

Gives Grant Report

Please provide us with an overview of the achievements over the last 12 months of the program for which BlackRock provided funding. We would especially like to know how the program is making a difference in the communities you serve.

Hosted in January 2026 under the banner of The Humsafar Trust and powered by Yaariyan, *Gulabi Mela* was envisioned as more than just a festival—it was a living, breathing expression of community empowerment and inclusion. With the support of BlackRock, this annual fair was elevated to new heights, transforming into a vibrant hub of capacitation, commerce, and culture.

This year's *Gulabi Mela* welcomed over 1300 attendees from diverse backgrounds and identities, creating a truly intersectional space that embodied acceptance and joy. The event featured over **52 stalls** run by LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs showcasing everything from handmade crafts, fashion, and art to homegrown skincare, zines, and more. This was not just a marketplace—it was an economy of queer dreams being realized.

A standout feature of this year's mela was the inclusion of **participants from our Dolphin Tank program**, an initiative that supports LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs in building their own sustainable businesses. With the help of activity support, these entrepreneurs were able to put up professional stalls, promote their brands, and gain direct market experience and visibility—many of the stall owners get the chance to pilot ideas at the mela which they later develop into full blown business models.

The day was further energized by a **series of stage performances**, including dance, Soothing performance of beloved songs, and drag acts, all by queer artists, making the event not only an economic platform but also a cultural phenomenon. A special corner hosted **interactive games and art installations** that allowed for playful engagement and social mixing among attendees—many of whom reported feeling truly seen and celebrated for the first time.

Furthermore, we also ensured direct correlation to our core mission—advancing health and well-being within the community. A **pop-up health clinic** was set up on site, providing free and confidential HIV testing, STI screening, and counseling services. Over **200 people accessed health services** during the event, many of them first-timers, making it one of the most successful health outreach efforts embedded in a community event to date.

What made *Gulabi Mela* exceptional was its ability to bring together **commerce, culture, community, and care**—all in one open, non-judgmental, and joyous space. It was a true representation of what grassroots LGBTQ+ organizing can look like when given the right support. The event not only celebrated queer identity but actively strengthened it by offering real opportunities for economic upliftment, health awareness, and emotional connection.

What outcomes were achieved specifically as a result of BlackRock's grant?

One of the most significant outcomes was the **creation of a unique, community-driven marketplace** that centered queer enterprises. With the support of the grant, LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs were not only given the space to showcase their work but were also empowered to **pilot business ideas**, test out products in a real-world setting,

and receive immediate feedback from a supportive and responsive audience. This exposure provided essential validation and insight, especially for early-stage businesses that otherwise lack access to conventional platforms.

More than a market, *Gulabi Mela* became a **powerful space for community bonding and expression**, welcoming hundreds of queer individuals to come together in a safe, affirming, and joyful environment. For many attendees—especially youth—it was a rare chance to feel fully seen and celebrated in public space. The inclusion of queer performers and artists further enhanced the experience, offering them not just visibility but professional opportunities and an appreciative audience.

An important secondary outcome was that the event also **served as an awareness event about the annual Mumbai Pride March**, which was a week after the Mela day. Mumbai Pride created visibility for the LGBTQ+ community in the city. The event facilitated new friendships, collaborations, and networks among queer individuals and allies—something that cannot be quantified but is deeply felt. This emotional and social safety net is a critical outcome in a context where LGBTQ+ individuals often face isolation and marginalization.

BlackRock's grant helped create a **space of opportunity, pride, and purpose**—where LGBTQ+ youth, entrepreneurs, and artists could take up space, tell their stories, and build futures on their own terms.

Please describe the population served and/or the community reached during the grant period.

The event drew attendees from across the city, with many coming specifically to engage with a safe and celebratory space that reflected their identities and experiences. Held on a public holiday, *Gulabi Mela* was purposefully scheduled to ensure **maximum accessibility**—especially for individuals who are often unable to visit our clinic due to work or other commitments. This allowed a broader section of the community to benefit from the **on-site pop-up health clinic**, which offered free and confidential HIV testing, STI screening, and counseling in a **non-intimidating, community-rooted environment**.

Importantly, the casual and festive setting helped create a more **open and stigma-free atmosphere** for discussions around sexual health—encouraging individuals who may otherwise avoid formal health centers to access vital services and support.

In essence, the initiative reached a **diverse cross-section of Mumbai's queer population**, including those who are typically underserved due to time constraints, stigma, or lack of inclusive spaces—ultimately strengthening health equity and community connection.

How was the community served directly as a result of BlackRock's support?

The mela offered a **safe, affirming, and joyful space** where community members could gather, connect, and celebrate their identities beyond the usual settings of protests or parties. It created an inclusive environment for **queer entrepreneurs** to showcase their products, **generate income**, and build valuable networks with the wider community, helping them take tangible steps toward sustainable business growth.

The **talent showcase** segment gave a vibrant platform to **LGBTQ+ artists and performers** to share their skills and passions—from dance and music to comedy and drag—creating visibility, pride, and moments of celebration for the community.

Importantly, the event also hosted the **SAHYOG pop-up health clinic**, which provided attendees with on-the-spot consultations and health services in a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere. For many who are unable to visit our regular clinic due to work commitments or discomfort in formal health settings.

Through every element—entrepreneurship, artistic expression, and healthcare—the community was not only supported but **uplifted in ways that centered joy, dignity, and opportunity**. BlackRock’s support made this holistic and impactful experience possible.

How many people benefited directly as a result of BlackRock’s support?

As a result of BlackRock’s support, a wide range of individuals directly benefited through the *Gulabi Mela 2025*. The event empowered the **Yaariyan core team of young LGBTQ+ volunteers, and The Humsafar Trust staff**, who were involved in every aspect of planning and execution—gaining valuable experience in community organizing, event coordination, and public engagement.

LGBTQ+ performers (17 in total) were given a platform to express themselves, ranging from classical dance to comedic acts and character mimicry—helping them gain visibility and connect with a supportive audience.

Additionally, **52 LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs** showcased their businesses at dedicated stalls, where they were able to interact directly with the community, test out their ideas, and build confidence as queer business owners. This served as a critical stepping stone for many, offering real-time feedback and exposure that can inform and strengthen their entrepreneurial journey.

The event also included a **pop-up health clinic**, which offered essential services in a more relaxed, stigma-free atmosphere—encouraging conversations around health and enabling access to those who may not typically be able to visit the clinic due to work or other constraints.

How many people benefited indirectly as a result of BlackRock’s support?

As a result of BlackRock’s support, over **1,300 individuals** benefited **indirectly** through the *Gulabi Mela 2025*, which was hosted on January 26th, 2025. The event attracted a large and diverse crowd, with the majority of attendees coming from the LGBTQ+ communities in Mumbai.

The mela created a vibrant and welcoming space where attendees could **interact with 52 queer-owned businesses**, explore community-led initiatives, and enjoy inclusive performances. This not only helped increase visibility and community engagement but also fostered a **deeper sense of connection and solidarity** within the queer ecosystem.

In addition, **208 attendees accessed the pop-up health clinic** for consultations, benefiting from a safe, accessible, and non-judgmental environment to discuss health concerns—something that remains a challenge for many due to stigma or scheduling conflicts with traditional clinic timings.

The wide reach of the event, made possible through BlackRock’s grant, significantly contributed to creating **an affirming, celebratory, and service-oriented space** that left a lasting impact on the community.

Did the program generate any publicity or media coverage?

Publicity

Event Announcement post

https://www.instagram.com/p/DDPKbRCIOoz/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

Gulabi Mela Promotional Reel

https://www.instagram.com/reel/DFQVL_NIUZs/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

Internal Coverage

https://www.instagram.com/p/DFU_24eiRhO/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

https://www.instagram.com/p/DFaN0MKCOsi/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

https://www.instagram.com/p/DFdBZx7icXt/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

Media Coverage

[Media Coverage](#)

Have any BlackRock employees volunteered with your organization during this grant period?

No

Please include a description of our employees' involvement.

No

Please include the number of volunteers, if possible.

N/A

Please provide any additional feedback about your experience working with our employees. Anecdotal stories are welcome and encouraged. Please note that the information you provide could be used on our internal website or publications.

N/A

Did your organization receive any in-kind support from BlackRock during the grant period?

N/A

Please provide details of this support, including how it was used.

N/A

Please complete and upload the Financial Report using the template below

Please attach your most recent audited financials.

Resources/materials attachment 1: Resources/materials attachment 2:

Resources/materials attachment 3:

Resources/materials attachment 4:

Resources/materials attachment 5:

