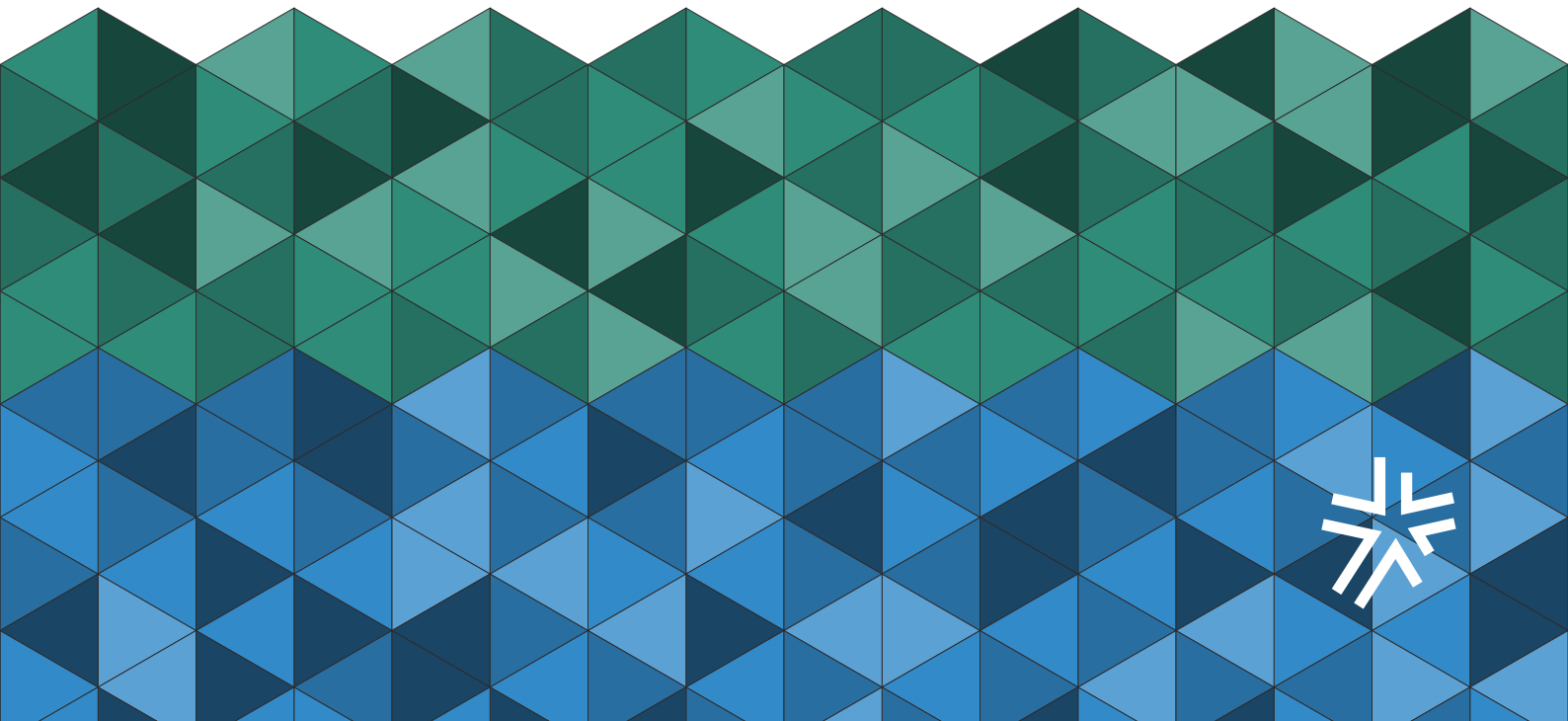


FROM INCEPTION TO FUTURE

A History of GATE





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About GATE

GATE is an international advocacy organization working towards justice and equality for trans and gender diverse communities. Rooted in our movements, we work collaboratively with strategic partners at the global level to provide knowledge, resources, and access to international institutions and processes. Our vision is a world free from human rights violations based on gender identity and gender expression. Our strategy is to transform the landscape of global advocacy, knowledge creation, and resource distribution through critical inclusion of trans and gender diverse movements at all levels of political, legal, and socio-economic processes. Find out more about GATE by visiting gate.ngo

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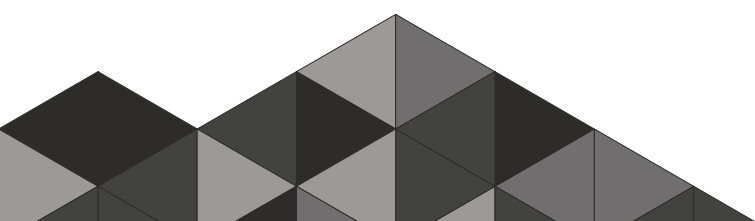
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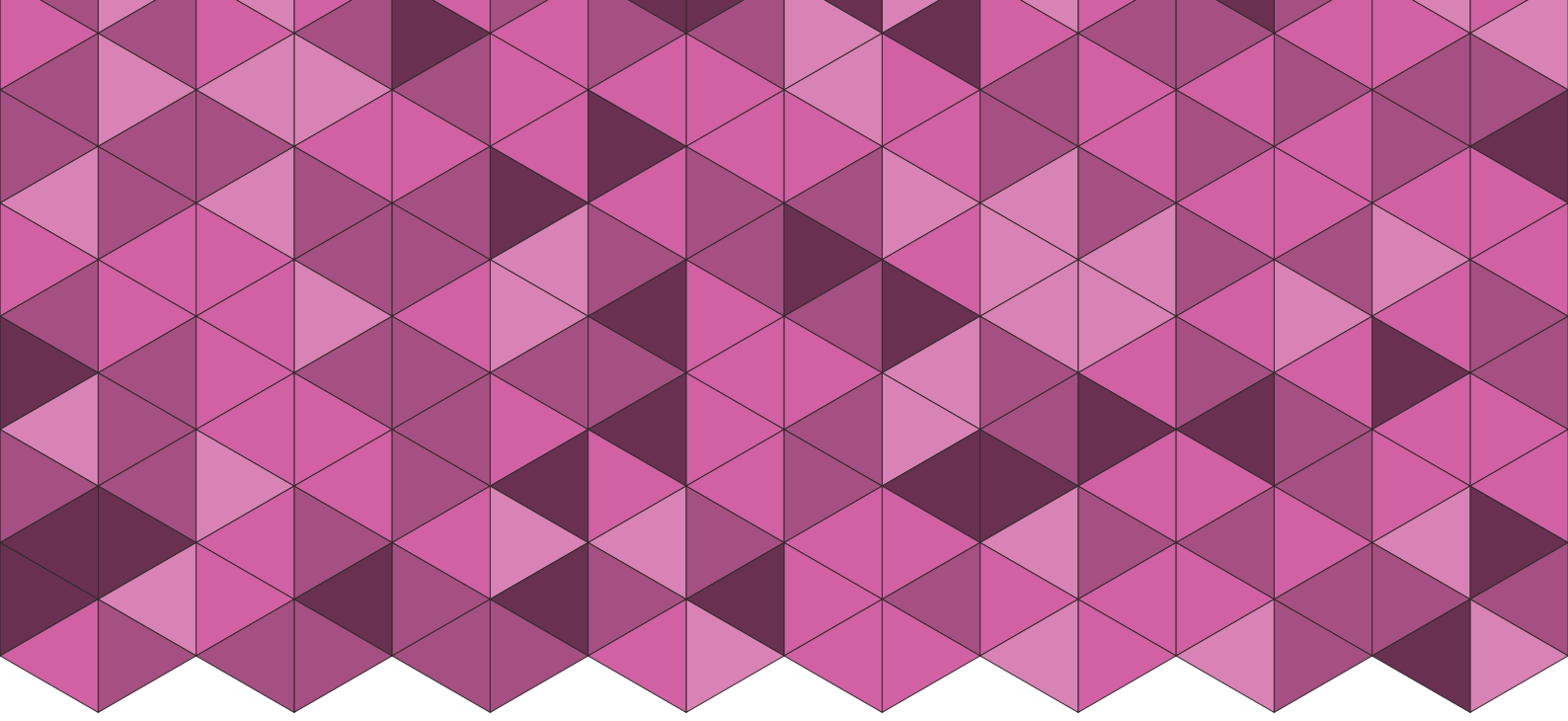


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2009-2011

INCEPTION

In 2009, the world appeared to become increasingly aware of the challenges faced by LGBTI people globally. Numerous reports, papers, and articles were advocating for the decriminalization of homosexuality, the repeal of 'sodomy laws,' the legalization of same-sex marriage and adoption rights, and increased funding to support LGBTI movements. Occasionally, there were intermittent references to trans and gender diverse people. The prevailing belief was that LGBTI liberation should follow a theory of change that prioritized securing rights related to sexual orientation first. It was assumed that once these rights were achieved, the benefits would naturally extend to address gender identity issues. Meanwhile, mainstream human rights organizations, donors, and official institutions often regarded gender identity-related issues as too specific and complex to warrant focused attention.

At that time, trans and gender diverse communities were facing severe challenges. Violence against trans and gender diverse people, particularly trans women of color, had reached epidemic proportions in several countries, with the media frequently amplifying that violence. Racial and socio-economic injustice were forcing many trans and gender diverse people to migrate and endure extreme living conditions.

Additionally, only a few countries allowed legal recognition of trans and gender diverse people's gender identities, and those that did imposed unacceptable requirements, such as mandatory psychiatric evaluations, sterilization, surgeries, therapy, real-life tests, and divorce. These requirements were rooted in the classification of trans and gender diverse people as mentally disordered and reflected the pervasive influence of pathologization in social and institutional contexts.

In the health sphere, trans women were gaining recognition as a key population in the HIV response, although they were most often categorized under 'men who have sex with men' (MSM) and (mis)represented by (cis) gay organizations. The existence of trans men was completely overlooked. Resources intended for LGBTI movements rarely reached trans and gender diverse organizations, and there was a notable absence of trans and gender diverse representation in international decision-making processes. Furthermore, the number of paid trans and gender diverse activists was extremely low across all areas of work.

Although the [Yogyakarta Principles](#) had introduced 'gender identity' into the human rights framework, human rights violations based on gender identity were inadequately addressed, and issues concerning trans and gender diverse people were often perceived as minority concerns within the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) framework. There was a lack of trans and gender diverse leadership in mainstream LGBTI organizations, networks, and initiatives, and encountering trans and gender diverse representation within the staff of these organizations was exceedingly rare.

For years, many trans and gender diverse activists had been expressing their frustration with this situation, voicing it in conversations across the world. For quite some time, and from their respective locations in The Netherlands and Argentina, Justus Eisfeld and Mauro Cabral Grinspan had been engaging in these discussions, primarily through email. Both had extensive experience in national and regional organizing and had actively engaged with international developments. They both shared the same sentiment, that the situation facing trans and gender diverse people was unjust.

The idea of creating GATE emerged as a response to that sense of injustice, guided by a radically different theory of change: improving the situation of trans and gender diverse people worldwide required strengthening the political and financial capacity of their movements to determine and implement their own strategies. GATE was also conceived as a means to create paid jobs in international trans and gender diverse activism, addressing a gap that international LGB organizations were unwilling to invest in.

After meeting in person at events in Los Angeles, Paris, and Buenos Aires, the creation of GATE took place in just under a year, finalized in November/December 2009. Justus and Mauro became co-directors of the organization, with offices established in New York and Buenos Aires.

Moving forward after Barcelona

GATE began developing its initial work plan in early 2010, but this process was soon interrupted by news from Spain. An International Congress on Gender Identity and Human Rights (CONGENID) was being organized by Fundació Triàngulo, Federació Estatal de Lesbianes, Gais, Trans y Bisexuals (FELGTB), and Human Rights Watch. They invited GATE to host a pre-conference for trans and gender diverse activists prior to the Congress. After accepting the invitation, GATE spent the following five months focusing on reaching out to and involving trans and gender diverse activists from around the world, organizing the pre-conference program, managing logistics, and fundraising to support as many participants as possible.



Justus Eisfeld speaking at the CONGENID.
Barcelona, Spain, June 2010.
© Lukas Berredo

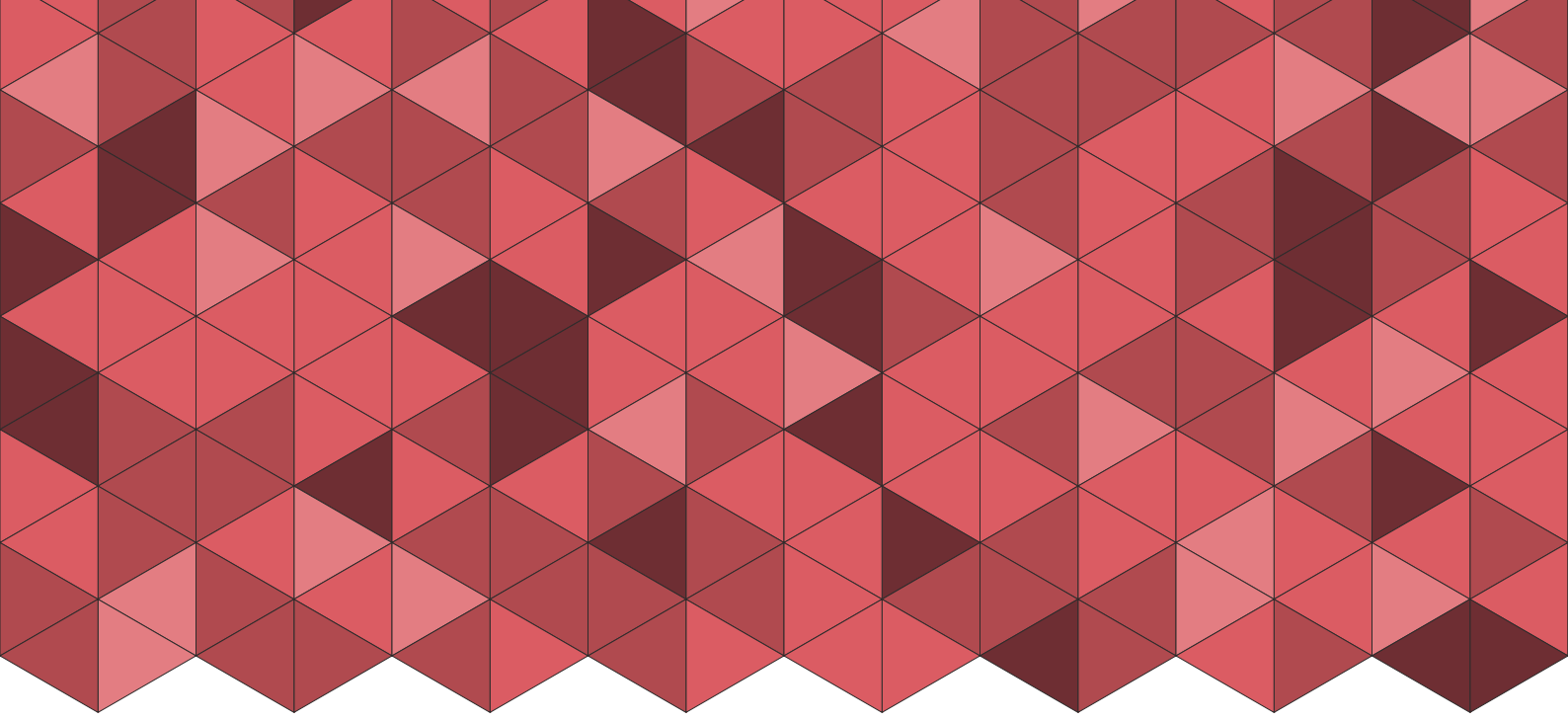
Between 3 and 6 June 2010, over 150 activists gathered in Barcelona for GATE's pre-conference, titled *Trans* Action = Trans* Rights*, marking the first international convening exclusively for trans and gender diverse activists. It was a historic movement, as activists from around the world came together to discuss their issues on their own terms. Unfortunately, the subsequent CONGENID did not meet the expectations of trans and gender diverse activists.

Under pressure from cisgender gay leaders to produce a joint declaration without adequate time for trust-building or discussion, and following a heated plenary that devolved into a shouting match, the program was canceled after the first day. The remainder of CONGENID saw participants engaging in open roundtable discussions.

The abrupt ending of CONGENID was a major setback to the newfound sense of unity fostered by the pre-conference. Although participants had expressed a desire to build a global network of trans and gender diverse activists, the failure of CONGENID delayed this ambition for years and complicated efforts to secure HIV funding in the aftermath.

In the months following GATE's pre-conference and CONGENID, it became evident to GATE's Co-Directors, Board, and donors that developing a successful work plan for GATE required learning from the events in Barcelona. In December 2010, just before the 25th International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA World) Conference in São Paulo, Brazil, GATE convened a group of trans and gender diverse activists from Argentina, Brazil, Botswana, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Uganda, and the United States. The purpose of this meeting was to gather their insights, analyses, and visions to inform GATE's first work plan.

The resulting document guided GATE's activities over the next five years. The 2010 work plan focused on two main areas: supporting movement building and advancing holistic gender recognition. This included several sub-issues such as increasing funding for trans and gender diverse movements globally, expanding meaningful inclusion in international processes, and depathologizing trans and gender diverse identities. The plan also outlined GATE's key strategies for change: advocacy, producing and disseminating critical knowledge, and supporting trans and gender diverse movements worldwide.



2011-2015

FOUNDATIONS

Guided by its work plan, GATE set about building its programmatic and institutional foundations over the next five years. During this period, Cori Zaccagnino and Karen Bennett joined the organization as administrative assistants in New York and Buenos Aires, respectively.

Resourcing trans and gender diverse movements

Years before GATE was established, trans and gender diverse activists from all regions shared a common concern: despite growing support for LGBTI organizations and key populations in the HIV response, trans and gender diverse movements had extremely limited access to funding. This widespread challenge was a key factor that motivated Justus and Mauro to create GATE. It was also a primary concern for GATE's Board Members and the trans and gender diverse activists that GATE connected with at various convenings during the early days.

Following the community guidance received in São Paulo, GATE developed a series of virtual and in-person meetings with donors already supporting or interested in providing support to trans and gender diverse movements. GATE met with donors

who were funding organizations focused on working with LGBTI people and key populations. The majority of the donors were operating under the assumption that funding organizations under these categories would adequately address trans-related issues. While some donors understood the need for targeted support for trans and gender diverse movements, others were unable to see how the lack of such targeted support was a significant problem. However, both groups agreed on a key issue: there was no reliable data to produce a solid analysis of trans and gender diverse access to funding.

As a result, GATE partnered with the American Jewish World Service (AJWS) to create a global report. A total of 340 activists participated in the research, the majority of whom were trans and gender diverse activists, with some intersex activists also contributing. The report, published in 2013, was titled [*The State of Trans* and Intersex Organizing*](#). As anticipated, the report revealed a deeply troubling lack of funding affecting trans, gender diverse, and intersex movements globally. It also validated activists' concerns about the glaring contradiction between the widespread efforts of trans and gender diverse organizing to address social and political challenges and the scarcity of funds available to support these efforts. This contradiction persisted despite donors' best intentions, who believed they were funding trans-related issues under LGBTI or MSM categories.

In the months after the report's publication, GATE participated in a series of meetings focused on exploring a fundamental question: how to increase the amount and accessibility of funding for trans and gender diverse groups? Since the start of his work at GATE, Justus had consistently shared his vision for a dedicated funding mechanism to support trans and gender diverse movements. When the data from *The State of Trans* and Intersex Organizing* report was released, this vision began to gain traction among both activists and donors. Following a challenging organizing process that involved multiple stakeholders, feasibility studies, and a combination of remote and in-person convenings, Justus' vision became a reality in 2015 with the creation of the International Trans Fund (ITF), a community-led funding mechanism with GATE participating in the Steering Committee.

Transforming perspectives on depathologization

At the time of GATE's creation, in the few countries where legal gender recognition was allowed, accessing it generally came with unacceptable requirements, such as a psychiatric diagnosis, sterilization, divorce, and other such inhumane preconditions. Efforts to reform these legal processes, which aimed to challenge these requirements and affirm self-determination, consistently stalled against the same obstacle: trans

and gender diverse people were classified as mentally disordered and subjected, by definition, to the legal administration of psycho-medical taxonomies.

Recognizing its significance, GATE decided to participate in the World Health Organization's (WHO) process to review and reform the tenth edition of the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD-10). Represented by Mauro, GATE joined the Stop Trans Pathologization Campaign in 2010. In November 2011, GATE organized an Expert Meeting with the WHO in The Hague to examine the validity of the diagnostic categories used to classify trans people in the ICD. The meeting produced two main outcomes: a report detailing the discussions and a preliminary proposal for trans depathologization called 'the starfish model,' as well as a collective agreement among trans and gender diverse experts and allies to support depathologization in the forthcoming ICD-11.

In May 2012, Argentina became the first country in the world to legally depathologize trans and gender diverse identities. Following this, GATE organized a second Expert Meeting in Buenos Aires, resulting in the creation of a new document titled [*Critique and Alternative Proposal to the "Gender Incongruence of Childhood" Category in ICD-11*](#), which was submitted to the WHO. Over the following years, GATE engaged in numerous international consultations, meetings, and trainings aimed at advancing advocacy efforts for the depathologization of trans and gender diverse identities.

Inclusion in the global HIV response

Between 2012 and 2017, GATE actively engaged with the international HIV response to address a multifaceted challenge: while trans and gender diverse people, particularly trans women, were disproportionately affected by HIV, they were often underrepresented or excluded from leadership roles in the responses. Additionally, funding specifically targeting trans and gender diverse communities was extremely scarce, and the exclusion of trans men was commonplace. This lack of representation not only hindered access to decision-making and funding but also impacted the design and implementation of programs aimed at addressing the needs of trans and gender diverse communities as a key population. Unlike other key populations, trans and gender diverse people did not receive funding to work on HIV issues globally, with GATE's efforts being primarily supported by LGBTI human rights donors.

From its inception, GATE's Co-Directors participated in both virtual and in-person meetings with trans and gender diverse activists working in the HIV field as well as with other key population groups. A working group on trans and gender diverse issues was established at the Global Forum on Men who have Sex with Men (MSMGF), which later

evolved into the International Reference Group on Trans People and HIV (IRGT). GATE co-chaired IRGT for two years and played a crucial role in facilitating trans and gender diverse engagement at major events such as the AIDS Conferences in Washington (2012) and Melbourne (2014), as well as at the Sex Workers' Festival in Kolkata (2012).

In 2013, in order to expand its capacity in this area, GATE hired Rena Janamnuaysook to provide specialized support for its work on HIV-related issues.

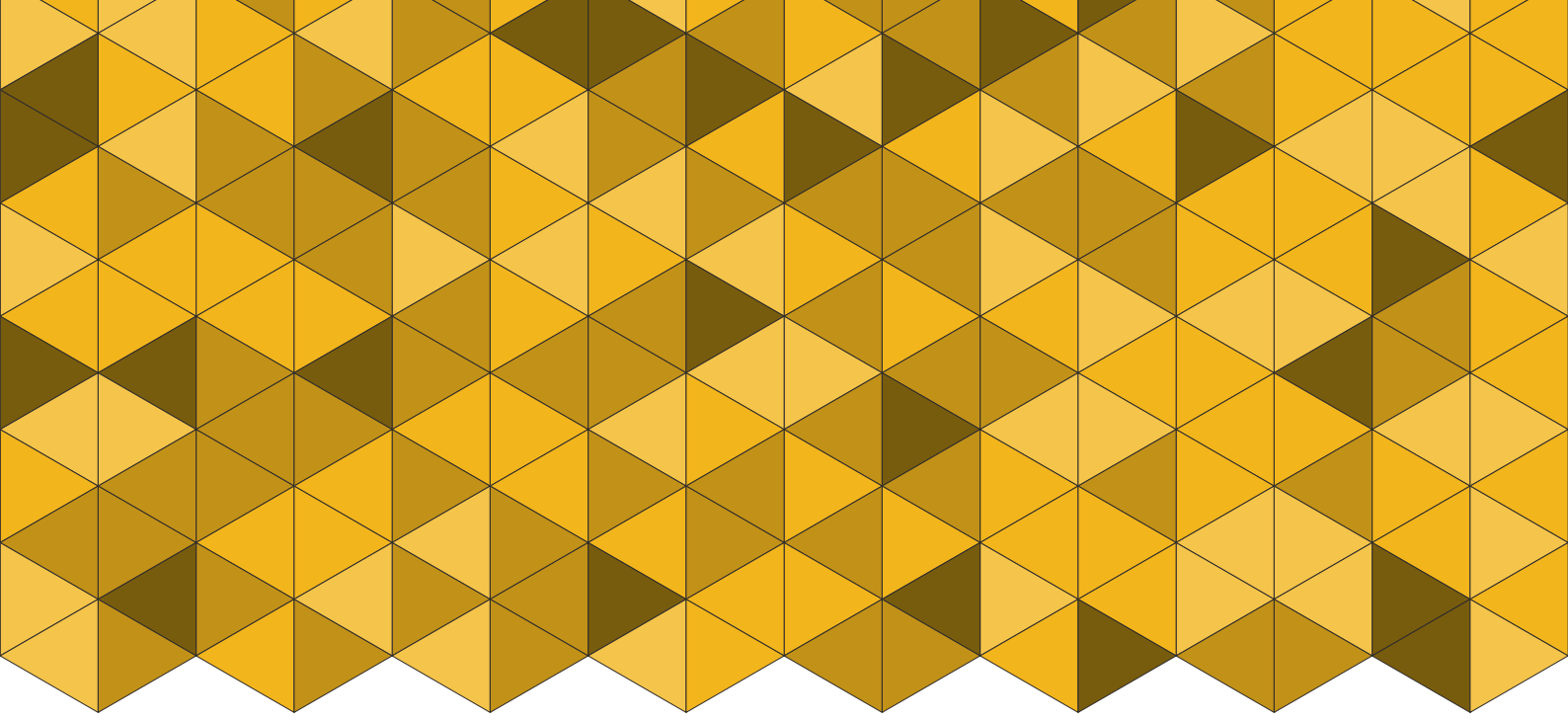
Strengthening intersex advocacy

Leveraging Mauro's expertise in intersex issues, GATE was instrumental in advancing intersex advocacy and fostering stronger collaborations and alliances between the trans and gender diverse, and intersex movements. Mauro participated in key events such as the first, second and third International Intersex Forums in Brussels (2011), Stockholm (2012), and Malta (2013), respectively. He also took part in the first Thematic Hearing on Intersex Issues at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in Washington, D.C., and the first Expert Meeting on Intersex issues organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

On behalf of GATE, Mauro served as Senior Advisor to the Intersex Human Rights Fund. Additionally, GATE provided expert advice on intersex issues to lawmakers in Malta and to the mandate of the United Nations Independent Expert on Torture.

Crafting global alliances

During this period, GATE emerged as a key player in global LGBTI issues, actively participating in ILGA World Conferences and ARC International Dialogues. GATE's representatives also attended regional conferences, numerous consultations, strategic planning meetings, and various events organized by civil society organizations, donors, and United Nations agencies. These efforts significantly enhanced the visibility and recognition of trans and gender diverse issues, highlighting them as distinct concerns, though occasionally intersecting with those of LGB people. By 2015, the mere addition of a 'T' to 'LGB' was no longer considered acceptable, marking a shift from earlier practices by LGB organizations. GATE's work contributed to this growing awareness, ensuring that trans issues received the specific attention and advocacy they deserved.



2015-2017

LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

In 2015, GATE underwent its first leadership transition as Justus Einfeld stepped down from his role as Co-Director after six years of dedicated service. His departure followed a meticulously planned transition process that included extensive community consultations regarding GATE's present and future. The feedback collected was analyzed during a strategic planning meeting held in Bear Mountain, U.S., ensuring that the transition aligned with the organization's long-term goals and community needs.

While the community feedback largely affirmed GATE's existing work areas, it also revealed a need for both community-supported work areas and a focused institutional building process. To lead this effort, Masen Davis was appointed Co-Director shortly after the meeting in Bear Mountain. Masen took charge of developing a strategic roadmap aimed at strengthening existing programmatic areas, identifying new areas of work, and establishing a clear development pathway for GATE. This new work plan was crafted in alignment with GATE's values and principles, incorporating insights from the community consultation and collective discussions with over 40 activists from around the globe.

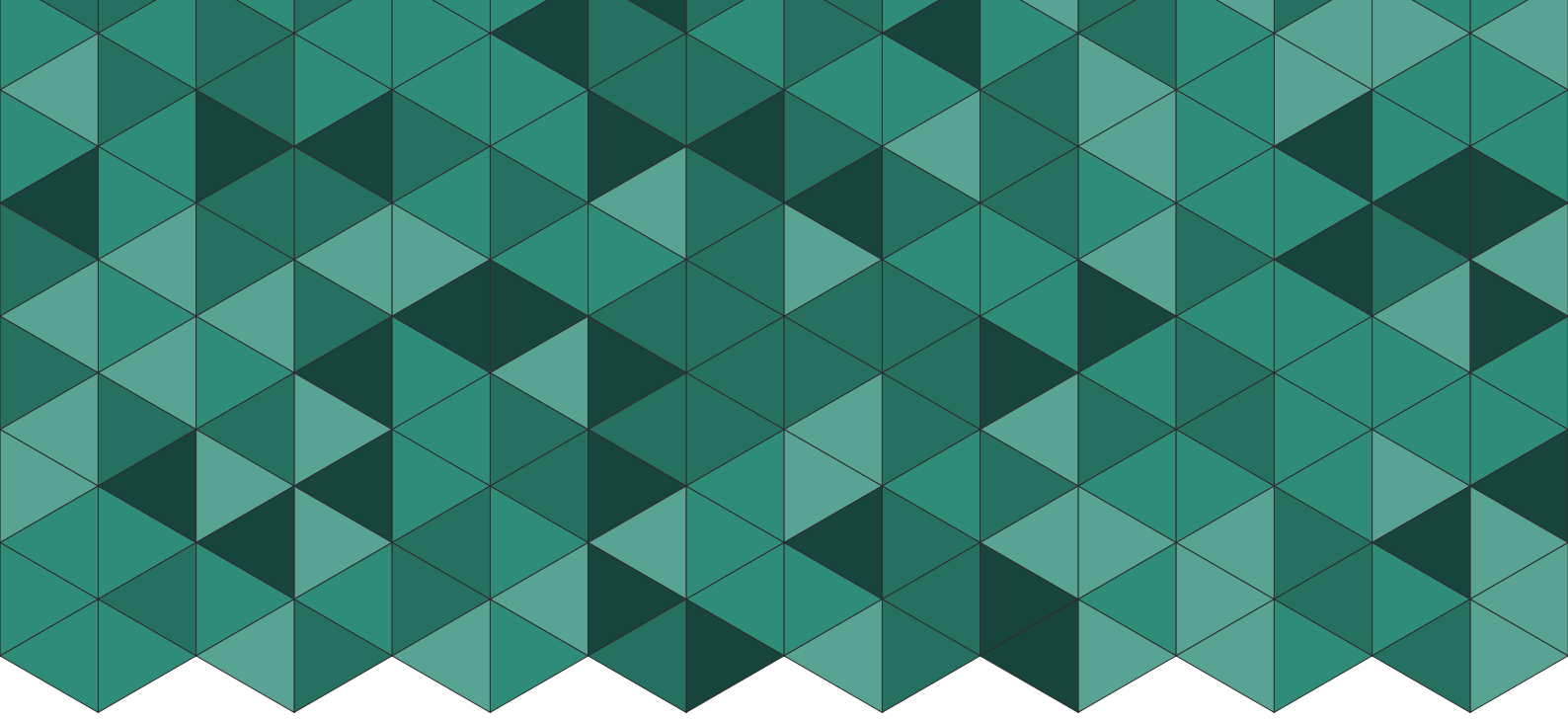


Mukasa, Masen Davis, Julia Ehrt, and Abhina Aher after announcing ITF's first call for grant applications, ILGA World Conference 2016. Bangkok, Thailand, December 2016.

© Lukas Berredo

Since its founding, GATE had faced challenges due to its dependence on fiscal sponsors. In 2016, the organization achieved independence, which bolstered its operative capacity. Key appointments included Cori Zaccagnino as Director of Finance and Operations, Abhina Aher to support GATE's HIV-related work, and Karen Bennett in communications.

In 2017, GATE experienced another leadership transition, when Masen Davis stepped down as Co-Director and Mauro Cabral Grinspan was appointed GATE's first Executive Director. Shortly thereafter, GATE expanded its leadership team by hiring Erika Castellanos as its first Director of Programs, marking a new chapter in the organization's growth and development.



2017-2022 **EXPANSION**

Operating for the first time as an independent entity and bolstered by increased funding, GATE experienced significant expansion between 2017 and 2022. A major aspect of this growth was the creation of dedicated roles, including a position for communications, led by Naomhán O'Connor, and another on intersex issues, led by Morgan Carpenter. These additions were crucial in broadening GATE's outreach and deepening its expertise in critical areas of work.

Building movement and resourcing

GATE continued its commitment to supporting movement building and resourcing by partnering with AJWS and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice (ASTRAEA) to produce a second edition of reports on funding realities. This collaboration resulted in the development of two pivotal reports: [*The State of Trans Organizing*](#) and [*The State of Intersex Organizing*](#). These reports aimed to provide crucial insights into the funding landscape and organizational needs of both trans and intersex movements, helping to better understand and address the challenges faced by these distinct communities.

Following the publication of these reports, GATE engaged in numerous in-person meetings with donor governments and multilateral agencies across Europe and the United States. This included strategic discussions, consultations, and evaluations with a diverse range of key stakeholders, including those focused on HIV, sexual and reproductive rights, women's and feminist issues, and those supporting trans, gender diverse, and intersex movements. Additionally, GATE participated in the Working Group on Donor Coordination at the Equal Rights Coalition.

Sara Gunther (Astraea), Mauro Cabral Grinspan (GATE), and Erin Howe (Strength in Numbers) presenting the research data from *The State of Intersex Organizing* and *The State of Trans Organizing*. November 2017.

© GPP



The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for trans, gender diverse, and intersex organizations globally. In response, GATE transitioned its workshops and trainings online, hosted virtual events to keep activists engaged in key processes, and provided financial support for internet access, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other basic needs. Over this critical period, GATE also facilitated access to funding by creating open-access training on grant proposal writing and assisting activists and organizations in securing emergency support. This proactive approach helped sustain the vital work of trans, gender diverse and intersex organizations during a time of unprecedented global crisis.

Advancing depathologization

GATE, alongside its partners and allies, continued its dedicated efforts to depathologize trans, gender diverse, and intersex identities. During this period, GATE coordinated and participated in multiple in-person and virtual meetings, workshops, and training sessions aimed at bolstering activists' capacity to engage in this critical process. Notably, GATE organized two significant seminars and led activist delegations at the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Conferences in Amsterdam (2016) and Buenos Aires (2018), bringing together over 50 trans, gender diverse, and intersex activists from across the globe.

In consultation with activists and experts working at the national, regional, and international levels, GATE sought to advance legal depathologization by publishing two influential reports authored by Sheherezade Kara: [*Gender is not an Illness*](#) (2017) and [*Depathologizing Gender Identity Through Law*](#) (2021). GATE also submitted a comprehensive proposal on intersex depathologization to the WHO and supported the publication of the article [*Intersex Variations, Human Rights, and the International Classification of Diseases*](#), authored by Morgan Carpenter, in Harvard's Health and Human Rights Journal.



Mauro Cabral at the WPATH Conference 2018. Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 2018.

© Naomhán O'Connor / GATE

2019 marked a significant victory in GATE's advocacy efforts when the World Health Assembly approved a new version of the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD-11). This eleventh edition no longer classified trans and gender diverse people as mentally disordered, an achievement comparable to the depathologization of homosexuality 29 years earlier in 1990. Although intersex people remained heavily pathologized, GATE's ongoing engagement with WHO opened new avenues for advancing intersex depathologization in the future.

Transforming global HIV response

During this period, GATE's role in the international HIV response was significantly strengthened, thanks in large part to Erika Castellanos' expertise in the field. Under her leadership, GATE became the only member of the Communities Delegations to the Board of the Global Fund representing trans and gender diverse communities and became a vital member of the International AIDS Conference's planning committee. GATE's expertise was frequently sought after by international agencies such as UNAIDS and WHO, as well as by HIV donors, organizations, networks representing key populations, and trans, gender diverse, and intersex communities.



Erika Castellanos giving a speech at the closing plenary of the International AIDS Conference 2018. Amsterdam, The Netherlands, July 2018.

© Naomhán O'Connor / GATE

In 2017, GATE secured its first three-year grant from the Global Fund's Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative (CRG-SI) to implement a capacity-building and advocacy mobilization project across Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Asia-Pacific regions. GATE also organized and participated in numerous in-person and virtual convenings, co-hosting Trans Networking Zones and satellite events at International AIDS Conferences.

In line with GATE's ongoing commitment to the inclusion of trans men in the international HIV response, GATE established a working group on Trans Men and HIV and appointed Max Appenroth as its first coordinator. GATE continued to empower activists by producing the [TRANSIT Smart Guide](#), tailored for a community-based audience of trans and gender diverse individuals and trans-led organizations, and by implementing comprehensive training on developing HIV National Strategic Plans.

GATE also contributed to expanding global understanding of trans and gender diverse issues through the development of an eLearning course for the Global Fund's Communities, Rights and Gender Department. GATE's expertise was further solidified when the WHO invited the organization to participate in its consultation to update the Consolidated Guidelines on HIV, Hepatitis, and STIs. As part of this engagement, GATE was tasked with producing a qualitative study on the [values and preferences of trans and gender diverse communities](#), underscoring the organization's growing influence in global HIV policy discussions.

Coordinating advocacy efforts at the UN

In 2017, after participating in a public consultation called by the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity (IE SOGI) in Geneva, GATE recognized the urgent need to increase trans and gender diverse visibility and engagement with the United Nations. This led to the co-organization of the first [UN Trans Advocacy Week](#) alongside the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTAN), ILGA World, Transgender Europe (TGEU), and the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights (RFSL). The initiative was replicated in 2018 and 2019, but due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was held virtually in 2020 and 2021. More than 60 activists from all over the world participated in these events, with many continuing to engage closely with UN processes.

GATE's engagement with UN Special Procedures expanded during this period, particularly through its work with the IE SOGI mandate, regularly contributing data and analysis on human rights issues affecting trans, gender diverse, and intersex communities. GATE also engaged with the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on

Health and Torture, contributing to their understanding of issues faced by these communities.

In a significant milestone, Morgan and Mauro were invited to join the drafting committee of the [Yogyakarta Principles Plus Ten](#) in 2017. Their involvement in this key document, which expanded the original *Yogyakarta Principles* to address emerging human rights issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, highlighted GATE's growing influence and expertise in international human rights advocacy.

Resisting anti-gender movements

During this period, trans and gender diverse communities faced an intense wave of transphobia that was strongly linked to anti-trans agendas emerging from various global contexts, including the Trump administration in the U.S. and legal reform processes in the United Kingdom and Spain. While gender identity laws based on self-determination had been successfully implemented in other countries since 2012, similar law proposals in these regions sparked massive backlash from anti-gender actors. These included not only traditional opponents but also new entities like government officials, politicians, digital platforms, and mainstream media outlets.

In response to these escalating challenges, GATE initiated strategic conversations with trans and gender diverse activists, organizations, networks, allies from other movements, and donors. Recognizing the need for informed and coordinated resistance, GATE commissioned several studies, including a [comprehensive report on the UK](#) and briefings that examined anti-gender and anti-trans developments in Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and the UK.

A significant step in addressing these challenges was taken in December 2021 when GATE co-organized a groundbreaking consultation. This event brought together activists, donors, and representatives from governments and United Nations institutions to discuss the impact of anti-gender movements and to strategize collective responses. This consultation marked a critical moment in building a united front against the global rise of transphobia and anti-gender ideology.

Advocating for intersex rights

GATE maintained a strong focus on intersex rights, engaging actively at both international and regional levels. Representing GATE, Mauro participated in the Intersex Forum in Amsterdam in 2015, an important gathering that brought together

intersex activists and allies from around the world to strategize on advancing intersex human rights.

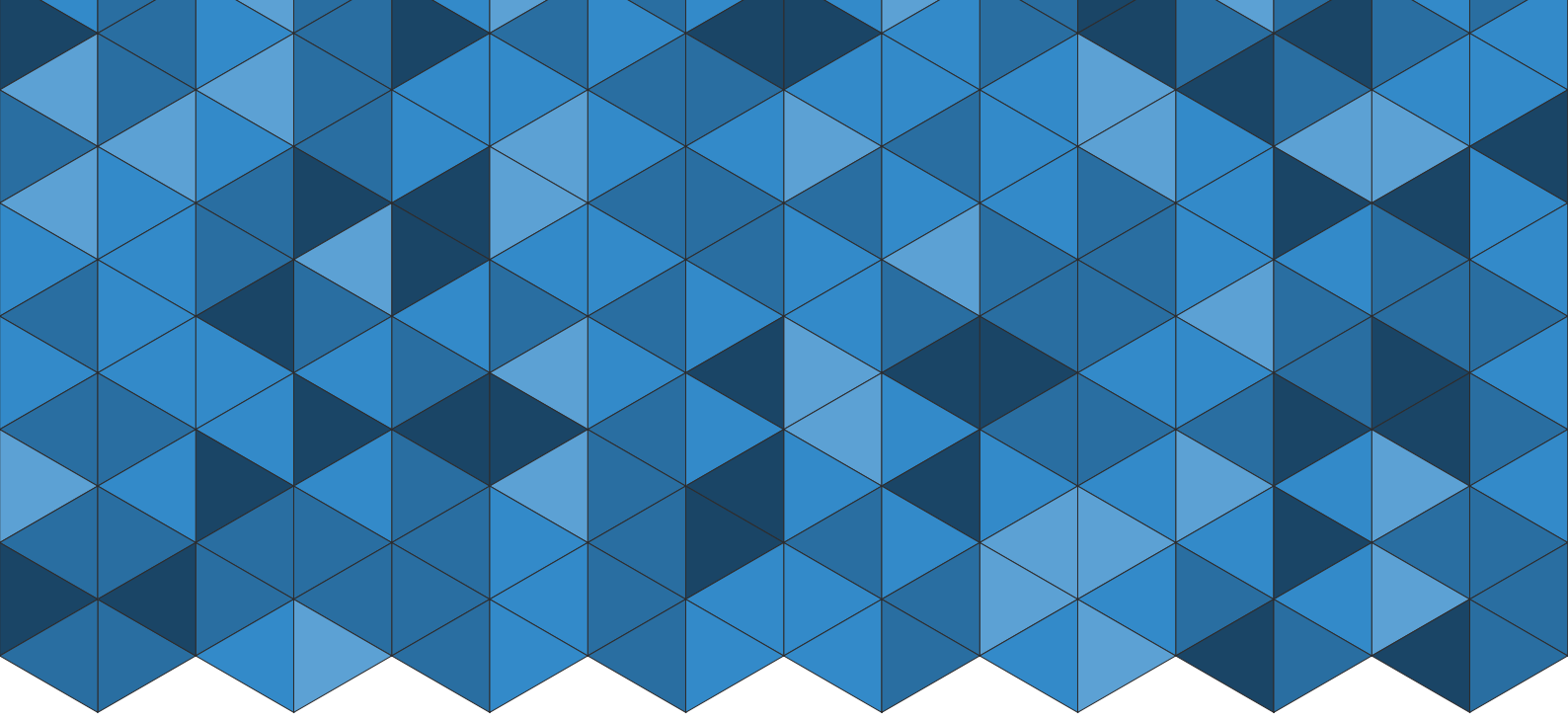
GATE also played a crucial role in supporting the United Nations' efforts on intersex issues. Mauro contributed to an Experts' Meeting convened by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, where discussions focused on the human rights violations faced by intersex individuals and strategies for global advocacy.

At the regional level, GATE facilitated important discussions and collaborations. In 2020, Mauro led regional meetings in San José de Costa Rica and Buenos Aires, bringing together intersex activists from across Latin America. These meetings provided a platform for sharing experiences, challenges, and best practices, and for strengthening the regional intersex movement's capacity to advocate for their rights. GATE's involvement in these initiatives underscored its commitment to advancing intersex rights and ensuring that intersex issues remained a priority in the broader human rights agenda

Engaging in international spaces

During this period, GATE recognized the increasing importance of addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by trans, gender diverse, and intersex communities. GATE deepened its involvement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), taking an active role in UN High-Level meetings and becoming part of the international campaign for Universal Healthcare Coverage (UHC). Understanding the critical need to empower activists within these frameworks, GATE developed a range of resources, including technical briefings, toolkits, and a [webinar series linking the Sustainable Development Goals with the work of trans and gender diverse communities](#).

In 2020, GATE's influence expanded when it was appointed as the civil society co-chair at the Working Group on National Laws and Policies within the Equal Rights Coalition. This leadership position provided GATE with a strategic platform to further advocate for the rights of trans, gender diverse, and intersex people on a global level. Collaborating closely with governments and civil society organizations, GATE worked to shape and influence national laws and policies, reinforcing GATE's commitment to promoting equality and human rights and ensuring that the voices and needs of our communities were heard and addressed in key international forums.



2022-PRESENT

NEW DIRECTIONS

At the beginning of 2022, Mauro Cabral Grinspan stepped down as Executive Director of GATE, marking the end of an era for the organization. The Board of Directors initiated an open call for applications and conducted an exhaustive selection process to find GATE's new leader. After five years of serving as Director of Programs, Erika Castellanos was appointed as the new Executive Director.

Erika's appointment signified a historic moment for GATE. For the first time since its founding in 2009, neither of the organization's co-founders was involved in its leadership. This transition infused fresh energy and perspectives, while also representing a significant advancement in racial and gender justice within the organization. Historically, GATE had been led by white trans men; since 2022, it has been directed by an Indigenous trans woman of color, signaling a pivotal shift in its leadership.

Building resources and capacity

In 2022, GATE adopted a [new strategic plan](#) designed to guide its work over the next five years. This plan, developed through extensive consultations with over 200 community members from around the world, aimed to strengthen GATE's

governance, expand its support for activists, organizations, and networks, and enhance its capacity through e-learning and re-granting efforts. As part of this expansion, GATE increased both its team and funding, bringing on board several new staff: Levan Berianidze joined as the Human Rights Lead in 2022, followed in 2023 by Anil Pavadatan as the Health Lead, Anwar Ogrm as Movement Building Lead, and Andreo Gustavo as the Communications Officer.

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a significant shift towards online platforms, prompting GATE to adapt its methods of engagement and support. Building on this momentum, GATE relaunched the GATE Learning Hub in 2023, introducing several new courses on human rights and health that successfully engaged over 150 new users in its first year. This digital pivot also led to the launch of a mentorship program by GATE, designed to provide technical assistance, guidance, and ongoing support to organizational leaders within the trans, gender diverse, and intersex communities.

Further learning from the pandemic and recognizing the ongoing challenges faced by our communities, GATE created an [Emergency Funding and Support](#) page. This resource was specifically created to guide organizations during emergencies, providing them with the tools and information needed to apply for essential funding. This resource aims to help organizations navigate crises more effectively and continue their vital work.

Countering anti-trans agendas

With the anti-gender movement continuing to intensify its efforts through the spread of misinformation, continuing to pose a significant threat to trans, gender diverse, and intersex communities worldwide, GATE took decisive measures to counteract these harmful narratives. The organization has organized multiple webinars and produced numerous articles and publications in a concerted effort to [map global and regional anti-gender mobilization](#). Leveraging the insights gained from this information-gathering, GATE developed toolkits for countering anti-gender opposition, including guidance on how to [recognize, document and address these movements](#), as well as a [crisis communications guide](#) to combating extremist narratives. Through these efforts, GATE aimed to raise awareness, provide accurate information, and mobilize support against the rising tide of anti-trans agendas.

Amplifying intersex voices

In 2022, GATE made significant strides in amplifying intersex voices, particularly from the Global South. To foster dialogue and collaboration, GATE facilitated webinars focusing on intersex issues in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa, providing a platform for activists and movements to discuss sex variations and related concerns. As a result of these webinars, GATE published a series of memoirs titled [We, the Intersex People from the Global South](#), featuring articles by panelists sharing their experiences and insights. These initiatives underscored GATE's commitment to supporting and elevating intersex voices on a global scale.

Strengthening the global HIV response

From 2022 to 2023, GATE continued its efforts in strengthening trans and gender diverse representation in the global HIV response through various initiatives, including conducting research, ensuring trans inclusion at key international events, and further developing the International Trans Men and HIV Working Group. A key achievement was GATE's collaboration with the WHO to develop a [Trans Smart Guide to the WHO Consolidated Guidelines](#), created as a tool for communities to advocate for rights-based health services.

GATE continued to expand its advocacy efforts for health access and rights by coordinating the International Working Group on Trans Masculine People & HIV, producing critical knowledge on trans men and HIV, and developing a strategy to increase the meaningful engagement of trans men in health discussions. A significant milestone in trans men's engagement was achieved with the publication of the [Policy Brief on Effective Inclusion of Trans Men in the Global HIV Responses](#), developed with support from UNAIDS and UNFPA.

The International AIDS 2022 Conference also saw a notable increase in the number of trans and gender diverse participants, including researchers, service providers, and HIV activists. The Trans Networking Zone provided a central space for trans organizing, hosting daily sessions that engaged donors and key stakeholders. Notably, this included a unique session on intersex people and sexual rights. GATE also organized a satellite session on HIV National Strategic Planning, providing crucial insights into ensuring trans and gender diverse engagement in government health strategies and funding mechanisms.

Group of trans masculine researchers, academics, and activists at the International AIDS Conference 2022. Montreal, Canada, August 2022.
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Elevating voices at the UN

In 2023, GATE achieved a significant milestone by receiving ECOSOC status, further solidifying its role in international advocacy. This status empowers GATE to engage more effectively with UN mechanisms, participate in high-level dialogues, and influence global policies affecting trans, gender diverse, and intersex communities.

GATE's advocacy efforts continue to include the coordination of Trans Advocacy Week, a platform that enables trans and gender diverse activists to voice their concerns and strategies directly within the UN. This initiative, which strengthens the visibility and impact of these communities within global policy discussions, ensuring their perspectives are integral to shaping international human rights standards, was further enhanced with the inclusion of a sixth regional partner: the East Africa Trans Health and Advocacy Network (EATHAN).

Looking ahead

In July 2024, 14 years after GATE's pre-conference *Trans* Action = Trans* Rights* in Barcelona, the organization realized a long-held vision by reuniting trans and gender diverse activists from around the globe. Partnering with twelve trans-led

organizations from all world regions and securing funding from eight major donors, GATE provided full financial support to all participating trans activists, except for a few who chose to self-fund. This effort culminated in the second international trans convening, titled [*Unite! Advocate! Thrive! Global Trans Conference*](#), held as a pre-conference to the 25th International AIDS Conference in Munich, Germany.

The event successfully brought together over 190 trans and gender diverse activists and key stakeholders for two comprehensive days of discussions and networking. The conference addressed the critical need for trans and gender diverse-specific strategies and unified responses, focusing on three key thematic areas: Health, Human Rights, and Movement Building.

GATE also used the occasion to announce two significant shifts in its focus and structure. Firstly, acknowledging that intertwining its mission with intersex advocacy has inadvertently diverted necessary resources and attention from intersex-led organizations, GATE decided to discontinue its intersex programming to concentrate exclusively on trans and gender diverse issues. GATE expressed its commitment to supporting the leadership, representation, and independence of the global intersex movement as they continue their work.

Secondly, GATE revealed plans to transition to a membership-based model, which will be free for all trans-led organizations. This change aims to foster greater



Group photo at the Global Trans Conference 2024.
Munich, Germany, July 2024.
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collaboration within the global trans and gender diverse movement, creating new opportunities for learning, mutual support, and connection. The convening was a resounding success, culminating in the sharing of a [*Global Trans and Gender Diverse Declaration*](#) crafted by trans and gender diverse activists from around the world that was read at the opening session of the International AIDS 2024 Conference.



Demonstration after the reading of the declaration at the opening session of the 25th International AIDS Conference. Munich, Germany, July 2024. © Steve Forrest / IAS

GATE's journey has been marked by its resilience, growth, and unwavering commitment to trans and gender diverse communities. With recent strategic shifts, the organization is better positioned to address the challenges posed by anti-trans and anti-gender movements while continuing to expand its reach and deepen its impact. As GATE looks to the future, it remains dedicated to advancing trans and gender diverse movements globally.

FROM INCEPTION TO FUTURE
A History of GATE



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