

From Idea to Action: A Four-Step Guide to Supporting Global LGBTIQ Causes Through Corporate Philanthropy



The problem

Violence and discrimination contribute to the exclusion and marginalization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people, thus increasing their socio-economic and other types of vulnerability. Reports from Outright International indicate that:

- Fewer than half of the United Nations' 193 Member States ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.
- Thirteen countries have laws explicitly criminalizing transgender people.
- In many countries, transgender people cannot get their gender legally recognized.

As open societies are a pathway to equal opportunity and human prosperity, this systemic marginalization represents a crisis for economic development.

One primary factor contributing to slow progress for full equality for LGBTIQ people globally is the gross underfunding of the movement. This is especially true outside of the United States of America and Canada, which — according to data from the Global Philanthropy Project's Global Resources Report — receive more than half of the world's LGBTIQ-specific funding.

Notably, while global corporate funding for LGBTIQ issues reached its highest level during 2019–2020, corporations maintain the lowest amount of all donor types.¹ Moreover, three funders accounted for 95% of corporate funding focused internationally, outside the United States of America.

Why does it matter?

When we secure human rights for LGBTIQ people, we reinforce the principle, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), that all people have basic dignity and deserve full freedom in society under the law. Encouraging increased philanthropic support for, and partnership with, the global movement for rights and equality for LGBTIQ people — especially in countries and regions that are severely underresourced — will result in gains for the human rights movement, especially and specifically for LGBTIQ people. Further, beyond the legal responsibility of companies to reduce all the risks that could suggest discrimination in the workplace, the development and execution of social mobility tactics are also critical for business. While not the driving motivator to pursue gains in human rights, several case studies link such tactics with direct economic advantages for companies (productivity, innovation, and reputation). Broader economic development and gross domestic product growth have additionally been well established through research as a direct link and are important for business sustainability.

Footnotes

¹The term "global corporate funding" refers to all funding globally for LGBTIQ issues, as opposed to funding of international LGBTIQ issues.

To make true progress in advancing equality for LGBTIQ people everywhere, the global LGBTIQ movement requires more significant resourcing. The private sector has a role to play in facilitating the movement's dynamic growth through financial and other investments — because it's the right thing to do, and because businesses will benefit from the progress the movement secures.

How can we increase support?

To enable and empower the private sector to robustly and sustainably support the global LGBTIQ movement, Outright International has partnered with Google.org to co-fund this Guide, authored by Outright, on how to effectively unlock and leverage corporate philanthropy to support global advancement for LGBTIQ equality.

The Guide offers step-by-step insights to direct effective corporate philanthropic support of the global movement to advance human rights for LGBTIQ people everywhere.

Four Steps to Formulating a Proposal for Your Company

1. Map current philanthropic pathways in your company
2. Assess your company's readiness to support global LGBTIQ issues
3. Formulate your reason to support global LGBTIQ causes
4. Identify potential beneficiaries

The Guide further provides concrete pathways and examples to help corporate leaders assess readiness and create an intentional plan, including:

- Whether a company is ready to engage with global LGBTIQ issues, and what to do if it is not
- Who to approach with a proposal, and what pathway can provide the strongest opportunity
- What rationale and justification to use, and data to debunk commonly cited barriers
- Which beneficiary to propose, and what kind of philanthropic support is appropriate for that beneficiary

Putting it all together

The four steps in this Guide will provide you with the content you need to make a compelling case for action so that your company can increase its philanthropy for global LGBTIQ causes. By using the Guide, corporate professionals will be positioned both to help build a diverse, equitable and inclusive business environment, and to enable positive change for LGBTIQ communities all over the world. By supporting global LGBTIQ causes, your company can be part of historic advancements that will help shape a better future for LGBTIQ people everywhere.

For more information, or to consult with issues experts, contact Outright Director of Development Elise Colomer-Cheadle at Development@OutrightInternational.org, with the subject line "LGBTIQ Pathways."

Outright International works at global, regional, and national levels to eradicate the persecution, inequality and violence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) people around the world. With staff in over a dozen countries and headquarters in New York, Outright builds capacity of LGBTIQ movements, documents human rights violations, advocates for inclusion and equality, and holds leaders accountable for protecting the rights of LGBTIQ people everywhere. Outright was founded in 1990 and has recognized consultative status at the United Nations. www.OutrightInternational.org

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