

A photograph of two people from the waist up. The person on the left is wearing a white ribbed tank top and blue jeans with a black belt. The person on the right is wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans with a black belt. Both have rainbow body paint on their forearms. The person on the left has a semi-circular rainbow, and the person on the right has a horizontal rainbow. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

RAINBOW ADVOCACY PROGRAM





THIS IS RAP

The Rainbow Advocacy Program (RAP), implemented through the kind support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), is a 13-month-long fellowship for LGBTIQ+ activists from the Global South and East to affect change at home through international advocacy focused on the United Nations.

RFSL would like to thank ILGA World, OutRight Action International, and other partners, for their essential support of the Rainbow Advocacy Program.

The program is visionary as well as unique in its approach to combining both the human rights and the development frameworks, especially the Agenda 2030. Participants will gain hands-on advocacy experience by engaging with UN processes, learning from experts and peers, and by implementing an advocacy project in their constituencies.

**CHECK THE FORMATTING FOR THE SECOND PARAGRAPH - “constituencies” should not be in a separate line.



THE RIGHTS OF LGBTIQ PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Over the years, the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, and Queer (LGBTIQ) persons have gained substantial progress at the United Nations, thanks to the brave and tireless works of activists, civil society, diplomats and other individuals.

LGBTQI activists have also been utilizing various UN mechanisms to push for changes on the ground. However, there exists a considerable gap in terms of access, capacity, skills, resources, and participation of underrepresented LGBTQI activists from the Global South and East when it comes to UN advocacy.

With this situation in mind, RFSL, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights, has initiated Rainbow Advocacy Program (RAP) aiming to address some of the manifold gaps and challenges. The program is informed by the results of a pre-study, which included an online survey, desk research and in-depth discussions with LGBTQI activists from the Global South and East as well as with other relevant actors.

So far, three cycles of the program have been implemented with 44 activists and 38 projects.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR UNDERREPRESENTED ACTIVISTS

The Rainbow Advocacy Program (RAP) is a unique opportunity for underrepresented LGBTQI activists from the Global South and East to learn, network, collaborate and gain hands-on experience in UN advocacy.

Each cycle of the program is divided into four phases: an intensive training coinciding with the Human Rights Council session in Geneva, designing and implementing a financed advocacy project, a secondary training and convening during the High-Level Political Forum in New York, and finally the reporting and wrapping up of the project.

Mentorship is a key component of the RAP program, enabling Fellows to have continuous access to expertise and support during all phases of the program and project implementation period, as well as after the program as RAP alumni. Moreover, to deepen learning, advocacy, and project design and evaluation skills, RFSL provides small-scale financial support to Fellows for the implementation of a Learning on the Spot (LOTS) project, local advocacy projects connected to international mechanisms. A digital platform works as the go-to knowledge hub enriched with relevant contents for the program.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the program is twofold: strengthen the advocacy capacity of LGBTQI activists and organizations from the Global South and East and facilitate the participation of underrepresented groups in international advocacy fora to further the realization of the rights of LGBTQI persons. In doing so, the program aims to:

- Provide a learning-by-doing opportunity to activists
- Share knowledge, information, resources, network, and contacts
- Provide access to UN advocacy spaces
- Sustain UN engagement in an informed, effective and safe manner
- Secure more spaces for civil society at UN forums
- Create a pool of community experts to engage in international advocacy



A HANDS-ON TRAINING PROGRAM

The training program is visionary as well as very unique in its approach to combining both the human rights and the development frameworks. In the survey carried out during the pre-study, almost 70% of the respondents suggested including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the course content. They emphasized the need to merge the tried and tested use of human rights mechanisms with the potential of the SDGs to push for greater recognition of the rights of LGBTQI persons.

A dedicated team of consultants researched, mapped and analyzed Agenda 2030, SDGs and other development frameworks and their application to the lives of LGBTQI people in the Global South and East. Based on this, they developed the structure and content for a comprehensive and easy training module.

A very important aspect of RAP is the hands-on advocacy experience. Each cycle of the program is planned to coincide with the Human Rights Council (HRC) session and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. Participants will be spending a good portion of their training period by being present in those forums and by actively engaging in a manner that suits their needs and context best.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE UN

The first phase of the program, which is the in-person training in Geneva, includes topics such as introduction to the UN, its structure, mandate, and relevance to the rights of LGBTQI persons, various UN human rights mechanisms such as the treaty bodies, independent experts, and UPR, attending the Human Rights Council session, drafting and delivering statements at the Council, meeting various stakeholders such as the UN agencies and Permanent Missions in Geneva. The training also has an introductory session to the development framework i.e the Agenda 2030.

DEEP DIVE INTO DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

The next in-person training, which is the third phase, takes a deep dive into the development framework with topics such as the theory of development, its history and various manifestations, data and development, Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, and how to engage with the SDGs etc. The fellows also get to attend and deliver statements at the High-Level Political Forum at the UN HQ in New York, and meet New York-based UN agencies and Permanent Missions.

In addition to the specifically designed theoretical and practical contents, participants will be learning from their peers with mentors honing their knowledge and skills.

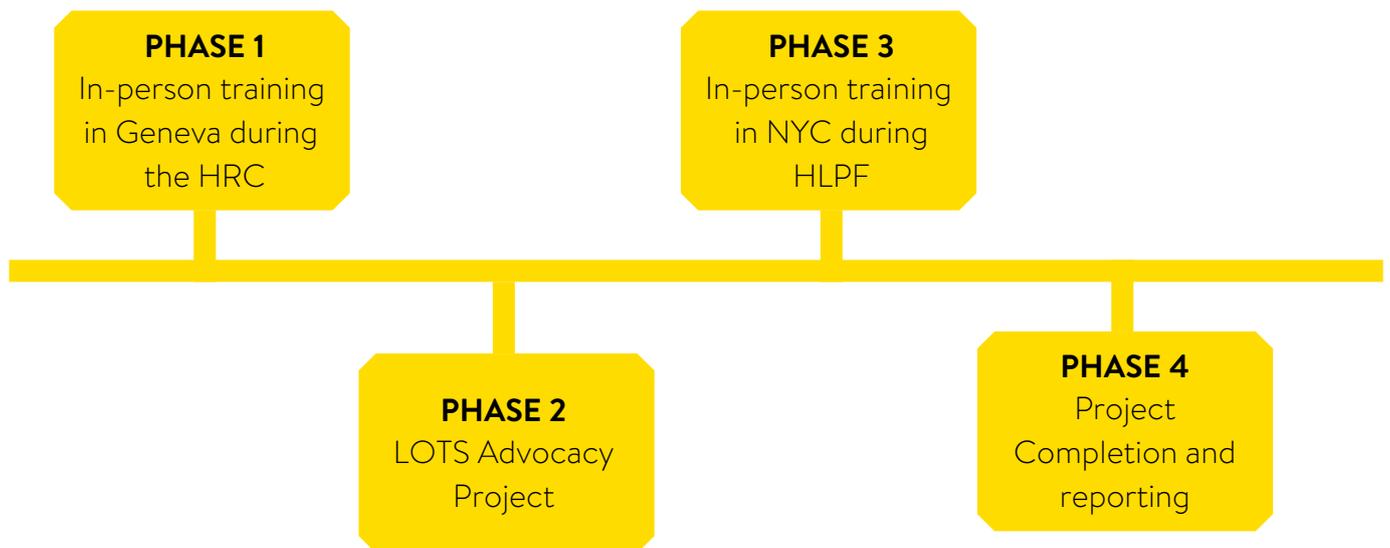
The training and all the materials will be in English.



THE TIMELINE

The first phase takes place in September coinciding with the Human Rights Council session in Geneva, Switzerland. The following months is the second phase i.e the implementation period of the LOTS advocacy project.

The participants will reconvene for the third phase during the High-Level Political Forum in New York, the USA in July with the final phase taking place around September. The program will wrap up in October.



COSTS

RFSL will bear all the costs related to the training for all the selected participants, except local travel within participants' own country e.g. to and from the airport. Moreover, a small financial support will be provided to participants to implement their advocacy projects. Adequate per-diem will also be available for the duration of the training.



THE FELLOWS

The targeted fellows of are LGBTIQ+ activists from countries in the Global South and East as listed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Applicants who are from DAC listed countries but living/working in another country are also welcome.



Priority will be given to underrepresented groups, especially women of color, trans, and intersex individuals from the regions.

FELLOWSHIP REQUIREMENT*

In order for the Fellows to receive the certificate of completion, the following requirements are in place:

- Be available and actively engaged for the whole duration of the program;
- Participate in both the in-person trainings;
- Stay employed at/involved with the organization applied on behalf of;
- Implement the LOTS Project in cooperation with the organization;
- Submit LOTS project reports;
- Participate in the online sessions and webinars.

**The RAP Fellowship is an intensive training that requires substantial working time. As such, it is important to ensure that each Fellow has the support of their organization and that sufficient working time is allocated to the training and the LOTS project implementation throughout the 13-month long duration.*

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE? CHECK BELOW!



- Are ready to commit to the full 13-months period of the program;
- Are from a country in Global South and East according to the list of Development Assistance Committee (DAC). [Click on this link to see if your country is listed under DAC.](#)
- Self-identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ community;
- Have 1-3 years of advocacy experience, locally, nationally, regionally or internationally;
- Have basic knowledge about international human rights mechanisms;
- Belong to an LGBTIQ-led organization;
- Have a role in the organization which includes advocacy work;
- Your organization is working, or planning to work, with international advocacy as part of its strategy for the coming years;
- Can freely communicate in English, both in written and oral form

“ —

RAP made my personal and professional life better by establishing amazing human connections and by providing an effective space for learning, practicing and sharing.

— ”

TESTIMONIALS

Over the last three cycles, RAP had the honor of working with 44 amazing activists from 41 countries.

At the end-of-the-program survey, 100% of the respondents said they would recommend the fellowship for other activists. More than 80% reported increased knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage with UN mechanisms. Many fellows also reported increased capacity and access to funding due to the fellowship, which helped continue their advocacy work in a sustainable way.

44

ACTIVISTS.

41

COUNTRIES.



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligible applicants are welcome to fill out the online form, which cannot be saved but can be worked on for as long as the tab is open. So please make sure you have stable internet, power connection and other documents ready before starting to fill out the form. Initial screening will be based on responses given in the online application and eligibility criteria.

Please make sure to submit a complete application package that includes:

- the completed form,
- CV/Resumé,
- nomination letter from the organization head and
- a proposal for the Learning on the Spot Advocacy project.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applicants selected during the initial screening will go through an oral interview before they are informed about the final selection.

LEARNING ON THE SPOT (LOTS) ADVOCACY PROJECT

Selected participants will have the opportunity to plan and implement a LOTS advocacy project that they think would best fit their local context. Rainbow Advocacy Program will assist the participants with mentoring and small-scale financial support for the project.

The idea behind the LOTS Project is to enable participants to employ their newly learned knowledge and skills in a practical setting. It is up to the participants to design and decide on the scope and objectives of the project they want to implement but the project should be connected to UN advocacy. The project should be for 8 months with achievable activities and objectives. Participants should be able to work on the project while continuing the regular work with their organization. A LOTS project could help participants attend some UN events, prepare original resources or translate resource materials into the local language, provide trainings to local activists, hire a part-time advocacy personnel, create or update organization's existing advocacy strategies, create advocacy materials, and carry out data generating activities etc. The options are limitless!

The quality and theme of the LOTS Project will determine a participant's selection to a significant extent. In order to submit the proposal, applicants should download the template, fill it up and upload it to the application form.

You can [find the application here.](#)



APPLY HERE!

THE IMPACT OF RAP

AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL...

- Increased engagement of LGBTI actors from the global south and east in international mechanisms;
- Increased visibility of LGBTIQ activists from Global South and East at the UN;
- Increased representation from the underrepresented LBQ & ITGNC communities;
- Increased funding to grassroots organizing for sustainable advocacy;
- Increased access to global platforms and the ability to influence decision makers;
- Increased data, documentation and resources about LGBTIQ communities globally.

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL...

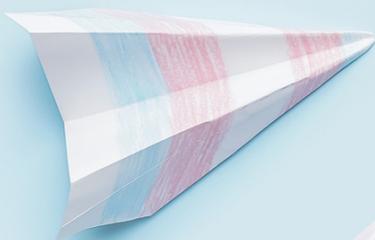
- Increased capacity and skills of LGBTIQ activists to advocate and lobby with various stakeholders;
- Increased organizational capacity to manage grants and projects;
- Cross-platform, transnational, and regional collaboration and increased solidarity;
- Increased access to resources, knowledge, and information;
- Increased outreach to rural LGBTIQ and underrepresented communities through LOTS projects;
- Diversified leadership within the LGBTIQ movement.



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RAP and LOTS project increased both capacity of the organization I represent and our team, and me personally. For us it was a very new type of activity, the first real international advocacy (before we were more focused on national advocacy and didn't counteract much with the UN bodies). Now the whole team definitely feels more confident.

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THE ORGANIZER

RFSL, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights, is a non-profit organization founded in 1950.

RFSL works locally, nationally and internationally and is an ever-growing organization with about 7000 members and 38 branches all over Sweden. Internationally, RFSL is recognized and respected as an experienced and accomplished organization. Our international work has been built upon more than 35 years of experience and lessons learned from our commitment to global LGBTQ rights when RFSL joined ILGA in 1979.

Some of the core values of RFSL's international work are meaningful participation by rights holders, gender equality, non-discrimination, transparency, and sustainability.

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