

Resourcing and engaging young trans feminist movements

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I. Intro

a. Why a strategy for better engaging with and resourcing trans groups

Young feminist trans activists around the globe tend to exist in the intersections of high levels of marginalisation and oppression. In line with the objectives of the 2020-2025 strategic plan, FRIDA is working to ensure that young feminist groups led by trans folk as well as groups which focus on trans issues are well connected, well resourced and adequately supported.

Since the very first grantmaking cycle, FRIDA has been funding and supporting young feminist groups led by or centered on trans activists and communities representing different regions and backgrounds. At the moment of this strategy development FRIDA funds over 200 grantee partners in six regions in the Global South, namely Latin America, the Caribbean, West, East, South and Central Africa (WESCA), Central Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central and North Asia (CEECCNA,) South, South East, East Asia and Pacific (SSEAP) and SouthWest Asia and North Africa (SWANA). Out of these, 59 of them are either trans led or trans centred (LGBTQIA+/feminist groups that work on trans issues).

FRIDA is committed to better engage with and resource trans movements, as part of our continuous striving towards intersectional feminism. We strongly believe that trans people have a very important role within the feminist movement, and that their activism for gender justice supports healing and freedom for us all.

We have seen in the past years growing anti-trans sentiments and perspectives in the feminist movement, especially promoted by trans exclusionary radical feminists (TERFs). We also witnessed rising 'anti-gender ideology' movements across the globe that demonize gender in general, and trans people in particular. We are also living in times of rise of populism, far right politics and policies that many times use the LGBTQI+ community as scapegoats for national, social and economical issues. Trans people face grave violations of their rights in all regions that FRIDA operates, and even though progress has been made in certain countries, globally, trans communities face discrimination, inequality and violence.

Trans movement globally has undergone a big growth over the last years with activists all over the world fighting for the right to self determination, access to health care, legislative change, and social acceptance for trans people, despite being under-resourced.

Research¹ shows that:

- ❖ Trans people face serious human rights violations in every region of the world, including discrimination, violence, lack of legal status or recognition and lack of access to health care;
- ❖ Trans movements receive very little resources from funding dedicated to LGBTQIA+ organizing;
- ❖ When applying for funding to women's rights or feminist funders very few of them receive grants, the least out of all types of funders (including human rights or HIV focused);

¹ American Jewish World Service, Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice & Global Action for Trans Equality: The state of trans organising, 2016, available at: <https://www.transfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/The-State-of-Trans-Organizing-2016.pdf>

- ❖ More than half of trans groups have annual budgets lower than \$10,000 USD, and about a third have employed staff– both of these aspects being important for growing organizations sustainably;
- ❖ Trans activists are in dire need of capacity strengthening for ensuring sustainable development of their organizations. Most mentioned are the need for organizational development, fundraising, grant writing, budgeting and financial management. Addressing trauma and preventing burnout are also very pressing needs for trans activists.

In this context, resourcing trans movements becomes not only a responsibility that we have as a feminist funder, but also a political stance that recognises the historical contributions of the trans community to the gender justice movement, as well as a declaration for co-creating a future where young feminists in all their diversity thrive.

This strategy was developed to support FRIDA's journey to better resourcing and engaging with trans led and centered groups, its own grantee partners but also the wider trans movement. Through it, we hope not only to improve the way that we, as a funder, show up for the trans movement, but also to inspire other funders in their processes.

b. What do we understand by trans and trans feminisms

Language holds great power and we want to contribute to a more just world through the words we use. We know language is a living, changing instrument that helps us better understand ourselves and each other. It helps us find identity, community and meaning. Language is also the common means that connects our internal thoughts, beliefs, and experiences, to the external world and how we choose to engage with it as individuals. The language we use is a direct reflection of what we think, and what we think is who we are.

This is why our understanding of the term trans is one that allows for nuances and complexity. When we use the word **trans**, we talk about any person whose gender identity and/or expression differs from the sex assigned at birth. Some trans folks identify as (trans) women or men, others as non-binary. Others as *fa'afafine*, *leiti*, *fakafifine*, *akava'ine*, *mahu*, *vakasalewalewa*, *palopa*, *Sistergirls*, *Brotherboys*, *whakawahine*, *tangata ira tane*, *muxhe*, *omeguid*, *travesti*, *two spirit*, *hijra*, *bandhu*, *mangalamukhi*, *kinnar*, *thirunangai*, *thirunambi*, *khwaja sira*, *meti*, *katoey*, *waria*, *mak nyah*, *kua xing nan*, *trans laki-laki*, *transpinay*, *transpinoy*, *kwa-sing-bit* and *transgender*, *transsexual*, *genderqueer*, *gender non-binary*, *gender diverse*, *gender non-conforming*, and *agender people*² to name just a few.

We strive to decolonise the way we understand and talk about gender identities and bodies, and the terminology we use to describe ourselves and our experiences. For the sake of simplicity, we will be using trans throughout this document, but recognise that behind it there are multiple, complex and beautiful ways of living gender. The term trans is not one that we assign to people, but rather one that is self assigned. We fully believe in autonomy and self determination as essential feminist values.

The feminist movement has long changed the way in which we understand sex and gender, their connection and impact on our lives. As these concepts evolve, so does our

² International Trans Fund: <https://www.transfund.org/about-us/faq/>

understanding. We commit to being in this journey of unlearning and learning, so that together we may experience more freedom.

Trans feminisms, similarly to Black Feminisms, comes to bring much needed new perspectives on the way we understand concepts such as *feminism*, *gender*, or *woman*. It centers trans women and their issues inside the feminist discourse, fights for the lives of trans women and denounce transphobia, transfemicides and other oppressive forces directed at trans women such as economic injustice, poverty, and violence. Transfeminist movements look differently in the different regions of the world, and they can either be centered only on trans women, or can be inclusive of non binary and trans men. There is still a need to better understand and document the various ways in which the transfeminist agendas are growing and changing the local realities of so many communities.

In many ways, trans feminists are asking the larger feminist movement to look inward and reassess if their understanding and practice of feminism truly embraces and fights for the liberation of all women and marginalised genders, or if it defaults to centring only one expression of womanhood, including other genders identities and expressions as an afterthought in order to tick the right boxes. Trans feminism asks that we not remain neutral in the face exclusionary movements, transphobia and its direct translation to a lack of access to adequate healthcare, housing, and employment.

The tensions and disconnect between the trans and feminist movements have a history that has resulted in many practices that still keep these communities in separate sylos although many times our values are more similar than not. We all want gender liberation, fair and just systems, access to rights and recognition of our most inherent human value, care and collaboration for the good of us all. The risk of not having more solidarity and shared movement between trans activists and the wider feminist movement is that it continues to perpetuate a paradigm that excludes those most in need. It also doesn't help the wider movement advance its intersectional goals of serving those most in need, and those whose voices have been left out for a long time.

It's hard for me assess the gaps from the global perspective; from my local experiences I see them mostly in communication, history of conflict-ridden relationship, lack of recognition of the issues (in comparison to eg cisgender women's issues in the movement), understanding of gender in patriarchal societies and limited definitions... I would point out the socio-cultural landscape. (FRIDA advisor, Central Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central and North Asia region)

II. The state of trans organizing

FRIDA's trans led and centered grantee partners from all over the world have multiple ways of contributing to the trans movement. Some work from a human rights and advocacy perspective, others within the LGBTQIA+ rights framework, some focus on arts and creativity, others on challenging stereotypes and gender discrimination, economic empowerment, sex worker's rights, legal gender recognition, or increasing access to healthcare and transition

related care to name just a few. It is important to recognise this diversity and to constantly learn from the evolving trans movement.

Having only a global, generalized perspective on trans rights and experiences alone will not serve FRIDA's work to better resource trans led and centered groups. We need to also engage in a constant process of learning from grantee partners, and to observe regional trends and issues that shape the possibility of creating change locally.

a. PESTEL Framework

Following, we will explore some of the main political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal aspects that may have an impact on the state of trans organizing through the PESTEL framework.

Political

In the past years we have seen a rise in the anti-gender movement all over the world, in different shapes and forms including in the political arena. The trans movement has been highly targeted in this process and continues to suffer in face of a very well organized and resourced anti-trans movement. Politicians have used anti-gender issues as populist tools for gaining visibility and traction with the general population, proposing laws that discriminate against trans people.

Politicians don't see trans issues as a topic to take on in their mandates as it brings with it popular rejection of candidates. We still see very little political representation, and opportunities for trans folks to influence political discourse.

Economic

Many trans folks live in economic precarity, work jobs that don't offer social protection and specific trans related policies that would allow trans people to easily navigate their transitions while at work or when searching for jobs. Due to the overwhelming transphobia in the workplace, many trans people don't have access to jobs, or face discrimination if they come out in the workplace.

Family rejection also causes a disproportionate number of trans folks to be disconnected from their support systems, and lead to an increase in poverty, homelessness, and life precarity.

Social

Stigma, prejudice and discrimination of trans people are still part of the fabric of most societies all over the world. Violence against trans people, especially trans women, is at higher rates than ever. Just in 2020, 375 trans and gender-diverse people reported murdered³, out of which 96% were trans women and femmes, and more than half sex workers. Police often target trans people, especially trans sex workers and others working in informal economies.

Technology

Online environments are still the primary choice of identity exploration and community for trans people. In a world that is rather marginalizing of trans folks, online offers a respite in terms

³ TGEU, Trans Murder Monitoring, Available at: <https://transrespect.org/en/tmm-update-tdor-2021/>

of being able to be yourself without judgment. Thus, anonymity and being able to self express online through using an image and/or name that better suits you than the one in your legal documents, as well as reaching out to other people like yourself and making friends, has become a way in which trans folks can safely explore their identities. However, online spaces are increasingly being policed, either by big tech requirements that make it less and less possible to remain anonymous, or by the rapidly increasing online bullying, hate speech and transphobic attitudes to trans folks.

Environment (context)

There is more awareness in terms of gender diversity, as well as a greater concern about language usage when it comes to trans issues. We can also observe more trans representation in popular culture, movies and books, although not all are in line with trans realities, and some may fall into stereotypical paradigms

With the increase in visibility of trans folks, also comes an increase in backlash, hate speech and misrepresentation.

Legal

Trans identities are still criminalized in 13 countries⁴ in the world directly through legislation. In many other places, even though legislation either improved in the last years, or doesn't specifically target trans people negatively, the reality shows that many people experience the legislative process as being inaccessible and not based on self determination. This is especially true in legal gender recognition processes.

Even though in 2019 World Health Organization adopted the ICD-11 which depathologises trans identities, in practice this still remains a main burden on trans lives all over the world. In many areas of life, trans folks are still required to present a psychiatric evaluation report in order to access services- such as trans specific healthcare, legal gender recognition, in the education system, workplace, and in family recognition.

b. Resourcing trans movements

There is still very little trans specific research when it comes to the needs of trans groups and organizations. The trans movement worldwide is increasing year by year and bringing to the surface many complex issues that the community faces globally and regionally. We need multi annual, comparative research that can show us the evolution of the trans movement as well as the needs and realities that trans activists face in their specific contexts.

The report published in 2016 the Global Philanthropy Project published on the state of trans organizing gathered the input of 455 organizations working in 99 countries, representing every region of the world. They also compared the results of this research, with the previous one done in 2013. The report identifies key barriers to funding and fundraising for trans organizations. Here are some of the main findings of the report⁵:

⁴ At the moment of this strategy's development, as seen in ILGA World's Trans Legal Mapping Report (2019), available here:

https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_World_Trans_Legal_Mapping_Report_2019_EN.pdf

⁵American Jewish World Service, Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice & Global Action for Trans Equality: The state of trans organising, 2016, available at:

<https://www.transfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/The-State-of-Trans-Organizing-2016.pdf>

When it comes to resourcing trans groups:

- Trans groups face barriers to finding, applying for and implementing grants. Seven in ten (70.8%) trans groups reported at least one barrier to applying for funding. Not explicitly expressing an interest in trans specific organizing in the call for proposal is one of the main aspects that limits trans groups from applying for certain funding opportunities. Another common barrier was the fact that applications were too long or complicated, their group not being registered with the government, funders not responding to their applications, not having staff that know how to write grants, and the application being in a language that was difficult for the group to read or write.
- Trans groups all over the world continue to do critical work, addressing the human rights violations facing trans communities with very limited resources. More than half of trans groups all over the world are working with under \$10,000 a year.
- The international trans movement is rapidly growing yet significantly under-resourced and continues to receive only a small amount of total global funding on LGBTI+ issues. Trans organizations are at the front lines of the HIV response within their communities but receive a very small amount of global HIV funding.
- Out of all types of funding available to trans groups, Women's rights funding is reported as being the least likely to be received by trans groups.

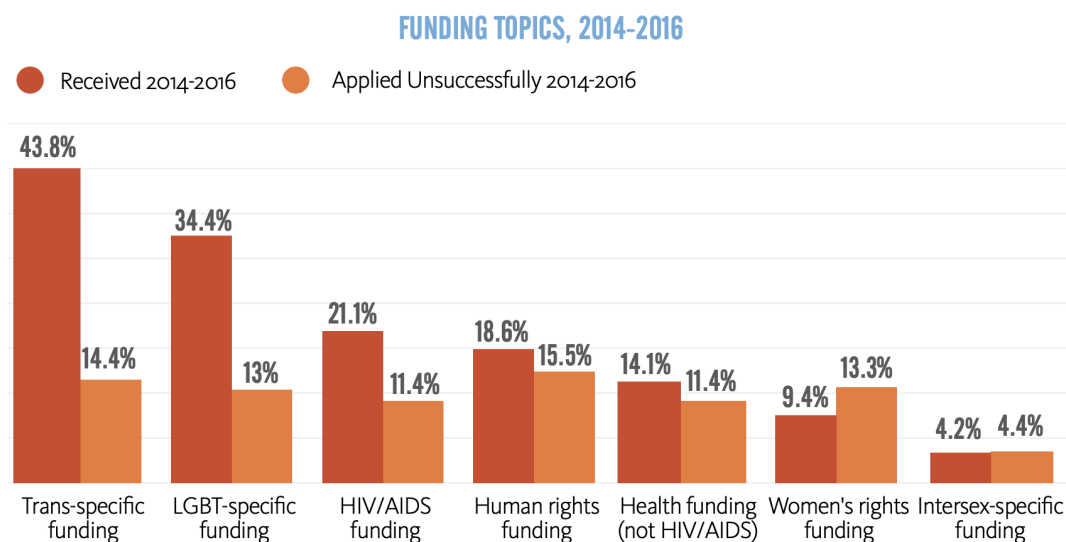


Figure 19

Graph from *The state of trans organising* by American Jewish World Service, Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice & Global Action for Trans Equality

When it comes to the specificity of trans groups and organizations:

- Many trans groups are autonomous, and others are part of LGBT rights organizations.
- Trans groups - particularly autonomous groups - lack sufficient full-time paid staff.
- Trans activists use a variety of strategies to benefit their constituents, with the largest numbers focusing on advocacy, social service provision and safety and anti-violence work.
- In addition to working with trans people, trans groups work with constituents who face multiple and intersecting identities, privileges and marginalisations: low-income people

(53.6%), sex workers (30.1%), ethnic minorities (27.4%), and people living with HIV/AIDS (24.7%)

- Trans activists need capacity strengthening support to sustain and grow their groups and prevent burnout. In 2016, almost eight in ten (79%) of trans groups wanted skills training in fundraising and grant writing, more than seven in ten (70%) trans groups wanted skills training in budgeting and financial management. The largest gaps between types of capacity strengthening support received and needed were in the areas of finding and responding to funding opportunities (17.0% vs. 79.2%), healing, anti-trauma work or burnout prevention (18.1% vs. 76.5%) and budgeting and financial management (21.9% vs. 70.4%).

Comparing the identified realities and needs of trans organisers and those of young feminists⁶, we can see a lot of similarities, reinforcing the commonality of needs in terms of resourcing and capacity strengthening. Some of the main similarities are:

- A steady increase in trans and young feminist organising all over the globe, many of them autonomous, unregistered, small, and emerging
- Innovative and creative ways of doing activism and managing to create change with very little resources
- A special interest for intersectional perspective and practice
- Many of them start, and some continue for longer periods, being part of bigger organizations and or connected to other local/national movements
- Lack of resources is reported as the main challenge for both

III. FRIDA's trans universe

FRIDA as a young feminist funder has always grown organically, learned by doing, and improved the way it sees and does its activities and processes to include the many nuances that the feminist movement has. This is also the case when it comes to resourcing and engaging trans led and centered communities.

Frida has been supporting many LGBTQIA+ groups throughout the years, as this is one of the types of groups most benefiting from FRIDA's grantmaking. However, we cannot say that if FRIDA funds LGBTQIA+ groups, it automatically funds trans related organizing. Many times more 'generic' LGBTQIA+ organisations, although they have trans included in their mission, they don't always prioritise trans issues in the same way as issues related to sexual orientation. This is why, while it is important to recognise these efforts and continue to prioritize funding LGBTQIA+ organizations, we also need focused efforts on trans led groups, and trans organizing.

At the time of this strategy development, in spring 2022, FRIDA supports 59 groups that are either trans led or trans centered. Out of these 2 are in the Caribbean, 8 in Latin America, 14 in South, Southeast, East Asia and the Pacific, 15 in Central Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central and North Asia region, 4 in South West Asia North Africa, 16 in West East South and Central Africa. They work at the intersection of education, community organizing, service provision and advocacy. Their work happens in diverse and challenging political contexts and

⁶ FRIDA & AWID, Global-State-of-Young-Feminist-Organizing, Available at: <https://youngfeministfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Global-State-of-Young-Feminist-Organizing.pdf>

with little, if any, support from the wider society. We celebrate and support their work as we know that their efforts will bring about more justice and freedom for us all. We also commit to dedicating time and finding ways for getting to know them and their realities better, and collecting specific data so that we can support them better. One first step in this direction is continuously updating our existing mapping of trans led and centered grantee partners, and transforming it into a living, useful document for FRIDA.

We are now in an unique position of having an increasing number of trans led and centered grantees, trans staff, advisors and collaborators- and we know that this is just one small step in having a fully embedded trans perspective in FRIDA. Through this strategy and in popular discourse we many times use ‘trans inclusion’ as a goal, for lack of a better expression. We want to clarify that we regard ‘inclusion’ with a critical lens, acknowledging the colonial nuances it holds, that centers the ‘mainstream’⁷ as the norm (in this case cis girls and women) and holders of the power of deciding who is allowed to be considered a woman, a feminist, or part of a community. We wish to challenge this perspective and propose that even though we use the word ‘inclusion’ for simplicity and ease of understanding, we look at it as a process of unlearning and shaking current existing systems and ways of thinking, to make space for a co-creative process where trans women alongside cis women, trans men, and non binary folks reimagine the feminist struggle. Therefore, this is in itself a process of better understanding the institutionalized historical exclusion that trans folks face, and actively work against it in FRIDA and in the wider feminist movement.

We know that this is a gradual and emergent process. We know that there are many things we don’t know yet, and that the way forward is based on creating the right circumstances for ‘inclusion’ with intention, so that new realities will emerge organically and create sustainable change.

Strategic Directions

We anchor this process in [FRIDA’s strategic framework](#), which consists of five strategic areas, our rising constellations: *bridging*, *flourishing*, *queering*, *co-creating*, and *moving*. They guide us in exploring, what is the change that we want to see and how will we know that we got there? Following, we are going to explore these constellations through a trans lens, and see what are some anchors we can put into the future.

Bridging (connections, co-accountability & accessibility)

- Trans activists are well resourced: more trans groups apply to FRIDA, more trans groups get funded, more groups are able to create significant change using this grant;
- Trans grantees are supported with specifically tailored programming and opportunities;
- FRIDA’s structures (advisory, human resources, wider community, etc) are well prepared to provide a positive FRIDA experience for trans folks, and as a result, more trans activists join the Global Advisory as well as the wider community;
- FRIDA contributes to knowledge building around trans issues by continuously learning from trans groups’ realities and uplifting that knowledge into the wider philanthropic ecosystem.

⁷ Understood as the most commonly met

Flourishing (radical care & planetary wellbeing)

- Trans folks are invited to actively co-create the overall FRIDA experience, not just when it comes to trans related projects;
- Trans grantees are actively invited to experience radical collective care within the FRIDA experience and supported to implement wellbeing and care practices in their own work;
- Trans activists experience a holistically secure experience at FRIDA and are able to learn and implement them in their own work;
- FRIDA includes trans folks in it's leadership structures, as well as in other levels of community involvement (Staff, Advisors, Board, Consultants, etc).

Queering (creative disruption and strengthening diverse feminist movements)

- FRIDA leads the way in redefining what is meant by young feminists through consistent inclusion of trans issues as feminist issues and uplifting the realities of young trans activists from all over the world;
- FRIDA has a strategic, holistic, and coordinated long term approach amongst all areas of work to better engaging with and resourcing trans activists;
- FRIDA acts as a model amongst its peers when it comes to including trans people in it's philanthropic advocacy work;
- FRIDA supports trans folks to join the philanthropic community through offering opportunities for involvement and for shaping the field;
- FRIDA acts as a bridge between trans organizers and other donors or spaces (both grantees and non-grantees);
- FRIDA develops and implements trans specific human resources policies making its work environment a trans affirming one.

Co-creating (culture of collaboration)

- FRIDA acts as a link between movements, supporting relationship building and solidarity amongst cis and trans folks part of it's wider community;
- There is a healthy flow of communication between trans grantees and FRIDA, allowing for cross-team collaboration and continuously informing FRIDA's work from the grassroots;
- FRIDA continues to recruit new trans staff and consultants who shape FRIDA's work to better include trans perspectives;
- FRIDA intentionally creates partnerships with trans organizations and peer funders with the purpose of learning and mutual support;
- Trans issues are feminist issues, and this is clearly communicated by and integrated in FRIDA's work at all levels.

Moving (agility flexibility, & adaptability)

- FRIDA continuously unlearns and learns about trans issues in the wider frame of gender justice;
- FRIDA reflects frequently on the quality of engagement with and resourcing of trans groups.
- Trans realities and voices are included in FRIDA's research and publications in all their diversity.

Areas of focus

The visions explored above can become a reality when FRIDA intentionally builds on existing strengths, looks at current risks and finds appropriate actions to address them. This will ensure that the organization is moving forward in a healthy, sustainable way that creates conditions for trans folks to thrive within its structures and co-create FRIDA.

a. Grantmaking

Trans collectives, even though similar in needs with other young feminist groups, need specific attention when it comes to the grantmaking process. It is important to start paying more attention to this specific community through analysis of the data gathered through the grantmaking process, and improve the journey from a grantmaking cycle to another. There is a huge gap in the knowledge that we currently have access to when it comes to the realities of trans activists, and their resourcing. The few studies that exist need more information to build a more solid database of information when it comes to the needs of trans movements.

Grantmaking is and will continue to be one of the primary means through which many trans activists learn about and engage for the first time with FRIDA. More specific attention is needed in ensuring that the process is explicitly and radically inclusive of trans movements, as well as contributing to the education of the overall feminist movement. It is important that FRIDA is aware of the main areas in which trans movements focus their energy and resources on, and explicitly welcome that type of work. Many trans activists still lack support in work such as increasing access to healthcare, legal gender recognition, as well as responding to violence against trans people. Incorporating these issues as feminist issues in our discourse and practice will support the access of trans groups to FRIDA's grantmaking process.

Strengths:

- Grantmaking process clearly states that trans groups are welcome to apply;
- Outreach process is led by regional advisors who are close to the movements and can reach groups that would otherwise not have access to funding;
- The outreach plan is adapted to regional context and priorities;
- Staff is committed to ensure that trans groups are part of each grantmaking round, ensuring fairness and accessibility;
- FRIDA is working to be more engaged with trans grantee partners by giving them specific attention to their needs and their remarks especially through focal points;
- FRIDA grants allow for development in a pace that suits groups, without major restrictions;
- FRIDA's grantmaking process is accessible (7 languages, no need to be registered, etc.).

Risks:

- Age limit: Due to the specificity of trans organizing, where many folks start their activism later in life due to social stigma and transition processes, age is regarded differently by trans folks, and their life expectancy is lower than other populations. The age limitations of FRIDA may further marginalize trans led groups from taking part in the process;
- Global North narratives around gender identity impact the way in which we understand how activism/change should be done. There is a gap in knowledge when it comes to

what trans feminist activism looks like, many voices and ideas are less visible and resourced (for example trans sex workers, trans people in privation of liberty or in informal economies);

- Many trans groups are in situations where they are not able to securely receive grants due to political repression and lack of knowledge on alternatives for safer resourcing;
- New and emerging trans groups have less, if any, experience with grant proposal writing.

I feel that the age limit for trans-led groups is an obstacle when outreaching and resourcing these groups. Especially because many trans people have a wider chance to organize after they have transitioned, which already takes a few years. So it's sad to see some trans-led groups being left out in call for proposals due to the age limit. I feel we have different time frames in terms of age not only because we have a shorter life expectancy (which is why is also so important to support older trans-led groups) but also because transitioning can take several years of our social lives. (FRIDA Staff member, Latin America)

Actions:

- Better clarify what types of activities groups can use FRIDA grants for, and explicitly mention trans specific themes such as projects working on improving access to hormone therapy as eligible for receiving a FRIDA grant;
- Offer information around security, reporting, and overall process of grantmaking to bring even more accessibility to the grantmaking process, especially how groups may be able to receive grants securely;
- Include trans specific points in the orientation of advisors before the assessment of project proposals;
- Outreach plan to specifically target trans led groups and channels such as: social media and mailing lists of trans and LGBTQIA+ specific organizations ([GATE](#), [ITF](#), [TGEU](#), [IGLYO](#), [UHAI](#), [ILGA](#), etc.). Use existing and past trans grantees to outreach to new groups;
- Use the grantmaking cycle to learn more about trans led groups and use the information to reach out to new collectives in the following cycle;
- Analyze the voting system, how many trans groups applied, and how many got the grants, to see if there are any unfavorable conditions for trans groups on the existing system, as it may be the case that non-trans people do not vote for trans projects due to personal biases, stigma, etc. If the voting system is found to unfavour trans groups, find alternative ways for this process;
- Using the information gathered, make intentional space for conversation about the specificities of trans grantees and explore with them how FRIDA grantmaking can become more permissive and accessible for the trans movement;
- Become more flexible when it comes to the age limit for trans groups, allow for groups with 5-10 years above the current limit to apply. Instead, we can focus on asking groups to explain how they ensure that young trans people are supported to take more leadership roles. Support advisors in understanding the reason behind this;
- Do not completely exclude groups with membership and/or leadership over 35 years old– support them by acting as a bridge to other funders that would be more suitable. Many trans groups work intergenerationally, and this is something to be supported;

- Simplifying the application and the reporting form by using simpler language, and by offering support with understanding how to fill in the application form for groups with less experience. Offer alternatives such as submitting the proposal by video;
- Increase grants sum, considering the increasing needs of the community, and/or offer trans-specific grantmaking/special grants with core support. This is needed because, unlike other types of young feminist groups, in very many countries there is only one or two trans organisations which have to cover a wide geographical space and a big community with very limited resources;
- Explore establishing an annual percentage of trans groups to fund within the overall grantmaking, specifically on funding groups with trans leadership instead of groups that work on trans issues but are led by cis people.

Recognize that our ways of working are particular, that we still lack a lot of training in these matters, and try to prioritize organizations led by trans people, since many times our role in organizations only becomes participants, but not coordinators. (FRIDA grantee partner, Latin America)

b. Communications and advocacy

Communications and advocacy are essential to ensuring that there is a healthy cycle of information between FRIDA and trans communities, as well as the wider philanthropic ecosystem. Communications pose a dilemma when it comes to how we use language and how generic or specific it is. On one hand, we need generic terminology that includes everybody, such as *young feminists*. On the other hand we need nuanced and targeted communication that explicitly tells specific groups that this process is for them too. The overall question for this area of work is *how do we navigate the complexities and tensions of including everyone yet being specific to each community?*

There is a great potential for facilitating learning through the way we use communications and advocacy: both with existing and potential grantees, as well as with the philanthropic community. FRIDA is in a unique position to influence the expansion of the term *feminist* or *young feminist*, to explicitly include trans folks at the intersection of a multitude of realities, identities and experiences.

How can we ensure a healthy flow of information exchange between FRIDA and its community? The existing systems in place can be upgraded to truly embed trans issues as feminist issues inside FRIDA's communications. However, good and inclusive communication needs to be accompanied by practical steps, and be uniform in all areas: in how we write, but also how we speak at events and the words we use.

Strengths:

- Dedicated team working to ensure consistency and inclusion in FRIDA's communications and advocacy efforts;
- Wide reach through advisors and existing grantees;
- Language justice efforts are already reaching out folks in 7 languages;
- Consistent communication efforts and established channels of communication;
- FRIDA is seen as an innovative actor in the philanthropic field.

Risks:

- The wider community may not have the same understanding of what do we mean by young feminists, as well as FRIDA's perspectives on trans issues;
- Communicating on trans issues brings a challenge of “whose voices are we amplifying?” and “whose voices are not present?”. Not having trans folks in FRIDA's communications team may bring difficulty in expressing nuance on trans issues.
- Although communications are inclusive, they may not reach a wide enough audience to directly lead to more trans led groups engaging with FRIDA. Many trans activists do not know about FRIDA and the fact that they can apply;
- Some philanthropic actors may not be aware of the realities and needs of trans activists;
- Promoting one sided perspective of trans communities, influenced by global north perspectives;
- Existing tensions in the wider feminist ecosystem, coming especially from TERFs (Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists) as well as people who lack information on trans issues;

Actions:

- Engage with and make visible the diversity of trans organizing globally through communication and advocacy by inviting folks from diverse contexts to contribute to strategies and articles on all topics, not only on trans specific materials. Remuneration should be budgeted;
- Invest in trans specific training for ensuring that all communication is inclusive;
- Revisit the FRIDA Writing Style & Guide and include trans terminology and nuances, the definition of young feminists as including trans folks, as well as the reason behind it. Be aware that language is constantly changing, thus this will need to be updated from time to time;
- Find ways to explicitly communicate that FRIDA is supportive of trans movements and does not align with TERFs, nor does it wish to fund them;
- Diversity in the communication channels of FRIDA to include more trans specific platforms, forums, organizations (trans and LGBTQIA+ networks such as [ITF](#), [GATE](#), [TGEU](#), [IGLYO](#), [UHAI](#), [ILGA](#) World and regional ILGAs, online LGBTQIA+ platforms, etc); have a continuously updated list of trans led organizations with whom to cultivate relationship and ask for support in disseminating FRIDA's call for proposals;
- Follow and amplify trans activists' social media messages, campaigns, and demands, as well as highlight stories of trans grantee partners as examples;
- Encourage LGBTQIA+ advisors and grantees (past and present) to promote FRIDA's call for proposal in other local languages;
- Develop the partnership with [ITF](#) as an important partner for ensuring FRIDA's communications, especially outreach, reaches the wider trans movement. They can also support FRIDA's advocacy efforts, and FRIDA can amplify ITF's advocacy goals;
- Co-organise strategic outreach events with trans organizations;
- Reach out to well connected trans activists and ask for their guidance and support in dissemination;
- Draw learnings on the needs of trans groups from MEL in order to respond with specific advocacy support, especially when it comes to other grantmakers simplifying the application process and including trans groups in their grantmaking.

c. Communities and Culture

FRIDA's communities and culture work is essential for weaving together the existing experiences, resources, and needs. When it comes to how this area intersects with trans issues there are a few important things to consider:

- ❖ Many times, the feminist community is not inclusive of the trans community, keeping the two separated and sometimes even opposing.
- ❖ The culture of young feminists is seen by many to include only young women and girls, thus FRIDA is contributing to changing this culture by intentionally focusing on the way it engages with and resources the trans movement. This may not be seen as positive by everybody.

In this context, some important questions to continuously explore are *“how can we go beyond “pronouns” and create a truly trans inclusive feminist community and culture within FRIDA and within the feminist ecosystem?”*, *“what conditions do we need to create so that trans issues are embedded in the FRIDA communities and culture?”*, *“how can we address the exclusion of trans folks in our communities?”*.

Strengths:

- FRIDA Staff and Advisors are extremely culturally diverse and can provide valuable insights from the local and regional communities they are part of or in solidarity with;
- There is a desire and willingness to learn and better engage with trans issues and communities;
- There are systems in place supportive of collaboration and inter-community dialogue, such as the special grants;
- There is already a lot of expertise in the wider community about trans specific issues, which can easily be transferred to folks that need to learn more.

Risks:

- Being a community where the majority of members are young women and girls, trans folks may feel alienated by cis-centric language;
- Biases and lack of familiarity of trans issues amongst advisors;
- Very few openly trans advisors;
- Information related to trans issues are not included in the orientation process for advisors.

Actions:

- Offer learning opportunities specifically on trans issues including cultural nuances from across the globe, and different ways that we understand gender and trans identities. This should be attended by all advisors, to ensure there is a shared understanding, and also to address any inconsistencies in evaluating trans projects. Hire trans folks to facilitate these learning spaces;
- Ensure that each regional advisory always has trans people in it, to ensure nuance and also not to become tokenistic. The more advisors we have, the greater reach in the global trans community we will have;

- Apply the trans inclusive language guidelines to each meeting and ensure dialogue and reflection about the terminology we use when sharing space with each other, for example: using words like people instead of girls, solidarity and friendship instead of sisterhood, young feminists instead of only saying young women;
- Address exclusionary language when it appears with the purpose of making space for learning, expansion, and solidarity;
- Involve advisors and staff in the process of mapping local and regional trans led groups frequently;
- Support regional solidarity and networking amongst grantees and advisors, so advisors can better understand trans groups that FRIDA funds.

d. Capacity Strengthening

Trans groups are in great need of capacity strengthening, especially when it comes to accessing resources, organizational development, in particular project management, financial management, communications within the team and managing conflicts, digital security, sustainability of the organization, as well as developing a shared vision in the team, preventing and addressing burnout and balancing activism and other commitments such as work.

A more coordinated and intentional approach to support trans grantee partners based on their specific identified priorities and needs would be beneficial. A frequent needs assessment can provide the knowledge for future offerings, and can contribute to knowledge building that can then be used in philanthropic advocacy.

FRIDA's Capacity strengthening program has the chance to contribute to the development of trans groups and organizations, and support them with the learning and resources needed for their goals. Capacity strengthening can also mean bringing people together in order to make bridges and give them space to lead the way for new perspectives. For example, a training on trans issues could benefit grantees, but a joint collaborative initiative to tackle anti-gender ideology discourse can bring together both cis and trans folks that can find their commonalities in face of a shared threat. FRIDA can support the mainstreaming of trans issues by identifying practical ways in which to address trans exclusionary attitudes, language, or actions when grantee partners come together.

Focal points play an essential role in engaging with trans grantee partners. This relationship can be an important source of learning for FRIDA, and can be developed in time and coordinated so that information is used in all programming.

We believe FRIDA's approach in strongly engaging and involving the trans community provides a space where we as communities can freely articulate our needs and feel supported to carry out the work we are doing, an example would be the workshops on fundraising which is something a lot of trans led grassroots organizers like us need as the majority of us don't have certain capacities but have the passion to do the work. (FRIDA grantee partner, WESCA)

Strengths:

- FRIDA already has a good basis of interacting with trans led and centered grantees through it's capacity strengthening program;
- Focal points have direct and close relationship with grantee partners;

- FRIDA's previous workshops have been seen as providing value to trans grantee partners, as they tackled topics that they needed to strengthen their capacity on, such as fundraising;
- Convenings organized provide valuable space for learning and building community.

Risks:

- Biases and lack of familiarity about trans issues amongst grantees causing unsafe environments for trans folks;
- There aren't any structures in place to support trans folks from the FRIDA community in coming together;
- Trans grantees have a lot of gaps in knowledge, and need supportive accompaniment in addition to financial support in order to become sustainable.

Actions:

- Provide trans specific capacity strengthening that will allow not only for individual and organizational support but also provide networking and solidarity opportunities amongst trans grantees;
- Offer a trans convening to support the development of a trans network of FRIDA's trans grantees, and ensure exchange and solidarity;
- Offer trans special grants;
- Offer more technical skills to trans grantees so they can strengthen their capacity, especially when it comes to leadership building, managing organizations, conceptualizing, writing and implementing a project, resource mobilization, and advocacy;
- Specifically support trans activists with self and collective care offerings, as many are burnt out and overworked, in addition to managing the stress of living in transphobic contexts;
- Support folks to better understand how they can find other funding opportunities;
- Use existing and previous trans grantees to support in the accompaniment process of new grantees, and, generally, promote peer to peer exchange;
- Explore how to utilize existing expertise within the trans movement instead of bringing "outside expertise";
- Strengthen the existing relationships of focal points with grantee partners;
- When transitioning, FRIDA can support grantees to develop strategic plans so they can access other resources and develop their organization further. Developing partnerships with trans and LGBTQIA+ networks and funders will be of great use to this process, in ensuring a smooth and sustainable transition;
- Develop a cyclical needs assessment process that can inform any capacity strengthening offerings.

e. Human Resources

We look at human resources as the area of work that builds FRIDA from the inside, so that it's trans staff, consultants and collaborators can thrive and contribute in their fullness to FRIDA's work, bringing in valuable perspectives through their work, and also contributing to a nuanced approach when it comes to trans issues. The stronger the organization is on the inside,

the stronger impact it has on the outside. Having more trans workers, and better trans specific policies to support them will be a way to show to the trans movement that FRIDA is treating this topic holistically, and will provide much needed representation of diverse voices. It will also support more trans groups to apply in the grantmaking cycle, and increase the trans community within FRIDA year by year.

Always have trans consultants and staff. Protect trans people you work with. Always use inclusive language, correct people if they are not inclusive in what they are saying. Don't force people to come out in order to start using inclusive language. You're hurting people with this "womans and girls" (FRIDA grantee, CEECCNA)

Strengths:

- Care based culture in processes of hiring and employment;
- Strong existing employment policies, including health and wellness stipend and relocation costs;
- Flexibility and desire to improve;
- Priority given to folks with a minority background, including trans, in the recruiting process;
- Staff has diverse experiences and knowledge in terms of working with trans folks and engaging with trans issues.

Risks:

- No trans-specific policy in the staff handbook yet;
- Not being able to prioritize staff development on trans issues due to workload;
- Difficulty to fully benefit from trans-specific policies (such as gender-affirming healthcare) due to bureaucracy and/or legislation in FRIDA staff national contexts;
- Trans applicants may need to be looked at through different lens in the recruitment processes, taking into consideration that some trans candidates might not had the same access to education due to being excluded because of their gender identity, thus have different types of skills;

Actions:

- Review internal policies to ensure that they are trans inclusive (using gender inclusive language such as "people" or they instead of gender binary terminology such as "women and men" or "she or he" etc.)
- Add new trans-specific policies: transition related support (ex. HRT- hormone replacement therapy, ability to use a chosen name in official FRIDA communication even if legal documents state otherwise), inclusive family policies, mental health related support, etc.
- Ensure that trans folks have access to FRIDA's job opportunities by advertising widely in trans networks;
- Visibilise FRIDA's trans-inclusive policies in all job postings;
- Prioritize hiring folks that are trans to increase FRIDA's expertise as well as ensuring representation;
- Set up a target for employing new trans folks in FRIDA.

Trans-specific human resources policies ensure that there is equitable support offered throughout the organization, including to trans folks. It shows trans employees that their needs are taken into account and that their employer is aware of the variety of aspects needed to be addressed in order to have a trans affirming workplace.

Developing trans-specific policies⁸ in the workplace include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Privacy & confidentiality issues: each trans person will decide if, when, and how they wish to communicate about their identity to their colleagues
- ❖ Official documents change procedures
- ❖ Using the a chosen name and pronouns
- ❖ Transitioning on the job (including a transition plan)
- ❖ Discrimination and harrasment
- ❖ Health insurance benefits

Due to FRIDA's fiscal registration in Canada, national laws and regulations will need to be taken into account when designing new policies, support, and transition plans⁹.

f. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

On its own journey, FRIDA can put in place MEL mechanisms that not only provide info for its own improvement, but also to the wider ecosystem. There is an untapped opportunity when it comes to supporting the wider philanthropic community to better engage with and resource trans led and centered groups. There is also very little research on the state of trans organizing, the realities trans activists face, and the specific needs they have. How can we use every suitable opportunity to gain insights on the realities and needs of trans grantees? How can we transform these insights into learning?

FRIDA's MEL team should engage in a reflection process and identify how it can best use the tools in place to develop its MEL processes, so that it can support a healthy cycle of information and knowledge building. FRIDA's work, especially when it comes to grantmaking and capacity strengthening, needs to be informed by the data gathered from trans grantees. In this way, FRIDA will be able to offer tailored support, and to continuously learn from its work with trans groups. When it comes to MEL, we need to also reflect whether there are any trans-specific MEL that we need to start incorporating in the already existing processes.

Strengths:

- A very strong MEL approach, involving all areas of work of FRIDA;
- Multiple opportunities for data collection in the grantmaking cycles;
- Direct relationship with trans grantees;
- A learning culture within the organization.

Risks:

⁸ Transgender Law Center, Model Transgender Employment Policy, available at: <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/model-workplace-employment-policy-Updated.pdf>

⁹ Canadian Labor Congress, WORKERS IN TRANSITION A Practical Guide for Union Representatives and Trans Union Members, available here: <https://canadianlabour.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WorkersInTransition-Guide-EN.pdf>

- At the moment there are not enough segregated data for FRIDA to learn, or see patterns in time for it's trans grantee partners;
- There are no trans specific indicators;
- FRIDA has many participatory processes involving sending questionnaires to its community. This might overwhelm grantee partners, and result in less responses.

Understand oppressions the trans community is going through. Include them in your surveys. You have surveys listing 100 types of gender-based violence, but not a word on transphobia or transmisogyny. (FRIDA grantee partner)

Actions:

- Identify the ways in which we can learn about trans grantee's needs through the existing processes (advisory, grantmaking, special grants, transition, etc.);
- Separate LGBTQIA+ and trans in all MEL processes for research purposes;
- Recognise transphobia and transmisogyny as specific gender violence, as well as other trans-specific relevant elements when surveying;
- Publish learnings on trans needs and realities from data gathered in MEL processes, in support of FRIDA's growth in this field, as well as for the wider philanthropic ecosystem;
- Simplify language;
- Set clear goals and monitor how FRIDA evolves in terms of trans 'inclusion' over time.

g. Resource Mobilization

When it comes to resource mobilization, we are sitting at the intersection of under-resourced trans movements and the ability of the wider philanthropic field to sit with the complexities of funding trans activism. FRIDA's resource mobilization process has seen increased growth in the last years, and with it many conversations around ethical aspects. When it comes to trans issues, FRIDA's resource mobilization work needs to make efforts to increase its capacity to represent trans issues in conversations with donors, as well as find diverse sources of funding that can be distributed to trans activists.

Strengths:

- Good systems in place, as well as being a respected and trusted organization within the donor sphere;
- Track record of fundraising for diverse groups including trans activism;
- Resource Mobilization Ethics Policy that aligns values with resourcing;
- A growing interest from the community on the ethical aspects of fundraising.

Risks:

- Transphobia is present amongst donors, which can hinder a healthy flow of resources towards trans groups;
- Not yet having enough knowledge of how to make a case for trans-specific fundraising.

Actions:

- Embed trans issues in FRIDA's resource mobilization through all processes;

- Mobilize donor-allies to support trans activism through their resources;
- Mobilize resources for trans activism including fight for healthcare, access to rights, trans folks living in precarity, sex workers, and those most marginalised;
- Partner with ITF in efforts to better resource the trans movement;
- Educate donors on trans issues.

h. Finances and administration

The trans movement is severely under-resourced, as well as in great need of support related to financial management capacity strengthening. Procedures in the organization should reflect values of 'inclusion', and make the process an easy one for trans grantee partners.

Strengths:

- FRIDA has systems in places for securely disbursing resources to grantee partners;
- Flexibility in grantmaking;
- Groups are able to remain anonymous.

Risks:

- Some trans groups have a harder time receiving grants due to political issues;
- Trans groups are not aware of FRIDA's efforts to disburse grants in a secure and flexible way;
- Lack of experience in financial management and reporting of trans groups;
- Legislative impediments in certain contexts that make it harder for folks to receive, manage, and report.

Actions:

- Communicate with transparency and clarity FRIDA's financial abilities and limitations;
- Provide direct support for new and existing grantees, as well as resources related to financial management and reporting;
- Decrease administrative burden from grantee partners, and simplify reporting process and administrative tasks;
- Develop confidentiality policies in relationship with trans activists, in ensuring that their identities remain anonymous, and that they share only what they are comfortable to share with the wider community;
- Analyze and improve the administrative process by asking feedback from grantee partners.

i. Holistic Security

The trans community is one that will benefit greatly out of gaining more knowledge and insight into holistic security approaches. Trans activists from all over the world are facing considerable risks when it comes to their organizing, especially online. Due to the specificity of trans communities, who are not location bound, but spread on the territories of a certain region, as well as the stigma and invisibility, trans activists use online activism more to create communities and support each other. Online environments are what save a lot of trans lives of

those with access to it, as they can facilitate community and support. In the same time they are also dangerous and threatening to the wellbeing and livelihood of trans folks.

This is why FRIDA is in a unique position where it can shape its policies in order to make space for trans activists to feel safe, connect with each other, and take advantage of the multitude of opportunities without fear of oppression. A community informed and driven holistic security strategy can use the information gathered from trans people to understand priorities, concerns and the possibility of trans groups to access digital spaces, opportunities, and tools so that nobody is left behind. Through its holistic security practices FRIDA can inspire and educate trans grantees on how to keep each other safe, especially online.

“In Central Asia and Eastern Europe, trans lives are endangered not only by homophobic and transphobic legislation, but also by governments seeking to exert stricter surveillance over civil society by controlling and monitoring internet usage. Restrictions on internet freedom have a disproportionate effect on trans communities in the region who rely on the internet for their activist, personal, and professional lives, making it a critical tool for connecting and movement building.”¹⁰

Strengths:

- Dedicated team with access to safe and secure platforms and tools that can be used in communication with trans activists;
- Trans communities are already exploring this topic for their own safety reasons, especially in certain parts of the world;
- There is a big desire and need from trans activists to explore further this topic.

Risks:

- Trans groups may not be fully aware of the various policies in place to ensure their safety when applying to FRIDA, and/or when becoming a FRIDA grantee;
- Trans activists do not have enough knowledge of safe online tools and platforms, as well as a lack of access to data, especially in rural areas;

Actions:

- Gather feedback from trans activists;
- Bring to visibility FRIDA's efforts for ensure holistic security through all processes;
- Provide capacity building on holistic security, and invite trans facilitators and trainers to support with this work;
- Offer flexible funding for developing secure infrastructure in trans organizations;
- Make sure that all digital communication and information sharing with trans activists is secure, in order not to provide extra risks for activists.

¹⁰ Mapping Digital Landscapes Of Trans Activism In Central Asia And Eastern Europe, TGEU & Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, available at: https://s3.amazonaws.com/astraea.production/app/asset/uploads/2018/05/Astraea_DigiSec_EnglishVIEW.pdf

j. Leadership

The need for representative leadership was one of the most common suggestions for improvement of FRIDA in the consultation process. Navigating the terrain at the intersection of the feminist movements and the trans movements, one big step towards coming together is having more reciprocity and representation, ensuring that nuances of trans realities are present within the feminist movement.

Trans leadership development takes time, intention and continuous reflection. We need to look at what are the conditions that need to be fulfilled so that trans leadership can flourish? We need more trans voices in FRIDA, as well as in philanthropy in general.

Strengths:

- Leadership of FRIDA is participatory and horizontal;
- FRIDA already has some trans staff and advisors that can lead this process or provide insight and guidance.

Risks:

- Lack of coordination in the efforts to better resource and engage with trans communities;
- FRIDA's reputation as a leading funder for young women and girls needs to be intentionally updated to include young trans activists through all its areas of work. Thus, the need for leadership to be consistent in including trans issues in their leadership.

Actions:

- Create a trans working group comprised of staff, advisors, and grantees to provide leadership for implementing the trans strategy gradually and organically;
- Invite trans activists to join FRIDA's board;
- Discuss and plan on the long term what are the conditions needed so that FRIDA's next co-leadership can include a trans person as a co-director;
- Cultivate the skills of trans staff so they can take on leadership roles within the organization;
- Lead FRIDA with trans folks in mind as much as with girls and young women, in all aspects of work. Those in leadership positions can inspire others through their discourse and actions in ensuring that trans issues are seen as feminist issues.

The trans strategy as a living document and practice

a. Methodology

This strategy was initially developed between December 2021 and March 2022 through a participatory process which included: questionnaires for FRIDA grantee partners, advisors, and staff, two community consultations, interviews with staff members, and an interview with International Trans Fund.

The strategy was built as a guiding vision for FRIDA, with concrete analysis of what are some of the things that already exist and work, what are the things that still need tending to, and some ideas on how that might be done. It is a living document that will continue to be updated as we unlearn and learn more about and with the trans movement.

b. Recommendations for implementation

- ❖ FRIDA should allocate one person to be responsible for the overall implementation of the strategy, as well as aligning processes so that they build on & support each other
- ❖ Each team in FRIDA should dedicate time to analyze the proposals from the strategy, decide which ones can happen when, and develop indicators for the following years, as suitable, according to budget. Activities should clearly be included in the work plan.
- ❖ The strategy should be communicated to the wider community, especially grantee partners, advisors, and partners in the philanthropic community. This is a great occasion for the field to learn from FRIDA's process, be inspired, and start similar processes.
- ❖ The strategy should continue to be updated with new discoveries every year, as well as a close monitoring of the results.