

TransWave Jamaica Ltd.

Annual Narrative Report 2023



**Reflecting activities as of
January 1 - December 31, 2023.**



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About TransWave

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Since its inception in 2015, TransWave Jamaica Ltd. has been at the forefront of the transgender and gender non-conforming movement in Jamaica. Originating from an advocacy blog, the organization was conceptualized by co-founders Akilah White and Neish McLean during a workshop organized by WE-Change Jamaica. Over the last eight years, TransWave has evolved into a thriving advocacy group with a team of 13 members.

Under the leadership of its current Executive Director, Renae Green, TransWave centers its efforts on advocating for the affirmation and recognition of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. The organization also focuses on implementing programs and conducting research on community issues, engaging with traditional and social media to increase visibility, and providing social support and fostering engagement within our diverse and vibrant gender community.

TransWave Jamaica is dedicated to advancing our mission of fostering change that leads to social inclusion, acknowledging rights, and providing legal protection for the transgender and gender non-conforming community. Our vision is to create a Jamaica where transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are embraced, affirmed, and able to enjoy all universally recognized human rights.



2023 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

All department activities align with the specific objectives outlined below. Detailed descriptions of major activities can be found in this report. To implement the Strategic Objectives from 2019 to 2023, we have hired a consultant to help develop a new five-year plan based on the identified needs of the transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary (TGNCNB) community in Jamaica.

2023 Strategic Priorities

- Media and Community Presence
- Political Platforms and Gender-Affirming Legislation
- Media and Community Presence
- Wellness and Access to Gender-Affirming Care
- Staffing and Organisational Infrastructure
- Building Coalitions and Meaningful Collaborations

- 1** TransWave will use social and traditional media, popular education and trainings to promote the visibility and inclusion of trans-gender and gender non-conforming persons.
- 2** TransWave will assist in removing barriers to trans persons' access to employment, essential public services (medical, public safety, and education) and promote over-all well-being.
- 3** TransWave aims to decrease violence and discrimination against transgender individuals by establishing inclusive and supportive environments and fostering acceptance within families, schools, and community institutions.
- 4** TransWave will develop an organisational infrastructure in alignment with mission and impact.
- 5** *TransWave will collaborate with stakeholders to develop legislative initiatives that support the self-determination of trans and gender non-conforming persons.*



A Message from TransWave's Co-Chairs

Lee Rose (He/Him)

Greetings, I'm honoured to be among the TransWave family, and I look forward to continuing my contribution to our trans community, within the capacity as newly appointed Co-chair. Reflecting on 2023 it is clear that TransWave has achieved remarkable milestones. With their expansive programming and I would like to highlight especially, the actions taken with outreach and social support. From expanding food packages across Jamaica to collaborating with like-minded partners, as ambassadors, research coverage on transgender issues across the island, and overall involvement in the discourse on policies that will impact transgender life and lived experiences. They've no doubt worked tirelessly to advance the mission of promoting inclusivity, providing vital support, and advocating for the rights of the transgender community.

Looking ahead to 2024, my hope is that we will continue to build on this momentum. I'm happy to be on this journey of strengthening our collective advocacy efforts, amplifying the voices of the transgender community, and enhancing our impact. Creating a more compassionate and equitable Jamaica.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated team, partners, and supporters who have made such achievements possible. Together, with consistency and commitment we will continue to make a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve.



Rich Richards (He/Him)

Work accomplished should be acknowledged. TransWave has had an impressive year. To the staff, the ambassadors, and the volunteers: thank you for your time and talents, your visibility, and your commitment to the mission, we recognise your contributions. Last year was one of the most momentous years for the trans community locally, regionally, and internationally. We lost siblings to transphobic attacks all around the globe, but we stood united regardless of creed, colour, or geographical location. There is much to be celebrated. Under the leadership of Renae Green, TransWave continues to conquer new territories. Despite the innuendos, the team rose above and claimed their year.

Locally, the Trans Health Conference delivered yet another memorable example of trans-excellence.

Our Ambassador program reached new heights with even more diverse ambassadors and an even more inclusive movement.

Regionally, something beautiful was birthed when Renae asked trans leaders as the CWSDC conference one simple question: what do you need to be able to do the work? The result was an alliance between ECADE, TransWave and Butterfly Barbados which created the inaugural Transcendence conference where one of our ambassadors was crowned King. This year, get ready for Royale.

TransWave made a strong presence at both international and regional human rights conferences. Lamar's insightful interventions challenged common misconceptions and unconscious biases prevalent among the Jamaican public, keeping everyone engaged and informed.

2024 promises to exceed expectations as we revolutionize care through healthy life choices and create access to service providers who are fully sensitized to comprehensive trans healthcare. This new year, we issue a call to action to the trans community: show up and speak up.

"Planting ourselves outside of the rooms of change does not improve the process. For change to exist we must bring our ideas and solutions to the table."



Cont.

Planting ourselves outside of the rooms of change does not improve the process. For change to exist we must bring our ideas and solutions to the table. I implore the diaspora to intentionally foster inclusion — stay connected and help us to advocate for a better Jamaica with policies and legislation that include us all. This is the age of resolutions and camaraderie. Let's be solution - driven while we move to acquire that which is owed to us: basic human rights. The words we share and consume matter. Let us not be silent but be intentional with that which comes from us. The power of community can never be underestimated, let's put it to good use.



Renae Green
(She/Her)

A Message from TransWave's Executive Director

TransWave Jamaica: Resilience, Progress, and Hope in 2023

2023 was a difficult start for the team at TransWave Jamaica, with many things happening within the organization such as the changing of staff and our policy framework improving. We had our first financial audit which saw us making improvements to our financial and operational policies. We completed our first strategic plan with our new plan currently under development.

The organisation and community suffered a great loss of our beloved Tracey-Ann Thomas who served as our board member and treasurer. Tracey, who passed in May of 2023, was an important figure within the organization and has had a significant impact on our work over the years and who we are today.

Despite the loss and setbacks we've had, we have also achieved milestones such as the return of our Trans Health and Wellness Conference which saw almost (60) persons inclusive of members of the Trans community, partners and allies to discuss trans peoples' access to health resources and barriers that exist to prevent such.

We also supported the staging of the region's (Caribbean) first ever trans conference and pageant which was held in St. Lucia during IDHOTBIT. The conference brought together almost 100 trans advocates from around the Caribbean as well as allies from the Global North. We were able to support two members of the Trans community from Jamaica in participating as our King and Queen representatives, with us successfully taking the King's title. We also supported the training of medical/healthcare professional from across the region including Guyana, Belize, Trinidad, St. Kitts, Barbados and St. Lucia.

Cont.

Locally, we were able to relaunch our Ambassador Program and supported our civil society partners in lobbying our government around the signing of the Samoa Agreement, which had been boycotted by members of the church. We provided over 100 care packages to members of the community in need and hosted a number of support group sessions. We also had several articles published in the Gleaner and Observer as well as published a number of policy briefs around social issues such as homelessness, unemployment, health etc.

I would like to say thank you and congratulations to my team for a year well executed despite the challenges and loss we have faced. I would also like to mention the many partnerships and allies we have been able to forge in 2023, particularly our partnerships with ECADE, UCTRANS, ILGA-NAC and ILGA-World, Black Feminist Fund. Our long-standing partners I want to take this moment to thank you as well: Astrea, Giveout, CVC, ITF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNAIDS, and Gilead. In conclusion, I recognise that 2023 brought with it a lot of loss and challenges for TransWave Jamaica, but also hope and progress.

The team managed to pull through despite the circumstances, we adapted and overcame. As we head into our 9th year of advocacy, it shows our commitment to making Jamaica a place for trans Jamaicans to thrive.

“I recognize that 2023 brought with it a lot of loss and challenges for TransWave Jamaica, but also hope and progress. The team managed to pull through despite the circumstances, we adapted and overcame.”

MEET TRANSWAVE'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**LEE ROSE
(HE/HIM)**
Co-Chair



Lee is a Movement Anthropologist, Director of Movement, Movement Educator & Writer. He sees movement as a living archive, Resounding Everywhere. Lee's practice highlights that movement is simply 'vibration' in form, resonating within, for, with, and around us. He transposes, fragments and augments lived experiences from the gestures of peoples around him. His work uses subversive commentary to deconstruct discourse around bodies and our environment, with the theme often being 'survival'. Additionally, through the incorporation of text, sound, textures, objects, and obscure sites, he challenges us to think of movement in its simplicity. How we use movement to construct our everyday realities, to cultivate social intimacies and by extension fulfil our human function as social beings. With this, his aim is to recode our understandings of the purpose of movement/s using the principles of embodiment to journey toward a sense of individual to collective liberation



**RICH RICHARDS
(HE/HIM)**
Co-Chair

Rich Richards is a transmasculine Jamaican, who defies conventional expectations by navigating spaces typically considered inaccessible to individuals with diverse gender identities. He assumes multiple roles as a mobilizer, graphic designer, creator of IEC content, political consultant, community organizer, and advocate for marginalized communities. His advocacy involves trans sex workers through establishing a safety management channel for them, as well as for the improvement of the educational system for LGBT students, students with LGBT parents, students with disabilities, and those facing mental health challenges, violence, poverty, or residing in volatile communities. Rich is passionate about inclusive leadership and engages issues such as queer acceptance, the misuse of political power and redefining the trans experience. He also co-founded Safety Advocacy Family Equity Jamaica, an organization dedicated to bringing relief for women who are experiencing sexual violence or are being held against their will. Along with his ongoing efforts to disrupt societal norms and re-establish disenfranchised individuals in spaces they were once excluded from due to heteronormative ideals, he remains open to collaboration and community building.

MICKEL JACKSON (SHE/HER)



Mickel Jackson is an organisational development specialist with her professional career spanning more than a decade in leadership roles in human rights, HIV and AIDS, youth and education development. She has both secured funding from and worked for projects funded by various donor agencies, including Global Fund, USAID and PEPFAR, Global Affairs Canada (formerly CIDA), as well as government and private funders. She possesses extensive experience and proven expertise in external relations, strategic analysis and planning, organizational development, curriculum development and assessment, and resource mobilization. Mickel is a master's degree holder in Public Policy and Management from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and Bachelor's degree in English and Political Science from the University of West Indies. She is the Executive Director of Jamaicans for Justice and an adjunct lecturer with the University College of the Caribbean where she teaches courses in Politics, Sociology, Business Communication and Business Ethics.



NOELLE CAMPBELL (SHE/HER)

Noelle Campbell is a registered nurse, LGBTQIA rights advocate, and an avid sports fan. As the Health and Wellness Programme Manager at the Equality for All Foundation (EFAF), she is primarily responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing as well as monitoring and evaluating the organisation's health and wellness programme in an effort to foster the development of an environment where LGBT people's right to health are protected, promoted and respected. In this role, she has been able to connect her passions of helping people through healthcare and championing the causes of the Jamaican LGBTQIA community. Prior to working at EFAF, Noelle worked in the health industry for over a decade. This experience has bolstered her desire to give back to her community by providing information and education to better the physical and mental health of those she serves. She strongly believes in creating spaces that support the health and wellbeing of the queer community.

Noelle earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of the West Indies, and a Master's in Public Health from the University of Technology Jamaica.

MARSHA BLACKWOOD (SHE/HER)



Marsha joined the board of TransWave in January 2024. Her primary responsibilities include advising the organisation on financial policy and practices as well as strategic decisions. She has extensive experience in the audit field and has provided assurance and advisory services to a number of companies spanning various industries. She is dedicated to maintaining transparency and quality reporting to stakeholders. She is a Chartered Accountant who is an active member of the ACCA, ICAJ and IIA. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from the University of the West Indies.



**KARLENE TEMPLE-ANDERSON
(SHE/HER)**

Karlene Temple-Anderson's greatest passion is assisting and supporting individuals as they learn to think outside of the box and grow into the best version of themselves. She is a Motivational Speaker and the Author of "Self-Nurturing Thoughts: 7 Times 7". She is currently the Director of Enabling Environment and Human Rights at the National Family Planning Board. She facilitates sessions on how to rethink and reshape one's perspectives while aligning it with one's intention and focus. She has a Master's in Communication for Social and Behaviour Change, a Bachelor's in Education and a Diploma in Education. For the past 25 years, she has had the privilege of working in the non-government, government and private sector organizations in the education, health, and insurance fields.



TransWave's Staff

Renae Green (She/They)
Executive Director

Operations

Rohan Wallace (He/Him)
Associate Director of Operations
and Project Development

Shevoy Brown (He/Him)
Finance Manager

**Saint Courtanii Ba'Rhone
(She/They)**
Finance Officer

Programs and Research

Sheré Samuels (She/Her)
Associate Director of Programs and
Research

Mali Dust (They/She)
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

Policy and Advocacy

Lamar Grant (He/She/They)
Policy and Advocacy Manager

Outreach & Social Support

Shadeana Mascull (She/Her)
Social Support Manager

Anika Walsh (She/He/They)
Social Support Officer

Russianzz (They/Them)
Community Liaison Officer and
Receptionist

Media & Communications

Chaday Emanuel (They/Them)
Media & Communications
Manager

Sudean Peters (They/Them)
Media & Communications
Officer



REST IN PEACE

TRACEY-ANN LEWIS



TRACEY WAS OUR BOARD MEMBER AND TREASURER, SHE WAS ALSO ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF WOMEN FOR WOMEN AND WAS A PIONEER FOR THE EARLY DAYS OF ADVOCACY PARTICULARLY FOR QUEER WOMEN.



Executive Summary

The Annual Report reflects on the achievements of TransWave Jamaica during the year 2023. The work the organisation does is crucial to the advocacy of transgender and gender non-conforming/non-binary Jamaicans, as we are the first and leading organisation for promoting positive changes in the social inclusion, recognition of rights, and legal protection of the community we serve. Thus, the report covers the strides the organisation has made towards these goals based on our implemented activities.

In 2023, TransWave was able to do more work around the gender-based violence (GBV) faced by the trans and gender non-conforming community

Our activities centred analysing the effects of GBV on the community, providing support and methods of combating the violence and safeguarding oneself from potentially harmful situations, and sensitising service providers (especially those offering mental and physical health services) around GBV affecting the trans community. Through the implementation of these activities, we were able to broaden our scope of stakeholders and partners island wide and make positive advancements towards more trans-friendly spaces and available services.

This report looks at our major successes achieved throughout the year and offers a snapshot of the rate of completion of our activities. We were able to complete 45.8% of all planned activities and 72.9% of overall activities. There were instances of lack of available funding opportunities which would have impacted the initiation and completion of some of our planned activities, however the organisation made do with the resources execute our plans for the year.

45.8%

planned
activities
completed

72.9%

of activities
completed
overall

We reached out to persons across various spaces locally and regionally to increase the visibility of the work we do and of the trans community, allowing us to engage with over 1000 persons physically and over 463,000 persons online. This includes stakeholder meetings, town halls, residential trainings, support group sessions, media campaigns and the accumulated reach of general posts made across our social media profiles. For the year, we were able to meet the following key outputs:

6 media campaigns on trans health, wellness, HIV myths, gender- based violence, and visibility.	1 Website launch celebrated with community members and CSO partners	8 leverage partnership sessions with 232 key duty bearers
4 Legal literacy sessions with 61 community members	1 residential training with 15 ambassadors for TransWave including trans community members and their allies	2 self-defence classes with 25 community members
200 care packages distributed to community members	7 Trans GBV training held for 122 attendees; community members, trained psychologists, counsellors-in-training, and CSO partners	11 support group sessions with 57 community members
1 Trans Health and Wellness Workshop with 26 community members, and a Symposium with 53 participants; community members and CSO partners	1 research around gender-based violence impacting the trans community	200 Launched Trans Safety Guide at event with 21 attendees; community members and CSO partners

This report concludes with a summary of the Human Rights Violation Report, which would take a closer look at the implications of GBV on the lives of the trans and gender non-conforming community. The report also briefly looks at the financial health of the organisation.



Major Successes/ Top Ten of 2023

***NB. Not in any particular order



TRANS HEALTH AND WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOP

In February of 2023, we were able to host our Trans Health and Wellness Symposium and Workshop at Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, Kingston Jamaica. The day began with the workshop, where TransWave staff, facilitators and 26 community members branched off into two groups to discuss issues surrounding health and wellness for trans and gender non-conforming Jamaicans. Participants came not only from in town, but across the island as well as residents of the Larry Chang Foundation Safe House were provided transport to the event. Discussions surrounded accessing hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and HIV-related services. Participants were encouraged to openly speak on any difficulties, successes, or desires for accessing the health services, and were also provided information on which offices/organisations provided them. The workshop gave TransWave an opportunity to hear the concerns and challenges of the community when it comes to health so that we could be more informed in our mitigation strategies.

Shortly after the Workshop came the Symposium, which had 53 participants present including community members, representatives from others CSOs, government workers, members of the diplomatic community, key duty bearers and other stakeholders. The Symposium, held annually, led conversations around accessing health and wellness spaces in Jamaica by means of panel discussions. The panels involved representatives from CSOs that offer services to trans and gender non-conforming persons, key duty bearers, and community members. Through the facilitated discussions, attendees were sensitised around the issues faced by the community we serve and gave insight on what part participants could play in creating safer, affirming and more accessible spaces for the trans and gender non-conforming community.



TRANSCENDENCE REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND PAGEANT



The Transcendence Regional Conference, in collaboration with ECADE and Butterfly Barbados, was held in St. Lucia from May 17-20. The goal of the conference was to address the issues impacting transgender and gender non-conforming persons in the Caribbean. Trans and gender non-conforming participants and their allies across the Caribbean came together to highlight the progress and challenges of trans advocacy in their own countries. It provided a space for advocates to learn from each other to improve their efforts in the work they do for the community. The conference also included a cocktail reception at the residence of the British High Commission in commemoration of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT). The activities proceeded into the Mr and Ms Queeribbean Pageant, a showcase of trans-masculine and -feminine persons across the region to represent their respective countries. They competed in talent, swimwear, evening wear and cultural wear categories, all while being able to present as their most affirming selves. The pageant gave participants and their supporters the opportunity to partake in a ceremony celebrating trans visibility and representation in countries across the Caribbean. For those could not physically attend the event, there was a live stream available from our Instagram account. Our trans masculine representative from Jamaica swept the competition, winning every category and eventually the Mr. Queeribbean title.





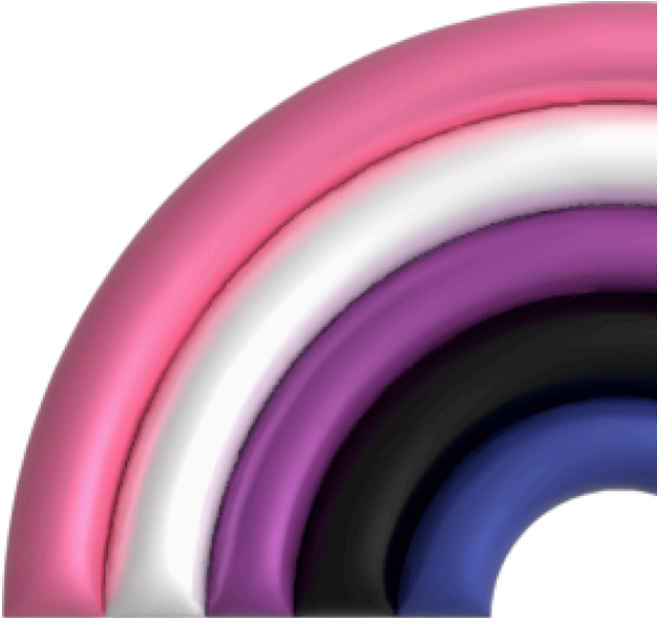
TRANS SAFETY GUIDE LAUNCH

TransWave recognised the risks of violence impacting the community we serve in Jamaica. As a method of combating the effects of the transphobic attacks, we developed and disseminated a Trans Safety Guide. The Guide provided useful tips to trans and gender non-conforming persons how to navigate public and online spaces to ensure their own safety. It also addresses high risk sexual behaviours and how to protect oneself and practice safer sex practices to lower the HIV prevalence rate amongst community members.

We also hosted a launch event for guide on the office grounds, which had 21 participants in attendance including staff, community members and civil society partners. The launch presented the reason behind the creation of the guide and introduced it formally to stakeholders. Staff also availed themselves after the event to answer questions pertaining to the guide and speak to persons individually. The guide and launch event allowed us to spread awareness of the special tips we identified would be greatly beneficial to the trans and gender non-conforming persons wishing to navigate their daily lives and commutes.



WEBSITE LAUNCH



In August, we set out to relaunch our website as a way of having all shared resources and information related to TransWave Jamaica available in one place for easy access for our stakeholders, partners, other CSOs, and the public. We onboarded a consultant to complete the design of the website, which was overseen by the Communications Department to ensure it captured all the information necessary. Staff were also trained on how to update the site without the assistance of a consultant. We re-acquired the domain address <https://transwaveja.org/> and loaded the site with photos, annual reports, guides, media campaigns, newsletters, newspaper publications, contact information, and information on our current staff and departments.

A launch event was held at the end of August to introduce the website to our stakeholders. The event had 16 physical participants including staff, partners and stakeholders, and was also live streamed from our Instagram page. The office space was set up to facilitate the event, where the chairs and catering was situated towards the back of the property. We also set up a projector against the white wall to show the new website to all in attendance and display the features of the site. Updates continue to be made to the website to reflect the work that TransWave has and is doing to advocate for the recognition of trans and gender non-conforming Jamaicans.



SELF DEFENCE CLASSES

As part of TransWave's goal this year to ensure the physical safety of the trans and gender non-conforming community in Jamaica, we hosted self-defence classes with an instructor skilled in the area. The sessions began in 2022 and continued into 2023, building the capacity of 25 community members around tips to de-escalate or escape dangerous or violent situations. The classes did not only teach physical moves to combat numerous potential threats, but also gave tips on how to identify when a situation may have a higher risk of violence and de-escalation tactics before resorting to physical defence.

The classes were a great way for us to tackle the issue of violence impacting the community by equipping trans and gender non-conforming persons with the knowledge and tools they would need to protect themselves and those around them. It also encouraged conflict-resolution, where they could identify situations where talking would be more necessary than physical retaliation. Participants were encouraged to employ these tactics into their own lives and interactions with others and each other. The participants were receptive to the information and demonstrations shared and will hopefully continue to make



RELAUNCH OF AMBASSADOR PROGRAM AND RESIDENTIAL TRAINING



The relaunch of our Ambassador Program provided us an opportunity to engage trans and gender non-conforming persons and their allies in contributing more directly to the work that we do. The program has 20+ volunteers locally and internationally, engaged mostly online via WhatsApp. The amb-assadors are engaged for media campaigns, sessions that we host or are asked to represent Trans-Wave at events and activities put on by our partners and other CSOs.

We provided a residential advocacy training to the ambassadors at the start of the program to sensitise them on advocacy techniques they can make use of. The training occurred at Villa Mishkan, St. Ann, at the end of June/ beginning of July, and engaged 15 of our ambassadors across the island as well as five (5) staff members.

The three-day training built the capacity of our ambassadors in advocating for trans and gender non-conforming persons in Jamaica. We spoke on the differences between advocacy and activism, public speaking, steps to building resilience, hormone replacement therapy (HRT), and conducted team building exercises and group work. The training gave our ambassadors more insight into the work we do so they could better represent TransWave and the trans community in the endeavours and engagement with stakeholders.





GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESEARCH PROJECT

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an issue that affects not only cisgender women and girls, but transgender persons as well. During the year, TransWave made efforts in providing research and evidence of GBV that affects the trans and gender non-conforming community. The research was then used as a guide for a roll out of sensitisation sessions with community members, counsellors/counsellors-in-training, CSOs and key duty bearers as a way of encouraging more inclusive practices.

To conduct the research, a sample of 38 trans and gender non-conforming persons from both rural and urban areas were interviewed through a series of focus group sessions across four parishes, Kingston, St. Ann, St. James and Westmoreland. The qualitative research explored the experiences community members had with GBV as well as analysed the capacity of various institutions in addressing the violence facing trans and gender non-conforming persons. The research found that the individual approaches towards trans and gender non-conforming persons by staff members at various institutions have negatively impacted the service delivery to address the issues facing our community. Physical violence is the most prevalent form of violence enacted on the community, and community members are less likely to report incidences to police officers as they too are often perpetrators of that same violence towards them.

With this information gathered, TransWave went out and sensitised institutions, schools, and community members across the island on the impact of GBV on the trans and gender non-conforming community. This also gave rise to a budding partnership between TransWave Jamaica and the University of the West Indies (UWI) Counselling Unit at the health centre, a space of trained psychologists who provide mental health services to students and staff at UWI. The counsellors there were more than willing to offer aid to our community members and support the work that TransWave has and is doing.



We also met with counsellors-in-training at the Portmore Community College, who were attentive during the session and asked relevant questions to better understand the experiences of trans persons. Eve For Life was another institution who were targets under this initiative, as they already do work around GBV for especially cisgender women. Overall, amongst those we sensitised, we saw a 52% increase in knowledge around GBV affecting the trans community, and we have formed meaningful partnerships that will truly help improve the behaviours and attitudes towards our community in Jamaica.



2023 IN PICTURES

20
23

Left to right - Website Launch; Trans Safety Guide Launch; GBV Sensitisation Session; Transcendence (Pagaent); Trans Health and Wellness Symposium Residential; (Bottom right) Ambassador Training





PRESENTATION AT THE UNDP KNOWLEDGE FAIR – EMPOWERING VOICES, ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



The Knowledge Fair, dubbed with the theme “Empowering Voices, Ending Gender-Based Violence”, was held in Bridgeport, Barbados from November 6-8, 2023. The fair’s goals was to bring together and celebrate organisations who had done work around addressing GBV in the Caribbean. It provided a space for actors to connect and network, understanding the perspectives of GBV and Family Violence from different countries and groups in the Caribbean, exchange knowledge and cultural products around combating GBV, and amplifying the shared knowledge to scale up impactful work.

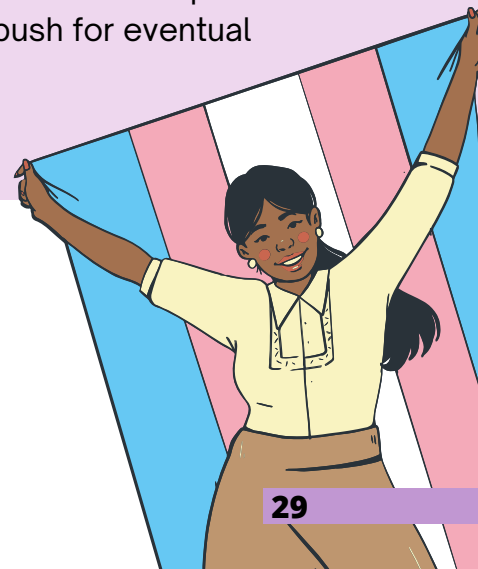
TransWave was represented by our Policy and Advocacy Manager where they presented the findings from our GBV Research conducted. The research helped form our understandings and actions in combating GBV affecting the trans and gender non-conforming community in Jamaica. The findings were particularly relevant and essential for the knowledge fair as the trans community is often forgotten or left behind when conversations are being had around GBV. TransWave was able to highlight the issues directly impacting our community to regional partners, as well as present the steps the organisation has taken to combat the violence.



UN- WOMEN'S MOVEMENT RETREAT



In October, our Executive Director represented the organisation at the UN Women Conference, held in St. Ann, Jamaica. The aim of the conference was to bring together feminist change-makers across the Caribbean into one space to exchange knowledge around better supporting women's lives and rights by ways of restructuring and rebuilding the women's movement. Feminism may sometimes exclude the lived realities of, and challenges faced by trans women, thus our Executive Director used the opportunity on a panel discussion at the retreat to highlight trans women especially. She raised the concern that trans women are often left behind in discussions around women's issues and brought to the aided participants in making more considerations of the trans community when speaking of making positive impacts on women's lives. The conference allowed TransWave the opportunity to be a part of the restructuring process which should help us to create a better network of allies, ones who can operate in spaces otherwise inaccessible to the trans community to push for eventual inclusion of the community.



CARE PACKAGES AND GROCERY VOUCHERS



The trans and gender non-conforming community faces a major issue of joblessness and homelessness. Transphobia persists in Jamaican society that causes the overlooking or discrimination of our community. We are turned away from job opportunities, kicked out of our family homes and displaced by their landlords. While TransWave continues to advocate for the rights and recognition of the trans community, we also found an opportunity to provide resources for those who needed them.

We distributed 20 grocery vouchers and 200 care packages across seven (7) parishes in hopes of meeting the basic needs of our community members. Each care package contained hygiene products, food items such as flour, rice and canned products, and other grocery items. We put out a call online for persons to reach out to us should they need assistance, and the call stretched island wide. We delivered packages in St. Ann, Westmoreland, St. James, Clarendon, St. Catherine, Kingston, and St. Andrew. We had two rollouts for dissemination—the first one hundred were delivered in July, and the second hundred in October. In December of 2023, we gave out 20 grocery vouchers to community members in Kingston and St. Andrew. The vouchers could be used to at a supermarket to purchase goods and meet basic needs at a specified total cost. Those who did not take advantage of the care packages could take the opportunity to reach out for a grocery voucher. While TransWave seeks to improve the lives of our community of trans and gender non-conforming persons, we continue to do our best to meet their basic needs where possible.

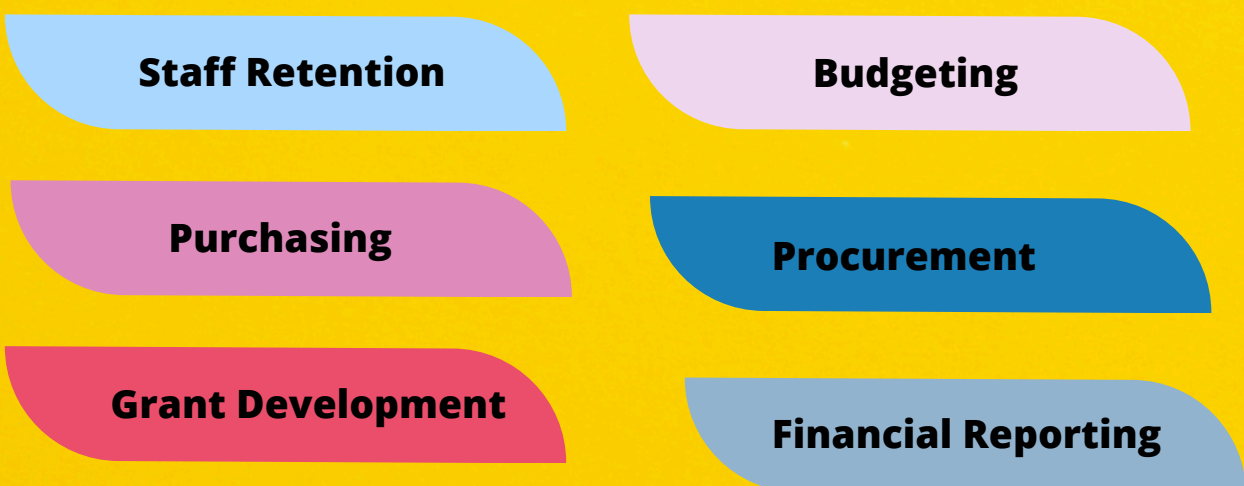


Departments

Operations

The Operations Department is responsible for the managing of administrative and financial tasks that are essential to the smooth operation of the organisation. Under this department are three portfolios, namely administration, finance and resource mobilisation. Under administration, the department offers support services, especially around staffing and office management, correspondence handling, risk management and compliance, which all are crucial to ensure the continued progress of the other departments in the organisation. Under finance, the department monitors and manages budgeting, financial planning, procurement, accounting, financial reporting, and analysis. They ensure we remain in compliance with the regulations set by both the organisation and our donors, which contributes to the financial health of the organisation. Finally, under resource mobilisation, the department focuses on identifying, acquiring, and effectively utilizing resources to support the organization's goals. It involves strategic planning, fundraising, partnership development, and resource allocation to drive growth, innovation, and sustainability.

Key Activities





POLICY AND ADVOCACY

As an organisation that advocates for the advancing of the rights, privileges inclusion of transgender and gender non-conforming people, the Policy and Advocacy Department is crucial to reaching our goals and vision. As the first trans-led and trans-focused organisation in Jamaica, TransWave works tirelessly to challenge discrimination, promote inclusion, and advocate for systemic and structural change. The Policy and Advocacy department stands at the forefront of these efforts, striving to create a more equitable and inclusive society that respects and protects the rights of transgender people. The department combines research, project management, coalition building, and engagement with key stakeholders and the community to champion and drive transformative change.

Key Activities for 2023

- 1** Developed and disseminated the Trans Safety Guide, a document that provides useful tips around maintaining one's own safekeeping as a trans or gender non-conforming person living in Jamaica.
- 2** Supported research around GBV conducted by UWI by amplifying the experiences of the transgender community.

- 2** Conducted Research on GBV affecting the transgender community. The Research was then used to initiate sensitisation sessions and activities around combating GBV affecting the community by meeting with key stakeholders, counsellors, counsellors-in-training, and other CSOs.
- 4** Hosted Trans Health and Wellness Symposium and Workshop to highlight the challenges the trans community faces in accessing general healthcare, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and HIV-related services.
- 5** Monitoring and Evaluation of all activities implemented by the organisation and providing reports to donors as required.
- 6** *Based on two (2) sessions involving 22 participants, a Community Feedback Report was generated. During these sessions, community members provided input on TransWave's operations, analyzing each department's activities, rating them, and proposing new ideas or activities to address identified shortcomings. Using this feedback, TransWave has adjusted and augmented our 2024 Workplan to better align with the community's needs.*

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Media and Communications Department manages the public face of TransWave Jamaica through traditional and social media tactics. Their primary role is to boost the visibility of the work the organisation is doing as well as of the trans community themselves. The department comes up with strategies and campaigns aimed at promoting awareness, support and respect for the rights of transgender persons in Jamaica. They are also responsible for recruiting and maintaining our cohort of Ambassadors, who also represent the public face of TransWave Jamaica and are often sued in media campaigns and general posts to our social media.

Key Activities for 2023

Social Media

- Instagram Follower Count: 6,122 Followers
- X Follower Count: 3K Followers
- Facebook Likes and Followers: 5.1K Likes, 5.4K Followers

News Letter

- Every quarter, TransWave released newsletters showcasing the work and activities completed during that period.
- These newsletters were distributed to over 450 subscribers in our email database, comprising community members, partners, and other CSOs.

- Re-launched the TransWave Jamaica website
- Created the Trans Day of Remembrance video featuring the voices of persons in the trans community to remember those lives lost due to transphobic violence.

Digital Media

- Developed a Trans Health Series featuring physical and mental health tips from community members and professionals to promote healthier practices among the trans community in Jamaica.

Community Engagement

- Ran Ambassadors Program with Policy and Advocacy Department to boost trans advocacy visibility in Jamaica.

- Launched Trans Safety Guide and shared campaign online with community members, partners, other CSOs, and followers.

- Implemented a COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign for the trans community.

Campaigns

- Created and Executed HIV campaigns for the trans community with nine videos reaching over 39,000 accounts.



OUTREACH AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

The Outreach and Social Support department meets with and attends to the needs of the trans and gender non-conforming more directly by engaging them in activities and sessions more in line with combating the systemic transphobia rooted in Jamaican society. The department ensures that they provide services and activities that improve the physical and mental well-being of the community members and connects persons to social services and resources as needed that the organisation may not be equipped to provide, all through on the partnerships TransWave has formed with other entities.

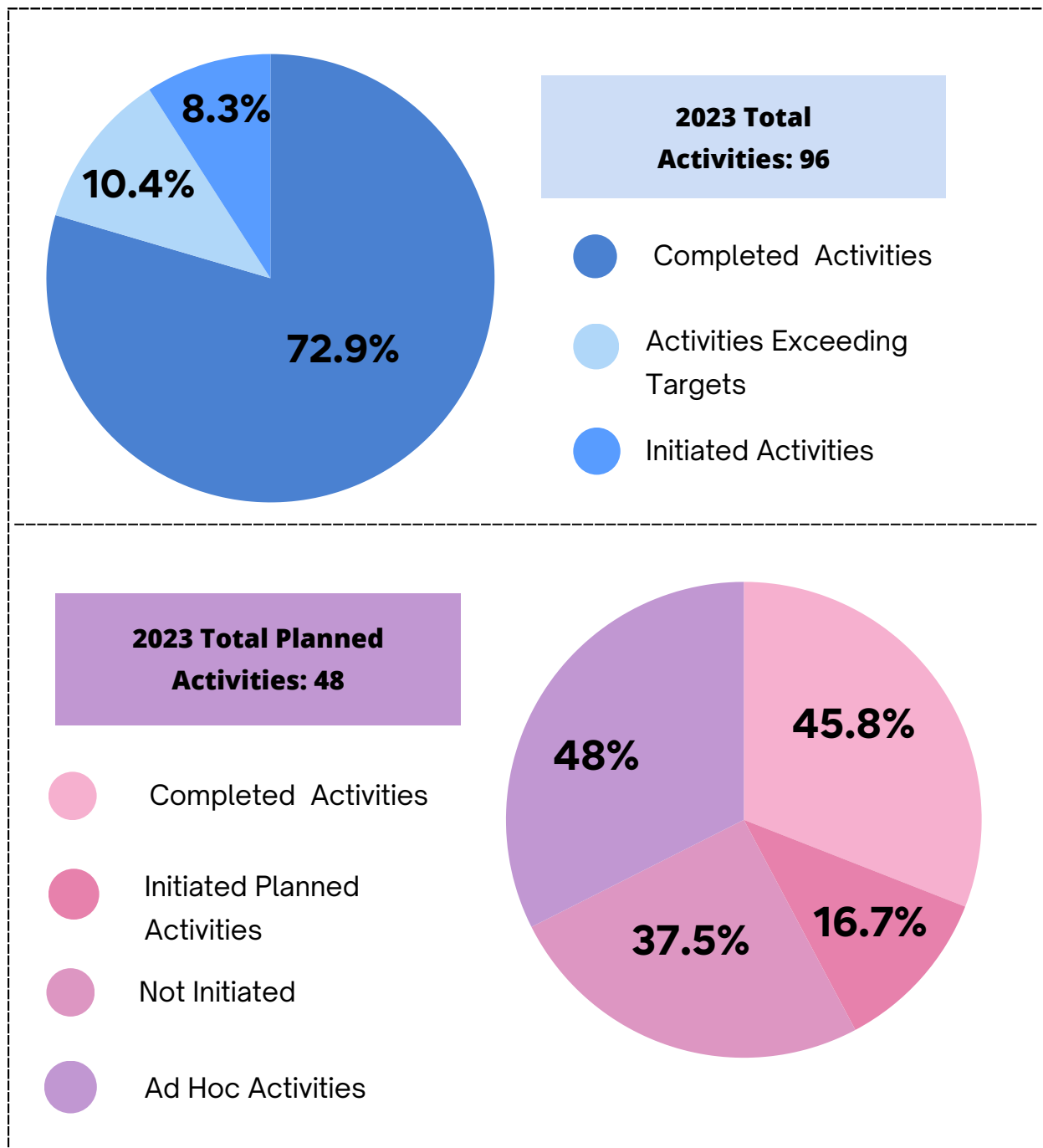
Key Activities for 2023

- Provided 200 care packages and grocery vouchers across seven parishes to support community members facing displacement or job loss due to discrimination, ensuring basic needs are met safely.
- Facilitated community events focusing on trans representation in movies and Vogue/Ballroom culture to create social spaces for trans and gender non-conforming individuals, fostering belonging and community.
- Host Support group sessions to speak on issues impacting the community and providing a space to air grievances, encourage safer sex practices, teaching job readiness skills, etc. The sessions promoted and provided the need for community support and built the capacity of the trans and gender non-conforming community on things that could improve their livelihood.
- Provided self-defense classes with demonstrations and de-escalation tips to address transphobic violence in the community by promoting self-protection and conflict resolution.
- Completed Shared Incident Database (SID) reports documented human rights violations reported by community members. The reports were used to guide interventions to eliminate violence threats and promote trans-friendly behaviors.
- Referred community members to partners for services like HIV treatment, testing, counseling, and birth certificates to better assist the trans community and strengthen partnerships.



2023 Snapshot

Note: Due to lack of funding, some planned activities were either not completed or initiated, which impacted the rates of completion and initiation shown here.



2023

Key Outputs

In-person engagement: 1,012

Online engagement: 463,047+ (Jan-Nov 2023)



1

website launched at an event with 21 persons including staff, community members, partners and other CSO representatives

6

media campaigns around the Trans Health Strategy, health and wellness tips, debunking myths around HIV, gender-based violence facing the trans community and transgender visibility

8

leverage partnership sessions with 232 key duty bearers



1

residential training with 15 ambassadors for Trans-Wave including trans community members and their allies.



4

Legal literacy sessions with 61 community members

7



sensitisation trainings around gender-based violence affecting the trans community with 122 participants including community members, trained psychologists, counsellors-in-training, and representatives from other CSOs.





1

Trans Health and Wellness Workshop with 26 community members, and a Symposium with 53 participants including community members, representatives from various CSOs, partners and key duty bearers

11

support group sessions with 57 community members

1

research around gender-based violence impacting the trans community



2

self-defence classes with 25 community members



200

care packages distributed to community members

1



Trans Safety Guide created and launched at an event with 21 participants including staff, community members, partners and representatives from other CSOs





2023 HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION REPORT

The data from the Human Rights Violation Report came from focus groups (38 participants) and the CVC Shared Incident Database (SID) platform. 16 persons were from rural areas, and 13 from urban area and included bisexuals, pansexuals, gender non-conforming folks and transgender women. The report found that following Rights of the individuals in the group were violated:

The Right to Housing	The Right to Life, Liberty, and Security of the Person
The Right to Equality Before the Law and Equal Protection of the Law	The Right to Education
The Right to Privacy	The Right to Healthcare
The Right to Work	The Right to Freedom from Discrimination

70%	reported negative experiences with the police, including violence when reporting gender-based violence incidents.
90%	of individuals lack trust in the Jamaican judicial system due to perceived discrimination against LGBT Jamaicans
70%	reported facing mental health issues due to violence, including suicidal thoughts, with one individual specified suicidal ideation, which prompted immediate action and referral to relevant authorities
1 in 5	reported experiencing cyberbullying based on their sexual orientation and gender identities.



Annual Financial Report

TransWave Financial Report Reporting Period: January – December 2023

In the fiscal year ending December 2023, TransWave Jamaica recorded a total income of \$41 million, falling short of the budgeted figure of \$113 million.

A significant portion, \$32 million, of the organisation's revenue came from grants, with additional income sourced from small donations.

Despite a decrease in actual activities compared to the budget, there was a notable increase in overall activity levels in 2023 compared to the preceding year.

This increase in activity was reflected in event expenses, which amounted to \$7.1 million for 2023, up from \$5.6 million in the previous year.

TransWave Jamaica achieved a profit of \$1M Jamaican dollars for the fiscal year 2023. The organisation's current assets, primarily comprised of chequing accounts, continued to grow positively, mainly fuelled by donor funding.

Furthermore, the organisation saw a significant decrease in total liabilities and equity, dropping by 54.13% from \$18 million as of December 31, 2022, to \$10 million as of December 31, 2023.

41M

TOTAL INCOME

7.1M

EVENT EXPENSES

32M

GRANT DONATIONS

54.13%

DECREASE IN TOTAL LIABILITIES AND
EQUITY

1M

TOTAL PROFIT



Thank you!

The work that TransWave has done throughout the year would not be possible without the contribution of our dedicated donors:

Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
Black Feminist Fund
Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)
Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC)
Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN)
Equality For All Foundation (EFAF)
Gilead
GiveOut
Global Fund
Global Fund For Women
International Trans Fund
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)



Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings further, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

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Facebook: TransWave Jamaica