



# Háttér Support Society for LGBT People in Hungary Strategic Plan 2013-2015

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Háttér Support Society for  
LGBT People in Hungary

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Who we are

Our association was founded on 10 February 1995, in virtue of the freedom of association, as a national, non-profit, non-governmental organization. For the past 18 years, we have played an important role in building a movement of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersexual (hereinafter referred to as: LGBTQI) people in Hungary, and promoting their social acceptance. Our activity is focused on offering services to help LGBTQI people. Since our foundation, we have been operating an information and counselling hotline, an HIV/AIDS programme and an archive and library. We have been offering legal aid service since 2000. In addition to our regular programmes, we organize cultural and community events, deal with advocacy, research, organize trainings and issue publications.

### 1.2 On the strategic plan

This strategic plan aims to determine for the next three years the directions and goals to be followed by the association, offering guidance for all our activities. Contents of this plan are built upon the consensus of the members, leaders and, as far as possible, the target group of the association. As the oldest and one of the largest LGBTQI organization in Hungary, it is particularly important to us that our programmes reflect the needs and expectations of the community. Therefore we launched a call on our website and on our Facebook page, in which we asked everyone to help us with their views and ideas in drawing up our strategic plan. In addition, each of our programme teams prepared a detailed analysis of the situation and their own strategic plan, which were edited in a unified document by a separate working group. The strategic plan of the association was adopted by the General Assembly in May 2013.

## 2. Our mission and values

### 2.1 Mission statement

Our aim is to draw the attention of professional and political public opinion, as well as the attention of wider society to the problems of LGBTQI people; the operation of services to assist them; getting to know the social situation and needs of LGBTQI people; mainstreaming these concerns in public services; protecting the rights of LGBTQI people and combating discrimination against them; increasing their well-being and health-consciousness; supporting LGBTQI-communities to organize themselves, preserve and promote their culture.

### 2.2 Our vision

We are fighting for a society in which no-one is discriminated because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, where all members of the LGBTQI community are free to live according to their identity, and receive the help they need to resolve the problems they might face.

## 2.3 Basic principles and values

**Professionalism.** Our association aims to provide services of the highest possible professional standards. When designing our services, we take into account national and international best practices; our volunteers and staff may participate in our work only after thorough professional preparation; we also provide further training for them.

**Solidarity.** Our activities are based on solidarity among the members of LGBTQI community and cooperation with other disadvantaged or minority social groups.

**Empathy.** Our guiding principle in the provision of support services is empathy. Our aim is to help, therefore we refrain from judging our clients and try to find the best solution for their specific needs.

**Confidentiality.** In our work, we ensure complete respect of data protection principles, personal data of those seeking our assistance are kept confidential, and disclosed to third parties only at the client's express consent.

**Diversity.** Our association is of the opinion that the diversity of LGBTQI community is a value in itself. Our services are accessible to everyone irrespective of their age, gender, race or ethnic origin, belief, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Volunteering.** In our activities we rely heavily on the work of volunteers, we believe that civil work done for the common good is useful not only for the society but also for volunteers themselves.

## 3. Key strategic goals

Key strategic goals are objectives determined for the association as a whole, which define common directions of development for all programmes.

### 3.1 Development of organizational culture

**Better integration of members and volunteers.** Our goal is to increase the commitment and activity of our staff. In order to achieve this goal, we involve a wider circle of staff in decision-making, we try to coordinate better our individual programmes, and properly communicate the achievement of our goals. We increase the number and intensity of community events, common actions and targeted training.

**Strengthening the motivation of staff.** We are developing a system for a more intensive motivation of our programme managers and other staff. For this purpose we introduce the methods of self-assessment, assessment and feedback. We strive to provide financial rewards for programme managers and staff with outstanding performance.

**Development of internal communication.** We plan to modernize the association's internal communication system so that internal and external information can reach all those interested. We deem it necessary to properly monitor responsibilities, and to send and receive proper feedback.

### **3.2 Networking, strengthening of external communication**

**Deepening of relations within Hungary.** We find it necessary to foster a closer cooperation with our LGBTQI partner organizations, such as the Hungarian LGBT Association and its member organizations, as well as other organizations and informal groupings. We devote special attention to building partnerships with professional organizations, and encourage collaboration between similar programmes and services.

**Development of international relations.** In order to learn about best practices already working elsewhere, and to attract new financial and human resources we enhance our participation in international consortium-based projects. We intend to strengthen programme-level international cooperation with non-Hungarian organizations. We attach outstanding importance to the continuous contact with LGBTQI organizations working in Central and Eastern Europe, preferably in the form of mutual study visits.

**More robust external communications.** In order to ensure proper publicity for our programmes and achievements we must use all possible tools at our disposal, moving on from “being present” to “being visible”. In our communication, apart from strengthening our own visibility, our primary goal is awareness-raising; therefore our messages will be short and concise, accompanied by strong visual design. In order to achieve the above goals, we are setting up a permanent press working group, which allows for greater efficiency and faster response. In the future we want to put more emphasis on reporting regularly on our website and in social media about the association’s activities, permanent programmes, current projects, achievements and future plans, so that these appear more prominently in both mainstream and LGBTQI press.

### **3.3 Development of volunteer management**

We consider it an important task for us to find, engage and train a sufficient number of volunteers. In order to efficiently organize our work, we explore the competencies and expectations of our current and new volunteers, and create a volunteer database. In order to clarify rights and obligations, we sign volunteer agreements with all our volunteers.

### **3.4 Strengthening our training activities**

It is our key goal to increase the sensitivity of professionals who are in contact with LGBTQI people, and to provide services in all fields of society that are sensitive to the specific concerns of LGBTQI people. To this end, we strive to develop good working relationships with different professional organizations, we advocate for a stronger presence of LGBTQI-related topics in initial and further training for different professions, and we organize training courses for representatives of the professions related to the association’s profile. Another goal is to increase the visibility and professional acceptance of the training courses we provide by gaining official accreditation for them.

### **3.5 Mainstreaming the concerns of vulnerable groups**

It is an important task for our association to increase the visibility of marginal groups within the LGBTQI community (e.g. Roma, the disabled, the elderly, adolescents, HIV-positive people, sex

workers, people living in small villages), and to reduce stereotypes and prejudices against them within the LGBTQI community. Our priority task is to make the association's services more accessible for members of these groups, and to make our colleagues more sensitive to their specific needs.

### **3.6 Building on new technologies**

We consider our priority to rely more on new information and communication technologies while developing more efficient organizational functioning and delivering our services. As part of this, we increase the role of electronic office solutions in the organization's decision-making, financial and internal communication processes. We also expand the accessibility of our services through the Internet. We are building more strongly on social networks and video communication tools in our campaigns aimed at drawing attention to our services and increasing the awareness of the LGBTQI community.

## 4. Strategic goals of our regular programmes

### **4.1 Telephone hotline**

We will set up new working groups in several areas (for example: PR, community building) and strengthen the work of existing working groups. The working groups are provided greater autonomy to operate more efficiently. A special training is assembled for volunteers who wish to work at the HIV-hotline. We are planning a more efficient integration of the HIV-hotline in the organizational order of the telephone service. We also plan to develop online chat availability to our counselling services by acquiring the necessary material and technical conditions. If a separate chamber or an umbrella organization is formed for telephone hotline services for marginal groups, we wish to join.

### **4.2 Legal aid service**

**Thematic priorities.** We focus on legal fields and cases where *de jure* discrimination is the strongest, or where rules stipulated in the legislation are the least respected: helping couples wishing to have children, providing support for victims of violent attacks and enforcing the rights of transgender people. These are the main areas in which we offer legal representation, and our activities (publications, campaigns) aimed at increasing legal consciousness are also focused on these areas.

**Strategic litigation.** At the legal aid service, cases of strategic importance must receive priority in terms of financial and human resources; we must also seek such cases actively. Cases of strategic importance are the ones that demonstrate the shortcomings of legislation, the continuation of legal inequality or the erroneous application of law, and / or affect a large number of people in the LGBTQI community.

**Developing a network of partner lawyers.** As more emphasis is placed on strategic cases, we must reduce the overall case load for the legal aid service, however we should continue to provide some sort of help in solving legal issues for those who require us to do so. A solution could be

building a partner network of reliable lawyers offering their services on a fee-basis, to whom we can forward cases that do not directly fall within the remit of the legal aid service. We also cooperate more closely with thematically specialized legal aid services and the Legal Aid Service of the state. The members of the network are also more likely to work for us as *pro bono* lawyers.

**Increasing the sensitivity of the legal profession towards the LGBTQI-community.** We treat it as a priority objective that LGBTQI issues appear more prominently in the university education of lawyers, and in the further training of attorneys, prosecutors and judges. In order to achieve this goal, we organize training sessions, issue a regular legal newsletter, and strive to expand the availability of Hungarian legal literature on LGBTQI-topics.

#### **4.3 HIV/AIDS prevention**

**Expanding our prevention activities.** Our prevention programmes so far have focused on Budapest; in the next strategic period we extend our activities to the rural MSM (men having sex with men) communities, prisons and educational institutions. In addition to personal counselling we plan to develop publications, promotional tools by which we can raise awareness.

**Research on unexplored areas.** We focus our research activities on the following areas: psychological causes of risky sexual behaviours; HIV and / or STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) and the exact way of infection; experiences in treatment and care; HIV and / or STD infection in the context of the use of recreational drugs.

**Development of an on-line knowledge base.** Our goal is to develop an on-line knowledge base that covers LGBTQI sexuality in its entirety, showing the sexual activities and the potential hazards associated with them free of any taboos.

#### **4.4 Archives**

**Enlarging and managing library stocks.** It is an important task to continuously develop, organize and preserve our library stocks. We will prepare a collection development policy. We seek to obtain a copy of each LGBTQI-themed publication issued in Hungary, therefore we continue networking with Hungarian publishers to get complimentary copies.

**Strengthening our archival activities.** To ensure researchability for the Hungarian LGBTQI-history, we take over and process archived materials of Hungarian partner organizations. We sign long-term agreements with organizations providing such materials; and elaborate rules for the organization and accessibility of archived materials. We launch awareness-raising campaigns to acquire private donations and bequests.

**Making our collection accessible.** We strive to make the majority of the collection available on Internet. In addition, we create the conditions for becoming a public library (necessary labour force, costs, opening hours etc.), and by the end of the strategic planning period we plan to obtain the status of specialized public library.

**Renewal of our publishing activities.** We plan to renew our book-publishing activities started earlier, but abandoned in the meantime. Relying on the materials of Háltér Archives, we plan to

publish books on Hungarian and international LGBTQI history and cultural history, with the assistance of grants and organizations supporting private publishing.

## 5. Implementation

Each year, programme managers prepare a detailed annual work plan on the basis of the strategic plan, specifying deadlines, responsible persons and resources needed. Work plans are adopted by the Executive Board. Programme managers submit written reports to the Executive Board about their activities. The Board reports to the General Assembly on the implementation of the annual work plans in the framework of the annual reporting.