

Member Engagement

Progress Report 2024



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Member Engagement Progress Report 2024

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TGEU (Transgender Europe) is a trans-led nonprofit for the rights and well-being of trans people in Europe and Central Asia. TGEU represents over 250 member organisations across 50 countries.

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Our Membership

Throughout 2024, TGEU's membership has continued to grow, reflecting a broadening network of individual and organisational members. As of December 2024, TGEU comprises over 250 organisational members and 290 individual members from 50 countries. This growth highlights our ongoing efforts to reach underrepresented communities, particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and to amplify the voices of marginalised groups within the trans community. We hope to expand further and reach two more countries within our operating region, Lichtenstein and Turkmenistan.

Impact & Activities 2024 Highlights

- Expansion of membership
- Peer support
- Capacity-building initiatives (in-person and online trainings)
- Solidarity and crisis response
- Cross-movement collaborations

The work and progress reviewed below are in line with and guided by our 2022-2025 TGEU and community-building strategic goals. In particular, goal 2 Protect our people, and Goal 4 is to Strengthen our networks

Protect our people

In response to the continued impacts of various crises across our regions, TGEU provided 1-1 virtual consultations and tailored resources to trans groups and activists experiencing emergencies. This year, many of our members faced increased challenges due to the rising anti-trans and anti-LGBI legislations and targeted attacks, which have further exacerbated the vulnerabilities of trans communities in several countries. During our consultations with trans activists, we provided wellbeing and advocacy support to those facing personal threats and threats to their work.

By offering direct solidarity and support to members impacted by these hostile environments, we focused on helping our members navigate by providing hands-on support in understanding new anti-LGBTI laws and their implications on local

organising efforts. Additionally, we offered grant-writing and resource mobilisation trainings to help members continue their vital work under increasingly restrictive conditions.

Support Our Members

One of TGEU's core priorities in 2024 was to continue enhancing the capacity of our members through targeted training programmes to empower activists to effectively respond to challenges within their organising efforts. This year marked the launch of the second cycle of our Fundraising Empowerment Programme and the Trans Feminine Leaders Academy (TFLA), which gathered new cohorts of almost 30 activists from diverse backgrounds and experiences to strengthen their leadership and fundraising skills.

Fundraising Empowerment Program (Second Cycle 2024-2025): Building on the success of the first cycle in 2022-2023, this program focused on equipping activists with advanced skills in fundraising, grant writing, donor engagement, and sustainable organising. The second cycle started with a three-day training full of workshops and was attended by 13 activists from across the EU. Participants came from grassroots organisations, often underfunded and working in highly marginalised contexts, and left the program with practical tools to secure funding for their initiatives. Many participants expressed that the training gave them the confidence and knowledge to approach new funding opportunities with tremendous success. Two months after the training, a follow-up virtual consultation support was organised for the participants. The second and advanced part of the programme is scheduled for 2025.



Quote: “[This training]’ gave us a better, more consistent understanding of our opportunities. Learning from a team like TGEU, well, I cannot really imagine a better growing path for queer organisations. I feel I now have a better understanding of the directions I can follow eg, how to deal with institutional fundraising and what not to be scared of in crowdfunding, etc.” (Georgy, LGBTQ+ Group ComingOut, Lithuania)

“The training provided crucial insights into fundraising, equipping us with knowledge and skills needed to expand our reach, impact and adopt the right approaches and strategies for sustainability, fostering both the movement's and the organisation's growth. The learnings significantly improved the way I approach and view fundraising. I now know that there are different ways to write compelling proposals. For instance, one approach is to use storytelling, as it helps create a deeper understanding and connection between the organisation, its members and the donor. “ (Lissa, Queerstion Media, Sweden)

Trans Feminine Leaders Academy (Second Cycle): The TFLA continued to be a vital platform for developing trans feminine leaders. The second cycle gathered another 15 activists, with a special focus on trans femmes from further marginalised backgrounds, including migrants, refugees, sex workers, and activists from underrepresented areas. The Academy provided a mix of leadership development, strategic communication, and advocacy training tailored to the unique challenges faced by trans feminine leaders. Throughout the training, participants planned individual leadership projects supported by peers from the cohort and TGEU staff. A follow-up virtual consultation support was organised for participants, and in 2025, the cohort will meet again for a retreat, which marks the closing of the programme.



Quote: *“Everyone in TFLA empowers me. The diversity we exchange helps me see myself and realise my value to society. TFLA is a space that, through our collaboration and solidarity, brings tangible change to the European transgender community.”* (Kath Khangpiboon, Thai Transgender Alliance, Czech Republic)

“The Trans Feminine Leadership Academy served as a networking and training platform for me. We analysed several successful cases of trans advocacy in Europe, and the results are inspiring. We also analysed the trans map of Europe, and it's evident that a lot of work has been done on trans advocacy in Europe. I am always inspired by people, their experience, their work. I leave inspired and with faith that we will succeed.” (Kanykei Kyzy, Trans Coalition, Germany)

“Being in a room surrounded by policy-making, activist, creative and simply incredible trans women, many of which BIPOC, has been such a humbling and inspiring experience. By sharing resources, ideas and stories, I was once again reminded that the future is up to me and other young trans leaders like me.”* (Misi Hoogvliets, Berlin Ballroom Pier, Germany)

In addition to the core training programmes, Between May and September, TGEU collaborated with other partner organisations to host a series of online webinars aimed at broadening members' skill sets and networks:

- Grant Writing and Resource Mobilization with FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund - we held two online sessions focusing on practical grant writing and resource mobilisation techniques.
- Digital Safety and Security webinars with Access Now - two sessions, one in English and another in Russian, were held to discuss digital privacy and security amidst increasing surveillance and online harassment.
- Exploring Migration: Challenges and Strategies for Supporting Trans Communities, held in collaboration with Rainbow Railroad, was held in both English and Russian and explored best practices for supporting trans individuals facing displacement and persecution due to their gender identity.

The overall feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many reporting that they felt more empowered, connected, and prepared to take the lead in their roles within their communities and beyond.

These training programmes are part of TGEU's broader strategy to ensure that its members are equipped with the necessary skills and resources to effectively combat intersectional discrimination and advance the rights of diverse trans communities across our regions.

Financial support through subgrants

In 2024, we provided direct financial support to members through several continuing and new programmes.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) remain an underresourced and underrepresented region, which is at the same time severely affected by Russia's war against Ukraine and overall increasing militarisation, an ever more aggressive anti-trans and anti-gender rollback, and economic hardship. All this continues to require targeted and sustained support, especially for groups working to protect the rights and well-being of trans communities. TGEU is proud to have expanded both our engagement with our EECAC members and the direct support we provide them. In 2024, 11 trans-led groups in EECAC received subgrants for advocacy, community building, and trans movement strengthening. Besides financial support, all EECAC subgrantees received tailored capacity building support through group and individual training, consultations, and mentoring sessions.

In 2024, 7 of our EECA subgrantee partners completed their projects with us. We announced a new call for applications and selected a new group of subgrantee partners to be supported in 2025. Both in the previous and current sub-granting cycle under this programme, we are particularly proud and excited to support emerging trans-led groups into sustainability. We also issued a separate subgrant to our member TransFormA (North Macedonia) to support the organising of Transposium, a key subregional trans community gathering in the Balkans, which was hosted by TransFormA this year.

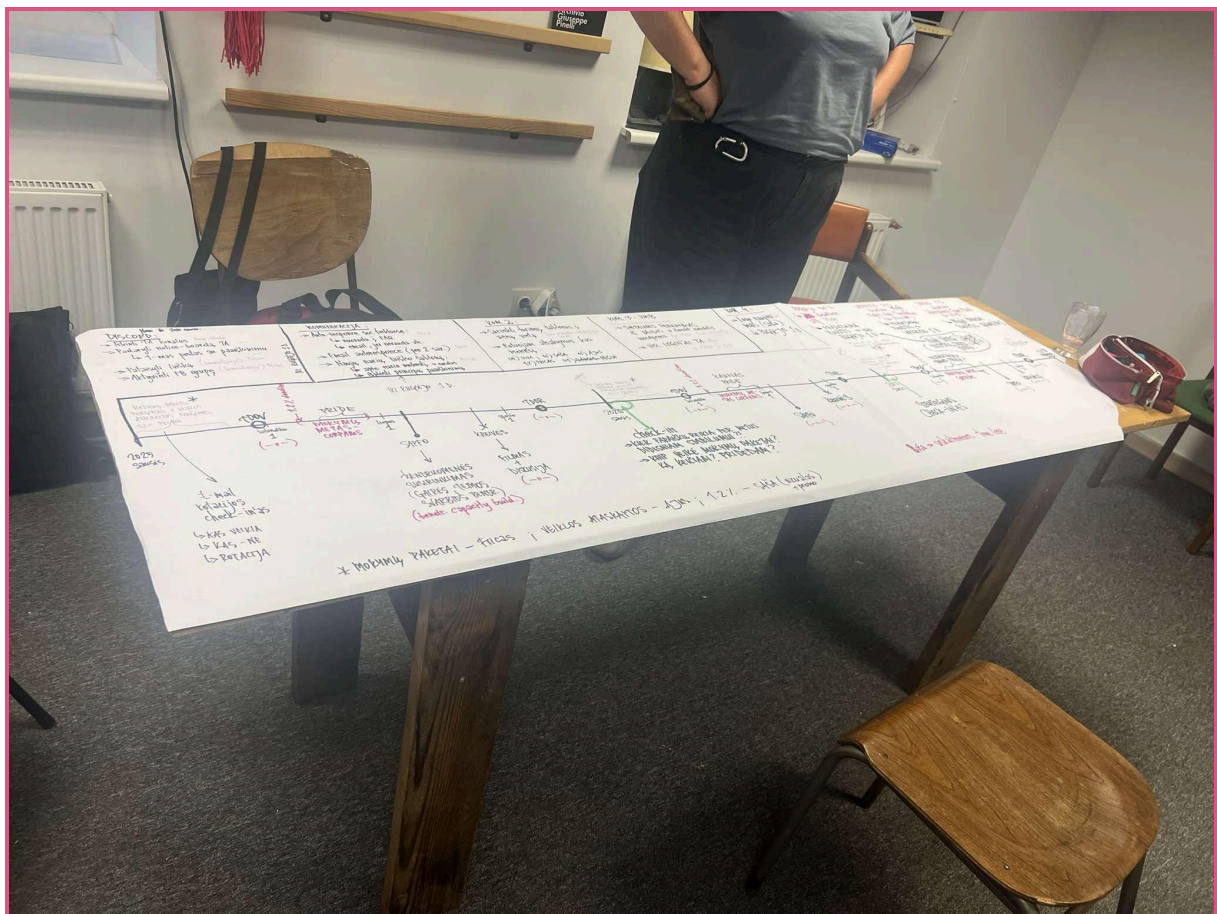
Quote: "TGEU's mentoring was very important. We have learned new skills, we now have a strategy and understand how to create change. You have also supported us with contacts and connected us with donors. The TGEU project staff was amazing and very supportive, and you taught us a lot. We were lost, we didn't know how to do anything, we just had energy and ideas. But in collaboration, we are now more focused."

(Luana Myrto, Ylberofilia, Albania)

European Union

With the aim to drive meaningful change in the lives of trans people across Europe, for the first time, TGEU embarked on an EU sub-granting programme held through 2 cycles. The first cycle in 2024 saw three member organisations selected in a competitive process. The groups Trans Autonomija (Lithuania), FLIRT (France), and Trans Network Balkan (Western Balkan regional initiative) were each awarded a one-year grant of €30,000. Funding of these projects was made possible by the European Commission's Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV).

Quote: "The TGEU grant has enabled us to improve our support for trans migrants, asylum seekers and refugees by setting clear long-term goals, organising impactful community events, and beginning the development of essential resources through expert consultations. The funding has strengthened our capacity to meet community needs, enhancing the support network for trans individuals navigating complex social and legal challenges." (Migle, Trans Autonomija, Lithuania)



Quote: *“One significant achievement we've made with the help of this grant is the successful facilitation of a capacity building training and coordination of a regional campaign that has brought together newer activists and established advocates for trans rights in the Balkans. This collaboration is crucial to our continued work on building solidarity and shared purpose, emphasising the importance of cross-country collaboration on bigger initiatives that can significantly advance the rights and wellbeing of all.”* (Trans Network Balkan)



We continued to prioritise direct engagement with our members through 1:1 consultations, on-site country visits and informal gatherings to foster stronger connections within the community.

1:1 Virtual Consultations: This year, TGEU held 10 online consultations with new and longstanding members. These sessions allowed TGEU staff to connect with members, better understand their unique challenges, and provide tailored support. Discussions during these consultations spanned a variety of topics, from strategic planning and advocacy efforts to wellbeing and community organising.

On-site visits: TGEU also provided in-person consultations during country visits, to get to know more about their work and context, support and connect with their communities as well and explore collaborations. Our Senior Programmes Officer visited our members kolekTIRV in Croatia for a Health Symposium, using the time to meet with two other members - QueerUp and K-Zona. The second member visit this year by our SPO was for a TBPoC retreat in Amsterdam organised by our members,

Manish Cave. Per invitation from our Belgian member group Rainbow House, we also participated in the International Pride Conference dubbed the Meaning of Prides.

Our staff also visited four trans-led members in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. During the visits, they discussed members' ongoing projects supported by TGEU, supported financial and organisational management, and held strategic discussions about the changing country contexts and plans for organisational development.

Member crisis support: TGEU provided crisis support to members facing threats or severe political deterioration. In 2024, major crises experienced by our members included crackdowns on civil society and trans and LGBTI communities in Russia, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, police raids on the homes of trans and LGBTI people in Belarus, and personal attacks and harassment of activists in Italy. In all cases, TGEU reached out to our members in the respective country and offered relevant support. This included alerting regional and international decision-makers, supporting members' fundraising efforts, researching and connecting to members in other countries to facilitate access to hormones, and amplifying our affected members' communications through our communications channels.

As the state of human rights for trans people is increasingly threatened by the growing right-wing and antigender rollback across Europe and Central Asia, we strengthened our approach to crisis response by developing an internal crisis support manual for staff to coordinate smoothly and align on how best to support members facing crises and threats.

PeerNetz: In response to the turbulent times many activists are facing, TGEU also organised an informal virtual gathering through PeerNetz, an online space designed to foster connection and provide a sense of community. During the PeerNetz event, members gathered to play a quiz together and engage in lighthearted, informal conversations, providing a much-needed space for relaxation and fun amidst the challenges many are confronting in their activism. Feedback from members emphasised how these moments of informal connection helped to alleviate stress and build solidarity across the network.

Strengthen our networks

TGEU made a coordinated effort to engage members from further marginalised communities, including trans refugees, BIPOC, sex workers, and Deaf/disabled trans people.

Trans Refugee Network: Through our work with the Trans Refugee Network, we conducted 2 virtual gatherings for the network members. An in-person progress review and planning retreat for 12 participants, including partners and Trans refugees, was conducted in Malta from November 26-27. In partnership with ORAM and GATE we also co-created a panel for the ILGA World conference in Cape Town titled: Coping from the Margins amplifying the lived realities of rainbow refugees. The session focused on strengthening connections and amplifying the voices of Trans and Gender Diverse and LGBQ refugees globally.



We were proud and glad to strengthen our engagement with our member, National Trans Coalition (Armenia), who visited TGEU at our office. During the visit, we exchanged insights into each other's work and discussed possibilities for collaboration and expanding our strategic work in the Caucasus.

Along with financially supporting our members TransFormA to organise the Transposium, TGEU staff - including Research Officer Amanita Calderon Cifuentes, attended the event and contributed directly to the program. Amanita led a session on data collection and reporting methods for TGEU's Anti-Trans Violence Project, presenting critical insights from recent research. This session held particular significance as many attendees had contributed directly to this project, making this an invaluable opportunity for them to engage with the data and see firsthand the impact of their work.

Collaborations and peer exchange with partner networks

We deepened our collaborations with cross-movement organisations and networks, recognising that building strong alliances with other social justice movements is essential for amplifying trans rights. Through partnerships with organisations working on feminist, migration, refugee, and human rights issues, we expanded our reach and impact.

FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund: TGEU partnered with FRIDA for a series of fundraising and grant-writing webinars to empower trans activists with essential skills in resource mobilisation. This collaboration enabled our members to access insights from the feminist movement and apply innovative strategies for securing funding for their work.

ORAM: TGEU participated in the ORAM stakeholder consortium. This event aimed to create a space for open dialogue, collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders working to enhance LGBTIQ inclusion in displacement contexts across Central and Eastern Europe. As a result, TGEU gathered more information and created networks to include in the Refugees and Asylum Seekers support resource guide, which will be included on our website to ensure easy access to information, mapping organisations and allies supporting the refugees and asylum seekers.

Rainbow Railroad: Through our partnership with Rainbow Railroad, we organised an informational webinar on migration and the challenges faced by trans communities fleeing persecution. This webinar provided practical guidance for activists on supporting displaced trans people and was another step in connecting members to the broader network of LGBTI refugee support groups.

GATE - Global Trans Conference: TGEU was represented by our Senior Programmes Officer, who also facilitated a session on intersectional movement building at the event held in Munich in July. This was an opportunity to network, share and learn from other global trans activists, allies and partners.

To Strengthen relations with strategic allies and partners, we continued to diversify our network base by engaging in peer learning and exchange meetings and collaborations with the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), European Network Against Racism (ENAR), Safe Passage, as well as GATE and ORAM refugees. We also continued our cooperation with Front Line Defenders and AccessNow by referring interested members to them for tailored support around holistic and digital protection.

What we have learned

Reflecting on our recent efforts, TGEU has identified key lessons that will guide our continued work to engage and support trans communities effectively. The following insights highlight our key learnings and the actions we will undertake to strengthen our impact moving forward:

- Enhanced and improved crisis response - The unfortunate and ever-growing challenges faced by trans communities, such as emergencies and anti-LGBTQ+ legislations, require TGEU to remain agile and responsive. We have learned the value of having adaptable crisis support mechanisms to meet members' needs swiftly.
- Sustained cross-movement alliances - Collaborating with cross-movement organisations has reinforced the necessity of an intersectional approach in our work. Addressing issues that overlap with migration, racial justice, and gender equality has proven impactful in supporting marginalised trans communities.

- Importance of targeted outreach and inclusion of all members in capacity building programmes - The success of programs like the Fundraising Empowerment Program and Trans Feminine Leaders Academy highlighted the demand for tailored, practical training for underrepresented activists from further marginalised groups. TGEU plans to continue offering these programs, exploring additional areas to further equip members for sustainable leadership.

Next steps

To build on our progress and address the lessons learned, TGEU will implement the following steps:

1. **Enhance Crisis Response:** We will further develop our internal crisis support framework, improving coordination among staff and ensuring quicker and more efficient responses to members experiencing emergencies or threats.
2. **Expand Intersectional Advocacy and Training:** TGEU will work collaboratively with members to understand and support intersectional organising and advocacy with a focus on sharing strategies to address overlapping key issues.
3. **Increase Informal Engagement Opportunities:** Building on the success of PeerNetz, we will create more spaces for peer connection, support and exchange amongst our members to strengthen the sense of community throughout the network.

These steps ensure that TGEU remains a strong, adaptive, and supportive force for trans communities across Europe and Central Asia.