

SUPPORT WITH AN IMPACT

About our work in Ukraine - page 10

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

MEMBERS – 2022: 8 064

BRANCHES – 2022: 34

CONGRESS – Once every two years

ASSOCIATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES •
ACCOUNTANTS • NOMINATING COMMITTEE

NATIONAL OFFICE - Management team and units

UNITS

NATIONAL • INTERNATIONAL • FINANCE •
EDUCATION • FUNDRAISING & ADMINISTRATION •
COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY

RFSL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

EDITOR: Lars Jonsson

TEXT: Lars Jonsson, Levi Karvonen

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: Sharon Wagiella

PHOTO EDITOR: Rebecka Ekholm

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Pushing Buttons, pushingbuttons.se

PHOTO COVER: Christina Pashkina, from Charkiv Pride.

PHOTO BACK COVER: Rebecka Ekholm, from Stockholm Pride.

If not otherwise specified copy right of photos belongs to RFSL.

RFSL AS AN ORGANIZATION

RFSL (The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights) exists and operates all over the country. RFSL also conducts international work.

The Congress, which is held every two years, is RFSL's highest decision-making body. The next congress will be held in October 2023. RFSL's association board of trustees, elected by the congress, is responsible for the organization's work between congresses. Chairman, since 2021, is **Trifa Shakely**. **Peter Sidlund Ponkala** is deputy chairman of the association. RFSL's national office, with approx. 50 employees, works on behalf of the association board of trustees. The association board of trustees and the national office are responsible for carrying out activities and advocacy work within the areas that the Congress decided that RFSL should work with. Particular focus is placed on areas that the Congress has decided should be prioritized. The areas that are prioritized until the 2023 congress are asylum and migration, family issues, trans and intersex issues, elderly issues and the protection of democracy.

At the turn of the year 2022/2023, RFSL had 34 branches and 8,064 members. Almost a third of these, 2,551 people, are members of the largest branch RFSL Stockholm. Members under the age of 26 are also connected to RFSL Ungdom, which is a youth association linked to RFSL. Ten of RFSL's branches run Newcomers activities (for asylum seekers, undocumented and newly arrived LGBTQI people) and some branches offer special youth and senior activities.

The national office is divided into six different units under the leadership of a director of operations. Since November 2022, **Fredrik Nilsson** has been acting operations manager. Until October 2022, **Pär Viktorsson Harryb** was operations manager. The national office has a broad mission to work with support and initiatives for several different target groups: the board, branches, members, the LGBTQI community, asylum

seekers, victims of crime, the public, decision-makers, financiers, partners, activists in other countries, and more. The national office is a knowledge centre on LGBTQI issues that works with a large number of issues of varying nature and produces self-produced information and training material for individuals, companies, authorities and members. RFSL is a referral body to, among others, relevant reports from government investigations and various regulations from authorities. In 2022, RFSL submitted eight different consultation responses. A significant educational activity is conducted through RFSL Utbildning AB, wholly owned by RFSL, with both public operations, in the form of authorities, municipalities and regions, and companies as clients.

The tasks of the association board of trustees consist of:

- › to work for the organisation's long-term development and financial stability,
- › to keep in touch with branches and the LGBTQI community in general,
- › to make decisions about things that have to do with the goals and direction of the operation, and
- › to consider strategic, ideological and, for the organisation, fundamental issues.

The operation during 2022 at the organisational level was characterized by it being an election year. RFSL strove for LGBTQ issues to be noticed during the election campaign, i.a. by holding a party leader's debate at the beginning of August during this year's Stockholm Pride.



RFSL's chairman Trifa Shakely (middle) visits East Pride in Norrköping

MEMBER & BRANCH WORK

By providing support to RFSL's 34 branches, RFSL works to strengthen and develop the branches and to stimulate a sustainable commitment. Support for the branches is, i.a., given in digital form through a special e-mail.

The branch support, which is part of the communications unit at the National Office, is one of the parts of RFSL's operations that is mainly financed by the organizational grant RFSL receives from the authority MUCF. In 2022, RFSL received SEK 4.35 million in organizational grants. The grant is based partly on the number of branches and partly on the number of members.

Through continued primarily digital support, the branches have been strengthened during the end of the challenging pandemic period. Through the presence of either someone on the association board of trustees or someone from the National Office, the National Office participated in almost all annual meetings of RFSL's active branches. Furthermore, work on implementing RFSL's new vision, mission and basic principles has continued. In the long run, this will strengthen the organization in building a strong movement for the future.

At the beginning of 2022, the last of the branch's premises were completed, which in 2021 received support mainly with furniture and furnishings from IKEA. In a colla-

boration with The Humle Co. RFSL received a larger supply of rainbow toothbrushes that the branches could use to recruit new members and donors. During RFSL's spring conference, which was held in Sundsvall on 13-15 May, the Robert Karlsson Svärd memorial prize was awarded. The Organisation of the Year award went to RFSL Luleå and Norra Norrbottens län. This was for the branch's work in actively standing up for the rights of LGBTQI people in connection with a local Christian Democrat politician

urging parents to keep their children at home instead of receiving LGBTQI information at school. Preethi Huczowski from RFSL Jämtland Härjedalen was named Activist of the Year.

Projects carried out in 2022

Strategies to counter and deal with hate and threats with homo-, bi- and transphobic motives began. The project is financed by MUCF in 2022 with a grant of approximately SEK 1.8 million. The purpose of the project

RESULTS IN 2022

- › RFSL broke a new membership record with 8,064 members at the turn of the year 2022/2023. Several success factors are assumed to be behind the membership record, where active work with re-enlistment via the CMR system Salesforce is one and successful work with communication another.
- › A branch letter, with information to RFSL's representatives and employees throughout the country, was sent out eleven times during the year. Furthermore, the newsletter Parad was sent out to RFSL's members seven times during the year.
- › RFSL's branch fund, from which branches can apply for support for membership development activities, distributed SEK 79,500 to three different branches.



RFSL activist of the year Preethi Huczowski (holding the flowers) from Jämtland Härjedalen with other activists in the branch.

is to strengthen the LGBTQI movement against the different types of threats and hatred that is directed at activists. This is done through strengthening the branches' capacity, developing collaboration with authorities around threats both nationally and locally and by contributing to increased knowledge in society about this vulnerability. During the year, a needs inventory was carried out for RFSL's branches. Cooperation with other organizations has been strengthened through RFSL's participation in Ideell Arena's security network.

The needs of the community

There is a fundamental need for support for elected representatives at branch level, in order to maintain a well-functioning associational democracy. RFSL's members have a need to be offered a community, in the form of safe and inclusive activities. The role of the National Office's branch work is to support the branches in offering this. RFSL is a target group-driven organization. The personal stake in the commit-

ment and the sense of belonging in RFSL is often high, as it is such a central part of activists' lives and identities.

Strengths and challenges with RFSL's member and branch work

The support RFSL's branch work offers is adapted to the needs of each individual branch. The coaching approach helps activists find their own strengths and tools to be able to handle challenges on their own and create a more sustainable commitment. The branch support also means creating opportunities for meetings between the branches to exchange experiences and ideas for sustainable and relevant activities locally.

One challenge is that RFSL's work at the national level is sometimes not perceived to be sufficiently visible in the branches. RFSL needs to get better at capturing committed people in the branches, as well as attracting and retaining new activists. One way to promote commitment is to work more in member networks.

Anti racism

RFSL is an anti-racist organization and as such RFSL wishes to create space for vulnerable groups to operate both within the organization and outside the organization. During 2022, RFSL's spring conference had an anti-racist theme, which became a good opportunity to increase and deepen the knowledge about anti-racism in the branches and to inspire the continuing anti-racist work at a local level. Method material for the branches has been produced, with guidance for how the branches in a simple and practical way can start their anti-racist work. Two trainings were held for the staff at the national office, where at least 45 people received an in-depth training in identifying and addressing racism. Furthermore, an initiative was started which targets LGBTQI people who identify as BIPOC (black, indigenous and people of colour), which resulted in a weekend conference.

FUNDRAISING

RESULTS IN 2022

- › Collected funds amounted to SEK 4,787,910. The donations came from monthly donors, from social media fundraisers, from corporate donations and from a bequest.
- › The number of monthly donors was 886 at the turn of the year, which is an increase of 186 monthly donors during the year.
- › The fundraising foundation has had collaborations during the year with, among others, IKEA and The Humble Co. In the latter case, the company donated money per Pride toothbrush sold and donated a large number of toothbrushes that RFSL could use in recruiting members.

During the year, the Fundraising Foundation distributed SEK 2.6 million in support.

The support went to:

- › SEK 1,500,000 for emergency interventions in Ukraine that have benefited LGBTQI people,
- › SEK 855,000 for work for the rights of LGBTQI people in Sweden, i.a. to work in the field of asylum and migration, and
- › SEK 245,000 for RFSL's international projects otherwise funded by various grant funds (where partial self-funding is required to be able to obtain funding).

The RFSL's Fundraising Foundation collects money in favour of the rights of LGBTQI people in Sweden and internationally. Collected funds come from private individuals, organizations and companies.

The fundraising foundation holds a 90 account and is thus a collection society that meets the high requirements of the Svensk Insamlingskontroll. The fundraising foundation is also connected to Giva Sverige, which works to ensure ethical, transparent and professional fundraising. The work in the foundation is voluntary, under the direction of a board, and the foundation has no costs for employees. RFSL helps with administrative and personnel support, which is funded outside of the foundation. Chairman of the fundraising foundation's board is **Johnny F Kroneld**.

The fundraising foundation's strategy to achieve the goals of the fundraising is to activate existing networks and RFSL's members. This by enabling both individuals and companies to support the work for the human rights of LGBTQI people.

The fundraising foundation acts in the interest of RFSL's work with LGBTQI people's rights in Sweden and internationally with four target operations:

- › asylum and migration work in Sweden,
- › advocacy work and dissemination of information in Sweden,
- › support for LGBTQI organizing in Sweden and internationally, and
- › crisis support for LGBTQI organizations in Sweden and internationally.

In recent years, the fundraising volume has grown. This growth is in line with a goal that in 5-7 years have a more independent fundraising work with a strong and committed base consisting of donating individuals and corporate partners who, apart from donating, make a difference internally and externally to their target groups/customers. In line with the strategy to achieve the goal of a more independent operation, focus has for the past two years been building a base of monthly donors and establishing more long-term collaborations with corporations that make a difference.

In the long term, the work for the rights of LGBTQI people needs better and more stable funding through private donations so that the work is not so exposed to political fluctuations in public funding. There must also be funds for work with vulnerable LGBTQI people whom the public does not want to support. In the long term, the goal is for there to be three times as many resources compared to today from RFSL's fundraising foundation for the work for the rights of LGBTQI people. The work that receives support must have made a documented difference for LGBTQI people at system/community level, organizational level and individual level.

RFSL's raised funds are still far from



During 2020, IKEA donated its gains from the sales of their rainbow bag to RFSL.

securing independent funding for the work for the rights of LGBTQI people and need to increase. At the same time, the dividends from the Fundraising Foundation have a major impact on the work for the rights of LGBTQI people. RFSL has, thanks to support from the fundraising foundation, strengthened LGBTQI people around Sweden, as well as in other countries.

To ensure that the Fundraising Foundation RFSL sets the right priorities, the following follow-ups are being carried out:

- › Size of the fundraising and sharing of RFSL's funding.
- › How many members RFSL organizes and in how many locations there are activities.
- › What participants in activities say about safety and satisfaction in evaluations.
- › Number of partners who receive support in international operations and whether they consider that they receive useful support.
- › Number of members in RFSL Newcomers and number of meeting places around the country.
- › Number of asylum seekers who receive support directly and indirectly and how things work out in cases that RFSL supports.
- › Which target groups does RFSL

pay attention to in campaigns and communication.

RFSL's fundraising work, like RFSL in general at a national level, is working to develop its power measurement. This is to ensure, within the framework of each activity, that the activity is in line with the goals of both the organization and the projects.

The needs of the community

There is a great and increasing need for independent funding for the work for the rights of LGBTQI people. Public contributors are influenced by the political climate and work based on an agenda set by politicians. Donations to the RFSL's Fundraising Foundation make it possible for RFSL and other organizations to work independently for rights and better conditions, regardless of what decision-makers decide or what public contributors prioritize. RFSL makes it possible for anyone to contribute to the fight for the rights of LGBTQI people in an easy way. Much of RFSL's work could not be carried out without this support from individuals, organizations and companies.

Strengths and challenges of RFSL's fundraising work

There is a desire to contribute to long-term and independent work for the rights

of LGBTQI people within the LGBTQI community as well as among allies and friends. RFSL has high credibility and the fundraising foundation is an important link between all those who want to contribute and RFSL, which has the ability to carry out activities. Within the foundation, there is a high level of expertise in both LGBTQI issues and fundraising. The foundation works closely with RFSL and can identify needs where donated money can make the biggest possible difference. During the year, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine led to RFSL, in cooperation with the Fundraising Foundation, being able to quickly reorient its work in Ukraine to, with the help of collected funds, focus on urgent needs. Over SEK 1 million was collected in 2022 for the benefit of Ukraine.

Finding resources for the fundraising work itself, which requires working hours, administration, communication efforts and regular relationship building, is a constant challenge. Even if collected funds go to needs that exist, there will still be an extensive need, both in Sweden and internationally, to give LGBTQI people the conditions to organize themselves and to be treated equally and with legal certainty.



Despite the war, LGBTQI activists managed to organise Pride in Charkiv at the end of September. A small parade was held in the city's subway. Photo this page and next: Christina Pashkina.

ON SITE IN UKRAINE

With Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022, RFSL's Ukrainian partner organizations had to completely change their operations. A prerequisite for RFSL's support to Ukraine during the year was already established contacts with the LGBTQI movement in the country.

Even before February 24, RFSL was in contact with activists and did a risk analysis. When the full-scale invasion began, RFSL and partner organizations were therefore able to begin evacuation and work on establishing sheltered accommodation on the same day. Only two days later, the first sheltered accommodation opened in the city of Uzhhorod in western Ukraine.

RFSL was among the very first to start a fundraiser in favour of Ukraine. This fundraiser raised over SEK 1 million. Thanks to this money, RFSL was able to support seven more LGBTQI organizations in Ukraine, as well as one organization in a neighbouring country, in addition to the nine collaborations RFSL had in the country before. In addition to collected funds, the operation was financed through funds from Sida and Regnbågsfonden.

Our own and our partner organizations' support to the LGBTQI community in Ukraine focused above all on urgent needs. This included safe housing, medical care, legal, psychological and social support, as well as evacuation both inside and outside of Ukraine. Trans people who wanted to flee were also supported

The purpose of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is to destroy Ukraine's independence and usurp parts of the country's territory. So far, over 80,000 - soldiers, civilians, Ukrainians and Russians - have died. The invasion set off the biggest wave of refugees in Europe since World War II. 5.5 million Ukrainians are estimated to have fled across the border. Over 50,000 have made it to Sweden.



During this very difficult year, the community has helped thousands of people survive, while strengthening the movement and maintaining its visibility. But the fight is still not over.

We are so proud of our queer partners, friends and colleagues in Ukraine and we promise to continue to support them as long as necessary in these times. We continue to stand united in solidarity with Ukraine, and call on communities around the world to continue to support their brothers, sisters and non-binary siblings in the country, as long as they continue the fight.

in the form of someone accompanying them to the border who could explain their situation to the border guards. This was to ensure that they were not harassed or refused to cross the border.

Due to the great need, three shelters were opened in Uzhhorod. The accommodations came to accommodate over a hundred people. In parallel with the work to set up sheltered accommodation, work was underway to support LGBTQI people in Ukraine with advice and information, e.g. about where they could get support. RFSL conducted over 300 such consultations via messaging and social media.

Being in or near a full-scale war can lead to physical injuries but also serious damage to mental health. Therefore, resources were set aside for psychological support for our partner organizations' staff, as they were under enormous mental and emotional stress. RFSL also stepped in and covered the costs of health insurance and purchased medical equipment.

From a statement of RFSL and 16 other European LGBTQI organizations on the anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.



RESULTS:

- › In total, RFSL's partner organizations provided various forms of support to more than 1,500 LGBTQI people. Over 700 LGBTQI people received direct support through RFSL.
- › 157 people received various types of support via the sheltered accommodation that was established. 95 of these stayed there for more than three days.
- › Five partner organizations could be evacuated just after the outbreak of full-scale war.

ASYLUM/MIGRATION & NEWCOMERS

RFSL's work with asylum and migration consists of three different parts:

- legal work,
- advocacy work in migration and asylum issues, and
- RFSL Newcomers.

Legal asylum work is carried out by an asylum lawyer who mainly works with legal support and advice to individual asylum-seeking LGBTQI persons, undocumented persons and other individuals who intend to apply for various forms of residence permit in Sweden. In some asylum cases, the lawyer has represented the asylum seeker as public counsel through the asylum process.

The advocacy work consists of drawing attention to the situation of LGBTQI refugees, raising public opinion and conducting advocacy work on legislators and authorities.

Newcomers is RFSL's national network for and with asylum seekers and undocumented LGBTQI people. Newcomers can be found in ten locations around the country. Within Newcomers, participants can share experiences, make contacts and get valuable information about Swedish society. The local groups can offer both social meeting places and certain support activities.

The asylum work and Newcomers are mostly financed by organisational contributions and collected funds. During 2022, a certain part has been financed with funds specifically allocated for work with the reception of people from Ukraine seeking protection in Sweden. RFSL received approx. 1.7 million from MUCF for this work.

Work carried out during 2022

The asylum lawyer provides individual legal counselling. The legal counselling usually consists of advice before asylum investigations at the Swedish Migration Agency, appeals and oral hearings at the migration courts. Another part of the asylum lawyer's work consists of training for both state and private bodies. During 2022, trainings have been carried out for, among others, the Swedish Migration Agency, healthcare staff, non-profit organisations, law students, municipal employees, RFSL's branches and Newcomers groups.

The legal investigation *Grounds for refusal in LGBTQI asylum cases* published by RFSL in 2020 has continued to receive attention, i.a. from politicians, media, and researchers. The investigation is used as course material at Karlstad University for law students specializing in migration law and for psychology students at Umeå University. Work has also been ongoing with a follow-up to the legal investigation, where approximately 1,000 judgments and decisions between 2021-2023 in LGBTQI asylum cases are reviewed. The follow-up is expected to be published in 2023.

During 2022, Newcomers has worked together with RFSL Ungdom on a national

RFSL Newcomers Youth in collaboration with Peter Englund has designed a clothing collection. Photo: Anrike Piel/RFSL Ungdom.

level with the project *Emergency support for LGBTQI+ Ukrainians*. The initiative has aimed at coordinating the reception of LGBTQI people fleeing Ukraine upon their arrival in Sweden. The goal has been to coordinate the work within the respective Newcomers operations. This is to better include LGBTQI people from Ukraine in regular Newcomers activities and i.a. to be able to offer support in the contact with authorities.

The needs of asylum seekers

The legal asylum work is a response to a bottomless need for qualified legal assistance focused specifically on LGBTQI asylum law at various stages during and after the asylum process. Counselling is also given in family reunification and other migration-related matters. Further training and knowledge-raising initiatives are regularly carried out for lawyers, lawyers, organisations, healthcare staff, municipal employees and other actors who meet and work with asylum seekers and newly arrived LGBTQI people. Advice is also given on fleeing from one's country of origin, or another country to which one has fled, where one risks persecution because of one's sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression. The asylum legal work affects



Strengths and challenges in the work with asylum/migration and Newcomers

The state authorities' continuing legal uncertainty and often impermissible grounds for refusal in LGBTQI asylum cases is a driving force to continue the work, legally and politically, to increase legal certainty for asylum-seeking LGBTQI people with the right to protection. RFSL's educational efforts in LGBTQI asylum law take on an increasingly important role in achieving this goal. In 2022, legislators have admitted to a greater extent the shortcomings in the authorities' application of the law and promised an investigation of the legal certainty in LGBTQI asylum cases. It is also a strength of asylum work that it consists of several different cooperating parts. The activities within RFSL Newcomers at the local level are made up of qualified people and there is a strength in that it both offers meeting places and concrete support when needed.

One challenge is that concrete improvements to legal certainty in LGBTQI asylum cases have so far been lacking. This means that asylum-seeking LGBTQI people continue to be denied protection and deported to countries where they risk persecution, torture and execution. The new government's policy in the area of asylum and migration also means a strong shift towards stricter rules regarding the application of the right to asylum and the possibility of family immigration, which will also affect LGBTQI people in need of protection. A major challenge specifically for 2022 has been the large number of LGBTQI people in need of protection and asylum seekers from Ukraine and Russia, many of them families with children where family members had different citizenships. The asylum law lawyer has been regularly contacted by LGBTQI people from or in Ukraine and Russia. Unfortunately, LGBTQI asylum seekers from Russia have been largely denied asylum despite the ongoing war against Ukraine. Another challenge, for both the asylum legal support and RFSL Newcomers, is difficulties with financing for long-term work. For RFSL Newcomers, the dependence on project-managed funds means that it becomes difficult to achieve their own set goals and meet the needs of the Newcomers groups.

the life situation of many individual LGBTQI asylum seekers and undocumented people.

The needs of Newcomers

Being able to offer a safe and welcoming meeting place, and an open-minded environment, where the target group can be themselves without fear of reprisals, is

the starting point for RFSL Newcomers. In addition, correct information is provided regarding the rights of the target group during the asylum process. The information about Swedish society that is conveyed plays a significant role for asylum seekers who do not always receive the right support and information upon arrival in Sweden.

RESULTS IN 2022

- › RFSL's asylum lawyer gave individual legal counselling to approx. 900 individuals.
- › Over 100 lawyers and legal professionals working with asylum cases received training in LGBTQI asylum law from RFSL (in the form of a training organized by the Asylum Rights Centre and UNHCR) about LGBTQI asylum seekers' protection needs and challenges in credibility assessments, something that increases the chances that LGBTQI people are given better conditions to be granted the protection to which they are entitled.
- › The new government's government declaration included that "a review must be made of the asylum process with the aim of strengthening quality, uniformity and legal certainty" i.a. when it comes to the asylum cases of LGBTQI people. The hope is that this means that such an investigation of the legal certainty in, among other things, LGBTQI asylum cases that the RFSL has long advocated will now be undertaken.
- › RFSL Newcomers has established collaborations with UNIQLO Scandinavia, Inditex Nordics and Björkåfrihet. This collaboration includes donations and the actors have made resources available. Inditex Nordics also offered employment to people from Newcomers and Björkåfrihet has offered internships.



Group photo from ILGA Asia Conference held in Saigon, Vietnam at the end of 2022. Photo: ILGA Asia.

INTERNATIONAL WORK

The core of RFSL's international work is to strengthen the LGBTQI movement's capacity and support the organizations, activists and parts of the community that have the least resources. RFSL collaborates, within various projects, with partner organizations in Asia, East Africa and Eastern Europe. In the UN, RFSL works to ensure that the human rights of LGBTQI people are respected.

The work with international issues is carried out by a team of employees at RFSL's federal office of different nationalities and broad experience in working with LGBTQI issues. The budget for the international work was approx. 25 million in 2022, with Sida and Forum Syd as the main contributors.

The international work has three main directions:

- › Partnership with LGBTQI organizations in East Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe.
- › Influence work at global and national level.
- › Capacity building of activists and organizations.

In its international operations, RFSL has:

- › A well-developed advocacy work within the UN, where RFSL actively uses its consultative ECOSOC status which gives access to the UN context.
- › Training program for LGBTQI activists globally, including in leadership, resource acquisition, and advocacy work.
- › Support for LGBTQI organizing at both grassroots and more established organizational levels.

Projects carried out in 2022

- › *Eastern Partnership* (financier: Sida) is a regional program whose goal is to strengthen and support the LGBTQI movement in Eastern Europe.
- › *Mobilizing for Change* (financier: Sida) aims to increase respect for the rights of LGBTQI people on a global level, within the UN, as well as to educate and strengthen LGBTQI activists in the global South and East.
- › *Rainbow Kick-Off* (financier: The Rainbow Fund) supports organizations and groups in Eastern and Southern Africa and Southeast Asia that have difficulty obtaining funding. The project focuses above all on trans and intersex organizing.
- › *Regional movements* (financier: Forum Syd) consists of collaborations with several LGBTQI organizations in East Africa and Asia, where the goal is to strengthen activists and regional organization for the rights of LGBTQI people.
- › *Resilient movements, Stronger Communities* (financier: Sida) is RFSL's program in Ukraine.



Needs of the community

Despite the fact that more and more countries are decriminalizing same-sex relationships, over a third of the world's countries still have criminalising legislation. Opposition to the rights of LGBTQI people is also growing in various places around the world, leading to the loss of previously won rights. LGBTQI activists and organizations worldwide are subject to harassment, discrimination, stigma and threats. In disasters, crises and wars, LGBTQI people often become scapegoats and targets.

RFSL works actively to make the conditions of LGBTQI people visible around the world. As a well-established and internationally recognized organization, RFSL participates in global conferences and in various mechanisms around human rights. Through this participation, we can make LGBTQI people's needs and human rights visible and work to ensure that these are respected. RFSL also uses this unique position to support activists from underrepresented regions and backgrounds, so that they can attend international LGBTQI conferences or make statements in UN forums and make themselves heard.

As a norm-critical, feminist and anti-racist organization, intersectionality is a watchword in RFSL's international work. This means that we take into account how different power structures interact with and reinforce each other. For example, the metropolitan norm means that LGBTQI organizations in rural areas have less access to resources. Gender norms and stereotypes lead to lesbian, bisexual and queer women and transgender people to a greater extent living in poverty and being exposed to violence and discrimination. This marginalization in turn creates barriers that prevent groups from organizing. RFSL works to support both more established

RESULTS IN 2022

- › Two training programs were organized, with 32 LGBTQI activists from the Global South and East.
- › RFSL funded five regional partner organizations in Asia and East Africa with approximately SEK 3.3 million. RFSL also funded ten grassroots organizations, which together shared approximately SEK 750,000.
- › Together with Regnbågsfonden, RFSL supported five initiatives in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and Vietnam, with a focus on trans and intersex organizing.
- › The ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, RFSL's partner in Southeast Asia, succeeded in securing ECOSOC status within the UN. Thus, one organization was added to the approximately ten LGBTQI organizations that have such status. This enables LGBTQI voices and perspectives from the Global South, Southeast Asia in particular, to become more visible and included within the UN.

organizations and LGBTQI organizing at the grassroots level.

Strengths and challenges of RFSL's international work

As one of the world's oldest still active LGBTQI organizations, RFSL has a unique opportunity to create change and support LGBTQI organizations globally. We have a wide network of LGBTQI activists and organizations that we work actively to consult. RFSL builds its international operations based on needs communicated by partners through feasibility studies, surveys and individual conversations. A central principle is that our partner organizations must have great power and autonomy in determining the content of the projects and programs financed by RFSL. In the first year after the pandemic, several partners, including ILGA Asia, EATHAN in East Africa and Intersex Asia, have again been able to organize conferences and member meetings. Meeting again has been central after several years of isolation and online-based work.

Something that was particularly visible in 2022 was how wars, crises and conflicts affect groups that are already particularly marginalized, including LGBTQI people. Widespread social and political crises in countries such as Afghanistan, Myanmar and Uganda continue, where LGBTQI people are particularly vulnerable.

Due to the security situation, a large-scale migration is currently taking place in Eastern Europe, which in turn has led to a drastic increase in rents in many places. This has a big impact on the LGBTQI movement. Costs for offices and premises

increase drastically and make it difficult for LGBTQI organizations to conduct business. At the same time, the increased cost of living means that more and more people in the community risk homelessness or are forced to live with family members who expose them to violence.

In these situations, it is important to be flexible with partner organizations. War and crisis means that needs change quickly and that activities that were planned earlier can no longer be carried out or are no longer relevant. Then flexibility is crucial for the movement to be able to adjust and handle the challenges that arise.

The war in Ukraine has caused many financiers in Sweden and globally to shift their focus. As a result, LGBTQI organizations in other parts of the world have had access to less resources. At the same time, we also see that inflation and increasing costs for e.g. food, rent and fuel affect partner organizations in the global south to a greater extent. In 2022 also prevailed great uncertainty about continued funding in Sweden. This is as a result of the new government's reorganization and tightening of aid policy.

WHAT DO GLOBAL SOUTH AND EAST MEAN?

Global South is a concept that has replaced "third world" and "developing countries". In the Global East, i.e. several Eastern European countries are included and the concept makes visible the challenges these countries face.



LGBTQI+ IN THE WORLD

Although there were several setbacks in 2022, the situation globally for LGBTQI people is slowly getting better. RFSL continued to carry out work in several different locations around the world. In about a third of the world's countries, consensual same-sex sexual acts are still illegal. Unfortunately, Indonesia was added as one of those countries in 2022, when a ban was introduced against all sexual relations outside of marriage. In 2022, same-sex sex was simultaneously legalized in three countries: Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Singapore. Right now it is possible to enter into marriage with someone of the same sex in 34 of the world's countries. In 2022, same-sex marriage was introduced in Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Switzerland and Slovenia.

Europe:

Armenia, Georgia, Moldavia, Ukraine

New partnership with organizations in Eastern Europe

During the year RFSL began a partnership with 18 different bi+ and trans initiatives and organizations in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The partnership will support the special needs that exist among those who are bi+ and transgender in these countries and the communities where they are located. Within the partnership, RFSL's Eastern Europe team began planning for the Stockholm Queer Qonference, which will be a unique gathering of activists working for bi+ and trans people in these four countries.

Ukraine

Intensive aid work in Ukraine

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in the spring of 2022, RFSL organized three shelters for LGBTQI people who were refugees within the country. During the year, RFSL also supported over 20 Ukrainian LGBTQI organizations that were in need of urgent funding. Furthermore, intensive work was underway to support LGBTQI people in Ukraine with advice and information, e.g. about where they could get support.

UN/Switzerland

The UN's LGBTQ expert gets a continued mandate

After a successful campaign, in which RFSL and several LGBTQI activists and organizations participated, the UN's independent LGBTQI expert **Victor Madrigal-Borloz** had his mandate extended in July. The position of Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity has existed, under the UN agency UNHCR, since 2016. The expert's overall task is to develop ways to improve protection in the world for people who suffer violence and discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Asia:

Vietnam

Asian LGBTQ movement gathered in Saigon

RFSL's partner organization ILGA Asia organized a major international LGBTQ conference (ILGA Asia Conference 2022) in Saigon, Vietnam between 28 November and 2 December. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness of issues affecting Asian LGBTQI communities, create regional solidarity and develop common strategies. RFSL participated at the conference with several representatives.

North & South America:

United Nations/United States

A Peruvian LGBTQI activist was able to participate in UN forum thanks to RFSL

RFSL, through its ECOSOC status at the UN, enabled an LGBTQI activist from Peru to deliver a statement at the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York in July. HLPF is a forum where world leaders, politicians and civil society meet to follow up the work with sustainable development.

Africa:

Kenya

Training for trans and intersex activists

During the year, in collaboration with its partner organization EATHAN, a regional network for trans and intersex organizations in East Africa, RFSL organized a training session on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals within Agenda 2030. 17 trans and intersex activists from East Africa participated. The training was held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Tanzania

A safe place for trans and intersex people

RFSL's partner organization in Tanzania held, with the support of RFSL, a national meeting that created a safe space where trans and intersex people could meet. A safe excursion to the beach was also organized for the participants.

TRANSGENDER HEALTH & RIGHTS

Issues relating to transgender people's health and rights pervade several different projects and activities. Trans issues are, according to a decision at RFSL's last congress, a particularly prioritized area for the RFSL to work on. During 2022, RFSL has invested in building a good collaboration with other actors who work with trans issues. The collaboration with Transnätverket, the organization Transsammans and their project Starka tillsammans has meant fruitful results in the form of exchange of experience, knowledge development and collaborations around trans issues.

Most of the focus on trans issues within RFSL is through the operation Transformering, which is run together with RFSL Ungdom. Transformering offers support and information to trans people and people who have questions about gender identity at all ages, as well as to relatives and professionals who want knowledge and advice about trans issues. The work is carried out through the website, answering e-mails and dialogue with authorities, health care and organizations within civil society. A majority of the emails that come from trans people have concerned various parts of gender-affirming care and mental health connected to being trans or questions about gender

identity. A theme that has increased compared to previous years is the long waiting times in care. Here, the counselling has increasingly focused on strategies for the individual to manage the long waiting times.

Transformering, as well as the work with suicide prevention, is financed by the Public Health Agency's operating grant for mental health and suicide prevention. This with a contribution of SEK 1.8 million.

Work carried out during 2022

In 2022, extensive advocacy work for transgender people's improved access to their rights and improved living conditions has been carried out. The focus of the advocacy

work has mainly been on three areas:

- › a modernized gender recognition act based on self-determination,
- › an improved care process in connection with converting parts of the gender-affirming care into national highly specialized care, and
- › to reduce negative consequences in connection with the National Board of Health and Welfare's update of its knowledge support for the care of young people with gender dysphoria.

In all these areas, we can see that RFSL's work has clearly improved outcomes in favour of trans people.

Furthermore, work is carried out with



suicide prevention. This is by following knowledge development in the area, increasing knowledge within RFSL and conducting dialogue with authorities and other actors. In addition to the part of the work that is aimed directly at transgender people, RFSL has in 2022 within the project Queerkunskap invested in suicide prevention and health promotion activities for the target group of bi- and pansexuals in the form of a digital lecture series. The project consisted of four digital seminars, focusing on promoting the health of bisexuals, pansexuals and queers. During the seminars, lectures were mixed with discussions and reflections in small groups and in whole

groups. In the evaluation of the lecture series, 75 percent of the participants answered that the meetings had contributed to strengthening well-being.

In June, RFSL and RFSL Ungdom released the report *Unga transpersoner och den könsbekräftande vården*. The purpose of compiling a report was to shed light on the current situation in gender-affirming care for young people and to dispel myths about how accessible gender-affirming care is. The report showed that access to adequate gender-affirming care for young trans people varies widely across the country and that there is an acute shortage of specialized care staff. The waiting time to start a

gender dysphoria assessment is usually one year, but can be as long as three years.

In December, RFSL held an empowering all-day digital conference for transgender people and their relatives with approximately 100 participants. The purpose of the conference was to increase knowledge about mental health and methods to promote it. The day included, among other things, exercises for a better connection with the body and relatives received specific advice on how to support a family member with mental illness. The conference received a very good overall rating, with 84.5 percent answering that it was good or very good in the evaluation. →

RESULTS IN 2022

- › Transformering answered 1,393 supportive and advisory emails. 61 percent of the emails came from transgender people or people with questions about gender identity and the rest mainly from relatives and professionals. 30 percent of the emails from trans people concerned mental illness and of these 6 percent dealt with suicidal thoughts.
- › The evaluation of the all-day digital conference that was held for transgender people and their relatives showed that 78 percent of transgender people who rated their own mental health as worse had been strengthened by participating in the conference. Of trans people with poorer mental health, 63 percent responded that the day gave them tools to promote their mental health. 71 percent of the relatives who participated answered that the day gave them tools to strengthen their relative's mental health.

The needs of the community

Sweden today systematically violates trans people's human rights in terms of access to correct legal gender and the right to good health. Many trans people, people who are thinking about gender identity and relatives need knowledge, information, advice and support. Knowledge and information can e.g. about how the gender-affirming care works, legal issues around transition or where one can get counselling. Counselling and support can deal with different ways of dealing with feelings and one's life

experiences. At Transformering's advice email, one of the most common questions is where it is possible to meet others who are trans or others who have questions about their gender identity. Transformering provides constantly updated information about which meeting places and discussion forums exist in the country both within and outside RFSL.

There is a great need for collected, up-to-date and easily accessible information on trans issues and a great need for counselling and support with trans competence.

Strengths and challenges with RFSL's work with transgender health and rights

Through our direct contact with many within the target group, we get a broad picture of what needs exist. We take this with us into i.a. meetings with decision makers. Transformering is an established and trusted operation that maintains good cooperation with other organizations. Dialogue also takes place with parts of the gender-affirming care, which ensures up-to-date knowledge. An example of when it works best is when, via contact with the target group, we get to share experiences regarding the long waiting times in care and can describe these experiences in dialogue with care and decision makers. RFSL functions as an important link between decision-makers and those affected by the care.

A major challenge is that the human rights and value of trans people are questioned, both nationally and internationally, in the public debate by various debaters, which makes the promotion of mental health among trans people difficult and requires resources to respond to. Care for underage trans people has been particularly questioned and young trans people have been denied care solely on the basis of their age, for example through the greatly reduced access to hormone treatments that were introduced at Astrid Lindgren's children's hospital in Stockholm, which then became the practice that is now recommended for the whole of Sweden.

” A major challenge is that the human rights and value of trans people are questioned, both nationally and internationally, in the public debate by various debaters, which makes the promotion of mental health among trans people difficult and requires resources to respond to.

situation linked to being trans. It can be about the need to reflect on what is right for you, difficulties around breaking norms, dealing with transphobia, prejudice and minority stress, dealing with long waits for gender-affirming care as well as relatives' and professionals' questions about trans and how they can constitute a support. We see a great demand for meeting places and discussion forums to meet others to share

There is no clear body in society in general to turn to with these questions. Many who seek support find themselves groping in a void where they are often referred elsewhere because the knowledge is not available. Having access to this type of information and counselling promotes the mental health of the target group and is suicide preventative.

RFSL SUPPORT SERVICE

RFSL Support Service, which has existed since 1998, offers people who have been victims of hate crimes, honour-related violence, violence in close relationships and sexual violence support calls and practical support from the services counsellors. The support that can be offered is:

- single crisis talks or several processing talks,
- information about rights,
- contact with care and authorities,
- support when reporting to the police and in legal proceedings, and
- protected housing.

Relatives of vulnerable LGBTQI people are also offered support. The support takes place via telephone, e-mail, video calls and/or physical visits. The most common reason for contact with the organization is violence in a close relationship (which also includes honour-related violence) and the second most common is hate crimes.

RFSL Support Service also acts as a national knowledge centre. This is by strengthening the competence and knowledge about LGBTQI people exposed to violence at both authorities and non-profit actors. In this work, training courses are offered for e.g. the social services and the non-profit sector. The support service also provides support and information to RFSL's branches. Certain advocacy work is also carried out towards politicians and

authorities in the area of LGBTQI people's exposure to violence.

The financing is partly through a state grant of 3.4 million, which is distributed by the National Board of Health and Welfare, and partly through a grant of 0.85 million from the Trust Fund for Victims, which is distributed by the Compensation Board for Victims of Crime. The grant from the National Board of Health and Welfare was higher in 2022 than in previous years, which was a temporary grant increase. The support service has been staffed by three counsellors and by a part-time team leader with coordinating responsibility.

Needs of the community

LGBTQI people run a greater risk of being exposed to threats and violence and have

greater mental ill-health than the general population. Many LGBTQI people have low trust in society's help agencies when exposed to violence, and heteronormative beliefs about violence in close relationships make it difficult to get appropriate support. Knowledge of LGBTQI people's exposure to violence and the specific needs that exist is low among the operations that offer support in the event of exposure to violence. RFSL Support Service is needed both to offer support to those who need it and to contribute to increased knowledge about violence within the group LGBTQI people.

Strengths and challenges with RFSL's work with victims of violence

Through extensive specific knowledge in the area of LGBTQI victims of violence, our counsellors can support people in an individually tailored way. RFSL support service has a unique expertise in the double vulnerability of both belonging to the LGBTQI group and being exposed to violence. The service is perceived as a safe place, away from hetero- and cis-normativity. Counselling can be given in English, Spanish and Arabic, or through an interpreter if needed. One challenge is that the financing of the operation is not permanent, but project funds need to be applied for each year for one year at a time. There are also limited resources to uphold a good knowledge of the support service's operation within the LGBTQI community.



RFSL support service has produced the text *Stöd vid hatbrott - fokus på hbtqi*, which comprises 20 years unique experience in the area.

RESULTS IN 2022

- › 204 individuals received various forms of support.
- › In 20 individual client cases, the Support Service acted as advisor to other professionals regarding their clients.
- › The document *Stöd vid hatbrott- fokus på hbtqi* was produced, which primarily addresses professionals and wants to contribute to an increased understanding of hate crimes and how being victimized affects people. It contains i.a. section on who is victimized by hate crimes, consequences of hate crimes and how you can provide support.
- › A collaboration was carried out with the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm in the form of a series of webinars on the theme "Queering the city". The focus area was on urban planning and safety in the city's various environments for LGBTQI people. The collaboration led to new reflections on how our urban environment can be strengthened to counteract perceived vulnerability.

SENIOR WORK



Senior issues are, according to a decision at RFSL's last congress, a priority area for RFSL. This means that RFSL has made a commitment to work actively to improve the situation of older LGBTQ people.

At national level, there is a member network for senior issues and within six branches there are active senior groups. There is also a senior team with representatives from the various senior groups within the RFSL. The team actively participates in organizing activities and in information efforts for the organisation's older members. The senior team has had eleven meetings in 2022. Furthermore, there is an active collaboration with external actors and experts in the field of older LGBTQ people's conditions. Financing of senior work has taken place through a project grant from the National Board of Health and Welfare, which in 2022 amounted to SEK 700,000.

Work carried out during 2022

The senior project that was started in 2019 received continued funding in 2022 from the National Board of Health and Welfare. The purpose of the project has been to engage more seniors within RFSL and to make

the experiences of LGBTQI seniors visible. The project has, among other things, enabled work to create more meeting places for older members both locally and nationally.

Two physical meetings for LGBTQI seniors were held during the year, one in Örebro and one in Gothenburg. Four digital meetings were also held. An issue of the newspaper Seniorbladet was sent out to approximately 1,200 members who are 60 years of age or older. Furthermore, there is the Facebook group RFSL Senior, with approximately 100 members, which functions as a platform for sharing information relevant to senior activities and also as a forum for social exchange between members. In the Pride Parade during this year's Stockholm Pride, RFSL rented a cab that drove two of our oldest members through the entire parade.

In 2022, extra focus has been on getting an increased representation of older trans people in the organisation. Representatives

from the trans organization FPES, who are seniors themselves, have participated in the design of this year's issue of the newspaper Seniorbladet, which had a trans theme. These representatives were also present at the physical senior meeting that took place in Örebro and they have participated in the meetings with the senior team. The purpose of this was to create a bridge between RFSL Senior and FPES, as the presence of trans people within RFSL's senior operation has been low.

Furthermore, a collaborative meeting with the pensioner organizations SPF and SKPF has been held and RFSL has participated in a reference group for a research project on the elderly at Södertörn University. RFSL's senior work also functions as a resource for the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency in their work to map the conditions of older LGBTQI people. Four meetings have been held with the project managers in

RESULTS IN 2022

- › The newspaper Seniorbladet , with the theme of being older and trans, went out to approximately 1,200 members who are 60 years of age or older. In a reader survey for the newspaper, 74 percent responded that the newspaper had given them a sense of increased presence from RFSL compared to before.
- › 83 percent of the participants in the senior meeting in Örebro felt that the meeting had greatly contributed to an increased sense of community with other LGBTQI people.

charge, where RFSL has conveyed views and shared knowledge about the target group's needs and the perspectives that RFSL considers important.

The needs of the community

The senior work responds to older LGBTQI people's need for community with other LGBTQI people and the need for increased participation among older members within RFSL. There is a need for RFSL to take up a position and be active in issues relating to the conditions of older LGBTQI people, and for these issues to be made visible in society in general and within elderly care in particular.

There is a particular vulnerability to involuntary loneliness among LGBTQI people over 60, compared to the national average in the age group. Contributing factors are that you are not open about your sexual orientation or gender identity and that you do not have much contact with other

LGBTQI people. The work to counteract involuntary loneliness among older LGBTQI people therefore includes creating opportunities for and facilitating contact with other LGBTQI people and creating an experience of presence from RFSL in the group. This is done through for the target group adapted and directed activities at local and national level. Existing research shows that older LGBTQI people often carry a concern about aging and a possible increased need for care. Such anxiety is common among most elderly people, but for the LGBTQI group there is an extra vulnerability because they worry about how they will be treated and whether they will dare and be able to be open. This concern is partly due to previous negative experiences from the encounter with care, but also to the fact that LGBTQI people in this generation have lived in a time when oppression against LGBTQI people was institutionalized.

Strengths and challenges with RFSL's senior work

That we collaborate and work anchored both internally and externally is one of the most important success factors for senior work. Through the senior team and the regular meetings, we have built a structure that enables us to keep up to date on each other's work and also anchor external processes that are relevant for everyone involved in the issues to know. It also means that all work that takes place at the association level is well anchored locally and thus with the target group. The major challenge in 2022 was that the National Board of Health and Welfare's decision on continued subsidy funds came late in the year, which meant that the project activities were in practice carried out for only five months.



Photo: Amanda Ekström/Tuggmotstånd

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Family affairs are, as decided at RFSL's last congress, a particularly prioritised area in RFSL's work. An overarching goal is that there should never be unreasonable obstacles in legislation, or practice, that make it impossible for LGBTQI people to form a family in the way they want or to live safely in the families they have chosen.

Children who grow up with LGBTQI parents must have the same security, the same opportunities and be met with the same respect as other children, regardless of how they came to be. Therefore, among other things, the parental code needs to be simplified, equal and gender neutral, in order for it to represent different family constellations. Among other family affairs that RFSL works on, mention can be made of the possibility for children to have more than two legal guardians and legal parents and that legislation should be introduced that regulates how parentage and citizenship is determined for children born after a host pregnancy abroad.

Work carried out during 2022

Until June 30, the *Rainbow Families in Waiting* project was ongoing. The project, which was financed by Allmänna Arvsfonden, was initially for three years, but was extended by six months. The overall goal of the project has been strengthening the position of children in rainbow families. This was done through activities for LGBTQI people who were expecting a child or

were new parents aimed at strengthening them in their parenthood. An evaluation of all parent groups was carried out between May and June 2022. It was answered by 78 people and showed that those who participated in our parent groups on average (on a scale between 1-5) gave a rating of 4.0 when they answered the question: "To what extent has the parenting group made you feel stronger and more secure in your parenting"?

During the last six months of the project:

- › Seven films were launched: a film aimed at gay fathers, a film entitled *Förälder bortom genetiken*, a film on breastfeeding and feeding children together, a film on how to think in the relationship between the adults to avoid conflicts, a film about desire and sex during pregnancy and as new parents, and two films aimed at professionals on how to support breastfeeding and how to make your own feeding set.
- › Rainbow Family Day on May 6 was observed in several places, including Malmö, Kristianstad, Halmstad, Gothenburg, Umeå, Stockholm, Sundsvall and

Borås. A total of 275 people participated in these celebrations. Colouring books were sent out to these locations to be distributed to children who participated in the celebration.

- › Meetings and presentations were held about, for example, multiple parenthood, desire and sex during pregnancy and as new parents and about facing society as a rainbow family.
- › The Västra Götaland region, inspired by our parental preparation groups, prepared the start-up of its own digital midwife-led parental groups for LGBTQI people in the region. Prior to this, the project held a review of the set-up of our parental groups and a lecture for the groups on, among other things, rainbow families path to becoming a family, minority stress and breastfeeding/feeding.

In 2022, RFSL continued to hold a dialogue with a government investigation which, among other things, investigated how the Parental Code can be simplified to become more inclusive and gender neutral and whether the scope to terminate a parentage should be limited. In June, the

RESULTS IN 2022

- › The films produced as part of the Rainbow Families in Waiting project had 1.4 million views during the year, of which the film about breastfeeding accounted for the most views.
- › The knowledge support Hbtq-kompetens - för dig som möter blivande och nyblivna föräldrar has during 2022 been distributed and sent out to individual care providers and to midwives' clinics and maternity clinics in 1,150 copies. In the material, healthcare personnel receive information about the conditions LGBTQI people have for starting a family and what special needs they have.
- › In June, the parliament voted yes to proposals from the government on new rules on parenting in international situations for women in same-sex relationships. The rules mean that a woman who has not given birth to a child and who is or has been married to the person who gave birth must automatically be considered the child's parent in Sweden. In the first place, this applies if the woman is considered to be the legal parent in the country where the child was born. The new rules, which RFSL has been working for for several years, correspond to what applies to paternity in international situations.

investigation presented its comprehensive report *Alla tiders föräldraskap – ett stärkt skydd för barns familjeliv* (SOU 2022:38). RFSL also had continued contact with several members of the parliament's Civil Affairs Committee, especially before the parliament's vote in June on new rules on parenting in international situations.

Needs of the community

The desire to become a parent can be somewhat more difficult for LGBTQI people to realize. The paths to parenthood can look different, e.g. depending on whether you yourself have the opportunity to get pregnant. Family law is still not adapted to the needs of LGBTQI people and the norms of parenting that exist in society can seem excluding to LGBTQI people. There is a great need for information about practical approaches and what legal rights you have to become a parent. LGBTQI people have, on average, a lower level of trust in healthcare than the general population, and for many the contact with pregnancy care is the first long-term contact with healthcare. Many feel a need to be able to reflect and share

experiences with others who similarly break society's norms around family. Non-gestational and non-genetic parents may have a particularly strong need to connect with other non-gestational and/or non-genetic parents to share experiences and challenges. We have also seen that it is of great importance to find out more about minority stress and how it affects pregnancy and thoughts before childbirth.

Strengths and challenges in RFSL's work with family affairs

Within RFSL, there is a great deal of knowledge about family affairs and how family legislation works for LGBTQI people, and we have also collected that information at rfsl.se. We have also been able to reach a large proportion of rainbow families with our film productions and seminars. There is a solid contact network in these issues between RFSL and decision-makers, other organisations, colleges/universities and trade unions in order to be able to reach a wider audience and influence on several levels.

A significant challenge is that the family legislation in Sweden is far from adapted to

the needs of LGBTQI people and in many cases produces consequences that are perceived as both difficult and discriminatory for people who wish to become parents or are parents. The fact that the legislation is also complicated calls for clear and educational communication about how the legislation works and what challenges it contributes to. A concrete challenge has been to try to reach out broadly to the target group regarding how the presumption of parentage that was introduced on January 1, 2022 works, with cancellation rules for those who have had children after home insemination or treatment at a clinic abroad with a completely anonymous donor. Another challenge is that access to assisted reproduction, which is a common route to parenthood for LGBTQI people, looks different in different parts of the country. Creating an overview of how the regions' different rules and queue times differ is resource-intensive.

HIV & STI PREVENTION

RFSL's HIV and STI preventive work is part of the work for the health of LGBTQI people. During 2022, the work has been based on four different sub-goals:

- Strengthen RFSL's branches in long-term and stable HIV and STI preventive work.
- Strengthen the conditions among men who have sex with men, transgender people and newly arrived LGBTQI people to have safer sex and to test themselves for HIV/STIs.
- Carry out advocacy work around sexual health.
- Be a knowledge resource for other organisations, authorities and international actors.

The work is financed through an action grant from the Public Health Agency, which in 2022 totalled SEK 8.4 million, of which 2.6 million was made up of an additional action grant that was distributed during the second half of 2022.

Nine of RFSL's branches, as well as RFSL Rådgivningen Skåne, also carried out HIV and STI prevention during 2022 with the help of funds from the Public Health Agency. RFSL nationally acts as a support resource for the branches in their HIV prevention.

Thanks to a legacy, in 2022, as in the year before, RFSL has been able to develop activities that aim to, by improving knowledge and countering stigmatization, make life more bearable for gay men living with HIV. The project has worked to increase knowledge within RFSL about living with HIV and has collaborated with patient organisations, such as Posithiva Gruppen, to strengthen and provide support at group and/or individual level. In 2022, Posithiva

Gruppen received funds from RFSL from this legacy to work with social activities, education and skills development.

RFSL's HIV and STI preventive work includes:

- › Trainings and workshops for branch employees, etc.
- › Campaigns that inform about HIV and STIs and strive to counteract the prevailing stigma around HIV.
- › Interactions around HIV, STIs and safer sex: mainly in the form of the Sexperterna Chatt, which is accessed online.

Work carried out during 2022

- › RFSL and RFSL Ungdom conducted an extensive survey among men who have sex with men. The purpose was to collect knowledge in order to then develop and strengthen the work to improve sexual health among men who have sex with men. The survey was distributed both

digitally and physically. A total of 1,984 people responded. The three interventions that, according to the survey responses, are most in demand are:

- distribution of free home tests for sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea,
 - distribution of free home tests for HIV, and
 - distribution of condoms and lubricants in bars, clubs and cruising areas frequented by men who have sex with men.
- › Together with the Posithiva Gruppen, RFSL arranged (on 10 and 11 November) the conference *MSM and HIV - a conference on attitudes, prevention and communication* with a total of 80 participants (of which 25 participated digitally). The conference covered topics such as PrEP, living with HIV in the gay community and the fact that treated HIV not being transmitted.





- › To draw attention to the fact that in 2022 it was 40 years since the first AIDS diagnosis was made in Sweden, the documentary film *Stockholm, 1982* was produced in collaboration with RFSL Ungdom and the production company Sic Film. In the film, the stories of three people are told about what it was like to grow up, come out and live during the first years of the AIDS epidemic in Sweden.
- › Rapid testing for HIV and syphilis to the target groups men who have sex with men, transgender people and newly arrived LGBTQI people has been offered on various occasions in Gävle, Linköping, Luleå and Uppsala. All visitors have also been offered free home tests for, among other things, chlamydia and gonorrhoea. These efforts have increased the availability of testing done through RFSL, which has now also taken place in locations where branches do not entirely carry out testing themselves.

RESULTS IN 2022

- › Sexperterna Chatt had 1,719 contacts with the target groups men who have sex with men and trans people. This was an increase from 1,334 contacts the year before.
- › During the year, 414 people have subscribed to RFSL's testing reminder. The testing reminder is aimed at men who have sex with men and transgender people and means that you receive an SMS reminder when it's time to go and get tested for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.
- › In the state's budget for 2023, an extra 50 million was set aside for HIV prevention. This is the second year in a row that the grant has been increased, which is something that RFSL advocated. One of the parliament's motions, from the Moderates, who previously raised the issue, has referred to RFSL's impact analysis from 2020 on the negative consequences of the reform that took place in 2017 of the state funding for HIV prevention.

The needs of the community

RFSL's HIV prevention work is part of the national strategy against HIV/AIDS and certain other infectious diseases. RFSL's HIV prevention work targets some of the groups identified in the strategy as particularly vulnerable to HIV, including men who have sex with men, transgender people and new arrivals. Concretely, the work involves reducing the incidence of HIV/STIs among LGBTQI people, increasing knowledge about HIV/STIs and countering stigma around HIV.

Strengths and challenges with RFSL's HIV and STI prevention

RFSL's HIV and STI prevention is based on evidence-based methods. Based on many years of experience, there is solid knowledge about what type of preventive work actually works. Currently, the HIV and STI preventive work is broad and is aimed at the entire LGBTQI group with a particular focus

on men who have sex with men, transgender people and newly arrived LGBTQI people. RFSL's closeness to and knowledge of our target groups contributes to great confidence in our HIV and STI preventive work. RFSL's HIV and STI prevention is also strengthened by the fact that several branches carry out this work around the country.

During the year, several RFSL branches, including RFSL Rådgivningen Skåne, were affected by reduced action grants which meant cuts to their HIV and STI prevention. There was no funding from the Public Health Agency for the activities in RFSL's HIV and STI prevention which meant strengthening the branches and supporting them in their work with applications and reports. This made parts of the operation more difficult to plan, although it became clearer after dialogue with the Public Health Agency how it could be structured.

TRAINING

RFSL Utbildning is Sweden's largest player when it comes to offering training and process management on LGBTQI and inclusion. Training takes place in the form of LGBTQI certifications, online courses, lectures and workshops.

Since its inception (2008), RFSL Utbildning has LGBTQI-certified nearly 600 businesses around the country. The focus of all educations is the living conditions of LGBTQI people, norms linked to gender and sexuality, and what an LGBTQI-competent treatment means. The training is based on a norm-critical and intersectional perspective and we work with all grounds of discrimination. The trainings are mostly process-oriented and aim to build or strengthen the systematic work against discrimination.

RFSL Utbildning also offers consulting services for companies and organizations that want inspiration, guidance and practical tools in their inclusion work. RFSL Utbildning has a strong focus on educa-

tional development and quality assurance. This is to always have training that is at the forefront and meets our customers' needs. During 2022, RFSL Utbildning has, among other things, developed a new online training and launched a new model for LGBTQI certifications that is more flexible and adaptive to businesses. In addition to this, a range of different consultancy services have also been launched within practical change work.

The educational activities are conducted by RFSL Utbildning AB, which is wholly owned by RFSL. Since 2021, **Karl Yves Vallin** is CEO of the company. Surpluses that arise can be used to finance other activities within RFSL.

The need for trainings

Through our training and tools, we create a long-term change for LGBTQ people in society and in working life. We do this by giving our customers knowledge and tools to develop strategies to create a safe work environment and good treatment of LGBTQI people. The more businesses that certify and educate themselves, the closer we get to a society characterized by respect for the equal value of people, where all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, should have equal rights and obligations and equal opportunities to live and work.

The businesses that RFSL Utbildning educates need increased knowledge and

RESULTS IN 2022

- › 34 new businesses became LGBTQI-certified and 80 businesses were recertified. 67 other training efforts were carried out. Parts of the staff at 1177.se and operations within Ängelholm municipality were some of those who were certified during the year. 6 of the 34 businesses were within the private business sector.
- › A new online course was launched. RFSL Utbildning's three existing online courses in basic LGBTQI knowledge were supplemented with the online course "Inte på vår arbetsplats", which goes through what harassment and sexual harassment are, how the anti-discrimination act and the law on occupational health work and how you can work preventatively.
- › On RFSL Utbildning's main platform on social media, LinkedIn, the number of followers increased by 35 percent, from 3,400 to 4,605 people. The posts that were made were viewed a total of 347,649 times. RFSL Utbildning's own website rfslutbildning.se had 23,000 unique visitors. Efforts have been made to rank better on search engines and to be dynamic in the use of the website in terms of campaigns and the information that is disseminated.
- › The year's result for RFSL Utbildning AB was a surplus of SEK 212,272.

RFSL's trainer Pom Sandhagen during a training session.



practical tools to be able to safely provide a competent and norm-conscious treatment of everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. There is also a need for strategies to create an inclusive and visible work environment where all employees can participate and develop on equal terms. A workplace that is certified by RFSL gets the tools to be able to work systematically with equal treatment, reception and human rights. It happens i.a. by allowing the business to investigate norms and risks but also opportunities in its own operation and that it receives support in drawing up a plan with concrete efforts for the work going forward. RFSL's trainings, methods and tools

create a long-term change for LGBTQI people in society and in working life.

Strengths and challenges with RFSL's educational activities

RFSL Utbildning contributes to creating a more inclusive society and better health and living conditions for LGBTQI people and others.

A decisive strength in the business is the employees' at the same time broad and expert competence in LGBTQI, anti-discrimination, communication, method development, pedagogy and change work. This, together with continuous and strategic work with educational development, means that the trainings offered are up-

dated, current and maintain a high quality. Another strength is that the business has a well-functioning management team, led by a CEO, with defined areas of responsibility, as well as an extended sales team.

The big challenge in 2022 has been to fulfil the set budget for both incomes and expenditures. A budget audit was carried out in August when the income that had been budgeted was not fully fulfilled. The year also involved some staff turnover, which had effects on the scheduling of training courses and marketing.

