

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

COMMONSLIBRARY.ORG



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Commons pays respect to the traditional owners of the land in which we operate and wherever the Commons Library website is accessed. The Commons Library staff team live and work on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation.

MISSION

The Commons Library exists to make social movements smarter and stronger.
We gather and share tools, resources and inspiration from Australia and around the world.

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

What makes The Commons Library special isn't just the resources it holds, but the people and the experiences behind them. The Library was founded on the simple idea that the knowledge we gain through working in social change is worth sharing, and that sharing strengthens our collective capacity to create meaningful change.

Over this past year, we have grown our reach and impact with more than 1,600 resources, 1,100 contributors and 46 collections. From campaigning and organising to narrative change and movement building, each Library resource is an opportunity for someone to discover new ideas, develop their skills and put what they've learned into action.

This year also marked an exciting milestone with the relaunch of The Commons Library website, which has made access to the Library's resources even easier, laying a strong foundation to grow our collections and reach more people in the years ahead.

We've also strengthened our role in bringing people together through webinars, training, podcasts, research collaborations and partnerships, creating opportunities for connection that evolve with the needs of changemakers and social movements.

As we look ahead, there is no shortage of opportunities to strengthen the people and movements working for social change. We're excited to continue doing what The Commons Library does best: making knowledge accessible to changemakers so they can make change.

Above all, The Commons is a human centred library. Behind every resource are people who've taken the time to reflect on their experiences, document what they've learned and generously share that knowledge.

It's this spirit of generosity, collaboration and collective learning that makes The Commons such a valuable part of the social change ecosystem.

Our work wouldn't be possible without the dedication of our Director, Holly Hammond, and the wonderful team of Antje, Iain, Aoife and Sophie. Their care, creativity and commitment to making knowledge accessible is reflected in everything they do.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our Board Chair, Sue, and our fellow board members Holly D., Hugh, Shanthi and Toni, for the time, expertise and care they bring to ensuring The Commons Library remains independent, sustainable and responsive to the community it serves.

We're grateful to everyone who contributes, supports and learns as part of The Commons community and we look forward to what we can achieve together next.



Phong Trinh

On behalf of the Commons Library Board

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Have you wondered what the Commons librarians do? And just how the various resources end up in the library?

The Commons Social Change Library exists to make social movements smarter and stronger. We build and maintain the library to be a reliable source of activist wisdom and movement best practices. All social change involves learning, and learning is a powerful ingredient in the effectiveness of movements.

The Commons Library Content Flow Chart gives you some of the picture of how our team:

- Identifies learning needs
- Deliberates to decide on priorities
- Sources, collaborates, curates and develops learning resources
- Publishes, promotes and distributes those learning resources.

But that's not the only way.

We also:

- Report from conferences like those hosted by Australian Progress
- Interview social change leaders and produce the Commons Conversations radio show and podcast
- Run projects which produce resources, such as Making Advocacy Accessible and Countering Disinformation
- Undertake research, support research fellows, and make academic research more accessible
- Partner with organisations, networks and individuals to build collections
- Welcome contributions focused on a broad range of social change approaches and skills

This means that what you find in The Commons Library is the result of many collaborations. The generosity of knowledge sharing by so many people involved in real campaigns and movements makes a big difference.

In 2025/26 the global trend towards far right popularity and authoritarianism was the standout area of need our librarians tracked. Luckily, resistance is well underway all around the world, and there are many educational resources to guide responses and action.

The crisis in democracy is prompting many changemakers to reflect on how they have been operating over the years. There is an appetite to try new things as the same old tools seem to have less impact. This is an opportunity for innovation and learning that The Commons is primed to document and share.

In the year ahead The Commons will continue to help people's movements know their history; reflect on action; connect with creativity; plan for the future; build power; and act for justice. Thank you for doing this work with us!



Holly Hammond

Commons Library Director

THE COMMONS YEAR AT A GLANCE... 2025-26



150+ New Resources



150+ New Contributors
4 New Collections



1.2 Million Views
662,000 Global Active Users
266,077 Active Users from USA
62,789 Active Users from Australia

COMMONS USER SURVEY

Of participants who used the Library monthly, weekly or multiple times per week:



considered The Commons Library a trusted source



saw the Commons Library as an essential resource



felt that the Commons Library had helped them to gain new knowledge, skills and/or practices



are usually able to find what they need on the Commons Library website



felt the website is user-friendly and easy to navigate

2026 COMMONS USER SURVEY

Respondents

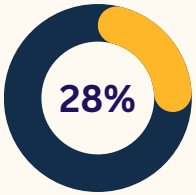
157 valid responses



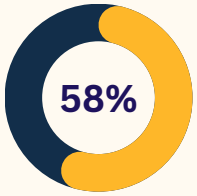
38% responses in USA



30% responses in Australia



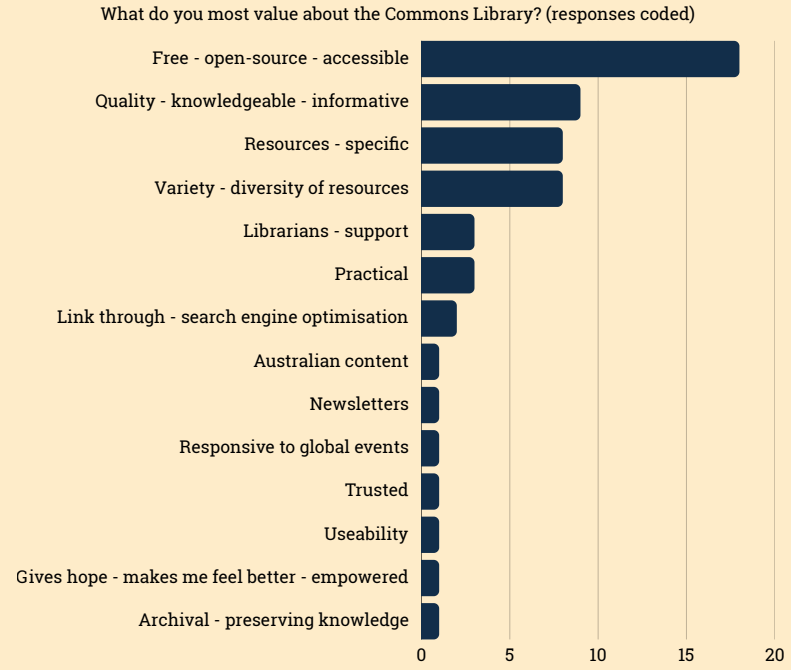
Regular users of the Commons Library



Involved in social change for 6+ years

Value about Commons Library

Participants valued the fact that the Commons Library is a free, open-source and highly accessible resource. Participants also praised the quality of the resources on the Commons Library, with multiple specifically referencing the "depth" of knowledge available.



Preferences

Which topics interest you the most?

Theory of change, organising and campaign strategy were the 3 most popular topics

Which formats do you prefer?

Practical guidance came through strongly in responses. With preferences for articles, manuals/guides, case studies and templates.

Where else do you access resources?

Participants primarily liked to access social change resources through trusted sources (known organisations or community networks) or general searches of books and Internet. Beautiful Trouble was the most named organisation, identified in 7 responses.

Challenges

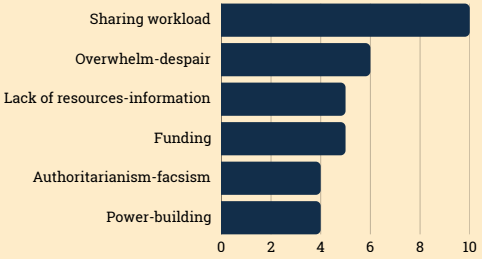
Primary challenges in social change work

The primary challenges were sharing the workload, overwhelm-despair and lack of resources.

Solutions to challenges

Participants most requested resources on topics such as organising and strategy and practical formats such as case studies.

Biggest challenge facing you in your social change work (responses coded)*



*Only displaying themes with 4+ responses

REBUILDING THE COMMONS

The Commons Social Change Library launched in April 2019 and has become an indispensable piece of movement infrastructure, supporting the learning of 2.5 million visitors so far.

We launched our original site with a small budget and the library grew in volume and popularity, exceeding the scale it was ever designed to handle. It was crucial that the site be updated, to stay secure and accessible and able to grow into the future.

Thanks to support from our generous community we embarked on a rebuild. Many thanks to Glenn Todd from Action Skills for both the original and updated webiste development. The site update could not have been possible without the dedication and cleverness of Antje Dun, Commons librarian and graphic designer.

Our first student librarian on placement, Bella Recca, made a valuable contribution to the refreshed library. Bella researched how libraries inform and orient their visitors, and considered the needs of all the people who access The Commons. Bella developed an animated video to introduce The Commons and provide tips for exploring it.

Explore commonslibrary.org



> Working remotely with The Commons offered the perfect balance of flexibility and incredibly meaningful work. We came up with a project that fitted my placement goals, existing skills, and experience in visual communication and accessible education tools: I would help the team develop a road map to using the Commons library.
>
> It was a joy to work with Holly and Antje. Their trust in my abilities to translate the work they do in a short animated video made the placement experience all the more fulfilling. I would encourage anyone who has an interest in social justice movements and the importance of accessible, collaborative, and free distribution of information to consider The Commons Library as a placement host.
>
> Bella Recca

POPULAR RESOURCES

The Commons Social Change Library includes resources in many different formats, focused on a wide array of skills and approaches to social change. Site analytics provide insights into trends and needs, which the librarians respond to through gathering and curating resources. Beyond the top 10 resources we see a lot of interest in campaign strategy tools and practical skills guides eg community organising, narrative change, and building effective teams.

WORLD

1	198 Methods of Nonviolent Action by Gene Sharp - The Commons	41,429 (3.59%)
2	The Commons Social Change Library	30,169 (2.61%)
3	Marshall Ganz Quotes and Wisdom about Leadership, Hope, Organizing and Narrative	24,390 (2.11%)
4	Authoritarianism: How You Know It When You See It	23,289 (2.02%)
5	The Power of Story: The Story of Self, Us and Now - The Commons Library	22,516 (1.95%)
6	Disinformation and 7 Common Forms of Information Disorder - The Commons	18,945 (1.64%)
7	Power Mapping and Analysis - The Commons	12,238 (1.06%)
8	The Four Roles of Social Activism by Bill Moyer - The Commons	11,488 (0.99%)
9	Watch Inspiring Activist and Protest Speeches - The Commons	10,739 (0.93%)
10	Templates, Worksheets & Checklists for Changemakers - The Commons Library	10,153 (0.88%)

AUSTRALIA

1	The Commons Social Change Library	7,157 (4.72%)
2	Australian Women Protest Conscription During Vietnam War [Save Our Sons (SOS)], 1965-1972 - The Commons	2,177 (1.44%)
3	Browse the Resources of The Commons Social Change Library	1,869 (1.23%)
4	THE COMMONS SOCIAL CHANGE LIBRARY	1,792 (1.18%)
5	From Little Things Big Things Grow: Events That Changed Australia	1,605 (1.06%)
6	Australian Women Protest Conscription During Vietnam War [Save Our Sons (SOS)], 1965-1972 - Commons Library	1,539 (1.01%)
7	About Commons Social Change Library	1,343 (0.89%)
8	A-Z Tags - The Commons	1,114 (0.73%)
9	The Four Roles of Social Activism by Bill Moyer - The Commons	1,099 (0.72%)
10	Marriage Equality Campaign Timeline and Reflections - The Commons	1,083 (0.71%)

Interest in strategic nonviolence & a variety of tactics

The big themes of 2025 & 2026

Practical tools that save time

Lots of traffic from teachers, students & history buffs

Different ways to explore the library

Campaign case studies inspire and inform

A classic framework that helps make sense of different approaches within social movements

2025-26 COMMONS ACTIVITIES

New Collections



Workers Rights Hub
This collection contains a wide range of resources to support people engaged in organising, campaigning and narrative change for economic justice, labor rights and the future of work. Developed in partnership with IRIS, the International Resource for Impact and Storytelling, as part of the Future of Work(ers) project.

MOVE, The Global Social Movement Centre
MOVE connects and supports social movements worldwide to help them grow, stay safe, and make change effectively. The collection includes self-paced courses, manuals, podcasts and more.

Training Sessions & Panels

This year included an increased emphasis on training delivery, in collaboration with other movement support organisations:

- Strong Movements Share Knowledge! - with Global Grassroots Support Network.
- Weaving the Threads Together: How to Document Your Campaign - with Leading Change Network.
- Impact Evaluation Workshop - with Australian Progress.
- Research Skills for Changemakers - with Australian Progress.
- Rural & Regional Organising - with Nature Media Centre & Advocacy Research Network.

In addition:

- Holly Hammond joined a panel organised by CAVAL and Informit, following a screening of The Librarians film highlighting censorship and resistance in the USA.
- Holly convened the When People Move: Lessons from Protests panel at Progress 2026.
- Holly presented at the Victorian Climate Convergence on 'Tactics that Work'.

Conference Curation



The Commons Library reported from the Progress 2026 conference hosted by Australian Progress. Our team of 10 staff and volunteers liaised with presenters, wrote articles, and published 21 resources on a range of topics including deep organising, solidarity across differences, resisting authoritarianism, building powerful coalitions, digital innovation and much more. For a taste of the conference check out the Plenary Highlights.

Want The Commons to report from your conference? Or train a team of volunteers to? Get in touch!

COMMONS CONVERSATIONS

We produced the fourth season of Commons Conversations, our radio show and podcast, connecting campaigners, organisers, artists and researchers for insightful discussions.



- Episode 1: Collective Trauma Healing and Nonviolent Direct Action with Kazu Haga and Charlie Wood
- Episode 2: Rural and Regional Organising with Lucy Graham (CAFNEC)
- Episode 3: Understanding and Countering Far-Right Movements with Will Potter (Tomorrow Movement) and Natasha Adams (UK researcher)
- Episode 4: Comics and Art in Social Change with Jess Harwood
- Episode 5: Campaigning Against the Fossil Fuel Industry with Sophie Hartley & Cathy Rogers (Social Change Lab UK)
- Episode 6: First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) voices in the climate movement with Neha Madhok and Michelle Prasad
- Episode 7: Community Organising in Rural and Regional Areas with Hayley Sestokas (Environment Victoria)
- Episode 8: Digital Campaigning to Counter the Far-Right with James Clark and Mar Garcia Sanz (European Center for Digital Action)

RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

The Commons collaborated with Australian Democracy Network and Robyn Gulliver to investigate the influence of the fossil fuel industry on the criminalisation of protest. This included publication of Tactics Used by Fossil Fuel Companies to Suppress Critique and Obstruct Climate Action.

This research was complementary to that produced by Social Change Lab UK: Strategies and Tactics to Curb the Fossil Fuel Industry which was also published on The Commons. We linked up the authors, Sophie Hartley and Cathy Rogers, for a Commons Conversation episode which explored tactics, strategies, and lessons across both countries.

The Commons also collaborated with Nature Media Centre and the Advocacy Research Network ARN to research challenges and best practices in rural and regional organising. This included two interviews on the Commons Conversation podcast (with Lucy Graham and Hayley Sestokas), input into the Progress 2026 workshop Organising Beyond the Cities: Building Power in Regional Australia, the publication of articles by ARN, and a webinar to present the findings.



The Commons also published research from ARN on Climate Justice and Climate Conversations, and Robyn Gulliver's summary of 50 research studies on The Impacts of Climate Activism.

IMPACT EVALUATION

Evaluating the impact of advocacy and campaigns is crucial, but too often it is an afterthought. The Commons developed and delivered impact evaluation training in partnership with Australian Progress.

Additionally, Commons researcher Sophie Hartley developed comprehensive resources on impact evaluation including Campaign and Social Movement Evaluation: Start Here and Evaluating Advocacy and Social Change: Challenges and Tips. She has also developed an indicator library to help groups pick ways to measure their impact, which will continue to grow.

The Commons is available to partner with organisations and campaigns on evaluation projects.



> Sophie Hartley from The Commons Library has presented a number of sessions on impact evaluation through Australian Progress events. Her short sessions at FWD+Organise 2024 and Progress fellowships have been engaging and informative. With the two day Impact Evaluation workshop she has raised the bar, presenting frameworks tailored to advocacy evaluation and informed by extensive research. Participants have rated the training highly and we expect to see positive impacts across the sector.
>
> Laura Melville
> Australian Progress

TACTICS TOOLKIT

Throughout this year The Commons website received consistently high traffic to the classic 198 Methods of Nonviolent Action by Gene Sharp. This key strategic nonviolence text provides a list of tactics, categorised into Protest & Persuasion, Noncooperation, and Nonviolent Intervention. However, it was published in 1973 and does not include hundreds of other tactics, including all of those made possible by the internet. It is also just a list, without any guidance on how to carry out the tactics.

The Commons team decided to build a Tactics Toolkit to provide activists, advocates and organisers with clear guides they can use to put a wide variety of actions into practice.
A small grant from the Quaker Peace & Social Justice Fund enabled The Commons to do foundational work for the Tactics Toolkit: researching tactics; developing a categorisation system; a template for tactic guides; and publication of an initial eight guides to a diverse set of tactics. Further funding is sought to build on this work, in a multi-year ongoing project.



> The Social Change Lab recently mapped the strategies and tactics used to constrain fossil fuel expansion. As part of this research I found that there are lots of tactics described in many places, but there isn't one place to find everything. There are also significant gaps, both in describing different tactics and how people can put them into action. A thorough tactics directory would be a really valuable resource.
>
> Cathy Rogers
> Social Change Lab (UK)

FEEDBACK FROM LIBRARY USERS

“

As a community campaigner, the Commons Library has been a vital resource for my team. This is my first 'proper' organising role and I use the Commons frequently to help work through campaign strategy and take inspiration from social movements across the continent and around the world. I regularly revisit resources on theory of change and storytelling to help ground my work. The Commons offers clarity and hope, at a time when disinformation and xenophobia is rampant.



Sanaa Shah

Senior Community Campaigner
Sweltering Cities

“

What I love about the Commons Library is it is universal, anyone can use it. It's not bound to whatever network that you're within, or whatever trainers you have access to.

With the challenges we all have to face in this world, being able to have The Commons spread out everywhere and available at your fingertips, it's just amazing to me.

I'm so proud that, you know, a little group in Australia have been able to create that.



Eleisha Mullane

Organiser, Advocate and Trainer
Read Eleisha’s articles on The Commons

“

The Commons is a really important intervention in ensuring that change is maintained. It is this easy repository to turn to when you have a another fight.

Where can we go to? Who's done this before? Where are some materials we can easily draw on?

They're all free. They're on the website. You can find them easily. And you've got people you can talk to who can direct you to something.



Erin Farley

Director
Nature Media Centre

COMMONS STAFF



HOLLY HAMMOND
Director

Holly directs the Commons Library: developing and implementing strategy, overseeing library operations, tracking social movement needs, forging project partnerships and building the financial sustainability of the organisation.

She is one of Australia's foremost activist educators.



ANTJE DUN
Librarian

Antje maintains the library, creates and adds new content, supervises volunteers, does graphic design and contributes her information management expertise to special projects.

She has worked in many specialist libraries and is also a graphic designer.



IAIN MCINTYRE
Commons Historian

Iain brings past social movements stories to present day change makers through social media posts, articles, campaign case studies and research projects.

He is a social movement historian and author of several books.



AOIFE CARLI HANNAN
Engagement Officer

Aoife develops engagement pathways for Commons supporters. She plans and delivers social media outreach, fundraising appeals, and events.

Her many years of grassroots fundraising and solidarity work with Timor-Leste have skilled her up to strengthen the Commons.



SOPHIE HARTLEY
Researcher

Sophie is a writer, researcher, impact evaluator, and trainer focused on promoting evidence based advocacy.

She draws on her years of experience researching climate activism and working in various community organising and activism roles.

We would also like to thank all writers and contributors of content to The Commons, Commons Conversations participants, Progress 2026 reporters, and volunteers. Thanks to Emily Wood-Trounce for support; CTAS for bookkeeping; and Action Skills for website maintenance.

COMMONS BOARD



SUE MCKINNON (Chair)

Sue (BEc, DipEd, GIA (Cert)) has a background in forensic accounting, lecturing in economics, and educating people about the complexities of poverty and the important role of grassroots community organising in making the voices of the oppressed heard through local and international advocacy. She has been treasurer for a number of organisations and is the director of the McKinnon Family Foundation.



TONI BEAUCHAMP

Toni (MA Social Pol & Research, BA/BSocStudies) has a background in social policy, advocacy and research. She is now semi-retired but has worked and volunteered in numerous non-profit organisations, most recently with Settlement Services International. She is passionate about social justice and the role of civil society in achieving progressive change.



SHANTHI ROBERTSON

Shanthi (PhD) is a social scientist with extensive senior leadership experience across academic research and research consultancy. She is currently the Managing Director of The Insight Centre, a values-driven research consultancy that mobilises research towards evidence-led strategic planning, stakeholder and community engagement, and communications and advocacy.



HUGH RUNDLE

Hugh is a librarian who has worked for two decades in public and academic libraries, mostly specialising in library technology and discovery systems. He also has experience coordinating electoral campaigns and helping lead non-profit organisations. Hugh grew up among the forests and coasts of lutruwita/Tasmania and is always happiest among the trees with a view to sea.



PHONG TRINH

Phong (MIR) has worked in advocacy for over 10 years in the youth, international development and refugee sectors. He specialises in digital marketing, communication, graphic design and strategy development. Phong currently works at Australian Progress, building the collective capacity of civil society movements to achieve systemic change.



HOLLY DAWSON

Holly is from Boorloo on Nyoongar Country. She is a campaigner, movement and capacity builder with over 10 years experience working in both progressive political parties and advocacy NGOs in Australia and around the world. She is currently a communications specialist for the European Center for Digital Action, an NGO that builds the skills and knowledge of progressives to master digital organizing tools and tactics.

COMMONS DONORS

The Commons Library is made possible through financial contributions from a mix of sources:

- core funding
- project funding
- project partnerships
- organisational supporters
- donations
- monthly subscriptions

2025-26 Grant Providers & Philanthropic Supporters

Tactics Toolkit:

- Quaker Peace and Social Justice Fund.

Research Projects:

- Climate Social Science Network
- Pew Charitable Trusts

Core Funding:

- Alf & Meg Steel Fund of the Australian Communities Foundation
- ACME Foundation
- McKinnon Family Foundation
- Graeme Wood Foundation
- Reichstein Foundation

Thank you to all Commons supporters, big & small!

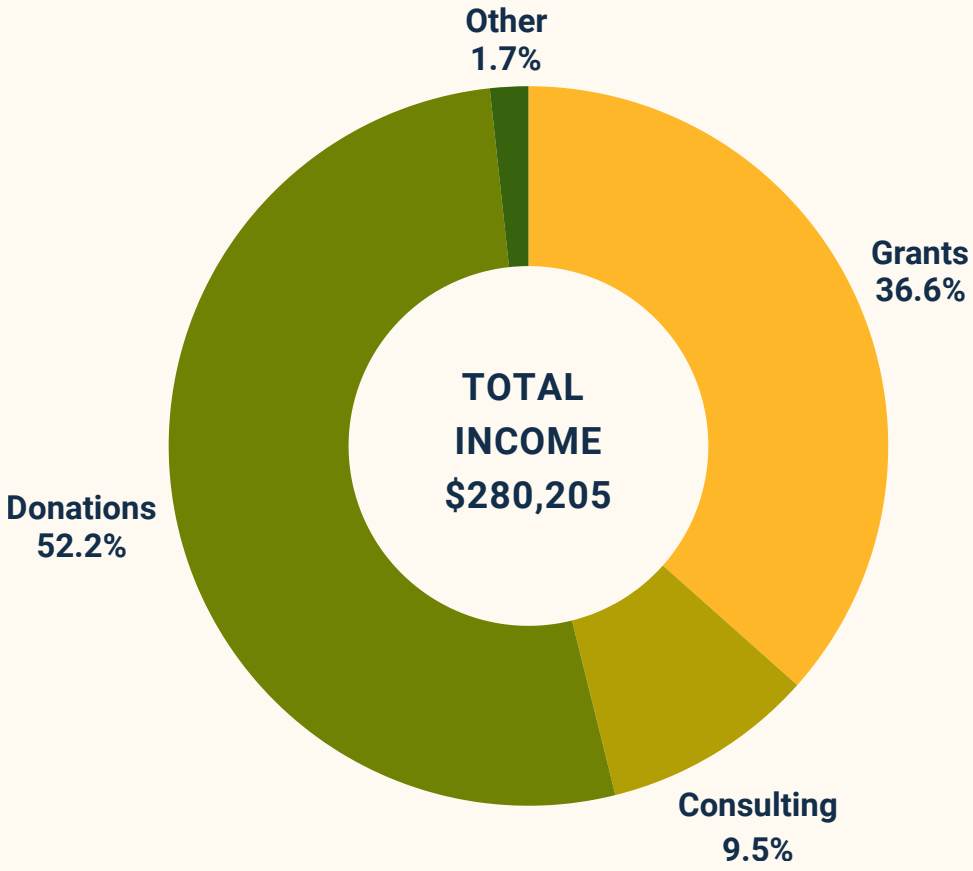
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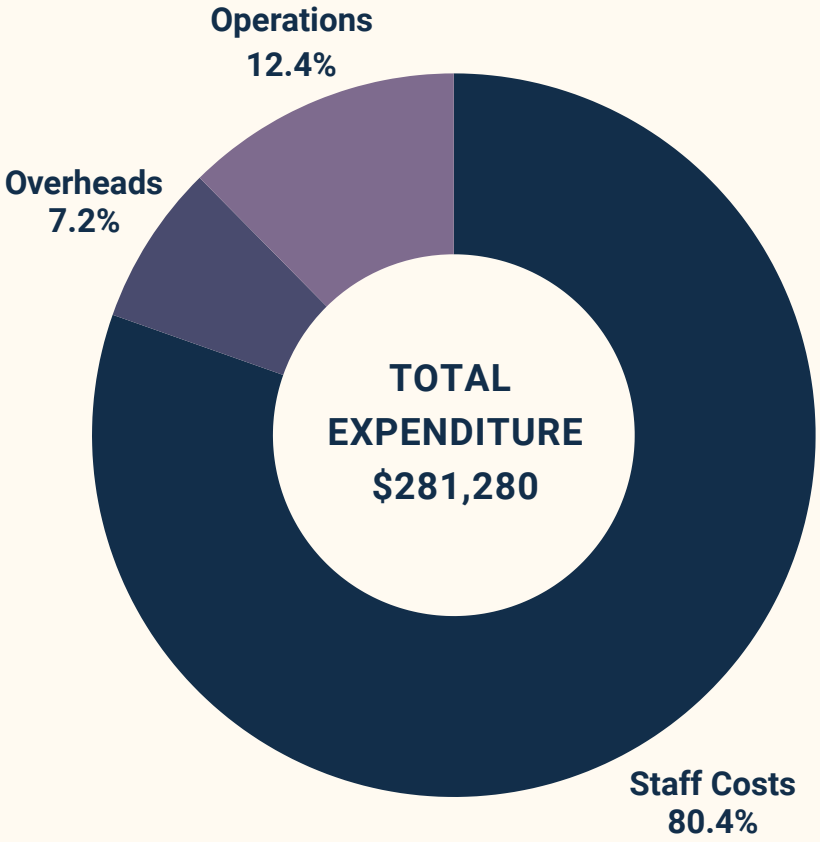
PROJECT PARTNERS

SUPPORTERS

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2025-26 FINANCIAL YEAR







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