

# ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS

## Trends in Global Foundation Grantmaking

### What is the *Advancing Human Rights* initiative?

The research initiative maps the evolving state of human rights philanthropy to help funders and advocates understand the landscape and increase their effectiveness, ultimately supporting a more sustainable human rights field.



### How do we define human rights grantmaking?

Human rights grantmaking addresses the root causes of injustice and inequality, working to effect systemic change in pursuit of rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent treaties, with a special focus on marginalized populations. We analyze any grant that meets our definition, regardless of whether the funder considers their work to be human rights.

From 2011 to 2015, we identified...

**1,193**  
FUNDERS



**\$10.9 B | 99,863**  
TOTAL GRANTS



**27,891**  
RECIPIENTS

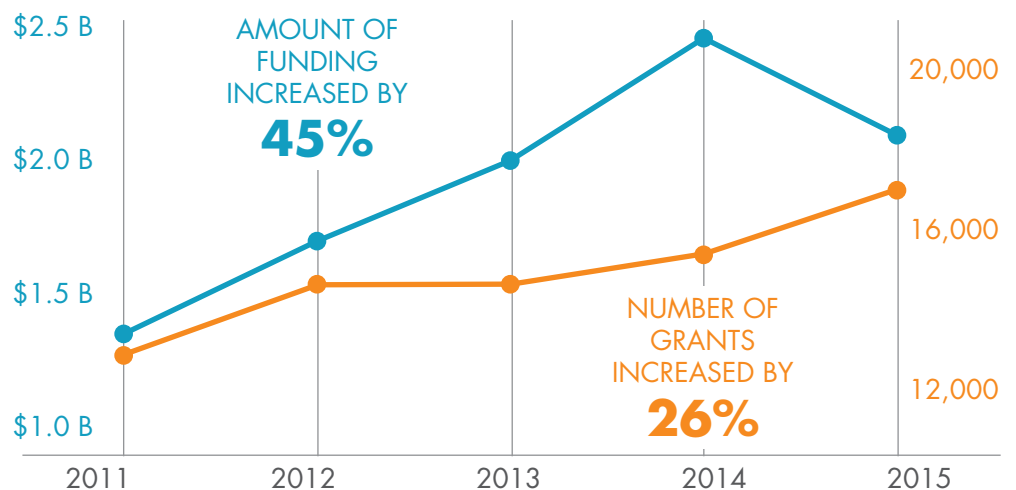


**5%**  
INCREASE IN  
FUNDERS  
REPORTING DATA

**63%**  
INCREASE IN  
FUNDERS OUTSIDE  
THE U.S.  
REPORTING DATA

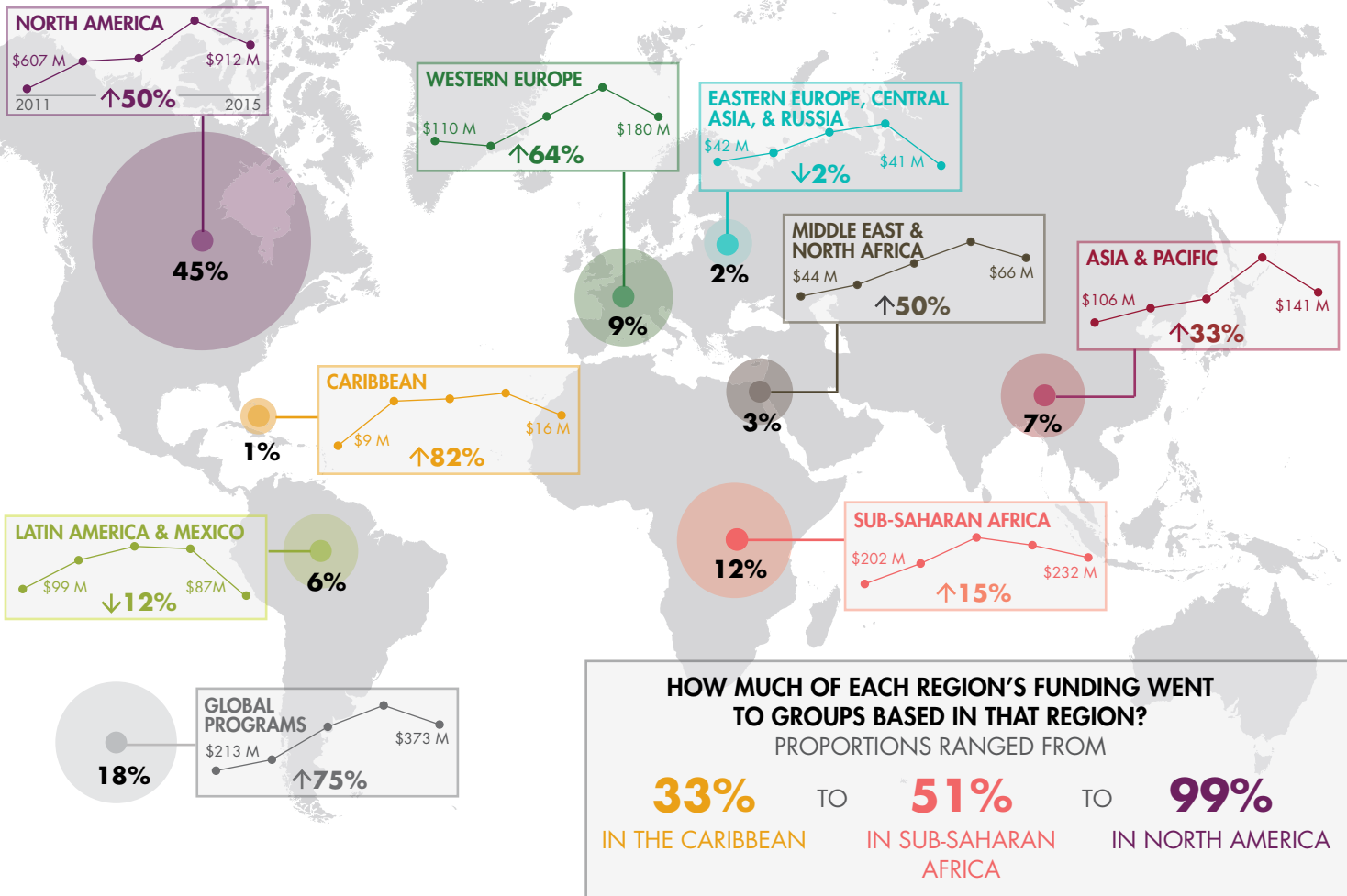


### Funding Trends

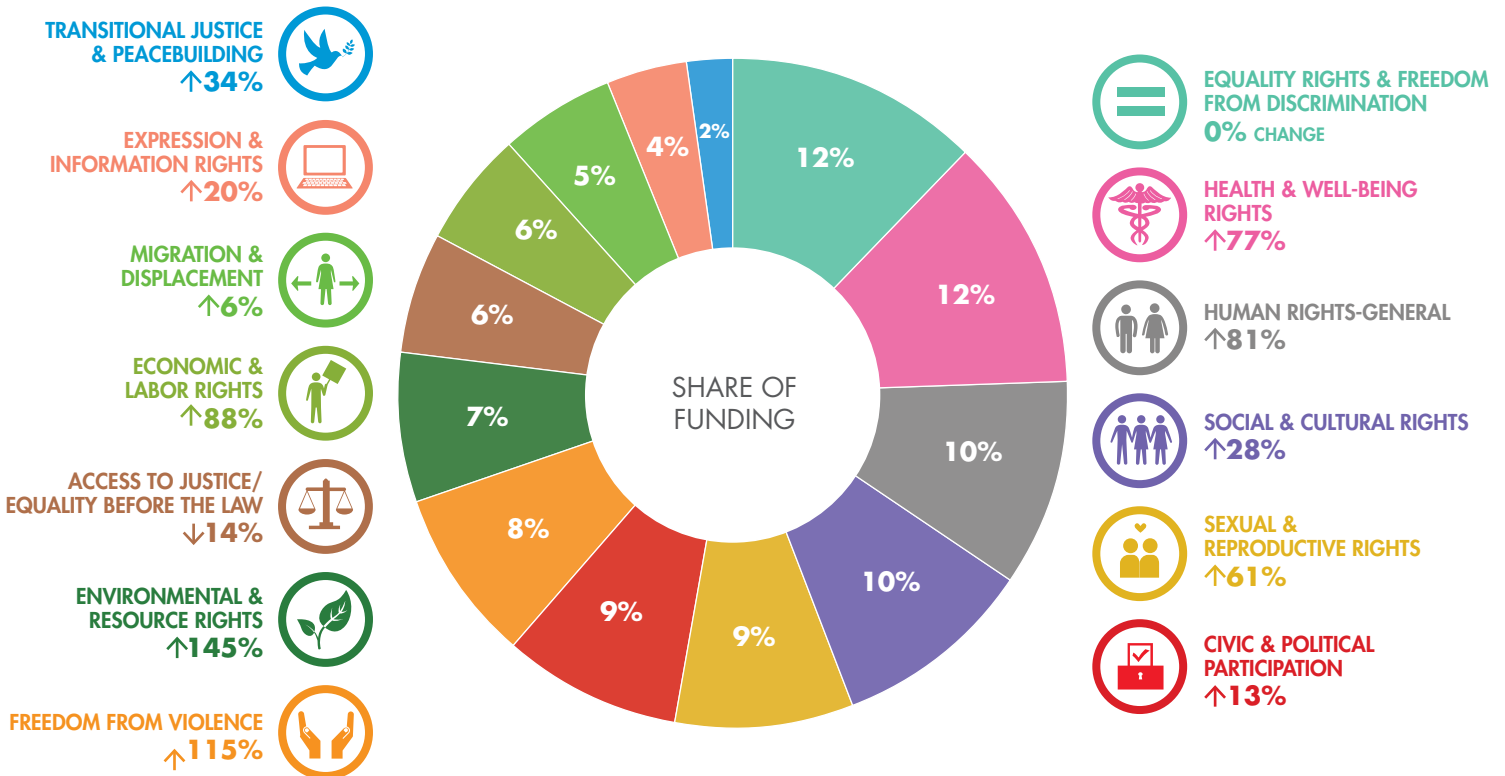


To analyze trends, we look at 561 funders who shared data for each year, 2011–2015.

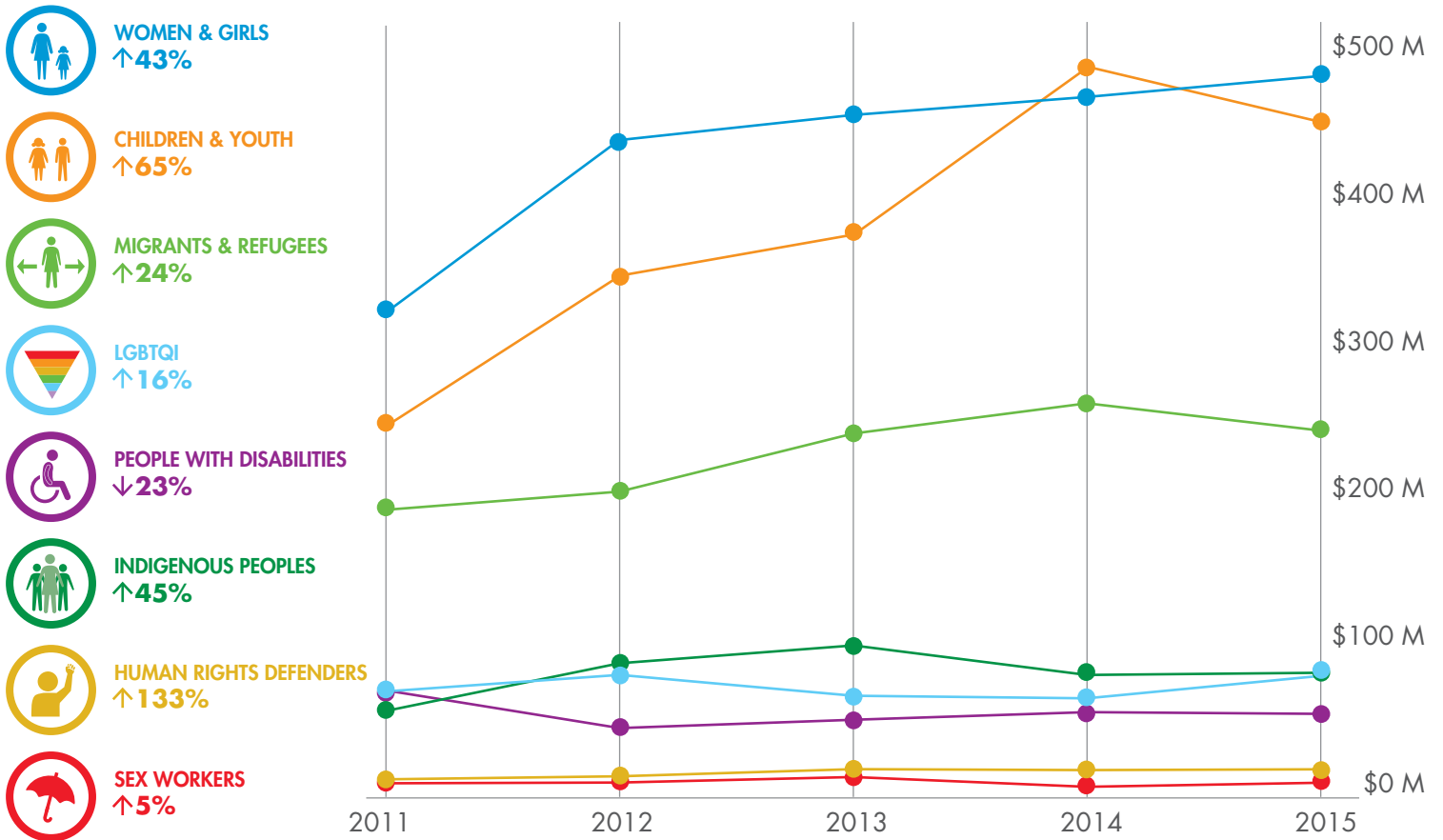
## Human Rights Funding by Region, 2011–2015



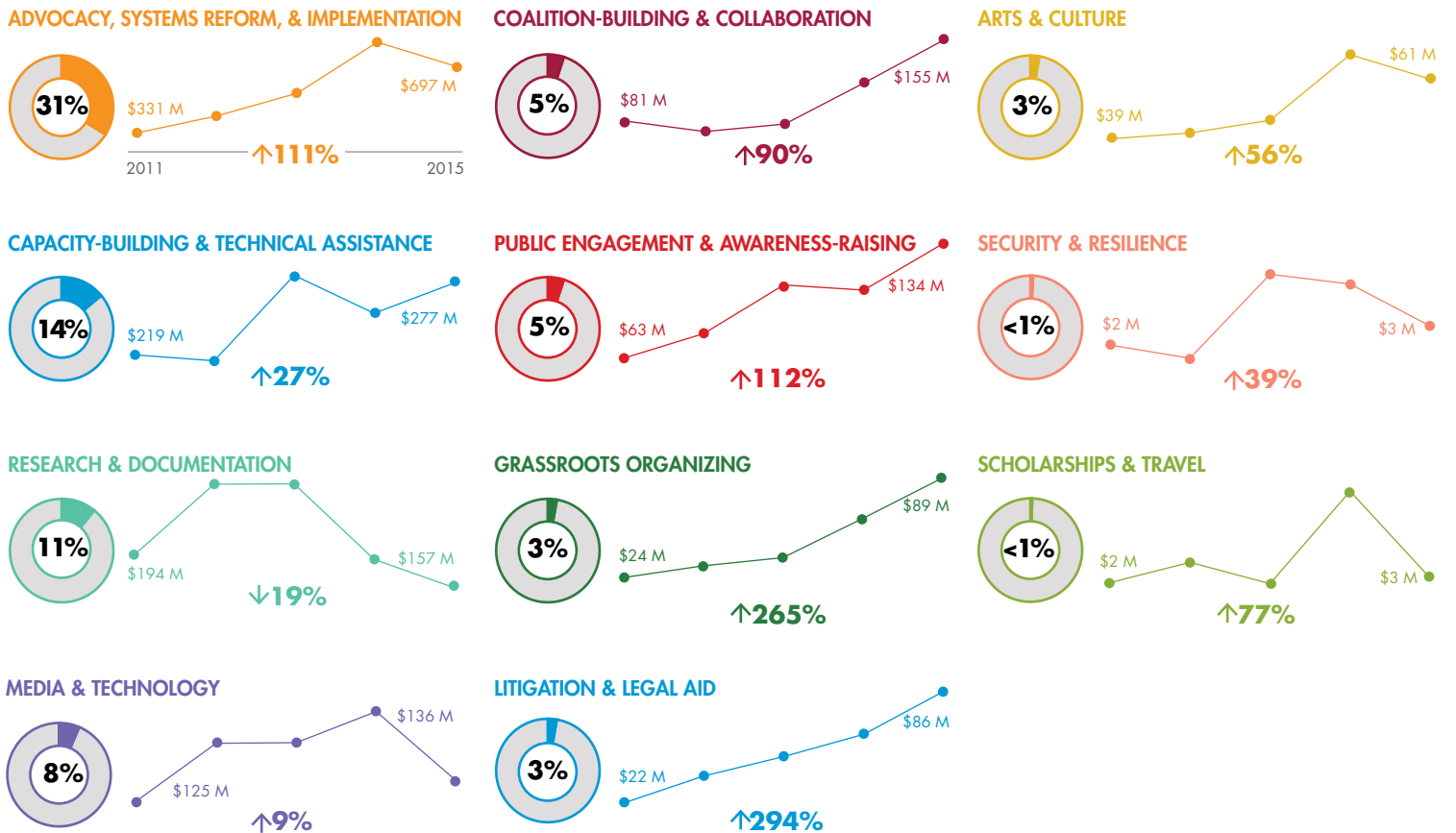
## Human Rights Funding by Issue, 2011–2015



## Human Rights Funding by Population, 2011–2015



## Human Rights Funding by Strategy, 2011–2015



## Top 10 Funders by Dollar Amount, 2011–2015

1	Ford Foundation	USA	\$1,044 M
2	Open Society Foundations	USA	\$965 M
3	Nationale Postcode Loterij	Netherlands	\$834 M
4	National Endowment for Democracy	USA	\$442 M
5	Atlantic Philanthropies	USA	\$431 M
6	Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation	USA	\$416 M
7	W. K. Kellogg Foundation	USA	\$305 M
8	Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program	USA	\$266 M
9	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	USA	\$247 M
10	Oak Foundation	Switzerland	\$243 M

## Top 10 Funders by No. of Grants, 2011–2015

1	Open Society Foundations	USA	7,357
2	National Endowment for Democracy	USA	4,966
3	Tides Foundation	USA	3,320
4	Ford Foundation	USA	3,273
5	Global Greengrants Fund	USA	3,010
6	American Jewish World Service	USA	2,936
7	Global Fund for Women	USA	2,344
8	EEA and Norway Grants	Belgium	1,981
9	Fund for Global Human Rights	USA	1,550
10	Mensen met een Missie	Netherlands	1,544



The value of flexible general support is a common refrain in the human rights funding field, yet only **25% of funding** was reported as such.

The pursuit of human rights is a long-term struggle. Funders know that progress is often accompanied by backlash. This multiyear analysis looks past year-to-year fluctuations to identify trends in human rights funding. We hope this will enable funders and advocates to assess where the field is headed, where it has work to do, and where they can contribute.

### How can I learn more?

- Explore data on human rights funding over time, by region, issue, population, and strategy, on our [Advancing Human Rights research hub](#)
- Dive deeper into grants-level data and find peers on our funder-only tool, [Foundation Maps: Human Rights](#)
- Follow our [blog series](#) for funder perspectives on human rights philanthropy
- Reflect on the field's history through previous [analyses](#)



### Funders have used the research to:

- Inform their strategy around funding LGBTIQ rights
- Identify peers supporting disability rights in Asia and the Pacific
- Find potential grantees before expanding their programs to the Middle East
- Make the case to their board about their foundation's niche for anti-trafficking work
- Advocate to governments and peer funders to leverage additional resources for women's rights



We are proud to undertake this research in partnership with:



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