

Introduction & Methodology



Introduction

About the Robert Carr Fund

The Robert Carr Fund (RCF) supports regional and global networks led by inadequately served populations (ISPs)¹ in their HIV advocacy. Since 2012, RCF has invested US\$125 million through five grant cycles. The 2022-2024 cycle represents RCF's fifth investment in community-led advocacy infrastructure that enables ISPs to influence the policies, programs, and funding decisions that affect their lives.

RCF's approach centers on three core principles: **flexible core funding** that networks control according to their priorities, **long-term investment** spanning multiple years to enable sustained advocacy, and **community leadership** where ISPs set their own strategic directions. This model recognizes that meaningful systems change requires patient investment in advocacy infrastructure rather than predetermined project outcomes.

The RCF Theory of Change asserts that when regional and global civil society networks are stronger, people from inadequately served populations will have more influence over the human rights and HIV issues that affect them. This influence creates leverage. Initial investments enable networks to secure additional resources and policy changes far exceeding the original grant values.



Since

2012



\$125M

invested through
five grant cycles

¹ RCF defines ISPs as communities disproportionately affected by HIV who face systematic barriers to accessing quality health services and realizing their human rights. This includes people living with HIV, sex workers, people who use drugs, men who have sex with men, transgender people, young people, women and girls, prisoners, and migrants.

2022-2024 Investment Overview

During the 2022-2024 grant cycle, RCF supported **72 regional and global networks** representing people living with HIV, sex workers, people who use drugs, men who have sex with men, transgender people, women and girls, young people, prisoners, and migrants. These networks, their members and partners, operate across **approximately 130 countries** spanning all continents where HIV remains a significant health challenge.



RCF invested

\$33 million USD



25

Grants



3

Years



72

Regional and Global Networks

Refer to Annex C: Financial Report to see financial figures from the 2022–2024 grant cycle.



RCF funds both individual networks and consortia, with resources flowing from regional and global networks to strengthen national community responses. **By investing in regional and global networks, RCF supports the building and sustaining of community-led advocacy infrastructure that connects grassroots national organizations to international policy processes grounding them in local knowledge and country contexts, enabling local advocates to influence global HIV governance while bringing international expertise and resources to strengthen domestic responses.** This creates a multiplier effect where international advocacy capacity building strengthens local HIV responses in countries with the highest burden and greatest need.

What This Report Covers

This final report documents the impact of RCF's 2022-2024 investments across RCF's four strategic outcome areas. The cycle unfolded during unprecedented challenges, yet networks achieved breakthrough results including legal victories in 11 countries, healthcare improvements across 15+ countries, and funding commitments worth millions of dollars. The evidence demonstrates that flexible, long-term investment in community-led advocacy creates change extending far beyond HIV, strengthening democratic participation, human rights protection, and social justice across multiple sectors.



11 Countries

Legal Victories



15+ Countries

Healthcare Improvements



Funding Commitments

Worth Millions of Dollars



Methodology

Approach to Data Collection and Analysis

This evaluation employs a mixed-methods approach to assess progress across RCF's Theory of Change within the 2022-2024 RCF grant cycle. RCF's methodology balances quantitative measurement of organizational indicators with qualitative insights into the strategic choices, contextual challenges, and innovations of partner networks.

Data Sources

Annual Partner Reporting: Primary data comes from a self-completed survey by all 69 active RCF partner networks in 2024, with comparative data from 71 networks in 2023 and 72 networks in 2022. RCF funds both individual networks and consortia of networks, with all networks receiving funding (incl. consortium members) required to report regardless of their funding structure. These reports include both quantitative indicators and narrative responses.

In-Depth Reflections: Supplementary qualitative data was collected through network case examples, which provide context-specific insights into how organizational strengthening, advocacy work, service improvements, and funding changes manifest in different settings.

Baseline Assessment: All progress measures are compared against baseline data collected at the beginning of the 2022-2024 grant cycle (n=72 networks).

Analytical Framework

Our analysis examines four interconnected outcome areas using a developmental assessment approach that recognizes:

Non-Linear Development: Progress in network strengthening rarely follows a straight line; networks may advance in some areas, maintain and consolidating in others, or even temporarily regressing in others.

Contextual Adaptation: "Success" looks different across diverse political, legal, and cultural environments

Strategic Autonomy: Networks make deliberate choices about institutional development based on their unique circumstances and constituencies.

Community-Defined Progress: Measurements prioritize networks' own assessments of meaningful change while also responding to donor information needs and accountability requirements. In 2023, RCF's MEL framework was revised through participatory processes involving community partners, ensuring it captures community-identified priorities while providing the evidence and accountability mechanisms that funders require to demonstrate impact and responsible stewardship of resources.

Methodological Considerations

Measurement Refinements: Some indicators were refined throughout the 2022-2024 grant cycle (in 2023) to improve clarity and reduce reporting burden. Where these changes affect year-to-year comparability, we explicitly note the methodological adjustments.

Self-Reported Data: All organizational metrics are self-reported by partner networks. While this centres community perspectives, it may introduce reporting variations based on different interpretations of indicators and information provided. To ensure consistency in quantitative reporting, RCF provides standardized indicator definitions, reporting guidance, and support to networks throughout the data collection process, at the same time recognizing that some variation in interpretation reflects legitimate differences in organizational contexts and structures.

Attribution Complexity: Organizational strengthening typically results from multiple factors beyond funding alone. Our analysis acknowledges the contribution of RCF support while recognizing the broader influences of the ecosystem.

Population Size Changes: The slight variation in reporting network numbers across the grant cycle (from N=72 in 2022 to N=69 in 2024) reflects organizational changes such as mergers, closures, and voluntary exits from consortia. Where relevant, we adjust percentage calculations to maintain accurate comparisons.

Cross-Outcome Activities and Integrated Advocacy: RCF's four outcome areas represent distinct strategic focus areas, but networks' advocacy work often operates across multiple outcomes simultaneously. Many activities reported in this report demonstrate cross-outcome impacts. For example, community-led monitoring activities may document human rights violations (Outcome 2) while simultaneously identifying service gaps (Outcome 3) and building evidence for funding advocacy (Outcome 4). Strategic litigation challenging discriminatory laws addresses human rights barriers while removing obstacles to healthcare access. This integrated approach reflects the interconnected nature of challenges facing ISPs and the multi-faceted advocacy strategies networks employ. Where activities or results appear across multiple outcome areas in this report, this represents cross-outcome impact. The categorization of activities across outcome areas is based on how partner networks themselves report and categorize their work in annual surveys, recognizing that networks best understand the multiple strategic purposes their initiatives serve. Networks' ability to leverage single initiatives for multiple strategic purposes demonstrates the efficiency of ISP-led advocacy approaches.

This methodological approach prioritizes understanding genuine organizational development rather than solely tracking compliance metrics, reflecting RCF's commitment to supporting authentic, community-led network and systems strengthening processes.

Read more about RCF's MEL approach here.



Contributors

This report draws on experiences and insights from RCF's 72 networks in the 2022-2024 cohort. Developed by MEL Officer Thea L. Khoury with support from Gavin Surgey (*Singizi Consulting*), the RCF Secretariat team, Timon Mutero (*Design*), with the guidance of the Fund Director, Felicia Wong.

Observed Provisions

RCF observes the following donor-specific provisions in accordance with funding agreements:

Compliance with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Standard Provisions was monitored and documented during the 2022-2024 grant cycle. No United States Government (USG) funding was used for advocacy related to decriminalization of sex work activities. As in line with contract stipulations, funding from Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) is spent only on activities benefiting countries that qualify for ODA according to OECD/DAC.