

Project title	Step up! Stronger LGBT movements for equality in Western Balkans.
Implementing organisation	ILGA-Europe
Project goal	To improve the legal and social situation of LGBT people in Western Balkans
Starting date and duration	January 2010, 3 years
Target region	Western Balkans
Target groups	Policy makers at national and European level, LGBT people, LGBT human rights activists
Themes	Human rights, advocacy, public policies, LGBT rights, Council of Europe, European Union, OSCE

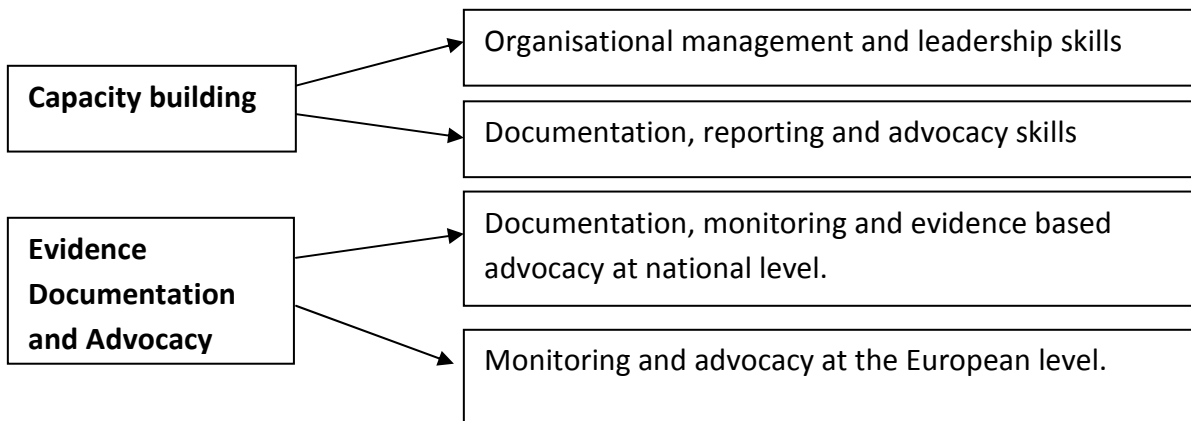
Description of Project goals and activities:

The overall goal of the project is to improve the legal and social situation of LGBT people in Western Balkans.

2 specific objectives identified to meet the goal are:

1. To increase/ build the capacities of the local LGBT organisations in the fields of organisational management, documentation of human rights violations and advocacy.
2. To advocate at national and European level (using the documented evidence of discrimination) for improved legal protection and social acceptance of LGBT people in project countries.

The project will comprise of 2 main components:



1. Capacity Building

1.1. Organisational development and leadership skills

- *Trainings:* A regional training will be organised for teams of partner organisations aiming to build skills in strategic and organisational planning; human resources management; leadership skills, etc. Apart from imparting knowledge using participatory approach, the role of the trainer will be to guide the participants through the process of defining organisational strategies and policies. Follow up trainings will be conducted by local organisations working in the field of organisational development and leadership. Trainings will be designed as to reflect the needs of participants and aimed at achieving concrete practical results at the end.
- *Consultancy:* Apart from trainings the project will allow for the possibility of on demand consultations giving the opportunity for the project partners to adjust and apply the knowledge gained during the trainings to the needs of the organisations.

1.2. Documentation and advocacy skills

- *Trainings* will be organised at regional level for teams of partner organisations and aim to build skills in documentation of human rights violations and reporting; planning advocacy strategies, strategic litigations.. etc.
- *Ongoing consultancy* will be provided by ILGA-Europe to all project partners on the use of international and European mechanisms for their advocacy actions.
- *Study visits* have proved to be very effective and highly useful way of building project partner organisations skills of doing advocacy at the European level. Each year a 2 day study visit will be organised to the European Commission and the European Parliament by ILGA-Europe for participants from all project partner organisations and one study visit will be organised to the Council of Europe. In addition to this, the project will also facilitate 2 study visits to the organizations in the Eastern European countries that are new member states.

2. Evidence Documentation and Advocacy

2.1. Documentation, monitoring and evidence based advocacy at national level.

Monitoring and documentation of cases of human rights violations and discrimination is an important first step for effective advocacy. Quality documentation provides sound evidence for national advocacy work and for awareness raising campaigns as well as helps formulating arguments in public debates on non-discrimination and equality.

- *Documentation of discrimination and human rights violations:* Each partner organisation will document the evidence of discrimination through interviews with the members of LGBT community, through the review of the national legislation and through small scale opinion polls (optional). In addition, cases of hate motivated violence against LGBT people will be documented through individual interviews with the victims of violence with the view to bring those cases before the courts (with the request/consent of the victims). Monitoring and documentation of hate speeches in printed and electronic media (as well as in online social networks) and during public debates will also be part of documentation activities by partner organisations. Finally, pro-active approach will be adopted for the assertion of the rights to freedom of assembly and association and violations of those rights will be thoroughly documented and used for advocacy purposes. All cases will be collected and documented according to the international human rights standards, compiled into country reports and printed in both original language and English. Consultancy and legal expertise will be provided by ILGA-Europe on identifying the breaches of international and regional human rights standards applicable to the particular country.
- *Advocacy at national level :*
 - Advocacy campaigns will be organised on a particular human rights issue relevant in the project country (e.g. freedom assembly, ant-discrimination law etc) with the materials (flyers, stickers, posters

etc) of the campaigns being distributed widely across the countries. The advocacy campaigns will be accompanied (depending on the country context) with peaceful public demonstrations.

- Advocacy materials such as brochures, postcards, posters will be produced and widely distributed together with the reports on documented violations to both key national decision makers as well as to the institutions of professionals. In addition, educational activities with the groups of professionals (journalists, teachers, police, etc) will be organised with the aim to increase their knowledge on LGBT issues and sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination.
- Direct lobbying of national authorities and policy makers by mean of meetings, letters, public statements, participation in the trainings/seminars which involve public and law enforcement authorities and raising the concerns of LGBT people in the country.
- Cases of violence and discrimination will be taken to the courts (given that the victim is ready to pursue justice) and the victims will be provided with relevant legal assistance.

ILGA-Europe will provide expertise and ongoing consultancy to national partners in their advocacy actions. We will also provide political support to national campaigns by lobbying European institutions to raise the issues of LGBT people with the relevant public authorities in the project countries during bilateral meetings with them and by establishing direct contacts between partner organisations and European officials (e.g MEP in the European Parliament, responsible bodies in the European Commission and the Council of Europe).

2.2. Monitoring and advocacy at the European level.

The European Institutions provide numerous mechanisms for promoting LGBT people's rights in the Western Balkan countries. These mechanisms have varying purposes, timeframes, country focus and potential for impact. ILGA-Europe is well placed to make the most of the advocacy opportunities presented by these institutions and their human rights mechanisms to advance LGBT people's rights.

Lobbying the European Union, the Council of Europe and the OSCEⁱ

The work with the European Institutions will be built on what is already being done by ILGA-Europe. Located in Brussels and having established good contacts in the EU institutions, in the Council of Europe and the OSCE ILGA-Europe will continue having regular meetings/correspondence with relevant European Commission staff, MEPs in the European Parliament and the EU Council Working Group on Western Balkans (COWEB) as well as have regular lobby visits to the CoE and to the OSCE to ensure the protection of LGBT people's rights in the Western Balkans countries.

The expected project outcomes/impact are:

- Increased/developed capacities of all project partners and initiative groups to produce high quality documentation, to conduct successful advocacy campaigns as well as advocate at the European level.
- Improved legal position, increased recognition and respect for human rights of LGBT people in the project countries.

ⁱ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe