

EQUALITY

MAGAZINE

[CURRENT ISSUE](#) [PAST ISSUES](#)



DisplayFusion
9.5.0.0

10:11:59 AM 4/15/2021
Windows 10 Enterprise 64-bit Build 18363

EQUALITY

MAGAZINE

Grants Program Helps Fuel Movement for Global Equality

by [Jose Soto](#) • [Winter 2021](#)



2020 presented enormous challenges to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's global work because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Most of our work, both in the U.S. and abroad, was

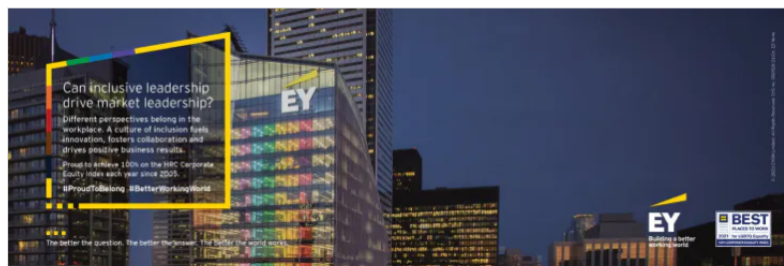
reimagined to fit into a virtual landscape. Under normal circumstances, the HRC Foundation would convene global advocates in person to help leverage our 40 years of experience working toward LGBTQ equality in the workplace, places of worship, policy and education. However, because of the pandemic, meeting in person became impossible and we had to creatively reimagine how to continue to support our growing network of 180 HRC Foundation Global Alumni in more than 90 countries around the world.

To do so, the HRC Foundation created the Global Small Grants program to foster virtual and innovative work in a COVID-19 environment. We understood that the LGBTQ community everywhere was disproportionately impacted by the virus. That meant it was crucial that the work of these advocates and organizations — now forced to be conducted virtually — go uninterrupted, benefitting from tangible support.

We called for online submissions from advocates and their organizations in four areas of work: engaging employers and businesses as allies for equality; engaging institutions and individuals of faith as allies for equality; innovative organizational programs operating in a virtual environment; and events providing unique LGBTQ visibility. More than 45 submissions were received from all over the world.

As HRC Foundation staff sorted through the applications, the one similarity among them was the dire need to continue the global effort for LGBTQ equality in various areas, even during a time of complete virtual work.

ADVERTISEMENT



“What we saw as we reviewed the applications was that despite the pandemic, advocates were determined to continue to serve their communities, even if that meant going virtual,” said Jean Freedberg, HRC Foundation’s director of global partnerships. “Because of the disproportionate ways in which the LGBTQ community has been impacted by the pandemic, in addition to trying to keep their advocacy efforts moving forward, many of them had to pivot to supporting their communities and providing services such as food, housing and mental health support.”

20

Global Advocates

17

Countries

\$50K

*Up to \$50K awarded, as well as the chance to partner with **HRC***

Twenty global advocates in 17 countries were awarded up to \$5,000 as well as the chance to partner with **HRC** to help ensure the success of their programs.

One of the recipients was Track-T, a community-based organization in Pakistan working to advance transgender rights. "With the grant from HRC Foundation, Track-T will be able to create weekly online programming directly serving the transgender community in Pakistan," said Freedberg.

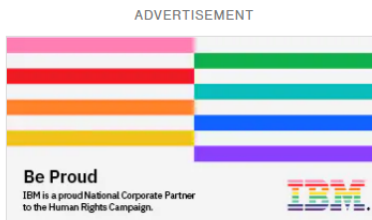
In 2009, Pakistan's Supreme Court called for all provincial governments to recognize the basic human rights of transgender people. Despite this, transgender people continue to face high rates of discrimination and harassment, which led to 2018's groundbreaking transgender rights law which explicitly prohibits these acts. Still, much work remains to ensure the prosperity of the trans community in Pakistan.

“*As a transgender rights activist, I, along with my organization, have a responsibility to my community to ensure trans people have all the same rights, including safety, access to education and healthcare, equal work opportunities and a dignified life. HRC's support helps us continue our advocacy work virtually.*



Jannat Ali, Director of Track-T

Fundación Sergio Urrego Reyes is an organization in Colombia dedicated to preventing suicide among LGBTQ youth, a prevalent concern not only in Colombia, but within the LGBTQ community across the world. HRC's [most recent data](#) shows that 29% of transgender youth, 21% of gay and lesbian youth and 22% of bisexual youth have attempted suicide here in the U.S. In Colombia, one in four LGBTQ people have attempted suicide, according to a [report](#) by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law. With the grant funding, Fundación Sergio Urrego Reyes will engage people of faith in virtual dialogues to support their efforts to end bullying of LGBTQ children.



“For us, starting to work with religious communities is very important,” said Alba Reyes, director of Fundación Sergio Urrego. “This is an opportunity to say that discrimination against LGBTQ people on religious grounds has an effect on their mental health. Mental health is a human right. HRC has been an important ally in this matter and its support will allow us to advocate for suicide and discrimination prevention.”

“*Mental health is a human right. HRC has been an important ally in this matter and its support will allow us to advocate for suicide and discrimination prevention.*”



Alba Reyes, Director, Fundación Sergio Urrego

In Hungary, Tamás Dombos is a board member for Háttér Society, another recipient of HRC Foundation's Global Small Grants program. His grant is for a program to advance improved and inclusive workplaces for Hungarian transgender, intersex and non-binary people. Dombos said that influential anti-LGBTQ elected officials and the adoption of restrictive legislation are both immense challenges for the Hungarian LGBTQ community. He also recognizes the coronavirus pandemic as a tremendous challenge.

“Many [LGBTQ people] have lost their jobs, were forced to move back with their parents or were finding it difficult to access vital health services. The group that was most heavily hit by these challenges are trans people, probably the most vulnerable, but least visible part of our community,” said Dombos. “We're aiming to build capacities to create inclusive workplaces through practical tools to enhance workplace inclusion

for trans, intersex and non-binary people. We also want to encourage human resources professionals to be better prepared to deal with such employees, helping create workplace visibility for the community.”

Of the 20 organizations that received the grants, seven were from Africa, five from Asia, six from Latin America and the Caribbean, and two from Europe. Five went to advocates working on trans issues.

Because of the Small Grants program, the HRC Foundation is optimistic that, despite the complications and limitations brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, the selected recipients will continue to spearhead sustainable change in their communities and countries. [Throughout the world](#), 68 countries still criminalize same-sex sexual activity. In up to 10 countries, same-sex sexual relations may be punishable by death. Many countries have yet to provide non-discrimination protections to their LGBTQ community or grant equal access to marriage and other family rights.

While these grants help advance global equality, there is a long way to go. Still, the Small Grants program attests to the HRC Foundation’s commitment to a world where LGBTQ people are ensured their basic rights and can live authentically, in the United States and around the world.

For more information, visit hrc.org/global

Share



Join HRC

Become a Member



[VIEW THE FULL ISSUE](#)

Also in the Winter 2021 Issue:

- The Fight Ahead
- The COVID-19 Vaccine
- Representation Matters
- Prioritizing Equality From Day One
- Georgia On Our Minds
- Investing in Our Communities
- Creating Welcoming Schools