

Theory of Change & ILGA Asia's Strategic Plan 2021–2025



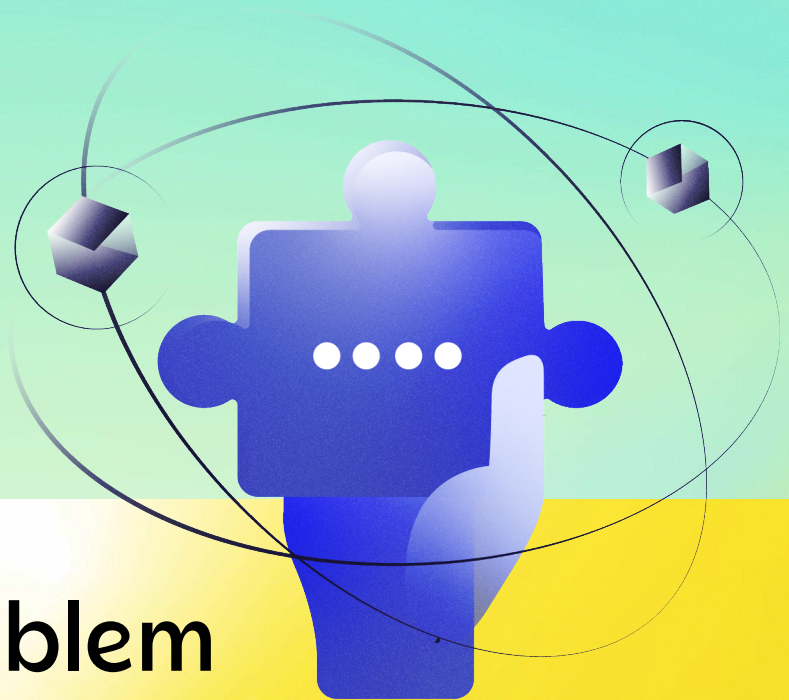
Who we are

ILGA Asia is the Asian Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, representing East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and West Asia, established in 2002. ILGA Asia is registered as a non-profit foundation in Thailand, with an administrative office in Bangkok. This is the second strategic plan the organisation has developed. This document represents a maturing of the organisation as well as a move to further maintain civil society space for LGBTI individuals in the region and improve community lives.



Where we are

LGBTI individuals in Asia remain marginalised yet resilient between the backdrop of COVID-19 and ongoing human rights issues. To date 15 countries have completed community-led research across Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Japan, India, Iran, Iraq, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. These reports provide a snapshot of the current (2020/2021) context of LGBTI activism in each of the jurisdictions, comprehensive analysis of community priorities and recommendations for future work (for both ILGA Asia and the movement in general). Individual country contexts highlight that vulnerability, as well as social and economic precarity of LGBTI communities remain unresolved and COVID-19 has only served to exacerbate these dilemmas.



The problem ILGA Asia is trying to solve

LGBTI communities are the best place to lead the way in forging a future for themselves and pave a way where all can live in freedom and equality. This is a long game and progress in terms of laws, policies, and practices as well as social acceptance of LGBTI groups in the region takes ongoing and persistent advocacy.

The advocacy landscape in Asia is unique, contraction and backlash to LGBTI activism coupled with questions about legitimacy of regional networks, membership versus partnership approaches, independence and interdependence with global networks (ILGA World and beyond) means the landscape is dynamic and complex.

ILGA Asia plays a multifaceted role within this work, while not necessarily leading that work.

ILGA Asia believes that civil society spaces or arenas need to exist on a regional level where activists can access knowledge, skills and connections that would help them mobilize their communities, organize, and advance their rights.

When information on international treaties and the human rights obligations of their governments are viewed in isolation the connections and leverage points between national and civil society at the regional and global level is obfuscated.



Collective actions can bring about changes at scale, arenas need to be maintained to ensure opportunities exist for LGBTI activist and allies can connect across sectors and localities, exchange experiences, learn from each other and advocate for change through networks and coalitions. ILGA Asia is a stop gap and launching pad to work towards achieving fundamental human rights and freedom in Asia in spite of already limited space for civil society and activism.

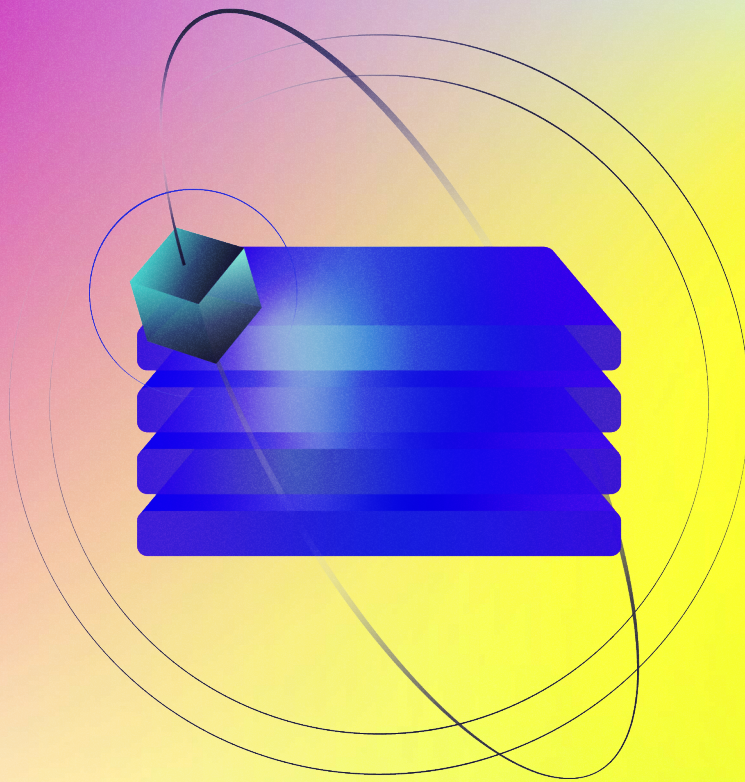


This document

This document presents an updated and aligned **Theory of Change** which draws from the previous success of ILGA Asia's first [Strategic Plan 2017-2019](#), and significant input from extensive country consultations to inform **ILGA Asia's Strategic Plan 2021-2025**. ILGA Asia's Theory of Change is a direct response to the current landscape of the LGBTI movement in Asia, and an articulation of ILGA Asia's place within it.

The **Theory of Change** details how ILGA Asia conceptualises its work and can be used to explain to its partners and supporters what pre-conditions are needed in order to bring about the change ILGA ASIA envisions. A theory of change is a clear statement describing ILGA Asia's approach to creating social change, which ultimately links its big-picture mission and strategy to its operations. It provides a complete framework for understanding how ILGA Asia creates value for its members communities, and how its actions align with mission and vision attainment.

The strategic plan outlines key outcomes for ILGA Asia to pursue over the next few years and includes suggested means of verification for ongoing measurement and evaluation. This is part of broader Theory of Change linked to longer term outcomes and impact. There are no output, activity or input levels further articulated in this document as this will be developed internally by ILGA staff.



Core ‘Arenas’ of work

Arenas are loosely defined as any civil society space where important work happens. This document and Theory of Change use the term to define the work done towards the long-term and medium term outcomes of ILGA ASIA. This work is often ongoing and iterative, rather than one of interventions or initiatives. Like advocacy itself, this work is long-term, multifaceted (multiple tactics in parallel) and not exclusively for self-interest.

Regional action is more relevant than ever.



Especially across the following key arenas:

Solidarity and Effectiveness

National actors are able to connect regionally, to enact solidarity and model effective advocacy for emerging LGBTI leaders in Asia.

Capacity Strengthening

Arenas that allow direct application of new skills by the communities in question. Spaces where innovative forms of advocacy can be developed, and engagement with human rights mechanisms and global institutions is taught forward. What makes this arena important are the ongoing opportunities for activists (represented by LGBTI people and communities directly affected) to apply their new skills and knowledge in a space without needing to go through an intermediary.

Mobilising Movements and Activating Allyship

Regional spaces that remain faithful to LGBTI movement building in Asia whilst also encouraging organisations out of their national space and expanding their reach and allyship are needed.

Strategic Information and Knowledge Use

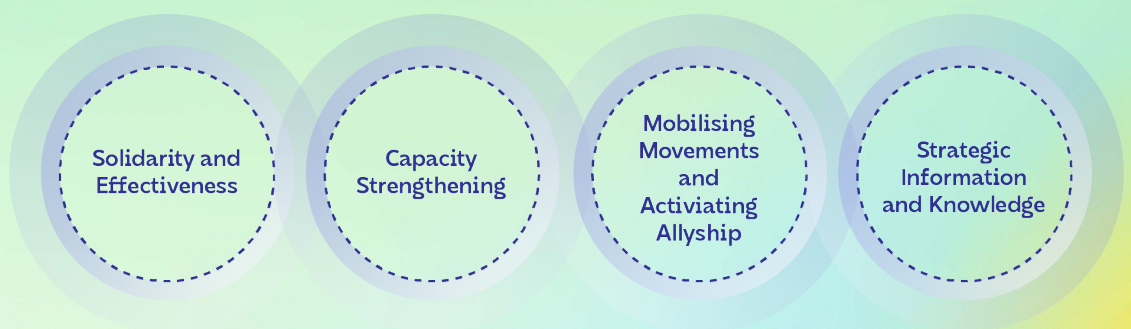
Maintaining arenas of activism where emerging and expert knowledge can be shared with those with proximity to crucial situations of rights violations and the capacity to transform that knowledge into action is crucial.

Definitions



Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (TOC) defines long-term outcomes and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. It is important to understand that ILGA Asia's TOC, much like its advocacy work, is scaffolded. It combines medium and long term outcomes and impact (10 to 20 year horizons) with dynamic work within multiple arenas (reflective of 3–5 year efforts). Thus the short-term outcomes detailed are ongoing efforts that take time, not one-off interventions.



Advocacy

The broadest definition of advocacy includes both the traditional scope as well as advocacy related activities. That is a set of strategic actions taken by activists aimed at influencing decision-makers and power-holders to make changes to policies, laws or practices. It also includes general community mobilization, ongoing capacity building, sharing of strategic information and building relationships that prepare the ground for advocacy work.

Vision

A vision is an organisational “Guiding Star” the ideal state that the organization wishes to achieve.

Impact

Impact is the cumulative effect or the net effect that ILGA Asia work has had on the landscape of LGBTI rights in Asia. The significant, positive change that has been made.

Long-term outcomes (LO)

Long-term outcomes are changes in social, political, and organizational systems, ways in which work done has challenged existing power structures.

Medium-term outcomes (MO)

Medium-term outcomes are often changes that may contribute to change in the long term. These are foundational work which include advocacy related activities.

Short-term outcomes (SO)

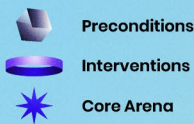
Short-term outcomes are the smaller steps taken toward a bigger change. The level of performance or achievement that ILGA Asia is working on to move the dial towards changing attitudes or beliefs, raising awareness, creating visibility, building relations, and creating space for civil society that we aim to see in the MO and LO levels. Below SOs are outputs and activities with more immediate results and direct links between action and effect.

Preconditions

Preconditions are the environment that must exist in order for the next outcome in the pathway to be achieved. These can be seen as precursors because they must be achieved before the next outcome in the pathway, and as requirements for the accomplishment of the next level outcomes.



Legends:



Preconditions

Interventions

Core Arena

VISION

A world where Asia is a safe place for all, where all can live in freedom and equality, be properly informed in the nature of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) rights, have access to justice, and diversity is respected

IMPACT

More LGBTI civil society from Asia effectively lobby and advocate for their rights, with stronger sustainability, resilience and performance

Long-term Outcomes

Enhanced and committed solidarity of LGBTI communities through networking and collaboration

Medium-term Outcomes

Established platforms for strategic information and knowledge sharing to build data driven responses SOGIESC issues

Ongoing support to LGBTI communities in Asia with strategic communications, research and data. This can include amplification of nationally-initiated statements, collating data across jurisdictions and borders etc

Continued support grassroots communities to document evidence of violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics and used them for various UN human rights mechanisms.

Medium-term Outcomes

Increased understanding and acceptance of the public on SOGIESC

Ongoing empowerment of family of LGBTI people and allies including religious groups.

Continued championing of responsive and inclusive governance to ensure youth intersex, trans, LBQ, sex workers and geographies are represented

Long-term Outcomes

Strengthened capacity to effective advocacy for the respect, protection and fulfillment of their human rights

Ongoing provision of training on human rights, especially engagement in UN mechanisms and documentation of human rights violation

Responsiveness to violations of LGBTI human rights or challenges of human rights mandates (systematic, but also responsive to real-time events and emergency)

Capacity Strengthening

Solidarity and Effectiveness

Mobilizing Movements and Activating Allyship

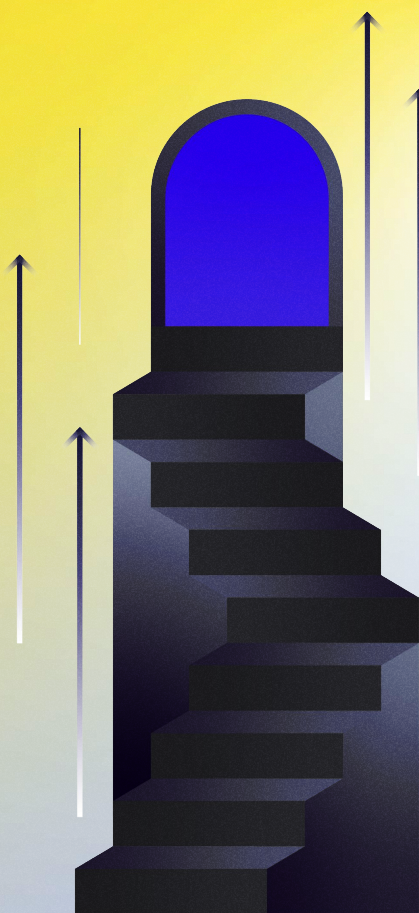
Strategic Information and Knowledge

- LGBTI communities form networks, collaborate, build movements and engage allies
- LGBTI communities in Asia are willing to engage in experience sharing amongst each other
- LGBTI communities strengthen relationships with and increase the understanding of allies and support base

- ILGA Asia creates and maintains a Asian regional 'arena' that is unique and distinct from global spaces, free from domination by 'Western' priorities, empowering members to learn, practice and bolster their political engagement
- ILGA Asia provides an 'aspirational' space for national actors to connect regionally and globally, to enact solidarity and model effective advocacy for emerging LGBTI leaders in Asia
- ILGA Asia opens opportunities to 'level up' actors in the LGBTI space, delivers and translates knowledge across countries and applies lessons learnt in new jurisdictions

How to read/navigate this document

It can be helpful to first review Annex I to understand the linear and direct links between the work done within each arena, preconditions and the medium-term, long-term, impact and vision.



LO#1 Enhanced and committed solidarity of LGBTI communities in Asia through networking and collaboration.

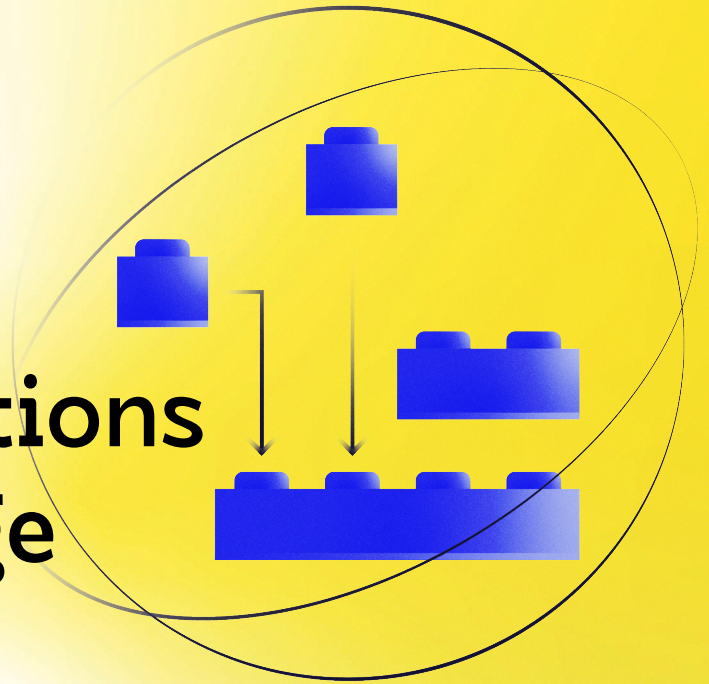
LO#2 Strengthened capacity of LGBTI civil society to work towards conducting effective advocacy for the respect, protection and fulfillment of their human rights.

MO#1 Increased understanding and acceptance of the public on SOGIESC issues.

MO#2 Established platforms for strategic information and knowledge sharing to build on data-driven responses to SOGIESC issues in Asia.

However Advocacy is not linear. The TOC is best represented as a progression, happening in stages but not necessarily a linear process. Getting to impact level results involves a dynamic regional landscape, and meeting identified pre-conditions at varying levels to progress to longer-term outcomes.

Preconditions for change



Each level creates the preconditions for change. For example a **strengthened base of support** for LGBTI issues, along with marked and sustained **improvements in lived social and physical conditions** for LGBTI individuals and tangible **structural changes or wins** are the pre-conditions necessary for ILGA Asia's *vision of a world where Asia is a safe place for all, where all can live in freedom and equality, be properly informed in the nature of sexual orientation and gender identity & expression and sex characteristic (SOGIESC) rights, have access to justice, and where diversity is respected.*

Here structural wins or changes, effective bases of support and improved conditions only comes about when activists perform well and mobilise in greater numbers.

Long-term Outcomes



To create this level of impact longer-term outcomes linked to the **LO** *Enhanced and committed solidarity of LGBTI communities in Asia through networking and collaboration* and the **LO** *Strengthened capacity on effective advocacy for the respect, protection and fulfillment of their human rights*.

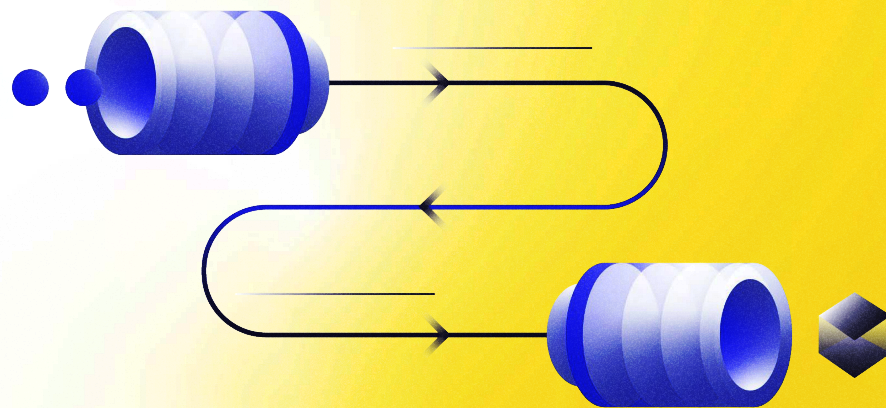
To realise these long-term outcomes involves, again, three key preconditions. The theory posits that when LGBTI communities form networks, collaborate, build movements, when they are able to engage a wide range of allies (and reap the benefits of expanded the allyship), experience sharing of experiences amongst LGBTI communities in Asia and have support bases that understand their cause, they will be able to bring about greater solidarity and apply strengthened capacity to their work.

Medium-term Outcomes

Achieving the medium-term outcomes; the **MO** Increased understanding and acceptance of the public on SOGIESC issues and the **MO** *Established platforms for strategic information and knowledge sharing to build on data driven responses SOGIESC issues in Asia* similarly relies on meeting three pre-conditions of change detailed below:

- **Creating and maintaining** an Asian regional 'arena' that is unique and distinct from global spaces, especially distinct from spaces typically dominated by 'Western' member states. This arena allows members to learn, practice and bolster their political engagement.
- **Providing 'aspirational' spaces** for national actors to connect regionally, to enact solidarity and model effective advocacy for emerging LGBTI leaders in Asia.
- **Opening opportunities** to 'level up' actors in the LGBTI space as well as facilitating the translating of knowledge across countries and applying lessons learnt in new jurisdictions.

Here it is important to revisit the core 'Arenas' of work. In reality the work ILGA Asia does is not hierarchical, rather it is through the maintenance of multiple arenas of regional activism that ILGA ASIA meets its short-term outcomes across spheres of work. These arenas are where important actors in national, and regional politics work towards its mission.

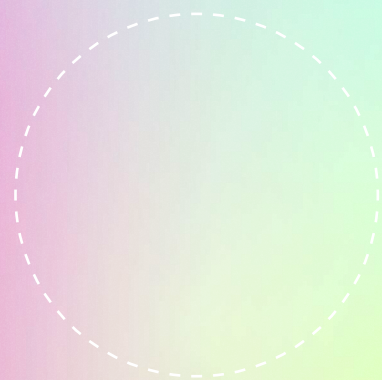


Assumptions

Thus far the Theory of Change has tackled the regional 'Arenas' of the work. However no regional activism is possible without some semblance of a local ecosystem of support for LGBTI groups and individuals. Note this work remains outside ILGA Asia Core Level work. The following assumptions provide a critically important foundation for constructing an achievable Theory of Change in terms of ongoing and effective regional work.

- Ability to mobilize resources locally and proactively to engage with regionally-led funding opportunities
- Where capacity is emerging, the ability to seek guidance and learn from others in the region
- Desire to cultivate or apply a regional and global mindset, seek opportunities to engage with regional and global organising and initiatives
- Ability to recognise sub-regional themes and topics which would allow greater solidarity amongst key countries and bring these to ILGA Asia for consideration
- Ability to navigate the linguistic landscape of activism in Asia, where possible allow for non-English speaking representation to be facilitated by community spokespersons

- Desire to engage with regional organisations, see the value of membership or engage in partnership building coalition activities
- Seek to codify local experiences to share with regional and bilateral partners as lessons learned
- Understanding of risk and security as fundamental skills for human rights defenders working on SOGIESC issues in Asia
- Having basic-to-complex organisational structures and a willingness to continue to develop vertically (to engage with formal regional and global mechanisms) while remaining representative to communities locally





Strategic Plan

Below are the key outcomes that ILGA Asia will pursue over the next five years and a plan for monitoring and evaluating those results. These align with the TOC above.

Ongoing Measurement and Evaluation

IMPACT

More LGBTI civil society from Asia effectively lobby and advocate for their rights, with stronger sustainability, resilience and performance.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

- Collect Most Significant Change (MSC) stories annually centred around changes in sustainability, resilience and performance of LGBTI communities in Asia, review for changes across; Strengthened base of support, Structural change, Improved social and/or physical conditions
- Track yearly the number of regional advocacy campaigns and interventions led by new or emergent groups or led by new coalitions/partners

Solidarity and Effectiveness

LO#1 Enhanced and committed solidarity of LGBTI communities through networking and collaboration.

SO#1.1 Ongoing commitment to meaningful networking and convening.

OUTPUT #1 Deliver ILGA Asia Regional Conference in 2022 and 2023 and 2025

OUTPUT #2 Facilitate the Asian space at the ILGA World Conference in 2022 and 2024

OUTPUT #3 Dissemination of newsletters, stories of members and communities across Asia

OUTPUT #4 Promotion of ILGA memberships online and offline

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

- List of all advocacy outcomes achieved by member organisations that received support or attend ILGA Asia's conference with basic description and supporting evidence
- Collate Member organisations's opinions on the relevance and value added of ILGA Asia support to their advocacy work (long-term perspective)

Capacity Strengthening

LO#2 Strengthened capacity on effective advocacy for the respect, protection and fulfillment of SOGIESC-related human rights.

SO#2.1 Ongoing provision of training and technical assistance on human rights, especially engagement in UN mechanisms and documentation of human rights violations.

OUTPUT #1 Deliver an Advanced Training on Human Rights and UN Mechanisms per annum from 2021 through 2025

OUTPUT #2 Organize UPR Advocacy Week throughout the period from 2021 to 2025, enabling Asian activists to engage with the UPR-related advocacy activities in Geneva and obtain first-hand experience and skills on human rights mechanisms

OUTPUT #3 Support in submitting NGO reports to UPR, Treaty Bodies, and Special Procedures, and organizing lobby & advocacy activities

SO#2.2 Responsiveness to violations of LGBTI human rights or challenges of human rights mandates.

OUTPUT #1 Joint statements condemning human rights violations of LGBTI people and demanding corrective and preventive measures

OUTPUT #2 Campaigns advocating social justice and human rights protections of LGBTI people

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

- Number of organizations/activists trained or number of attendees of ILGA ASIA events which relate to catalysing and amplification work
- Opinions and case studies from member organisations about the value add of engaging with ILGA Asia
- Number of UPR lobby meetings / mission visits (co-)organized by ILGA Asia
- Number of SOGIESC-related UPR recommendations accepted by Asian governments
- Number of NGO submissions cited by Treaty Bodies reports issuing to Asian governments
- Number of inputs cited by Special Procedures reports with the support from ILGA Asia
- Number of Information Note distributed by ILGA Asia on UN mechanisms on a monthly basis

Mobilising Movements and Activating Allyship

LO#2 Strengthened capacity on effective advocacy for the respect, protection and fulfillment of SOGIESC-related human rights.

SO#2.1 Ongoing provision of training and technical assistance on human rights, especially engagement in UN mechanisms and documentation of human rights violations.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

- Collect Most Significant Change (MSC) stories annually centred around changes expanding allyship and support base by strengthening relationships and understanding.
- Continue to collect national level data regularly relating to LGBTI landscape through community consultations and compare with other regional data on regional data on attitudes.

SO#3.1 Ongoing empowerment of family of LGBTI people and allies including religious groups, the media, policymakers and elected officials, law enforcement, governments, medical practitioners, etc.

OUTPUT #1 Dialogues with allies to bolster and mainstream the inclusion of SOGIESC in their space

OUTPUT #2 Documentation of best practices in engaging with allies and expanding allyship

SO#3.2 Continued championing of responsive and inclusive governance to ensure youth, intersex, trans, and LBQ women are represented.

OUTPUT #1 Continuous review and revision of the Constitution and policies to reflect the diversity of memberships

OUTPUT #2 Representation of youth, intersex, trans, LBQ women in governance bodies

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

- List of ILGA ASIA's interventions to make networks and collaborations more inclusive (with a short description)
- Track the number of individuals/ organizations active in ILGA ASIA's network
- Conduct yearly Social Network Webbing analysis to review networks for support and inclusivity, compare across years to determine increase or decreases in scale of support. (Link 1, Link 2)
- Disaggregated data on target beneficiaries of interventions
- Meeting minutes from ILGA Asia conference's workshops, board meeting minutes
- Record of ILGA Asia's policies

Strategic Information and Knowledge Use

MO#2 Established platforms for strategic information and knowledge sharing to build on data-driven responses to SOGIESC issues in Asia.

SO#4.1 Ongoing support to LGBTI communities in Asia with strategic communications, research and data. This can include amplification of nationally-initiated statements, collating data across jurisdictions and borders etc.

OUTPUT #1 Development of analyses on specific countries or other geographical or thematic areas in Asia.

OUTPUT #2 Implementation of overarching research strategies, including those to identify the most effective ways to address LGBTI human rights concerns.

OUTPUT #3 Documentation of best practices in lobbying and advocacy on SOGIESC issues

SO#4.2 Continued support to grassroots communities to document evidence of violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristic and used them for various UN human rights mechanisms.

OUTPUT #1 Organization of Advanced Training on Human Rights and UN Mechanisms per annum from 2021 through 2025

- OUTPUT #2** Implementation of overarching research strategies, including those to identify the most effective ways to address LGBTI human rights concerns.
- OUTPUT #3** Documentation of best practices in lobbying and advocacy on SOGIESC issues

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

- Number of strategic information and knowledge interventions organized and co-organized by ILGA Asia (with a short description)
- Number of direct support activities that lead to reports, stories or evidence used in formal submissions as well as disseminated publicly (with a short description including outcome of the work)
- Number of LGBTI activists and/or organizations receiving training on human rights mechanisms
- Number of human rights reports produced by ILGA Asia
- Number of NGO submissions compiled with the support of ILGA Asia

INPUTS

- Well articulated value proposition as well as Unique Selling Point relative to other regional organisations
- Good working relationships with ASEAN, UN agencies, diplomatic community and peers in the regional advocacy landscape
- Engaged and competent Board and Staff supporting effective governance, project management, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilization
- Experienced staff, resources and skills to convene and coordinate participating member organizations



Towards common 'Near Stars'

The following is a list of advocacy agenda items and common indicators that would constitute a major step forward toward the collective goals of the LGBTI community in Asia.

With the ILGA ASIA vision as a “Guiding Star,” the following are “Near Star” targets or specific policy change areas of focus that could be achieved in 5-10 years that would constitute a major step forward toward the vision.

- Marriage equality passed in several Asian countries and territories
- Anti-discrimination clause on the ground of SOGIESC enshrined in constitutional amendments, supreme court decisions or legislation in several countries and territories in Asia

- Decriminalisation of homosexuality in several countries and territories in Asia
- Legal recognition of gender identities within appropriate state apparatuses
- Increasingly supportive stance of Asian governments for SOGIESC rights within global and multilateral institutions such as the UN
- Collective engagement with the corporate sector
- Collective maneuvering of members so that as a whole in the region there is growth in grassroots civil society's ability to receive foreign aid or government funding for LGBTI communities
- Flow of resources or support to increase the voice of marginalised groups within the LGBTI movement or geographies
- Collective cross-sector success LGBTI stories including but not limited to health, education, and employment
- Significant increases in standardised measures of social acceptance of LGBTI representation in mainstream media for LGBTI individuals
- Significant decrease in instances of violence against LGBTI individuals in all settings



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Our vision is a world where Asia is a safe place for all, where all can live in freedom and equality, be properly informed in the nature of sexual orientation and gender identity & expression and sex characteristic (SOGIESC) rights, have access to justice, and diversity is respected.



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