

Sarajevo Open Centre's Strategic Plan for 2018-2020

Adopted by the Steering Board on December 19th 2017

Introduction

After achieving formidable results during the period 2014-2017, Sarajevo Open Centre has created a three-year strategy for 2018-2020 that builds upon those results. Through this strategy, we strive to use the experience and knowledge gained and the established relationships to achieve sustainable change in the area of legal equality, social inclusion and acceptance of LGBTI people, and in the application of feminist principles and gender equality to advance the human rights of women in BiH society.

Due to the complexity of the BiH legal system and its mostly conservative society, there is still a need to tackle the same issues we have worked on in the previous period. The changes made in the institutional and legal framework are visible and substantial, however they need to be accompanied by the institutional and political will, in order to ensure their implementation and application in the practice. Such changes were not always followed by the social change that would ensure the advancement of human rights protection, quality of life and equality of women and LGBTI people in BiH. Therefore, in the period covered by this Strategic Plan, we will continue to work on the issues of violence and discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics since these issues are of great concern to human rights of LGBTI people and women in BiH. We will also continue building the movement and empowering the LGBTI community in BiH because only a strong and visible LGBTI community can support and be an adequate support network to its individual members, leading to meaningful changes in the society and the attitudes of the general public in BiH.

During the period 2018-2020, we will engage in ground-breaking work with the relevant institutions on policy, legislative and service providing levels regarding same-sex partnerships, the right to bodily integrity and self-determination of trans and intersex people, political participation of women and enhancement of existing gender equality and human rights architecture. A new focus will be set on efforts carried out to influence the hearts and minds of the public (especially parents and family members of LGBTI people, supporters/opinion makers, straight allies) creating a more inclusive surrounding for women and LGBTI people, thus inspiring a wider social change in BiH society. New strategies will be used to build up diverse and decentralised LGBTI movement, strongly connected with other social movements and marginalized groups, in order to achieve common goals and strengthen civil society and its influence in BiH.

This Strategic plan introduces specific and distinct goals, outcomes and indicators for our two programmes: LGBTI Rights and Women's Rights, aiming to show the specific contribution and achievements made in both of these areas through the work of Sarajevo Open Centre in BiH and the region. We will continue to measure our progress through smart indicators, but the results measured will be reinforced through a set of progress markers with which we aim to capture subtler changes in target groups' behaviour, relationships, activities and values (or in the case of institutions, change in their orientation or policy).

About Sarajevo Open Centre

SOC was established in 2007, registered as an association of citizens on the state level. Its small team worked on different projects related to political science research and political education, literature, film and art promotion, and interreligious education, without having clear programmes, an office or employed staff. As of 2011, it has started narrowing down its field of work and creating its first strategy for 2013-2014. In this period, the work of Sarajevo Open Centre was fully professionalized through the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and the results achieved through its implementation.

As defined by the Statute, the Sarajevo Open Centre: provides legal and psycho-social help and counselling for LGBTI people; cooperates with institutions on all levels in order to improve and implement public policies and laws protecting and promoting human rights of LGBTI people and women; implements educational and informative programmes and activities for institution representatives, CSOs, media and general public on LGBTI and gender issues; supports other LGBTI CSOs and non-formal groups in their capacity building efforts and further development; implements researches, publishes publications, conducts media campaigns and artistic activities in order to inform and raise awareness of human rights of women and LGBTI people.

Through its continuous work, Sarajevo Open Centre has achieved considerable results both in its **work with the LGBTI community, as well as in the improvement of legislative, policy and institutional framework for the protection of human rights of women and LGBTI people**. SOC has established its role as an organisation close to the community, but also to the institutions, acting as a bridge between the civil society and decision makers, as well as a strong advocate and lobbyist for necessary changes.

One of the strong suits of SOC is its **constant production of knowledge and BiH human rights related data** through its diverse publications, policy proposals and its yearly report on human rights of LGBTI people in BiH, yearly report on human rights of women in BiH and the yearly alternative report tackling the advancement and protection of human rights in general during the EU accession process of BiH. Sarajevo Open Centre is the only organisation in BiH producing such reports, which are used by domestic and international institutions and organisations as relevant sources of information on human rights situation in BiH.

In 2014-2017, the Sarajevo Open Centre has successfully advocated for and initiated amendments to the **Anti-Discrimination Law, Criminal Code of FBiH, BiH Law on Sports, Law on Asylum of BiH and the Law on Free Legal Aid of BiH** regarding human rights of women, LGBTI people, and other marginalised groups. SOC has also successfully lobbied for the inclusion of **LGBTI specific measures into the entity-level and state-level operational plans for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan of BiH**. Owing to the coordination of the Initiative for Monitoring the European integration of BiH, SOC has been recognized as an **important partner in the EU integration process** and has provided **alternative responses of CSOs to the questionnaire of the European Commission**.

In the past three years, SOC has organized **several large-scale public LGBTI events, such as the yearly Merlinka Festival, several protests and a spontaneous protest**

walk named by the media as the *Sarajevo Zero Pride*. In a country where every fourth LGBTI person is exposed to some sort of violence and where a large proportion of this violence occurs in homes and schools, the LGBTI community is mostly invisible and hidden. Therefore, it is especially hard to organise these events through the active involvement and participation of members of the LGBTI community. In the previous three years, the number of the community members who openly participate in public events, give media statements and willingly associate themselves with the LGBTI activism of Sarajevo Open Centre has increased, directly owing to its work and dedication.

Through its feminist and gender equality education programmes, SOC has contributed to the **mobilization of people who share feminist ideas and has given them space to promote and implement these ideas thus sustaining the feminist debate in BiH society.** Through these programmes, SOC also established close partnerships with the state, Federation and local-level representatives with whom it effectively collaborates on achieving the above-mentioned legislative, policy and institutional changes.

These changes have been summed up in the evaluation of SOC's 2015-2016 programme:

SOC has created long-term change within the LGBTI population through creation of a **safe space, and an opportunity for LGBTI community to gather.** The credibility of SOC as an organisation for LGBTI people has been strengthened, and SOC is recognised as an organisation that can provide support to LGBTI people directly.

SOC is recognised as an **advocacy organisation with capacities to advocate for and to bring institutional, legislative and policy change in the domain of human rights of women and LGBTI people.**

SOC has carefully and systematically implemented activities aiming at institutional sensitisation concerning LGBTI rights through the creation of its **advocacy champions for LGBTI and women's rights.**

LGBTI rights and feminist discourse have been mainstreamed, and SOC's work has contributed to this mainstreaming. SOC is recognised as the most visible and most active organization in BiH working on the mainstreaming of LGBTI rights, feminist education and political participation of women.

SOC has used a variety of strategies to address and sensitize media on the topic of LGBTI rights, which has contributed to the **more neutral and BiH-relevant reporting on human rights of LGBTI people** and topics of their interest. This change in media reporting is confirmed through the yearly media analysis by Sarajevo Open Centre.

Vision

The vision of Sarajevo Open Centre is that Bosnia and Herzegovina become a society based on equal rights and opportunities for everyone; Bosnia and Herzegovina is a state built by active and engaged citizens and accountable authorities.

The degree of democracy and development (economic, social, cultural, etc.) of one country is dependent on the equality and inclusion of all its citizens, regardless of their identities. In order to enhance inclusive democracy in BiH, two different processes have to take place. On the one hand, the state must ensure adequate respect for, and protection of human rights of its citizens through advancement of its legislative, policy and institutional frameworks. On the other hand, the citizens of BiH, especially those

belonging to marginalized groups, must actively engage in democratic processes and claim their rights by influencing their fellow citizens, authorities and decision makers and holding them accountable for their actions.

Mission

Sarajevo Open Centre advocates for the full respect of human rights and social inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and intersex people and women. Sarajevo Open Centre is an independent feminist civil society organization that strives to empower lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and intersex people and women through community empowerment and activist movement building. SOC also publicly promotes the human rights of LGBTI people and women, and advocates for improved legislation and policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina on national, European and international levels. By working on European integration issues, SOC is improving human rights in general and encouraging further the development of civil society.

Key Values and organisational culture

We aspire to achieve high degree of **professionalism** and **quality** in our work, which would reflect an exemplary, inspiring, and effective organization of people sharing joint vision and values.

We believe in and promote **intersectionality** and **diversity** of ideas and people: we respect and take into consideration people and their perspectives stemming from their different identities and backgrounds. We also actively fight multiple discrimination, especially on the grounds of sex, sex characteristics, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity.

We promote **integrity**: we stick to our values and principles, and are committed to fairness, transparency and accountability in our procedures and work, guided by professional standards and results we want to achieve as well as broad involvement of different stakeholders.

We believe in **proactivity and activism** as we constantly monitor the relevant local, regional and worldwide political and social currents in order to identify challenges and find solutions before problems arise. This anticipatory, change-oriented and self-initiated behavior enables us to act timely and to use our competences to prevent social backlashes and to set foundations for future advancements of human rights and equality of all BiH citizens.

Innovation and creativity: we introduce new methods, approaches and focus areas, encourage openness and are prepared for continuous learning in order to be able to respond to new challenges.

Collaboration and solidarity: we invest in long term partnerships and networks on national and international levels, using these synergies to further our goals and strengthen our position within civil society. We believe that we can achieve more by combining partnerships, when they favour our strategic goals, and a critical approach towards the performance of the state institutions.

Communication: we have established successful channels of communication with stakeholders and our target groups, which are used regularly, and are two-way.

Methodology and the adoption of the Strategic Plan

After reviewing results of external evaluation of SOC's programme (2015-2016) and SOC research findings concerning the needs and problems of LGBTI people in BiH, Sarajevo Open Centre initiated its strategic planning process in May 2017. During 2017, three workshops were held and facilitated by a consultant. They focused on creating a SWOT analysis, identifying key focus areas, development of key objectives, stakeholder analysis, roles and responsibilities of SOC, etc. Under the moderation of the consultant, the entire SOC team, SOC board members and external stakeholders/partners from BiH and the region took part in some of these workshops, actively contributing to the strategic planning with their knowledge and inputs.

SOC management was responsible for drafting all documents such as the Result Assessment Framework, Action plan, Strategic plan, and this process was facilitated and reviewed by the consultant through meetings, emails and Skype calls. Once these documents were finalized, the SOC team reviewed them. The Steering Board of SOC adopted the Strategic Plan and accompanying documents in December 2017.

Results achieved by the organisation in the previous period (2014-2017)

Key results achieved by Sarajevo Open Centre to-date are listed below.

Advocacy, legal protection and institutional cooperation

- Established and maintained the only civil society-led LGBTI human rights violation monitoring and documentation system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which resulted in Pink Reports – annual LGBTI rights reports for 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 followed by concrete advocacy (i.e. written submissions/alternative reports, legislative and policy proposals) actions on national, European and international levels;
- Representatives of national institutions, international and human rights organizations from the region recognized SOC as the main source of accurate information and quality legislative and policy proposals;
- Established our internal women's rights monitoring procedures, which resulted in Orange Report – annual women's rights reports for 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 (the only annual women's rights report in Bosnia and Herzegovina published by a civil society organisation), as well as different advocacy actions on national, European and international levels;
- Successfully launched changes or participated in amendments to the following laws: a) Anti-Discrimination Law (improvement of procedural aspects and clear definition of sexual orientation, gender identity and sexual characteristics as prohibited discrimination grounds), b) Law on BiH Ombudsmen Institution (proposing a model law whose parts dealing with the definition of competences, relations with civil society, and a clear recognition of sexual and gender minorities in the areas of work of the Institution of Ombudsman have been incorporated into the official law), c) Criminal Codes of RS and FBiH (clear definition of hate crimes, i.e. based on sexual orientation and gender identity), d) Law on Sports of BiH (equal participation of women in the Council for Sport, gender responsive budgeting, prohibition of discrimination on all grounds – i.e. disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity and sexual characteristics), e) Law on Asylum of

BiH and f) Law on Free Legal Aid (harmonization with the new anti-discrimination legislation)

- Successfully established cooperation with parliamentary commissions, state institutions for gender equality, and Institution of Ombudsmen for Human Rights in BiH, and worked with them on law amendments as well as on inclusion of LGBTI topics in the entity's Annual Operational Plans for the implementation of the BiH's Gender Action Plan, as well as the creation of the first ever report on LGBTI rights by the Institution of the Ombudsperson. As of 2016, LGBTI rights were included in a public policy in BiH for the first time;
- Successfully kicked off the sensitization process of local and cantonal institutions providing social and health services to LGBTI people and brought the issues of LGBTI human rights to the local level;
- Successfully led advocacy campaigns; took part in the working groups for creation of general human rights and anti-discrimination public policies (Human Rights Strategy and Strategy for Combating Discrimination);
- Launched talks on big future challenges such as legal regulation of same-sex partnerships, legal gender recognition, bodily integrity of intersex people, and creation of multi-annual Action plan for equality of LGBTI people in BiH that need to be implemented through separate laws and policies in the following period;
- Initiated action and decisively contributed to a better status of safe houses in the Federation BiH by preventing the adoption of the amendments that would de facto threaten the existence of safe houses in a joint action with participants of the Feminist School Žarana Papić and other women's organizations;
- Initiated the campaign to introduce the use of gender sensitive language in the Parliament of FBiH, and in university diplomas in Canton Sarajevo;
- Initiated the public discussion to introduce improvement to the regulation of the parental leave for parents;
- Introduced the work on establishing institutional gender mechanisms for gender equality at the level of cantons and continued to work on the local gender action plans;
- Led and/or participated in advocacy on the European level (i.e. contributions to the BiH Progress Report on women's and LGBTI rights; Alternative Progress/Report on BiH, European Parliament Resolutions, EU-BiH Structured Dialogue on Justice consultations and written submissions; OSCE/ODIHR hate crime report submission; monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on measures combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, consultations with ECRI and PACE) and in international (i.e. UPR written submissions, CEDAW Alternative Report and consultations, UN Committee against Torture) advocacy actions in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- Successfully streamlined the activities using the EU accession process as the focal point for targeted, evidence-based advocacy in order to promote respect for and recognition of human rights of LGBTI persons in the Western Balkans;
- Introduced first ever human rights education of public officials in BiH about the infringements of human rights of LGBTI people (i.e. intensive training for police inspectors in 2013 and 2015 in FBiH; permanent education of 1300 police officers in 2014; Train the Trainer program for all cantonal Ministries of Interior (Mols) in

- 2016; continued with intensive trainings for prosecutors and judges in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017, trainings for the IGMs representatives);
- Based on our advocacy, Cantonal Mols are implementing education programmes on hate crime within the scope of their permanent trainings that are mandatory for each and every police officer of each canton in FBiH;
 - Started a unique training and empowerment programme (Equality Academy) for MPs, representatives of executive power and political parties on cantonal, entity and state levels in 2015, 2016 and 2017;
 - Based on our advocacy, four police stations in Sarajevo Canton, for the first time ever, appointed contact persons for LGBTI victims of human rights violations in 2014;
 - Based on our advocacy, the Prosecutor's Office of Canton Sarajevo appointed a contact person for the cases of LGBTI hate crimes;
 - Started the only intensive informal educational programme in BiH for students of law and journalism/media sciences on LGBTI rights, in order to educate and influence the next generation of leaders and stakeholders (2012-2016).

Awareness-raising

- Highly increased visibility and mainstreamed LGBTI issues in BiH media by implementing different online, TV, radio and print media campaigns, giving voice to the BiH LGBTI community and reaching out to more than 1,000.000 BiH citizens each year;
- Raised public awareness of LGBTI and women's rights issues by organizing dozens of public events, street actions and protests (i.e. Merlinka LGBTI film festival in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017; theatrical reading of the revolutionary documentary drama "SEVEN" in 2013, 2015 and 2016; exhibitions "All human beings are born equal and free in dignity and rights", two human rights marches on the occasion of the Human Rights Day in 2013 and 2016, Sarajevo Zero Pride on the occasion of 2016 IDAHOT, public performance *Our Lives Exist Outside 4 Walls*, *STAND UP WOMAN! – Europeanization & Emancipation: A Case of Nafija Sarajlić – Themes and Reminiscences, Poetry and Museum of Razija Handžić: memory confiscation and systematic neglect of women's contribution to culture, science and institutions*; film screenings, discussions, exhibitions and film weekends)
- Accurately informed the public about the human rights conditions of LGBTI people and women through knowledge production and promotion and countrywide distribution of publications (i.e. donations to libraries, promotions and presentations during festivals). Thus, we have published over 100 publications that were printed in more than 50.000 copies in total;
- Improved critical feminist debates in Sarajevo by running the feminist lecture programme "Somebody Said Feminism?" (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017).

Community empowerment and movement building

- Provided accurate and relevant information on LGBTI rights and everyday life to the LGBTI community through the first and only BiH LGBTI info portal www.lgbti.ba;
- Offered the only specialized legal counselling and legal representation to LGBTI persons in BiH which resulted in first cases of hate crime or discrimination on the grounds of SOGISC before courts and BiH, as well as several recommendations by the Ombudsman Institution;

- Offered the only constant peer-to-peer and psychosocial support programme to LGBTI people in BiH;
- Empowered LGBTI community and offered a safe place (i.e. through cultural events, monthly social events, community empowerment in Tuzla, Mostar, Sarajevo, Zenica and Banja Luka);
- Supported and led women's rights movement development, by strengthening the BiH Women's Network;
- Established the only non-formal academic feminist education programme – Žarana Papić's School of Feminism through which we created a significant base of supporters, activists and advocates for both feminist and LGBTI issues;
- Supported the development of LGBTIQ activist groups and associations in Tuzla, Banja Luka and Mostar and their street actions. Supported foundation and work of Banja Luka Association of Queer Activists (BUKA), Liberta Mo association and Tuzla Open Centre.

Organizational capacity building and networking

In 2014-2017, members of Sarajevo Open Centre attended different capacity building actions related to programme developments (rights of transgender people, same-sex partnership, rights of intersex people, specific topics related to women's rights – gender responsive budgeting, gender analysis and mainstreaming, BiH Gender Equality Law and its implementation), and/or organized internal ones, enhancing skills in the areas of free legal aid provision, peer-to-peer counselling, documentation of human rights violations, advocacy and lobbying, campaigning and messaging, as well as organisational (organisational security, steering board roles, i.a.) and financial management.

This process of capacity building, and establishment of different organisational procedures related to administration and financial management led to a high level of organisational development, that has scored 3.87 (out of maximum 4) on the Organisational Capacity Assessment conducted at the beginning of 2017.

Sarajevo Open Centre is a member of several CSO networks in BiH, as well as on the regional and European levels, and uses these memberships to advance its work towards its mission. We are coordinating the work of the Initiative for monitoring the European integration of BiH, an eminent CSO network.

Human rights situation for LGBTI people & women or Our working landscape – context and trends

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has done a very poor job in protecting and ensuring the rights and freedoms of LGBTI (lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) people since the introduction of basic anti-discrimination legislation in 2009. Still lacking in implementation, the legal framework for protecting the rights of LGBTI persons has been somewhat improved through the 2016 amendments to the Antidiscrimination Law, and the introduction of hate crime legislation on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Until the end of 2015, no measures ensuring the equality of LGBTI people have been adopted nor implemented by any level of government in BiH. Since then, governments of both entities have adopted annual operational plans for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan in 2016, while the Council of Ministers of BiH adopted a one-year Anti-Discrimination Action Plan in April 2016. All three included measures, partially implemented throughout 2016 and 2017, were designed to enhance the rights of LGBTI persons. They were mostly focused on basic trainings of public officials working in institutional gender mechanisms and relevant ministries in LGBTI human rights, and the improvement of legislation addressing the most prominent and urgent issues regarding the violence and discrimination against LGBTI people. No laws addressed through these policies were ever amended.¹

However, hate speech, discrimination and violence against the LGBTI community are still a widespread phenomenon in the society of BiH, and the state is not offering any services needed by or tailored to the needs of the LGBTI community. The assessment of the needs and problems of the LGBTI community conducted in 2017 showed that predominantly heteronormative and patriarchal social context, inundated with explicit homophobia, intolerance and violence against LGBTI persons, coupled with inadequate institutional mechanisms for protecting LGBTI rights and freedoms, has made the life of the LGBTI community much harder and considerably more limited compared to the rest of the population. LGBTI persons are often prevented from leading a normal life or meeting basic personal, social or cultural needs (e.g. being open about their relationships, freely expressing their gender identity, etc.). The results of this study indicate that fear of violence, discrimination and/or exclusion often leads to extreme forms of self-isolation, avoidance of certain cultural and social activities, reluctance to express one's views, etc. The lives and needs of LGBTI persons are often incomparable to the quotidian life of those whose sexual orientation, gender and/or sexual identity falls neatly within the dominant and cultural matrix of the BiH society.

Therefore, apart from addressing the still prevalent violence and discrimination, it is necessary to intensify the development and implementation of concrete LGBTI inclusion programs and adopt legislation needed to ensure equal and dignified life of LGBTI citizens and their families in BiH in the areas of education, healthcare, service provision, primarily by making the community stronger and more visible, and by tackling the rights of transgender and intersex people, same-sex partners, together with supporters and allies.²

¹ Local groups working on LGBTI human rights extend their outreach and influence relevant local stakeholders

² For more detailed information, please refer to our Research on Problems and Needs of LGBTI Persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2017 - Analysis of Findings – Numbers of equality 2.

http://soc.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ENG-Brojevi-ravnopravnost_04.10.2017.-WEB-II.pdf

Although women make up more than 50% of the population according to the 2013 census, they are still considered a marginalized social group in BiH. Women still face violence and discrimination on grounds of gender, and misogyny is widely accepted and used in the public discourse. They remain underrepresented in political and public life, and the current legislative and policy framework reinforces existing gender gap in all spheres of public life, as well as the gap between personal and professional life of women in BiH. Bosnia and Herzegovina was the first country in Western Balkans to adopt a comprehensive Gender Equality Law in 2003, which prohibits gender based discrimination (in education, employment, social and health care, sports and culture, public life) and violence, domestic violence, and prescribes affirmative measures to achieve gender equality. However, like many other laws, this one remains unimplemented, especially regulations concerning the 40% quota for the less represented gender in all the institutions and bodies on every level within the state. Since no sanctions are prescribed in case of failure to fulfil this quota, governments in BiH are often entirely composed of men. The largest percentage of women in the government amounted to 25% in the entity governments. Though there is a mandatory quota of 40% on electoral lists, due to preferential votes, women usually make up to only 20% of parliamentary bodies in BiH. Quota of women in administrative bodies, agencies and institutions and publicly owned companies is also prescribed by this law but is not considered mandatory and it is rarely respected in practice (e.g. in appointing the advisory boards of publicly owned companies, state agencies, etc).

Violence against women and girls also remains a widespread problem. Criminal codes of BiH, its Entities and Brčko District, as well as the laws on domestic violence need to be aligned with the Istanbul convention in order to counter and process this type of violence adequately. Though the Labor Laws of the Entities regulate maternity and paternity leave, mothers are the ones staying home and taking care of children. Better regulation and more gender sensitive and affirmative public policies are necessary to enhance the equality of men and women in BiH in the aforementioned areas.

This can be achieved through establishment of institutional gender mechanism systems on cantonal and local levels and connecting them with the existing state level Gender Equality agency and gender centers on entity level, thus ensuring the more adequate implementation of the Gender Action Plan of BiH and more comprehensive work of gender equality bodies on gender sensitive legislation and policies on all levels.

Stakeholder Analysis

The main stakeholders identified through Sarajevo Open Centre's 2018-2020 Strategic Plan are:

LGBTI people in BiH - are still reluctant to access SOC's services openly (peer-to-peer or psychological support, legal counselling, informative and empowering social gatherings). In the following period, SOC will aim to empower LGBTI people to engage more in action planning, to report human rights violations, and participate in public events.

Family members of LGBTI people in BiH - rarely support their LGBTI members, privately or publicly. SOC aims to empower these family members, connect them with each other and inspire them to publicly support and advocate for LGBTI human rights.

Targeted duty bearers:

- **Institutional Gender Mechanisms and relevant ministries** - targeted duty bearers are reluctant to publicly condemn human rights violations of LGBTI people and women, and only do so when pressured by CSOs. They also fail to see the importance of including LGBTI and women's rights into all human right tackling policies and in the development of cantonal gender institutional mechanisms. SOC will attempt to empower targeted duty bearers to react ex officio to human rights violations of LGBTI people and women, to propose mechanisms for their protection and to independently cooperate with CSOs. SOC will also strive to influence the targeted duty bearers to propose structural changes on cantonal level for the purpose of establishing contact points for gender equality, and work on ensuring gender and minority sensitive legislation and policies on all levels. in cooperation with CSOs.
- **Parliamentarians** – parliamentarians rarely engage in discussion regarding human rights of LGBTI people and women, and only do so upon the initiative of civil society organisations. They still believe that women's human rights and gender equality are specific human right issues and target them solely through gender policies. SOC will aim to initiate engagement of parliamentarians in collaboration with CSOs and to include LGBTI and women's rights into all legislation and policies, and initiate necessary amendments to fulfil the gaps and align legislative and policy framework in BiH with its international obligations and highest human rights standards.
- **Political parties** - SDA and HDZ members publicly express or condone homophobic statements. Although individuals from Naša stranka, SDP, DF and SBB are supportive and willing to cooperate, the parties still do not openly and publicly include LGBTI human rights into their programmes, strategies and documents. SOC will influence SDA and HDZ to express the positions of their parties in relation to human rights of LGBTI people and prohibition of discrimination of LGBTI people in their documents. Through the same activities, SOC will influence Naša stranka, SDP, DF and SBB to include in the programmes the most prominent issues of interest concerning human rights of LGBTI people, and to initiate changes of legislation and policies in order to advance private and family life, self-determination, bodily integrity and protection from violence and discrimination of LGBTI people in BiH.

Law enforcement officers – Despite their participation in CSO trainings, police officers remain unaware of the necessity to be specifically sensitized to work with LGBTI victims of hate crimes, and to the freedom of assembly of LGBTI people. SOC will attempt to create necessary conditions for members of law enforcement to treat LGBTI victims professionally, inform them of all the stages of the process and maintain a relationship of trust, treating the victims in a friendly manner and respecting their identities and preferred terminology.

Judiciary – Despite their participation in CSO trainings, members of the judiciary remain unaware of the necessity to be specifically sensitized to work with LGBTI victims of discrimination and hate crimes. SOC will attempt to create necessary conditions for members of the judiciary to treat LGBTI victims professionally, inform them of all the stages of the process and maintain a relationship of trust treating the victims in a friendly manner and respecting their identities and preferred terminology.

National Human Rights Structures – The Institution of Ombudsperson for Human Rights still lacks the will to engage proactively in the protection and promotion of LGBTI human rights. SOC will try to empower the Ombudsperson to react ex officio to human

rights violations of LGBTI people, and to contribute to the public debate on and raise awareness of the issues of LGBTI citizens of BiH.

Local groups working on LGBTI human rights – lack knowledge and expertise in human rights of LGBTI people to be able to contribute to the local community or engage with local stakeholders. SOC will try to increase their knowledge and empower them to mobilize and gather local LGBTI communities, and to engage in the discussion in advocacy activities with local stakeholders and duty bearers.

Advocates – prominent figures from public life/opinion makers are supportive but lack adequate knowledge to be proper advocates for human rights of LGBTI people. SOC will try to equip them with adequate information and knowledge necessary for them to attend public events and protests, personally engage and use media channels to support LGBTI human rights in BiH.

Media – as a result of SOC's work, media remain neutral in their reporting on LGBTI topics. SOC will attempt to advance the media editorial outputs and ensure that the media continue delivering issues of interest and relevance for the BiH LGBTI community.

Key strategic objectives and Expected Results

In the following three-year period, Sarajevo Open Centre will continue its LGBTI and Women's rights programs, through feminist perspective and the perspective of the BiH EU integration process. We will build upon our previous results and successes and strive for further progress. In our **LGBTI Program**, we aim at the **improved legal equality, social inclusion and acceptance of LGBTI people in BiH**. To achieve this, we will further pursue advanced protection from violence and discrimination; equality and inclusion in the areas of self-determination, bodily integrity (trans and intersex issues), and private family life (same-sex partnership), through advocacy, monitoring, policy analysis, outreach, awareness-raising, community empowerment and alliance building, and human rights education.

In our **Women's Rights Program**, we aim to **advance human rights of women in BH society through application of feminist principles and gender equality**. We will centre our attention around improving women's participation in the political life, with the special focus on women in governments and administrative branch, contributing to the enhancement of gender institutional mechanisms, inclusion of gender equality into policies and legislation on all levels of government, and their adequate and continuous implementation. Only empowered women and men educated in feminism and gender equality can initiate these changes which is why we will continue providing our feminist and gender equality education programmes.

Complementary to this work, Sarajevo Open Centre will work on several other areas concerning human rights of all citizens of BiH, and not just LGBTI and women, such as the freedom of assembly, enhancing the role of national human rights institutions, anti-discrimination, etc.

LGBTI PROGRAMME

OUTCOME 1: LGBTI PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED TO CLAIM THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS

To achieve this outcome, we will socially empower LGBTI people in BiH (Sub-outcome 1.1). Social empowerment (understood as the process of developing a sense of

autonomy and self-confidence, and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourses) of LGBTI people will be achieved by:

- **increased access to safe space, peer and professional psycho-social support and LGBTI relevant informative content** (Bridging outcome 1.1.1) through workshops, trainings, community gathering events, peer-to-peer counselling and/or therapy, and creation of online LGBTI relevant content
- **encouraging LGBTI people to engage in activism for their rights** (Bridging outcome 1.1.2) through public events, protest, street actions, workshops, trainings, online actions etc.
- **increasing the understanding and level of support of LGBTI people from their family members** (Bridging outcome 1.1.3) through workshops, info-sessions and trainings.

Outcome 1 will also be achieved by achieving legal empowerment of LGBTI people (Sub-Outcome 1.2) by:

- **increasing access to information on their human rights i.e. legal orientation** (Bridging outcome 1.2.1) through legal counselling of SOC, directly, by phone or e-mail
- **increasing access to legal representation** (Bridging outcome 1.2.2) through legal counselling of Sarajevo Open Centre and strategic litigation

OUTCOME 2: THE STATE AND ITS ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS IMPROVE LEGAL, POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBTI PEOPLE.

We will achieve this outcome by **advancing legislation and policy in regards to private and family life, self-determination, bodily integrity, protection from violence and discrimination** (Sub-outcome 2.1) and **improving the implementation of LGBTI human rights standards by state institutions** (Sub-outcome 2.2). Sub-outcome 2.1 will be accomplished by:

- exercising the influence on **targeted duty bearers (i.e. parliamentarians on all levels) to initiate necessary improvement of legislative framework** (Bridging outcome 2.1.1) through human rights monitoring and reporting, legislative proposal drafting, addressing decision-makers through different channels, public statements/conferences, social media and public campaigning, participating in working groups, shadow reports to relevant institutions, etc.
- exercising the influence on **targeted duty bearers (i.e. IGMs and relevant ministries) to initiate the inclusion of LGBTI human rights into policy and legislation** (Bridging outcome 2.1.2) through human rights monitoring and reporting, policy analysis, legislative/policy proposal drafting, addressing decision-makers through different channels, public statements/conferences, social media and public campaigning, participating in working groups, shadow reports to relevant institutions, etc.
- **increasing our influence on political parties to define their positions in relation to human rights of LGBTI people in BiH** (Bridging outcome 2.1.3) by addressing political leaders through different channels, proposing concrete changes to their political parties' plans and programmes, social media and public campaigning, consultations, etc.

Sub-outcome 2.2 (improving the implementation of LGBTI human rights standards by state institutions) will be delivered by:

- **enhancing the role and coordination of targeted duty bearers (i.e. of IGMs and relevant ministries) for the protection of human rights of LGBTI people** (Bridging outcome 2.2.1) via human rights education, human rights monitoring and (shadow) reporting to relevant institutions, concrete proposals for efficiency advancement through different policies, cooperation, etc.
- **enhancing skills and coordination of law enforcement and judiciary in relation to LGBTI right to life and safe environment** (Bridging outcome 2.2.2) by human rights education, human rights monitoring and (shadow) reporting to relevant institutions, concrete proposals for efficiency advancement through different policies, cooperation, strategic litigation, etc.
- **enhancing efficiency of existing judicial and national human rights institutions in protection of LGBTI people from discrimination** (Bridging outcome 2.2.3) through human rights education, human rights monitoring and (shadow) reporting to relevant institutions, concrete proposals for efficiency advancement through different policies, cooperation, strategic litigation and appealing etc.

OUTCOME 3: ADVANCING ORGANISATIONAL ABILITY TO INFLUENCE AND INTERACT WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS FOR ACHIEVING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES³

We will achieve this outcome by **informing the public debate around the issues of private and family life, self-determination, bodily integrity and protection from violence and discrimination of LGBTI people with our partners (relevant public figures and allies)** (Sub-outcome 3.1) and **advancing our effectiveness in order to reach strategic results** (Sub-outcome 3.2).

Sub-outcome 3.1 will be attained by:

- **informing advocates who contribute to public debate on the issues of human rights of LGBTI people** (Bridging outcome 3.1.1) through meetings, info sessions, conferences and different public events and consultations, protests, public statements, articles, social media posts and videos on the topic of human rights of LGBTI people etc.
- **supporting local groups working on LGBTI human rights to extend their outreach and influence to relevant local stakeholders** (Bridging outcome 3.1.2) through trainings/meetings/info sessions on activism for human rights of LGBTI people, production of educational content, etc.
- **ensuring that targeted media maintain delivery of accurate and relevant information on LGBTI rights and identities** (Bridging outcome 3.1.3) through monitoring reports, meetings with media contacts, providing media content, sending op eds, articles, etc.

Sub-outcome 3.2 will be fulfilled by:

- **advancing institutional capacities and systems** (Bridging outcome 3.2.1) through trainings and education of the organisational staff in human resources, conflict resolution, time management, monitoring and evaluation, leadership, as well as in fundraising, commercialization of services, crowdfunding and local institutions as sources of funds, and financial management of large-scale projects.

³ Although this outcome falls within the scheme of the LGBTI programme, it will encompass all of our programmes. It is an outcome affecting the whole organization, but for the sake of simplicity, can be found in the scheme of goals and outcomes related to the LGBTI programme.

- **advancing organisational systems and procedures** (Bridging outcome 3.2.2) by developing various procedures and systems: procedures for sub-granting; procedures and standards of work with the LGBTI community; rules, procedures and standards of work for the editors of the lgbti.ba portal; rules, procedures and standards of work on LGBTI legal counselling; roster of external collaborators/experts; databases of contacts; data protection rules and procedures; system of supervision for community coordinator/and or other team members; improved database on LGBTI community members and activists; combined calendars of responsibilities and duties; job descriptions to match new strategy goals; internal and external communication strategy; Anti-corruption Policy; Code of Conduct; Process for Risk Analysis
- **advancing professional knowledge and skills of the organisational staff** Bridging outcome 3.2.3) through training and education on advocacy, watch-dog work, policy analysis, and community/allies building and mobilizing.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS PROGRAMME

OUTCOME 1: THE STATE AND ITS ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS IMPROVE LEGAL, POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

In order to achieve this improvement, we will **advance the implementation of Gender Equality Law in regards to political participation of women** (Sub-outcome 1.1) and **strengthen the institutional framework for gender equality through cooperation with gender institutional mechanisms** (Sub-outcome 1.2).

Sub-outcome 1.1. will be achieved by:

- **influencing targeted duty bearers (i.e. MPs, IGMs, and relevant ministries officials) to advance legislation for the purpose of enhancing political participation of women in executive and administrative branches on all government levels** (Bridging outcome 1.1.1) through increased influence and cooperation with institutional gender mechanisms, gender equality committees of legislative bodies, relevant parliamentarians and ministries
- **influencing targeted duty bearers (i.e. MPs, IGMs, and relevant ministries officials) to advance electoral legislation related to political participation of women** (Bridging outcome 1.1.2) through increased influence and cooperation with institutional gender mechanisms, gender equality committees of legislative bodies, relevant parliamentarians and ministries

Sub-outcome 1.2. will be achieved by:

- **increasing influence on targeted duty bearers (i.e. IGMs, and relevant ministries) to ensure the inclusion of gender equality in policies and legislation** (Bridging outcome 1.2.1) through increased influence and cooperation with institutional gender mechanisms and relevant ministries
- **influencing targeted duty bearers (i.e. IGMs, relevant ministries and governments) to contribute to the establishment of a comprehensive network of executive and legislative gender institutional mechanisms** (Bridging outcome 1.2.2) through increased influence and cooperation with institutional gender mechanisms and relevant ministries

OUTCOME 2: FEMINISM AND GENDER EQUALITY MAINSTREAMED INTO PUBLIC AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND DEBATE

This outcome will be achieved by **strengthening feminist advocacy base (public figures, allies, alumni of the feminist and gender equality programmes)** (Sub-outcome 2.1) and **influencing political representatives (parliamentarians, elected officials, prominent political party members) to actively advocate for gender equality and human rights of women** (Sub-outcome 2.2)

Sub-outcome 2.1 will be attained by:

- **increasing the number of advocates mobilized around the issues of feminism, gender equality and human rights of women and LGBTI people** (Bridging outcome 1.2.2) through Feminist School Zarana Papić modules (3 or 4) and follow-up initiatives

Sub-outcome 2.2 will be attained by:

- **enhancing the knowledge of targeted political representatives in the field of gender equality and human rights of women and marginalized groups** (Bridging outcome 1.2.2) through gender equality academy modules (3 or 4) and follow-up activities: meetings, roundtables, conferences, consultations, etc.

SOC today

At the moment, (December 2017) SOC has altogether 12 highly skilled, full-time employees and 3 volunteers. The organisation has an Assembly, and a Steering Board consisting of 5 members. The Steering Board oversees an Executive Director who is in charge of the entire staff, programme development, internal and external work of the organisation. Due to organizational changes in 2016, there are now 3 Managers (Programme, Advocacy and Finances/Administration). Programme Manager is managing all programmes and supervising 6 Programme Coordinators, who are implementing projects and programme activities. Advocacy Manager is responsible for management of all advocacy, lobbying and legal activities. Finance and Administration Manager is responsible for management of financial, accounting and administration and supervising of 1 Finance and Administration Coordinator, who is implementing administrative and financial tasks.

SOC has grown to become a respected civil society organization in BiH and position itself as a leading organisation in BiH when it comes to the LGBTI human rights, feminist education and political participation of women. SOC has proved to be an important stakeholder which initiates advocacy and public actions, recognizes problems and offers solutions, creates new methods of collaboration between CSOs and the government, coordinates other CSOs and supports them in their actions.

SOC sees the domestic civil society, as well as decision makers and governmental organisations as its partners, not competitors, and initiates and coordinates larger CSO networks in order to achieve joint goals.

The added value of SOC is definitely a young team with diverse expertise, as well as built relationships with other CSOs, decision makers, experts and partners from BiH and the region willing to participate in our actions. Such organisational structure enables SOC to adequately detect issues of importance for human rights of LGBTI people and women, as well as human rights in general, and to react concretely and quickly with high quality proposal/actions through proper channels, for the purpose of influencing social, legislative, policy and institutional changes. SOC also reaches out to its opponents and competitors through diverse educational and awareness raising programs and reasons

with them either turning them into allies or neutralizing the negative aspects of their actions. It also builds up relationship with relevant stakeholders and supporters who also advocate for SOC goals and values.

The perception of SOC has been best summarized by former First Secretary of Swedish Embassy Pia Hallonsten who was in charge of SIDA Development Cooperation (June 2017): “Theory of change – a clear results matrix with good indicators – monitoring – strong and engaged management – stable internal procedures – transparency – securing sustainability of results – basing a new strategic plan on results and lessons learned. It is a schoolbook example of how a well thought strategic plan, with an excellent results framework – set the perfect conditions for a core support.”

Organisational development priorities 2018-2020

The importance of organisational development is evident through the overall outcome (Outcome 3) aimed at advancing organisational ability to influence and interact with relevant stakeholders for achieving strategic objectives. We plan to achieve this outcome through advanced institutional capacities and systems of SOC, advanced organizational systems and procedures, as well as advanced professional competencies of the staff (please see outcome 3 for more details). Although the Outcome 3 is only placed in the LGBTI programme results three, advancing our effectiveness is planned for all of our work, including the Women’s Rights programme. To achieve the strategic goals, we plan to keep the existing organisational structure (please see Annex IV). Our OD will be measured through the already used methodology with Organizational Capacity Assessment tools used at the beginning of 2017. Additional tools might be used, when needed.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

SOC ensures the implementation of its Strategic Plan through the development of the Annual Work Plan in order to cover all set objectives; incorporate unique activities for each objective/outcome and divide tasks and obligations to individual team members. The progress of the work itself is monitored through the Result Assessment Framework (RAF), covering the period of the Strategic Plan. The implementation of RAF is the responsibility of the coordinators and the managing staff, which is supervised by the Executive Director. In order to ensure that set goals are reached, progress is measured twice a year. The results of SOC’s work in the period 2018-2020 will continue to be measured through smart indicators, but they will also be reinforced through a set of progress markers with which SOC aims to capture subtler changes in target groups’ behaviour, relationships, activities and values (or in case the institutions change their orientation or policy). Monitoring and evaluation forms will be developed based on the smart indicators and progress marker measurement.

In case some indicators/progress markers need to be improved or adjusted, this will be done on a yearly basis, like in the previous period. Reasons and arguments will be given why such changes were considered meaningful and necessary. The initial objectives will be compared to the final outcomes, taking into account all necessary changes. It will also allow for a certain level of flexibility by taking into account that the objectives can vary

due to circumstances (risks). This would also allow Sarajevo Open Centre to record *unintended* effects and outcomes of our work.

SOC will also continue to issue annual reports based on the targets achieved through RAF measurement and progress markers, with the annual, and an overall external evaluation done at the end of the two-year programme. An external consultant will work with the staff, Steering Board and other relevant stakeholders (LGBTI community, targeted duty bearers, donors, decision makers, other CSOs, etc) to evaluate the progress on the Strategic Plan in 2020 (for the period 2018-2020).

2018-2020 Financial Plan

Sarajevo Open Centre currently receives and expects most of its revenue from a number of international donors and foundations, and there is a symbolic (and almost insignificant) support from the domestic institutions. This financial support is twofold and is awarded to SOC on project, and core funding basis (expected from SIDA for the strategic period, and Open Society Fund BiH until the end of January 2019). Currently, SOC is expanding the scope and diversity of its international donors and is applying with new potential donors. However, as planned by Outcome 3, SOC will invest in exploring, mapping and learning about the commercialization of its services, crowdfunding and reaching out to local institutions so that they become significant sources of funds for the programme and other costs. Expected costs for the three-year period will consist of:

- **staff salaries** (Executive Director, 3 Managers and Programme, and Administration and Finance Coordinators);
- **office costs** (rent, utilities, security, office material/supply, phone and internet costs, equipment and maintenance, furniture, vehicle, cleaning and representation costs, communications, press clipping, and unknown costs)
- **programme costs** (covering costs of the program for LGBTI Rights, Women's Rights Program and other activities, supported either through core funding or project-based funding)
- **capacity building costs** (covering the costs of monthly team meetings, annual operational/team building meeting, all capacity building sessions, both for the individual team members, based on the annual assessment of team members, or for the groups of two or more team members, as defined by the outcome 3, or based on urgent organizational needs)
- **other costs** (including external accounting agency services, bank transaction costs, supervision for SOC team members, health insurance/programs, general audit and M&E costs). The work done by the team of Sarajevo Open Centre is highly stressful (as identified in risks), therefore we are planning to mitigate some of the negative effects, especially burn-out.

Risk analysis and mitigation

The risks for implementation of the Strategic Plan of Sarajevo Open Centre can be external and internal. SOC team identified the following external risks:

- The lack of political will of government representatives, political parties and parliamentarians to engage in the discussion on *controversial* topics of same-sex unions, self-determination of trans and intersex people, gender quota in electoral

- and executive branch, etc;
- Social backlash and further re-traditionalization of BiH society – the rise of right wing, anti-women and anti-minority ideas and statements of public officials, as well as legislative and policy proposals;
- Pending elections in 2018 and 2020 and the climate surrounding them which will lead to nationalist discussions and pre-election campaigns during which the rights of marginalized groups might be used in a negative context and violence might be incited;
- Existence of extremist groups in BiH and their incitement during the pre-election periods could potentially lead to the increase in violence against women and LGBTI people, including personnel of civil society organization;
- Civil society organisations might not be strong enough or sufficiently united to fight against social backlash and might lack the strength to push for joint causes and advancements necessary for human rights of all citizens in BiH.

Internal risks SOC might face during the implementation of the Strategic Plan are:

- Inability to ensure sustainable multi-year funding for our programmes/projects and activities;
- Loss of experienced and skilled staff members due to their departure from the organisation or from the country;
- Burn-out of the staff, especially those directly offering services to the beneficiaries;
- Inadequate strategies to combat social backlash and opponents of human rights of women and LGBTI people.

The above-mentioned risks will be mitigated through several different actions of the management team and the staff of SOC. SOC will continue developing the capacities, skills and knowledge of its team related to their primary work, but also to fundraising, community and CSO mobilizing and working with opponents. It will continue to cooperate with organizations from the region, learn from their experiences and prepare for likely scenarios. SOC will also continue to empower the LGBTI community and raise the capacities of young activists through our LGBTI, feminist and mentoring educational programmes and enable them to engage in activism either through SOC or independently. Sarajevo Open Centre will continue supporting other CSOs, as well as LGBTI movement building and connecting with other social movements and groups in order to strengthen the civil society networks and initiatives to respond and react to human rights violations and to propose concrete solutions for all relevant issues. In the following period, we will intensify our work with political parties themselves in order to create more allies inside them, neutralize possible threats and advocate for inclusion of women's and LGBTI human rights in their programmes.

At the same time, we will continue working with the judiciary, law enforcement and national human rights structures to make sure that they are ready to act adequately on the protection of human rights.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Results Assessment Framework

Annex II: Budget 2018-2020

Annex III: Theory of Change and Progress Markers

Annex IV: Organogram of Sarajevo Open Centre