarming global imbalance in resourcing, from who holds money to where grants go and how little flexible funding is available for human rights actions in the Global South and East.**

We do so in humble recognition that the field of human rights funding exists in service of movements for justice. As we set our strategies and organize as a field, we cannot lose sight of the everyday struggles for justice, life and livelihood, and dignity that connect us all.

## SHARE YOUR GRANTS DATA!

Our research relies on you. Foundations can submit their grants data safely and securely using [this template](#). Or, if you use software from any of [these providers](#) to manage your grants, you can simply export your data to the template. To be included, grants data is due by June 30 each year for the previous fiscal year. If you are interested in contributing to this research or have any questions, please email us at [AHR@hrfn.org](mailto:AHR@hrfn.org).

To access more information about the human rights funding landscape, visit [humanrightsfunding.org](http://humanrightsfunding.org).

# ABOUT ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS

Within the field of philanthropy, a dedicated community of funders commits time and money to supporting human rights actions around the world. Though human rights grant dollars are a small part of the overall funding ecosystem, these resources are critical for supporting and connecting movements working across human rights struggles.

Launched in 2010, *Advancing Human Rights* tracks the evolving state of global human rights philanthropy. Led by Candid and Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN), in collaboration with Ariadne–European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, and Prospera–International Network of Women’s Funds, this research is the single most comprehensive analysis of where philanthropic money goes for human rights around the world. In our annual analysis, we unpack which issues get funded and which don’t, where human rights issues overlap and intersect, and how funding changes from year to year. Grounded in a decade of grants data, we use rigorous methodologies to understand funding trends.

Our research is part of a larger effort to better understand and influence the funding landscape. Mapping funding for key issues and movements has been critical for advancing what advocates have called “more and better funding,” increasing both the quality and the size of resources for social change.<sup>(2)</sup> Leading examples include research by the [Association for Women in Development \(AWID\)](#), [Funders Concerned About AIDS](#), [Funders for LGBTQ Issues](#) and [Global Philanthropy Project](#), [Peace and Security Funders Group](#), and the [Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity](#), among others. Within this growing body of work, *Advancing Human Rights* provides a global overview, offering a comprehensive picture of funding for human rights at large.

This research brings field-wide evidence to support what human rights organizations and activists know firsthand: Philanthropy has a critical role to play in meeting the moment and advancing human rights globally and there is considerable untapped potential.



## THE POWER OF THE FINDINGS

Many of the funders included in this analysis see themselves as expressly contributing to human rights, on one issue or many. Others do not use that language, but some of their grants actively support human rights activities. We see power and potential in naming, tracking, and comparing this funding so that it might expand and reach the frontlines where it is most needed.

We also hope this research can support those working to advance human rights – whether as activists or as funders – by providing evidence to advocate for more and better funding.

Whether you are new to *Advancing Human Rights* or a seasoned reader, you can use the findings to increase your knowledge of the funding landscape, understand where your organization fits in human rights and philanthropic fields, inform your strategies, identify partners, and mobilize resources. Funders and activists have shared these reflections on the power and potential of the data:

“Quantitative data is critical to philanthropy.... [it] begins to ground conversations in the reality of what’s really happening, and provide a benchmark to measure change over time to see how the field is evolving.”

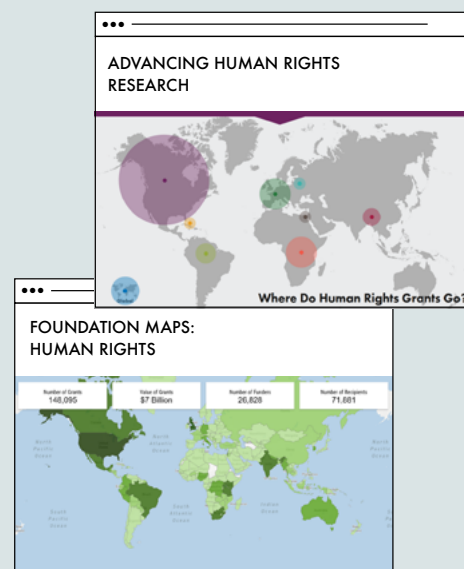
“When I shared the [*Advancing Human Rights*] data at a convening of our grantees, it gave them a baseline and some associated righteous anger to push for more inclusion in funding to other groups and issues. It encouraged them to think outside the disability box and to consider ways in which their organizations could apply for women’s rights funding, environmental rights funding, etc.”

“[The data] helped us form a new relationship with another foundation that we might have previously identified as unlikely potential allies. Their grants got included in the AHR research because those grants have a human rights focus, even though the foundation does not publicly describe itself as a ‘human rights funder.’”

### Dig Deeper into the Data

The findings in this report are just a starting point. In addition to this analysis, *Advancing Human Rights* includes powerful ways to tailor the data to your areas of interest.

- Use our [research hub](#) to explore funding over time by regions, issues, populations, and strategies.
- Dive into the [grants database and mapping platform](#) to see grant-level details and find peers.
- Follow our [blog series](#) where we showcase diverse perspectives to contextualize the numbers.
- Learn from our [additional reports and analyses](#) of the field of human rights funding.



# METHODOLOGY

Our research aims to incorporate all human rights grants in a given year. To do so as comprehensively as possible, we collect data from three networks of global human rights donors and review individual grants housed by Candid, the leading source of information about foundation funding. For 2019, the most current available year, we identified 761 foundations in 51 countries that gave \$4.1 billion for human rights.

For our data analysis, we use a combination of machine learning techniques, rules-based search strategies, and extensive data review to identify grants that meet our definition of human rights funding. In total, we reviewed approximately 170,000 grants, roughly 90% of which came from Candid's data set of grants of \$10,000 or more made by 1,000 of the largest private and community foundations in the U.S.<sup>27</sup> The remaining grants were collected directly from human rights funders, including 182 members of the three global networks (HRFN, Ariadne, and Prospera).<sup>28</sup> Across all four sources, 26,621 grants met our definition of supporting human rights.

To avoid "double counting" grant dollars, we excluded grants that were re-granted from one foundation to another within our data set. These accounted for 341 grants (1% of human rights grants), generally from private foundations to public foundations, which raise funds from a range of sources to support their grantmaking. We also use a matched subset – funders that are consistent across research years – to compare trends and track changes over time. This is important because we can identify variations that are indicative of larger shifts in the field, even as we work to bring in more data each year.

In the course of our research, we have to make some hard choices about how to categorize grants. A single human rights grant may focus on multiple regions, support several populations, or incorporate various strategies like research, litigation, and advocacy. Because most grants do not specify the share of funding for each facet, we count the full value of each grant in the totals reported for three facets: 1) regions; 2) populations; and 3) strategies. For example, we would include the full \$20,000 for a grant to address violence against migrant women in Latin America and the Caribbean in each of the totals for migrants and refugees, women and girls, Latin America, and the Caribbean. While this approach is instrumental in helping us

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<sup>27</sup> Candid's Foundation 1000 data set represents roughly half of all U.S. private and community foundation grantmaking.

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<sup>28</sup> Members include any foundations that contribute membership dues or submit data directly to HRFN, Ariadne, or Prospera for this research.

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understand the relative funding flows by category, the drawback is that it may inflate the actual funding for each category.

The one facet where grants are assigned to a single category alone is the human rights issue. Where grants address multiple issues, we use a combination of grant descriptions, and knowledge of funder or grant recipient priorities, to determine the most relevant category. Based on this, we assign each grant to one of 27 unique human rights issues, which are grouped into 13 overarching categories. We have included the category “human rights general” to capture grants where there is not enough detail to assign a specific human rights issue. This single-issue approach helps us to better conceptualize how funding is divided among human rights needs, but limits our ability to capture cross-cutting work. In 2022, we produced a separate analysis that specifically looks at cross-issue funding to deepen our understanding of intersectional grantmaking.

As with any research, there are limitations. We may not capture very small grants (those under \$10,000 through Candid), and we continually strive to bring in more global data. Still, through our data collection, research methodologies, and regular engagement with the field, our *Advancing Human Rights* research provides a well-grounded understanding of the allocations and trends shaping human rights philanthropy around the world.

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Designed by Trent Williams in collaboration with Vito Raimondi

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## COVER PHOTOS

Top left: Indigenous Women's March in Brasília, Brazil, August 14, 2019 (photo by [Katie Maehler](#) for [Apib Comunicação](#) on Flickr, cropped from original)

Top right: protest in Bonn, Germany, calling for climate action, March 15, 2019 (photo by [Mika Baumeister](#) on Unsplash, cropped from original)

Bottom left: protest in Hong Kong calling for the withdrawal of the extradition bill, August 23, 2019 (photo by [Studio Incendo](#) on Flickr, cropped from original)

Bottom right: "Close the Camps" protest in San Francisco demanding closure of migrant detention centers, August 25, 2019 (photo by [Peg Hunter](#) on Flickr, cropped from original)

## HUMAN RIGHTS FUNDERS NETWORK

Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) is a network of funders from the Global South, East, and North dedicated to resourcing human rights actions around the world. For nearly 30 years, HRFN has brought funders together to collaborate, strategize, and strengthen the field of human rights philanthropy. Since our inception, our community has grown into a global network of almost 450 institutions across 70 countries. We are committed to advancing human rights through “open philanthropy,” an approach and ideal through which resources are distributed ethically in a way that is abundant, justice-centered, open in knowledge and power, and informed by movements. Learn more at [hrfn.org](https://hrfn.org).

## CANDID

Foundation Center and GuideStar joined forces in 2019 to become Candid, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Every year, millions of nonprofits spend trillions of dollars around the world. Candid finds out where that money comes from, where it goes, and why it matters. Through research, collaboration, and training, Candid connects people who want to change the world to the resources they need to do it. Candid’s data tools on nonprofits, foundations, and grants are the most comprehensive in the world. Find out more at [candid.org](https://candid.org).