



Annual Report 2024

Reflecting Activities as from
January 1 - December 31, 2024





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Introduction

From its inception only nine (9) years prior, TransWave Jamaica has been leading in transgender and gender non-conforming/non-binary advocacy in Jamaica. It originated first as a dedicated virtual space for blogs about trans experiences and eventually grew into an organisation that developed programs to promote inclusive policies, visibility, social support tactics, research on issues impacting the community and fostering increased knowledge and capacity of the local trans community.

TransWave Jamaica is dedicated to continuing 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.

Strategic Objectives

All our programs and projects aligned with the following Strategic Objectives for the year:

1: To get Jamaica to a place where trans people are recognized and protected from discrimination at community and institutional settings, specifically in health, education, workplace and law enforcement

2: To amplify the visibility of the transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary and intersex (TGNCNBI) community to improve quality of life, well-being and realisation of human rights.

3: To create safer and more inclusive spaces for trans people to access health and psychosocial support services through increased partnership referrals and via limited direct service delivery.

4: To enhance programme design and implementation through innovation, strategic information and improved monitoring systems.

5: Strengthen the internal financial system and ensure adequate diverse funding sources for a fully to fulfil organisational mandate and meet needs of the Trans community.

6: Strengthened accountability through board governance; statutory compliance; and a sustainable, professional learning organisation with skilled staff and volunteers.

Staff Complement 2024

Renae Green (She/Her)
Executive Director

Administration and Finance

Shevoy Brown (He/Him)
Finance Manager

Saint Courtanii Ba'Rhone (They/Them)
Finance Officer

Russainzz Hunter (They/Them)
Community Liaison Officer / Procurement Officer

Yakeem Reid (He/Him)
Procurement Officer / Media and Communications Specialist

Policy and Advocacy

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

Lamar Grant (She/They)
Policy and Advocacy Specialist

Tashwa James (She/Her)
Media and Communications Specialist

Programs and Strategy

Rohan Wallace (He/Him)
Associate Director of Programs and Strategy

Mali Dust (She/They)
Monitoring & Evaluation Officer

Anika Walsh (She/Her)
Outreach and Social Support Officer

Jasmine McKenzie (She/Her)
Intern

Oqukion Fowler (He/They)
Intern

Executive Summary

The Annual Report reflects on the activities and projects completed within the year 2024. TransWave sits at the helm of transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary (TGNCNB) representation and advocacy in media and policy, making great strides towards legislative and social inclusion as well as the realised human rights for the community it serves. The organisation conducted several activities in the year that progressed towards these outcomes, as well as building the capacity of the trans community, and reinforcing allyship with service providers.

We had a total of 87 activities in our workplan, including 18 ad hoc activities and 69 planned ones. We completed 30 planned activities and initiated 19. Funding for certain projects remains an issue that impacts us, and especially in the wake of rising cases of transphobia and anti-gender movement support in the political sphere locally and internationally, we are learning that building more self-sustaining projects and activities are crucial now more than ever—a feat that we will make greater strides towards in the coming year.

Most notable in the year's progress is the implementation of our education assistance and seed funding programs under the "Being LGBTQIA+ In the Caribbean" project. These directly benefitted 25 trans individuals with attaining certifications, degrees, or resources to establish their small businesses. This program stood out especially as we found that too many trans and gender non-conforming persons were unable to finish formal schooling due to lack of support from the families they grew up with, leaving them to live lives on the lower scale socio-economically. Finding and keeping jobs also presented issues both due to lack of accredited qualifications, but also due to transphobia existing in the hiring process. By directly aiding community members with full or partial scholarships, they had a better chance at completing and attaining certifications to boost their portfolio. Supporting small trans-led businesses with necessary resources to sustain themselves gave trans business owners a chance to build clientele without the worry of accruing loss, as well as having new materials and machinery (sewing machines, printers, whacker etc.) that will not require maintenance for a while. The program also featured a psychologist and social worker who helped beneficiaries develop life plans to sustain themselves beyond the project.

34%

planned activities
completed

55%

of activities
completed overall

The project included the development of a document detailing the history of the trans movement, which inspired a mural painted at our office in Kingston. The document, powered by a consultation with Tenement Yaad Media, shares the rich history of the trans movement in Jamaica, including where TransWave stepped in as an organisation dedicated to trans advocacy and visibility. The mural showed the faces of persons who were pivotal in the trans movement locally, as well as commemorated the lives of those lost due to transphobic violence, sharing some faces and many names across a pink and blue ribbon. Though the mural was launched in January 2024, we held a candlelight vigil with 13 participants on Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR) in November, where they shared stories of their trans loved ones gone too soon.



We held various residential and one-day trainings, capacity building sessions, stakeholder meetings and focus groups that

involved or directly benefited the TGNCNB community, their allies, police officers, healthcare workers, other service providers and educational institutions. These sessions were geared towards building advocacy measures for the trans community, fostering more empathetic and inclusive practices, and dismantling internalised/externalised transphobia. Some sessions included building the advocacy efforts of other trans-led groups or initiatives in Jamaica including Cari-Trans Support Group (who was later awarded financial support from us to implement a support group activity), TranscendX, TransForm and Totally Inspiring Trans (TiTs). Other sessions involved training police officers, upcoming social workers from the Jamaica Theological Seminary, or staff at Children First Agency/Bashy Bus Kru in how to provide trans-friendly services.

TransWave also developed a Trans Health Toolkit with major support from Leemoy Weaver and Steve R. Weaver, who gladly organised focus groups with healthcare workers to develop a rapid assessment on their willingness to provide trans-specific healthcare. The rapid assessment guided the authoring of the Trans Health Toolkit as it showed that there was some willingness amongst healthcare workers, however there was a lack of knowledge as to how or what resources were necessary to provide such services. The Toolkit will bridge that gap and offer a comprehensive look into what services would be most beneficial to

the trans community, the relevance of having such services and in what ways healthcare providers can be better allies to the community.

Other notable activities included media campaigns on Mpox (which also included a billboard erected in Kingston, as well as a video campaign), workplace discrimination, trans-inclusive language and PrEP and other HIV-related services. Most campaigns included videos or graphics shared and boosted on our social media accounts, or updates to our website, including a brand new landing page dedicated to all thing PrEP: what it does, where to access it, important information about mixing PrEP with hormone replacement therapy (HRT), and so forth, which is all accessible here: <https://prep.transwaveja.org/>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the TransWave Jamaica PrEP website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Resource Hub, PrEP Clinic, Myth-Busting, and a prominent purple 'TAKE ACTION' button. The main header features the 'PrEP: HEALTHY' logo, where 'PrEP:' is in black and 'HEALTHY' is in white on a red background. Below the header, a large image of a smiling Black woman with curly hair is on the left. To her right, text explains that PrEP is a proactive step toward a healthier, HIV-free future. Below this, a map of Jamaica is displayed with orange pins indicating the locations of various PrEP clinics across the island. A search box on the left of the map allows users to find a clinic by name or address. On the right side of the page, a section titled 'PrEP & Transgender Health' provides information on why PrEP is important for transgender people, discussing factors like stigma, discrimination, and hormone therapy. A 'Learn More' button is located at the bottom of this section.

This narrative report delves deeper into all the activities conducted throughout the year, provides key outputs, a snapshot of the completion rate, and concludes with our Human Rights Violation Report, as well as shares the donors who helped to sustain us.



Major Successes

Note: Listed in no particular order

Ambassador Trainings

We held two (2) residential advocacy trainings with a total of 23 transgender, gender non-conforming/non-binary persons and their allies, as a way of building their capacities on advocacy efforts. The first training, held in July, had 13 participants who were representatives from various trans-led groups and initiatives in Jamaica, including TranscendX, TransForm, Cari-Trans Support Group (CTGS) and Totally Inspiring Trans (TiTs). Activities included presentations on the National Trans Health Strategy, evidence-based advocacy, proposal writing and reporting, as well as developing a proposal for a project that could benefit trans community members. This training allowed us the opportunity to train more trans advocates as to how to contribute and continue the already existing movement towards trans liberation, ensuring that other trans initiatives are provided the resources to propel the movement forward.

The second training in November had 10 transgender, gender non-conforming/non-binary persons and their allies come together to form a new cohort of ambassadors for the organisation. The ambassadors were trained to develop skills around advocacy, resilience, climate action, financial responsibility and developing vision boards. Participants engaged with presenters in meaningful ways, and strengthened their abilities to represent not just themselves, but the entire organisation and transgender community.

Trans Health Toolkit

Authored by Leemoy Weaver and Steve R. Weaver, TransWave commissioned for the development of a Trans Health Toolkit. This document would be used as a guide for healthcare practitioners who are already or are considering taking up work that will affirm transgender community members. This toolkit includes some basic information about trans-specific healthcare options and tools to assist with initiating and/or maintaining gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT), gender-affirming surgeries, navigating legal and ethical considerations, and health maintenance care. It also directs healthcare professions to further reading and provides suggestions for where they can access support from more experienced healthcare providers. The toolkit supports the call to develop specific protocols to guide how services can be offered to the trans community, ensuring that these protocols meet global standards of care for trans people which are set by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH).

The toolkit lists the following as its objectives:

- Understanding transgender needs
- Promoting inclusive care
- Clinical Guidance
- Navigating legal and ethical considerations
- Health maintenance care
- Collaboration and networking



Educational Assistance

We assisted 14 persons, of which two (2) were trans women, two (2) were trans men and 10 were gender non-conforming/non-binary, in starting or continuing school at the tertiary level, or certification courses to develop skills. Of the cohort of beneficiaries, they studied for subjects such as accounting, nursing, law, marketing, psychology, business administration as well as finishing CSEC qualifications. We offered full tuition coverage for a semester of studies, creating ease for the beneficiaries as they could proceed to attain qualifications and increase their chances of finding and maintaining jobs. This activity also included check-ins with our resident psychologist and social worker to develop life plans and ensure they stay on track with their studies.

Seed Funding

In addition to the educational assistance, we also aided 11 community members (5 trans women, 3 trans men, 3 gender non-conforming) with seed funding, which involved providing key tools, materials and other resources to start or maintain their small business ventures. Our beneficiaries owned businesses that offered services such as provision of gender affirming products, reproductive health items, clothing/fashion, snack shops, gardening, printerries and carpentry. The program involved persons applying through an online form, where our staff availed themselves to anyone in need of assistance completing our forms. The assistance went directly into procurement of items for their small businesses, as well as pick-up and delivery (where possible). A psychologist and social worker were also available to beneficiaries to develop business and life plans to promote sustainability of the project for its beneficiaries.

Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR)

Candlelight Vigil, Historical Document and Mural



As a key activity and in commemoration of the Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR) in November, 2024, we commissioned Tenement Yaad Media to complete a historical document that detailed the history of the transgender movement in Jamaica. It would allow TransWave to note key actors in the stride towards transgender recognition and community building in Jamaica, as well as make mention of those we had lost due to transphobic violence. The document would then be used to guide the creation of a mural, to be painted at TransWave's office in Kingston, and would both acknowledge those advocates who were and are pivotal to the trans movement in Jamaica, as well as pay respects to all those trans lives lost over the years.

While we intended for this mural to be prepared in time for TDOR in November, due to some scheduling and internal conflicts, it could not be completed by then. However, we still held our candlelight vigil at our Kingston office with 13 participants, including trans community members, their allies, and representatives from UNDP, who were key donors for the event. We provided fireless candles/lights to participants to hold throughout the ceremony and held brief periods of silence to as well as encourage participants to share their stories of loved ones as a way of honouring the lives of those lost to transphobia.

Key Outputs

Two (2) residential trainings with 23 TGNCNB participants & their allies to build ambassador program

12 support groups with 57 TGNCNB participants to improve mental health outcomes for the trans community

14 TGNCNB persons provided with educational assistance to start or continue tertiary education and/or attain certifications

11 TGNCNB persons provided with seed funding to support their small businesses/business ideas

One (1) partnership with HEART TRUST/NSTA to provide more affirming educational opportunities

Two (2) stakeholder sessions with 39 TGNCNB participants to build their capacity on entrepreneurship

Mpox trainings with 15 TGNCNB participants to create informed community leaders to bring information to the rest of the community

Provided financial support to Cari-Trans Support Group to implement support session for 15 transgender men and trans-masculine individuals

Legal Education training with 20 police officers from the Half Way Tree and New Kingston police stations to promote positive attitudes towards the trans community

Key Outputs

Sensitisation sessions with 18 staff members from Children First Agency and 20 students from the Jamaica Theological Seminary to improve their attitudes and behaviours towards the transgender community.

20 grocery vouchers were distributed to TGNCNB persons

Onboarded two (2) TGNCNB interns to learn project implementation and advocacy skills

4 media campaigns including videos and graphics shared to our social media pages, as well as a billboard erected in Kingston promoting ways of preventing the spread of Mpox. Campaigns spoke to HIV prevention, PrEP, workplace discrimination, Mpox, trans health.

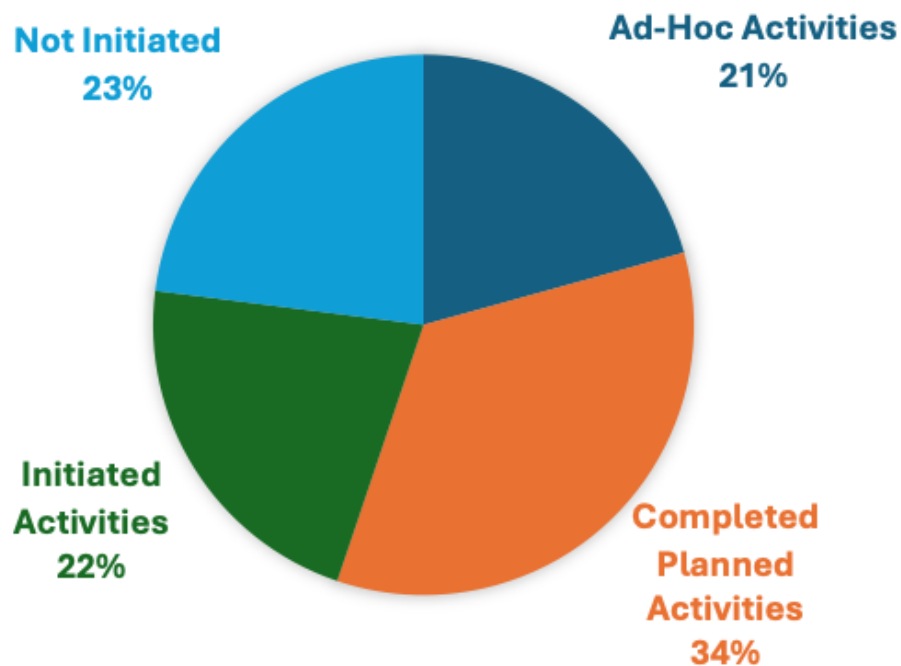
Two (2) legal literacy trainings with 43 TGNCNB participants to build their capacity on legal recognition and legislation that impacts the trans community



Snapshot

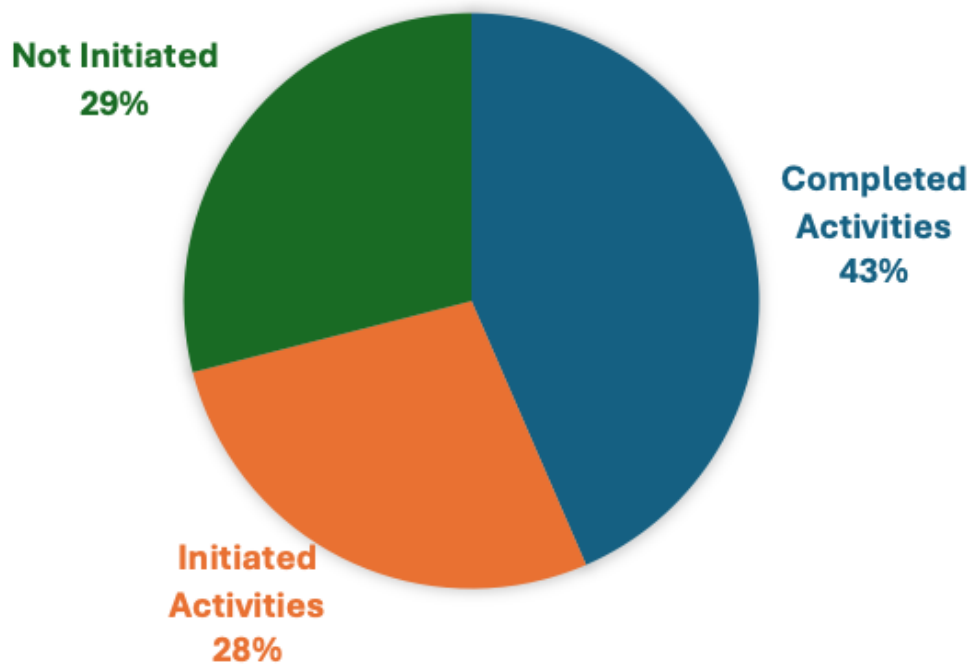
In 2024, we had a total of 87 activities for the year, including 18 ad-hoc activities. Of the 87 activities, 69 of them were planned activities, with 30 of these being completed and 19 being initiated. A total of 20 activities were not initiated, mostly because of a lack of funding opportunities to execute them.

COMPLETION RATE FOR ALL ACTIVITIES IN 2024



Snapshot

COMPLETION RATE OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES 2024



Photos



Human Rights Violation Report

Data for this report were collected through the Shared Incident Database (SID), in-person reporting at our office, and interactions during various sessions hosted by our team throughout the year.

A total of **21** reports were documented, submitted primarily by **trans women (70%)**, followed by **trans men (20%)** and **gender non-conforming persons (10%)**. The reported violations included:

- Physical assault
- Sexual violence
- Verbal harassment
- Unwarranted evictions
- Intimate partner violence

Reports stemmed from geographic areas located in both rural and urban Jamaica, with the majority originating from Kingston and St. Andrew, St. Catherine, St. Ann, St. James, Westmoreland, and Clarendon.

Alarming, only two (2) out of the 21 individuals who reported violations proceeded to file a formal report with the police. Additionally, one (1) person attempted to make a report but was unsuccessful. The data also highlighted one (1) case of police discrimination, as well as an incident in which a police officer recorded a community member without their consent and subsequently ridiculed and verbally abused them.

These incidents underscore the community's prevailing lack of trust and confidence in law enforcement, with many stating that they do not feel safe or supported when attempting to report violations.



In response, our Policy and Advocacy team initiated targeted interventions to address this widespread distrust. Throughout the year, the team conducted legal education trainings and stakeholder sensitization sessions with duty bearers, including police officers from two major stations in Kingston and St. Andrew. These sessions aimed to:

- Equip officers with a deeper understanding of the realities faced by trans and gender non-conforming persons
- Promote respectful and dignified engagement
- Strengthen their capacity to uphold and protect the human rights of all individuals, regardless of gender identity or expression

A total of 20 officers participated in these sessions, with more than half expressing a willingness to engage more positively with the transgender community moving forward. These engagements aim to foster a more inclusive, respectful, and rights-based approach within policing practices, ultimately ensuring that trans and gender non-conforming persons can access justice and protection without fear of discrimination or secondary victimization.



Our Donors

We extend our sincere gratitude to our donors who helped us to fund activities, programs and operational costs throughout the year. Your support has kept us sustained and provided meaningful and positive changes for the transgender and gender non-conforming community in Jamaica:

Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice

Black Feminist Fund

Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC)

Commonwealth Foundation

Cross Culture Collective

GiveOut

Global Fund/Ministry of Health and Wellness

International Trans Fund (ITF)

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

Skylar Wharton

Stonewall

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Contact Information



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



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