

Following  
the Money

**INSIDE THE U.S.  
CHRISTIAN  
RIGHT'S  
SPENDING BOOM  
IN AFRICA**

Briefing  
23 October 2024



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

This briefing is published by the Institute for Journalism and Social Change (IJSC), which brings together journalists, activists and researchers for impact. It was produced by IJSC co-founders and co-directors Claire Provost and Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah, along with Jerry Richardson, an IJSC research assistant.

Thank you to Joy Asasira (SIRC) and colleagues at The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU) for reviewing drafts, as well as the interdisciplinary group of African feminists who gathered at IJSC's 2023 convening in Accra and contributed to this research: Caren Akoto-Adade (African Women's Development Fund), Leah Eryenyu (Tax Justice Network Africa), Asha Mwilu (Debunk Media), Felogene Anumo (Thousand Currents), Sanyu Awori (AWID) and Hakima Abbas (Black Feminist Fund).

This work was supported by OSF and RFSU.



# CONTENTS

---

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** \_\_\_\_\_ **02**

**INTRODUCTION** \_\_\_\_\_ **05**

**KEY FINDINGS** \_\_\_\_\_ **05**

Box: Trump and ‘Project 2025’ Connections \_\_\_\_\_ **07**

Box: About the Data \_\_\_\_\_ **08**

**NOT THE WHOLE STORY: LIMITED DETAIL  
AND TRANSPARENCY GAPS** \_\_\_\_\_ **10**

Table: Heartbeat International Additional  
Details (2019-2022) \_\_\_\_\_ **10**

Map: African Countries Where Heartbeat International  
Disclosed Spending \_\_\_\_\_ **11**

**AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH** \_\_\_\_\_ **13**

**TABLE: US CHRISTIAN RIGHT GROUPS SPENDING  
IN AFRICA (2019-2022)** \_\_\_\_\_ **14**



# INTRODUCTION

---

African feminists, including those that the Institute for Journalism and Social Change (IJSC) brought together to inform our research strategies, have been observing and tracking attacks on sexual and reproductive rights supported by foreign actors. This briefing presents new data analysis and updated figures on the African spending of US Christian right organisations known for their anti-rights and anti-gender activities. Based on these organisations' own financial filings, it reveals a dramatic increase in spending on the continent since 2019. It also explores the limitations of this data which represents just a fraction of US and Global North investment against rights in Africa, and concludes by noting some avenues for further research that could be usefully done in this area.

At the end of this document is a summary table of the spending figures analysed, while on the IJSC's website, readers can find a spreadsheet including hyperlinks to each of the underlying financial filings from which these figures were extracted.



## KEY FINDINGS

---

US ‘anti-rights’ and ‘anti-gender’ groups increased their total annual spending in Africa by about 50% between 2019 and 2022 (the latest fiscal year for which these figures were available for most groups), according to our analysis of their own financial filings.

Seventeen mostly Christian Right US organisations, known for opposing sexual and reproductive rights<sup>1</sup>, together spent about **\$16.5 million** in Africa over the four years from 2019–2022.<sup>2</sup> Almost a third of this total (\$5.2 million) was spent in 2022 alone (the year after President Biden took office, and two years after former President Trump lost the 2020 elections).

Notably, these groups increased their spending in Africa at the same time that abortion rights in the US were being fiercely challenged, including at the Supreme Court, in the case that began in 2021 and was decided in mid-2022, overturning *Roe v Wade*.<sup>3</sup>

The groups include several that are involved in the controversial ‘Project 2025’ initiative. Its 900-plus page policy playbook, released this year, has been called a “dystopian manifesto for Trump’s second term” and a “shocking plot to erase diversity.”<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information about most of these organisations, their anti-rights activities, and, in some cases, their links to the former Trump administration, see: M. Brough, I. Snip, C. Provost and L. Ferreira, “[Interactive: Explore US Christian Right ‘dark money’ spending globally](#)”. openDemocracy (2020)

<sup>2</sup> As of October/July 2024. See details of these figures and sources in the ‘About the Data’ box below. The full data, and links to each of the underlying financial filings for each organisation, is available on our website.

<sup>3</sup> The landmark 1973 judgement in the *Roe v Wade* case at the Supreme Court had recognised the constitutional right to abortion. See more: ‘[Roe v. Wade](#)’, Center for Reproductive Rights

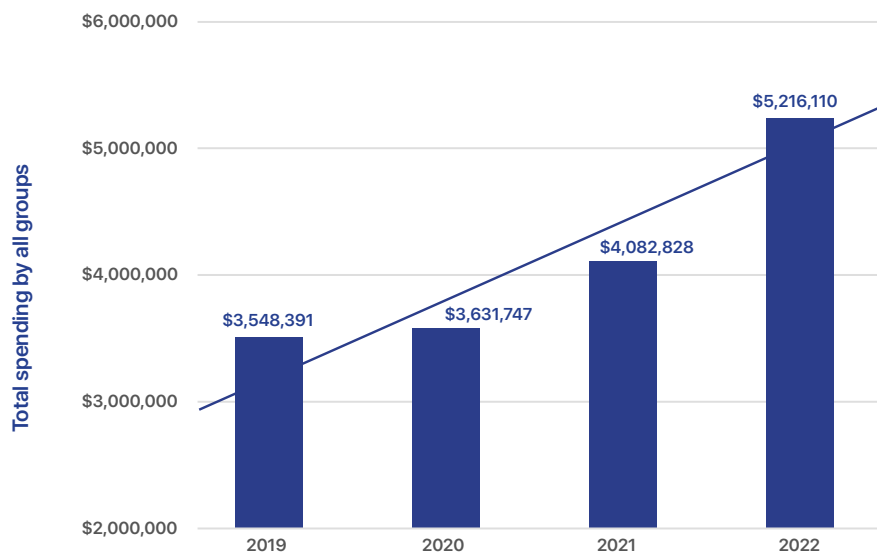
<sup>4</sup> A, Woodward. ‘[What is Project 2025? The ‘dystopian’ manifesto for Trump’s second term](#)’. Yahoo News (2024) ‘[Project 2025 Exposed: The shocking plot to erase diversity in America](#)’. MSNBC (2024)



The sums identified bring up the total spent by these organisations in Africa, since 2007, to more than \$70 million. (Previous research published by openDemocracy had counted \$54 million spent by such groups over the 2007-2018 period).<sup>5</sup>

Recent years' spending was led by the Fellowship Foundation, which focuses on evangelising and organising with politicians<sup>6</sup>; it spent almost \$9 million of the \$16.5 million 2019-2022 total – and more in Africa than in any other region outside the US.

## CHART: A SIGNIFICANT RISE IN SPENDING



For only four of the groups we looked at, there are already published filings covering fiscal year 2023 (with a total spend of almost \$4 million).<sup>7</sup> For the remaining thirteen groups in our sample, filings for 2023 were not yet available as of early October 2024.

<sup>5</sup> That research, published in 2020, covered most of the same organisations as this analysis. Exceptions are: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and International House of Prayer, which no longer file 990 forms; Family Research Council and Exodus Cry (no more disclosed Africa spending in these forms). Meanwhile, we included one anti-abortion group (Life International) which was not included in the previous openDemocracy study. See: N, Archer and C, Provost. '[Revealed: \\$280m 'dark money' spent by US Christian Right groups globally](#)'. OpenDemocracy (2020)

<sup>6</sup> E, Sachs. '[Secretive Christian group at heart of D.C. politics ready for its close-up in Netflix docuseries](#)'. (2019)

<sup>7</sup> Fellowship Foundation, Bethany Christian Services, Life International and World Youth Alliance are the five groups in our sample that had already published 2023 filings by early October 2024



## **BOX:** TRUMP AND ‘PROJECT 2025’ CONNECTIONS

Three of the seventeen groups in this analysis are named members of the Advisory Board to the controversial ‘Project 2025’.<sup>8</sup> These include Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), which focuses on court battles against sexual and reproductive rights. Its CEO Michael Farris also “played a critical behind-the-scenes role”, said the New York Times, drafting a lawsuit in a “last-ditch effort to overturn the election of President Biden”.<sup>9</sup> ADF’s disclosed spending in Africa, while still small, rose by almost 180% between 2019 and 2022 (from about \$20,000 to more than \$50,000 a year).<sup>10</sup>

The Leadership Institute, another ‘Project 2025’ advisor, along with ‘Project 2025’’s publisher, the Heritage Foundation, are also on the list of spenders in Africa, although the amounts they’ve disclosed are small and decreasing (see table at the end of this brief). In 2018, the Heritage Foundation boasted that “one year after taking office, President Donald Trump and his administration have embraced nearly two-thirds of the policy recommendations from [the foundation’s] “Mandate for Leadership.”<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> [‘Advisory Board’](#). Project 2025

<sup>9</sup> E, Lipton and M, Walker. [‘Christian Conservative Lawyer Had Secretive Role in Bid to Block Election Result’](#). The New York Times (2021)

<sup>10</sup> [‘About Us’](#). ADF International

<sup>11</sup> [‘Trump Administration Embraces Heritage Foundation Policy Recommendations’](#). Heritage Foundation (2018)



## BOX: ABOUT THE DATA

All figures in this briefing come from US 990 forms, accessible via ProPublica's online database.<sup>12</sup> These 990 forms are submitted to the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by registered 501c3 non-profit organisations that are tax-exempt. They are also available for public scrutiny. An exception in our sample is Focus on the Family, which is registered as a church and not required to submit these forms to the IRS (however, it still completes them and publishes them on its website and for its donors).<sup>13</sup>

For each organisation, its 990 forms were downloaded, and figures for Africa spending were extracted from a section called 'Schedule F: Statement of Activities Outside the United States'. Organisations must complete this section if they have total expenses or revenues outside the US of at least \$10,000.<sup>14</sup> In some cases, groups file these forms under different names to those they use publicly (eg. Family Watch International is registered as 'Global Helping To Advance Women & Children').

The years cited in this document refer to fiscal years (which may begin and end at different times depending on the organisation). This briefing, and the associated spreadsheet that can be found on the Institute for Journalism and Social Change's website, present raw spending figures along with a few key calculations. Disclosed Africa spending figures were added up across organisations to get total figures for each year.

---

<sup>12</sup> ['Nonprofit Explorer'](#). ProPublica

<sup>13</sup> See: [Financial Reports](#) on Focus on the Family's website.

<sup>14</sup> Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service. '[Instructions for Schedule F \(Form 990\)](#)' (2023)





To look at spending over this period, we calculated the percentage change in the annual figures between 2019 and 2022.<sup>15</sup> In some cases, we had to deal with discrepancies. Figures for Bethany Christian Services, which has two filings covering different parts of the large organisation, have been combined into one figure.<sup>16</sup>

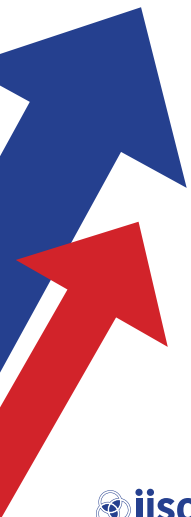
There are important limits to what we can see from these filings, however (further described below). The IRS's own guide to completing 990 forms explains some ways that international activities can be funded without being disclosed in Schedule F sections. For example, it states that expenses incurred for services provided in the US to both foreign and domestic recipients (ex. those provided over the internet) shouldn't be reported in this section. Additionally, it notes that: "An organization need not report foreign investments indirectly held through a domestic (United States) pass-through entity, as the domicile of the pass-through entity isn't a foreign location."<sup>17</sup>

---

**15** Latest (2022) figure minus first (2019) figure divided by first (2019) figure. Note: In line with previous studies, we did not adjust organisations' disclosed annual spending figures for inflation. If inflation were accounted for, we would expect it to increase the 'real' size of these flows, from the perspective of the recipients (as higher rates of inflation in many African countries mean these US dollars could 'buy more').

**16** '[Bethany Christian Services Inc](#)'. ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer, and '[Bethany Christian Services Inc - Group Return](#)'. ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer

**17** Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service. '[Instructions for Schedule F \(Form 990\)](#)' (2023)





## NOT THE WHOLE STORY: LIMITED DETAIL AND TRANSPARENCY GAPS

In most cases, there is very little detail in these US organisations’ 990 filings about how exactly this money was spent. Usually, only the region ‘Sub-Saharan Africa’ is specified. A notable exception is the anti-abortion group Heartbeat International, whose filings actually do specify particular countries where money is spent.<sup>18</sup> Even in such rare cases, however, these forms still don’t tell the full story of US anti-rights investments in Africa.

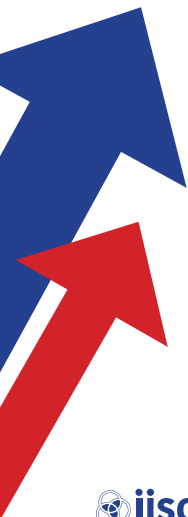
None of these organisations provide details in their public filings on where their funding comes from. Some of them, including Alliance Defending Freedom, have also fought – including at the US Supreme Court – to protect donor secrecy.<sup>19</sup>

**TABLE: HEARTBEAT INTERNATIONAL ADDITIONAL DETAILS (2019-2022)**

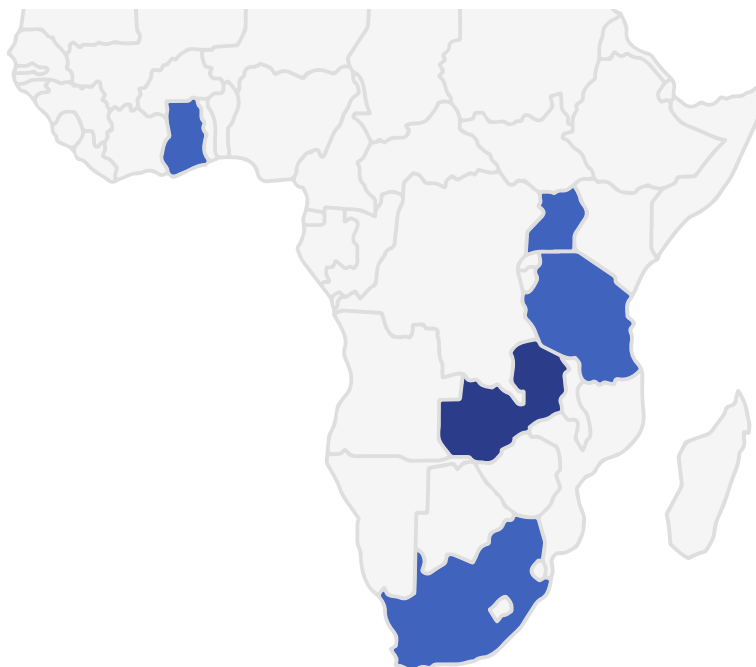
Heartbeat International Detail	2022	2021	2020	2019
Ghana	\$827	\$566	\$2,698	\$748
South Africa	\$53,516	\$7,148	\$24,194	\$6,847
Uganda	\$2,679	\$2,373	\$2,236	\$502
Zambia	\$9,074	\$73,932	\$79,535	\$35,841
Tanzania	\$679	\$551	\$2,035	\$502
	\$66,775	\$84,570	\$110,698	\$44,440

<sup>18</sup> In some other cases, more information on international transfers is available in ‘Part II: Grants and Other Assistance to Organizations or Entities Outside the United States’ and/or ‘Part III: Grants and Other Assistance to Individuals Outside the United States’ of organisations’ 990 Schedule F forms. For example, the Fellowship Foundation has disclosed spending specifically in Liberia, Uganda and Ethiopia; Human Life International, another anti-abortion focused group, disclosed transfers in 2021 (its most recent filing as of October 2024) to groups or individuals in Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. However, again there is limited detail on the transfers’ recipients and purpose.

<sup>19</sup> [‘Nonprofit asks US Supreme Court to reverse decision forcing disclosure of donors,’ Alliance Defending Freedom press release \(2019\)](#)



## MAP: AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHERE HEARTBEAT INTERNATIONAL DISCLOSED SPENDING



The overall increase in spending in Africa by these US groups is large, though it does not tell the whole story. It is likely just a fraction of the full financial investment that US conservatives opposing sexual and reproductive rights have made on the continent.



**It is likely just a fraction of the full financial investment that US conservatives opposing sexual and reproductive rights have made on the continent.**



Significantly, churches and church associations do not file these 990 forms. Some groups such as the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) have re-registered as associations of churches and stopped releasing these filings. BGEA had been a leading spender in the previous openDemocracy research mentioned above.<sup>20</sup>

In other cases, there are US groups that do file 990 forms and are apparently active in Africa but that don't disclose spending on the continent in these filings. An example is the Institute for Women's Health (another 'Project 2025' advisory board member).<sup>21</sup> Its founder Valerie Huber, who held a number of leadership roles in the previous Trump administration and played a prominent role in developing the anti-rights 'Geneva Consensus Declaration', has visited many African countries in the last two years.<sup>22</sup> This group is not included in this briefing's analysis and data tables because, while it is registered as a US 501c3 non-profit, it has disclosed no international spending in its annual filings (of which there were only two as of early October 2024).<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to the limited detail that these forms provide for international spending, there is more disclosed about domestic funding. In another section of these forms (Schedule I), particular names and addresses of US recipients of funding are provided. For example, in its 2021 filing, Alliance Defending Freedom lists the specific names and addresses of 16 different US Christian lobbying and legal groups as funding recipients.

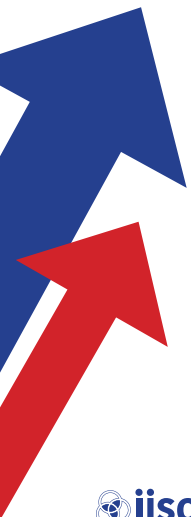
---

<sup>20</sup> ['IRS Reclassifies Billy Graham's Organization'](#). The NonProfit Times (2016)

<sup>21</sup> ['Advisory Board'](#). Project 2025

<sup>22</sup> See, for example: The Institute for Women's Health February 2024 [press release](#) on Valerie Huber's visit to Uganda and meeting with First Lady Janet Museveni, and coverage by the Catholic News Agency, ['Pro-life leader launches 'life-affirming, family-strengthening' health ministry for women'](#) (2024)

<sup>23</sup> ['Institute for Women's Health'](#). ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer





# AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

---

Other research, beyond these filings, is required to identify the African partners of these groups and the ultimate destinations and on-the-ground impacts of this funding. These spending figures, alone, are likely to be imperfect approximations of organisations' footprints and impacts on the continent. Further research could usefully:

- ★ look at other sources of financial information, such as annual reports, for US organisations that do not have published 990 forms
- ★ consider other indicators such as mobilising and convening capacity, the opening of local chapters and the hiring of local staff
- ★ investigate similar funding flows and investments in Africa from anti-gender and anti-rights actors in Europe
- ★ replicate and expand this analysis to other regions of the world

We hope that this briefing informs and supports other work in this area. The dramatic increase in spending in Africa by these US groups demonstrates the need for more regular and ongoing monitoring to keep figures and anti-rights monitors up to date.

## TABLE: US 'ANTI-GENDER' GROUPS SPENDING IN AFRICA (2019-2022)

Including totals and the percentage change in annual spending between 2019 and 2022<sup>24</sup>

Organisation	2022	2021	2020	2019	4 year totals	% change 2022 vs 2019
Fellowship Foundation	\$2,946,200	\$2,109,796	\$1,829,212	\$2,033,989	\$8,919,197	45%
Bethany Christian Services	\$1,650,057	\$1,313,075	\$1,191,952	\$1,032,885	\$5,187,969	60%
Human Life International	No filing yet	\$253,121	\$191,180	\$192,667	\$636,968	No 2022 filing yet
Heartbeat International	\$66,775	\$84,570	\$110,698	\$44,440	\$306,483	50%
Family Watch International	\$128,636	\$0	\$128,241	\$21,613	\$278,490	495%
Focus on the Family	\$176,468	\$49,159	\$33,024	\$5,087	\$263,738	3369%
Life International	\$87,630	\$95,577	\$46,729	\$20,348	\$250,284	331%
World Youth Alliance	\$46,756	\$68,910	\$42,208	\$68,910	\$226,784	-32%
Alliance Defending Freedom	\$54,733	\$71,037	\$25,122	\$19,690	\$170,582	178%
Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty	\$28,601	\$0	\$19,713	\$75,846	\$124,160	-62%
Capitol Ministries	\$27,949	\$7,256	\$7,675	\$11,288	\$54,168	148%
Population Research Institute	\$0	\$23,500	\$0	\$0	\$23,500	No 2019 or 2022 spend
Home School Legal Defense Association	\$2,305	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,735	\$13,040	-60%
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship	No filing	No filing	No filing	\$8,000	\$8,000	Unknown
Heritage Foundation	\$0	\$184	\$5,918	\$1,850	\$7,952	-100%
Leadership Institute	\$0	\$305	\$75	\$5,395	\$5,775	-100%
American TFP	\$0	\$1,338	\$0	\$648	\$1,986	-100%
<b>Total spending by all groups</b>	<b>\$5,216,110</b>	<b>\$4,082,828</b>	<b>\$3,631,747</b>	<b>\$3,548,391</b>	<b>\$16,479,076</b>	<b>47%</b>

<sup>24</sup> Latest (2022) figure minus first (2019) figure divided by first (2019) figure. Note: In line with previous studies, we did not adjust organisations' disclosed annual spending figures for inflation. If inflation were accounted for, we would expect it to increase the 'real' size of these flows, from the perspective of the recipients (as higher rates of inflation in many African countries mean these US dollars could 'buy more').



## The Institute for Journalism and Social Change

✉ Email: [admin@theijsc.org](mailto:admin@theijsc.org)

✕ Twitter: [@the\\_ijsc](https://twitter.com/the_ijsc)

📷 Instagram: [@the\\_ijsc](https://www.instagram.com/the_ijsc)

🌐 LinkedIn: [/company/the-institute-for-journalism-and-social-change](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-institute-for-journalism-and-social-change)

🌐 Website: [www.theijsc.org](http://www.theijsc.org)