ASTRAEA LESBIAN FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

Seeds, Territories, and Resistance in Abya Yala

Insights from LBTQI+ community organizers in 18 Latin American countries

2025

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

"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 Guna 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. 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.

Throughout the conversations, LBTQI+ activists from Abya Yala stand together collectively and place love, community, protection, safeguarding, and holding each other 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.

> ***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)***

Throughout this research process, nearly one hundred people and organizations opened their hearts, 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 astraeafoundation.org/contact