

ISDAO

ALODO

RESPOND Fund Impact
Assessment Report
(2020–2024)



ALODO: RESPOND Fund Impact Assessment Report (2020-2024)

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The title of this report is inspired by the word ‘Alodo,’ which signifies, in the Fon and Ewe languages, mutual aid (literally ‘hand in hand’). It refers to an action carried out by several people. The Fon and Ewe languages are spoken in several countries in West Africa and beyond, including Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo.

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Table of Contents

3	Acknowledgments
5	Preamble
6	Abbreviations
7	Overview
	a. Overview of the RESPOND Fund
	b. Love Alliance
	c. Overview of RESPOND Fund stakeholders
9	Methodology
	a. Ethical considerations
	b. Approach, design, and scope
	c. Initial meetings
	d. Literature review
	e. Sampling strategy and data collection
	f. Data analysis
	g. Limitations of the evaluation/Challenges encountered
13	Assessment Findings
	a. Grantee partners' definition of an emergency
	b. RESPOND Fund impact on LGBTQI organizations (2020–2024)
	c. Key results and effective practices identified
	d. Barriers faced by RESPOND fund grantees and adaptive strategies employed
33	Case Study
	a. Background and context
	b. Reach and coverage in Nigeria and Burkina Faso
	c. Types of emergencies addressed
	d. Stories of change: evidence from the field
37	Recommendations to ISDAO and donors funding the LGBTQI movement in West Africa
	a. Priority Actions (Immediate Impact)
	b. Secondary & operational actions (strengthening quality, consistency & sustainability)
	c. Additional strategic recommendation (cross-cutting)

Preamble

This evaluation assesses the contributions and outcomes of ISDAO's RESPOND Fund over the grant period spanning 2020–2024, with emerging qualitative insights drawn from early 2025. The year 2025 is not included in the core analysis period because the 2025 grants had only just been disbursed at the time this evaluation was conducted. The primary objective of the evaluation was to provide an objective, comprehensive, and evidence-based analysis of the Fund's impact during this period. As external evaluators, we conducted the assessment with the highest standards of professionalism, transparency, and adherence to recognized industry best practices.

The evaluation employed a rigorous methodological approach, incorporating document review, data collection, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and benchmarking against relevant industry standards.

It is important to note that this evaluation was conducted independently and without any organizational affiliation or bias. While ISDAO supported the process by facilitating access to contact information for donors and funded organizations, the organization was not involved in the data collection, analysis, or interpretation of findings. The evaluation team maintained a neutral and impartial stance throughout, relying solely on evidence-based data to present an accurate and balanced assessment of the Fund's performance.

All information gathered during the evaluation was treated with the utmost confidentiality. The findings presented in this report are grounded in data and evidence provided by ISDAO and the various categories of stakeholders engaged in the evaluation process.

While the evaluation seeks to generate meaningful insights into the performance and impact of ISDAO's RESPOND Fund, it also acknowledges that continuous improvement is integral to organizational growth. Accordingly, the recommendations outlined in this report are intended to be constructive and forward-looking, supporting ISDAO in strengthening and maximizing the Fund's impact.

We trust that the findings and recommendations presented herein will serve as a foundation for informed dialogue, learning, and strategic action in relation to ISDAO's RESPOND Fund.

Abbreviations

AGMP	Activist Grant Making Panel
EJAF	Elton John AIDS Foundation
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
ISDAO	Initiative Sankofa D’Afrique de l’Ouest
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PWUD	People Who Use Drugs
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SWs	Sex Workers

Overview

a. Overview of the RESPOND Fund

The RESPOND Fund is a rapid-response support mechanism established by ISDAO to provide timely financial assistance to grantee partners funded through the Regional Activist Grant Making Panel (AGMP) and the Love Alliance (for the Love Alliance partners). The RESPOND Fund was designed from the outset to support collective responses at the movement level or even across movements (within the framework of the Love Alliance). Through the RESPOND Fund, ISDAO disburses emergency grants of USD 1,000 to support LGBTQI organizations in West Africa to address urgent safety, security, and emergency-related needs that may arise during the implementation of their core grant activities in each grant cycle.

The Fund is designed to be flexible and responsive, enabling grantee partners to identify and prioritize emergency needs based on their specific contexts and risk environments. Use of the RESPOND Fund is documented through existing grant reporting processes to ensure accountability while minimizing administrative burden for grantee partners.

b. Love Alliance

As part of the overview of the RESPOND Fund, this evaluation includes organizations led by sex workers (SW) and people who use drugs (PWUD) communities, as they received RESPOND Fund grants through the Love Alliance initiative.

The Love Alliance¹ is a five-year initiative (2021–2025) aimed at advancing the health and empowerment of LGBTQI communities, sex workers, and people who use drugs (PWUD) through a more inclusive and people-centered sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) approach. It is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under its SRHR Fund and implemented in partnership with key stakeholders, including ISDAO. In West Africa, the Love Alliance operates in Burkina Faso and Nigeria. Through grant-making, accompaniment, and support for advocacy, movement building, and organizing led by LGBTQI movements, PWUD, and sex workers, the initiative seeks to strengthen national and sub-regional advocacy and deepen activists' engagement in key decision-making spaces. It promotes greater recognition of intersectionality

1 <https://isdao.org/en/special-initiatives/>

and the interconnected nature of struggles across these communities, contributing to more diverse and united movements. While complementing ISDAO's ongoing work to strengthen LGBTQI movements across West Africa, the Love Alliance advances ISDAO's broader vision of a fairer and more inclusive region, with a holistic focus on addressing structural drivers of HIV prevalence, including stigma, discrimination, gender-based violence, and patriarchy.

c. Overview of RESPOND Fund stakeholders

The RESPOND Fund engages several stakeholder groups, each playing distinct roles in the design, financing, and implementation of the mechanism:

- * ISDAO, which administers and disburses RESPOND Fund resources to eligible grantee partners and oversees implementation.
- * ISDAO grantee partners, which deploy RESPOND Fund resources to respond to urgent safety, security, and emergency needs in their contexts.
- * Direct donors to the RESPOND Fund, which provide funding specifically earmarked for the Fund: The only donor that has provided funding specifically and directly earmarked for the RESPOND Fund is the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF). In addition, the RESPOND Fund has been supported as part of the Love Alliance program (with Love Alliance partners receiving emergency funds from the Love Alliance). Other regular donors to ISDAO have also contributed to RESPOND activities through their unrestricted/global grants to ISDAO, enabling the Fund's operations since its inception (prior to EJAF's involvement).
- * Indirect donors: as mentioned above, these are donors who provide flexible funding to ISDAO's overall grantmaking. From this funding, ISDAO makes allocations towards the RESPOND Fund at its discretion. In other words, these are global grants to ISDAO from which ISDAO is able to fund the RESPOND Fund.

Methodology

This section outlines the ethical considerations that guided the evaluation and summarizes the evaluation design, scope, target audiences, sampling and data collection, analysis approaches, and limitations.

a. Ethical considerations

The evaluation adhered to the following ethical principles:

- * **Voluntary participation:** All participants (survey respondents, interviewees, and focus group participants) participated voluntarily and could withdraw at any time without providing justification.
- * **Informed consent:** Participants were informed of the purpose and intended use of the assessment in advance, including at the start of interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires.
- * **Confidentiality:** Personal data collected through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions were not shared with third parties.
- * **Do no harm:** The evaluation team took steps to ensure the assessment did not cause physical, social, psychological, or other harm to participants.



b. Approach, design, and scope

The primary objective of this evaluation is to assess the contributions and outcomes of ISDAO's RESPOND Fund and examine how it has contributed to supporting the communities it was designed to serve. The evaluation also identifies opportunities to strengthen the Fund's sustainability over time. In addition, it provides insight into how grantee partners define emergencies and how emergency needs have been addressed through the Fund.

This summative evaluation examines the contribution of the RESPOND Fund to enhancing the safety and protection of LGBTQI communities in West Africa over the period 2020–2024. Data from 2025 is included as qualitative context only, as allocations were recently disbursed.

Data was collected using a mixed-methods approach, including a desk review of relevant documentation, an online survey, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to provide a balanced assessment of the Fund's performance and results.

c. Initial meetings

The evaluation team conducted initial interviews with ISDAO staff to clarify expectations, confirm evaluation priorities, and address any questions. Findings from these consultations informed updates to the assessment workplan.

d. Literature review

To strengthen understanding of the Fund, its implementation context, and observed outcomes, the evaluation team conducted a literature review focused primarily on grantee reports that included documentation of RESPOND Fund use. These reports provided insight into the types of emergencies addressed and, where available, the amounts spent and numbers of people supported.

e. Sampling strategy and data collection

Between 2020 and 2024, ISDAO disbursed 369 RESPOND Fund grants through the AGMP. While some partners received support over multiple years, 110 unique organizations benefited during this period. All organizations that received RESPOND support between 2020 and 2024 were included in the survey sampling frame. At the time of the evaluation, RESPOND Fund allocations for 2025 had only recently been disbursed.

The RESPOND Fund has a single direct donor, who constituted the full donor sample and was interviewed as part of the evaluation. Nine ISDAO staff members with direct knowledge of and involvement in the RESPOND Fund were also included in the sample.

The total evaluation sample comprised 231 respondents, primarily staff from grantee partner organizations (221; 95.7% for the survey and the focus group discussions), alongside ISDAO staff (9; 3.9%) and one donor (0.4%). The evaluation therefore draws predominantly on grantee perspectives, complemented by operational, strategic, and funding-related insights from ISDAO staff and the donor.

Data collection yielded 134 completed grantee surveys from staff members of partner organizations (there are instances where more than one staff from grantee organizations took the survey), and seven staff surveys from ISDAO staff. Survey participation among grantees was considered satisfactory given the security-sensitive and time-bound nature of emergency response work. Eight grantee survey responses were excluded from quantitative analysis due to early termination or incomplete responses to core evaluation questions. All seven ISDAO staff survey responses were complete and included.

Qualitative data were collected through one donor interview and five focus group discussions (FGDs) with grantee partners to deepen interpretation of survey findings. FGDs were conducted in English and French to ensure inclusivity across Anglophone and Francophone contexts, reflecting the geographic distribution of grantees across ISDAO's nine focus countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo. Participant selection was informed by survey responses (including consent to follow-up) and balanced by country, organizational role, and experience with RESPOND-supported emergency response.

f. Data analysis

Qualitative data were coded and organized into themes and subthemes. The evaluation team compared and harmonized coding frameworks across data sources, followed by joint review and consolidation prior to drafting findings. This approach supported triangulation and strengthened confidence in patterns identified across the dataset.

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using Excel and SurveyMonkey.

g. Limitations of the evaluation/ Challenges encountered

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings:

- * The evaluation draws primarily on self-reported data from grantee organizations, ISDAO staff, and focus group participants. While appropriate for capturing perceptions and lived experience, this may introduce recall or response bias.
- * Respondent distribution across countries is uneven, limiting the reliability of country-level comparisons and broader generalizability in contexts with small sample sizes.
- * Documentation and quantification of emergency interventions vary by year and context due to the rapid, sensitive, and security-constrained nature of emergency response work, which limits systematic measurement of reach and outcomes.
- * The evaluation focuses on short-term results and perceived impact rather than longitudinal outcome tracking, limiting assessment of sustained change.
- * For ethical and security reasons, some details were anonymized or omitted, limiting the depth of case-level analysis but necessary to protect individuals and organizations.
- * FGDs were conducted during the first week of December, coinciding with high workloads for many partners due to activities linked to the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

Assessment Findings

a. Grantee partners' definition of an emergency

Grantee organizations define an emergency as a sudden, high-risk situation that poses an immediate threat to the safety, freedom, health, or survival of LGBTQI individuals, or the organizations that support them. Emergencies are most commonly associated with arrests, violence, exposure, forced displacement, health crises, and service disruption, often driven by criminalization and hostile social environments. These situations are typically urgent, unpredictable, and lack alternative support mechanisms, requiring rapid and flexible intervention.

Across the evaluation, grantee definitions of emergencies clustered into the following categories:

1. Immediate threats to life, physical safety, or freedom

Emergencies are frequently defined as situations involving imminent danger, including:

- Arrests, detention, or police raids
- Mob violence, attacks, or threats of physical harm
- Forced displacement or urgent relocation

Respondents emphasized that emergencies are situations where delays could result in serious harm, detention, or death, and rapid intervention is required to prevent escalation.

2. Criminalization-driven crises

Many organizations link emergencies directly to laws and enforcement practices that criminalize:

- LGBTQI identities and expression
- Sex work
- Drug use

In these contexts, emergencies often involve state or non-state actors invoking criminalization, leading to arrests, extortion, blackmail, or violence.

3. Health and medical emergencies

Organizations also define emergencies as situations involving urgent health needs, particularly when systems fail or discrimination restricts access to services. Examples include:

- Injuries resulting from violence or attacks
- Emergency medical care following arrest or abuse
- Mental health crises linked to exposure, trauma, or threats

Discrimination within public health facilities frequently compounds these emergencies, increasing reliance on emergency funding.

4. Exposure, visibility, and reputational risk

A consistent theme across contexts is sudden exposure, including:

- Social media outing
- Community denunciation
- Media coverage or public shaming

In these cases, visibility itself becomes dangerous and can quickly trigger threats, violence, or state action.

5. Organizational survival and service disruption

Some organizations define emergencies at the organizational level, including:

- Threats forcing offices to close
- Inability to operate due to security risks
- Sudden loss of access to staff, beneficiaries, or safe spaces

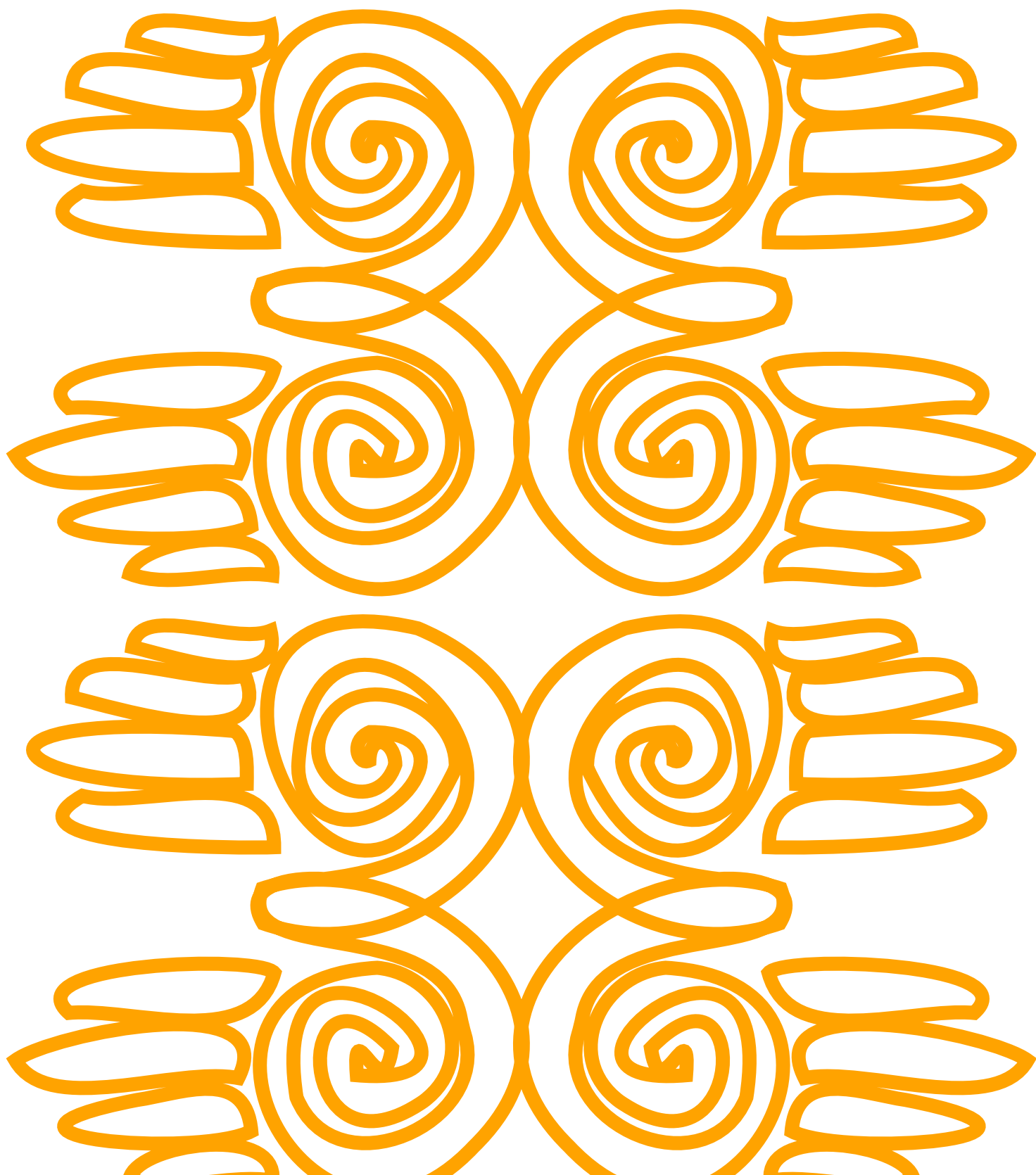
Here, an emergency is any event that temporarily halts an organization's ability to function or protect its community.

6. Cross-cutting characteristics of an “Emergency”

Across countries and contexts, grantees describe emergencies as:

- Sudden and unpredictable
- Time-sensitive (requiring action within hours or days)
- High-risk (legal, physical, psychological)
- Under-resourced (no alternative funding available)
- Context-specific (requiring local judgment rather than preset criteria)

Importantly, organizations emphasized that emergencies are not always large-scale; many are individual or small-group crises with severe consequences. The way grantee partners define “emergency” in the evaluation is fully aligned with the operational definition reflected in RESPOND Fund project reports, which consistently frame **emergencies as high-risk situations requiring immediate intervention to protect safety, freedom, health, or organizational continuity.**



b. RESPOND Fund impact on LGBTQI organizations (2020–2024)

This chapter presents the evaluation findings on the RESPOND Fund’s contributions to LGBTQI organizations in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo** between **2020** and **2024**. While attributing direct causality in complex emergencies is challenging, the data highlights RESPOND Fund’s specific contribution to stabilizing organizations and protecting lives. The analysis draws on quantitative and qualitative data from organization-level surveys of RESPOND recipients, complemented by inputs from ISDAO staff. Findings are structured using the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability) to provide a systematic, donor-relevant assessment of performance and results.

“Benefiting from the Respond Fund showed how readily available emergency support (on ground) can go beyond immediate relief, it can restore hope, strengthen resilience and empower survivors to become advocates for change within their own community”.

—Focus Group Discussion

Overall, evidence indicates that RESPOND has functioned as a highly relevant, effective, and efficient emergency funding mechanism, particularly in contexts shaped by criminalization, violence, and shrinking civic space. At the same time, the findings highlight the structural limits of emergency funding in delivering long-term sustainability without complementary recovery or resilience-oriented support.

Summary of perceptions across OECD/DAC criteria

The table below summarizes grantee partner perceptions of the RESPOND Fund’s performance across the **OECD/DAC evaluation criteria**, drawing on organization-level survey data. Scores reflect mean ratings (on a 5-point scale where applicable) and the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each indicator.

Table 1. Summary of RESPOND Fund performance against OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (2020–2024)

OECD/DAC Criterion	Indicator (Survey Statement)	Mean Score	% Agree / Strongly Agree
Relevance	Addressed the most urgent community needs	4.75	91.8%
Coherence	Aligned with other org activities	-	89.7% (Yes)
	Collaborated with other orgs during emergencies	-	78.3% (Yes)
Effectiveness	Effectively supported emergency response	4.53	85.8%
Impact (Movement)	Strengthened community resilience	4.61	79.1%
	Contributed to LGBTQI movement priorities	4.62	86.6%
Impact (Civic Space)	Contributed to broader LGBTQI advocacy/civic space	4.04	60.4%
Sustainability	Outcomes sustainable beyond funding period	3.89	55.2%
	Strengthened capacity for future crises	4.07	63.4%

Source: Organizations survey

Overall, the RESPOND Fund performs strongest on **relevance**, **effectiveness**, and **movement-level impact**, indicating that it is well aligned with urgent community needs and effective in enabling timely emergency responses. Ratings related to **coherence** further suggest that RESPOND is well integrated into organizational mandates and supports collective, movement-oriented responses. By contrast, **sustainability** scores are more mixed, reflecting the structural limitations of short-term emergency funding in generating durable outcomes without complementary recovery or resilience-oriented support. This pattern is consistent with the Fund’s design as a rapid-response mechanism rather than a long-term development intervention.

OECD/DAC Findings

1. Relevance: Addressing urgent and life-threatening needs

Survey respondents rated RESPOND's relevance very highly, reflecting the Fund's strong alignment with urgent community protection needs.

- **Organizations:** Mean relevance score **4.75/5** (n=126); **97.6%** rated 4-5 ("approve/strongly approve").
- **ISDAO staff:** Mean relevance score **4.71/5** (n=7).
- **Country pattern (mean /5):** Highest ratings in **Ghana (5.00)** and **Liberia (5.00)**; lowest (still strong) in **Côte d'Ivoire (4.22)** and **Benin (4.50)**.

Qualitative evidence reinforces that RESPOND resources are used during moments of acute crisis (including arrests, exposure, violence, medical emergencies, forced displacement, and imminent organizational shutdown) where alternative funding sources are often inaccessible or too slow. This consistency across contexts confirms that RESPOND is well aligned with the operational realities of LGBTQI organizations in West Africa and addresses a clear gap in the emergency funding ecosystem.

RESPOND is perceived as highly relevant across all countries, consistently meeting urgent needs in time-sensitive, high-risk situations.

2. Coherence: Alignment, coordination, and collective action

RESPOND demonstrates strong coherence with both organizational mandates and movement-level emergency response practices.

Alignment: **89.7%** of organizations reported that RESPOND-funded interventions aligned with their ongoing work (n=126).

Coordination: **78.3%** collaborated with at least one other organization during a RESPOND-supported emergency (n=129).

Resource pooling and mutual aid:

- 44.2% pooled funds with another organization for a specific emergency (n=129).
- 45.0% contributed some or all RESPOND resources into a collective/pooled mechanism (n=129).
- 78.2% used RESPOND to support an emergency involving individuals who were not formal members of their organization (n=133).

These patterns suggest that RESPOND strengthens a broader ecosystem of mutual aid and collective protection. Rather than driving isolated responses, the Fund appears to reinforce solidarity and coordination among organizations, particularly in high-risk contexts.

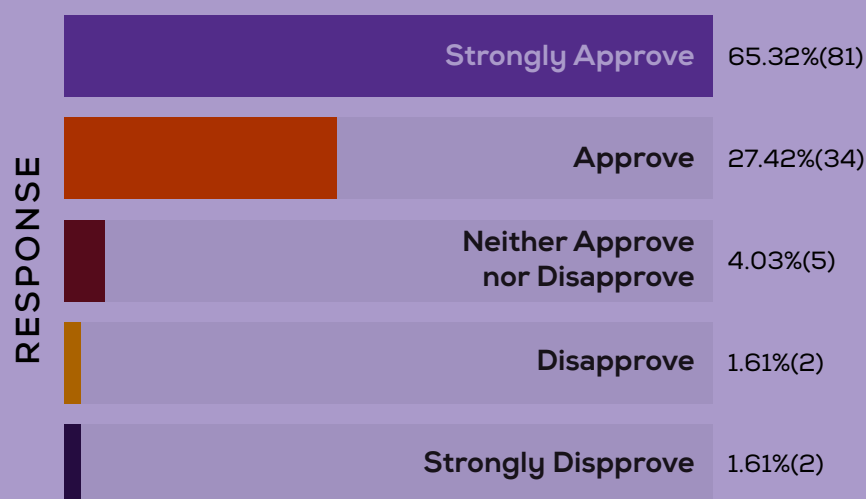
RESPOND is well integrated into existing organizational work and supports movement-level coordination, including mutual aid and spillover support.

3. Effectiveness: Delivering timely emergency responses

Evidence from both quantitative ratings and qualitative narratives indicates that RESPOND has been highly effective in enabling rapid and appropriate emergency interventions.

- **Organizations:** Mean effectiveness score **4.53/5** (n=124); **92.7%** rated 4-5.
- **ISDAO staff:** Mean rating for grant processes **4.71/5** (n=7).
- **Country pattern (mean /5):** Highest ratings in **Burkina Faso (4.75)**, **Ghana (4.75)**, and **Liberia (4.75)**; lower relative (still strong) in **Togo (4.00)** and **Côte d'Ivoire (4.33)**.

Figure 1: The RESPOND Fund effectively supported emergencies



Source: Grantee partner survey

Qualitative data highlight that effectiveness is closely linked to RESPOND's operational design: rapid decision-making, flexible use of funds, and low administrative requirements enable organizations to act quickly when delays could increase harm.

RESPOND is effective in achieving its core purpose thus enabling timely emergency responses in contexts where speed and flexibility are essential.

4. Efficiency: Value for money and streamlined processes

RESPOND is widely perceived as an efficient use of limited resources, reflecting both streamlined grant processes and the appropriateness of the support provided.

Organizations emphasized that efficiency is driven by:

- simplified application and reporting requirements;
- flexibility in expenditure decisions; and
- trust-based relationships that reduce transaction costs during crises.

Given the relatively small size of most RESPOND grants, respondents emphasized that “value for money” is best understood through timeliness and appropriateness rather than scale. Median beneficiary numbers per intervention are modest, reflecting the individualized and protection-focused nature of emergency responses; however, stakeholders consistently described outcomes as proportionate to investment.

RESPOND delivers strong value for money by minimizing transaction costs and enabling rapid, context-appropriate response.

5. Impact: Community resilience, movement continuity, and civic space

5.1 Movement-level impact and resilience

RESPOND’s most consistent impacts are observed at the level of resilience and movement continuity.

- **Strengthened community resilience:** Mean **4.61/5** (n=113); **93.8%** rated 4-5.
- **Contributed to LGBTQI movement priorities:** Mean **4.62/5** (n=126); **92.1%** rated 4-5.
- **ISDAO staff:** “Measurable impact on communities” mean **4.57/5** (n=7).

Qualitative findings suggest that emergency interventions support not only individual protection outcomes, but also organizational continuity, reduced burnout, and the preservation of movement infrastructure in hostile environments.

RESPOND strengthens resilience and supports continuity of LGBTQI movements by helping organizations remain functional during crises.

5.2 Civic space and advocacy effects

Perceived contributions to broader advocacy and civic space were positive but more variable, reflecting RESPOND's primary focus on protection and stabilization rather than structural advocacy.

- **Advocacy/civic space contribution:** Mean **4.04/5** (n=109); **74.3%** rated 4-5.
- **Country variation (mean /5):** Higher in **Liberia (4.50)**, **Ghana (4.38)**, **Nigeria (4.32)**; lower in **Côte d'Ivoire (2.86)**, **Mali (3.33)**, **Burkina Faso (3.50)**.

Several respondents nonetheless described indirect civic space effects such as strengthened credibility, improved relationships with local actors, or the ability to resume advocacy after stabilization.

RESPOND has meaningful indirect civic space effects, but these are secondary and context dependent.

6. Sustainability: Preparedness versus long-term outcomes

Sustainability emerges as the most constrained criterion, which is typical for emergency-response mechanisms. Respondents more frequently identified improvements in preparedness and crisis capacity than sustained outcomes beyond the funding period.

- **Outcomes sustainable beyond funding period:** Mean **3.89/5** (n=113); **65.5%** rated 4-5.
- **Strengthened capacity for future crises:** Mean **4.07/5** (n=113); **75.2%** rated 4-5.
- **ISDAO staff:** "Incorporated sustainability strategies" mean **3.71/5** (n=7).

Organizations described sustainability primarily in terms of improved systems and readiness (protocols, referral networks, coordination mechanisms, and institutional learning) rather than long-term resolution of structural risk drivers such as criminalization or chronic insecurity. These findings suggest that sustainability could be strengthened by linkages to longer-term recovery and resilience-oriented support.

RESPOND supports preparedness and adaptive capacity, but long-term sustainability remains limited without complementary funding streams.

7. Country snapshots

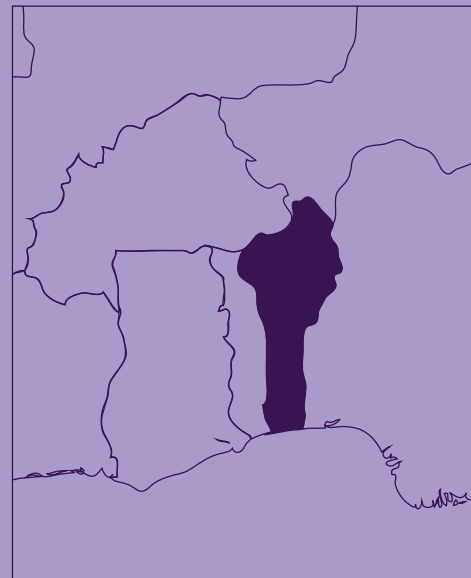
Benin

Context and risk environment: LGBTQI organizations in Benin operate in a context of intermittent but recurring risk, including exposure, localized violence, and service disruption.

What RESPOND enabled: RESPOND support enabled organizations to respond rapidly to discrete emergencies, facilitate short-term protection measures, and coordinate with peer organizations when crises arose.

Key pattern observed: While beneficiary reach per intervention is typically modest, RESPOND funding is perceived as highly relevant and well aligned with organizational mandates. Sustainability scores are comparatively stronger than in several other countries.

Implications: In Benin, RESPOND appears to contribute not only to immediate crisis response but also to incremental improvements in preparedness and organizational learning.



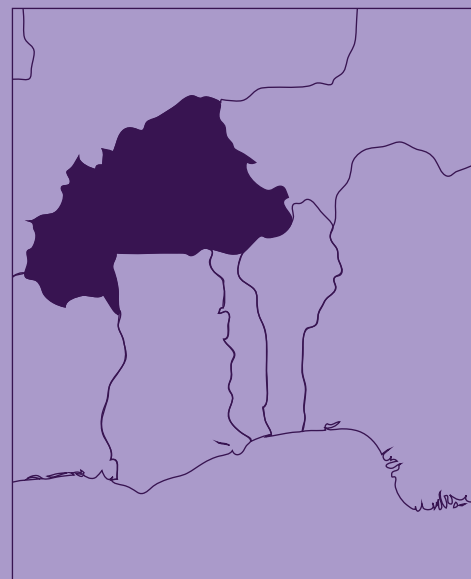
Burkina Faso

Context and risk environment: Burkina Faso is characterized by insecurity, political instability, and heightened risk for LGBTQI communities.

What RESPOND enabled: RESPOND funding supported emergency protection measures and helped organizations maintain service continuity for highly vulnerable populations during periods of acute crisis.

Key pattern observed: Organizations report very high relevance and effectiveness, alongside strong collaboration. Perceived advocacy and civic space impacts are lower, reflecting a focus on survival-oriented interventions.

Implications: RESPOND plays a critical role in sustaining organizational presence and preventing service collapse in highly volatile contexts.



Côte d'Ivoire

Context and risk environment: LGBTQI organizations face episodic emergencies linked to exposure, arrests, and social hostility, though conditions are less consistently volatile than in some neighboring countries.

What RESPOND enabled: RESPOND funding enabled timely emergency responses focused on immediate protection and stabilization.

Key pattern observed: While relevance and efficiency remain high, perceived contributions to advocacy and civic space are comparatively lower.

Implications: In Côte d'Ivoire, RESPOND fills an essential emergency protection niche but is less connected to longer-term movement or policy engagement.



Ghana

Context and risk environment: Ghana presents a comparatively enabling but increasingly unpredictable environment, with periodic surges in risk.

What RESPOND enabled: RESPOND consistently enabled swift, appropriate responses to emergencies, with strong perceived value for money.

Key pattern observed: Ghana records some of the strongest ratings across relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, alongside more visible movement and civic space effects than in several other contexts.

Implications: Emergency stabilization in Ghana appears to support continued engagement and advocacy where the operating environment allows.



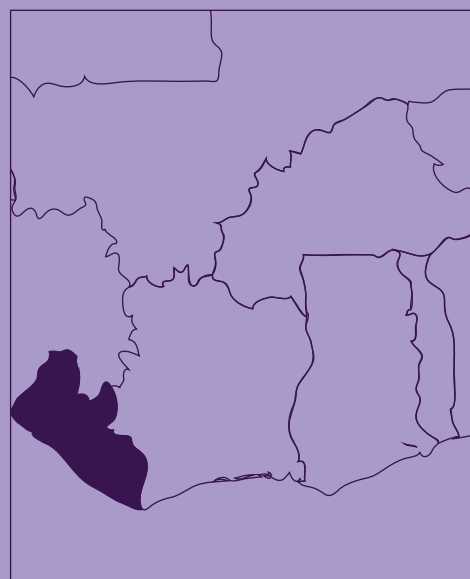
Liberia

Context and risk environment: LGBTQI organizations in Liberia face significant risk and limited access to alternative emergency financing.

What RESPOND enabled: RESPOND supported rapid action, collaboration, and relatively higher beneficiary reach per intervention compared to several other countries.

Key pattern observed: Organizations report very high relevance and effectiveness, but sustainability beyond the funding period remains a concern.

Implications: RESPOND is essential for immediate protection in Liberia, but longer-term resilience would benefit from complementary recovery support.



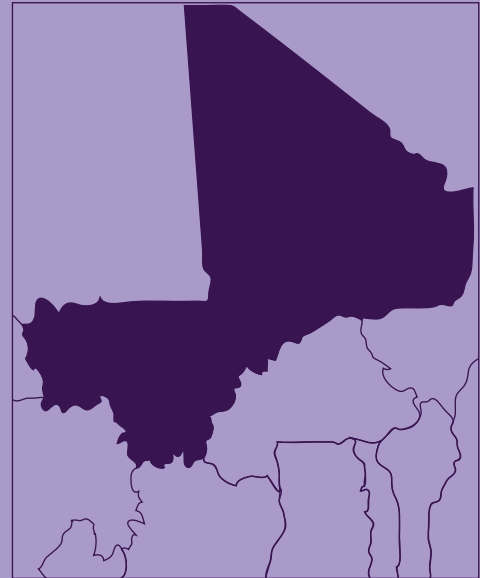
Mali

Context and risk environment: Mali is characterized by chronic instability and repeated crisis situations affecting LGBTQI organizations.

What RESPOND enabled: RESPOND funding supported repeated emergency responses and helped organizations manage recurrent crises.

Key pattern observed: Mali records higher average numbers of RESPOND grants per organization and comparatively stronger sustainability scores, particularly in crisis-management capacity.

Implications: In Mali, RESPOND contributes to strengthened preparedness and institutional learning, even as advocacy and civic space impacts remain constrained.



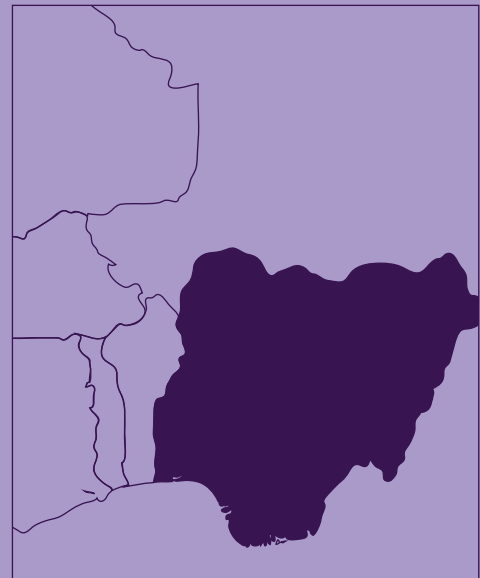
Nigeria

Context and risk environment: Nigeria represents the largest concentration of RESPOND-supported organizations and one of the most restrictive operating environments due to criminalization and recurrent violence.

What RESPOND enabled: RESPOND funding enabled frequent, rapid responses to arrests, exposure, violence, and legal emergencies.

Key pattern observed: Nigeria demonstrates strong performance across all OECD/DAC criteria, with particularly high relevance, effectiveness, and movement-level impact.

Implications: RESPOND is a cornerstone emergency mechanism in Nigeria, sustaining organizational continuity and movement resilience amid recurrent crises.



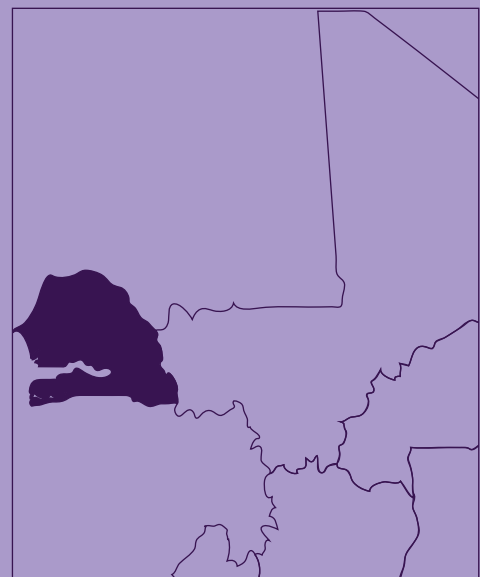
Senegal

Context and risk environment: Senegal presents a mixed environment, with periodic emergencies but fewer repeated crises than in higher-risk contexts.

What RESPOND enabled: RESPOND played a stabilizing role during emergencies, enabling timely response and short-term protection.

Key pattern observed: Organizations report strong relevance and effectiveness, but lower repeat access and more modest sustainability outcomes.

Implications: RESPOND is effective as a stabilization tool in Senegal, though less embedded in longer-term movement strategies.



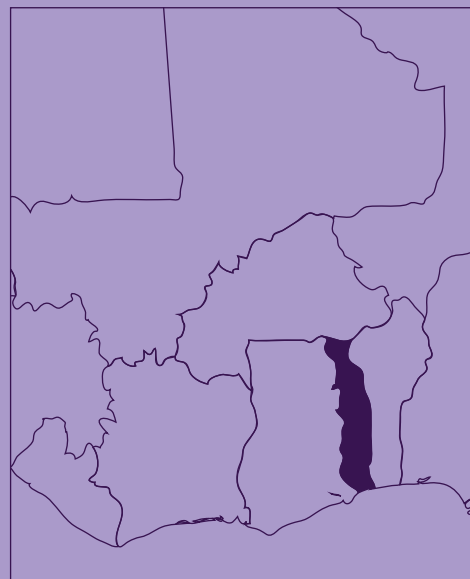
Togo

Context and risk environment: LGBTQI organizations in Togo operate in persistently high-risk conditions, with frequent emergencies.

What RESPOND enabled: RESPOND funding supported repeated emergency responses and incremental capacity strengthening.

Key pattern observed: Togo shows high reliance on the Fund, strong ratings across relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, and comparatively higher sustainability scores.

Implications: In Togo, RESPOND supports both immediate protection and gradual strengthening of crisis response capacity.



What makes the RESPOND Fund so effective within the community?

From the data collected and the documents read, the RESPOND Fund proves highly effective in addressing emergencies for LGBTQI communities in ISDAO's countries of focus primarily because the funds are held and managed directly within the community itself. By placing resources with trusted local partner organizations rather than centralizing them at ISDAO or with external donors, the Fund enables those closest to the crises (community members and activists who best understand local contexts, risks, and priorities) to assess emergencies in real time and respond immediately. This decentralized, community-led approach eliminates lengthy approval processes, ensures rapid disbursement (often within hours or days), and allows flexible, tailored interventions based on self-defined needs, such as relocation, medical care, legal aid, or psychosocial support.

This structure fosters ownership, builds trust, and strengthens movement-wide solidarity through mechanisms like pooled resources and mutual aid across partners. As a result, the Fund not only delivers timely life-saving support but also reduces reliance on slow external systems, empowers local decision-making, and contributes to longer-term resilience and advocacy (even in increasingly hostile environments) far more effectively than conventional emergency funding models.

c. Key results and effective practices identified

Evidence from surveys, project reports, and focus group discussions shows that the RESPOND Fund has generated significant results in protecting lives, sustaining organizations, and strengthening movement resilience. Effective utilization of the RESPOND Fund is driven by rapid and predictable disbursement, flexible and trust-based grantmaking, proximity to community risk, and a collective, movement-oriented approach to emergency response. These practices enable timely, context-appropriate interventions that protect lives, sustain organizations, and strengthen resilience in highly restrictive environments.

Key Results of RESPOND Fund utilization

1. Lives protected and immediate harm prevented

Lives protected and immediate harm prevented emerged as a central outcome of the RESPOND Fund. Across survey responses, project documentation, and focus group discussions, the Fund was consistently described by respondents as life-saving. Evidence indicates that RESPOND support enabled grantee partners to prevent homelessness following family or community rejection, facilitate urgent medical care for survivors of violence or injury, secure release from detention through bail and legal assistance, avert the escalation of mob violence and lynching, and support rapid evacuation in cases of doxing or exposure. These outcomes were documented across multiple countries (particularly Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo, and Ghana) and were repeatedly highlighted by focus group participants as situations in which any delay in response would likely have resulted in severe harm or loss of life.

Without RESPOND: Partners reported facing imminent closure or inability to bail out detained staff.

With RESPOND: Immediate funds allowed for bail and relocation, preserving organizational continuity.

Spotlight: In Nigeria, a partner used funds within 24 hours to relocate an activist targeted by mob violence, preventing imminent physical harm; an outcome impossible with standard grant timelines.

2. Organizational survival and continuity maintained

Organizational survival and continuity maintained emerged as a key outcome of the RESPOND Fund, with evidence indicating that the funding enabled grantee organizations to remain operational during periods of acute crisis. RESPOND resources were used to relocate offices or staff in response to threats, strengthen physical and digital security

measures, cover emergency rent to prevent eviction, and sustain shelter operations during periods of mass arrests or targeted attacks. By addressing these urgent needs, the Fund helped prevent organizational collapse, service disruptions, and heightened burnout among staff. Grantee partners consistently emphasized that these outcomes were critical not only for supporting individuals, but for ensuring the survival and continuity of LGBTQI movements in highly constrained and high-risk contexts.

3. Strengthened emergency response capacity

Strengthened emergency response capacity was identified as a significant outcome of the RESPOND Fund, with organizations reporting lasting improvements in how they manage crises. Findings from surveys and focus group discussions indicate that RESPOND support contributed to the development of crisis response protocols, improved documentation and reporting systems, the establishment of legal aid and referral networks, increased organizational confidence in handling emergencies, and enhanced coordination across states and national borders. Several organizations explicitly noted that RESPOND influenced not only what activities they were able to fund, but also how they operate, enabling a shift from ad hoc crisis responses to more structured and systematic emergency management approaches.

4. Strengthened collaboration and movement coherence

Strengthened collaboration and movement coherence also emerged as a key result of the Fund. Evidence points to high levels of inter-organizational referrals, joint emergency responses across regions, support extended to non-member individuals, and the shared use of legal services, shelters, and safe spaces. Focus group participants consistently described RESPOND as a collective movement resource rather than a competitive grant mechanism, highlighting its role in reinforcing solidarity, trust, and mutual aid within LGBTQI, sex worker, and people who use drugs (PWUD) movements.

“RESPOND gave us the ability to act within hours, not weeks.”

—Focus Group Discussion

5. Increased dignity, trust, and community confidence

Increased dignity, trust, and community confidence was another important outcome associated with RESPOND-supported interventions. Participants emphasized that the provision of rapid emergency assistance helped restore dignity to individuals in crisis, reduced fear associated with seeking support, increased confidence in local organizations, and reinforced a sense of belonging and protection within communities. These less tangible but critical outcomes were repeatedly highlighted during focus group discussions as foundational to longer-term resilience, sustained engagement, and community trust, even where material support was necessarily short-term.

Effective practices in RESPOND Fund utilization

1. Speed and predictability of disbursement

Speed and predictability of disbursement emerged as a defining strength of the RESPOND Fund. Across all data sources, respondents consistently identified rapid access to funds as the single most important design feature. Requests were typically processed within hours or days, without prolonged donor approval chains, and funds were available when emergencies occurred rather than being tied to fixed timelines. Participants frequently contrasted RESPOND with other emergency funding mechanisms, noting that delays in those systems often rendered support ineffective or “too late to matter.”

2. Flexible, context-driven use of funds

Flexible, context-driven use of funds was another highly effective practice. RESPOND enables grantee partners to determine how funds are allocated based on the specific needs of each emergency. Funds were used for a wide range of interventions, including bail, transportation, food, medical care, relocation, legal fees, security upgrades, and psychosocial support, often in combination. This flexibility was repeatedly cited as essential given the unpredictable, complex, and highly contextual nature of emergencies, particularly in environments characterized by criminalization and insecurity.

“Emergencies cannot wait. The RESPOND Fund allowed us to act immediately, rather than waiting for approvals while lives and freedoms were at risk.”

—Survey

3. Trust-based grantmaking

Trust-based grantmaking further enhanced the Fund’s effectiveness. RESPOND is characterized by minimal bureaucratic requirements during crisis situations, reliance on post-response reporting rather than pre-approval, and recognition of grantee partners’ judgment and proximity to risk. Focus group participants emphasized that this trust-based approach enabled faster action, reduced stress during emergencies, and increased grantee ownership and accountability for the use of funds.

“RESPOND recognizes that those closest to the crisis are best placed to respond.”

—Focus Group Discussion

4. Proximity to communities and grounded decision-making

Proximity to communities and grounded decision-making also contributed significantly to the Fund’s success. RESPOND leverages local organizations’ situational awareness, community-based verification of emergencies, and peer referrals and validation. This proximity to affected communities helped minimize misuse while ensuring that responses

remained relevant and appropriate. Focus group discussions repeatedly highlighted this balance between accountability and contextual relevance as critical to the Fund's legitimacy and effectiveness.

5. Integration of emergency response with capacity building

Integration of emergency response with capacity strengthening was another effective practice observed. RESPOND-supported emergency interventions frequently served as learning opportunities, leading to the development of safety protocols, training of staff and paralegals, and the strengthening of partnerships with lawyers and civil society organizations. This dynamic helps explain why sustainability outcomes are more pronounced in areas related to preparedness and response capacity than in long-term material outcomes, as reflected in the survey findings.

“For SWs and PWUD, RESPOND was often the only support available in moments of crisis.”

—Survey

Overall, across all data sources, RESPOND's effectiveness is not accidental. It derives from a coherent emergency funding model that combines: Speed, flexibility, trust, proximity, and collective orientation. This model consistently produces immediate protection outcomes, organizational continuity, and movement resilience even in contexts of escalating violence and shrinking civic space.

d. Barriers faced by RESPOND fund grantees and adaptive strategies employed

Grantees face significant barriers arising from criminalization, insecurity, insufficient funding, documentation constraints, and recurrent crises. In response, they employ adaptive strategies including legal aid networks, resource pooling, flexible documentation practices, emergency relocation, digital security measures, and strengthened crisis management systems. RESPOND Fund design features enable these adaptations, allowing organizations to respond effectively despite persistent structural constraints.

Barrier 1: Criminalization and hostile legal environments

Grantee partners operate in contexts where LGBTQI identities, sex work, and drug use are criminalized or subject to aggressive policing. This legal environment exposes individuals and organizations to arbitrary arrest, detention, police extortion, and harassment, while simultaneously limiting access to formal state protection mechanisms. These dynamics are consistently documented across project reports and focus group discussions, particularly in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo, and Senegal, where law enforcement actors are frequently identified as sources of risk rather than protection. In response, grantees have adopted pragmatic coping strategies, including the establishment of informal legal aid networks with trusted pro bono lawyers, the rapid use of RESPOND funds to cover bail and emergency legal fees, and selective, strategic engagement with justice or police actors where relationships could be safely leveraged. These approaches enabled organizations to navigate hostile systems during crises without escalating risk.

Barrier 2: Insufficient funding amounts relative to scale of need

While RESPOND funding was widely described as lifesaving, grantees consistently reported that the standard emergency allocation (typically around USD 1,000) is increasingly insufficient given the scale and complexity of emergencies. Large-scale incidents such as mass arrests, coordinated doxing campaigns, and cross-border displacement often exhaust available funds rapidly, with emergency resources depleted early in the year and limited coverage available for subsequent crises. This challenge was repeatedly highlighted across focus group discussions and open-ended survey responses. To cope, organizations employed prioritization and triage strategies focused on the most life-threatening cases, pooled RESPOND resources with organizational reserves or personal contributions, and used RESPOND as a catalytic resource to mobilize additional in-kind or emergency support from partners. While these adaptations extended impact, they frequently placed additional financial and emotional strain on organizations and staff.

Barrier 3: Difficulty documenting emergencies in high-risk contexts

Grantees reported significant challenges related to documenting emergency responses in insecure and rapidly evolving contexts. These included difficulties collecting receipts during evacuations or in conflict-affected areas, documenting expenses incurred through informal arrangements for transport, food, or shelter, and safely storing sensitive information related to arrests, violence, or displacement. These constraints were particularly acute in northern Nigeria and parts of Burkina Faso and Mali, where insecurity and population movement are common. Grantees responded by adopting alternative documentation approaches, such as affidavits, photographs, and narrative explanations, and by completing reporting after emergencies had subsided and safety was restored. Over time, many organizations also strengthened internal record-keeping systems. RESPOND's flexible reporting requirements enabled these adaptations, allowing accountability without penalizing organizations operating under extreme conditions.

Barrier 4: Heightened risk from exposure and digital threats

An increase in digital threats has emerged as a significant driver of emergencies, particularly since 2023. Grantees reported growing risks related to social media doxing, online hate campaigns, viral misinformation, and heightened digital surveillance of activists and organizations. These threats frequently escalated into physical violence, forced displacement, or emergency relocation, as documented in project reports and focus group discussions, especially in Nigeria and Mali. In response, organizations utilized RESPOND funds to support emergency relocation of staff and community members, transition to remote or digital work modalities, and invest in digital security tools and protocols. While these strategies mitigated immediate risks, they also resulted in longer-term changes to organizational operations and security practices.

Barrier 5: Limited internal capacity for crisis management

At the outset of their engagement with RESPOND, many grantee organizations relied on informal or ad hoc emergency response systems, with heavy dependence on staff goodwill and personal financial contributions. Psychosocial support for staff responding to repeated crises was often limited or absent. Focus group discussions highlighted widespread burnout, emotional strain, and uneven crisis management capacity across organizations. Over time, grantees adopted adaptive strategies including the development of formal crisis management plans, training of staff and volunteers in emergency response, and the creation of referral directories for legal, medical, and shelter services. RESPOND utilization contributed to the gradual strengthening of internal systems, enabling more structured and sustainable crisis response mechanisms.

Barrier 6: Recurrent emergencies with limited long-term solutions

Grantees consistently emphasized that emergencies are recurring rather than isolated events. While RESPOND funding plays a critical role in stabilizing crises, it does not address the structural drivers of vulnerability, and access to long-term recovery or resilience funding remains limited. This tension between immediate emergency response and longer-term sustainability was widely acknowledged across surveys and focus group discussions. In response, organizations pursued pragmatic strategies such as building partnerships with local philanthropists, civil society organizations, and service providers; maintaining emergency savings where feasible; and using RESPOND as a temporary bridge while seeking additional donor support or longer-term funding. These approaches reflect adaptive resilience in the face of persistent constraints, rather than a full resolution of sustainability challenges.

These strategies reflect pragmatic adaptation rather than full resolution of sustainability challenges.

Across all barriers, a consistent pattern emerges which is that Grantees adapt not by eliminating risk, but by managing it collectively, pragmatically, and creatively. RESPOND Fund design features (speed, flexibility, trust, and proximity) enables these adaptive strategies rather than constraining them.



Case Study

Protecting lives and sustaining movements: The RESPOND Fund, Love Alliance, and emergency support for sex workers and people who use drugs in Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

a. Background and context

Sex workers (SWs) and people who use drugs (PWUD) face some of the most acute and intersecting forms of risk within West Africa's shrinking civic space. Criminalization, social stigma, exposure to violence, and limited access to health and justice systems place these communities at heightened vulnerability, particularly during periods of crisis. In both Nigeria and Burkina Faso, these risks are compounded by political instability, securitization, and moral policing, which disproportionately target already-marginalized populations.

Within this context, emergencies affecting SWs and PWUD often unfold rapidly and with severe consequences such as arbitrary arrests, public exposure, mob violence, denial of medical care, forced displacement, and organizational shutdowns. Traditional funding mechanisms are rarely designed to respond at the speed or scale required to address such crises. As a result, community-based organizations working with SWs and PWUD have historically faced critical gaps in emergency response financing.

Based on its community-centered strategic grant approach, ISDAO, through the Respond Fund and Love Alliance, supports SW and PWUD in Burkina Faso and Nigeria to address precisely these gaps.

ABOUT THE LOVE ALLIANCE MECHANISM

What it is: A dedicated funding stream within RESPOND specifically for LGBTIQ, Sex workers (SW) and People Who Use Drugs (PWUD).

Target: LGBTIQ, SW and PWUD.

Why: These groups face distinct criminalization barriers requiring specialized rapid response.

Delivery: Managed through standard RESPOND channels but earmarked for identified SW/PWUD-led partners.

<https://isdao.org/en/special-initiatives/>

Love Alliance is an initiative implemented through a consortium, of which ISDAO is a part. It seeks to address the structural barriers to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including gender inequality, decriminalization, funding for key populations, increased access to health (sexual and reproductive health/rights/HIV), and justice. In this initiative, ISDAO focuses on two West African countries, namely Burkina Faso and Nigeria. Through the Love Alliance, ISDAO sought to ensure that organizations working directly with SWs and PWUD in Nigeria and Burkina Faso have the resources to fund priorities identified by themselves.

The RESPOND fund, implemented by ISDAO in its 9 focus countries in West Africa, is designed to respond to emergencies, added to all regional grants. The beneficiaries of the Love Alliance, as all regional grants, benefited from the RESPOND Fund.

b. Reach and coverage in Nigeria and Burkina Faso

Survey data from organizations receiving the RESPOND Fund indicates that the Love Alliance has achieved targeted reach within its target populations:

- * 68 organizations reported receiving RESPOND support through the Love Alliance.
- * Of these 68 organizations, over three-quarters 77.9% (53) confirmed that the funding directly supported sex workers and/or people who use drugs.
- * The Love Alliance supported organizations come from Nigeria and Burkina Faso, which are the two focus countries in West Africa covered by ISDAO under the Love Alliance initiative

Among organizations working with SWs and PWUD under the Love Alliance:

- * Over 94% (64) agreed or strongly agreed that the RESPOND Fund had a positive impact on the health, safety, or rights of SWs and PWUD.
- * Reported interventions typically reached small but critical numbers of beneficiaries per emergency, consistent with protection-oriented, life-saving responses.

These findings underscore that Love Alliance funding is not designed for scale, but for depth, immediacy, and risk mitigation.

c. Types of emergencies addressed

Qualitative responses reveal a consistent pattern in the types of emergencies affecting SWs and PWUD in Nigeria and Burkina Faso:

a. Exposure and targeted violence

In Nigeria, several organizations reported emergencies triggered by public exposure of individuals or groups as sex workers or drug users, often via social media or community denunciation. Such exposure frequently led to threats, mob violence, or police intervention.

RESPOND funding enabled rapid relocation to safe housing, emergency transportation, and short-term subsistence support, preventing escalation into serious harm or death.

b. Arrests and legal crises

Criminalization remains a central driver of emergencies for both SWs and PWUD. Organizations described cases involving mass arrests, detention without charge, extortion, and denial of legal representation.

Through Love Alliance-supported RESPOND grants, organizations were able to:

- Pay for legal counsel and bail;
- Cover emergency court-related expenses; and
- Provide immediate support to detained individuals and their families.

c. Health emergencies and harm reduction

In Burkina Faso, insecurity and service disruption exacerbated health risks for PWUD and sex workers. RESPOND funding supported access to urgent medical care, continuity of harm reduction services, and emergency health supplies during periods when public services were inaccessible or unsafe.

d. Stories of change: evidence from the field

Nigeria: Preventing escalation and preserving dignity

One organization described a crisis in which individuals were exposed online and faced immediate threats of violence. RESPOND funding enabled the organization to relocate affected individuals within days, provide emergency psychosocial support, and stabilize the situation before it escalated into broader community violence. The intervention not only protected lives but also allowed the organization to continue operating in an extremely hostile environment.

Another case involved a transgender sex worker facing detention and abuse following arrest. Emergency RESPOND funds covered legal fees and immediate safety needs, resulting in release and protection from further harm. The organization emphasized that without rapid funding, the outcome would likely have been far more severe.

Burkina Faso: Maintaining services amid insecurity

In Burkina Faso, organizations working with PWUD reported that RESPOND support was critical in maintaining continuity of services during periods of heightened insecurity. Emergency funding allowed organizations to create temporary safe spaces, continue outreach, and provide essential health and protection services when mobility and visibility posed serious risks.

These interventions were often modest in financial terms but significant in impact, preventing service collapse and reinforcing trust between organizations and the communities they serve.



Recommendations to ISDAO and donors funding the LGBTQI movement in West Africa

These recommendations are designed to strengthen the sustainability, effectiveness, and resilience of the RESPOND Fund while preserving its rapid-response mandate.

a. Priority Actions (Immediate Impact)

These address the most critical gaps in sustainability, preparedness, and funding adequacy (essential for the Fund's long-term viability and effectiveness).

1. Secure multi-year, pooled funding commitments

Short-term funding severely limits strategic planning, emergency preparedness, and overall sustainability. Donors should commit to 3–5-year pooled (unearmarked or lightly earmarked) funding for the RESPOND Fund, moving away from annual, highly restricted grants. This would significantly enhance predictability, reduce transaction costs, lower administrative burden on ISDAO, enable proactive readiness investments, and allow more timely and effective emergency responses.

2. Formalize and invest in emergency preparedness as a cost-saving measure

Given the recurrent nature of crises faced by grantee partners, supporting basic preparedness is both practical and cost-effective over time. ISDAO should explicitly allow (and encourage) RESPOND grantee partners to fund the development of crisis protocols, pre-vetted legal and safe-shelter directories, digital and physical security readiness, and other foundational measures. Framing these as “emergency preparedness” keeps them fully aligned with the Fund's rapid-response mandate, while reducing future emergency costs, response times, and operational stress.

3. Increase grant ceilings (and introduce tiered levels) for complex, high-risk emergencies

Current funding levels are frequently insufficient for large-scale or predictable high-cost emergencies such as mass arrests, widespread doxing campaigns, cross-border evacuations, or escalated violence. ISDAO should advocate for (and donors should support) higher grant ceilings in verified high-risk contexts. This would also allow flexibility to fund collective or multi-organizational responses when appropriate, reducing the risk of underfunding and improving overall response quality and safety.

b. Secondary & operational actions (strengthening quality, consistency & sustainability)

These enhancements improve institutional learning, staff resilience, and operational efficiency without being existential threats to the Fund's survival.

4. Implement light-touch learning and documentation mechanisms

Valuable insights are generated during responses but are not consistently captured or shared. To strengthen institutional memory, donor communication, and continuous improvement without slowing emergency action, ISDAO should introduce simple, low-burden tools such as emergency typologies, response pattern tracking templates, concise post-crisis debrief checklists, and short annual learning briefs. These should be clearly separated from compliance-oriented grant reporting to avoid adding administrative weight.

5. Institutionalize responder wellbeing and psychosocial support

Widespread burnout and emotional strain among frontline staff and grantee partners threaten the sustainability of emergency response work. ISDAO and donors should explicitly recognize care for responders as an essential component of protection efforts by allowing (and where possible encouraging) a dedicated portion of emergency grants to cover psychosocial support, rest protocols, peer-care measures, or related wellbeing activities. This would build more resilient leadership and longer-term organizational capacity on the frontlines.

6. Reinforce and expand trust-based, low-burden accountability

Heavy compliance requirements can delay responses and increase risks in sensitive contexts. Donors should endorse and publicly affirm trust-based principles, accepting flexible, context-adaptive documentation (e.g., narrative summaries, voice notes, affidavits, or post-crisis reporting) instead of rigid templates. ISDAO should continue advocating for these approaches to preserve the Fund's speed and safety while maintaining appropriate stewardship.

c. Additional strategic recommendation (cross-cutting)

Support localization without fragmentation

The RESPOND Fund's model (placing decision-making authority and resources close to the point of risk) is already a strong example of effective localization. Donors and ISDAO should continue investing in and protecting this approach, prioritizing collective responses led by local actors, avoiding bypass mechanisms, and ensuring that localization efforts transfer both resources and genuine decision-making power. This remains foundational to building legitimate, accountable, and sustainable emergency response ecosystems rooted in local expertise and trust.





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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