

ISDAO 



# TASIRI

## ISDAO Grant Impact Assessment Report (2019–2021)

CONDUCTED BY NDIDI DANIELA ASHU

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TASIRI means Impact in the Hausa language. The Hausa language is spoken in several countries in West Africa and beyond including Burkina Faso, Benin, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, etc.



# Acknowledgments

Ndidi Daniela Ashu, the lead independent consultant, together with Anne-Marie Nwaobasi and Sheba Akpokli, the Anglophone and Francophone consultants respectively, would like to express their gratitude to the ISDAO team (Caroline Kouassiaman, Olumide Makanjuola, and Gervin Chanase) for their availability and support in achieving the assessment's goals. They also extend their appreciation to all the individuals and groups (donors, grantee partners, movement partners, and peer funding partners) with whom they had the opportunity to collaborate and communicate throughout this assessment.

The consultants also acknowledge Sandra's invaluable assistance in data collection and extend their thanks to her.

ISDAO also acknowledges the work of Nadia Ahidjo, who developed an initial framework and methodology that informed this evaluation exercise.





# Preamble

This evaluation assessed the impact of ISDAO's grants for the grant period of 2019-2021. The purpose of this assessment was to provide an objective and comprehensive analysis of ISDAO's grantmaking since its inception in 2019 through to 2021. As external evaluators, we conducted this evaluation with the utmost professionalism, transparency, and adherence to industry best practices.

Our evaluation was based on a rigorous methodology that involved data collection, interviews, focus group discussions, and benchmarking against relevant industry standards.

It is important to highlight that this evaluation was performed independently, without any affiliation or bias towards the organization. While ISDAO provided contact details for the individuals and organizations enrolled, they were not involved in either the collection or analysis of data for this report. We maintained a neutral stance, focusing solely on gathering evidence-based information to provide an accurate representation of the organization's current state.

We would like to emphasize that all information collected during this evaluation has been treated with the utmost confidentiality. The findings presented in this report are based on data and evidence provided by ISDAO and the various categories of stakeholders involved.

While this evaluation aims to provide valuable insights into ISDAO's grantmaking from 2019 to 2021, it is essential to recognize that no organization is without room for improvement. Therefore, the recommendations presented in this report are intended to be constructive and supportive, aimed at empowering ISDAO to achieve its full potential.

We sincerely hope that the results of this evaluation will serve as a foundation for meaningful dialogue and action regarding ISDAO's grantmaking.

# Abbreviations

<b>ACHPR</b>	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
<b>CSW</b>	Commission on the Status of Women
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>HRC</b>	Human Rights Council
<b>ISDAO</b>	Initiative Sankofa D'Afrique de l'Ouest
<b>LGBTQI</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>UPR</b>	Universal periodic review

## Figures

Figure 1: ISDAO Grantee partners breakdown by country

Figure 2: Sample distribution

Figure 3: Breakdown of survey responses

Figure 4: Profile of movement partners

Figure 5: Profile of Peer Funding Partners

Figure 6: Geographical distribution of grantee partners

Figure 7: Stakeholders views on if ISDAO contributed to some of the progress and impact seen in the region

## Tables

Table 1: Geographies operated in by ISDAO's movement partners

Table 2: Movement Partners' familiarity with ISDAO

Table 3: Movement Partners' familiarity with ISDAO's work in West Africa

Table 4: Use of case studies, stories, and other resources from ISDAO

Table 5: Movement partners' familiarity with partners funded by ISDAO in West Africa

Table 6: Frequency of use of case studies, stories, and other resources produced by ISDAO's grantee partners

Table 7: Geographies operated by the Peer Funding Partners

Table 8: Number of grants received from ISDAO between 2019-2021

Table 9: Number of other funders from whom funding was received from between 2019-2021

Table 10: Grantee partners' primary target(s) within the LGBTQI community





# Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Preamble	4
Abbreviations	5
Overview	7
Methodology	11
Assessment Findings	16
Recommendations	42



# Overview

## a. Overview of the regional and national level context

The countries where ISDAO intervenes exhibit diverse realities, with differences in terms of intervention context, identities, and the dynamism of movements. As a West African organization based in the sub-region, ISDAO's work focuses on nine West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo.

In a general overview, countries such as Burkina Faso, Benin, and Côte d'Ivoire have been wrongly considered to be more tolerant towards the LGBTQI community due to the absence of repressive laws against LGBTQI individuals. However, regardless of the absence of such criminal laws, these countries are also not immune to social hostility towards LGBTQI people, as evidenced by attacks that sometimes come from state actors.

Sharing public social spaces remains a huge challenge for LGBTQI people, underscoring the need for dedicated spaces where they can meet. Unfortunately, those public spaces sometimes prove to be a threat to their safety. For instance, in Lomé, Togo, LGBTQI individuals have faced attacks at the beach simply for occupying the same public space as others. Similar security concerns in public spaces are evident in countries like Senegal or Mali, where religious fundamentalism is prevalent. More broadly, security is a

pressing issue for LGBTQI individuals and organizations in the region. In the past year (2022), there have been several reported cases of vandalism at the premises of LGBTQI organizations in Burkina Faso, Togo, and Benin.

The legal repression of LGBTQI people is also present in Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Senegal, and Togo. In Nigeria certain legal provisions even mandate the death penalty in some states. Under the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA) passed in 2014, any Nigerian who is part of a gay organization can be sentenced to a 10-year jail term. Furthermore, any LGBTQI person risks a prison sentence of up to 14 years in jail. However, in several northern Nigerian states (Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, Zamfara) Sharia law is in operation. Under this law, the punishment for sodomy is death by stoning. This means it is unsafe to publicly identify as LGBTQI in many parts of Nigeria. The prevailing legal framework in Nigeria effectively sanctions human rights abuses, treating LGBTQI individuals as if they are unworthy of their fundamental human rights.





In Liberia, anti-gay sentiments and hostility towards LGBTQI individuals have been fueled by both media and political discourse in recent years. The country's leaders openly oppose homosexuality, thereby forcing LGBTQI individuals to hide their sexual identities.

In Ghana, on March 27, 2021, the police raided a private event organized by some queer women in Accra, arresting several guests in attendance (Padgett, 2021). Though the event was rumored to be a “lesbian wedding,” participants reportedly insisted it was merely a party. In addition to existing punitive laws, the government has made it clear that they intend to punish LGBTQI individuals and groups as harshly as possible.

In many contexts, not only are there laws criminalizing sexual relations between adults of the same sex in several countries, but the legislation in some places goes even further, penalizing organizations and individuals who work with and for LGBTQI people and accusing them of promoting homosexuality. In various situations, intersex individuals are subjected to irreversible, harmful, and medically unnecessary medical interventions, often without their consent. Many LGBTQI individuals have also undergone conversion therapy<sup>1</sup>.

LGBTQI individuals in West Africa face stigma and violence, which adversely affect their lives and contribute to poverty and social instability. In addition to the hostile social context, the fragile security due to terrorism, especially pronounced in countries like Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Mali, should also be noted.

Despite the unique situations in each country, some general trends emerge within the LGBTQI movement. For example, there is a growing visibility of LGBTQI groups that have been formed over the years, granting them a heightened presence on the regional stage. Besides funding challenges, there is a noticeable increase in advocacy issues being raised, and an increasing number of regional groups and coalitions are collaborating to amend laws and policies that hurt LGBTQI individuals. This includes the production of media content for education and advocacy — like the documentary on intersex realities produced by a Nigerian organization, aimed at challenging the denial of the existence of intersex people— and efforts by activists to counter anti-gender rhetoric with intersectional feminist discourse. Such coordinated actions are unfolding at both national and regional scales.

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<sup>1</sup> Conversion therapy is any emotional or physical therapy used to “cure” or “repair” a person's attraction to the same sex, or their gender identity and expression.



## b. Overview of actors in the region

The actors in the region can be classified into two main groups: state actors and non-state actors. State actors include the bureaucracy, police, army, and intelligence services. On the other hand, non-state actors encompass non-governmental organizations (NGOs), charities, social movements, lobby groups, activists, the media, and multinational organizations. The main distinction between state actors and non-state actors is that state actors are individuals acting on behalf of a government body, whereas non-state actors are influential organizations or individuals with the potential to influence the measures implemented by state actors, yet they are not associated with any state. For this evaluation, our primary focus was on non-state actors within ISDAO's ecosystem. This included:

### Movement Partners

ISDAO defines "Movement Partners" as representatives of LGBTQI people and/or organizations who are familiar with ISDAO and/or its grantees' work but have not received any funding from ISDAO. These partners are primarily global, regional, and national in scope. Movement Partners are well-known key stakeholders in the LGBTQI movement and often participate in events or activities organized by ISDAO and its grantee partners. While most Movement Partners are self-identified LGBTQI organizations or individuals, a small number of non-LGBTQI organizations and individuals are also included because of their active support for the movement in the area. It is important to note that Movement Partners are not recipients of

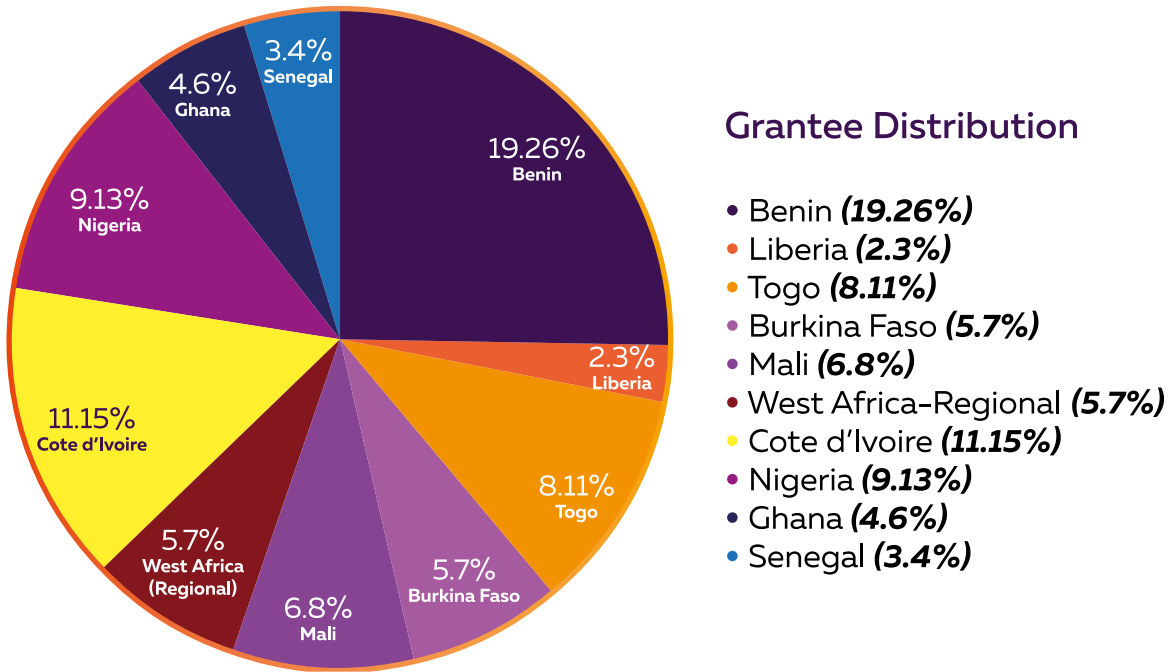
funding from ISDAO. Within the Movement Partners, there is a subgroup consisting of peer funders and entities that offer technical assistance to local organizations. This subgroup is referred to as "Peer Funding Partners" in this evaluation.

### Grantee Partners

Grantee Partners are LGBTQI organizations at national and regional levels that have received funding and technical support from ISDAO between 2019 and 2021. The figure below illustrates their distribution by country.



**Figure 1: ISDAO Grantee partners breakdown by country**



As depicted in the Figure, ISDAO awarded grants to 72 grantee partners, primarily among its nine focus countries, with Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire receiving the highest number of grants. Additionally, it is worth noting that two grants were provided to South African organizations to enhance the participation of West African LGBTQI activists in a regional human rights mechanism workshop and the ICASA Conference.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that this list of grantees only covers the period from 2019 to 2021 and does not include all grants provided by ISDAO to date. Additionally, the list does not encompass grants awarded through the Love Alliance initiative<sup>2</sup>, although some of the 72 grantee partners may have also received Love Alliance grants in 2021.

### Donors

Donors are organizations that have provided funding for the work undertaken by ISDAO and its grantee partners. These organizations are primarily based outside of the continent. Their support to ISDAO mainly revolves around grants for regranting or institutional support directed at ISDAO.

<sup>2</sup> The Love Alliance initiative is a five years (2021-2025) program funded by the Dutch government and brings together organizations across Africa in collaboration with Aidsfonds to design, implement and achieve the set theory of change as collectively designed. The partnerships address the overlapping issues faced by LGBTIQ, Sex Workers and People who Use Drug.- <https://isdao.org/en/special-initiatives/>

# Methodology

The methodology of this evaluation was informed and shaped by a preliminary design exercise led by an Independent Consultant. During this design exercise, the consultant played a crucial role in developing the approach, identifying the categories of stakeholders, and outlining initial thoughts on the evaluation's methodology. This section describes the ethical considerations that guided the evaluation and provides insight into how the evaluation was conducted, its scope, target audience, sample selection process, and its limitations.

## a. Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations observed during this study include:

- **Voluntary participation:** The participants who completed the questionnaires, took part in the focus group discussions and the interviewees were free to withdraw at any time without having to provide justification.
- **Informed consent:** Respondents were given information about the purpose and intended use of the assessment in all communications. This information was provided before conversations began and at the start of the questionnaires they were asked to complete.

- **Confidentiality:** The personal data of participants from the data collection (via questionnaires, interviews, or focus group discussions) was not shared with third parties in this assessment.
- **Potential for harm:** The team made sure that this assessment did not have any physical, social, psychological, or other negative effects.

## b. Approach, Design, and Scope

The primary goal of this evaluation is to conduct a grantmaking impact assessment to help ISDAO learn from its grantee partners and other stakeholders in the ecosystem. This assessment aims to understand how their grants have led to specific changes or contributed to broader movement shifts. The assessment will provide insights into how ISDAO's grants are advancing the work of LGBTQI organizations and movements in West Africa, both at national and regional levels. It also aims to identify opportunities for collaboration with other donors in the region to ensure coordinated actions. Furthermore, this assessment will offer valuable insights into the trajectory of organizations and movements across the region as they continue to ramp up their investments. By learning from grantee partners about the impact of the grants on their work and the LGBTQI movement in their countries and sub-regions, ISDAO aims to share the stories of these partners and their collective efforts.



The results of this summative assessment will showcase the contributions of ISDAO to the work being done in West Africa since the commencement of grantmaking in 2019. This information is vital for its strategic planning process.

To gather data for this evaluation, a literature review was conducted, surveys were administered, and one-on-one interviews and focus groups were held, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. Surveys were administered to both grantee partners and movement partners, while grantee partners participated in focus group discussions. Additionally, interviews were conducted with ISDAO's donors. The evaluation encompasses ISDAO's grantmaking activities from 2019 to 2021 and assesses the perceived impact of this funding on LGBTQI organizations in West Africa and the overall efforts of the LGBTQI community in the region.

### **c. Initial meetings**

We conducted interviews with ISDAO's team, giving them an opportunity to articulate their expectations and ask for clarifications on any questions they had. Based on these interviews, we updated the assessment workplan as necessary. Additionally, we initiated preliminary conversations with some members of the LGBTQI community to introduce the evaluation's objectives and gather initial information that would guide our approach.

### **d. Literature review**

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the project, its implementation context, and its outcomes, we conducted a literature review. This review encompassed various sources, including the concept document, ISDAO's strategic partnership concept note, strategic framework, reports to donors, reports from Grantee Partners to ISDAO, funded proposals submitted by grantee partners to ISDAO since 2019, proposals submitted by ISDAO to donors, resilience grants framework, Activists Grant Making Panel Decision Meeting reports, site visit guidelines document, the Doundou: Mapping LGBTQI Organizations In West Africa report, and the We Exist: Mapping LGBTQI Organizing in West Africa reports.

### **e. Sampling strategy and data collection**

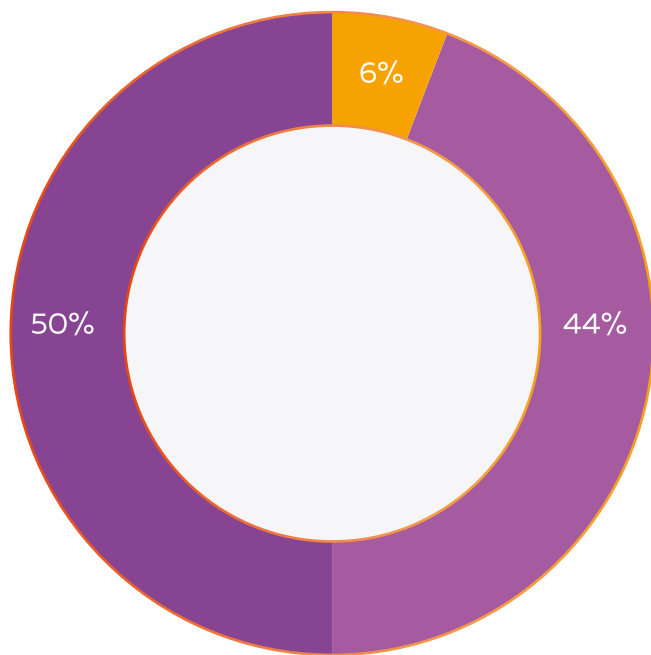
There is no definitive number and directory of movement partners within the region. Therefore, we used profiles to ensure a comprehensive representation of all movement partners in the assessment. This included self-identifying LGBTQI individuals, organization representatives with some knowledge of ISDAO and/or the work of grantees, and organizations that provide technical support to others in the region. As a result, we identified 73 movement partners and 12 Peer Funding Partners.

With regards to ISDAO's grantee partners between 2019-2021, the total count stands at 72. All were included in the evaluation process due to the manageable size of the group, though not all chose to participate.

Similarly, there are 11 donors in total. All 11 were included in our sample, though not all opted to partake in the evaluation process.

Consequently, the overall sample size amounted to 168, comprising 72 grantee partners, 85 movement partners (which includes Peer Funding Partners), and 11 donors, as illustrated below in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Sample distribution**



### Sample Distribution

- Donors
- Grantee Partners
- Movement Partners

The breakdown reveals an equal number of stakeholders with a close working relationship with ISDAO as there were stakeholders with a relatively more distant working relationship with ISDAO. This approach aids in validating and balancing data and information on ISDAO's perceived impact.

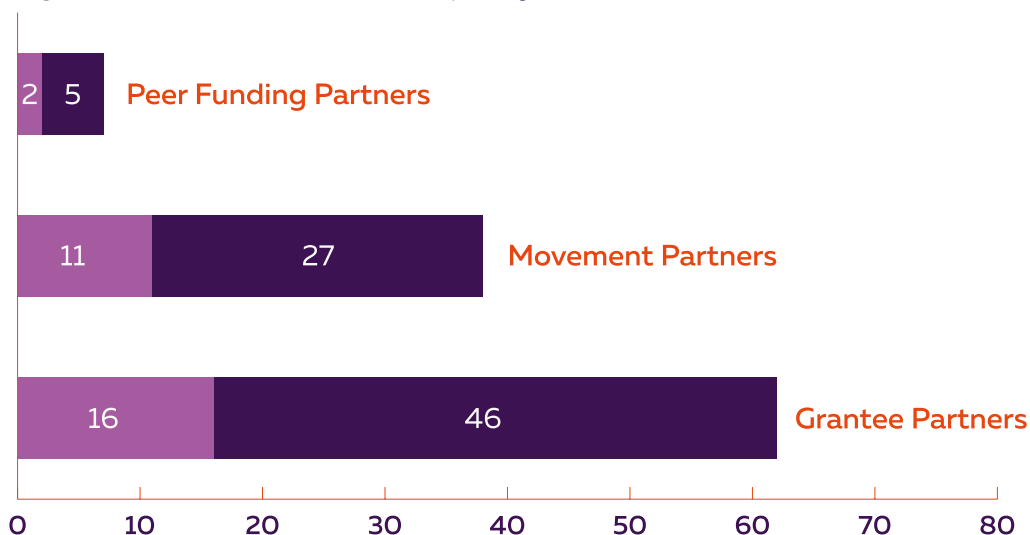
It is important to note that data collection was conducted in the first weeks of January 2023 rather than December 2022 to maximize participation from organizations and individuals in the evaluation process. Separate questionnaires were tailored for different groups: grantee partners, movement partners, and peer funding partners. The surveys were created using SurveyMonkey and were made available in both English and French to cater to anglophone and francophone West Africa. The analysis of the information gathered, including qualitative data, was conducted using SurveyMonkey and NVIVO.

For the donors, interview questions were provided. They had the option to answer at their own pace and return the filled-out document before a specified deadline. Some donors opted to engage in a virtual conversation with the consultants to provide their responses.

The graph below presents a breakdown of the responses collected.



**Figure 3: Breakdown of survey responses**



	Grantee Partners	Movement Partners	Peer Funding Partners
Invalid Entries	16	11	2
Valid Entries	46	27	5

A total of 107 responses were collected through the surveys, as depicted in Figure 3. The response rate was satisfactory at 63%, and of these, 73% of the entries were considered valid. Responses deemed invalid came from individuals who either quit the survey early or stated that they did not know enough about ISDAO to continue.

Donor interviews were conducted, and six of the 11 donors participating in the assessment. Regarding the proportion of Grantee Partners who responded to the questionnaire, 52.7% (or 29 organizations) were from Francophone Africa, while 47.2% (or 26 organizations) were from Anglophone Africa.

After the data analysis, focus groups were established to gain more detailed findings. Due to language barriers, separate focus group discussions were conducted in French and English. The willingness of participants, as indicated in their survey questions, to

answer further questions was also considered when selecting participants for the focus groups.

### **f. Data analysis**

The qualitative data was meticulously coded and organized into themes and subthemes. The consultants compared, harmonized, and refined the categorization across various data sources. This was followed by a joint review by the consultants and data consolidation before its presentation in the report. This approach facilitated the assessment of emerging patterns from diverse data sources and allowed for the triangulation of common themes presented in the findings.

For the analysis of quantitative data from the surveys, both Excel and SurveyMonkey were used. The report incorporates tables and graphs to succinctly present the findings and results.

## g. Limitations of the Evaluation and Challenges Encountered

This assessment has certain main limitations that should be noted:

- At the end of the year and the beginning of a new year, some people take time off. This affected data collection during the assessment period. However, most of the data collection went smoothly due to the responsiveness and willingness of all stakeholder categories.
- Conversations had to be scheduled based on language preferences as some participants were anglophones while others were francophones. To ensure inclusivity, we provided data collection tools in both English and French, allowing full participation. The collected data was subsequently translated into English to maintain consistency in analysis and provide a comprehensive overview of the information shared by participants. Additionally, language posed a challenge within the consultant team; half were francophone with limited English proficiency. To address this, we implemented creative strategies, enabling all team members to contribute effectively, especially since the evaluation deliverables are expected in English.
- Some groups encountered challenges participating in this study due to erratic Internet access, leading to a longer process as we needed to be flexible and considerate of their realities.
- Since ISDAO funding is not tied to specific thematic areas, impact measurement largely depends on the opinions of engaged stakeholders. This reliance on subjective views can introduce potential biases when assessing impact.



# Assessment Findings

This section presents the results of the survey, focus groups, interviews with donors, and literature review. Furthermore, it includes recommendations from stakeholders on aspects ISDAO should consider enhancing its services for the LGBTQI community in West Africa.

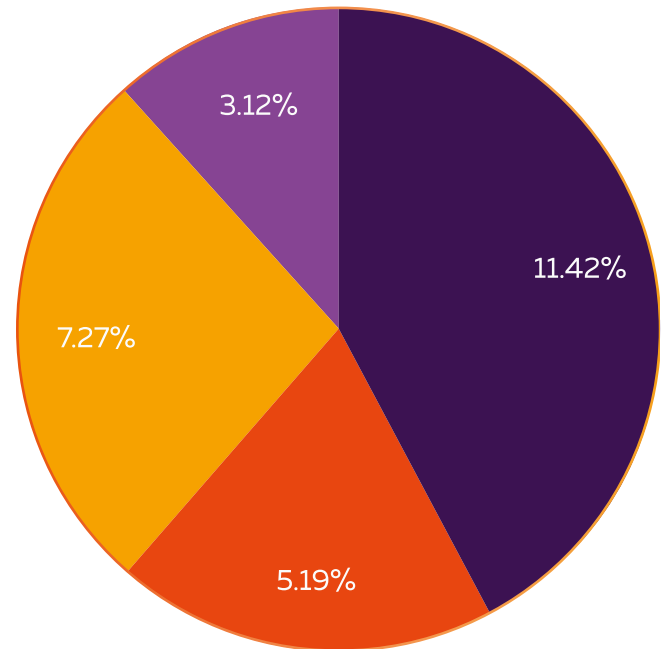
## a. Profile of the stakeholders

Before delving into the findings, it is essential to examine the various categories of stakeholders involved in the data collection process to better understand the results of this impact assessment.

### Movement Partners

Movement partners identify themselves as individuals primarily focused on promoting LGBTQI rights and/or addressing structural and root causes of inequality stemming from gender, sexual orientation, and/or sex characteristics. Additionally, some identify as organizations with LGBTQI issues as their primary focus, while others incorporate LGBTQI issues into their broader work. The "others" category comprises an activist, a consultant, and a member of an organization whose work encompasses human rights defenders in general. Figure 4 below illustrates this breakdown:

**Figure 4: Profile of movement partners**



- I am an individual whose primary mission is the promotion of LGBTQI rights, and/or who seeks to address the structural and root causes of inequality on the basis of gender and/or sexual orientation and/or sex characteristics.
- I work with an organization whose primary mission is the promotion of LGBTQI rights, and/or who seeks to address the structural and root causes of inequality on the basis of gender and/or sexual orientation and/or sex characteristics.
- I work with an organization whose work includes (but is not exclusively or predominately focused on) the promotion of LGBTQI rights or working to address the structural and root causes of inequality on the basis of gender and/or sexual orientation and/or sex characteristics.
- Other



Their work covers different geographical locations as shown in the Table below:

**Table 1: Geographies operated by ISDAO's movement partners**

Regions	Frequency	Percentage
Central Africa	5	10.6%
East Africa	5	10.6%
Globally	8	17.0%
North Africa	2	4.3%
Southern Africa	4	8.5%
West Africa	23	48.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>

Out of the 26 movement partners who responded, seven (27%) work in more than one region. The breakdown is as follows:

- Two movement partners cover West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, and Globally.
- One movement partner leads activities in West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa.
- One movement partner works in Central Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa.
- One movement partner operates in both West and East Africa.
- One movement partner operates in West Africa and Globally.

The majority of movement partners accounting for 48.9% of total responses, primarily operate in West Africa. Their areas of work include resourcing, philanthropic advocacy for LGBTQI rights, gender justice advocacy, decriminalization, human rights advocacy, human rights education, capacity

building, health promotion, sexual health and rights, community engagement and development, movement building and inclusion, regional and international human rights protection of LGBTQI persons, leadership and social change, grants development/management, awareness raising, evaluation and research, laws reform, and content production of narratives that amplify the visibility of LGBTQI communities. The majority of movement partners indicated familiarity with ISDAO, as summarized in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Movement Partners' familiarity with ISDAO**

Familiarity	Frequency	Percentage
Completely familiar	1	4.8%
Very familiar	10	47.6%
Moderately familiar	8	38.1%
Slightly familiar	2	9.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

Approximately 47.6% and 38.1% of respondents were categorized as "very familiar" and "moderately familiar" with ISDAO, respectively. To better understand their familiarity with ISDAO's work in West Africa, we delved deeper. The results are summarized in Table 3 below.



**Table 3: Movement Partners' familiarity with ISDAO's work in West Africa**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Completely familiar	2	9.5%
Very familiar	7	33.3%
Moderately familiar	9	42.9%
Slightly familiar	2	9.5%
Not familiar at all	1	4.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

Approximately 42.9% of the sampled movement partners' staff indicated that they were "moderately familiar" with ISDAO's work in West Africa, while 33.3% said they were "very familiar". Additionally, movement partners frequently utilized case studies, stories, and other resources produced by ISDAO in their work. The frequency of usage of these materials and resources is summarized in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Use of case studies, stories, and other resources from ISDAO**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	1	4.8%
Often	4	19.0%
Somewhat	7	33.3%
Seldom	5	23.8%
Rarely	2	9.5%
Never	2	9.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data on the familiarity of movement partners with partners funded by ISDAO in West Africa indicates that most of them were familiar with some of ISDAO's grantee partners. About 47.6% of the respondents knew five or more partners funded by ISDAO, while 42.9% were acquainted with more than one partner funded by ISDAO but fewer than five partners. The results are summarized in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Movement partners' familiarity with partners funded by ISDAO in West Africa**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
I know at least one partner funded by ISDAO	2	9.5%
I know five or more partners funded by ISDAO	10	47.6%
I know more than one partner funded by ISDAO but not up to five partners	9	42.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

Case studies, stories, and other resources produced by ISDAO's grantee partners were frequently utilized by movement partners in their work. The frequency of their usage is summarized in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Frequency of use of case studies, stories, and other resources produced by ISDAO's grantee partners**

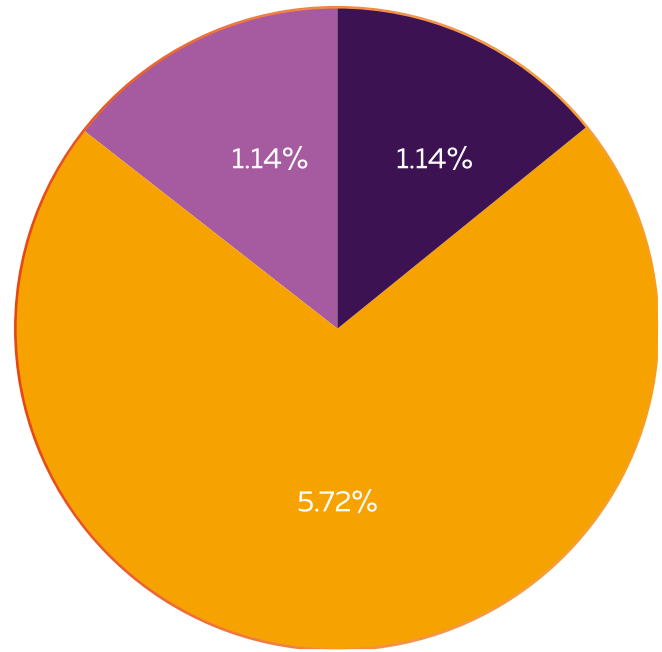
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	1	4.8%
Often	5	23.8%
Somewhat	6	28.6%
Seldom	4	19.0%
Rarely	2	9.5%
Never	3	14.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

The profile of the movement partners involved in the impact assessment indicates they have a deep understanding of both the movement and the sub-region's realities. They also possess knowledge of ISDAO, its work, and are familiar with ISDAO's grantee partners and their activities in the sub-region.

**Peer Funding Partners**

This category of movement partners also funds LGBTQI organizations in the region. The respondents primarily work with organizations that promote LGBTQI rights or address the structural and root causes of inequality based on gender and/or sexual orientation and/or sex characteristics. Figure 5 below illustrates this distribution:

**Figure 5: Profile of Peer Funding Partners**



- I work with an organization whose primary mission is the promotion of LGBTQI rights, and/or who seeks to address the structural and root causes of inequality on the basis of gender and/or sexual orientation and/or sex characteristics.
- I work with an organization whose work includes (but is not exclusively or predominately focused on) the promotion of LGBTQI rights or working to address the structural and root causes of inequality on the basis of gender and/or sexual orientation and/or sex characteristics.
- Other



The partner who selected “others” indicated that they collaborate with a funder whose work includes, but is not exclusively focused on, the promotion of LGBTQI rights and addressing the structural and root causes of inequality based on gender/sexuality/sex characteristics. The main areas of focus for Peer Funding Partners include promoting LGBTQI rights, addressing the structural and root causes of inequality based on gender and/or sexual orientation and/or sex characteristics, advancing human rights for LGBTQI people, promoting health (specifically concerning HIV and STIs), advocating for decriminalization, launching anti-stigma initiatives, reducing discrimination and violence, facilitating economic empowerment, strengthening movements, and advocacy. These partners operate across various regions in Africa, including Central Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa. Additionally, some partner funders operate on a global scale, as summarized in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Geographies operated by the Peer Funding Partners**

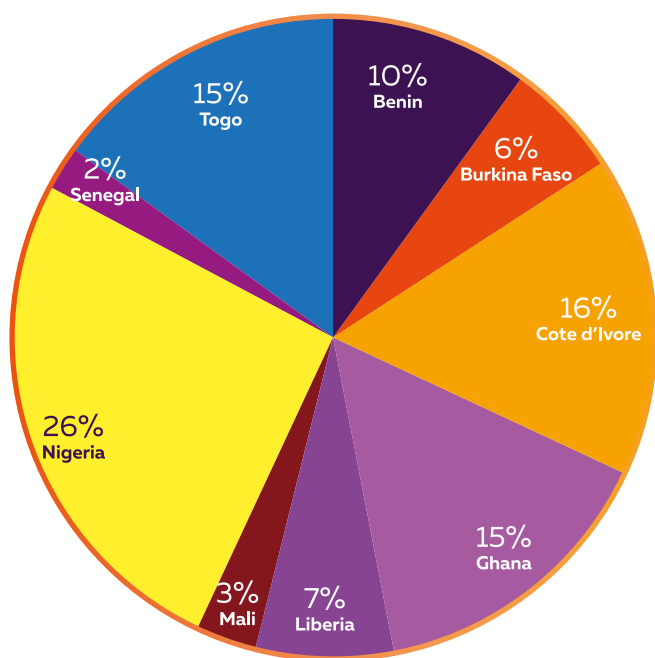
Regions	Frequency	Percentage
Central Africa	5	16.7%
East Africa	5	16.7%
Globally	4	13.3%
North Africa	5	16.7%
Southern Africa	5	16.7%
West Africa	6	20.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

All peer funding partners indicated their familiarity with ISDAO, with their levels of familiarity ranging from “moderately familiar” to “very familiar.” Almost all the Peer Funding Partners have collaborated with ISDAO, either directly or indirectly, fostering mutual support and facilitating learning from the similarities and differences in the operations of partner funders. The most commonly reported forms of collaboration include general support grants (covering grants and operations) and some restricted grants such as support for communication work, COVID impact mitigation, protection issues, community care, and restorative justice.

### Grantee Partners

At the time of the assessment, nearly all the grantee partners were registered organizations, with only one being unregistered. One positive aspect frequently mentioned by the participating groups in this assessment was that funding from ISDAO enabled them to obtain legal registration. Supporting this claim is the fact that out of the 72 enrolled grantee partners, only one remains unregistered. These organizations operate in all of ISDAO's focus countries in West Africa, as depicted below in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Geographical distribution of grantee partners**



**Sample Grantee Partners Distribution**

- Benin (6)
- Burkina Faso (4)
- Cote d'Ivoire (10)
- Ghana (9)
- Liberia (4)
- Mali (2)
- Nigeria (16)
- Senegal (1)
- Togo (9)

When compared to Figure 1, which presents ISDAO's grantees in the 'overview of actors' section, it becomes evident that the distribution in Figure 6 is representative of the grantees. From 2019 to 2021, these grantee partners received between one and six grants from ISDAO, as summarized in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: Number of grants received from ISDAO from 2019-2021**

No. of grants	Frequency	Percentage
1	13	21.0%
2	18	29.0%
3	20	32.3%
4	7	11.3%
5	3	4.8%
6	1	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100%</b>

Grantee partners also secured funding from other sources. The majority indicated that they received funding from 3 to 5 funders between the years 2019 and 2021 (data not segregated by year). This information is summarized in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Number of other funders from whom the funding was received from 2019-2021**

No. of funders	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	3.2%
2	4	6.5%
3	17	27.4%
4	21	33.9%
5	10	16.1%
6	4	6.5%
7	1	1.6%
8	2	3.2%
13	1	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100%</b>



The fact that grantee partners have other sources of funding allows them to compare their experience with ISDAO to those of other funders. Additionally, the majority of grantee partners, based on self-identification, stated that their primary targets within the LGBTQI community are transgender people, representing 11.7% of the total responses. This was followed by gay (6.4%), bisexual (6.4%), non-binary people (5.3%), intersex (5.3%), gender non-conforming people (5.3%), transgender women (3.2%), queer women (3.2%), and lesbians (3.2%). The distribution is summarized in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Grantee partners' primary target(s) within the LGBTQI community**

Primary targets	Frequency	Percentage
Transgender	11	11.7%
Gay	6	6.4%
Bisexual	6	6.4%
Non-binary people	5	5.3%
Intersex	5	5.3%
Gender non-conforming people	5	5.3%
Queer women	3	3.2%
Transgender women	3	3.2%
Lesbians	3	3.2%
Others	49	52.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100%</b>

The "Others" category includes various groups, such as Bisexual men, Queer youth, Gay Men, LBQ, LGBTQ, LBQ, Trans and LBQ, LGBTQI-PWUD-Sex Worker, LGBTQI+, Homosexual men, People living with HIV, Drug users, LGBTQI, LBG, GBMSM, GBQ, LBQ women, Disabled women, LBQ(T), Girls and boys, LBQ+, LGBTQI community, GBTIQ, Female Drug Users, African LGBT+ Youths, MSM, LBT, Older gay men, LBTIQ, GB Men, Queers, LGBTQI youth, Gay religious leaders, Female Sex workers, LGBT, LBQ+ women and girls, Young LGBT Persons, LBQT, LBQT Women.

### Donors

ISDAO donors who participated in the interviews have diverse funding goals. Some offer capacity building, advocacy, and institutional support funding to ISDAO, while others provide funding for regranteeing, specifically targeting certain issues. Additionally, some donors offer regranteeing funding that ISDAO can use at its discretion, based on emerging needs in West Africa. Almost all the interviewed donors stated that they have been supporting ISDAO since the inception of its grantmaking.

## b. Evolution of LGBTQI movements and organizations since the launch of ISDAO's grantmaking

The positive evolution of LGBTQI movements since the launch of ISDAO's grantmaking was acknowledged across all categories of stakeholders. According to ISDAO's donors, who were familiar with the space before the grantmaking began in 2019, the movement was fragmented, with individuals and organizations often not collaborating. Funding for LGBTQI organizations was limited or non-existent. However, since the commencement of grantmaking, there has been an increase in activity, funding, and visibility, though challenges and threats remain. These observations align with the findings of the We Exist report, which called for more funding to address issues such as the lack of physical and political space for LGBTQI groups, funding disparities within the movement, and limited access to regional and international networks.

*"There wasn't an indigenous queer-led fund that enabled participatory grantmaking to strengthen movement leadership and movement base. There were some parts of the region-based activism that were funded through HIV, development aid, and some human rights and feminist funds. But it was seldom informed by regional activists' priorities and analysis. ISDAO has galvanized support, coordinated movement actors to increase their visibility and articulate their needs, and has championed the needs of the community in global and regional donor and other advocacy spaces".*


—Donor

For grantee partners, the launch of ISDAO's grantmaking brought about significant changes in the way organizations operate and achieve their goals. They cited improved organization, access to tangible programs, and immediate assistance when facing danger. The movement has made efforts to break away from its previous isolated approach. Between 2019 and 2021, LGBTQI organizations experienced growth in numbers, size, and activities. They have become more stable, with some evolving from informal groups into registered organizations. Other positive advancements within the movement, attributed to ISDAO's grantmaking, include capacity building, provision of meeting spaces, heightened collaboration, improved communication, and mobilization.

*"LGBTIQ movement in West Africa has benefited from ISDAO through their empowerment that has demonstrated to donors the rigor, accountability and participation that they seek. ISDAO has undoubtedly channeled more resources into the region. Joining up the WA movement with those in other regions for participation in larger programs and building together is also credited to ISDAO".*

—Peer Funding Partner





Since ISDAO began its grantmaking in the region in 2019, Peer Funding Partners have observed a marked increase in the organization and collaboration of LGBTQI entities on a national level. They noted enhanced knowledge about funding opportunities and believe that a broader range of individuals and LGBTQI organizations, including unregistered ones, have accessed grants and support. This increased funding has empowered these groups and individuals to advocate more robustly for LGBTQI issues, leading to a rise in projects centered on sexual and gender minorities in West Africa. These observations are consistent with the perspectives of ISDAO's donors and grantees.

Common changes noted by grantee partners across the nine target countries since the launch of ISDAO's grantmaking include:

- **Improved organizational structure and capacity building:** Countries like Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Nigeria witnessed improvements in the organizational structure and capacity of LGBTQI organizations and movements. This includes better structuring, increased professional experience, strengthened governance, and improved grants management.
- **Enhanced networking and collaboration:** The funding has facilitated better networking, collaboration, and partnerships among LGBTQI organizations and other movements. Countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Togo have seen increased collaboration with other human rights movements and improved synergy between LGBTQI organizations.
- **Increased visibility and resilience:** In countries like Mali and Senegal, ISDAO's funding has contributed to increased visibility and resilience of LGBTQI organizations, allowing for better presence in the socio-political context and the ability to navigate challenging circumstances.



## Here are the edited country-specific changes noted from the grantee partners:

**In Benin**, significant progress has been made by the LGBTQI community in terms of cohesion and structured work. Between 2019 and 2021, organizations have undergone substantial evolution, improving their way of operating, organizational structure, support to targets, and professional experience.

**In Burkina Faso**, LGBTQI organizations and movements have experienced positive growth since the launch of ISDAO's grantmaking in 2019. The country's organizations are now better structured, more inclusive, and capable of networking.

**In Côte d'Ivoire**, there has been significant evolution within LGBTQI organizations and movements between 2019 and 2021, following the introduction of ISDAO's grantmaking in the region. The LGBTQI movement has seen notable structuring and improved organization. There is evident dynamism among LGBTQI organizations as they address community issues on behalf of their peers. Genuine engagement between leaders and their peers concerning LGBTQI issues is now more prevalent. A robust networking coalition exists within the LGBTQI movement, marked by consistent collaboration and partnership among identity-based organizations. However, certain areas still need enhancement to further strengthen LGBTQI Civil Society.

**In Ghana**, LGBTQI organizations and movements have made positive strides since the launch of ISDAO's grantmaking in 2019. Activist groups are now more open to collaboration, resource sharing, and reaching broader audiences, particularly in light of the introduction of the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill of 2021. Grassroots organizations have been able to access funding to support their work.

**In Liberia**, smaller LGBTQI organizations have experienced increased capacities, and the national network/coalition has improved.

**In Mali**, trans groups and LBQ women now enjoy better visibility. Interventions have diversified and are no longer limited to HIV/AIDS-related issues, enabling responses to a wider range of needs.

**In Nigeria**, organizations have experienced increased visibility and have engaged in more collaborations and partnerships. Most organizations have strengthened their organizational capacity in governance and grants management. There have been significant improvements in capacity building, alliance/consortium building, organizational structural development, funding opportunities, and the emergence of nascent organizations.

**In Senegal**, with the support of ISDAO, LGBTQI organizations have been able to maintain better presence and resilience in the often-fluctuating socio-political context.

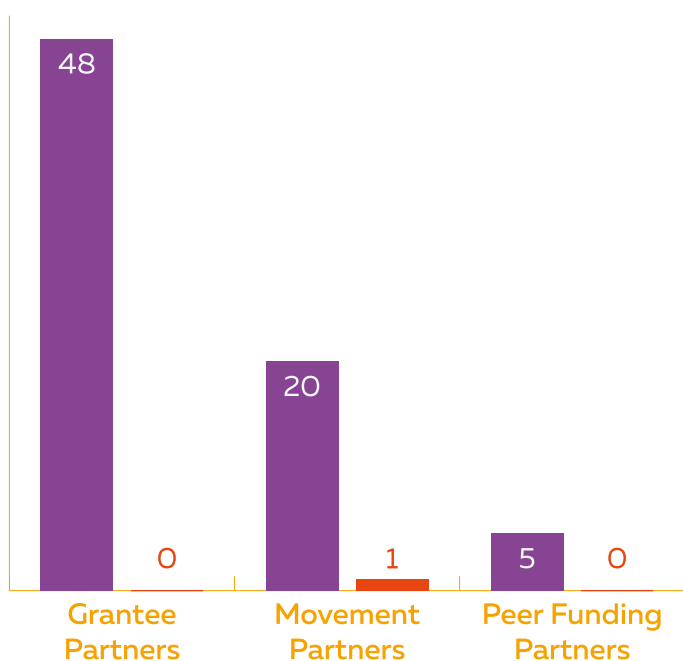
**In Togo**, organizations have enhanced their skills, leading to greater synergy between LGBTQI organizations and other movements. This is evident in improved collaboration between national LGBTQI organizations and other human rights movements, supported by the funding received from ISDAO.



### c. Contribution of ISDAO's work on LGBTQI issues in West Africa

Movement Partners, Grantee Partners, and Peer Funding Partners who are familiar with ISDAO and its work in West Africa unanimously agreed that some of the positive changes being observed in the region are directly attributable to ISDAO, as illustrated in the figure below.

**Figure 7: Stakeholders' views on if ISDAO contributed to some of the progress and impact seen in the region.**



**Are any of the progress and impacts of work done on LGBTIQ issues attributable to ISDAO?**

- YES
- NO

*"Before ISDAO started operating the movement was fragmented, there were more people working in isolation. there was no money reaching the group and if so, it was very limited funding".*

—Donor

While all grantee partners agree that ISDAO has played a prominent role in the positive evolution of LGBTQI movements and organizations observed since the launch of its grantmaking, donors and movement partners had some nuanced views. According to movement partners, ISDAO's funding of LGBTQI organizations, which might not have received funding otherwise, has profoundly impacted the development of the movement. This funding has promoted representation and inclusiveness in West Africa.

*"They (ISDAO) valorize the work of people with an interest in producing knowledge for us by us, while at least attempting to navigate structures that center western organizations, funders and their agendas. With ISDAO existing, it at least forces people to confront these uncomfortable realities about philanthropy and encourages us to find alternative models".*

—Movement Partner

Furthermore, movement partners believe that ISDAO has played a significant role in changing narratives and power structures in philanthropy, bolstering advocacy efforts, and aiding activists in honing their skills and capabilities. They have observed an increase in philanthropy marked by improved access to funding.

*"The strategic grantmaking that has increased in amount as well as countries; the prioritizing of trans, LBQ led organizations over the years; the different modalities of funding so that emerging needs of the movement are responded to; the participatory nature of the grantmaking; as well as ISDAO's role in the funder community to increase visibility of community needs are all markers of ISDAO's impact. The fact that ISDAO has increased its capacity to do all these aspects of work and is an allied peer funder and advocacy partner are seen as markers of its impact".*

—Donor

Peer funding partners emphasize that ISDAO has made a key contribution to the LGBTQI movement in West Africa by helping to build a robust, consistent, and mature activist-led advocacy and service delivery movement. They highlight that ISDAO has demonstrated accountability, flexibility, and meaningful participation that have attracted more resources to the region. Peer funding partners also credit ISDAO with facilitating connections and collaborations between the West African movement and those in other regions for joint programs and development initiatives. Furthermore, ISDAO has played a vital role in resourcing and advocating for more resources for the movement. According to peer funding partners, ISDAO's involvement has led to greater cohesion, enhanced flexibility in resource allocation, improved strategic communication within the movement, and more effective advocacy on behalf of the movement.

*"We have now the opportunity to be visible, especially when it comes to fundings and being in the spaces. ISDAO helps us visible intersex awareness and advocacy. They give a platform to intersex people who are not yet visible or historically has not been. ASANKA funds helps us create a documentary on our Intersex reality and struggles. This video helps us have conversations in spaces where stakeholders still think that Intersex people don't exist."*

— Grantee Partner

However, it is acknowledged that ISDAO is not solely responsible for all the positive changes observed. One donor indicated that there isn't a direct correlation between the observed changes and ISDAO since multiple players in the industry contribute to the progress. ISDAO is just one part of a larger ecosystem. Some movement partners also mentioned that LGBTQI issues within the region have long been championed by LGBTQI leaders and other organizations, such as QAYN. These entities have made significant contributions independent of the support provided by ISDAO. Therefore, while ISDAO has undoubtedly played a crucial role, the impact and progress within the region cannot be attributed exclusively to its efforts.



## d. Contribution of ISDAO's grantmaking and technical support to its partners in West Africa

*"The capacity building on advocacy helps us build a national advocacy force to carry out our agenda. Its observable that the national movement is growing and more structured. We were even able with the law enforcement corps, to discuss our issues and advocate. We are developing journals and collective documentation to make more visible LGBTQI issues."*

—Grantee Partner

Movement partners strongly believe that ISDAO has had a significant impact on LGBTQI organizations in West Africa through its grantmaking. By funding LGBTQI groups that might otherwise not receive support, ISDAO has been pivotal in building the skills and capacities of activists, shifting power and narratives in philanthropy, and bolstering advocacy efforts. ISDAO empowers the communities it serves, allowing them to define their priorities and effectively receive grants, which, in turn strengthens their financial management capacities. Grantee partners have expressed that ISDAO has been instrumental in assisting grassroots organizations with registration process, enhancing staff capacity for a better division of labor, and developing strategies and structures that increase their chances of securing funding from other sources. ISDAO actively supports grantee partners in their fundraising efforts by providing feedback and sharing information on potential funding sources. Unlike some other donors, ISDAO does not impose specific areas of work on its grantees, enabling organizations to address community issues more effectively.

*"Having an office space allows us to have community members here, to gather more easily, to visit, to socialize, etc. ISDAO has given us the opportunity to meet and talk regularly through discussion groups, especially for organizations or communities that are not based in the main city and for which it may be more difficult to get a space. This space allows us to better build teamwork, but also to host our partners on occasion."*

—Grantee Partner

Furthermore, ISDAO's provision of an emergency fund allows grantee partners to respond to life-threatening situations in a timelier manner than traditional funding sources.

*"The movement building is ISDAO's biggest impact"*

—Donor

Overall, ISDAO's grantmaking has played a significant role in promoting LGBTQI rights, empowerment, and visibility across its target countries, leading to positive changes within organizations and the communities they serve. Three key points have emerged as some of the most significant changes across the nine focus countries:

- **Capacity Building and Empowerment:** ISDAO's grantmaking has played a crucial role in enhancing the capacity and empowerment of LGBTQI organizations and individuals. This includes providing training and strengthening the skills of staff and volunteers, empowering LGBTQI individuals to resist social stigma and humiliation, and supporting the development of smaller LGBTQI organizations.

*“One of the most significant changes is the flexibility that leads to core fundings, as our organizations do not have access to this type of funds. The flexibility helps growing organizations to build themselves. ISDAO doesn't give instructions but allows organizations to spend the grants on their real needs, priorities that they have made.”*

—Grantee Partner

- **Advocacy and Networking:** ISDAO's funding has facilitated advocacy activities aimed at promoting LGBTQI rights, combating discrimination, and influencing key policies at the national level. It has also fostered networking and collaboration among LGBTQI organizations and allies, leading to strategic alliances.
- **Organizational Development:** ISDAO's support has contributed to the creation and improvement of organizational structures within LGBTQI organizations in various countries. This includes the establishment of strategic plans, improved accounting systems, securing office premises, and the implementation of digital applications or observatories for documenting and monitoring cases of abuse and violence.

*“They making sure that the minority of the minority get access to fund and opportunity to grow. We can project all the acronym and make space for everyone to be visible and own the space as well. ISDAO has been our first funder, and they also help us access to information and support for other funds and technical assistance.”*

—Grantee Partner



## According to Grantee partners, some in-countries significant changes attributed to ISDAO are:

**In Benin**, the positive impact of ISDAO funding is evident in the establishment of organizational structures within LGBTQI organizations, enabling effective activism and advocacy activities. The funding has facilitated efficient actions against discrimination and violence targeting LGBTQI individuals. The most significant changes attributed to the funding received from ISDAO between 2019 and 2021 include the development of a digital application to document GBV cases, the creation of a national observatory for monitoring abuse, violence, and arbitrary arrests, and advances in the legal recognition and governance of LGBTQI associations.

**In Burkina Faso**, ISDAO funding has sustained capacity building, community mobilization, collaborations, and networking efforts. The funding has also supported inter-organizational activities that foster trust among LGBTQI individuals and groups, including support for LGBTQI individuals with disabilities. Noteworthy changes within the organizations in Burkina Faso between 2019 and 2021, linked to funding received from ISDAO, include forging strategic alliances, prioritizing key intervention work, establishing the ATK web radio, increased visibility of LGBTQI organizations at local and national levels, and multiple inter-associative collaborations for healthcare.

**In Côte d'Ivoire**, ISDAO funding has played a role in executing strategies for community outreach, engaging civil society groups, and advocating at the national level. The funding has supported advocacy actions for the employment and socio-economic integration of young LGBTQI graduates. Significant changes within organizations in Côte d'Ivoire between 2019 and 2021, linked to ISDAO funding, include the development of a strategic plan, improved collaboration with feminist movements, legal recognition through accreditation, enhanced accounting systems, and securing office premises.

**In Ghana**, ISDAO funding has facilitated education on fundamental human rights for LGBTQI individuals and empowered LGBT micro-business owners for growth. The funding has also contributed to enhancing the capacity of LGBTQI organizations and individuals to resist social stigma and humiliation. Notable changes within organizations in Ghana between 2019 and 2021, linked to funding received from ISDAO, include defending the rights of LGBTQI communities and individuals, capacity strengthening for staff and volunteers in documentation and leadership skills, and the establishment of organizational structures. Moreover, thanks to ISDAO funding, LGBTQI interventions have expanded beyond Accra, the national capital, to other cities and towns.

**In Liberia**, significant changes between 2019 and 2021 can be attributed to funding received from ISDAO. These changes include a reduction in negative perceptions of LGBTQI individuals, decreased levels of discrimination and injustice towards LGBTQI individuals, enhanced capacities of smaller LGBTQI organizations, and a boost in intervention activities aimed at improving rights and the quality of life for LGBTQI individuals.

**In Mali**, notable achievements with ISDAO funding include collaboration between 15 organizations (both LGBTQI and allies) to address homophobia and bridge knowledge gaps among health workers regarding LGBTQI themes and health needs. The funding has also supported advocacy activities with decision-makers to influence key policies in favor of LGBTQI individuals in national programs. The most significant shifts within Malian organizations between 2019 and 2021, attributed to the funding from ISDAO, encompass mobilizing allies, securing additional funding, enhancing safety and security measures, and amplifying capacity-building efforts.

**In Nigeria**, ISDAO funding has facilitated music advocacy activities and community sensitization workshops aimed at public awareness campaigns about gender, sexual diversity, and SOGIESC. Some LGBTQI organizations have effectively combated police brutality. The most significant changes attributed to funding received from ISDAO in Nigerian organizations between 2019 and 2021 include institutional strengthening, increased funding support, the establishment of a community audio and digital music studio, expanded media advocacy, promotion of safety and security, increased community awareness about rights, and greater visibility to state actors and the Federal Government of Nigeria.

**In Senegal**, ISDAO's funding has played a key role in supporting organizations' ability to conduct education on human rights. The funding has also enabled office space and salaries for some staff members, promoting psycho-social support and mental health. Notable changes between 2019 and 2021, linked to funding received from ISDAO, include more skilled work on human rights, strong support for activities related to psychosocial and mental health, and improved leadership, empowerment, and visibility.

**In Togo**, ISDAO's funding has addressed key challenges faced by Togolese organizations, allowing them to actively participate in the construction of the LGBTQI movement. The most significant changes between 2019 and 2021, linked to funding received from ISDAO, include mobilizing other resources, motivating staff members, reducing cases of GBV, increased recognition of trans people, the development of a strategic plan, and reforms in financial management functions within the organization.





## e. Contribution of ISDAO's grantmaking and technical support on its partners' work in West Africa

*"The research provided background for our own research and in turn indirectly informed our grantmaking".*

—Peer Funding Partner

While not all of ISDAO's donors are familiar with the specific details of the work done by ISDAO's grantees, Movement Partners and Peer Funding Partners provided valuable insights on how ISDAO's grantmaking and technical support have contributed to their work.

*"Thanks to ISDAO, we were able to legally register our organization. It's also the partner that helps us work on key issues, notably the socio-professional integration of trans people. Most of the funding available doesn't address this issue, even though it's a growing need in our communities. Accompaniment enables us to have an impact on many trans people, whose greatest need is socio-professional integration. This approach has inspired other organizations in Benin, so that today they too have created support programs for socio-professional integration. For us, this impact was made possible by ISDAO. Today, the opportunity has enabled trans people to have the resources to reorient themselves professionally when the formal sector becomes inaccessible."*

—Grantee partner


All Peer Funding Partners familiar with ISDAO's partners' work indicated that the grants, case studies, stories, and other resources provided by ISDAO, or its grantees have influenced their own organizations' funding decisions, grants awarded, or strategies. Some partners also mentioned that ISDAO provides support in reviewing strategic documents and offers references to aid them in making grantmaking decisions in the region. Grantee partners' work varies depending on their country context.

*"References provided by ISDAO for applicants to the Frontline AIDS Rapid Response form a part of building up information about applicants then enable a decision about suitability to manage a grant. Continuing to learn about devolving grant-making decisions and processes has helped shape the Rapid Response Fund's 'localization' workstream to support local and national emergency response mechanisms. "*

—Peer Funding Partner







However, some common points highlight both the progress and challenges faced by the LGBTQI community in ISDAO's target countries. Progress is evident in increasing self-expression, visibility, advocacy efforts, and collaborations with external stakeholders while challenges persist in terms of creating synergy among LGBTQI organizations, achieving grassroots impact, and addressing socio-economic divides within the community, as discussed below:

- **Progress in advocacy and self-expression:** In several countries, such as Benin, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire, there has been notable progress in advocacy efforts and self-expression by LGBTQI individuals. The LGBTQI community is becoming more visible, and there have been dedicated efforts to protect the interests and rights of LGBTQI persons.
- **Collaboration with external stakeholders:** In Liberia and Togo, there are ongoing collaborations with traditional rulers, clergy, law enforcement agents, and local partners to support the work of the LGBTQI community. These partnerships aim to create an enabling environment and improve access to care for LGBTQI individuals.

These examples demonstrate the positive impact of ISDAO's grantmaking and support in various countries, leading to advancements in LGBTQI rights, advocacy, and visibility. However, challenges such as the need to strengthen collaboration among LGBTQI organizations, enhance grassroots impact, and address socio-economic inequalities within the community continue to be important areas for attention and improvement.

Below are some examples of achievements per country.



## Grantee partners' work in the respective countries includes:

**In Benin**, the LGBTQI Movement has established a National Committee that works to protect the interests and rights of LGBTQI persons. This committee is responsible for drafting an alternative report in response to violations of LGBTQI rights in Benin. There are also indications of growing free expression among LGBTQI individuals.

**In Burkina Faso**, the impact and progress of the LGBTQI community are still in the early stages. The community is gradually breaking the silence and standing against discrimination and social stigma.

**In Côte d'Ivoire**, there has been significant progress in self-expression and acceptance for LGBTQI people, a success largely attributed to the efforts of LGBTQI community leaders. Local partners are leveraging legislative gains to advocate for more political change.

**In Ghana**, progress has been made in mobilizing for visibility, and there is a growing number of LGBTQI-led organizations empowering LGBTQI communities.

**In Liberia**, ongoing collaborations with Traditional Rulers, the Clergy, and Law Enforcement Agents are supporting the work of the LGBTQI community.

**In Mali**, shifting perspectives on gender identity and increased acceptance mark a distinct departure from past narratives, signaling progress and impact.

**In Nigeria**, LGBTQI organizations have achieved significant progress and impact in different communities, with more members advocating for their rights. However, there is a lack of synergy among LGBTQI-led organizations, leading to a "silos syndrome" and a divide between the "elite" and the "poor," potentially hindering progress at the grassroots level.

**In Senegal**, the progress of work within the LGBTQI community may be relatively low, focusing on awareness creation and creating an enabling environment for equal rights, healthcare plans, and conflict resolution among peers.

**In Togo**, key areas of progress and impact include the development of a health plan, access to care, and conflict resolution among peers.

## Case Study: Targeted Advocacy to Reduce Human Rights Violations

The lack of awareness in communities about their rights and how to assert them is a significant contributor to the rise in human rights violations and abuses. The more these communities believe they have no option but to accept the violence as legitimate, the more the violence escalates.

A grantee partner based in Taraba has directly experienced the challenges faced by the LGBTQI community. Through the grants, which enable a broader community presence, the organization discovered that members of the LGBTQI community in Taraba State were often victims of human rights abuses. Many were unaware of their rights or how to assert them, and local stakeholders were not well-informed about LGBTQI issues. As a result, the organization applied for and received a grant to establish a training and discussion space. This initiative had two primary strategies: first, to educate communities about human rights violations and the remedies available to them, and second, to build alliances and advocate with decision-makers in the Taraba area.

As a result, human rights violations have decreased. This positive shift was initially facilitated by the organization's training sessions and visits to local groups, police, and other law enforcement agencies. In total, approximately 30 stakeholders were involved. Building on this foundation, communities are now equipped to recognize and report instances of violence against them.

This is a success for the organization because now it has access to conversations with the stakeholders that were trained. Moreover, when a situation of violence occurs, some stakeholders such as the police inform the organization so that it can act before the situation possibly worsens.

This strategy, which worked in one conservative environment, can be transposed to others by adapting it to their realities.



## f. Grantee, Movement Partners, and Peer funding partners' priorities

### Grantee partners' priorities

To understand the priorities of grantee partners, we first examined the key challenges they face when advocating for LGBTQI rights in the region. Based on our conversations with these partners, we have categorized the cross-cutting issues into three main areas, as described below.

#### **Advocacy and Human Rights**

In every country, human rights violations and abuses persist as a significant and growing concern. These violations include arbitrary arrests, police brutality, and several cases of psychological abuse by state agents. While decriminalization is a medium to long-term goal in various countries, organizations currently prioritize targeted advocacy, outreach, and fostering an environment conducive to interventions and the growth of the groups they represent. Nevertheless, groups are increasingly participating in advocacy spaces and mechanisms such as the ACHPR, the UPR, and more recently the CSW, through the submission of shadow reports or participation in exchanges in these spaces. However, there's a pressing need for support in bolstering technical capacities, particularly in report writing and preparing for interventions and meetings in these spaces. In a broader sense, there's an essential need to fortify advocacy work, ensuring sustained achievements and cultivating enduring relationships with stakeholders.

#### **Security concerns**

In the nine intervention countries, organizations, activists, and online platforms grapple with security issues. While several resources have been produced to mitigate vulnerabilities, repressive contexts keep this issue at the forefront, underscoring the need for support in developing and/or implementing security plans. Regional or national meetings and exchange spaces can be established or utilized to promote available resources, or to organize learning sessions that empower groups and activists to reclaim and make better use of these resources.

#### **Social Structures and Barriers**

Anti-gender movements are gaining increasing visibility and platform. Relying on subjective interpretations of religious customs, traditions, and principles, they disseminate hate speech and call for violence against LGBTQI individuals. This fundamentalist movement is gaining momentum and inspiring legislative proposals or the intensification of punitive laws against LGBTQI people. Organizations mentioned the need for support in creating a narrative that challenges the anti-gender movement, either through the production of educational resources or through advocacy meetings with opinion leaders.



## Representation and Inclusion

The visibility and presence of organizations and activists from Trans, non-binary, LBQ women, and intersex groups have evolved over the years with the support of ISDAO. However, these groups consistently report a need for greater inclusion and representation, both in language and in projects, as well as within broader spaces. This ongoing process implies a deconstruction of patriarchal practices, deeply rooted in the organizations and the movement. On another front, Francophone groups often face language barriers, leading to challenges in accessing certain funding or engaging in discussions where French isn't fully integrated, or where the inclusion of Francophone activists and organizations isn't a priority. Addressing these challenges translates into support for greater language justice and inclusive philanthropic advocacy for the needs of Trans, non-binary, LBQ women, and intersex groups, as well as Francophone groups.



## When examining the target countries, grantee partners indicated the following key challenges they face when working for LGBTQI rights:

**In Benin:** Challenges include a lack of strategic allies who openly support the community, difficulties in registering as an LGBTQI organization, poor communication and visibility of network actions, a hostile and discriminatory social environment (transphobic or homophobic), limited funding, non-recognition of LGBTQI organizations, and ambiguity in the law concerning LGBTQI issues.

**In Burkina Faso:** Culturally rooted LGBTQI phobic attitudes, discrimination, and violence against LGBTQ+ people, housing rights challenges, poor coordination leading to inadequate pooling of resources and forces, gaps in labor rights, a legal vacuum on the situation of LGBTQI people, lack of empowerment for community members regarding their rights, an unstable socio-political environment, and the influence of journalists in their coverage of LGBTQI issues.

**In Côte d'Ivoire:** Main challenges include socio-cultural barriers, limited access to fair and equal justice, insufficient care for GBV survivors, low advocacy, discrimination and stigma, lack of psycho-social support, opposition from religious groups, and a gap in access to employment for all.

**In Ghana:** Challenges include insecurity, existing punitive and discriminatory laws, stigma, religious biases, unlawful arrests, limited or inadequate funding, and cyberbullying.

**In Liberia:** The Penal Law was cited as a major hindrance when working for LGBTQI rights in Liberia. Other challenges included negative religious views, limited funding, and opposition from local traditions and customs.

**In Mali:** Key challenges include a lack of long-term financing, persistent homophobia, lack of a security plan for LGBTQI individuals, stigmatization, and repression. Some national decision-makers lack necessary information and fail to consider specific health needs.

**In Nigeria:** Challenges include slow advocacy impact, social and institutional discrimination, internal opposition among fellow community members, poor remuneration, religious, cultural, and political biases, poor capacity of organizations, limited access to justice and justice systems, a fragmented national movement, ignorance of the law by stakeholders and non-stakeholders, limited funding support, safety and security issues, punitive laws, public backlash, negative policy environment, classism and division within the community, and opposition from state actors.

**In Senegal:** Key challenges faced by organizations working for LGBTQI rights in Senegal include individual and collective digital insecurity, lack of resources and funding, and a resurgence of homophobia.

**In Togo:** Challenges include punitive laws, insecurity, safety concerns of LGBTQI people in their daily lives, inadequate political framework, poor inclusion of LGBTQI in social programs, inequalities, stigma, discrimination, social media hate speech, religious beliefs, general intolerance in the population, homophobia, insufficient funds for prosecution, non-collaboration with other ODDHs (organizations working for human rights defense), and challenges related to avoiding duplication when documenting GBV cases.

These challenges resonate with the findings described in the “We Exist” and “Doundou” reports. Based on these challenges, grantee partners highlighted priority areas where additional support from ISDAO would be appreciated. The following are the focus areas:

**In Benin:** Grantee partners seek further support from ISDAO to enhance capacity building for LGBTQI organizations, including opportunities to participate in international conferences and similar forums. Additionally, they stress the importance of ensuring the sustainability of grant programs.

**In Burkina Faso:** Grantee partners request support in job creation initiatives, health and well-being programs, mentorship programs, and collaborations.

**In Côte d'Ivoire:** Project sustainability is a priority. Grantee partners suggest long-term funding plans to develop follow-up initiatives for ongoing projects. They also highlight the need for increased funding to foster collaboration among organizations, aiming to form a consortium for a robust national movement.

**In Ghana:** In addition to wanting increased funding for multiple LGBTQI organizations, grantee partners seek technical support from ISDAO on engaging health service providers, lawyers, traditional rulers, clergy, and security personnel to protect LGBT individuals within society.

**In Liberia:** Grantee partners request increased stakeholder engagement concerning LGBTQI individual rights, safety, and security. Additionally, they emphasize the need for advocacy campaigns, emergency relocation support, training initiatives, and exchange visits for educational purposes. Moreover, they call strongly for assistance in ensuring fair justice and enhancing food security.

**In Mali:** Grantee partners are requesting the establishment of spaces or opportunities for regional advocacy meetings, along with technical and financial support, documentation, and remote coaching.

**In Nigeria:** Grantee partners propose that ISDAO maintain a database of previous grantees and engage them for re-application to sustain their earlier work. They also suggest allocating special funds for training and educating LGBTQI individuals in informal settings to reduce stigma and victimization. Additionally, they seek more funding for capacity building, collaborations, partnerships, and town hall meetings within Nigeria.

**In Senegal:** Grantee partners indicated the necessity for capacity building, the advancement of innovative advocacy formats, the enhancement of digital security, and the assurance of sustainability for accomplishments (including management and organizational development).

**In Togo:** Grantee partners express the need for ISDAO's assistance in funding the development of a regional advocacy plan through consultation. They also emphasize strengthening organizations' advocacy capacity and tools. Setting up regional meetings between organizations in different countries to share knowledge and receive technical support is also deemed beneficial.



## In their words:

*"At the national level, organize meetings between the organizations of each country, provide substantial subsidies for urgent actions, and sign a contract with a legal assistant to assist the organizations. At the regional level, create a network of beneficiary organizations to promote the sharing of experience."*

—Grantee Partners (Togo)

*"Develop a regional advocacy plan through consultation—further strengthening the capacity of organizations on how to conduct advocacy and how to develop advocacy tools."*

—Grantee Partners (Togo)

*"For us, increased capacity and the strengthening of our workforce will go a long way toward improving the quality of our impact. Also, increasing multi-year funding support would be quite beneficial to us."*

—Grantee Partner (Nigeria)

*"At the national level, we hope that [ISDAO] will help to encourage organizations to collaborate and work in the consortium. Prioritize funding in the consortium and also support the establishment of La Coupole Akwaba's network so that in Côte d'Ivoire there is a real movement. Funding needs to be increased. Initiate projects that last up to two years so that organizations engage in long-term actions."*

—Grantee Partners (Côte d'Ivoire)

*"ISDAO can further help us to respond to some of the challenges at the national level by making financial resources available to LGBTQI organizations for the sustainability of initiatives already undertaken and for new initiatives. Also, by supporting our organizations in building our capacities through the provision of consultants and experts."*

—Grantee Partners (Côte d'Ivoire)

*"ISDAO can further support us in engaging the larger society especially; health services providers, traditional rulers, and priests/priestesses, state security officials for better protection of LGBT individuals in the society."*

—Grantee Partner Ghana

### Movement Partners' priorities

Regarding Movement Partners, their collaboration with ISDAO primarily focused on the development of country and regional reports, the assessment and evaluation of ISDAO's needs, capacity building for LGBTQI partners, research and evaluation, baseline studies on gender ideologies and anti-gender campaigns, and media representation.

Most Movement Partners stated that they had engaged in either direct or indirect collaborations with ISDAO in the past. These collaborations covered a range of support, including general assistance (like grants and operations) and certain restricted grants (supporting areas such as communications work, COVID impact mitigation, protection issues, community care, and restorative justice). Additionally, there remain opportunities for further collaboration and complementarity of action with ISDAO in the upcoming years or months. Such collaboration could involve information sharing, capacity strengthening, support for civil society organizations, and joint funding to partners for areas or topics that they do not directly support or may be restricted from funding.



## Peer Funding Partners' priorities

We focused on understanding the perceived areas of collaboration between Peer Funding Partners and ISDAO. In general, the collaborations were characterized by mutual support and a willingness to learn from each other, taking into account both similarities and differences in Peer Funding Partners' operations. They expressed that working with ISDAO in a responsive and open manner made the collaboration productive and amicable, and they encouraged its continuation. Additionally, Peer Funding Partners highlighted opportunities for further collaboration and complementarity of action with ISDAO in the upcoming years or months. These opportunities include information sharing, capacity strengthening, and support for civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as joint funding for partners in areas where PEPFAR/USAID may not have the authorization to provide funding, for instance.

## In their words:

*"Bridging into Central Africa and working with Francophone countries more purposefully is very key and a possible opportunity for collaboration and complementarity of action with ISDAO in the coming years."*

*"We would be interested in deepening the working relationship around philanthropic advocacy and the production of useful knowledge for the movements and the political education of the financial partners."*

*"Opportunities for future collaboration and complementarity of action with ISDAO are recommended concerning capacity strengthening support for CSOs and joint funding to partners."*

*"There is an opportunity to explore collaboration and complementarity of action with ISDAO in the coming years or months, especially on information sharing and donor-facing advocacy."*

—Peer Funding Partners



# Recommendations

The consultant team largely agrees with the recommendations provided by ISDAO's Donors, Peer Funding Partners, and Grantee Partners. These recommendations focus on key areas such as movement building, advocacy, knowledge production, and increasing funding access for LGBTQI communities, particularly at the grassroots level, with a special emphasis on supporting Francophone communities. The consultants have further expanded on these recommendations and offer additional suggestions for ISDAO's consideration.

## From Grantee Partners:

- Increase the amount of emergency funds provided through the RESPOND Fund to better address emergencies in the region.
- Continue efforts to increase funding for Francophone countries, possibly by hiring more Francophone staff.
- Simplify the proposal submission process for returning grantees to avoid redundant document submissions.
- Continue supporting low-profile and emerging groups, including intersex people and LGBTQI individuals facing multiple challenges.
- Strengthen and make multi-year funding available, especially for capacity building and advocacy efforts.

## From Donors:

- Increase ISDAO's visibility as an independent organization, separate from UHAI, to enhance its sustainability.
- Strengthen institutional capacity to ensure eligibility for larger funding opportunities.
- Hire more staff and implement measures to protect and secure them.
- Adapt and grow in ways that respond to the movement's needs while fostering accountability and solidarity.
- Invest in more advocacy spaces and target higher levels of influence like the AU and UN.
- Continue conducting research on the evolving landscape of LGBTQI organizing and funding impact.
- Advocate for other funders to increase their support for LGBTQI initiatives.

## From Peer Funding Partners:

- Strengthen collaboration with other Peer Funding Partners to ensure complementarity of actions.
- Enhance collaborative work on resource production and philanthropic advocacy through improved communication and ongoing collaborations.

## Additional Recommendations from the Consultant Team:

- Develop metrics to track ISDAO's impact in the region to better measure and attribute positive developments to its grantmaking.
- Consider including Lusophone countries in efforts by hiring Lusophone staff to assess needs and plan future actions.
- By implementing these recommendations, ISDAO can further strengthen its support to LGBTQI communities, enhance its impact, and build stronger partnerships with various stakeholders in the region.

## **TASIRI : ISDAO Grant Impact Assessment Report (2019-2021)**

### **Editing:**

Elnathan John (English)

Fabrice Akey (French)

### **Translation:**

Fabrice Akey

### **Layout and graphic design:**

Njau Samson



### **INITIATIVE SANKOFA D'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST**

ISDAO is an activist-led fund dedicated to building a West African movement that advocates for sexual diversity and sexual rights through a flexible approach to grantmaking and strengthening a culture of philanthropy that promotes human rights and social justice.

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 [ISDAOSankofa](https://twitter.com/ISDAOSankofa)

 [info@isdao.org](mailto:info@isdao.org)

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