



AU FIL DU MOUVEMENT

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



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**Letter from the
Executive Director
of ISDAO**



2019! WHAT AN UNPRECEDENTED YEAR!

Unprecedented in more than one way:

As the first Executive Director, I joined ISDAO at a crucial phase of its institutional development. In a way, much of our work in 2019 was like building a house. Over the past few years, a community of West African LGBTQI activists (and our supporters) drafted a plan, built the foundation, planned and fitted out the rooms, laid the bricks and put up the roof. In 2019, our work consisted of continuing to build this house, including installing the plumbing, connecting the electricity and installing the windows. Along with the community of activists, technical support persons and allies who supported the construction of ISDAO, we were joined by two staff members.

My colleagues Olumide Femi Makanjuola from Nigeria and Stéphane Simporé from Burkina Faso, respectively Director of Programs and Director of Communications and Knowledge Management, joined me within a few months of each other.

Thus, ISDAO recruited its first staff members, all of whom are from West Africa, have extensive experience in philanthropy and the LGBTQI movement in West Africa and are fully dedicated to the work of establishing the Fund. Although we are a small team, cumulatively we have over 40 years of varied and deep experience with the LGBTQI movement in the sub-region, and in the areas of philanthropy, human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and international development.

Another unprecedented fact: We made grants to 27 groups, organizations and networks through participatory grant making!

This fundamental process for ISDAO was marked by the recruitment of our first Activist Grant Making Panel (AGMP) reflecting the diversities within the West African LGBTQI movement. While learning about the notion of strict confidentiality and the complexities of conflicts of interest - and putting these into practice - the AGMP reviewed and evaluated all eligible proposals received, and then decided on the proposals to be funded for the first round of grants from ISDAO.



ISDAO is occupying an unprecedented role as one of the few funders in the region going beyond the traditional thematic areas, offering a flexible approach while encouraging the emergence of innovative ideas for advocacy, education, storytelling and documentation in the construction and growth of the LGBTQI movement in West Africa.

Finally, the significant growth in visibility of ISDAO has not only allowed us to increase our financial resources, but has also been enabled us to develop new strategic partnerships.

2019 has been an important year of learning for us. We have learned - and continue to learn - how to be a functionally bilingual organization (and not just in our grant making). We have learned to leverage our presence in strategic spaces, as both participants and stakeholders, And we have learned to be bolder!

One of the most satisfying points for me is that we have further anchored the fund within our West African LGBTQI movement.

This annual report is a descriptive synthesis of our experience in 2019. It narrates our growth and learning within a deeply dynamic, diverse and engaged movement. The journey of ISDAO in 2019 is the result of a great collective effort and commitment - from staff, but also from members of the Interim Governing Body (IGB), the Activist Grant Making Panel (AGMP), and the many technical resource people who have supported our work.

“Thank you for all your contributions in building ISDAO in 2019!”

– B. Caroline Kouassiaman



Our team

EXECUTIVE TEAM

B. Caroline Kouassiama, Executive Director (Côte d'Ivoire/Ghana)

Olumide Makanjuola, Director of Programs (Nigeria)

Stéphane Simporé, Director of Communications and Knowledge Management (Burkina Faso)

INTERIM GOVERNING BODY (IGB)

Franck Amani (Côte d'Ivoire)

Jake Okechukwu Effoduh (Nigeria)

Jamal Venance (Ghana)

Nataka Gmakagni (Togo/Sub-Regional)

Patrick Kaboré (Burkina Faso)

Namita Chad / Lame Olebile (joint institutional representation - Astraea Foundation)

Rosalie Nezien (institutional representation, non-voting member) - Foundation for a Just Society



ISDAO



**We are
Grateful!**

Partners

DONORS

Baring Foundation, Dreilinden, Foundation for a Just Society, Global Fund for Women, Horizons Foundation, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund



FISCAL HOST

UHAI-EASHRI



Consultants and other technical support

COORDINATING CONSULTANTS

Andrea Lynch (USA), Stéphane Simporé (Burkina Faso)

INTERPRETERS/TRANSLATORS

Bamarel Kamon (Ghana/Cameroon), Claire Bâ (Senegal), Damaris (Kenya), Davys (Togo), Fabrice Akey (Togo), Félix Owino (Kenya), Fiacre (Bénin), Gabrielle Le Roux (South Africa), Josephine Pegoupa (Burkina Faso/Cameroon), Nicolas N. (Burundi/Kenya), Nina Okagbue (Nigeria), Phantus Wambiya (Kenya), Stéphane Doué (Côte d'Ivoire), Zakaria (Burkina Faso)

RAPORTEURS

Alice Quainoo (Ghana), Bobby Nzube (Nigeria), Léila Brumier (Sénégal), Mariam Sanogo/Koné (Burkina Faso)

ONE-TIME LOGISTICAL SUPPORT PERSONS

Germaine Chouchou Assoubona (Burkina Faso), Husseina Meyaki (Ghana)

OTHER TECHNICAL SUPPORT PERSONS

Essy Adhiamobo (Kenya), Irwin Iradukunda (Burundi), Mercy Jemutai (Kenya), Paula Akinyi (Kenya)



**We are Initiative
Sankofa d'Afrique de
l'Ouest - ISDAO**

Initiative Sankofa d'Afrique de l'Ouest - ISDAO is an activist-led fund dedicated to strengthening and supporting a West African movement for gender diversity and sexual rights by adopting a flexible approach to grant-making and building a culture of philanthropy committed to human rights and social justice.

ISDAO's core bodies





**We are building
an indigenous
movement in
West Africa**

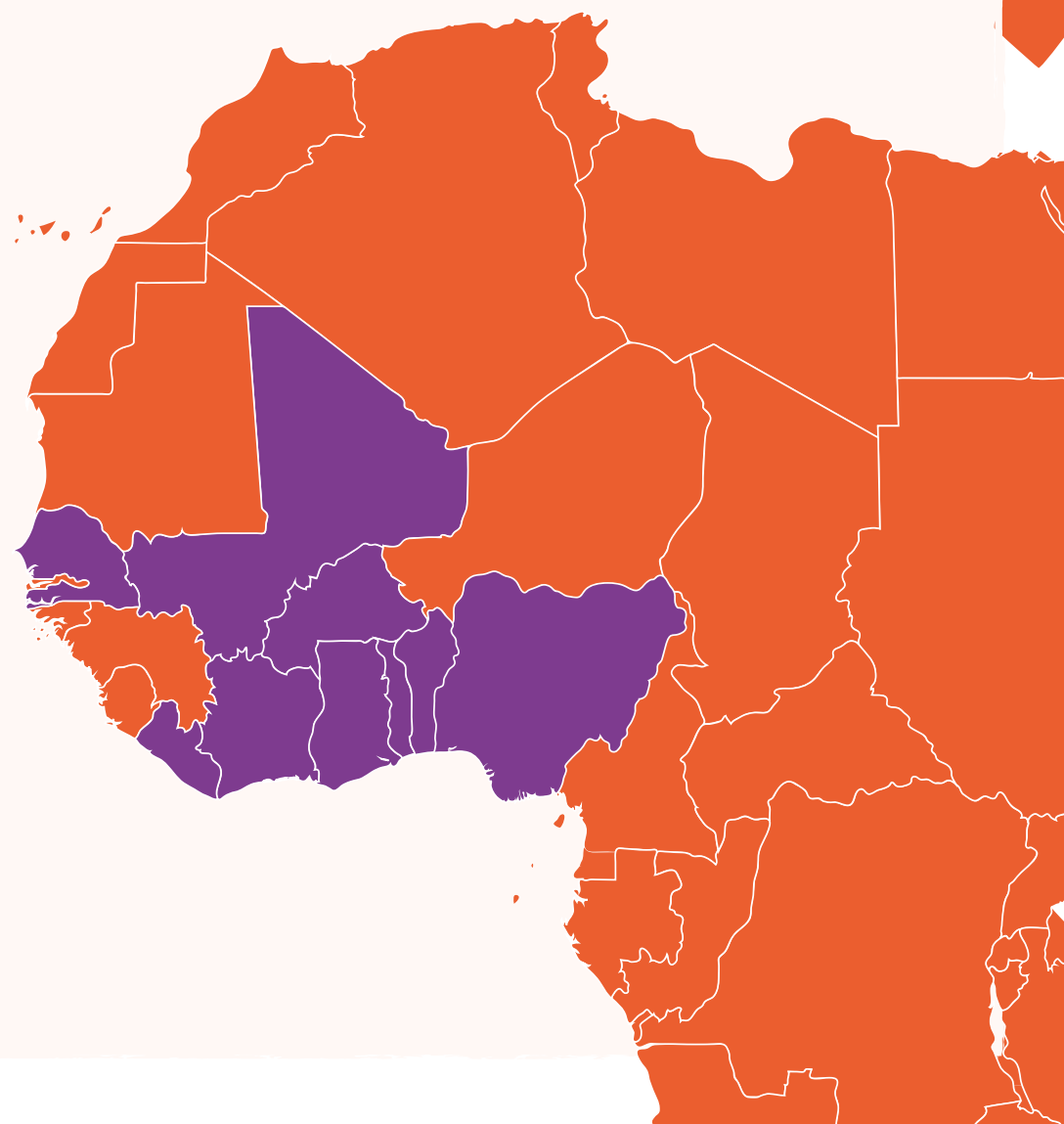
We launched our first call for proposals in October, from which we received nearly 70 grant applications from our 9 priority countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Togo and Senegal.

Participatory Grant Making

Description of the decision-making process within the AGMP

ISDAO is an activist-led fund, which means that all our decisions are made by activists. So, before we started to make grants, we set up a participatory structure to inform and the decision-making process: The **Activist Grant Making Panel – AGMP**. This autonomous body was made up of 13 members who are activists from the different LGBTQI communities in West Africa. Members were recruited to reflect diverse institutional, social, and political experiences within the West African LGBTQI movement.

During this first round, our AGMP reviewed all grant applications and decided on funding priorities within the movement, recommending 28 proposals out of the pool submitted by groups/organizations/networks that address several obvious gaps in access to funding.



What's changed?

DEVELOPPEMENT DE STRATEGIES INNOVANTES

PLUS D'INITIATIVES NOUVELLES

LE MOUVEMENT REGIONAL S'EST DEVELOPPE ET A GRANDI

Un projet d'association a été crée à la suite de la mise en place de la loi sur le mariage. Plus grand nombre de personnes ont été informées de la loi. Les personnes ont été informées de la loi sur le mariage et de la loi sur le mariage. Les personnes ont été informées de la loi sur le mariage et de la loi sur le mariage.

Exposé à diversité et à la non-binarité

More Trans & LBQ women Organising - Nig

Bisexual women in Sex Work

INCREASED ORGANISING AROUND SAFETY AND SECURITY

Tro much orgs wanted in dependably

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT VIA SKILL ACQUISITION FOR MSM

TREATMENT FOR ANAL WARTS & VACCINE HPV AMONG MSM

La dynamique de la configuration des enjeux

Visibilité (courage / audace)

Création de nouvelles initiatives

LE MOUVEMENT REGIONAL S'EST DEVELOPPE ET A GRANDI

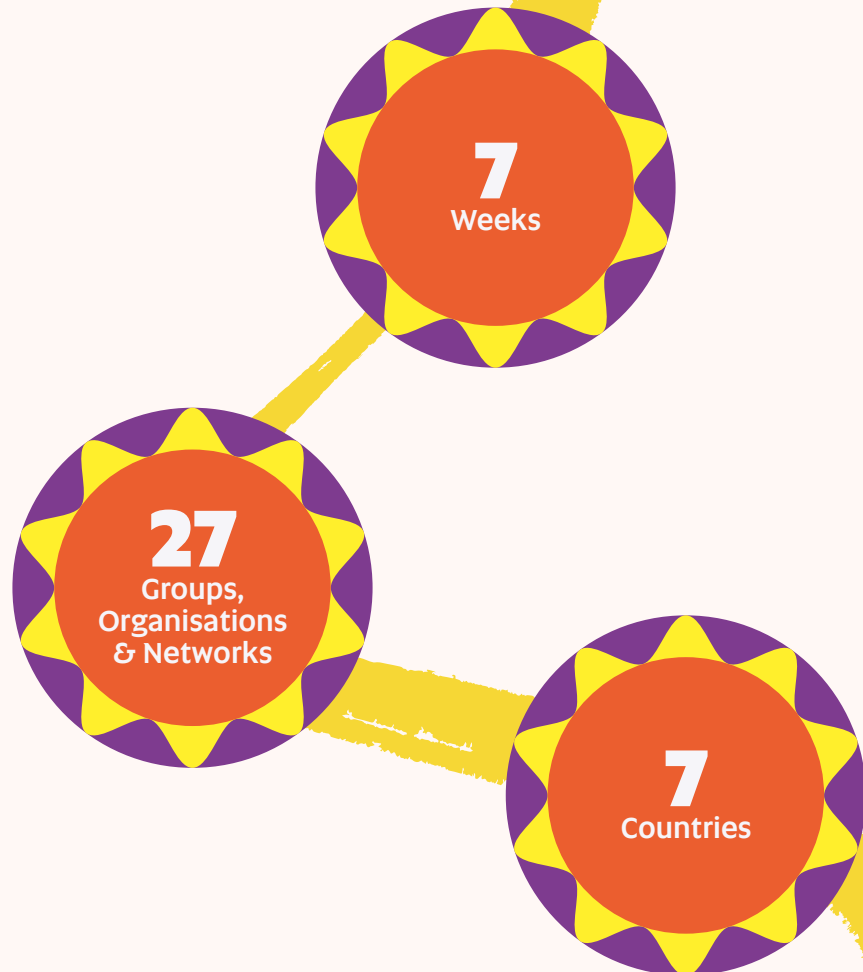
LE MOUVEMENT REGIONAL S'EST DEVELOPPE ET A GRANDI

LE MOUVEMENT REGIONAL S'EST DEVELOPPE ET A GRANDI

The activists on the ISDAO Grant Making Panel are not only consulted as advisors, but they are also decision-makers.

Learnings

After the in-depth review of proposals and discussions by the AGMP, the ISDAO team conducted 7 weeks of field visits to learn from the work of the groups, organizations and networks before proceeding with the disbursement of funds. As a result, we were pleased to disburse funds to 27 groups, organizations and networks in 7 countries.



Partner visits

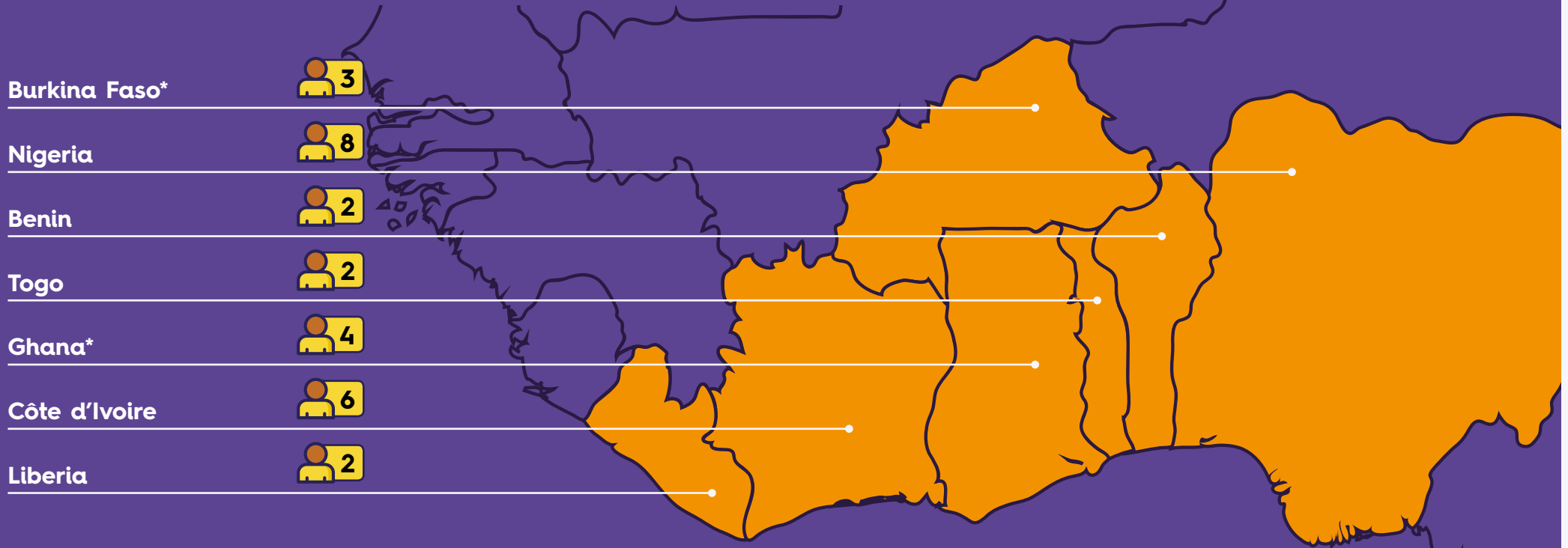
As part of our grant-making process and approach, the ISDAO staff undertook visits with all groups and organizations before finalizing grants and grant agreements. These visits enabled us to learn more about the organizations and groups - and for them to learn more about ISDAO. These visits also gave us a better understanding of the context of organizing and activism in the region, and how ISDAO can support groups and movement building beyond funding. For many of the organizations visited, this was a new type of visit - most organizations had experience with donor visits that focused exclusively on evaluation or monitoring.

These visits also provided an opportunity to have open discussions about funding and how ISDAO's funds would be used to address community priorities. We met with several dynamic LGBTQI youth-led groups during these visits, and one of the things that struck us was that while several major needs were identified during the conversations, namely the lack of access to housing, economic insecurity, isolation, and security related risks, these were rarely addressed in their proposals. For them, this could not be part of the range of possibilities because they had never experienced flexible and dedicated funding for their self-determined priorities. These experiences have taught us that even if we are contributing to an important change through our philanthropic approach, there is still a lot of work to be done to further strengthen these groups but also to push other funders to reconsider their approach!

Grants by country in 2019

ISDAO is contributing to strengthening our communities' knowledge, self-determination and mobilization. This grant cycle and the visits across the region deepened our understanding of the challenges and resilience of the movement, and also highlighted the need for donors supporting LGBTQI groups and organizations in West Africa to do better in responding to and respecting the priorities, structures and ways of organizing of their grantee partners.

In addition, this process validated the importance and vital contribution of an activist approach rooted in our values to help strengthen the LGBTQI movement in West Africa.



* Including Sub-Regional Grantees



In their own words:
Voices from our
communities





ASSOCIATION ALTERNATIVE BURKINA:

“The ISDAO grant enabled us to mobilize about 50 community, religious, administrative and health leaders in support of LGBTQI rights in Bobo-Dioulasso, the second largest city in Burkina. In addition, we were able to strengthen our human rights observatory by obtaining the support of an independent law firm in order to better document the violations that may occur.”







WOMEN HEALTH AND EQUAL RIGHTS INITIATIVE - NIGERIA:

“Although we have suffered from volunteer attrition, we continue to provide paralegal and peer support services. We have also provided some education and awareness-raising on mental health and related topics, including coping skills and self-care for the 326 LBQ women. In addition, we have increased the reach of WHER and its services to LBQ women in rural areas and slums in Nigeria.”







FOR HIRONDELLE CLUB BENIN:

...through the grant from ISDAO, we were able to Communicate about Sexual Rights, screen educational films on understanding LGBTQI identities, hold a camp to develop cohesion and solidarity within the LGBTQI community in Benin and to develop communication against toxic discourse.





Lessons Learned:

Strengthening our communities' knowledge, self-determination and mobilization.





**We are amplifying
the voices of our
communities**

Participation of activists in key conference spaces

At ISDAO, in addition to providing grants, we have provided strategic funding to increase the participation of activists in regional and global spaces.

In 2019, we supported the participation of 4 activists in the Global LBQ Feminist Conference in July and 13 Key Populations pre-conference of the International Conference on STDs and AIDS in Africa (ICASA) in December.

Furthermore, within such gatherings, we organized opportunities and spaces for West African activists to network and exchange as was the case particularly at the Changing Faces, Changing Spaces (CFCS) organized by UHAI EASHRI and the LBQ Conference.

Through this, we have a wider regional and community reach, as in these spaces we also included activists who are not part of the ISDAO grantee partner organizations, or who come from West African countries outside of the current ISDAO focal countries.



Publication of activists' reflections on our communications platforms

Reflection in SANKOFA

Our e-newsletter, SANKOFA, is a dedicated space to share our updates and progress within the LGBTQI movement in West Africa. Here, we also share the work and voice of our communities.



SANKOFA

Our newsletter





**We are advocating
for inclusion and for
resources**

Supporting linguistic justice and philanthropic advocacy

Over the past year, we took significant steps to push for action in both of these areas.

In recognition that the importance and commitment we place on the practice of inclusion and linguistic justice (the balance between English and French) is not always adopted by other funders and regional organizations, we undertook – and continue to undertake advocacy and to demonstrate our leadership in this area, and have worked with our peers to address this.

Furthermore, we lobbied for greater engagement of West African activists beyond participation in key spaces. We believe that the participation of West African LGBTQI activists in strategic spaces is **necessary but not sufficient**, and that they must also play a greater role in agenda setting and program development. In 2019, we successfully advocated for greater West African representation at the CISMA/ICASA pre-conference on key populations, including securing a seat on the steering committee of the meeting for a young trans* woman from Côte d'Ivoire, who also facilitated a panel session with other trans* activists from the region on the needs and priorities of trans people in West Africa.



In October 2019, we participated in the regional meeting **“Building a Feminist Internet”**, organized by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) in South Africa. Although we advocated for French interpretation at this meeting, unfortunately this was not possible, but we were able to connect and advocate for the participation of a West African LGBTQI network which works primarily in Francophone countries. Since this meeting, discussions have continued with the APC team how to make this space more inclusive of and accessible to francophone feminists.



Development of strategic partnerships

Following up on our conversations with APC, we helped identify a dynamic facilitator for a **digital feminist learning circle** specifically aimed at engaging and sharing learning with francophone activists. Held in December, the circle, focused on **feminist use of digital spaces on the internet, including the use of social networks**, brought together more than 30 people, including several people from ISDAO's grantee partners.

In 2019, we developed another major strategic partnership, initially through a link established and conversation at Changing Faces Changing Spaces. Through this connection, ISDAO was invited to participate in a consultation led by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on the development of a collective strategic vision for advancing the human rights and inclusion of LGBTI persons in Sub-Saharan Africa. As the only West African regional organization at this meeting, we successfully advocated for greater attention to and expanded resources for work in West Africa. Through this and subsequent consultations, ISDAO contributed to the development of a UNDP project proposal for this initiative that was successfully funded. ISDAO has helped to shape this four-year regional initiative to promote an inclusive approach to governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. The initiative, which will start in 2020, will be an important contribution to our vision of advocacy and strategic engagement in West Africa.



ISDAO is playing a major influencing role - and helped shape a new initiative to promote LGBTI inclusive governance in Africa.

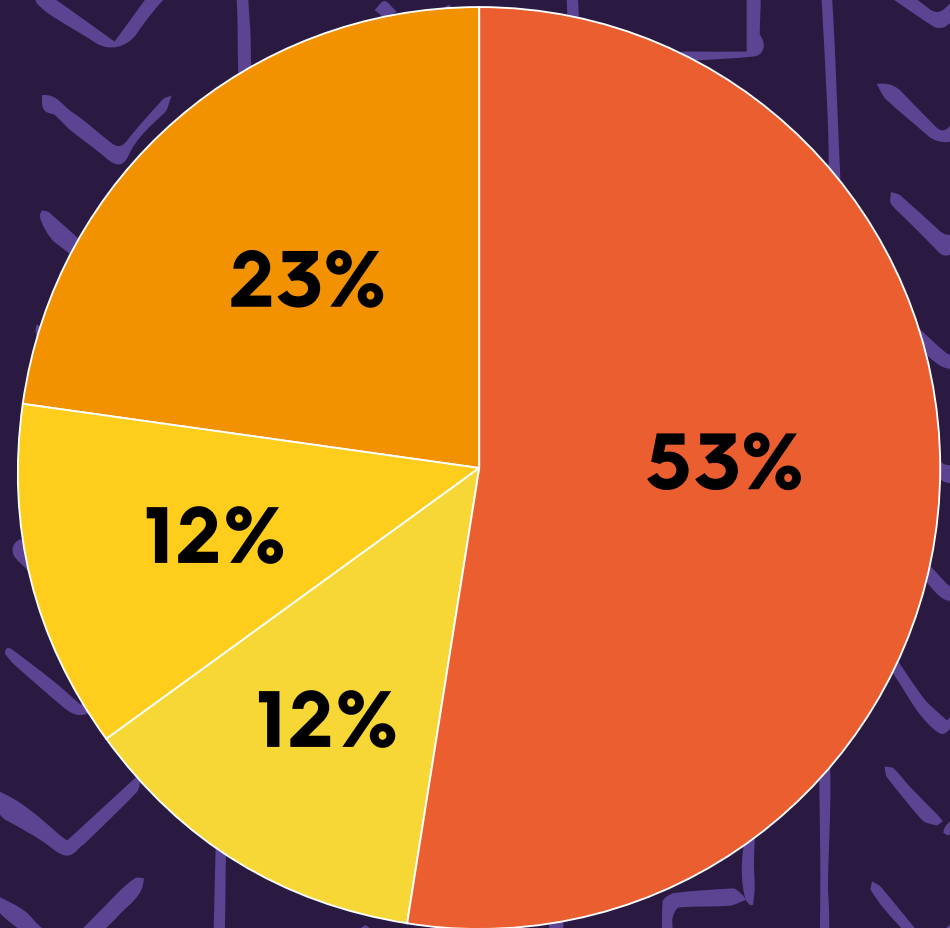




Our Finances

ISDAO 2019 EXPENDITURE

Direct Expenses-Programs	\$521,446
Administrative Expenses	\$225,352
Other Personnel Expenses	\$120,937
Institutional Development	\$123,950
TOTAL	\$991,685



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