Arcus in 2021
Learning from Strategies in Motion
“What stands out in 2021 is the resilience and determination of our many grantee partners around the world. There are numerous critical shifts facing humanity and the natural world that both independently and collectively have the potential to change the world in dramatic ways.” Annette Lanjouw, Chief Executive Officer

“At Arcus we embed a culture of learning, asking questions with humility and talking with our grantees to understand what’s working and not working. Then we fund projects that sometimes seem like we’re taking chances, but we learn from the successes and the failures.” Jon Stryker, Founder / President
Learning to Support Strategic Grantmaking

“It’s only by listening to our grantee and funder partners that we can create impact through our grantmaking. With humility as a core Arcus value, we periodically engage colleagues and partners in ways that help us question our assumptions, develop new insights, and adjust our approaches.” Cindy Rizzo, Vice President, Social Justice Program

Creating a Culture of Organizational Learning

“The foundation understood that the practice of learning from successes and failures and then applying those insights to subsequent work is easier said than done. We implemented a formalized initiative to integrate and strengthen organizational learning, and establish a sustainable learning culture.” Lia Parifax, Director, Executive Initiatives

arcus.link/LearningforGrantmaking
arcus.link/OrganizationalLearning
The Social Justice Program envisions a world in which all LGBTQ people live with dignity, safety, and opportunity in inclusive communities and societies. Arcus realizes this vision by supporting organizations and initiatives aimed at three goals:

- Increased inclusion and acceptance of LGBTQ people
- Increased LGBTQ-affirming protections
- Increased safety for LGBTQ people

The program gives priority to LGBTQ communities that have been pushed to the margins based on racial, gender, or economic status in specific countries in the Americas and Africa, where evidence suggests strong potential for change.

The program is currently at its midpoint in a 10-year strategy launched in 2017.

The acronym LGBTQI+—referring to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer / Questioning, Intersex, and additional gender identities and sexual orientations—aims to include the range of diversity in the communities and movements we fund and appears in various forms and combinations on the following pages depending on its use by the individuals or organizations referenced.
The program’s 2017 strategy articulated three goals, identified 12 countries of the Americas and Africa in which grantmaking is focused, and launched a 10-year plan for advancing the goals. Progress toward these goals is tracked using a system of indicators.

In 2021, the program conducted its second internal evaluation of the implementation of this strategy. Three learning case studies are featured on the following pages.

[Photo courtesy of MEXFAM]
Support Ecosystems of Organizations

Each organization brings its own unique mission, constituency, and expertise that contribute to the broader and multifaceted movements for social justice. Data collected from 45 organizations during our 2021 evaluation taught us that long-term funding to multiple grantees in our six U.S. geographic focus areas can build new relationships and strengthen existing alliances that, when mutually reinforcing, knock down barriers to justice.

**CASE STUDY**

LGBTQI+ people most pushed to the margins in California’s Central Valley face not only homo- and transphobia, but multiple barriers to safety, justice, education, housing, and healthcare, and too often get left out of the workforce and democratic processes.

Since July 2021, Power California’s Fund Our Futures campaign has been pushing for pandemic-related federal relief money to be invested in youth jobs after a rise in unemployment across the region, including in the city of Merced, where it jumped to 9 percent.

In December, the campaign persuaded Merced’s city council to invest $1.25 million from the American Rescue Plan in a youth employment program—marking an historic victory for the city’s young people. The program will provide educational assistance and job training to help young adults (including LGBTQI+ youth) ages 16-24 succeed in school, and transition to college and careers.

This win is part of Power California’s larger effort to build an ecosystem of youth organizations across the Central Valley.
LGBTQI+ leaders are principal enablers of policy and social change when they have legitimacy, knowledge, and experience of the needs and opportunities for change in their communities. They are key to effective engagement with government officials, religious leaders, and other community leaders. Social change organizations are more effective when relying on a significant and motivated grassroots base, which is why support for base building is a central objective of our strategy. This is especially true in communities pushed to the margins, who often lack resources for expert advocacy or political campaign donations.

**CASE STUDY**

Fundación Mexicana Para La Planeación Familiar (MEXFAM), through its Transformándome project, in 2021 mounted an advocacy campaign designed to increase visibility of Muxe (a local gender identity) members of the Zapotec community—indigenous to the Mexican state of Oaxaca—as a strategy to raise awareness and reduce violence and discrimination. The campaign resulted in greater confidence by members of the community in asserting their rights and led to increased participation by Muxe individuals in public life.

“Safety problems are long-term … the visibility we achieved through this campaign was like a social armor that we Muxe built for ourselves.”

Amaranta Gómez Regalado, Coordinator, Transformándome

On April 7th, 2022, the first regional council of diversity directors and coordinators, including members of the Muxe community, came together from nine municipalities to share experiences and look at challenges to safety in the Isthmus region of Oaxaca.
While maintaining our strategic focus on LGBTQI+ communities most pushed to the margins, the COVID-19 pandemic led us to become more flexible in our grant-making. We increased the number of general support grants and approved changes requested by grantees receiving project support. Where we would normally provide funding that is no more than one-third of an organization’s total budget—to avoid over-reliance on a single donor—we made exceptions, especially in countries with limited funding and where organizational sustainability was a significant concern.

CASE STUDY

The toll of the COVID-19 pandemic and related emergency health measures imposed by governments across the African continent led not only to negative economic impacts, but also to an increase in repression against already marginalized groups, including LGBTQI+ people.

In response, Pan Africa ILGA used general support funding from Arcus to survey the situations and needs of 50 organizations within the LGBTQI+ movement in east and southern Africa from mid-March 2020 to April 2021, including many partners in Arcus’ Africa focus countries.

Results of the survey, presented in a report released in October 2021, emphasized the need for networks in the region and donors to scale up responses to meet the evolving needs of LGBTQI+ communities.

“This report allowed us and our communities in east and southern Africa to discuss and share the learning about how COVID-19 impacted us but, most importantly, how communities were locally mobilizing to fight back. It showed that communities need support on all fronts to ensure they are represented in courts of law, and that life-saving health and other services continue uninterrupted.”

Richard Lusimbo, Programmes Manager, Pan Africa ILGA
The goal of the Great Apes & Gibbons Program is to achieve conservation and respect for the world's great apes and gibbons. The program focuses most of its work on apes living in 24 priority landscapes across 18 countries in Africa and Asia. It also supports efforts to ensure the survival and well-being of apes held in captivity outside of their ranges, in the United States and Kenya.

The program is currently at its midpoint in a 10-year strategy launched in 2016.
The program’s learning is based on a monitoring and evaluation system in which we gather and analyze data from a variety of sources—grantees, conservationists in the field and in academic settings, and relevant databases—to measure progress along specific indicators and milestones against the three program goals:

- Conservation and development reconciled
- Effective conservation movement built
- Increased respect for intrinsic value of apes

In 2021, the program completed its second internal evaluation of its 2016 strategy implementation. Two learning case studies are featured on the following pages.
The program has funded various human livelihood initiatives and noted several common factors in successful projects. These have led us to identify the following criteria to guide our grantmaking:

1. Ensure appropriate expertise and relationships for working with communities to understand their needs (e.g. social science techniques, participatory mapping, conflict resolution, accompanying communities to develop their life plans);
2. Increase direct, long-term funding to grassroots organizations embedded in local communities with a solid understanding of local culture, as well as of the broader drivers of environmental degradation;
3. Move beyond ‘sustainable’ to integrate livelihoods into a collaborative and holistic conservation model linking biological diversity, cultural diversity, (ancestral) land rights, and social justice.

**CASE STUDY**

*Tanjung Puting National Park* is home to one of the largest populations of orangutans in Borneo. Indigenous Dayak communities living around the park rely on the lands for their livelihoods. However, industrial oil palm expansion threatens the communities and the park. More than 320,000 hectares in Seruyan district, to the park’s east, have been allocated to oil palm, resulting in the takeover of Dayak lands without their consent. Communities have been displaced from their lands and traditional livelihoods of shifting cultivation, hunting, foraging, fishing, boat-making, and basket-weaving. They have been forced to either illegally exploit natural resources in the park and its buffer zone, or work as wage laborers for palm oil companies.

In 2021, Arcus funded *Forest Peoples Programme* to accompany Seruyan’s Dayak Banjar community in the participatory mapping of their lands, to help them understand their rights so they can advocate for ancestral lands and connected livelihoods, as well as hold companies to account for negative social and environmental impacts. This grant is demonstrating that addressing the wider threats of tenure insecurity and industrial agriculture expansion is helping communities be better advocates for themselves, the forest, and the orangutans. Park staff have invited communities to provide input on management of the buffer zone as an approach to long-term conservation of the area. FPP is now considering how it can replicate the approach with Indigenous Peoples in other parts of Indonesia.

Members of the Indigenous Dayak community.
CASE STUDY

Every year across Kalimantan, many orangutans are hunted or killed. Their habitats are often destroyed for crop plantation or timber harvesting, leaving the animals stranded in small, unsustainable stands of forest and forcing them to enter fields to find food.

Rescued and confiscated orangutans require high-quality facilities for their rehabilitation and medical care. Yet people in the areas where orangutans are found are often underserved and do not have access themselves to adequate healthcare.

Since its inception, International Animal Rescue Indonesia has worked with local forestry authorities to rescue more than 250 displaced orangutans. Those that are suitable candidates for release are introduced into Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park in the Arabella Schwanner landscape, an isolated and remote area bordering the park. Post-reintroduction monitoring of orangutans enables conservationists and practitioners to assess challenges to their survival. IAR Indonesia reports high survival rates for their reintroduced orangutans.

Health in Harmony has developed a program in partnership with villages surrounding the park to provide low-cost or affordable healthcare in exchange for a commitment by villagers to halt illegal logging. In this and all of its work, HiH seeks to ensure community needs are met by employing a non-threatening engagement technique: Radical Listening.

The aim of the collaboration between the two organizations is to reestablish and revive a threatened ecosystem where Bornean orangutans can thrive and flourish in harmony with surrounding human communities.

LEARNING

The program has supported collaborations in 20 of its 24 priority landscapes. All have shown that inclusive collaboration—conservation with human rights, development with social justice organizations, and those conserving apes in their home ranges with those caring for individuals in captivity—is a critical factor in effective conservation. We identified three learnings from our support to these initiatives:

1. More effective approaches are needed to address inter-NGO politics that can result from gaps in communication, competition for funding, and different values and strategies for conservation;

2. Careful thought must be given to facilitation of collaborative initiatives and overall coordination to ensure power imbalances are managed and diverse participants feel able to have a voice;

3. Conservation action planning should give special attention to local civil society organizations, human rights organizations, rescue and rehabilitation centers, and lifetime care for those individuals who cannot be released due to injury or disease.

A villager receives an eye test as part of the affordable healthcare program.
2021 Financials

Unaudited figures at December 31, 2021

TOTAL GRANTMAKING
$29,012,580

- Social Justice
  $14,490,712
- Great Apes & Gibbons
  $14,343,404

TOTAL EXPENSES
$39,063,143

- Programmatic Expenses
  $5,909,512
- Operating Expenses
  $4,141,051
- *Special Grantmaking
  $178,464

*Grants to support programmatic grantmaking

arcus.link/Financials
2021 Grants

Supporting Resilience throughout the Pandemic
While continuing to provide increased flexibility in administration of grants, Arcus awarded an additional $1 million to support the resilience of existing grantees facing unprecedented challenges amid the public health, social inequity, and economic crises. These grants helped recipients to collaborate within and across sectors, and to build skills and preparedness.

PROGRAMMATIC GRANTS TOTAL
Social Justice Program 82
Great Apes & Gibbons Program 54

CRISIS RESILIENCE GRANTS TOTAL
Social Justice Program 9
Great Apes & Gibbons Program 6

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