



ASTRAEA LESBIAN FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

Executive Summary: Seeds, Territories, and Resistance in Abya Yala

Insights from LGBTQI+ community
organizers in 18 Latin American countries

2025

Executive Summary



In 2022, the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice commissioned a report from independent researchers to assess the landscape of LBTQI+ activism in Abya Yala.

Abya Yala is a Guna word adopted as an alternative to the colonial America by the leaders and spokespersons of the indigenous resistance, from Alaska to the Patagonia. (Participant, 2019)

“Seeds, Territories, and Resistance in Abya Yala” shares perspectives from nearly one hundred LBTQI+ people and organizations. The report centers experiences, learnings, struggles, outrage, messages, and questions from LBTQI+ organizations, networks, community organizers, and collectives, with the goal of providing insights and recommendations to inspire donors operating in the region.

Abya Yala, “land in full maturity,” is the name adopted in consensus by the organizations of diverse native peoples. It imagines a decolonized future that connects us with our pre-colonization origins to learn to care for Mother Earth, the home that connects us beyond borders. Although Abya Yala includes the North American and Caribbean territories, out of respect for indigenous peoples Abya Yala is used throughout, with the note that Abya Yala is a more expansive concept than Latin America, which is also used in different parts of this document. The report responds to the widespread term Latin America and focuses on 18 countries: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina.

The political generosity of LBTQI+ activists is boundless. Far from limiting themselves to LBTQI+ work, the organizations interviewed engage and stand in solidarity with each

other's struggles, to create a beautiful new fabric of resistance. In addition to sustaining multiple and deeply intersectional healing and liberation work, LBTQI+ organizations have identified countless strategies adapted specifically to their context. They sow, cultivate, and sustain the struggle on a daily basis. They also engage in self-governance, direct representation, assemblies, *Buen Vivir*, civic engagement, horizontality, communitarianism, as well as radical tenderness, solidarity, and mutual support.

Because our organization is a TLGB organization that really tries to function in a circular way, who see each other, listen to each other with a collective leadership. (Participant, Peru)

Throughout the conversations, LBTQI+ activists from Abya Yala stand together collectively and place love, community, protection, safeguarding, and holding each other in the center, when bodies are being persecuted, criminalized, or stigmatized.

I very much believe in dancing and in the revolution that comes out of dancing. It's a way of resisting, especially in Black bodies. Our dances are part of our protest, Black people have always done it as a way of freedom and reclamation. And also of joy in the face of this anti-erotic, anti-dance, anti-joy society, and well, dancing for me is a revolutionary act. I like to dance; I dance because I like what happens in the body when people dance. Dance is healing, a vibration and autonomy. (Participant, Dominican Republic)

After decades, donor-activist relations have evolved in many ways, through encounters and tension, successes and failures, gratitude and reflections that still need to be explored, healed, and transformed.

Like any bond or relationship, this requires constant revision, listening to others, but also gratitude and celebrating the roads traveled.

It's essential to recognize that there are power dynamics. We should not presume to deny these existing power relationships and that no matter what, money implies a dynamic of power. And that regardless of who we are—whether we are donors, a feminist fund or a women's fund—there's a lot of contexts [and] history related to structural material conditions. [These conditions] allow us, like in my case and that of donors, to reach those spaces. This is clearly influenced by privilege. So, it's important to start by recognizing this instead of pretending it doesn't exist. (Participant, Colombia)

An early topic that emerged during the research is the issue of dissemination of funding information, accountability from founders, and language justice. Many organizations expressed the desire to receive trainings around accessing funding information because oftentimes many “don't know where or how to apply” (Participant, Bolivia).

We believe it's necessary to find mechanisms that allow collectives and organizations, as the ones who are sustaining the resistance, the work, the street advocacy and community and barrio work, have direct access to finance their work without too much bureaucracy. And with that, avoid the cycle of always having the same NGOs, foundations and organizations with legal status be the only grantees with access to funding. (Participant, Colombia)

We hope that this research will inspire fruitful collaboration of all kinds, particularly honest and transparent

conversations between funders and activists, wider regional cooperation, and increased cross-movement work.

Throughout this research process, nearly one hundred people and organizations opened their hearts, shared their story, lifted their voices, and shared their story and parts of the journey they have traveled. These woven words, this thread that winds through life and towards life, was created by them. What is left is a deep gratitude, a lot of lessons learned, and with so many people who bet on life, a lot of hope.

To read the full report, “Seeds, Territories, and Resistance in Abya Yala,” please contact us at astraefoundation.org/contact



ASTRAEA LESBIAN FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice is the only philanthropic organization working exclusively to advance LGBTQI human rights around the globe. We support brilliant and brave grantee partners in the U.S and internationally who challenge oppression and seed change. We work for racial, economic, social, and gender justice, because we all deserve to live our lives freely, without fear, and with dignity.

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