



COMINGOUT

LGBTQ+ group

Our work in 2023



Introductory words



In the past year, LGBTQ+ people in Russia faced unprecedented pressure from the government. Although, which of the last 10-15 years you wouldn't say that about? But we've always stood up. We continued to live and work, to fight for our rights and lives. We – not just Coming Out, but the community for whom and with whom Coming Out has been working for 16 years. A community of incredible power and possibilities. A community of unbelievable beauty.

External pressure is often demotivating. It frightens and angers. The recent years' pressure has been paralyzing. And under such conditions, we not only should – we must continue our work. Obligated to grow and reach out to as many Russians as possible: to queer people – with offers of support, to everyone else – in an attempt to fight against the government's propaganda. That's where by 'we' I mean Coming Out. We simply have no right to stop. Not now. And we'll continue our work no matter what.

The pressure is getting stronger, and so are we. One day, the oppressive state will break down, but our strength will stay with us. All we have to do is wait and try to bring that day closer. And that's what we keep on doing!

Alexander Voronov, Executive Director of Coming Out
Executive Director till the 30th of April 2024 (included)

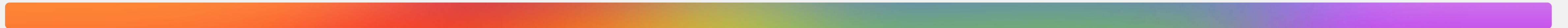




Organization's mission:

Coming Out works to create a comfortable living environment for LGBTQ+ people in Russia

We're doing it by changing public opinion and supporting LGBTQ+ people living in Russia to empower them to live in such conditions



History of the organization



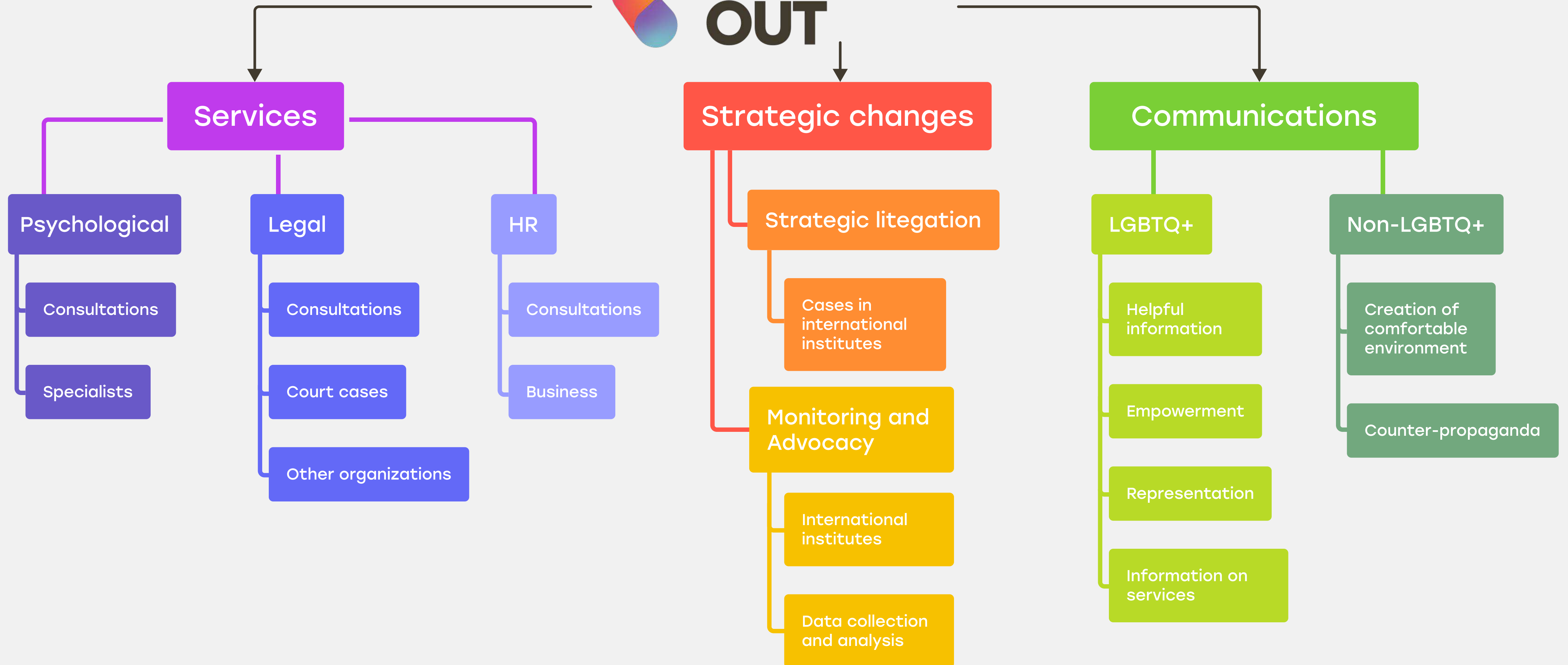
The Coming Out LGBTQ+ Group was founded in St. Petersburg in 2008. Over the years we have launched dozens of programs and projects aimed at supporting and protecting the rights of the LGBTQ+ community in Russia.



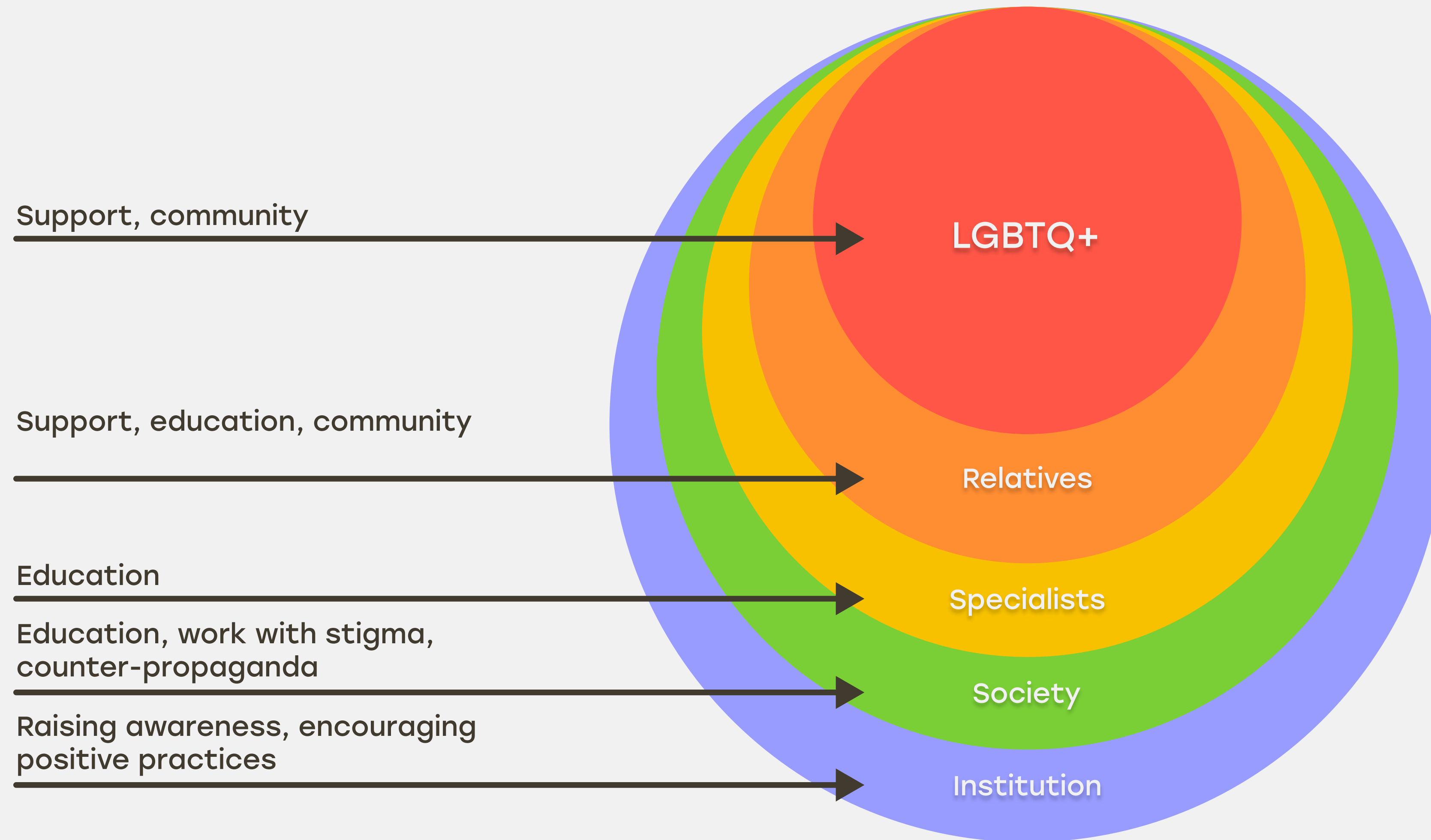
Our work



COMING OUT



How we work



Main results of the year



5 029

In 2023, we conducted 5,029 consultations to the LGBTQ+ community.



In addition, we sent 23 reports to international institutions, including the UN and the OSCE, and also documented 251 cases of discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. Finally, in 2023, we handled 46 cases in courts, of which 7 were before the UN Human Rights Committee and another 16 before the European Court of Human Rights.



Year-end results



In 2023, “Coming Out” continued helping everyone who asked for help and fighting discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in Russia. We have been growing, almost doubling the total number of consultations. However, there were some setbacks too. For example, the extremism law forced us to cancel support groups and peer-to-peer consulting for trans people.

Every bit of work brings us closer to achieving our mission – to help LGBTQ+ people feel safer in Russia. For example, the Psychological Support team helps queer people to cope with rising darkness, the Legal Support provides tools to protect their rights even today, and Career Consultancy works to improve the living standards of our beneficiaries.

This is also a reason why we are working in the Monitoring and Advocacy area, where our colleagues manage to constantly highlight the problems of homophobia and transphobia in Russia at the international level. Of course, this will not change the policy of the Russian government overnight, but the pressure of international institutions, if not stopping, then greatly slows down the repressive machine.

Finally, we actively cooperate with other LGBTQ+ organizations in the country and our social media work is aimed at reducing homophobia and transphobia in broader society and attracting new supporters.



Psychological service

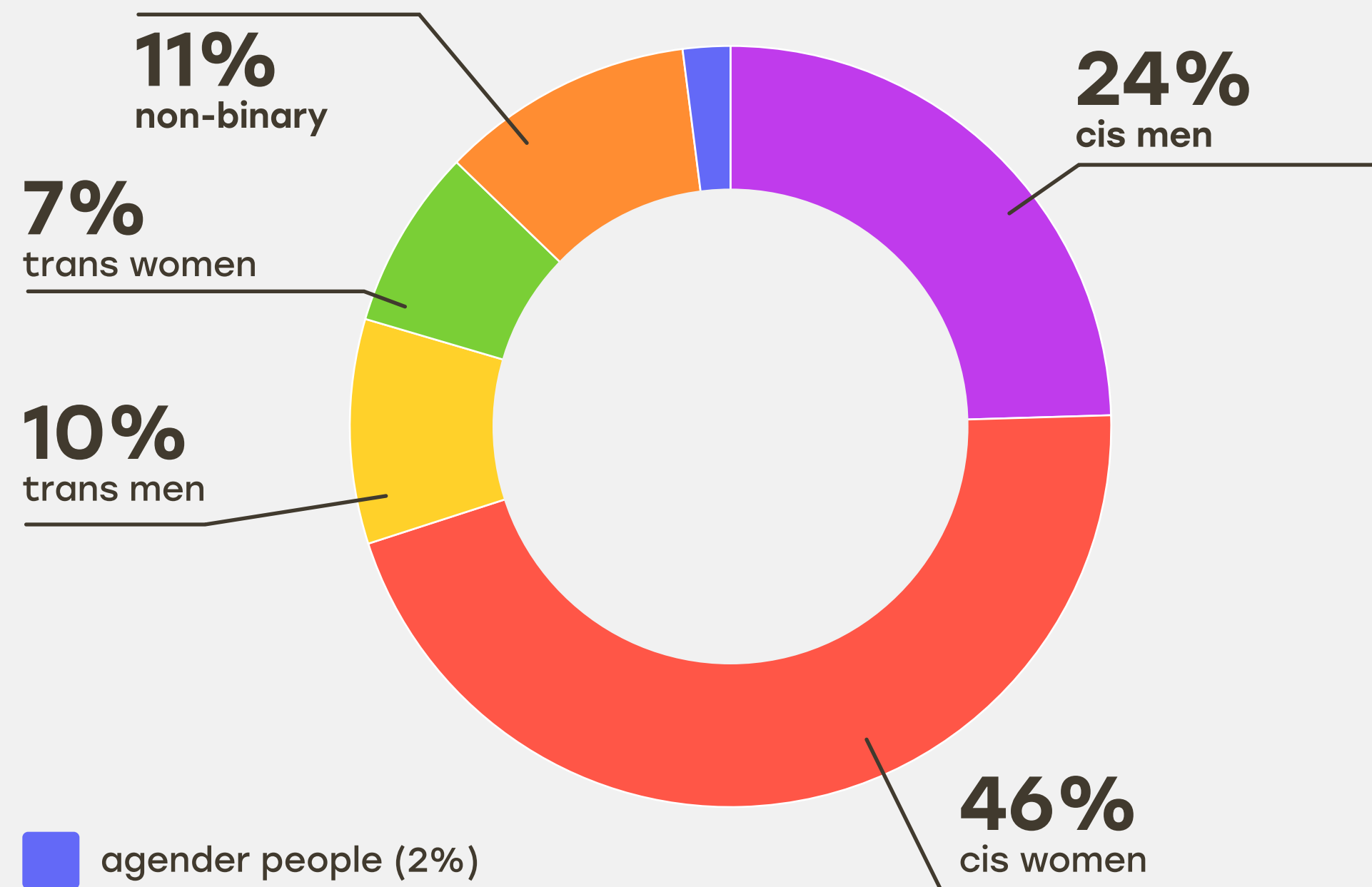


3 721

psychological consultations

1 264

people received help

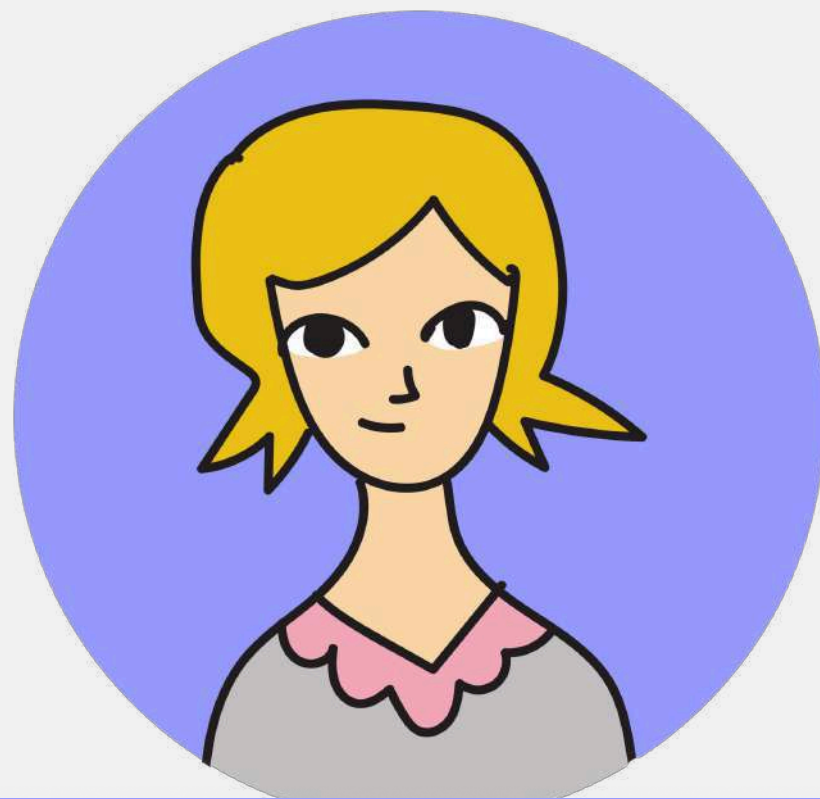


Our psychological service helps LGBTQ+ people to cope with problems related to their sexuality and gender identity. We provide professional support and help people to understand and accept themselves and build relationships with others.

All our psychologists are trained to work with LGBTQ+ people. Our psychological service empowers people to live in Russia, helping them to cope with stress and other issues related to their sexuality or gender identity. We provide confidential and safe support to help people feel more comfortable in Russia.



Success story



A 26 years old cis-woman came with relationship problems and difficulties in self-identification. Feeling that her relationship was going through a crisis, she sought help to understand herself and establish a harmonious relationship. The therapist provided 4 sessions using a cognitive approach.



“I expected help and relief and started to get it from the first session. Everything was great, my therapist and I were a perfect vibe match, and her approach suited me in every way.

There were relationship problems and identity issues, difficulties from accumulated resentments, and a lack of understanding on how to move on.

I started to feel better. My thoughts started to unravel, I started to hear myself, to realize what I wanted. And the resentments receded as if it was easier to breathe. I'm very grateful for this opportunity, it's really important and necessary, especially in such a turbulent time”

Support groups



77

Meetings in support groups

Meeting topics:

- General
- Queer parents
- Migrants
- Migration
- Neurodivergent people
- The trans people's experience
- Queer people's relatives

Before the "LGBT Movement" was recognized as extremist, we were relatively free to hold psychological support groups. Support groups are a space for communication and support within a community facing challenges every day. These meetings helped reduce feelings of isolation, discussed issues of identity and self-acceptance, and provided an opportunity to share strategies for overcoming discrimination and rejection. The support groups also fostered a sense of community and mutual support, which is especially important for the emotional well-being of the participants.

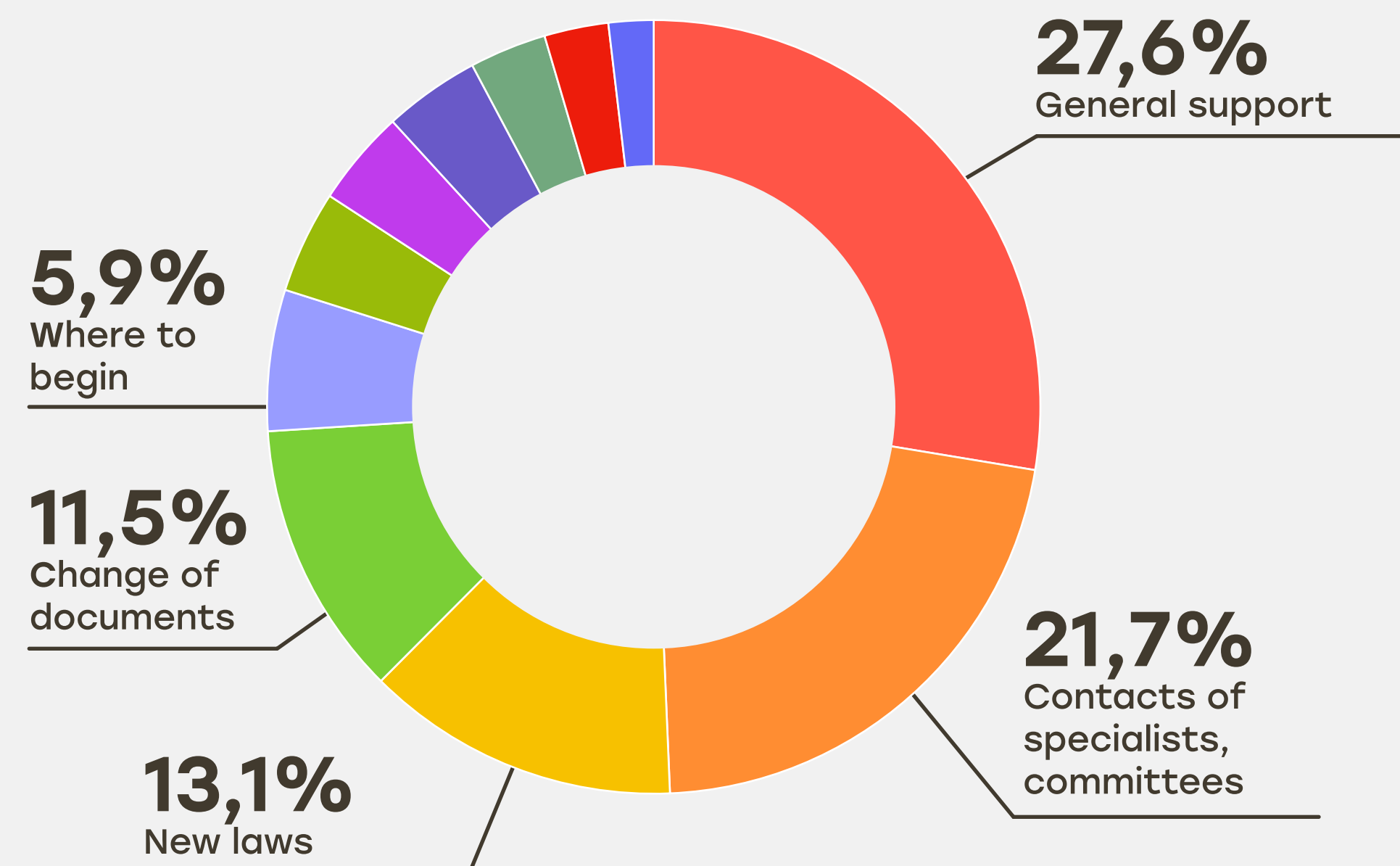


Peer-to-peer consultations for transgender people



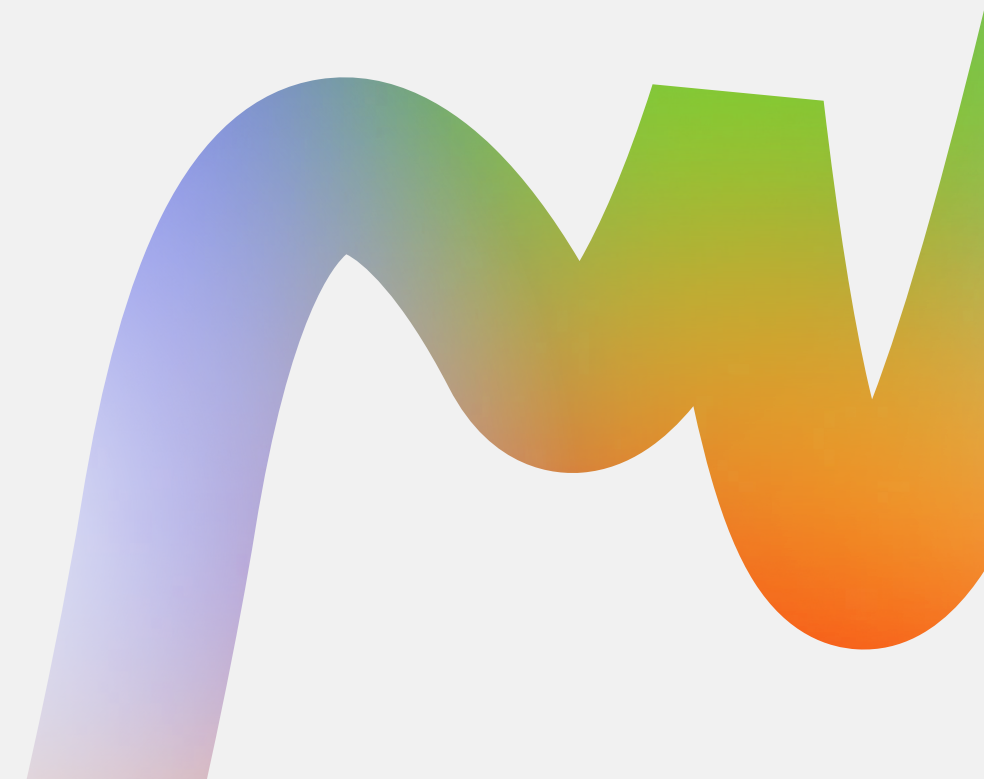
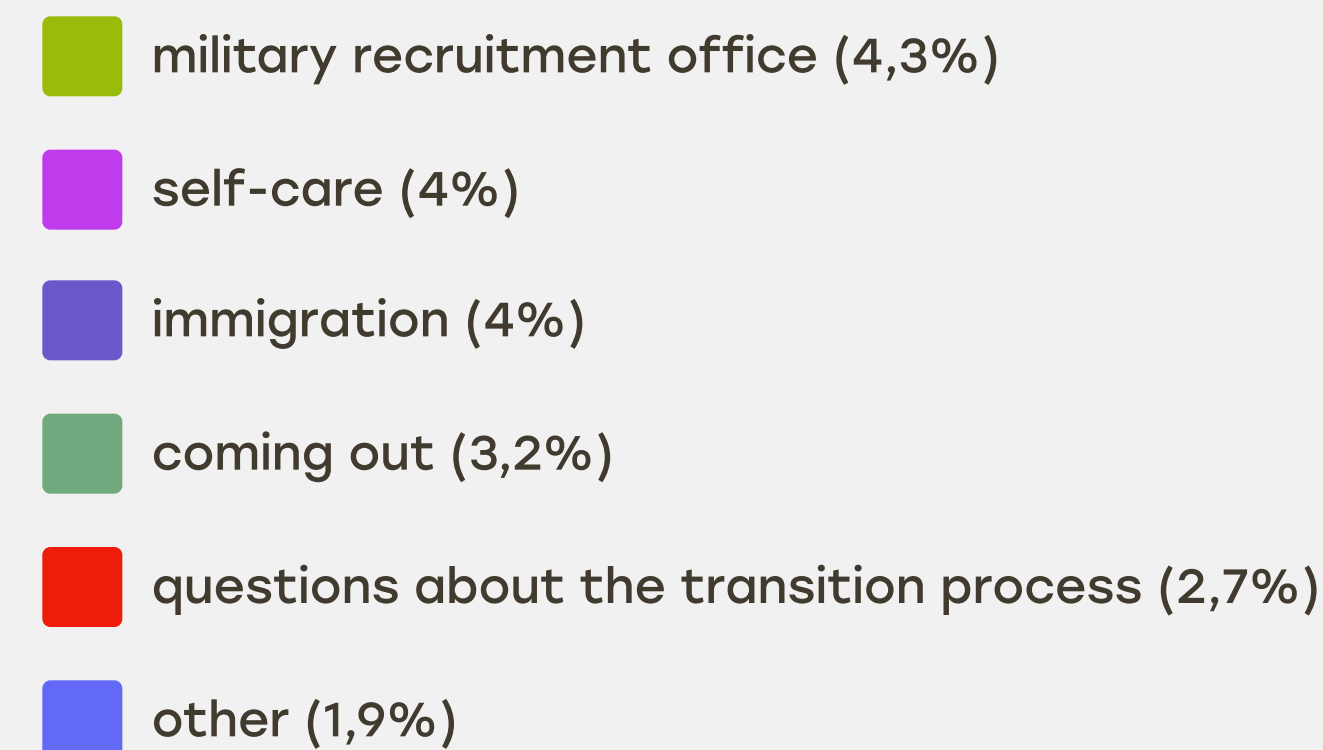
302

consultations



Equal counseling is a communication between two people with similar backgrounds. One person who has been through some life situation shares their experience with another person who is just going through this situation or is about to go through it.

For transgender and non-binary people in Russia, equal counseling is an opportunity to get unique information about transition and related experiences. This information is not publicly available, which is why, up to the very ban on transition, and even after it, our counselors continued to work and help trans people with various requests - from doctors' contacts to advice on self-care.



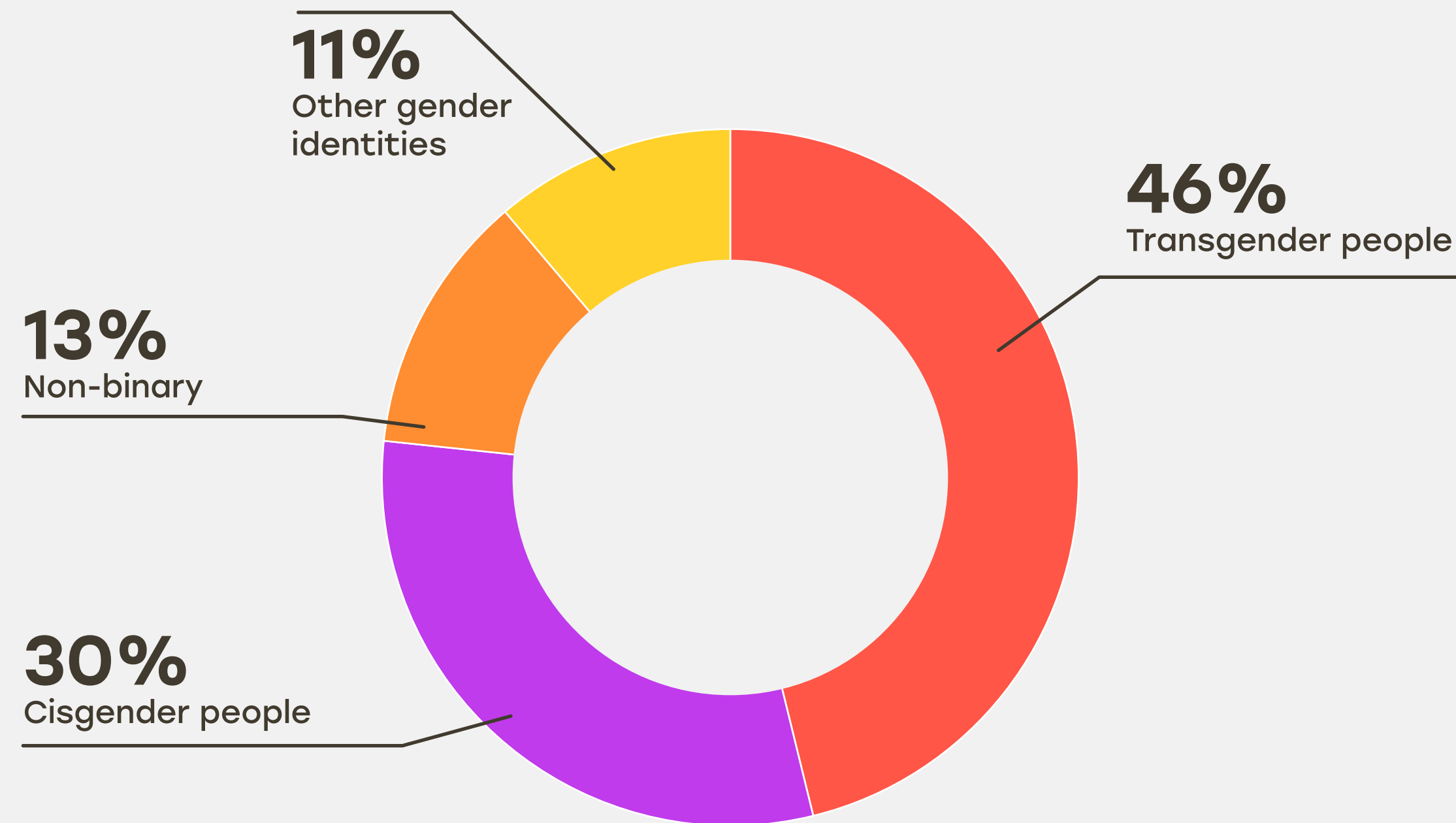
Legal consultations



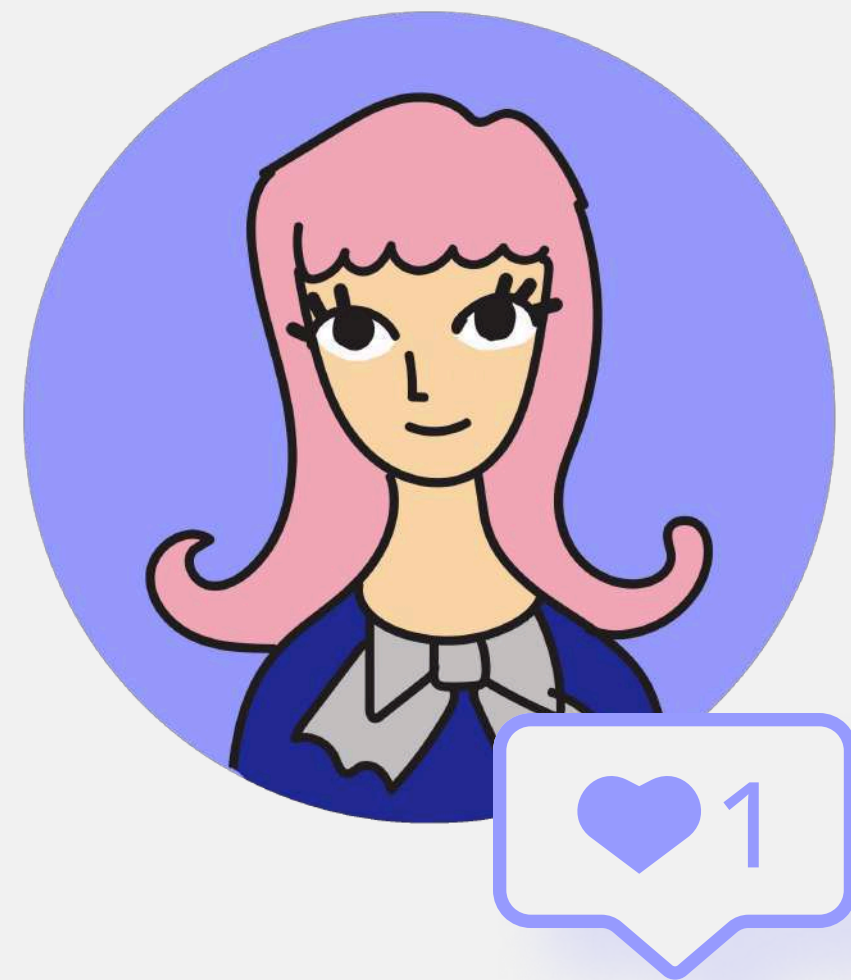
849

legal consultations

The Coming Out legal program provides direct assistance, protects the rights of LGBTQ+ people, and helps them feel more confident. We also help the LGBTQ+ community to become stronger, we educate people about their rights, run webinars, advise other initiatives, and accompany LGBTQ+ events.



Success story



A 21-year-old transgender woman with her birth documents found herself in a psychiatric hospital, where they tried to put her in the male wing, threatening with forced hospitalization through the court. Fortunately, her friend asked Coming Out for help and our lawyer rushed to help. After meeting with the girl, the lawyer persuaded the management of the PND (psychoneurological dispensary) to stop attempts to hospitalize her in the men's ward and hospitalization in general. Thanks to the efforts of our lawyer, the girl was released from the hospital by the evening of the same day.

Strategic litigation



Strategic litigation is the management of cases in court aimed at creating positive law enforcement practices that will have a positive effect on the whole community, change the courts' approaches to resolving cases of a certain category, increase the effectiveness of responses to crimes against LGBTQ+ people, and thus increase physical, informational safety for the community.

Also, strategic litigation includes pursuing cases in international organizations. Currently, this includes bringing cases before the ECHR and cases in UN treaty organizations. Even if the decisions of international bodies do not affect the legislation and practice in the Russian Federation right now, it is inherent in politics to change faster than legal regulation concerning vulnerable groups. Therefore, one of the results will be the formation of a number of decisions of international organizations on LGBTQ+ cases from the Russian Federation, which can be used to quickly change the situation with LGBTQ+ rights in Russia in the future.



Career consultations



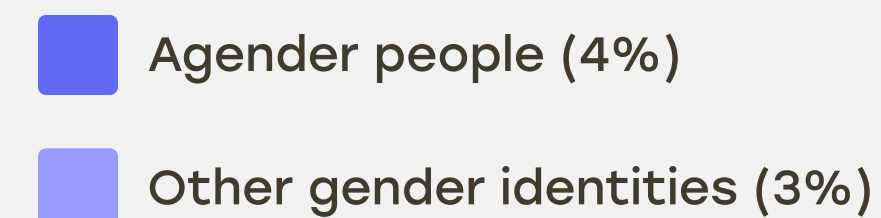
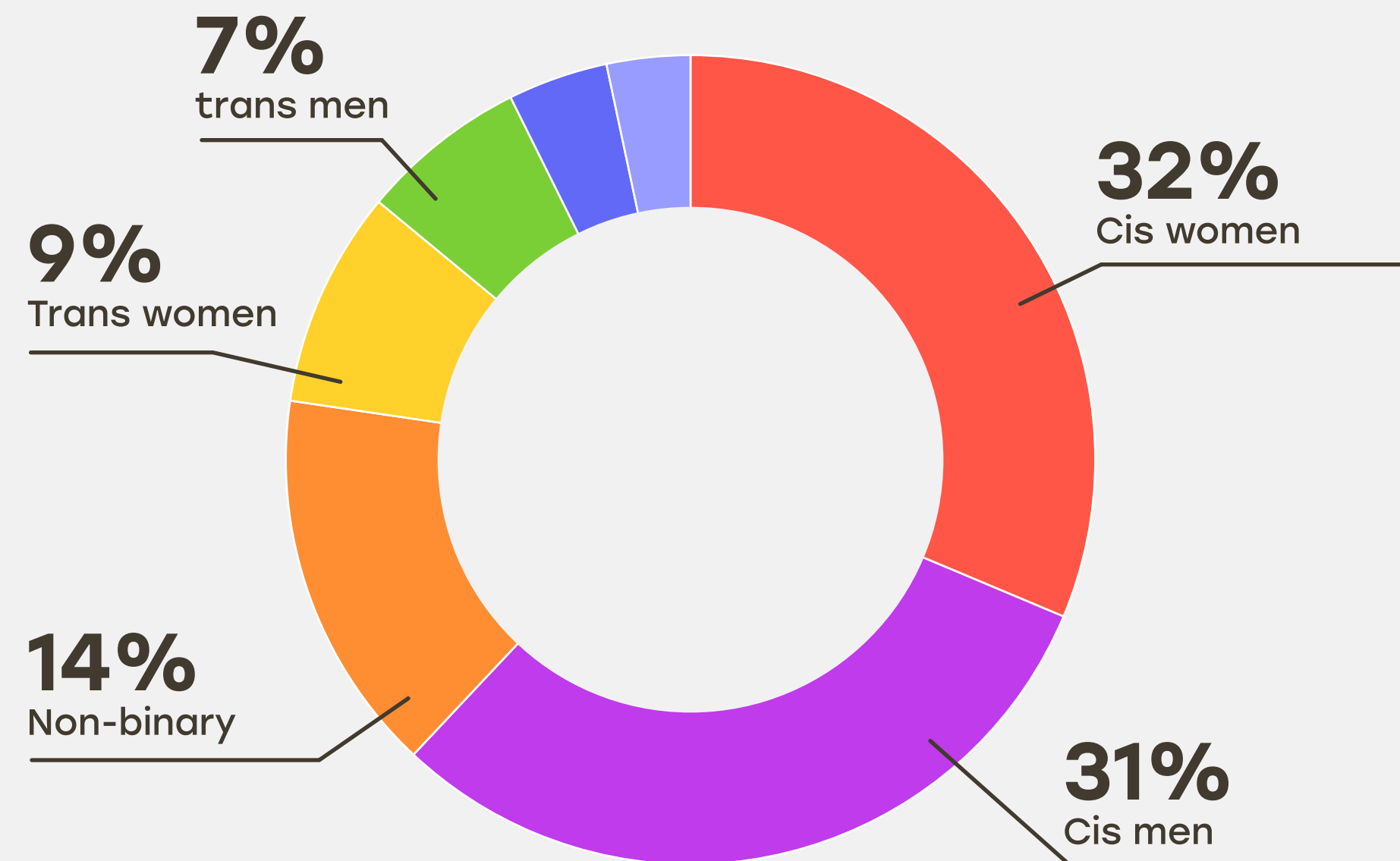
157

career consultations

102

people have found new jobs

The career consultations program brings together professional volunteer career counselors from different business sectors who have decided to help the LGBTQ+ community. This program helps LGBTQ+ people to find their first job or vocation and dream job, or a way out of a crisis period in their lives. The beneficiaries find new directions for their development.



Success story



A 27-year-old transgender man from a large city, with a background as a commodity and warehouse manager. Faced with extremely low self-esteem and financial difficulties, he was looking for a job with a salary of 15-20 thousand rubles (\$150-\$200) per month. Ilya chose jobs that did not match his qualifications and was rejected. However, thanks to two meetings with our career counselors in September, his life began to change. The coaches provided career guidance, helped him adjust his CV, and helped him prepare for the interview. In October, Ilya found a job with a salary of 60,000 rubles (\$600). Having completed his probation period in two months instead of three, he now lives a happier life: works in a stable environment, moved into a new flat closer to the city center, and started saving money.

In the feedback, he shared his gratitude and said he wanted us to continue our activities and help other people whose shoes he had once been in.

Discrimination monitoring and advocacy



251

Documented 252 cases of discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community

23

We sent 23 reports to international institutions, including the UN and the OSCE

3

Conducted 3 research pieces (6439, 4402 и 4048 respondents in each accordingly)

ComingOut regularly collects information about LGBTQ+ people's situation in Russia: we record cases of rights violations from personal appeals to us, monitor publications in the media and social media, and conduct our own research. Our colleagues in the monitoring program conduct research on a variety of topics: rights violations and discrimination in all spheres of life: LGBTQ+ teenagers, conversion therapy, the economic vulnerability of LGBTQ+ people, the needs of LGBTQ+ people, LGBTQ+ immigration after the full-scale invasion, and others.

We use the results of our research for analytical notes and reports to Russian and international institutions and organizations. Reporting helps international organizations better understand Russian realities and the situation of LGBTQ+ people in Russia.

Some of our research can be found at the [following link](#).

Our information is used by:



Communications



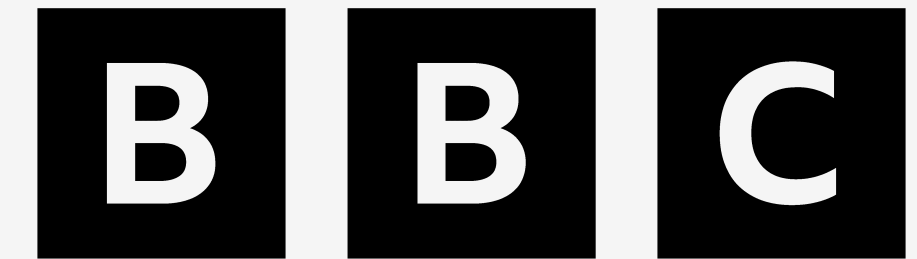
500 000+

On average, our social media feeds are getting over 500,000 hits per month.

The information team makes Coming Out's work visible: to the queer community and to society overall. We educate, entertain, explain complicated and unclear matters, keep up-to-date on major news and promote common sense. The main goal of our media work is to increase the number of LGBTQ+ supporters and give the opportunity for representation to the community members.



They write about us:



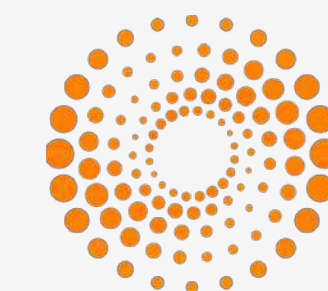
gaytimes

meduza

The Telegraph

ПАРНИ

DOXA



REUTERS

Our volunteer's work



237

Tasks we solved thanks
to the work of our
volunteers

Volunteers are a major part of the work of our organization. They provide LGBTQ+ people with targeted assistance – psychological, career, and peer-to-peer consultations. Volunteers also monitor discrimination against LGBTQ+ people and collect statistics on cases of discrimination. In addition, they help with everyday tasks such as collecting statistics, technical support for the website, and even more creative work such as writing or design. Volunteers at Coming Out are professional psychologists, career counselors, designers, developers, copywriters, translators, and just people who care, from a wide range of professions, willing to volunteer to help the Russian LGBTQ+ community.

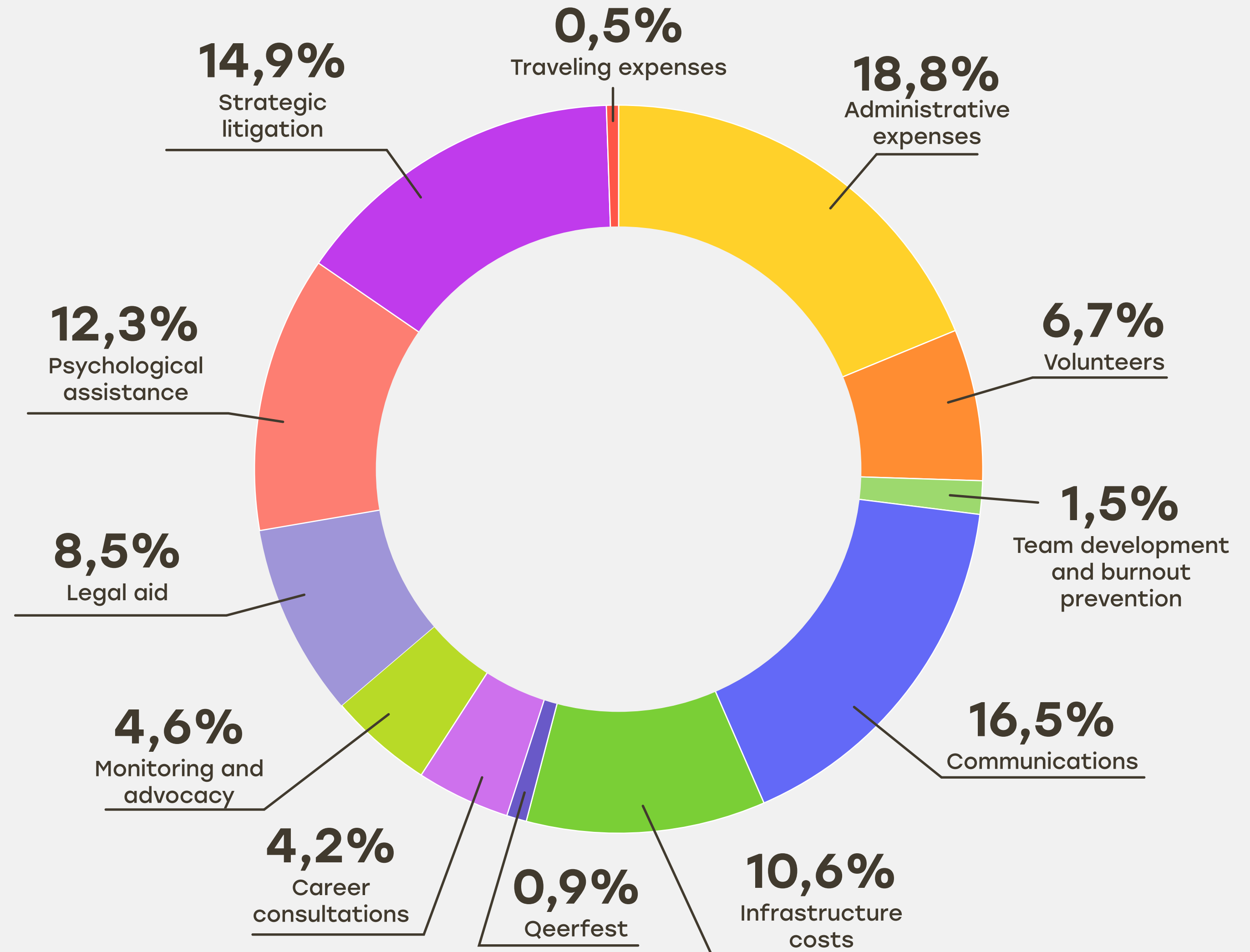


Our expenditures in 2023



565 892€

Amount of expenditures



Become a part of the Coming Out!

We are now living, to put it mildly, in a difficult time. “ComingOut” is fighting every day for a better future for queer people in Russia, fighting for people who are forgotten by the state or persecuted under invented pretenses.

We need supporters in this struggle. Join us in giving a voice to those facing discrimination and injustice. Every donation is important to us because we see people who are ready to work with ComingOut to create a bright and safe future for the queer community in Russia. With the demand for our help growing every month, recurrent donations are especially vital to our work, as this is how we can plan for a smooth and healthy growth of our workload.

Let's create a world where everyone has the right to love and equality!

[Support Coming Out](#)



We're always in touch!

Read about us [on our website](#)

Contact us: contact@comingoutspb.org

Social networks:



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