



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Astraea LESBIAN FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

DEAR FRIEND,



So much of our work is centered on long-term systemic change. Still, there are moments when our reach across borders, movements, stakeholders and strategies provides immediate insight that our unique role is not only necessary but *working*. It was a *joy* to lead Astraea though a year when the seeds of collaboration, advocacy, artistic intervention, research, travel, and community organizing bore so much fruit.

Astraea *has been making grants* for thirty-seven years. In 2014 we not only had our largest grantmaking cycle ever, but also awarded over 40% of our grants to first-time grantees!

When we talk about our *philanthropic advocacy*, we recognize the responsibility of being the only and longest-running public foundation in the world doing this work. How do we leverage the strengths of individuals, institutions, governments, artists and activists to ensure more resources flow where they are most needed? Through partnership and collaboration.

This was the inaugural year of *Funding Queerly*, a dynamic group of philanthropists under the age of 40, who believe the best resources are those that get to the frontlines of social change. Astraea is home to the *LGBTQ Racial Justice Fund*, a collaborative fund dedicated to ending racial disparities in the United States; we proudly chair the *Global Philanthropy Project*, a consortium of international funders of LGBTQI rights; and 2014 marked the second year of our *LGBT Global Development Partnership* with USAID.

Our grantee partners continue doing the most groundbreaking work around the globe. We are committed to *developing leadership and building capacity* in order to sustain movements and momentum despite repressive laws.

Astraea insists innovation is often born where the need is greatest. Our *media and communications* efforts were hugely successful in 2014. *CommsLabs*, our media, communications and technology initiative, came out of incubation. Fifty technologists and LGBTQI human rights defenders came together in Bogotá, Colombia for our first lab, sharing skills and strategies across analog and digital technologies, and geographic and political borders.

And finally, the collaborations without which none of this stellar work could happen: 890 individuals and institutions invested from 5 dollars to 1.7 million dollars because of their confidence in the efficacy of our work! I remain humbled and thrilled by the possibility of our co-creation. Please enjoy reading this glimpse into the incredible year we've shared.

In deep solidarity,

J. Bob Alotta
Executive Director

VISION/MISSION

In 1977 a group of women came together across racial and class differences to build a truly just social movement that prioritized the needs and vision of lesbians and women of color. In order to do so, they realized they would need to fund the work themselves. Their uncompromising vision became the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.

Astraea remains true to this founding lesbian feminist ethos, supporting movement building through four strategic pillars:

1. Grantmaking
2. Capacity Building and Leadership Development
3. Media and Communications
4. Philanthropic Advocacy

Today, Astraea works at the intersections of racial, gender and economic justice, connecting across issues, borders and generations to secure human rights and dignity for LGBTQI people everywhere.

BOARD MEMBERS

Miriam Zoila Pérez | Urooj Arshad | Jennifer Brier | William Cordery | Ryan Li Dahlstrom | Maria De La Cruz | Limay Ho | Prerna Lal | Jarrett Lucas | Nitika Raj | Cynthia Rothschild | Wendy Stark | Judene Walden | Susan Wefald

COMMSLABS

In July 2014 Astraea launched the first-ever Media, Communications and Technology Lab (*CommsLabs*) in Bogotá, Colombia, as part of the *LGBT Global Development Partnership* with USAID. Gathering together more than 35 activists from Latin America with 12 technologists and communications practitioners from around the world, the group worked together to create new media strategies and digital advocacy tools specifically designed to meet the needs of LGBT human rights defenders.



CommsLabs Bogotá, Colombia. Photo credit: Ben Parker

The CommsLabs project aims to:

1. **Develop social networks**, communications and organizational strategies that are accessible, secure, and relevant;
2. **Increase skills** among the next generation of LGBTQI activists;
3. **Create a radical network** of activists and technologists that strengthens the defense of LGBTQI human rights;
4. **Solidify partnerships** and alliances between LGBTQI communities and human rights defenders using technology;
5. **Build innovative tools** to monitor incidents of violence against LGBTQI people.

At the *CommsLabs* in Colombia, Astraea grantee **Red Lésbica CATTRACHAS**, a collective whose main objective is to advance and protect the human rights of LGBT people in Honduras, presented their *Observatorio* tool. The *Observatorio* is a database that CATTRACHAS has used since 2008 to monitor and identify trends in human rights violations and violence against LGBT people; it works by grabbing tagged words (murder, gay, homicide, lesbian) from online newspapers and media outlets.

CATTRACHAS then follows up, opens a case and provides support with reporting and services for the survivors. Astraea grantee partners **Colombia Diversa**, **Caribe Afirmativo** and **Santamaría Fundación** were also present at the *CommsLabs*. These organizations have been collaborating with **CATTRACHAS** since 2011, using the *Observatorio* to track human rights violations in Colombia. Together they've built a robust system that allows them to monitor violence and hate crimes against the LGBT community. Other organizations, such as **No Tengo Miedo**, a Peru-based grantee partner, and **Mujer y Mujer**, an Ecuador-based grantee partner, learned about the *Observatorio* and its regional impact for the first time at *CommsLabs*, and have made plans to implement it in their countries. As a direct result of the *CommsLabs*, **CATTRACHAS** strengthened the *Observatorio* with support from one of the trainers, and was able to make it available online for other organizations to use.

“I’m particularly excited about the work Astraea is doing around building the technology and communications capacity of community based organizations.”

—Surina Khan, Astraea donor



ACHIEVEMENTS

This year Astraea and grantee partners:

- **Broke grantmaking records.** 2014 was our biggest grantmaking year yet. We made over \$3 million in grants to 81 partners in 35 countries.
- **Monitored and closed “de-homosexualization clinics”** in Ecuador and advocated to reform the health code to regulate private and public clinics
- **Fueled a national campaign** in India to resist the re-criminalization of LGBTQI communities
- **Promoted the enforcement of Supreme Court rulings** on trans* rights in India, including the creation of state welfare boards for trans* Indians
- **Promoted LB women’s sexual and reproductive health rights** in Peru, obtaining inclusive health guidelines
- **Led a constitutional challenge** that successfully overturned the Anti-Homosexuality Act in Uganda
- **Received a four-star rating from Charity Navigator.** Astraea received a four-star rating from Charity Navigator, America’s largest and most-utilized independent evaluator of charities.
- **Advanced** Chile’s precedent-setting Gender Identity Legislation
- **Started to build** a challenge to criminalization of LGBTQI communities in Kenya
- **Launched Fueling the Frontlines**, a three-year \$20M campaign to support the incredible work we do worldwide
- **Organized a strategic convening** in the Caribbean to advance LGBTQI rights in the region
- **Secured the first-ever resolution at the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights** on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) issues, condemning violence based on SOGI in Africa
- **Fueled the largest march** for trans* rights in Turkey
- **Secured partial adoption rights** for same-sex couples in Colombia
- **Achieved a seventh resolution** on LGBTQI rights in Latin America
- **Created the first CommsLabs.** Astraea launched the first-ever Media, Communications and Technology Lab (*CommsLabs*) in Bogotá, Colombia, as part of the *LGBT Global Development Partnership* with USAID.

Fast Company recognizes, “After raising and giving away \$20.5 million in grants to 1,400 organizations in 43 states and 85 countries, it’s fair to say that Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice is quite literally putting a new face on philanthropy.”



Please join our global movement for LGBTQI rights by visiting www.astraeafoundation.org to make a donation.

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UNDOCUMENTED, UNAFRAID AND ORGANIZED

"LGBTQI people are not outsiders, we are not 'things,' and we are tired of being asked to prove that we are not 'criminals.' We live in a country that criminalizes our very existence," said Astraea grantee partner **Southerners on New Ground (SONG)** in a recent statement. **SONG** works to highlight the impact of immigration enforcement on LGBTQI people in the American South, a region that has seen a striking number of anti-immigrant measures in recent years. Because queer and trans* immigrants are more likely than their peers to come into contact with law enforcement, and less likely to have access to status through family relationships, they are disproportionately undocumented, detained and deported.

This year, **SONG** joined the #Not1More campaign to bring an end to unjust deportations. LGBTQI immigrants in detention centers experience appalling human rights violations, including violence, rape, and torture in the form of solitary confinement. While trans* women make up only 1 out of 500 detained immigrants in the US, they comprise one-fifth of all confirmed sexual assault cases in state detention facilities. Further, findings by the Congressional Research Service showed that as many as 40 percent of sexual abuse allegations occurring in state detention centers (ICE) are not reported. Dispirited by the abuse and their lack of legal recourse, **SONG, Familia: Trans**



SONG and Familia at the #Not1More march. Photo credit: Namita Chad

ONE OUT
OF EVERY
THREE LGBTQI
IMMIGRANTS
IS UNDOCUMENTED —
A TOTAL OF 260,000
PEOPLE IN THE US.



According to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Secure Communities (S-Comm) led to the deportation of more than 368,000 immigrants before being discontinued.

Queer Liberation Movement, and ally **Transgender Law Center** report that "many LGBTQI detainees simply give up, accepting deportation rather than continuing to fight for asylum for which they qualify."

In part due to organizing efforts from the #Not1More campaign and others, President Obama took executive action in November 2014, offering limited relief to some 4 million undocumented immigrants. Astraea grantee partners celebrated this victory that was brought about by the determination and sustained organizing of communities coming together.

'We support Astraea because, through Astraea, we are able to reach small grassroots organizations doing vital work fighting gender and sexuality-based oppression, both here in the US and around the world, that we would never be able to find on our own.'

—Astraea Donors Hosea Baskin and Sarah Buttenweiser

Unfortunately, many LGBTQI people will be excluded from the President's relief because they cannot access family reunification and because they continue to be profiled and targeted by law enforcement. Astraea grantee partners **SONG, Familia** and many others will continue to fight until LGBTQI immigrants no longer have to live in fear.

*Astraea has been funding **SONG** for 19 years (1996-2014).*

*Astraea began supporting **Familia** in 2014 through our newly launched LGBTQI Immigrant Rights cohort.*

ASTRAEA SUPPORTED 81 GRANTEE PARTNERS IN 35 COUNTRIES, MAKING \$3.1 MILLION IN GRANTS

Grantmaking

Astraea funds grassroots LGBTQI organizations working for racial, economic and gender justice. In all of our grantmaking, we prioritize the leadership of lesbians, trans* people, and people of color. This year, our grantmaking strategically focused on the following thematic concerns:

Anti-Criminalization and Freedom from Violence

Astraea supports groups led by LGBTQI youth, sex workers and people of color that organize against police and state violence, educate communities about their rights, and fight laws and policies that criminalize LGBTQI lives.

Anti-Discrimination Protections

Astraea supports grantee partners working to change laws and policies so LGBTQI people can live with safety and dignity, including family protections, anti-discrimination provisions, and equality in health and education.

Arts and Cultural Change

Because societies must change along with laws and policies, Astraea supports progressive LGBTQI artists and organizations that use arts and media as tools for transforming social attitudes and envisioning new realities.

Immigrant Rights

In the United States, Astraea fuels the grassroots LGBTQI immigrant movement that is building a new generation of leaders, fighting harsh deportation and detention policies, and demanding self-determination for all.

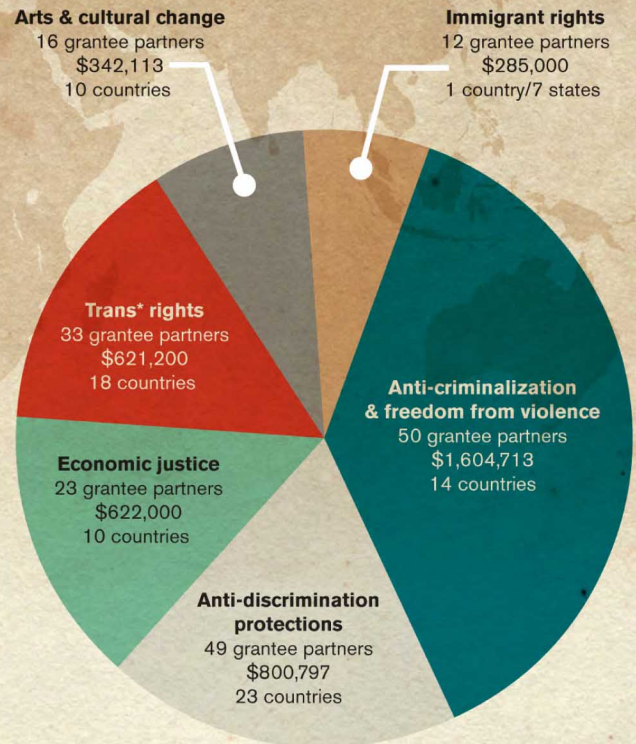
Trans* Rights

As a feminist and gender justice funder, Astraea supports trans* activism that works to build the power of trans* communities and secure human rights for trans* and gender non-conforming people.

Economic Justice

Astraea supports organizations and campaigns advancing economic justice for LGBTQI communities, including securing access to housing, education, employment and welfare.

\$3.1M IN GRANTMAKING WAS ALLOCATED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS*



*Astraea grantee partners work on multiple issues, so a single grant can contribute to multiple thematic areas.

ASTRAEA EXPENSE REPORT 2014

