



DONOR IMPACT REPORT





INTRODUCTION

When we launched our last strategic plan in 2020, we could not have imagined the type of seismic changes our organization, and our global community, were going to experience. From 2020 through 2022, we faced a global pandemic, major geopolitical crises, and, correspondingly, a significant increase in demand for our services. Since 2020, our requests for help have ballooned from just over 2,000 per year, to over 10,000 per year – a five hundred percent increase. The political climate has become more dangerous for many LGBTQI+ around the world over the past few years. However, we're so proud to be able to share that, alongside our incredible community of champions, Rainbow Railroad was able to rise to meet these challenges. As we take the time to

reflect on our work over the past three years, we are truly astounded by how much we have been able to accomplish together.

Rainbow Railroad has always been committed to assisting persecuted LGBTQI+ individuals by providing them with support and pathways to safety. Over the past three years, we pursued targeted strategies to improve our outreach and advocacy. These strategies included: expanding our service delivery mix, diversifying the demographics we serve, improving our social delivery model, driving social impact through strategic advocacy, building a sustainable fundraising mix in the U.S. and Canada, and enhancing organizational capacity.

AT A GLANCE

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Our programs team has further broken down these strategies into the below focus points for execution:



We're pleased to share that we met or exceeded the vast majority of our goals from our 2020-2022 strategic plan. Please read on for some of the highlights.

- Between 2020-2022 we successfully moved 607 people through the Emergency Travel Support program in spite of the pandemic and global travel closures.
- Although our goal for crisis response was not defined in 2020, we recognized the global need for crisis response services to support LGBTQI+ persons in need and integrated it into our efforts, successfully supporting 1,241 individuals through our crisis response program by the end of 2022.
- Due to the pandemic, we had to rethink and redesign our programs so we could provide support to those requesting help despite the global travel closures. This led to the creation of additional programs centring around cash assistance, partnership development

and in-country resources and we were able to support an additional 4,924 LGBTQI+ persons in need between 2020-2022.

- We successfully diversified the populations we served, ensuring that 22% of the people we supported were trans and nonbinary, and 26% of the people we supported were women in need from 2020-2022.

We owe our success in achieving these impact and goal targets to the unwavering support of our donors, who not only stood by us through all the challenges we faced in recent years, but deepened their engagement and support. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, for your tremendous commitment to supporting LGBTQI+ people at risk.



SPOTLIGHTS

ANKH & RUSSIAN CRISIS RESPONSE

Expanding our regional footprint was a central goal in our 2020-2022 strategic plan. Through various partnerships, Rainbow Railroad was able to build bridges and forge new pathways in order to reach more at-risk individuals and continue carrying out our mission.

Some of the international partnerships we fostered during between 2020-2022 were with the Arab Network for Knowledge about Human Rights (ANKH) and with the Crisis Response Group that operated in the North Caucasus (Russia, Georgia, Albania, and Armenia).



Rainbow Railroad's relationship with ANKH was strengthened over the course of 2020-2022, as were the over two dozen partnerships we've continued to engage with throughout the duration of this plan. Rainbow Railroad and ANKH have had a partnership since July 2019, with a primary focus on providing referral-based relocation services for individuals in the MENA region who are seeking safety. Additionally, the partnership has involved supporting at-risk LGBTQI+ persons with legal fees and livelihood assistance. ANKH has provided resources and information about the MENA region and the relocation process, including obtaining visas through the French Embassy. This partnership also emphasizes advocacy, meeting basic needs, providing medical support, and legal support. In 2022, Rainbow Railroad and ANKH assisted three individuals with relocation, including two Tunisians who

relocated to Sweden and one Egyptian who relocated to the Netherlands. Through this partnership with ANKH, Rainbow Railroad remains committed to providing resources and support for those seeking safety and a future.

Rainbow Railroad has established numerous partnerships in areas of high risk for LGBTQI+ people, one such partnership is with a crisis response group operating in the Caucasus region of Russia. Despite facing constant challenges and persecution from the Russian government, this underground organization has been able to adapt and evolve while remaining steadfast in their mission. Rainbow Railroad has been a dedicated partner to their cause. Starting in March of 2022, Rainbow Railroad partnered with the Crisis Response Group through a

two-month project that ultimately helped 18 individuals by providing shelter and monetary support. Since 2019, our existing partnership has primarily been referral-based as we assist with the relocation of individuals from Russia to safer countries. In addition, we have also provided livelihood assistance and covered legal fees for those in need, along with supporting advocacy efforts.

As Rainbow Railroad continues to lead the way in LGBTQI+ rights and advocacy, supporting like-minded organizations worldwide is critical to our mission. Our ultimate goal is to provide safety to at-risk LGBTQI+ persons through whatever means necessary. Partnerships are a critical way of scaling our support and allowing our impact to be amplified by connecting with organizations that offer regional expertise and outreach.



ELTON'S STORY

While our outreach in Europe is something we are very proud to be developing, we continue to strive for advocacy around the globe. As part of these efforts, we maintain a steady presence in the Caribbean countries where Rainbow Railroad's work began.

Elton McDuffus, a Jamaican activist, reached out to Rainbow Railroad out of fear for his safety. He was subjected to extreme bullying and discrimination due to his sexual identity. Despite facing such adversity, he remained committed to his work with the Jamaican Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG), where he dedicated over five years of his life. Unfortunately, the attention garnered from



his notable work was negative, and the threats and harassment he experienced escalated. After relocating six times to avoid danger, Elton turned to Rainbow Railroad for help. Together with Rainbow Railroad, he was able to escape Jamaica and relocate to Toronto, where he could live openly as a gay man without fear of persecution. Elton's story was featured on Canada's Drag Race, providing a platform for him to share his journey openly and shed light on the critical work that we do.


Elton's story exemplifies the very reason for Rainbow Railroad's existence. It reminds us of the ongoing struggles faced by LGBTQI+ individuals worldwide and the importance of continuing to advocate for their rights and provide support. Elton, and countless others like him serve as a testament to the impact that Rainbow Railroad has had



on meeting and exceeding the goals of our 2020-2022 strategic plan. As we look to what's next, we will continue to deepen our impact and strengthen our efforts to provide more at-risk LGBTQI+ people with opportunities for safer lives.



YEAR-END UPDATE

 ur 2022 year-end campaign, #60for365, ran from November 1st to December 31st, with the goal of raising \$1 million. With the help of thousands of donors like you, we exceeded our target, raising \$1.4 million from individual donors: enough funds to assist hundreds of LGBTQI+ persons in need, while also building a strong base for our work in 2023.

Over 4,000 donors contributed to the campaign, including 1,000 new donors - a remarkable demonstration of the global community we are able to connect with.



These donors helped Rainbow Railroad achieve remarkable things for those who require our assistance, as well. In just the last 60 days of the year, we:

- Supported the evacuation of 33 LGBTQI+ people in need
- Provided complementary supports to 127 LGBTQI+ people at-risk
- Prepared for the launch of Welcome Corps, a new program to get LGBTQI+ people to safety into the United States
- Published “No Safe Way Out” – a comprehensive report detailing persecution faced by LGBTQI+ people in Afghanistan

- Announced a first of its kind partnership with the Canadian government to resettle more than 600 LGBTQI+ Afghans into Canada starting in 2023

We are proud of the success of our year-end campaign and the tremendous support from our donors. Thank you so much for your ongoing support of our work throughout the year.





NOW & BEYOND

2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Rainbow Railroad expects to continue to see growth in the number of individuals needing our assistance, with requests increasing around the globe. We also have an important role to play in advocacy on the global stage, as LGBTQI+ rights are threatened at home and abroad.

In 2023, Rainbow Railroad plans to continue our work of providing direct services to LGBTQI+ people who are at-risk globally.



On top of our six core programs, Rainbow Railroad is engaged in two major opportunities:

1. Through an agreement with the government of Canada, Rainbow Railroad will resettle over 600 Afghans into North America, providing life-saving support in the largest resettlement effort in our organization's history - an operation estimated to cost approximately \$2 million.
2. We will launch a resettlement program in partnership with the U.S. government to bring at least 50 LGBTQI+ persons per year into the USA moving forward.

In 2023, we plan to provide life-saving support to close to 5,000 LGBTQI+ people.

We are also in the process of launching our next strategic plan, an ambitious plan that details how Rainbow Railroad will continue to focus on its mission from 2023-2025.

Our work has grown exponentially, and thanks to you, our organization has grown as well. In embarking on our next strategic plan, the following questions guided us:

- How can we continue our efforts to support as many LGBTQI+ people as possible through our existing programs?
- How can we improve these programs?
- How can we fight back against a system that is increasingly persecuting and subjugating LGBTQI+ people in need?
- How can we be better advocates?
- What are the tools and resources we need to accomplish this?

We will be sharing this plan with you shortly, but we can already tell you that, to achieve such an ambitious plan, we will need the full support of our donor community.

Thank you so much for continuing to grow with us.



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