

Quarterly Newsletter

TRANSWAVE
♦ JAMAICA

Q1 2025



Celebrating 10 Years of Advocacy, Visibility & Empowerment

As TransWave Jamaica marks its 10th anniversary this year, we are deeply reflective of the journey, sacrifices, and resilience of the trans and gender non-conforming community in Jamaica.

This first quarter has been rich with advocacy, community building, and visibility—each step guided by our mission to uplift and empower.

However, our progress is being challenged. The trans community continues to face intensified hostility both globally and locally. Rising anti-trans rhetoric in international politics and online spaces has translated into fear, isolation, and increased vulnerability here at home.

The right to exist, to be visible, and to participate in society freely is under threat.

This newsletter does more than capture our work—it stands as a testament to our refusal to be erased. It is also a call to action: to our community to remain resilient, and to our allies, funders, and supporters to stay steadfast and vocal in your solidarity.

In community and resistance,

TransWave Team x

In this newsletter
you can expect:

Community
Updates

What's next for
TransWave

Stories of Impact

Event Updates

Fundraising
Opportunities



Mural Launch - A Wall of Memory and Movement

To begin our 10th anniversary year with purpose and reverence, TransWave Jamaica unveiled a commemorative mural on January 25, 2025, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Installed on the back wall of our Kingston office, the mural honors the memory of trans individuals lost to violence and uplifts the pioneers of Jamaica's trans movement whose courage and visibility paved the way.

The mural was developed in partnership with Tenement Yaad Media, guided by a historical research process that traced milestones, struggles, and resistance within our community. Despite logistical setbacks—such as delays in invitations and heightened security concerns amidst rising anti-trans hostility—24 community members (12 trans men, 6 trans women, and 6 non-binary individuals) gathered in solidarity. This event wasn't just an unveiling—it was a powerful moment of remembrance, healing, and collective pride. The mural now stands as a public and permanent symbol of our visibility, resistance, and unbreakable legacy.

Strengthening Our Futures

On the morning of the mural launch, we hosted a focused empowerment session for 10 of our beneficiaries—individuals who received seed funding and educational grants through our trans empowerment initiatives. This session, facilitated by a licensed Social Worker and Psychologist, was designed to help recipients explore long-term strategies for personal and professional development. Participants (4 trans women, 2 trans men, and 4 non-binary persons) engaged in activities that addressed goal-setting, mental health awareness, financial planning, and sustaining growth beyond the life of the grant. These moments of reflection and visioning affirmed that community support is more than monetary—it's about building lasting tools for success and self-empowerment.



Politics & Participation: Understanding Our Landscape

Research on Trans Voting Habits

To understand and dismantle the systemic barriers preventing trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) Jamaicans from participating in the political process, TransWave Jamaica conducted groundbreaking research funded by the Kaleidoscope Trust. The study engaged 44 respondents (4 trans men, 27 trans women, and 13 non-binary individuals) through surveys and interviews focused on voting behavior and access.



Findings were sobering:

- 67% have never voted
- 53% feel unsafe while voting
- 60% believe no political party represents TGNC issues
- 30% experienced ID mismatches at polling stations



A Few Notes To Remember

These results highlight a stark democratic deficit for TGNC Jamaicans and point to the urgent need for reform in voter registration, identification policies, and political inclusion. The research is now being used to inform national advocacy efforts around electoral justice and civic engagement.





Visibility Through Wellness - Trans Health & Wellness Symposium

In observance of Trans Day of Visibility, TransWave hosted a transformative Trans Health and Wellness Symposium at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on March 31, 2025. This flagship event, supported by the Commonwealth Foundation through the Equal Rights, Equal Futures (EFAF) programme, brought together 77 participants—community members, healthcare providers, and allies—for an open and informed dialogue on trans health.



Key highlights included:

- **Panel 1:** "Fact vs Fear: Combatting Disinformation in the Anti-Gender Movement", exploring the rise of coordinated anti-trans narratives and ways to counter them.
- **Panel 2:** "Breaking Barriers: Fighting Stigma in Trans Healthcare", spotlighting lived experiences and practical solutions for inclusive care.
- **Launch of the Trans Health Toolkit**, developed for healthcare professionals to improve affirming services.
- **Live nationwide radio interviews**, amplifying the event's impact beyond the room.



The symposium also showcased the contributions of five TGNC volunteers and created vital bridges between health advocacy and public education.





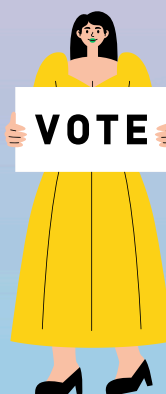
Building Political Power – Political Engagement Trainings

In both Kingston and Montego Bay, TransWave facilitated two comprehensive political engagement training sessions as part of our commitment to civic empowerment. Funded by the Kaleidoscope Trust, the trainings convened 32 participants (7 trans men, 15 trans women, and 10 non-binary persons) to build knowledge around:

- Understanding Jamaica's political system and key institutions
- Navigating safe and informed voting practices
- Using advocacy and organizing to drive policy change

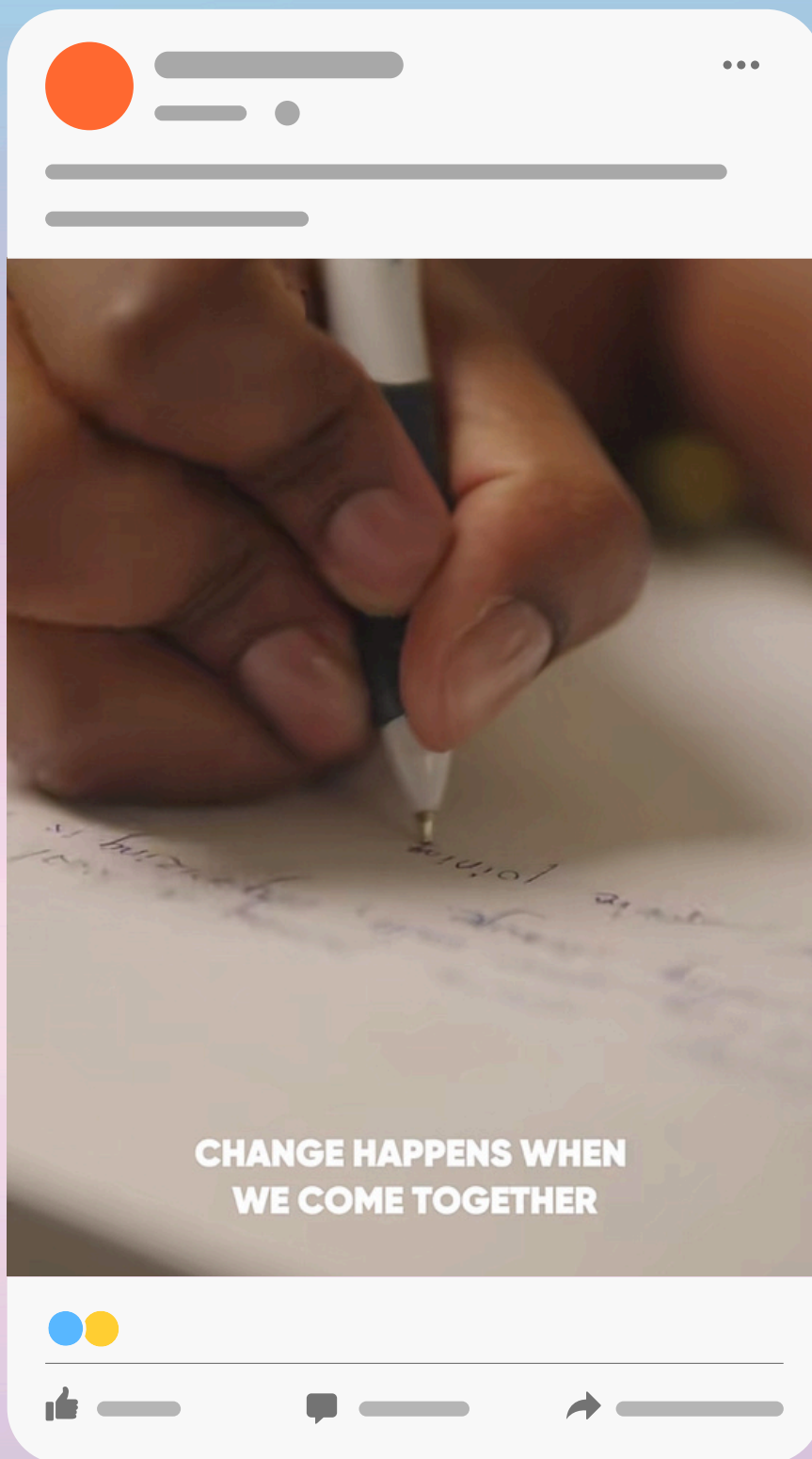
The workshops were led by TransWave's staff and a Board Member with expertise in civic engagement. While participants expressed mental fatigue by day three—a sign of the emotional weight of political work—they also reported increased confidence and understanding of how to engage safely and effectively in political spaces.

**YOUR VOTE
HAS POWER**



**≡ VOTE ≡
RIGHT**



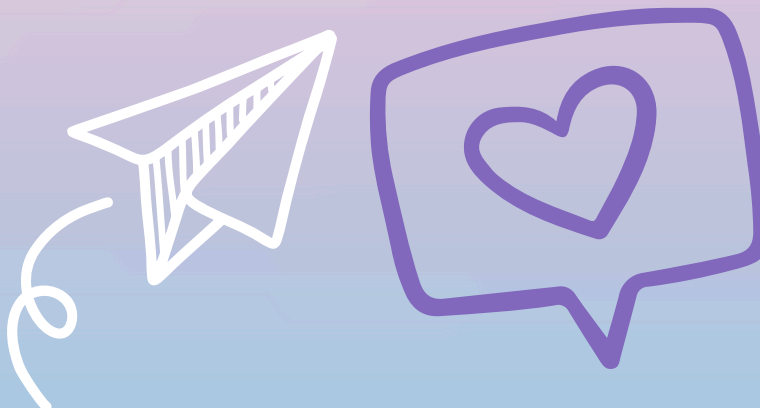


Your Vote, Your Voice - Social Media Campaign

To reach broader audiences and engage younger voters, TransWave launched a three-part video campaign on Instagram and other platforms in March 2025. Funded by the Kaleidoscope Trust, the campaign focused on:

- How to register to vote
- Why political organizing matters
- How political decisions affect the trans community

Three non-binary community members were featured as on-screen advocates, using their stories to connect policy issues to lived experience. Two of the three videos were boosted through Instagram advertising, which helped the campaign reach 17,925 accounts and generate 630 interactions—despite algorithmic and ad restrictions on political content.



Claiming Identity Through the Law - Deed Poll & ID Support Programme



As part of our ongoing support for legal gender recognition, TransWave helped 10 trans Jamaicans complete the deed poll process to legally change their names. Of those, five also received updated voter ID cards, making their civic participation more secure and affirming.

Additionally, we assisted 10 community members (1 trans man, 8 trans women, and 1 non-binary individual) in obtaining or replacing their birth certificates—a foundational step in securing legal identity documents.

These services are more than bureaucratic—each document is a milestone in affirming identity, enhancing safety, and expanding access to education, employment, and public life.

Additionally, to support beneficiaries of our legal identity programme, TransWave hosted two in-depth coordination meetings for eight deed poll recipients. These sessions focused on:

- Step-by-step guidance for the name change process
- Clarifying voter registration procedures
- Discussing safety considerations during elections

Though official representatives from the Registrar General's Department (RGD) and Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ) were unable to attend, TransWave staff ensured participants received accurate information via customized toolkits and visual guides. These efforts provided clarity, encouragement, and a sense of agency for those navigating complex systems.



From the Policy & Advocacy Desk

Rooted in Resistance, Powered by Community

By Lamar Grant (They/Them) – Policy and Advocacy Specialist

As we close the first quarter of 2025, TransWave Jamaica stands firm in the face of mounting challenges, celebrating hard-won victories and the unwavering power of community.

Amid a global wave of anti-trans rhetoric and the stark rollback of international funding, our work has never been more urgent or more impactful.

This quarter, we proudly hosted our 3rd Trans Health and Wellness Symposium on TDOV, deepening conversations around health, empowerment, and justice.

We launched a public mural honouring trans history in Jamaica, reclaimed space through two political engagement trainings, and convened critical coordination meetings with the Registrar General's Department (RGD) and Electoral Commission of Jamaica (ECJ) alongside community members to advocate for inclusive documentation systems.

These achievements were realized while working with a much smaller team, teaching us valuable lessons in adaptability, intentionality, and the strength of collective care. In the absence of robust institutional support, we leaned into our community, showing up for each other and directing aid where it was most needed. As trans and gender-diverse people continue to be pushed to the margins globally, we remain anchored in resistance and guided by our commitment to visibility, justice, and liberation. Join us in resisting the erasure of trans lives. Whether through resources, advocacy, or simply standing in solidarity - our support helps power a movement built on justice, dignity, and truth.



Lamar Grant (They/Them)

Policy and Advocacy Specialist



TransWave Jamaica's work is rooted in care, justice, and community power—and your support makes it possible.

By supporting the movement, your donations will help us to:

- Provide direct financial relief through our new Mutual Aid Programme
- Fund mental health services and trauma-informed care
- Support trans youth with educational and seed funding grants
- Offer emergency housing support and basic necessities
- Train community advocates in civic and political engagement
- Host events that affirm trans lives and demand equity in health, policy, and society

If you believe in the power of trans-led change, please consider donating:

🔗 Donate via PayPal: **paypal.me/transwaveja**

🔗 Donate through the Rustin Fund (US tax-deductible): **rustinfund.org/transwave**

Every dollar goes directly to empowering the trans and gender non-conforming community in Jamaica. Together, we can meet urgent needs, challenge injustice, and build a future rooted in dignity and liberation.

COMMUNITY Feature

Voices from the Movement



My Speaking at the Trans Health and Wellness Symposium was not just an honour—it was a necessity. Opportunities like this are the building blocks of a vibrant and engaged community. They create space for connection, shared purpose, and collective healing.

The symposium demonstrated that strong communities don't emerge by chance—they are built through trust, inclusion, and mutual support. Through forums, discussions, and tailored engagement, the event affirmed that each of us has a place and a voice in the fight for health justice.

Transgender men, women, and non-binary people are seeking more than services—we are seeking belonging, visibility, and the right to live in dignity. The Symposium made it clear: positive change is only possible when our community is centered, affirmed, and empowered.

This was not just about being seen. It was about being recognized, valued, and prioritized. Under the theme “Resilience and Resistance: Advancing Trans Health in Challenging Times,” we claimed space, demanded accountability, and reminded the world that our health is not a secondary concern—it is a fundamental human right. Let us be clear: the times are indeed difficult. Transphobia remains embedded in our systems. Affirming healthcare is scarce. Policies often erase us. Yet, despite it all—we endure. We organize. We resist. Because our resilience is not just symbolic—it is strategic, necessary, and powerful.

Healthcare should be a right, not a privilege.

But across Jamaica and the Caribbean, trans people face staggering rates of mental health struggles, HIV vulnerability, and healthcare discrimination. Many avoid clinics altogether due to mistreatment or ignorance from providers. We are also feeling the effects of global funding cuts—life-saving programmes are under threat. But we will not be deterred. Our health is non-negotiable.

Voices from the Movement...cont'd

Our survival is non-negotiable.

Today, we call on policymakers, healthcare providers, and allies:
Step up. Do the work. Ensure that no trans person is denied dignity in their pursuit of wellness.

To our trans sisters—facing the highest rates of violence, unemployment, and neglect—we see you. You are leaders. Your courage builds this movement.

To our trans brothers—too often excluded from healthcare conversations—you matter. Your struggle for recognition and access must be centered.

To our non-binary and gender-expansive family—you are not an afterthought. You are visionaries, challenging the world to expand its understanding of gender.

We are building a future where trans health means more than survival—it means thriving. We know the road is long. But we are not strangers to resistance. It runs in our blood. Resilience is our birthright.

We will continue to hold systems accountable.

We will support one another. We will build what the institutions refuse to offer. Because we are not victims—we are victors.

We are not a burden—we are a blessing.

We are not just trans people—we are history-makers.

So let the world see us. Let them hear us. Let them know:

We will not stop until every one of us can live, love, and thrive without fear.

Together, we rise. Together, we resist. Together, we reclaim our health, our power, and our future.

Yours Sincerely,

Amelia Artwell





A Community Under Pressure Looking Ahead

While we celebrate progress, we must also confront the deepening crisis affecting Jamaica's trans community. Across the island, TGNC people continue to face escalating levels of:

- Homelessness and displacement
- Violence and discrimination
- Barriers to healthcare, education, and employment

TransWave remains on the frontlines—offering psychosocial support, crisis interventions, referrals, and resource sharing. However, we cannot meet this moment alone. We call on partners, policymakers, and allies to respond with urgency, compassion, and a renewed commitment to justice.

WAY FORWARD

As we reflect on this powerful first quarter of our 10th anniversary year, we are filled with gratitude, resolve, and clarity. From murals to symposiums, from legal empowerment to political education, every initiative strengthens the collective heartbeat of our movement.

The work ahead is immense—but so is our will to endure, to rise, and to lead. Thank you for standing with us.

In Solidarity,

TransWave Team x





TransWave Quarter 1 - 2025
