



Wellspring  
Philanthropic Fund 

# The Power of Ownership

**A Guide to Property Purchases  
for LGBTQIA\* Civil Society Organisations**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Abbreviations Used in This Guide</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acronyms for CSOs and Their Location</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Some Background</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>How to Use The Guide</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 Making the Decision to Purchase</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2 Building a Case</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3 Preparing the Organisation and Community</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4 Sources of Funding</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5 Finding and Purchasing a Property</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6 New Opportunities</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>7 Building Sustainable Organisations and Movements</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>8 A Culture of Continuous Learning</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>27</b>

## Abbreviations Used in This Guide

<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)
<b>GIZ</b>	German Agency for International Cooperation
<b>LGBTQIA*</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and others
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>PWD</b>	People with Disability
<b>REF</b>	Ripple Effects Framework
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

## Acronyms for CSOs and Their Location

<b>JFLAG</b>	Equality for All Foundation Jamaica
<b>OTD</b>	Organizando Trans Diversidades (Chile)
<b>INEND</b>	Initiative for Equality and Non-Discrimination (Kenya)
<b>GDX</b>	Gender Dynamix (South Africa)
<b>TBZ</b>	Trans Bantu (Zambia)
<b>TOF</b>	The Other Foundation (South Africa)
<b>UAF-Africa</b>	Urgent Action Fund Africa (Kenya)
<b>VOVO</b>	Voice of the Voiceless (Zimbabwe)
<b>WHER</b>	Women's Health and Equal Rights Initiative (Nigeria)

## Some Background

Over the past few years, Dreilinden, Wellspring and other donors have been supporting LGBTQIA\* Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Global South and Global East to purchase their own properties. The anecdotal evidence that they gathered shows that the impact of owning property has been positive, leading to Queer<sup>1</sup> CSOs becoming more self-sufficient and sustainable. However, until recently, no formal evaluation had been undertaken on the social and financial impact of these purchases on the CSOs.

In 2022, Dreilinden and Wellspring commissioned research into property purchases. The objective was to develop an Effects Framework to identify and measure the changes that come about when CSOs own their space. Hornbill Consultants was contracted to assess the effects of property ownership on Dreilinden and Wellspring grantees at an individual, organisational and movement level. Twenty grantees and five donor organisations participated in the study. The principal output of this work was the development of a Ripple Effects Framework, a planning, monitoring and evaluation tool that can be used by CSOs and by donors who are considering property purchases.

During the process of developing the Ripple Effects Framework, it became evident that property purchases are pioneer projects for many CSOs working in the absence of 'How to' or 'Good Practice' guides. No repository exists where grantees and donors can learn about organisations that have embarked on this journey and what lessons they may have to share. CSOs are navigating an uncharted territory with little formal guidance, and thus are often re-inventing the wheel.

This Guide seeks to provide CSOs interested in property purchase with practical guidance on how to undertake this journey, from conceptualisation to realisation. It contains information that can be interpreted for the local context, to plan, implement, monitor, report, evaluate and learn from the property purchasing process.

### Who is it for?

The target audience for this Guide are Queer CSOs – those thinking of purchasing their own property but haven't yet started and those who may have made the decision to purchase and need support and guidance with the next steps. While the research focused on Queer organisations, the main principles can be extended and applied to all CSOs, regardless of sector.

### Purpose of the Guide

The main purpose is to guide CSOs by sharing the experiences of those who have been, or who are on the journey. It outlines the various phases of the journey, what CSOs have been doing, some questions to consider, possible hurdles you may encounter and how to mitigate these. In the process, it seeks to promote networking and reduce the isolation some CSOs may experience.

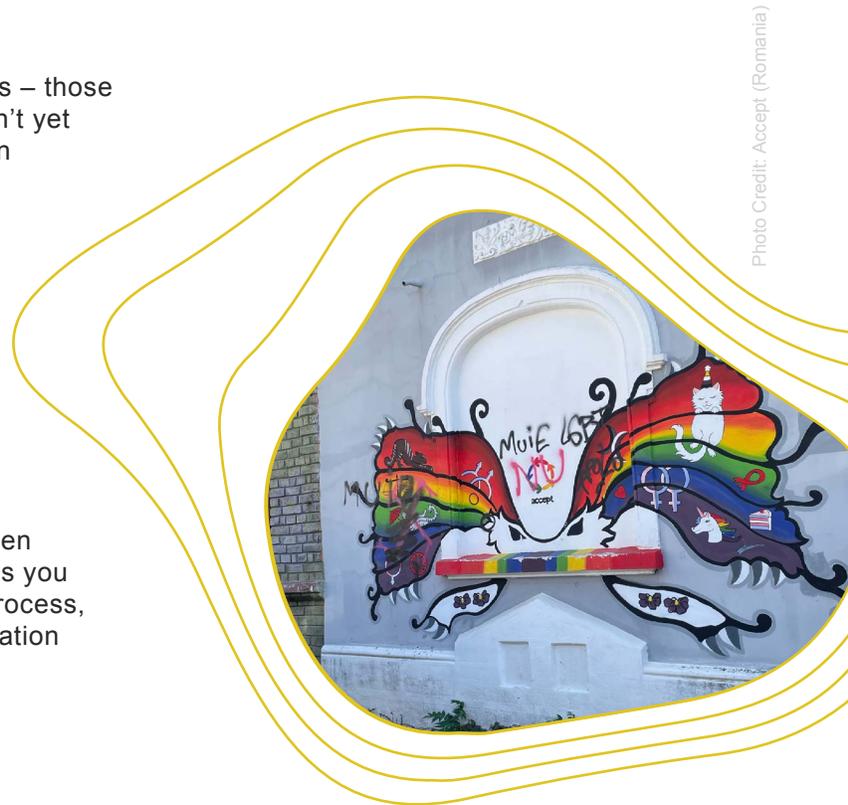


Photo Credit: Accept (Romania)

<sup>1</sup> Organisations contributing to this guide were individuals and communities from the SOGIESC – Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Characteristics spectrum. We use "Queer" as an umbrella term to refer to this diverse group.

# How to Use the Guide



This Guide has been developed using data gathered from the development of the [Ripple Effects Framework](#) in 2022 and some new and additional conversations with CSOs and donors (see Appendix 1). It is structured using the concept of a journey. While there is logical progression from one step to another, it's important to recognise that the entire journey is dynamic, and non-linear, including setbacks and leaps ahead. CSOs are therefore invited to see the Guide as a reference document, which they can dip in and out of.

# 1

## Making the Decision to Purchase

Moving from renting a property to purchasing one is a big decision with both benefits and risks.

Benefits include short term savings on rent, freedom to use the space as you wish and the creation of a long-term financial asset. Risks to the organisation include heightened visibility, the long-term commitment to repair and maintenance costs, and no longer being able to 'up and move' if the environment becomes hostile.

The decision-making process itself is not always straightforward or smooth. Even if there is a pre-planned strategy to purchase, for many it's a process that moves forwards and backwards over time. Having a sense of urgency is understandable, but at the same time, it is unwise to rush it. The availability of a suitable property can drive a decision to purchase but if a deal falls through, it may set the process back. In some instances, specific triggers prompt CSOs to pursue the purchase option at a particular point in time. This includes being 'gifted' with financial resources at the end of a funding cycle, or a security incident that makes moving essential and urgent.

Whatever the dynamics, it's important to make the decision to purchase collectively within the organisation, based on sound reflection. Even if your decision is *'this is not the right time to buy,'* the conversation is valuable to help your organisation plan more strategically for the future.

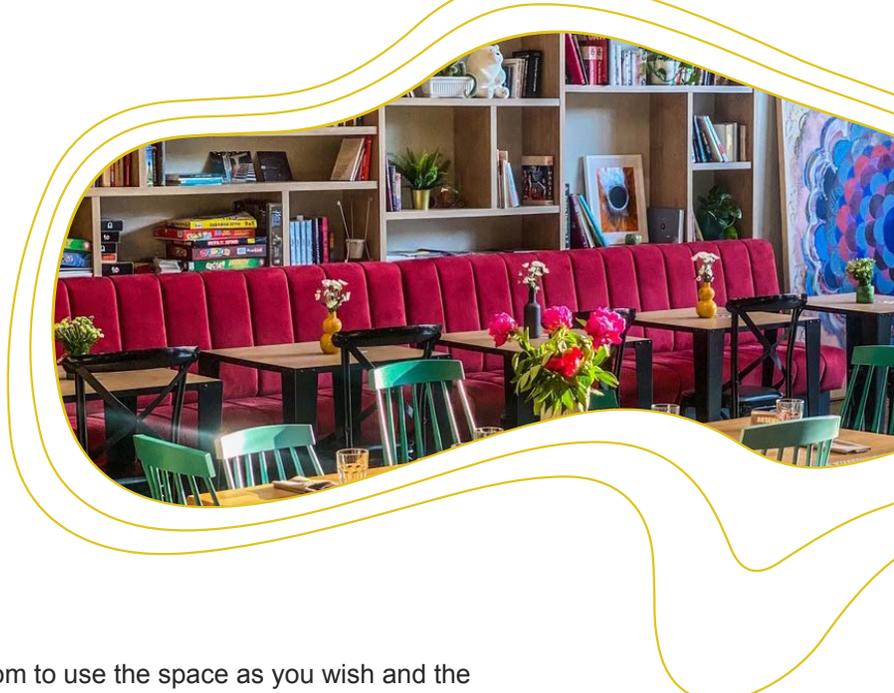


Photo Credit: Single Step (Bulgaria)

### Unforeseen circumstances can act as a trigger...

With the onset of Covid in 2020, Iranti like many other organisations found their rental offices were suddenly empty as everyone moved to working from home. The prospect of continuing to pay rent for an empty office prompted the Director to move ahead with the idea of purchasing a property for the organisation. By diverting funds earmarked for rent into an existing Reserve Fund, Iranti purchased a property in a neighbourhood that crossed boundaries in terms of class and ethnicity, had good security and was a place where Queer people felt comfortable. The new space has already hosted a multitude of events including a trans wedding, *"It's incredible. If we were in a rented premises, we would have to seek permission, it might not be possible. We have so much more agency over what we do in our space."*

### But undue pressure and haste can lead to suboptimal decision making...

A LBQ organisation in Asia was prompted to purchase a property using resources that remained at the end of a project funding cycle. The nature of the funding meant that the CSO was under pressure to make a quick decision. The political climate in the country was changing with the introduction of laws that were hostile to LGBTQIA\* people. In addition, aggressive discriminatory attacks were exacerbated by insecurity in the neighbourhood and the building was damaged by fire. *"After careful consideration, we were obliged to move out and had to sell the property at a great financial loss. A lot of money was lost in the process."*

## Some questions to consider when deciding whether to purchase

**How sustainable is your organisation?** Owning a property is a long-term commitment, regardless the size of organisation. Is your organisation likely to stay around for long enough to manage the obligations that property ownership brings?

**Is there sufficient leadership and vision to carry it through?** Purchasing a property is a demanding and time-consuming process with many ups and downs. Does your organisation have the leadership to see the process through to a successful conclusion?

Planning, budgeting, negotiating, and project management are among the **technical skills** you will need to successfully purchase and move to a new property. **Financial resources** are also important, not just for the purchase itself but also for the upkeep of the property. You may need to source some of the technical skills if you do not have them in-house.

**Is it the right time for increased visibility and physical presence of an LGBTQIA\* CSO?** Many Queer CSOs find themselves in a volatile and hostile environment where attitudes can shift rapidly, especially with changes in the political environment. Will a permanent physical presence bring greater acknowledgement of Queer people and their rights, or will it leave your organisation and its members more exposed to targeted intimidation and aggression?

**Do you have the support of the wider Queer community?** Many CSOs report that the benefits of their property purchase have arisen through the support of wider Queer communities and when there is consensus around increased visibility. Community members who use and benefit from the property are important for ensuring ownership is meaningful and sustainable.

## Push and pull factors

Once you have made the decision that purchasing a property (or constructing one) is right for you, it's advisable to consider the *push* and *pull* factors that might have influenced your decision. These bring into focus the challenges that purchasing a property will solve, and potential benefits that owning your own space might bring. It's also a valuable part of 'building a case' (see section 2). *Push factors* support a decision to discontinue renting a property, while *Pull factors* emerge from the anticipated benefits that owning a property will bring. There are several factors that Push CSOs towards a decision to purchase rather than rent, these include:

### Physical security

Many CSOs describe feeling unsafe with an ongoing threat of harassment, intimidation and sometimes violence. With rental properties, CSOs are often obliged to locate to less safe neighbourhoods where offices can be broken into, and equipment stolen. Investment in security systems may not make sense for the short term. If additional security is required, this represents a 'sunk cost' which is lost when the CSO is forced to move. Between 2016-2018, a human rights CSO in Uganda experienced several break-ins. Despite raising the fence and installing security cameras at their own cost, staff continued to feel unsafe in the space. "*Security became a big issue; We needed to find an alternative solution.*" If left unresolved, insecurity contributes to staff and the community feeling unsafe and disempowered.

### Difficulty in finding a place to rent

Organisations in many countries find it extremely difficult to find a landlord who is willing to rent to an openly Queer CSO. For those that operate covertly there is the potential risk of exposure and subsequent sanctions. When there is high demand in the rental market, the challenges are even greater and the long and arduous process of securing a property makes refusal even more disheartening. For Single Step in Bulgaria, the motivation to buy a property emanated from the inability to find landlords willing to rent. "We saw over 100 properties, but no one was keen to rent it to an LGBTQIA\* organisation. We ultimately said, "*Screw you, we'll purchase a property ourselves.*"

## Uncertainty of tenure

After acquiring a property to rent, the threat of eviction by LGBTQIA\* unfriendly landlords still hangs over many CSOs. Even with a formal agreement, landlords may refuse to renew a lease or cancel it at short notice. CSOs must sometimes 'tiptoe' to keep the true nature of their work hidden. Collectively, this contributes to staff and the community feeling insecure, as shared by FSM in Colombia *"Renting is always a struggle for trans organisations because landlords think that the space will be used for sex-work."*

## Financial considerations

In many parts of the world, CSOs struggle to keep up with high rents that keep increasing, especially in regions where economies are emerging and the demand for premises is growing. This places a lot of stress on the organisation and its staff who constantly worry if sufficient funding will come through on time. With property prices also increasing, there can be a sense that while purchase may be possible now, it may not be possible in future. As Guybow in Guyana reflected, *"For the past 21 years we've paid rent. It's a significant amount. We could've used that money to buy a property."*

Alongside push factors are those that pull CSOs towards a decision to purchase. These are anticipated benefits that owning a space can bring to the organisation and its staff, including:

## Creating a safe space

A place to call 'Home' is a universal aspiration for Queer CSOs; one that embodies security on a physical, psychological, and spiritual level for both staff and members of the community they serve. This safe space is often a platform for discussion, a place to reflect on community needs and issues, and where trusted conversations can take place.

## Enhanced sustainability

Creating a self-sustaining organisation, less reliant on donor funding is a vision shared by many CSOs. Owning one's space can be a road to greater financial independence and organisational security. For the past 12 years, The Other Foundation, based in South Africa has been renting office space. They are now purchasing their own premises. *"It fits into our long-term plan and makes financial sense. It will make the organisation more attractive."* The potential for generating income to meet overhead costs through letting out parts of the space is also exciting for many, especially in regions where donor funds are shrinking. The ASEAN SOGIE caucus in the Philippines was offered an 'exit grant' from their donor which enabled them to purchase an office space close to the centre of Manila. *"Our new space has provided psychological security to the organisation and opened up new possibilities of income generation in the future."*

For organisations to stay afloat means ensuring there is always enough money to cover the rent. Much time, attention and energy are invested in maintaining this budget line, often drawing focus away from core programmes. INEND in Kenya explain that *"If we have a large enough space, many activities can happen on our premises, and we don't need to spend money on holding meetings in expensive hotels."* Some CSOs use property ownership to achieve financial sustainability by adopting a business model where one part of the organisation generates income to support the core work of the other (CSO in Kenya, Single Step). The extent to which you focus on activism and human rights work or explore a social enterprise approach is an important discussion for your organisation and your communities.

Photo Credit: Accept (Romania)



## A space that can be tailored to specific needs

Many CSOs offer support for mental health and healing; dealing with trauma, violence, depression, and substance abuse that many activists and human rights defenders are vulnerable to. Having a space that can be tailored to provide appropriate privacy and security is a key benefit of owning a property. Connecting to issues of land justice and food security is another strong motivator. For example, the Women's Fund in Georgia is constructing a healing centre for feminist activists using straw bales. *"It will have eight bedrooms and cater for 21 people. Growing food using permaculture and cooking are important values of our centre."*

Many CSOs talk about the pull of **having a permanent physical presence within the social landscape**. Owning a property means having an enduring space where people can access community and support over time. Perhaps less obvious (but equally important) is the impact of Queer property ownership on the social landscape. This can challenge notions of who can and can't own property and land, demonstrate that change is happening, make clear that Queer communities are no longer invisible and transient, and even contribute to the decolonisation process. Like many iconic buildings, a Queer owned space can come to represent an idea; that Queer identity and values have a place in society and are here to stay. *"Owning property for Queer people is not just about ownership, it's about reclaiming power that we haven't had. It's a small step towards being an equal and active citizen. It's a difficult but necessary course."* VOVO, Zimbabwe.

Photo Credit: The Other Foundation (South Africa)



# 2

## Building a Case

The reasons to purchase a property for your organisation may seem obvious. Moving beyond 'deciding to purchase' to 'building a case' for purchase is important to bring others on board and to demonstrate that the process has been carefully thought through. This is especially important when approaching donors for financial support with the project.

### The importance of energetic champions

In most organisations, the idea of property purchase emanates from leaders (often the Director). They hold the vision of this endeavour and steer the process from the outset to completion by adding extra responsibilities and stress to their already demanding position. They undertake the scoping study, do the planning, advocacy, research, and marketing. They engage staff, community members, donors, vendors, among others. As leaders, they tend to reach out and do a lot of networking, which is beneficial for attracting resources and creating new possibilities. Their drive, vision, energy, and motivation cannot be overstated. They are seen to make things happen, especially in organisations with more conventional hierarchical management structures and styles. Once the idea has been conceived, they generally communicate and develop the vision with staff, the board and community members.

Once you have made the decision to purchase, it's important to think about who will provide this leadership and vision in your organisation. Will it be you and/or another senior colleague? In either case, the success of the property purchase depends heavily on the drive and commitment of champions; to steer the process through challenging setbacks and see it through to completion.

### How will we use the building?

Once you become property owners, you will have the responsibility of deciding how to use it. With ownership comes freedom to use the space in a way that is appropriate and that maximises benefits for both the organisation and communities. Reflecting on the possibilities in advance will assist in identifying suitable properties that are on the market; it will also help with deciding whether to purchase or to construct (see next section).

There are a wide range of activities that Queer CSOs carry out in their space. Many are essential for the smooth working of the organisation: adequate office space, document storage, and meeting rooms for existing and future staff members. Other functions that CSOs offer include counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation; all of which require private and secure space.

Engaging with the wider community is an important aspect of CSOs' mandates; workshops, socialising, celebrations and even entertainment are all areas where organisations have used communal spaces to build cohesion within communities and beyond. Balancing the needs of the community and the organisation is important if the space is to be used optimally. Considering how the organisation is likely to develop and grow in future will also help you assess the potential for expansion within the properties that you consider.

For some CSOs owning a property also provides an opportunity to reduce costs and generate income. For TOF in South Africa *"The cost of having meetings and workshops in a hotel is very high, bringing them in-house has led to significant savings"*. For smaller CSOs, such as VOVO in Zimbabwe, owning their property has allowed them to think creatively about resource mobilisation. *"We rent some space to an NGO on a weekly basis. They pay us some money and we offer them use of the WIFI. It works for both parties."*



Photo Credit:VOVO (Zimbabwe)

## Deciding whether to buy or construct

Instead of purchasing an existing structure, some CSOs have acquired land on which to construct their own property. This can be a viable (and sometimes cheaper) option for creating a space that is tailored to your specific needs and can provide additional room to grow into. It also lends itself to approaching the purchase of a permanent space in stages if there are insufficient funds to complete the project in one go. INEND in Kenya reports that “We are leaning towards purchasing land and constructing. Most houses on the market are old houses. This could work out cheaper”.

Not all property on the market will be suitable, perhaps because it is residential (with restrictions on its use) or commercial (with high price). In certain cases, CSOs have been granted land by local government or traditional leaders (GUYBOW, Guyana, and TBZ, Zambia) or supported by benefactors (Women’s Fund, Georgia). Others have purchased portions of land in the past as investments (CSO, Uganda, Rosendal Wellness Centre, South Africa). Acquiring a plot and constructing can allow you to create a space that serves your needs which can be developed in future. Constructing a property however comes with its own challenges; navigating the space with surveyors, engineers, architects, and builders is often a new experience for CSOs and can be lengthy (more than five years for Women’s Fund Georgia).

## Business planning

Charting out the financial implications of property purchase is an important part of building a case. The most obvious is the capital outlay of the actual purchase and the cost of servicing any loans or mortgages (if you choose to and are able to take one). If you have depleted the organisation’s reserves to help fund the purchase, then it will be important to plan for the re-establishing your reserve fund by costing it into future programme funding. It is important also to calculate the recurring costs associated with owning a property, such as maintenance, repairs, and insurance. Be aware there are many unpredictable costs that can arise, such as purchasing or repairing a generator if power supply becomes unreliable. Most CSOs after becoming property owners report an immediate saving on rent, however they also report that the costs of maintenance and repairs are significantly higher than anticipated. Many fail to consider essential insurance - for the building, fire, and theft.

If your property is large enough and you feel it is in keeping with your approach, you may also consider how parts of it can be used to generate income for the organisation to offset some of the running costs. Several CSOs rent out parts of their offices to like-minded organisations for a small fee, while others open-up the use of communal space for workshops and events run by external parties. Still others have adopted an entrepreneurial approach and use their properties to host social events and entertainment (Single Step, Bulgaria) or rent out entire parts of their property to generate income from short term commercial tenants (CSO, Kenya). Whichever route you choose, it’s important to construct a Business Plan that forecasts the likely income and outgoings for the organisation. Even if your plan requires updating when things change, having one in place is an important step towards testing the viability of your strategy and winning the confidence of donors and supporters. Not everyone is an expert in finance and business plans. Getting external help to craft a business plan is an important consideration. (see Appendix 2)

**“ We are leaning towards purchasing land and constructing. Most houses on the market are old houses. This could work out cheaper”**

**– INEND**



Photo Credit: GUYBOW (Guyana)

# 3

## Preparing the Organisation and Community

Preparation and research are important if your property purchase is to proceed smoothly. As part of preparing the organisation, there are some fundamental considerations to examine at the outset.

### Risk analysis

Risk Analysis is a process that helps to identify and manage potential problems that could undermine your purchasing project. To carry out a Risk Analysis, you must first identify the possible threats that you might face, estimate their likely impacts if they were to happen, and finally estimate the likelihood that these threats will materialise. Common risks CSOs refer to with property purchase include choosing a property in an unsafe neighbourhood, buying a property with hidden structural problems, leaving reserve funds precariously low or finding themselves in a situation where they can't up and move at short notice. The impact of many of these risks can be minimised with careful planning. A risk analysis helps the organisation think through some of these scenarios and put measures in place to ensure that they avoid them, or deal with them if they arise. For example, assessing security in potential neighbourhoods, hiring a structural engineer, and building up a reserve fund can help mitigate some of the risks mentioned above. The Due Diligence questionnaire (see Appendix 4) developed by Dreilinden and Equality without Borders is a useful tool that can help CSOs consider various risks and identify mitigating strategies.

### Getting buy-in from your board

Many CSOs work with a Board as part of their governance structure. Their role is to provide leadership and oversight ensuring the organisation realises its goals. The board is made up of individuals who have a range of skills and experience and may be able to give practical help with the process of property purchase. Most boards tend to be risk averse and are keen to protect the needs of the organisation in the medium term, while ensuring its sustainability in the long term. Having the board firmly behind the decision to purchase makes the role of the champion much easier (see section 2 Building a Case). Creating a strong business plan is an important step towards getting the board's support. For UAF the idea of creating a healing space for activists was discussed with the board back in 2017. *“Once the Board approved the concept note, a consultant undertook a scoping study and Kenya was selected.”*

### New policies and procedures

As an organisation, property purchase requires thinking through new policies and procedures to manage the purchase, but also to deal transparently with potentially unforeseen outcomes. One such outcome is how to dispose of the property should the organisation cease to exist. Many CSOs have decided that in this situation, rather than selling the property, they would rather predetermine that it be donated to a likeminded organisation<sup>2</sup> thereby safeguarding against individuals who may unscrupulously benefit from the situation. Other policies may cover the purchase process itself; for example, specifying the proportion of funding that will come from the organisational reserves, donor grants, loans, or mortgages. Similarly, it is important to establish clarity around how ownership and titles will be held by the organisation. All these policies and procedures should be discussed and reviewed with the Board.

<sup>2</sup> Carrying out a transfer of this type will also depend on the regulatory environment which can change over time



Photo Credit: Women's Fund Georgia (Georgia)

## Engaging the community

For CSOs who plan to use the property as a social hub, involving LGBTQIA\* communities is a critical part of the preparation. This helps build a collective sense of ownership and ensures that community needs and expectations are met within the space. Community engagement also allows the organisation to identify people with relevant skills to offer and who can help modify or upgrade the property after purchase. Guybow in Guyana *“plan to use the skills that exist within our membership - painting, bricklaying, and other practical skills. We’ve gone through an exercise to identify and monetise some of these potential contributions in kind and are learning to advocate for donations of materials.”* Similarly, UAF in Kenya have pledged that *“We want everyone on board - architects, engineers, interior designers to share our values.”* Even if community members will not contribute directly to the new space, VoVo in Zimbabwe advises *“Keep the process consultative. Otherwise, people will leave because it doesn’t speak to them anymore.”*

## Legal considerations

Purchasing a property as a CSO involves many areas that require sound legal advice. These include:

- Establishing the chain of title of the property itself
- The purchase and transfer of the titles
- Changing the status of land (e.g., from traditional to titled)<sup>3</sup>
- Applying for a change of use of the property should that be necessary
- Arrangements on transfer of ownership if the organisation ceases to exist
- Dealing with any disputes over boundaries and land ownership that might arise following purchase
- Changing the status of the organisation (or forming another entity) should the new property also be used for income generation
- Placing the ownership of the property within a trust, (as a structure) so that it is shielded from external moves to sanction or close down the organisation

Every country has laws regarding the type of entity that can own property or land. In some cases, a community-based organisation must review and change their legal status to become legal owners. For INEND in Kenya the organisation is *“in the process of becoming a Trust. That allows the Title Deeds to be in the name of the organisation, not an individual.”*

Trans Bantu in Zambia were allocated a plot of traditional land by local leaders. *“Navigating the process of converting traditional to titled land is very complex in Africa. There is a lot of documentation needed from chiefs and local councils”.*

In some instances, properties purchased in residential areas come with contractual agreement that sets out what properties can and cannot be used for. In Jamaica, JFLAG *“have a restrictive covenant that may need to be modified but could easily be changed. We are in a gay friendly neighbourhood”.*

Future disputes over ownership of land can sometime be hard to foresee; ACCEPT purchased their building back in 1998 when property was cheap in Bucharest. Incomplete legal advice provided by the property agents meant that issues around the ownership of land on which the property stood were overlooked. *“Getting this regularised has been a complex and costly exercise.”*

In cases where the organisation seeks to generate income with the new property, this may require the forming of separate entities, profit and non-profit. The Single Step Foundation in Bulgaria provides counselling and health services, while their social enterprise operates *“The Steps”*; a multifunctional space that includes a bistro, spaces for co-working, community, cultural, entertainment and corporate events. *“The income from the bistro, renting rooms for meetings and the club goes to run the Single Step Foundation that provides psycho-social services to the LGBTQIA\* community.”* Rather than wait until a legal challenge, problem or dispute arises, it is wise to have a knowledgeable, trustworthy, and independent legal expert who can provide advice, especially when such expertise is not available in-house.

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<sup>3</sup> This is important in some African countries where there are different types of land ownership.

## Planning for a lengthy process

Despite a sense of urgency and with best efforts from all sides, both the purchase and construction processes can be long. Setbacks include situations where suitable properties fall through, and the organisation finds itself back at square one. In addition to dealing with the disappointment and loss of momentum, there are other considerations; inflation means that the costs of material and labour tend to rise over time and in emerging economies, the cost of property itself can rise very quickly and unpredictably. As a result, your budget for purchase and upgrading of a property may quickly become unrealistic. It's wise to set aside some reserves to address less predictable costs that can arise when the process to purchase or construct becomes protracted.



Photo Credit: GenderDoc M (Moldova)

# 4

## Sources of Funding

Property purchases are only possible if finance is available. Finding this money is challenging for all CSOs. Land and property ownership in most countries of the global South is embedded in hierarchical social systems that preclude women, people of colour, indigenous groups, as well as LGBTQIA\* people. Ownership of space by LGBTQIA\* CSOs challenges these norms and is regarded by many as part of a wider social struggle.

Almost all CSOs rely on cash purchases using funds from institutional donors and individual fundraising drives. The cohort of international donors who fund property purchases is small and largely confined to public and private foundations. Some CSOs have been provided with land by traditional leaders (TBZ in Zambia), or even by government (GuyBow in Guyana). Completion of these construction projects is often dependent on the availability of additional funds; timelines can range from between two-and ten-years making budgeting a challenging exercise.

### Grants

Several Queer CSOs have successfully secured financial support for their property purchase through grant making organisations. These fall under several different groups.

**International Development Agencies** are part of government multilateral aid programmes and have interests in a wide range of development issues including human rights. This is often channelled through intermediary organisations (e.g., COC Nederland, Oxfam, HIVOS), but can sometimes be accessed by local CSOs. USAID (USA), DFID/FCDO (UK), SIDA (Sweden) and GIZ (Germany) have a presence in many parts of the global South and East and share a commitment to protecting the rights of LGBTQIA\*. In countries where the development agency does not have a presence in-country, there may be funds available for local projects through the embassy itself. Checking on the local websites of international foreign missions in your country is a good place to start.

As part of **corporate social responsibility** many large commercial companies set aside funding for philanthropic, activist, or charitable work. For medium size companies this is often among the communities they work in, or for global ones, it can be directed to projects anywhere in the world. Both Facebook and Google have supported property purchases by Queer CSOs and there are many others to approach.

**Philanthropic organisations** are private bodies that use resources from individuals or groups to provide funding for a range of social causes. Many have specific areas of interest - human rights, women's rights, and the interests of LGBTQIA\* (e.g., ARCUS, Oak and International Women's Fund, Urgent Action Fund, MacKenzie Scott). There are a smaller group of Philanthropic organisations that have a specific interest in the rights of LGBTQIA\* (Astraea, Baring, Equality Without Borders, Dreilinden and Wellspring foundations). Many of these provide support through regional funding mechanisms (e.g., The Other Foundation) who on-grant to local CSOs. Not all are open to being approached directly.

Most donors undertake a due diligence exercise of the legal, fiscal, and financial circumstances of potential grantees before entering into an agreement or contract. This process benefits both the CSO and the donor, ensuring that any gaps in governance and financial planning are identified and addressed in advance of awarding a grant. An example of a due diligence document can be found in Appendix 4.



Photo Credit: The Other Foundation (South Africa)

## Gifts and lump sums

Several organisations have benefitted from a lump sum granted to them when a donor funded project closes. Such 'gifts' have allowed them to purchase a property; however, monies often must be spent within a short time-period. GENDERDOC-M in Moldova bought their building back in 2001, using funds from COC Netherlands. In the case of the Women's Fund in Georgia, a gift of \$1000 from an individual donor in the Netherlands was an important contribution towards purchasing a plot of land on which they later constructed their retreat centre. Individual giving has also contributed to the Rosendal Wellness Centre in South Africa. While the amounts gifted by individuals may be small, they can be important in establishing the foundation for a more ambitious purchasing and construction project.

## Commercial loans and mortgages

Local banks tend to be risk averse and hence reluctant to lend to organisations that are not commercial, rely on grants, and focus on social change. Among the CSOs involved in the research, Single Step in Bulgaria and OTD in Chile were the only organisations that secured a loan to purchase from commercial banks. In the case of Single Step, a comprehensive business plan and their director's considerable experience of the financial sector were key factors in securing a commercial loan with UniCredit, an institution that has an interest in social banking.

*"Bank credit departments will always be very conservative so the blessing of top-level ownership and management is essential"*

CSO's that are thinking about debt financing for purchase can also explore Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) banking initiatives within a lender. Banks will loan up to 70-80% of the capital needed with the CSO contributing the remainder as equity. CSOs that include commercial components and have extensive financial experience, may consider approaching a social impact fund for equity investment. These institutions give credit for both financial and social returns (compared to traditional Venture Capital investors that focus on financial returns). When co-investing in a property purchase, the fund may insist on a clear exit strategy. One such organisation is [Gaingels](#), a social impact investor based in the USA and are considering opening a European fund. While commercial loans and mortgages may work for some, they remain challenging to access for many organisations.

## Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project by raising money from many people, each contributing a relatively small amount. It is typically carried out via the internet and can generate finance through mobilising sympathetic individuals and communities. Many companies in the USA and Western Europe provide matching contributions for their employees and where appropriate, you can tap into the goodwill of the diaspora. Single Step successfully used crowdfunding to support the purchase and renovation of their property in Bulgaria. Bear in mind that managing a crowdfunding initiative can be time consuming and that they are not always successful.

**" Bank credit departments will always be very conservative so the blessing of top-level ownership and management is essential."**

**– SINGLE STEP**

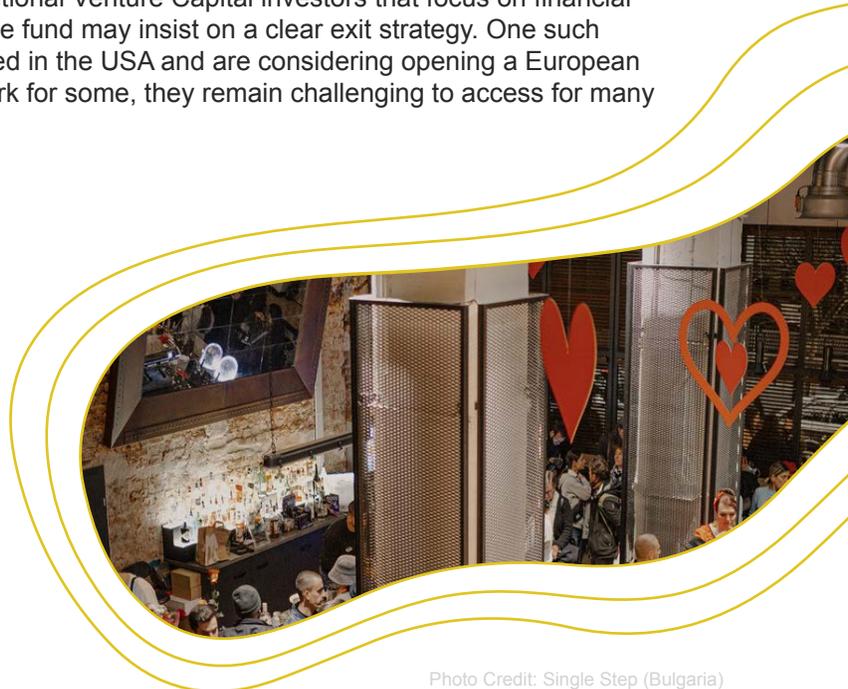


Photo Credit: Single Step (Bulgaria)

## Reserve and building funds

Establishing and maintaining a reserve fund is part of sound financial planning. Many CSOs endeavour to build up a healthy Reserve Fund to act as a buffer that covers fixed costs for 6-12 months should there be a gap in other funding. In some cases, reserves have been created using unspent monies from grants, exchange rate gains, and other unexpected savings. In some instances, contributions to a reserve fund may also be included into the cost of programming when discussing support with Donors.

Some CSOs have used Reserve Funds to help with property purchase, however if reserves are totally depleted a strategy needs to be in place to build them back up over the medium term. Healthy reserves have enabled some CSOs to make a purchase without any additional property purchase grants, thereby enhancing their own agency and autonomy. *“Iranti used the savings accumulated from not paying rent during Covid. A small grant from Dreilinden was used to upgrade the security and make the building wheelchair friendly.”* A human rights CSO in Uganda was able to liquidate assets by selling land that they had purchased as an investment some years previously. *“When the decision to build our offices was approved, we sold that plot to pay for the construction.”*

Some organisations have created a dedicated building fund for property purchase. This makes managing, monitoring, and reporting expenditure against the fund easier. Rainbow House in Jamaica is home to four LGBTQIA\* organisations: JFLAG, We-Change, Equality Youth and Transwave Jamaica. JFLAG set up a building fund and developed the criteria for purchasing the property. *“Out of 20 properties, we selected four that met the criteria. We chose one in New Kingston in a commercial area. It showed the most potential for our needs.”*

Following an increase in requests from Queer CSOs, some donors that provide grants are moving towards providing core support i.e., financial support that allows the organisation more flexibility. If your CSO receive core support/funding from a donor, it's important to have an open conversation about what the funds can be used for. You might also explore the possibility of allocating part, or all of it towards a reserve fund and/or property purchase.

## In-kind contributions

In addition to financial support, many CSOs have received non-financial contributions towards their new properties. Some professionals may provide their services pro bono (allies, or members of the community), thus reducing the cash required for the project. Other community members and organisations may provide materials, equipment, and labour. For example, GuyBow was gifted solar panels from a Japanese donor while ACCEPT was given furniture from IKEA and a washing machine from Bosch. In Jamaica, the German Embassy donated office furniture to JFLAG.

**“Iranti used the savings accumulated from not paying rent during Covid. A small grant from Dreilinden was used to upgrade the security and make the building wheelchair friendly.”**

– IRANTI

# 5

## Finding and Purchasing a Property

With the decision to purchase agreed upon, a business plan in place, a risk analysis completed, financing identified, and the board behind you, now is the time to start the purchasing process. It's important to recognise the time and resources that you will need. Leadership is once again key to providing guidance and oversight. *“As the GDX CEO, I am holding the space for the Senior Leadership Team, the Board, and the Staff. At some point, we shall appoint a Consultant to oversee the project. It's very demanding and time consuming.”*

### Managing the process

Purchasing property in any context is complex and stressful; there are many moving parts to manage, and the process often involves a lot of to-ing and fro-ing. Often the director (or a senior manager) manages the process themselves. For the Director of JFLAG In Jamaica, this turned out to be hard work. *“Wisely or unwisely, I took personal responsibility to oversee the project. It was very time consuming and added a lot of extra work to my already full portfolio. Hiring a dedicated Project Manager is my recommendation.”*

Fundación Santamaria in Colombia established a dedicated team to source potential properties and make recommendations. The major decisions were then made by the board. INEND in Kenya who are still in the process of purchasing, recognise that *“This is a project on its own and needs an ample supply of human, technical, financial, and legal resources. It needs to be a stand-alone project because of the energy and time that it needs”.*

Some organisations identify a qualified and experienced project manager to undertake all the tasks related to purchase. If the manager is recruited externally, the contract can be for the duration of the purchase and/or construction process. Bear in mind that it can be challenging to find someone with the relevant skills set – project management, real estate and understanding of social justice issues, among others. The Other Foundation in South Africa considered three different companies to manage their purchase before settling on one, *“It's a turnkey project, whereby the company is contracted to do everything. We elected this path so that it doesn't take us away from our core business, which is supporting the movement.”*

When considering how to manage the process, a Gap Analysis<sup>4</sup> is a useful way to identify the areas where you may need to build capacity or seek external help.



Photo Credit: JFLAG (Jamaica)

<sup>4</sup> A Gap Analysis compares an organisation's current state with the ideal future state, highlighting shortcomings and areas where additional support might be needed to achieve a goal.

If contracting an external manager, it's important to allocate funds for this position when preparing the budget. As part of deciding on how to manage the purchase process, it may be useful to review the competencies that exist within the organisation and ask:

- **What skills and experience do we have within the team and community?**
- **What can be done in-house and what needs to be outsourced?**
- **Who should we approach outside the organisation?**
- **Who in the organisation will take the lead?**
- **Does that person have the time to ensure everything stays on-course?**
- **What support will they need, and from whom?**
- **Are additional fund-raising efforts required to help pay for the additional resources?**

### Criteria for selecting a property

Having a set of measures to identify and compare potential properties is an effective way to streamline the purchasing process. Queer CSOs have used several criteria; we share some of them here.

#### Property price

The financial resources you have available will determine the price range you are able to consider for a property. Property prices vary according to their location within a country; properties in capital cities often command higher prices than those in secondary cities or smaller towns. Even within cities, prices will vary by neighbourhood with commercial areas in sought out areas commanding high prices. Rural settings are often where property prices are lowest and may be suitable for a retreat centre, but not an office or a community hub. It's important to strike a balance between your budget and a preferred location which meets other criteria you might have. Be mindful that the cost of purchasing a property is more than the property price alone. It is therefore important to consider the cost of property agent services, transfer taxes, costs associated with renovation and remodelling, and of moving from one location to another.

#### Location

Next to cost, location is one of the most important criteria for selecting a property or piece of land for many Queer CSOs. Some locations are more 'Queer' friendly than others. Residential areas can be quiet and secure but can also attract the attention of disapproving neighbours. Commercial areas can be more anonymous and allow the organisation to avoid a high profile, however they are generally more expensive. In many places, neighbourhoods are closely identified with social class. It's important to locate a property that will be used as a hub for the community in an area where people feel comfortable. In South Africa, Iranti chose a location in a part of the city that was socially fluid *"It was an ideal locality with cross migration, cross class and lots of complexities"*.

#### Space

The range of activities that you engage in as a CSO and the services that you offer will help determine the type of space that you need. Queer CSOs perform a wide range of functions that range from providing counselling, health services, and emergency shelter, to hosting community celebrations and providing entertainment. Most CSOs also require their property to act as an efficient workspace that can expand as the organisation grows. These functions in turn require space that can serve as meeting rooms, offices, areas for private interaction, accommodation, and large group gatherings.



Photo Credit: WHER (Nigeria)

Accept in Romania purchased a house and then added a second floor as their activities and staff numbers grew. Single Step in Bulgaria operate using a social enterprise model and purchased a space where they can provide counselling and health services but also host exhibitions and provide entertainment. JFLAG in Jamaica have a strong commitment to nurturing other Queer CSOs and purchased a building that had space to accommodate several partner organisations. Providing access for people with disabilities is also important. Selecting a property that is PWD friendly can reduce the cost of modifying it at a later stage and ensure that your property accessible to everyone. Moving to a space that you own may also open possibilities for new areas that your organisation can grow into. In Annex 3 we have included a list of the different uses that Queer CSOs have used their property for.

## Security

Security is a major factor in selecting a location, especially for Queer CSOs where staff and members of the community may be exposed to additional violence and aggression because of their identity. All cities have areas that are safer than others. GENDERDOC-M in Moldova chose a site for their office in a quiet neighbourhood close to an international embassy which means that security in the area is guaranteed. After a series of violent break-ins, a human rights CSO in Uganda were obliged to move from their rented property and chose a highly visible location to construct their office. *“The new place had to be more secure, not bordered by slums, we had to pay more money for land but now are next to a hospital and a school, close to happening places with bars and restaurants”.*

As well as considering the security of potential locations, it's also important to think about security systems you might need to install in prospective properties. Single Step in Bulgaria selected a street facing property to which they added security cameras and installed heavy duty glass windows. Being in a central location they have faced several occasions where hostile groups have tried to disrupt community events. A Panic button system has allowed them to call for a rapid response to these incidents from a private security firm.

## Accessibility

For properties that will be used as a community hub, accessibility is important. Many CSOs have selected properties that are on public transport routes. Fundación Santamaria in Colombia chose a working-class area that is *“accessible to public transport for trans people to travel and be there”*. In Zimbabwe, VOVO chose a location that people can walk to from the centre of town over other sites that required transport. Accessibility for people with disabilities is also a factor that several CSOs have considered.

## Utilities

In some countries the availability of utilities (gas, electricity, and water) are factors that can influence the selection of location and property. In Zimbabwe where water and power supply can be intermittent, VOVO selected a property where they could install a borehole and are now considering the use of solar power.

**“ The new place had to be more secure, not bordered by slums, we had to pay more money for land but now are next to a hospital and a school, close to happening places with bars and restaurants.”**

– GENDERDOC-M

## Identifying the property or land

Having set your criteria for selecting a property or piece of land, you can now set about looking for one. In many countries estate agents or realtors provide services to help with this. In some countries, the process is informal, with individuals that operate using word-of-mouth to network and advertise their services. In others it is more formal; agencies are registered as businesses and provide detailed information through offices and online. Estate agents' fees in some cases are charged to the seller of a property, in others to the purchaser of a property, and in some cases to both. It's important to know what you want and need from an estate agent as well as how you may be charged for their services if you choose to use one.

Once you've selected an agent, you should meet them to clarify any questions you have before formalising the relationship with a written agreement. In Kenya, INEND explored options of buying an existing building and renovating it or purchasing a plot of land and constructing a new customised structure. *"Prior to undertaking a huge financial undertaking, we appointed a valuer to do a proper evaluation and recommend the most cost-effective option."*

Some CSOs who have worked with estate agents have reported how difficult it is to find a reliable one. In South Africa Iranti found that *"most estate agents weren't interested because they didn't believe a CSO like ours was serious about purchasing a property"*. Investing time and using personal networks can help in finding a reliable agent.

Even when a suitable property is identified, and negotiations are in progress, the process may not be straightforward. In Nigeria, WHER engaged a realtor and saw many properties; most property sellers did not consider them to be serious because they were young. Once they produced evidence of their funds to purchase, the price for the property went up. *"In the end, we purchased a plot of land and built our own safe house."*

**"In the end, we purchased a plot of land and built our own safe house."**

– WHER



Photo Credit: WHER (Nigeria)

# 6

## New Opportunities

For many CSOs, the immediate effects of owning their own space are clear. These include a drop in overhead costs, removal of short-term uncertainties, agency over the use of space, improved physical and emotional security and scope for creativity and innovation. These in turn lead to other opportunities many of which are captured by the [Ripple Effects Framework](#) (see Appendix 5).

Among the opportunities that arise from owning a space include broadening of services that the organisation offers and fostering collaboration with new and unlikely allies. WHER in Nigeria use their newly owned space to run regular markets where community members can bring, buy, and sell their produce. Women's Fund Georgia plan to use their rural space as a retreat for activists who can also engage in food gardening and cooking. Single Step in Bulgaria have established relations with commercial businesses by renting out their space for functions and providing entertainment.

### New roles and responsibilities

Many of the opportunities described above (and in the Ripple Effects Framework ) are accompanied by new roles and responsibilities. With ownership, all the 'problems' that were previously the landlord's responsibility are now yours – repair to lighting, windows, geysers, stoves, and gates. The organisation now must accept full responsibility for the upkeep, maintenance, and security of the building and plan accordingly. Property management demands new roles for staff with new skills, and it will test the resilience of team members. A case in point being the changing role of Finance and Admin Officer at Iranti in South Africa. In the absence of a facility manager, new operational duties were added onto the role, *"While having your own building is important for our mental and physical wellbeing, it is important to maintain the premises, otherwise the investment will go down in value. We need to factor in all the new jobs that need to be done, and by whom"*

If you plan to provide commercial services as part of your model (e.g., cafe, events) it's critical to have an operational manager with significant experience in the hospitality sector. *"The manager can deal with suppliers, staff, partners; the required skills are quite unique and should not be underestimated"* (Single Step, Bulgaria).

When considering new opportunities, roles, and responsibilities, it may be helpful to consider the following questions:

- What are the changes in roles and responsibilities that owning property brings?
- What tasks can be undertaken in-house and what needs to be outsourced?
- Who in the organisation can be tasked to do these?
- How will the organisation formalise these adjustments and integrate ways of working?
- How might the additional costs of these roles be absorbed (e.g., into programmes)?



Photo Credit: Iranti (South Africa)

For opportunities:

- Do we have space to nurture nascent groups and organisations?
- What additional costs associated with the property upkeep might funders consider supporting?
- For CSOs that wish to pursue a social enterprise model, what appropriate income streams might you consider? (events, exhibitions, conferences, meetings, hot desking, sub-letting).
- How might the space be used to support income generation for the Queer community?

### Making unexpected allies

In many instances, owning a space has helped to jump start new conversations between CSOs and others including neighbours, government departments, donors and even law enforcement officers. Single Step in Bulgaria went above and beyond in their outreach to neighbours by inviting them to events and getting to know them personally. In the run up to national elections, there were several provocations directed towards the property by populist parties and extremists; it was critical that Single Step had their neighbours' support in countering these.

In Nigeria, WHER explains that *“The Head of Police lives in the neighbourhood. He sent a personal message saying we should notify him if we have any problems.”* Meanwhile, Iranti in South Africa has pursued more formal engagement outside the Queer ecosystem. They invited the Department of Home Affairs to their premises to issue identity cards with appropriate gender markers to members of the trans community. *“The government came to us. They brought a big truck with their staff and equipment. On the day, over 40 people were helped. We didn't need anyone's permission to set it up.”*

**“The government came to us. They brought a big truck with their staff and equipment. On the day, over 40 people were helped. We didn't need anyone's permission to set it up.”**

– IRANTI

# 7

## Building Sustainable Organisations and Movements

Many Queer CSOs are grounded in a tradition of activism and the fight for equal rights of LGBTQIA\* people. While this is incredibly important in today's world, the physical presence of owning a property can be a powerful way of influencing change, albeit in a less direct way. The [Ripple Effects Framework](#) found that many of these subtle, longer-term changes can serve to strengthen the Queer movement and to build greater acceptance of LGBTQIA\* people.

### A focal point for the community

Many CSOs speak about the power of owning property in creating a focal point for the community and for inviting people to use the space in a way that works for them. This includes acting as a meeting point, a place to prepare and share meals, or a safe space to offer and receive counselling. The permanence of the space that property ownership brings also means that the community always knows where to find it. The importance of this was highlighted by INEND in Kenya who realised that *“Most older LGBTQIA\* people disappear because they have nowhere to come back to.”*

### Nurturing nascent organisations

In spaces where there is sufficient room, CSOs sometimes accommodate nascent organisations while they take their first steps to find their feet and grow. Being able to support newcomers helps to diversify the movement and ensure that an ever-widening range of voices are heard and represented. GDX in South Africa are yet to purchase a property but already recognise that *“CSOs with properties find themselves well positioned to provide space to others at low or no cost. This is very significant to trans specific groups.”*

### An anchor for Queer culture and history

Having a permanent space and the agency to use it as you see fit, allows many CSOs to host events reflecting Queer culture that may not be possible elsewhere. Film screenings, book readings, fashion shows and art exhibitions are just some examples. Others such as INEND in Kenya plan to create resource centres and libraries where young people can access documentation, “so that our history is not overwritten”. Fundación Santamaria, a Trans organisation in Colombia, has even created a memorial garden to remember those who have suffered violence. Single Step's venue in Bulgaria is regularly rented out to companies for staff functions, children's parties, meetings for political parties and drag shows, *“Collectively all these contribute to raising awareness in a non-activist way, leading to positive social change and how the centre is perceived.”*

### Enhanced presence with the Queer ecosystem

Many CSOs who have become property owners report that their stature within the Queer ecosystem also changes. Purchasing a property can be seen as a reflection of organisational maturity amongst peers, but also a sign of stability and permanence among donors and supporters. JFLAG in Jamaica feel that they, *“are now the epicentre for the movement.”* Owning a space can also plant the seed amongst other CSOs, who when the time is right, can seek advice from an organisation that has already completed the purchasing journey.



Photo Credit: Nurture and Wellness Retreat Centre (South Africa)

As well as support, in some instances, becoming a property owner can generate tensions within the community, especially if it has been funded through financial support for which many are competing. Perceptions that the CSO is now well resourced can also lead to unrealistic expectations for support from some quarters. Managing these tensions through open dialogue and building trust with others, is part of the movement building process.

### Smart investments

All CSOs while appreciative of donor support for their work are acutely aware of shifts in funding patterns and priorities. Funding that is available today may not be available for your organisation tomorrow. Owning your own property can be part of a shift towards greater independence and financial self-sufficiency. For a CSO based in Kenya, conversations on how to become financially more self-reliant started back in 2010. The goal of their Endowment Fund is to raise \$50 million. *“We have a number of properties that we rent [out], saving accounts and also long-term investments.”* The properties are a combination of offices and apartments rented through the Airbnb platform. For the Triangle Project in South Africa, property purchase is part of the overall financial, investment, growth, and sustainability plan for the organisation, with conversations at this stage taking place with the board and financial advisor. *“The current rent is high and not meeting our needs. Finding something more suitable is what we’re exploring for the longer-term health of the organisation”.*

Photo Credit: UHAI EASHRI (Kenya)



# 8

## A Culture of Continuous Learning

Research sponsored by Dreilinden and Wellspring has shown that there are a wide range of ripple effects that emerge over the short and long term for Queer CSOs who purchase their own properties. The [Ripple Effects Framework](#) that was developed as part of the research, helps to make sense of the immediate and not so immediate changes that arise. The framework (Appendix 5) is constructed around six key themes:

1. Enhanced financial stability and independence
2. More efficient and sustainable organisations
3. Empowered organisations and their staff
4. Healthier Queer communities, organisations, and individuals
5. Greater integration of LGBTQIA\* within the social landscape
6. Growth of the movement and actualisation of Queer rights

CSOs who are considering purchasing a property can use the framework to think through the potential benefits, while those who already own a property can use it to reflect on the changes that property ownership has brought to individuals, the organisation, and the wider movement.

Queer movements are new in many parts of the world as is the information on what strengthens them in their quest for equal rights. It's very important that we continue to learn from experience so that lessons can be shared within the Queer community at a Global level. A commitment to learn (using the [Ripple Effects Framework](#) and other tools) and to share experiences around property purchase can provide valuable insights for Queer movement building in future. The [Dreilinden Foundation](#) is keen to learn from Queer CSOs' experiences of property ownership, its broader effects and how these might be supported.



Photo Credit: VOVO (Zimbabwe)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 List of property owning CSOs

Region & Name of Organisation	Location	Organisational Focus	Website
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>			
Fundación Santa Maria	Colombia	Trans. and GN Div.	www.sfcolombia.org
Equality for All Foundation Jamaica (JFLAG)	Jamaica	LGBT	www.equalityjamaica.org
GuyBow	Guyana	LBQ Wmn.	www.guybowfoundation.org
Organizando Trans-Diversidades (OTD)	Chile	Trans. and GN Div.	www.otdchile.org
<b>Eastern Europe</b>			
Accept	Romania	LGBT	www.acceptromania.ro
GENDERDOC-M Moldova	Moldova	LGBT+	www.gdm.md
Single Step Foundation	Bulgaria	LGBTIQ	www.singlestep.bg
Women's Fund Georgia	Georgia	Fem.Wmn.	www.womenfundgeorgia.org
<b>Africa</b>			
Initiative for Equality and Non-Discrimination (INEND)	Kenya	LBQ. and GN. Min.	www.inend.org
Gender Dynamix (GDX)	South Africa	Trans. and GN Div.	www.genderdynamix.org.za
Iranti	South Africa	LTI	www.iranti.org.za
Rosendal Wellness Centre	South Africa	LTI	
The Other Foundation (TOF)	South Africa	LGBTIQ	www.theotherfoundation.org
The Triangle Project	South Africa	LGBTIQ	www.triangle.org.za
Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF-Africa)	Kenya	Fem. & Trans. Wmn.	www.uaf-africa.org
Voice of the Voiceless (VOVO)	Zimbabwe	LBQT Wmn.	www.vovozimbabwe.org
Women's Health and Equal Rights Initiative (WHER)	Nigeria	LBQ Wmn.	www.whernigeria.org
Trans Bantu	Zambia	Trans. and GN Div.	www.transbantu.net
<b>Central and Southeast Asia</b>			
ASEAN SOGIE Caucus	Philippines	LGBTIQ	www.aseansogiecaucus.org

## Appendix 2 Business planning

### What and Why a Business Plan?

A Business Plan is a written document that sets out the goals of your property purchase, the method, and the timeframe for achieving them. It describes the nature of the business, background information of the organisation, financial projections, and the strategies you must achieve the stated targets. In its entirety, the document serves as a roadmap, providing direction to the business.

Written business plans are often required to obtain a bank loan, for grant applications or other kind of financing

### Online resources and sites for more information

#### Templates

[How to write a non-profit business plan](#)

[Business planning for non-profits](#)

[How to write a non-profit business plan](#)

[Business planning for non-profit organisations](#)

#### Videos

[What is a Business Plan](#)

[Step by step guide to writing a business plan](#)

[Non-profit or For-profit Business?](#)

[A plan is not a strategy](#)

[Strategic planning for non-profits](#)

[Seth Godin on successful fundraising](#)

## Appendix 3 The range of uses for queer owned properties

	Office Space	Accommodation	Safe House/Shelter	Workshop and training venue	Ceremonial Space	Retreat and Healing	Income generating (Cafe, night club)	Library/Resource study centre	Support for community /GAs	Art Exhibitions, film and cultural events	Social Events	Counseling space	Recovery Space (gender reassignment surgery)	Queer career advice centre	Shared space with other Queer CSOs (inc. Hot desks)	Nurturing nascent organisations	Community engagement and events	Recreation (e.g. Gym, Swimming)	Gardening and food production	Queer History and culture (Museum, memorial garden)	Commercial space (office)	Commercial space (other)	Residential stand-alone	Residential apartment	New construction
Africa																									
GDx, South Africa	✓	✓		✓							✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
HRAPF, Uganda	✓																								✓
INEND, Kenya	✓			✓				✓	✓						✓		✓			✓			✓		
Iranti, South Africa	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓						✓					✓			
Rosendal, South Africa																									✓
TOF, South Africa	✓										✓					✓	✓					✓			
Triangle Project	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓		✓						
UAF, Kenya		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓									✓						✓
UHAI, Kenya	✓	✓				✓						✓			✓									✓	
VOVO, Zimbabwe	✓					✓			✓	✓							✓	✓	✓				✓		
TB, Zambia		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓			✓							✓						✓
WHER, Nigeria	✓		✓			✓			✓		✓						✓								✓
Asia																									
ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, Philippines	✓														✓	✓								✓	
Caribbean																									
Guy Bow, Guyana	✓			✓				✓			✓						✓	✓	✓						✓
JFLAG, Jamaica	✓			✓							✓				✓	✓	✓						✓		
Eastern Europe																									
Accept, Romania	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓		✓				✓	✓			✓			✓		
GenderdocM, Moldova	✓					✓				✓	✓	✓					✓						✓		
Single Step, Bulgaria	✓			✓			✓			✓				✓			✓					✓			
Womens Fund, Georgia	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓						✓			✓	✓							✓
Latin America																									
FS, Colombia	✓			✓							✓	✓					✓			✓			✓		

## Appendix 4 Due diligence questionnaire

The document below has been supplied courtesy of Equality without Borders. While the list of questions is comprehensive, not all questions will be relevant in each context.

Guidance and Due Diligence for Purchasing Property for LGBT NGOs (as of November 8, 2022)

The purpose of this guidance note is to help LGBTI+ NGOs think through some of the key questions related to the possible purchase of a building or another large asset for their organisation's sustainability. It is also intended to raise questions, which could help address and mitigate risk associated with such a large purchase for the funders. Unlike a more typical grant, purchasing a permanent home or another large asset has both big rewards and potentially big pitfalls associated.

This guidance note is intended to support the partnership between the group and the funders to ensure a safe and successful set of transactions, and to truly help propel the organisation into greater sustainability for the foreseeable future.

### A. Developing a Real Estate Plan

Initial Questionnaire for organisation:

1. What exactly are you looking to purchase?
2. What will be the primary purpose of this space?
3. In what name will the official deed be?
4. In what neighbourhoods are you considering and why?
5. What is the price range you are looking at?
6. Are you considering a freehold or leasehold property? What are the implications for your organisation for each option? If a leasehold, what is the process for extending the leasehold on expiry?
7. Do you have a real estate professional(s) to help look and manage the deal? Do you need a lawyer to help the organisation with documents and formalising decisions related to the purchase? How do they work in your country – do all realtors have the same access to properties for sale, or are the listings specific to the company?
8. What are the options and pros/cons to each option?
9. Who is making the procurement decision(s) in your organisation for real estate agent, property purchase, and any additional related vendor selections such as a contractor for renovations or fixes, solar power, security assessment and installations, etc.? Do you have a procurement policy we could see?
10. Are there special considerations in the process of selecting a property related to security beyond budget? If the building is identified as an LGBT-related space, will that cause particular security concerns? How will that be addressed? Will you be open about the nature of the organisation and work with your neighbours for example? Do you have a written security plan and if so, may we see it?
11. How will the organisation afford the on-going maintenance and utilities costs for the building? How would this actually work in terms of functioning with current staff and organisational plans?
12. Are you able to build reserves for larger works in the future (e.g., new bathroom, new flooring, etc.)?
13. Beyond the basic expenses of upkeep and utilities, how do you see such a major asset fitting into your budget and strategic plans over time? What are the pros and cons of owning a property vs renting?
14. Do you plan on taking out any insurance on the property (e.g., fire, water damage, etc.)? Do you know how much it will cost to insure the property? Have you budgeted for the costs of the insurance?
15. If the organisation were to change in purpose, or stop existing for any reason, what would happen to the building? Do you have a lawyer to support this purchase, ownership, and succession planning, and/or any additional legal work needed for the organisation to own the property from an organisational perspective?
16. Do you have any other funding options for this plan in addition to Equality Without Borders money?
17. Is the board and staff and other stakeholders supportive of this idea? What kind of consultations have you made? What concerns arose? What ideas came up?
18. Once a property is identified and agreed upon, who will negotiate the price and the contracts?

19. Provide a detailed budget for the building? Including furnishings, security, etc.
20. What are the long-term benefits to your community and to your organisational mission that you're hoping to achieve by making this purchase?

## **B. Policy Requirements**

- Procurement Policy: who makes decisions about which purchases and what kind of process for selection of attorney, real estate broker, contractor/construction, etc. Above what sums of money requires multiple bids? Which members of staff and board are involved in which decisions?
- Financial Policies
- Security assessment and plan

## **C. Once Property is Identified for Purchase**

1. Please report on or share all property inspections:
  - Pest/Termite
  - Structural
  - Renovations – quotes for work

2. Legal/Escrow plan

How is the deed or ownership of the property legally transferred in your country? What is the process and who will be doing that on behalf of your organisation?

3. What are your renovation and sustainability plans for this particular space?

- Solar power or water sources?
- Will the property be used for any type of shelter? If so, what is your experience and plans for that?
- Will you use the property for any income possibilities for organisation and/or members– social enterprise or livelihoods options for stakeholders? Rental of conference/retreat space?
- Will you use the property for any garden or food production?
- Do you have any plans for artwork on or for space?

## **D. Risk Analysis**

What are the key financial risks associated with the asset purchase? How do you plan to mitigate these risks?

How do you plan to manage the increased visibility that comes with owning a property? What measures can be taken to ensure the safety of your staff and visitors to the premises?

Would an asset purchase have any effect on the ecosystem/environment your organisation is operating in? How would an asset purchase be perceived by other organisations, partners, and other stakeholders (friendly and hostile)? How would the dynamics within the ecosystem change?

Do you expect climate change to impact your work in the short-/medium-/long-term? Do you expect any changes in terms of community organising and the need for owning your own space? How do the type of properties you envisage acquiring meet these needs?

## **E. Longer-term Impact**

How will this contribute to the longer-term sustainability of your organisation?

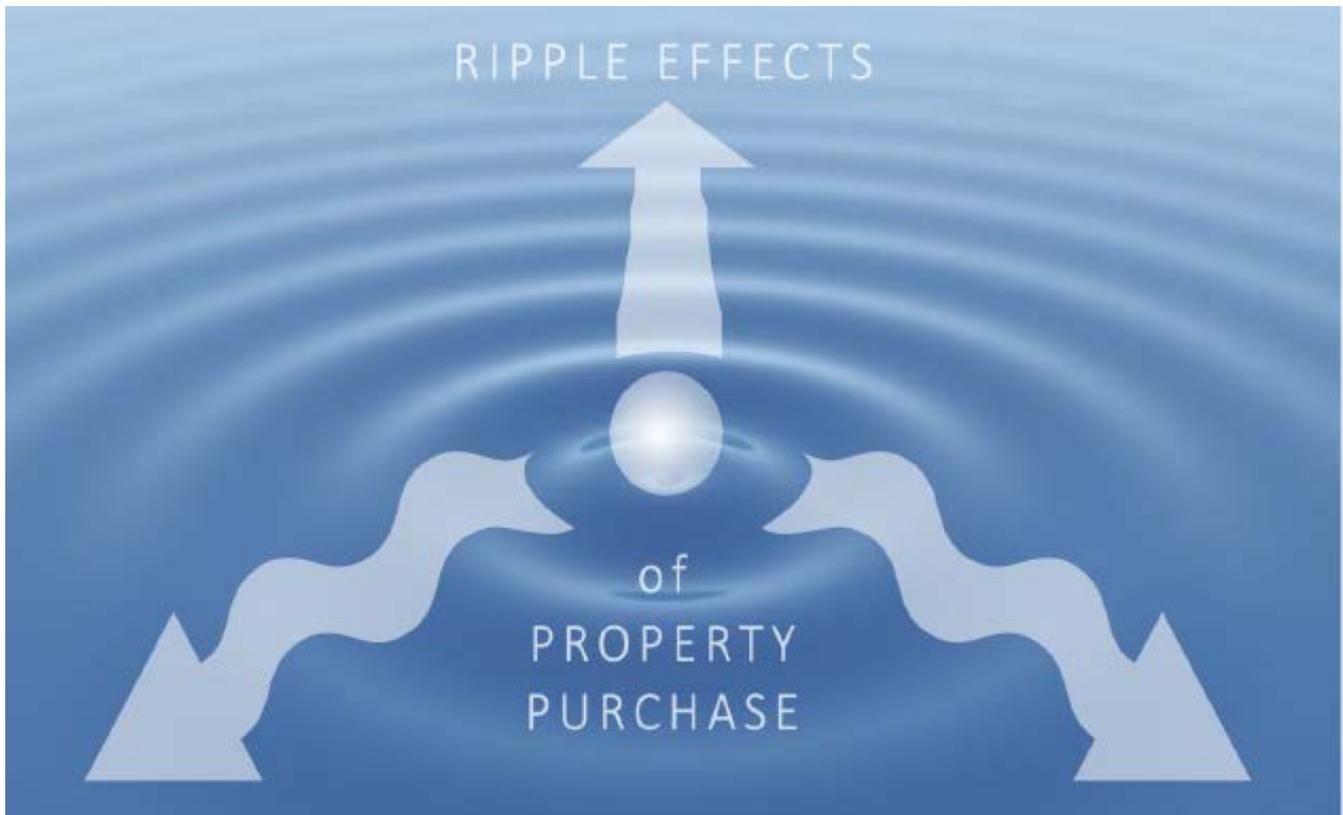
Do you have a specific need to be in a certain location? What is your strategy if that requirement changes over time (due to changes in the neighbourhood for example)?

If you were to sell the property at a later point and generate capital gains, what would happen with that money? What are the decision making processes? How would you make sure the money is used in accordance with the organisation's mission?

Should this funding come through, will you be willing to participate in a longer-term impact evaluation 2, 5 or even 10 years later?

## Appendix 5 The Property Purchase Ripple Effects Framework

The [Ripple Effects Framework](#) is the product of a research assignment commissioned by the Dreilinden and Wellspring Foundations. Their objective was to better understand the range of effects that Queer CSOS experience after becoming owners of property. Twenty CSOs from five continents took part in the study; the findings and the Ripple Effects Framework that emerged are summarised in an illustrated report. In a sense, the changes that CSOs described are analogous to ripples on a pond which stem from a single event, spread outwards over time and encompass an ever-increasing range.



### Definition of “effects”

In development practice, the term “results” is widely used to describe a chain of outputs, outcomes, and impacts, each contributing to the next in a linear sequence. In reality, social change more often follows a complex path where precise cause and effect can be difficult to determine. To reflect this, the Ripple Effects Framework uses the alternative term “effects” to describe changes that emerge from a less predictable, but interconnected process.

### The ripple effect of property purchase

The effects that flow from property purchase and ownership of a queer space have been represented using the Ripple Effects Framework, presented illustrated below.

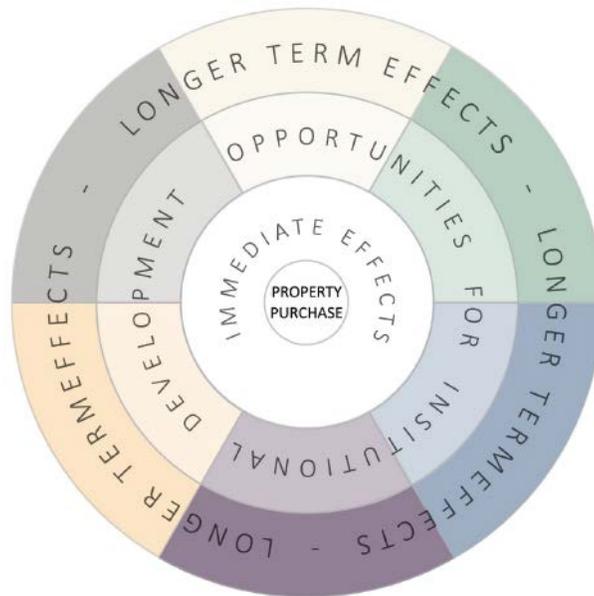


Figure 1 The structure of the Ripple Effects Framework

At the centre of the framework is the action of **property purchase** itself. **Immediate effects** reported by CSOs that tend to appear straight away, are shown in the surrounding layer (1). These include *a drop in monthly overhead costs, the removal of short-term uncertainty, agency over the use of space, an expansion of the planning horizon, improved physical and emotional security, scope for creativity and innovation.*

These **immediate effects** combine to provide CSOs with the opportunity to develop both the institution and the queer community across a wide range of critical areas. These **opportunities for institutional development** are shown in the second ring (2).

The Dreilinden/Wellspring research found that CSOs use a selection of building blocks (concrete activities) to support these areas of institutional development. These building blocks are summarised and listed in the full report under each thematic area.

Finally, the **opportunities for institutional development** in Ring (2) combine to provide **longer term effects** that emerge over time. These are clustered under thematic headings that include *enhanced financial stability and independence, more efficient and sustainable organisations, empowered organisations and their staff, healthier queer communities, organisations and individuals, greater integration of LGBTQI within the social landscape, growth of the movement and actualisation of queer rights.* Longer term effects of property ownership are shown in the third Ring (3).

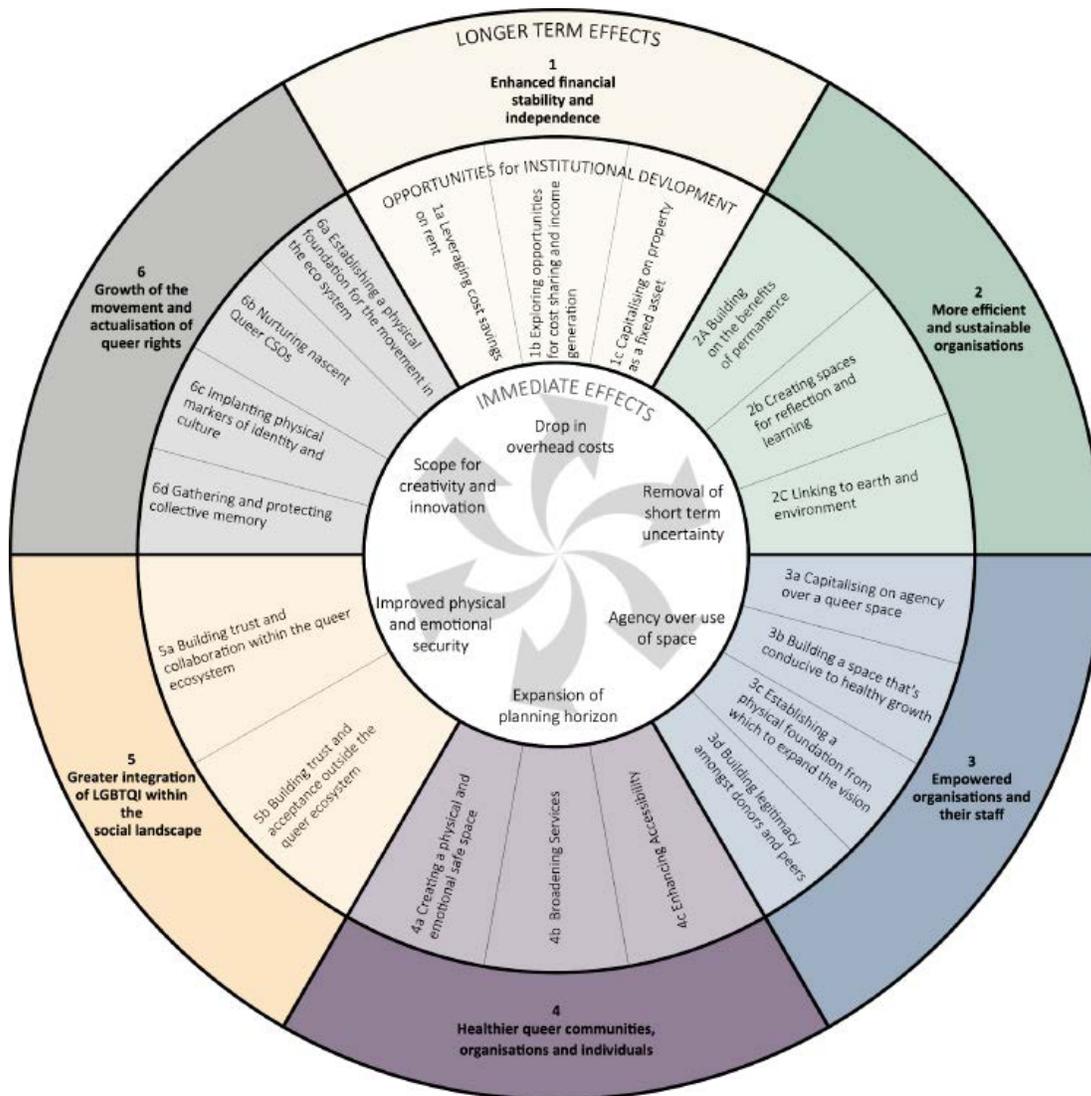


Figure 2 The Ripple Effects Framework populated with the findings of the study