

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 – 2024



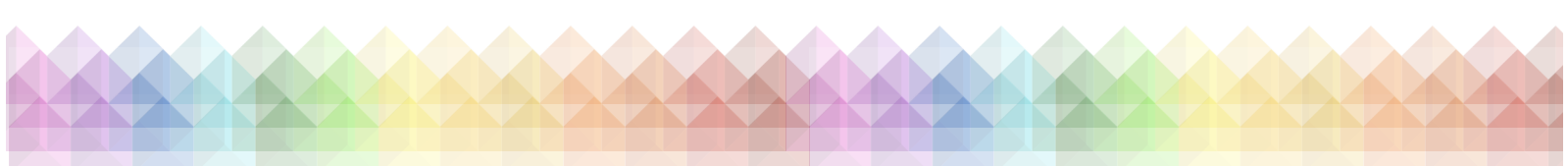
**ASEAN SOGIE CAUCUS**





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# 1

## Planning Process

ASC embarked on a nine-month long strategic planning process. This process which started from November 2018 engaged the different governing bodies of the ASC, its partners, allies, the donor community, and local projects and activists who have worked with ASC from 2016 to 2018.

Timeline of ASC's Strategic Planning Process		
YEAR	MONTH	PROCESS
2018	October	Online surveys with ASC members, donors, network, allies
2018	November	Joint BOT- Steering Committee- Secretariat strategic plan retreat
2019	January	Adoption of Strategic Priorities for 2019
2019	May	Review of the progress on Strategic Priorities 2019
2019	August	Strategic Planning Meeting by the ASC Steering Committee and Secretariat
2019	August - September	Drafting of the Strategic Plan document
2019	October	Adoption of ASC's Strategic Plan 2020-2024
2020	February	Final adoption of ASC's Strategic Plan 2020-2024 by the new Steering Committee


ASC conducted online surveys with partners, networks, members, allies (both LGBTIQ-focused and non-LGBTIQ focused groups who have engaged with ASC), and local groups who received small grants through ASC projects. All of ASC's donor partners answered the survey. Only a few local partners provided feedback. Data from the survey were consolidated and factored in crafting ASC's strategic priorities for 2019.

ASC then organized a Strategic Plan Retreat on November 9 to 10, 2018. The retreat brought together the members of ASC's Board of Trustees, Secretariat, and Steering Committee to assess the progress of the strategic plan and explore potential future thrusts of the organization. During the retreat, ASC identified the following four strategic priorities for the year: 1) Strengthen engagement with ASEAN mechanisms; 2) Mainstream SOGIESC rights within civil society; 3) Support local LGBTIQ activism; and 4) Strengthen ASC's membership and organizational capacity. The Secretariat finalized the document and the Steering Committee adopted it.

The Strategic Priorities for 2019 document is meant to guide ASC's transition into its new timeline. It reaffirmed the goals of ASC, supported the achievement of its programmatic obligations, and helped prepare for the General Assembly and Strategic Plan for 2020 and beyond.

The Steering Committee and the Secretariat initiated conversations on important trends affecting human rights of LGBTIQ persons in Southeast Asia. These conversations culminated in writing a Regional Situation Analysis Report. The Report reflects the Steering Committee's reading of the situation in the region, the issues ASC are facing and might continue to face in the immediate future. This information was used during the strategic planning meeting held in August.

The Secretariat also reviewed the progress of its work during this transition period. The Secretariat implemented activities using the Strategic Priorities as a guiding framework. Significant outputs



included issuing public statements and rallying advocacy in relation to Brunei's enforcement of Sharia, submission of human rights reports, participation in key decision-making processes of ACSC/APF 2019, completing project partnerships with non-LGBTIQ CSOs, and supporting six initiatives and ten LGBTIQ activists' local advocacy and leadership.

On August 2 to 5, 2019, the members of ASC Steering Committee and Secretariat engaged in a strategic planning meeting with the following aim: 1) identify trends affecting ASC's work; 2) review achievements and lessons from past years; 3) draft the strategic plan, and 4) review institutional arrangement including staff roles and work descriptions. The outputs of the discussions were an agreed upon strategy for the coming years, and a draft documentation of priorities and major activities for 2020 to 2024.

The meeting in August 2019 built upon the analysis and reflections from the November 2018 retreat. Systems Approach or analysis was used to locate ASC's goals and interventions within the larger ecosystem of power and structures affecting its work. Using this approach, ASC reviewed its articulation of its vision, mission, goals, and objectives, renewed its commitment to its organizational principles, and defined its scope and place of engagement.

The result of these processes culminates in this document, as ASC's Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2024. The Secretariat led in drafting this document. The Steering Committee reviewed and adopted the document and presented it for the General Assembly's approval. ASC's Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2024 was finally adopted on 11 February 2020.


## 2

## Overview of ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

The ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) is a network of human rights activists from Southeast Asia. The ASC works for the inclusion of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) in the mandate of human rights duty bearers in ASEAN. The ASC works for the promotion and protection of the human rights of all persons regardless of SOGIESC in the Southeast Asian region.

The ASC was formed when LGBTIQ activists from eight (8) ASEAN countries (Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) came together to attend a meeting organized by Arus Pelangi, Indonesia for Humans, and iSEE during the 2011 ASEAN Civil Society Conference of the ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC/APF) in Jakarta, Indonesia. This gathering was prompted by the 2010 ACSC/APF conference statement in Viet Nam that recommended highlighting issues pertaining to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE).

Aside from holding the first LGBTIQ workshop in its formal program, the 2011 ACSC/APF also provided an opportunity for the discussion on SOGIE issues to be opened up to a bigger and more diverse audience. As a result, SOGIE was included in the conference statement of the 2011 ACSC/APF in Indonesia. At the end of the conference, the group of LGBTIQ activists chose to call themselves the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus and issued a public statement with three recommendations of LGBTIQ people to the ACSC/APF.



Over the years, ASC has developed its program of work focusing in the following areas: developing capacities of LGBTIQ human rights defenders from the ASEAN region to effectively undertake advocacy work with human rights mechanisms; providing resources and technical assistance to grassroots LGBTIQ organizations, mostly those who do not have legal registration status and thereby facing challenges in obtaining resources from donors; and engage wider civil society organizations to mainstream the SOGIESC into their work.

ASC is legally registered as a non-stock and non-profit organization in the Philippine under the name Southeast Asia Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression Caucus (ASC), Inc. The organization obtained its legal registration in the Philippines on August 19, 2015.

### 3

## Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer (LGBTIQ) Human Rights in Southeast Asia


Spaces for LGBTIQ human rights defenders are continuously being challenged. In some countries, they are continuously shrinking while in others they are co-opted by state-led conservative forces. Non-state actors, organized under conservative and extremist interpretations of religion and operating with the support of the government, pose as a threat against LGBTIQ activism. Government actors, including ministries responsible for religion and internal security, exert effort to delegitimize LGBTIQ identities and activism. Resistance against LGBTIQ activism is informed by the following discourses: LGBTIQ identities are foreign to ASEAN; LGBTIQ identities are inconsistent with religion and public morality; LGBTIQ identities are a threat to state defined national development.

Globally, there is already a growing recognition of the rights of persons of diverse SOGIESC in human rights frameworks. The adoption of UNHRC Resolutions, the creation of the IESOGIE mandate, the increasing references to SOGIESC in UPR recommendations and treaty bodies concluding observations serve as evidence. This development has not trickled down in ASEAN. Since its inception, the AICHR has not issued a policy statement affirming the rights of LGBTIQ persons as inherent in the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. On the other hand, the ACWC made a reference to LGBTIQ children as one of the vulnerable sub-groups who are at risk of facing violence in its ACWC Plan of Action on Violence against Children.

Criminalization of consensual same-sex relations and of gender self-determination exists in many countries, including Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Singapore. National legislation imposing the penalty of death towards LGBTIQ persons exists in Brunei.

Despite the importance of anti-discrimination legislation, as recommended by UN bodies, legal and policy measures are minimal within the region. Thailand has a Gender Equality Law which has been interpreted to include discrimination on the basis of SOGIESC (as per jurisprudence in Kath K's case). Both in Cambodia and Thailand, policies were put into place as regards inclusive education.

In the Philippines, while non-discriminatory provisions can be found in specific laws such as the Magna Carta of Women, the Anti-Bullying Law, the Safe Spaces Act, and in SOGIE-specific Anti-



Discrimination Ordinances enacted in local government units, the 20-year campaign for the passage of national legislation on SOGIE-specific anti-discrimination came to a halt with key legislators vowing to again block the measure.

Synergies between LGBTIQ groups, women's rights groups, child rights groups, and mainstream human rights groups have existed over the years. With the final statements of the ACSC/APF recognizes the issues faced by LGBTIQ persons and makes commitment towards solidarity actions, cross-sectoral and cross-movement alliance continues to grow. Noting the increasing threats, LGBTIQ activists need to increase its political capital to withstand opposition and become resilient.

As ASEAN poses itself as an emerging regional economic and political force with claims on being inclusive in its slogan, “One Vision, One Identity, One Community”, the question remains: Where are LGBTIQ persons in the picture?

## 4

## Milestones of ASC

From 2016 to 2019, ASC worked to become a regional organization championing advocacy for SOGIESC rights in ASEAN. Our main strategies were: 1) Dialogue with key institutions in Southeast Asia to influence policies and programs; 2) Movement building or raising awareness of groups and communities towards LGBTIQ persons in the region; and 3) Building capacity of ASC members to undertake evidence-based human rights advocacy.

While a comprehensive evaluation of this cycle is yet to be carried out, the following are the milestones and significant shifts reported by the Secretariat during this implementation period:

- The ASC found allies in some of ASEAN governments and in diplomatic missions. This is key in pushing for SOGIESC-inclusive policies at the national level but proves to be limited in terms of actually influencing ASEAN intergovernmental processes. Since 2016, ASC has conducted its ASEAN Advocacy Week, program to mobilize LGBTIQ activists to conduct direct advocacy with ASEAN officials and permanent missions.
- The Secretariat made a major shift in strategy from broadening its engagement from ASEAN level to international human rights reporting procedures. The ASC continued to engage with ASEAN human rights bodies and the ACSC/APF processes and enabled its members and the Secretariat to carry out international human rights reporting primarily the UPR, CEDAW, and CRC.
- ASC created a new program not specified in the 2016-2018 strategic plan named, ‘*Support for Local Initiatives*’. This initiative began in 2016 and became more systematized in 2018. The goal of the program is to enable collaboration between and among LGBTIQ activists particularly those working in remote or hard-to-reach communities, and those who work with LGBTIQ persons who have less access to network and opportunities.
- Institutionally, the ASC has stronger visibility in the region (including online presence, citation by mainstream media, recognition from CSO partners and broad alliances), and has gained more partners. From a single staff in 2014, the Secretariat now has six full-time and two part-time staff. There were no changes in the membership due to pending implementation of membership application guidelines. Lastly, the ASC has acquired a permanent office in the Philippines.





## 5

# Vision, Mission and Goals (VMG)

### **Vision**

An ASEAN Community that respects the human rights of all people regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

### **Mission**

ASC is a regional network dynamically engaging diverse actors to collectively advocate for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer people, and gender-diverse persons in Southeast Asia.

### **Goals**

ASC aims to achieve the following goals:

- All human rights mechanisms impacting the ASEAN region adopt and implement frameworks and plans of actions that promote and protect the rights of LGBTIQ and gender-diverse persons.
- Domestic laws, policies, and programs in Southeast Asian countries include the protection and promotion of the rights of LGBTIQ and gender-diverse persons.
- LGBTIQ and gender-diverse civil society are empowered to engage state and non-state actors to adhere to human rights standards.”

### **Organizational Objectives**

ASC’s work is framed by the following objectives:

- To raise awareness about the rights of LGBTIQ and gender-diverse persons;
- To build and enhance capacity and knowledge of human rights defenders in advancing the rights of LGBTIQ and gender-diverse persons;
- To expand spaces for leadership of Southeast Asian LGBTIQ and gender-diverse human rights defenders within human rights networks and bodies;
- To advocate for the integration of the rights of LGBTIQ and gender-diverse persons into national, regional, and global governmental bodies and policies.

### **The work of ASC is guided by the following principles:<sup>1</sup>**

- Democracy - ensures that democratic principles are followed in the organization’s decision-making process in a manner that minority voices are heard and power dynamics are taken into consideration. Support is given to marginalized individuals and groups towards meaningful engagement in decision-making. Further support is given to the development of democratic practices and mentality in Southeast Asia.
- Accountability - mandates that ASC members fulfill their obligations, accept responsibilities, and disclose information in a transparent manner.

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<sup>1</sup> ASC shall develop additional guiding principles to reflect its commitment to apply a queer lens into its work, and to ensure mental health and well-being of its members and staff.

- Feminism – recognizes that patriarchy is the root of gender and sexuality oppression and we are committed to dismantling patriarchy, whose systems of inequality have negative effects for LGBTIQ people.
- Substantive Equality - recognizes equitable outcomes as well as equal opportunity. It also recognizes the specific and unique challenges, needs, gaps, and systemic discrimination faced by different groups in exercising fundamental human rights.
- Inclusivity and Diversity - recognizes, respects, values, and optimizes people’s differences to contribute and realize their full potential through culture building.
- Intersectionality - recognizes the intersecting, convergence and overlapping of identities, characteristics, affiliations, and status in every person that causes substantively distinct experiences. Advocacy shall be carried out against the intersecting forms of discrimination that LGBTIQ persons face.
- Self-determination and Bodily Autonomy and Integrity - recognizes that all human beings are autonomous persons with dignity who have the right to self-identity. Everyone has the right to make informed decisions for themselves in relation to their identities, bodies, sexual, reproductive and healthcare decisions, among others, and be respected for such decisions.
- Diversity of Tactics - acknowledges diverse and multiple methods that can be adopted in our advocacy. These are not limited to common and state-sanctioned tactics.

## 6

### Objectives for 2020 to 2024

For the period of 2020 to 2024, ASC will undertake work to reaffirm its organizational objectives:

- Raise awareness about the rights of persons discriminated on the basis of their SOGIESC;
- Build and enhance capacity and knowledge of human rights defenders in promoting and protecting the rights of persons discriminated on the basis of SOGIESC;
- Expand spaces for leadership of Southeast Asian LGBTIQ human rights defenders within human rights networks and bodies;
- Advocate for the integration of the rights of persons discriminated on the basis of SOGIESC into national, regional and global bodies and policies.

## 7

### Priorities for 2020 to 2024

ASC will leverage its strength and resources to focus on the following strategic priorities:

- Strengthening ASC’s membership and organizational development.
- Supporting local activism in the context of ASEAN engagement
- Mainstreaming SOGIESC within ASEAN civil society
- Strengthen engagement with global human rights mechanisms
- Strengthen engagement with ASEAN mechanisms





# Strategic Priority 1

## *Strengthening ASC's Membership and Organizational Capacity*


ASC's strength lies on its members. ASC is the only region-wide membership-based LGBTIQ organization whose work covers the entire Southeast Asia; this gives ASC an advantage. As a membership organization, ASC will have broader reach, more inclusive representation, and better access to a pool of resources.

By engaging strongly with members, ASC will have better influence in regional processes. Members can contribute regularly and frequently to inform and to support the shared strategies and collective actions of ASC. Through members, ASC will be able to have better reach with local organizations in the country-level. However, ASC has not increased its membership since its formation in 2011. Despite this, ASC has worked with several organizations; many of whom have already expressed interest to become part of the organization. Furthermore, there are countries in the region where ASC does not have a single member, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Laos PDR and Timor Leste.

ASC maintains a secretariat, which serves as the nerve-center of ASC's operations. As of 2019, the Secretariat is composed of six (6) full-time staff operating from Manila, which serves as the permanent headquarters of ASC, Jakarta, where most of ASEAN advocacy work is emanates, and Saigon, where work to engage with activists in the Mekong sub-region originates. The work of the organization is increasing and these cannot be absorbed by the current capacity of the Secretariat. The service provided by the organization can be summarized into the following: regional-level advocacy, capacity-building for LGBTIQ activists, and provision of technical assistance to local groups. By pursuing this strategic priority, ASC will pursue two tracks. First is by enhancing the technical expertise of the secretariat in the following areas of work: diplomacy and international relations, policy advocacy, organizational development, and grant management. Second is by restructuring the secretariat and to enable staff to be more focused on ASC's priority areas of work and manage all programs efficiently.

Resource mobilization shall be a continuous priority of ASC. ASC has guaranteed resources to have full operations in the next one and have year (i.e. mid-2021) with funding from Arcus, Give Out, Open Society Foundation, RFSL and VOICE. ASC has adequate resources to mitigate financial risks during lean-months. At present, ASC is developing its fundraising strategy in order to explore alternative sources of income, including, tapping individual philanthropy, membership fees, and social enterprise.

Engaging both mainstream media and social media is key to amplify and get ASC's advocacy messages across the target audience. In recent years, ASC has ample media coverage where its media statements have been cited by at least 20 media organizations. Likewise, ASC has achieved significant improvement its social media presence, marked by increase in the number of followers, total reach and engagements. In the coming years, ASC aims to strengthen its communications strategy by leveraging on its social media strength and its current media contacts.



In pursuing this strategic priority, ASC will undertake the following:

- Update the membership policy with an intention clarify whether ASC will accept individual membership, organizational membership or both; and strengthen the roles and responsibilities of members.
- Accept and consider new membership applications especially from countries where there is no membership (e.g. Timor Leste and Laos PDR) or in countries where there are few members (e.g. Myanmar).
- Restructure the secretariat by considering the hiring of a Deputy Regional Coordinator who can focus on administrative matters, organizational development, membership engagement and resource mobilization.
- Conduct internal capacity building based on the expressed needs of staff and the capacity requirements of ASC's programs.
- Finalize ASC's fundraising strategy and undertake fundraising activities, including identifying and working with potential donors.
- Develop a long-term economic empowerment plan to make ASC's operations self-sustainable. ASC will undertake programs for economic empowerment to ensure its financial self-sustainability. ASC will explore alternative fundraising and resource generation measures, including partnerships with existing social enterprises.
- Ensure compliance to donor requirements in relation to current and future grants.
- Develop a communications plan aimed at providing directions to strengthen ASC's engagement with mainstream media and improved social media presence.
- Strengthen Secretariat's on-line communications capacity by investing on staff development and acquisition of secured digital technologies.
- Integrate mental health and wellbeing in all stages of ASC activities—from planning, execution, evaluation, monitoring, and reporting.
- Ensure that salaries and benefits for Secretariat staff are competitive with other regional organizations.

By 2022, ASC will have achieved the following:

- Updated membership policy clarifying the extent of ASC membership, and strengthening the roles and responsibilities of members (SP1.2022.1)
- Increased membership of ASC (SP1.2022.2)
- Improved programmatic focus and work of ASC secretariat staff (SP1.2022.3)
- Donor commitments to finance ASC programs (SP1.2022.4)
- Increased engagements by mainstream media (SP1.2022.5)
- Increased social media presence and engagement (SP1.2022.6)

By 2024, ASC will have achieved the following:

- Increased membership of ASC (SP1.2024.1)
- Guaranteed resources to enable ASC to operate in the next 5 years or more (SP1.2024.2)
- Self-sustainable operations of ASC by having diversified sources of funding (SP1.2024.3)
- Increased engagements by mainstream media (SP1.2024.4)
- Increased social media presence and engagement (SP1.2024.5)



## Strategic Priority 2

### *Supporting Local Activism In the Context of ASEAN Engagement*

ASC shall continue supporting capacities of local LGBTIQ groups in the ASEAN region. This shall be done via diverse methods, including funding, advising, coaching, training and mentoring. In doing this work, ASC shall always consult local groups with regards to their capacity needs so that any interventions done will be relevant to local realities.


By supporting local activists, ASC can strengthen the connection between local organizations and regional processes. ASC can help sustain local activism by helping groups mobilize resources. ASC has also been active since 2017 to bring in Southeast Asian LGBTIQ voices into the program of ILGA Asia, which can serve as a platform for generating collaborative efforts with other activists to effect change in the region. ILGA Asia and similar organizations can be our partners in our regional strategy.

Supporting local activism has strategic implications on ASEAN regional work. Strong local activism will be an anchor to enhance political leverage of ASC in better influence ASEAN. The experiences of local groups (good practices, case studies, innovative approaches) can better inform ASC's advocacy messages when dealing with ASEAN.

ASC recognizes, however, the challenge to engage local LGBTIQ organizations in integrating ASEAN advocacy into their work. The following are the reasons: limited understanding of the complex structure and process of ASEAN, limited resources of local LGBTIQ groups to participate in regional level advocacy, perceived lack of direct impact of ASEAN on domestic changes, and prioritizing domestic advocacy over regional advocacy.

This strategic priority will be a continuation of the past work of ASC. ASC has a track record in supporting initiatives of local organizations. Since 2015, ASC supported at least 15 initiatives in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Viet Nam. Through the ASEAN Queer Leadership Week, ASC was able to create spaces for young LGBTIQ activists to exercise leadership both at the domestic and regional advocacy spaces. However, ASC recognizes that its support for local activism has low level of engagement in some countries, notably Brunei, Laos PDR, and Myanmar.

ASC recognizes that within the broader LGBTIQ movement, spaces for lesbian, bisexual and queer (LBQ) women's activism in the region are limited. As a response, ASC has undertaken work to mobilize LBQ women to discuss shared issues, a common analysis of discrimination and violence from a feminist perspective, and continuously co-created spaces, e.g. the LBQ Women's Meeting during the 2017 ILGA Asia Conference and the ASEAN LBQ Women's meeting held in 2019.



In pursuing this strategic priority, ASC will undertake the following:

- Conduct in-country and regional consultations to map the focus and work of LGBTIQ organizations and identify entry points where ASEAN advocacy can be integrated.
- Provide technical support, including financial support, to at least four local organizations per year. The form and extent of technical support be dependent upon the capacity assessment done with the local partner organization.
- Synergize the work of local organizations who have previously received technical support from ASC.
- Mobilize local organizations who have previously received technical support from ASC to engage in ASEAN-level advocacy.
- Organize the annual ASEAN Queer Leadership Week.
- Support the processes towards the creation of an ASEAN LBQ Women's network.

### **Envisaged Results for Strategic Priority 2**

By 2022, ASC will have achieved the following:

- Commitment of local LGBTIQ groups to integrate ASEAN advocacy into their work (SP2.2022.1)
- Local LGBTIQ groups in Southeast Asia receive financial and technical support for activities relevant to ASEAN advocacy (SP2.2022.2)
- Local LGBTIQ groups integrate ASEAN advocacy into their plans and programs (SP2.2022.3)

By 2024, ASC will have achieved the following:

- Commitment of local LGBTIQ groups to integrate ASEAN advocacy into their work (SP2.2024.1)
- Local LGBTIQ groups in Southeast Asia receive financial and technical support for activities relevant to ASEAN advocacy (SP2.2024.2)
- Local LGBTIQ groups integrate ASEAN advocacy into their plans and programs (SP2.2024.3)



## Strategic Priority 3

### *Mainstreaming SOGIESC within ASEAN civil society*

Upholding the principle of intersectionality, ASC recognizes that advocacy on human rights and inclusion cannot be limited within the LGBTIQ movement. In recent years, there have been positive advances whereby non-LGBTIQ civil society groups have taken political commitment and to some extent actions in integrating SOGIESC into their respective work. This can be seen especially in the areas of child rights, women's rights, youth, social development, and humanitarian programming.

One potential entry point for mainstreaming SOGIESC is through engagements in the UN reporting process. In the past years, LGBTIQ groups have collaborated with mainstream human rights groups and other sectoral groups (women and children) in submitting human rights reports (UPR reports and alternative reports). UPR recommendations received on different concerns have integrated SOGIESC, for example protection of human rights defenders, ensuring access to quality education, and freedom of the press and expression. Concluding observations made by treaty-bodies such as the CRC Committee and the CEDAW Committee have included SOGIESC.


Another entry point to influence the agenda of non-LGBTIQ focused civil society organizations is the annual ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC/APF). Since 2010, the conference statement of the ACSC/APF has consistently integrated SOGIESC into various provisions such as on non-discrimination, civil and political rights, social development and on peace-building. Such inclusion is a key factor that influenced the ACSC/APF to adopt non-discrimination and inclusivity as one of its guiding principles and thereby making itself an open space for LGBTIQ activism.

ASC has a track record in collaborating with non-LGBTIQ focused civil society organizations. In 2018, ASC had a partnership with Save The Children aimed towards building up a collaborative push for both LGBTIQ and children's rights in the region. Participants of the Regional Learning Session on CRC and SOGIESC were appreciative of the opportunity for working on child's rights and can be called on to action. Moreover, ASC had experience in doing collaborative advocacy work together with human rights groups such as FORUM Asia, Human Rights Working Group, and the International Commission of Jurists.

In pursuing this strategic priority, ASC will undertake the following:

- Provide technical, capacity or other forms of support to country-level engagements with UN mechanisms such as the UPR, CEDAW, and CRC processes. Some possibilities for action may be done in collaboration with local groups: co-produce UN reports, engage in the lobbying and advocacy (country-based or in Geneva), providing advice or mentoring local activists in effectively influencing UN processes.
- Conduct meetings and dialogues with regional and local civil society organizations to find entry points in integrating SOGIESC into their plans and programs. This can be done via organizing joint workshops, face to face meetings with leaders, or doing a SOGIESC orientation with their staff. ASC will provide technical support on how to integrate SOGIESC into the organization's programs, plans of actions, strategic plans and projects.



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- Develop an internal document to map the extent of SOGIESC positioning of non-LGBTIQ civil society organizations. This internal document will detail the organization’s stance on SOGIESC, as reflected in their statements and reports, and the extent of SOGIESC inclusion in their work and projects.

### **Envisaged Results for Strategic Priority 3**

By 2022, ASC will have achieved the following:

- Civil society organizations have better understanding on the linkage between SOGIESC and broader human rights and sustainable development agenda (SP.2022.1)
- Civil society organizations in ASEAN commit to integrate SOGIESC into their internal policies, plans or programs (SP3.2022.2)

By 2024, ASC will have achieved the following:

- Conference statements of the ACSC/APF consistently reference SOGIESC (SP3.2024.1)
- Civil society organizations in ASEAN effectively integrate SOGIESC into their internal policies, plans and programs (SP3.2024.2)

## **Strategic Priority 4**


### ***Strengthen Engagement with Global Human Rights Bodies***

In the past years, engagements of LGBTIQ civil society organizations with UN human rights mechanisms have been active. These engagements resulted in several SOGIESC-focused recommendations and concluding observations. As of 2019, all ASEAN countries have received SOGIESC-focused Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations. Several countries have also received SOGIESC-focused concluding observations issued by the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UN Human Rights Committee. The advocacy of LGBTIQ activists animated the move towards the creation of a special procedures mandate focusing on violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

UN human rights mechanisms have a strategic role to play in shaping human rights norms. Current human rights treaties that are relevant to the ASEAN do not explicitly mention SOGIESC. The provisions pertaining to non-discrimination, equal protection before the law, the right to life, the right to freedom of expression, among others, were given authoritative and substantive interpretations to recognize the human rights of LGBTIQ persons. ASC believes that these norms may cascade into the ASEAN region and internalized through domestic policies and practices.

During the period, ASC will intensify calls for UN human rights mechanisms to engage effectively with ASEAN mechanisms. We will advocate treaty bodies, UN special procedures and other key entities to issue recommendations specifically addressed to AICHR, ACWC and ACMW. We will encourage treaty body experts and UN mandate holders to conduct dialogue and discussions with ASEAN officials. This work will be anchored upon the need to realize AICHR’s mandate to “to consult, as may be appropriate, with other national, regional and international institutions and entities concerned with the promotion and protection of human rights” (AICHR TOR Paragraph 4.9).





ASC will continue to support local LGBTIQ organizations in doing evidence based advocacy with UN human rights mechanisms. These will be done through providing technical assistance in producing alternative or shadow reports, submitting communications to UN special procedures, conducting dialogues with key stakeholders such as treaty body members, mandate holders (e.g. the UN Independent Expert on SOGI) and UN permanent missions in Geneva. ASC will likewise work closely with ILGA World, Outright Action International, the Swedish Federation for LGBT Rights (RFSL), and other human rights groups having presence in UN spaces.

In the past years, ASC's work is hinged upon a strong human rights framework. Meanwhile, there are potential entry points to influence domestic, regional and global governance using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Internally, ASC recognizes its limited capacity to link SOGIESC and the SDGs. In a learning needs survey done with LGBTIQ organizations, ASC found out that very few organizations are knowledgeable about the SDGs and the processes for reporting and state compliance. As such, during this period, ASC shall conduct learning sessions and trainings on the SDGs.


In pursuing this strategic priority, ASC will undertake the following work:

- Continue to pursue UN ECOSOC status accreditation;
- Continue to support local groups in engaging with UN human rights mechanisms through provision of technical assistance, advice and funding;
- Continue to submit reliable information, communications and reports to UN mechanisms, particularly the IESOGIE;
- Conduct capacity building activities such as learning sessions, workshops and trainings focusing on UN human rights mechanisms, e.g. CEDAW, CRC, ICCPR and UPR, and the SDGs reporting process;
- Lobby treaty body experts, special procedures mandate holders and other UN stakeholders to dialogue with ASEAN officials.

#### **Envisaged Results for Strategic Priority 4**

By 2022, ASC will have achieved the following:

- ASEAN LGBTIQ organizations continue to submit communications to UN special procedures, including the UN Independent Expert on the protection against violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (IESOGI) (SP4.2022.1)
- ASEAN LGBTIQ organizations continue to submit reports to the UN treaty bodies and for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) (SP4.2022.2)
- Increased capacity of ASC members and partners to engage with UN human rights mechanisms (SP2.2022.3)
- Increased knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its relevance to SOGIESC (SP2.2022.4)
- UN treaty bodies and special procedures issue statements and recommendations to advance SOGIESC and human rights in ASEAN (SP4.2022.5)



By 2024, ASC will have achieved the following:

- ASEAN LGBTIQ organizations continue to submit communications to UN special procedures, including the UN Independent Expert on the protection against violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (IESOGI) (SP4.2024.1)
- ASEAN LGBTIQ organizations continue to submit reports to the UN treaty bodies and for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) (SP4.2024.2)
- Increased number of ASEAN LGBTIQ organizations engaging the SDGs reporting process (SP4.2024.3)
- UN treaty bodies and special procedures continue to issue statements and recommendations to advance SOGIESC and human rights ASEAN (SP4.2024.4)

## Strategic Priority 5


### *Strengthen engagement with ASEAN mechanisms*

This strategic priority is at the core of ASC's existence. ASC shall take leadership roles in creating spaces for and supporting capacities of LGBTIQ human rights defenders in doing advocacy with relevant mechanisms and bodies of ASEAN. ASC will specifically focus its engagement with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and the ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of women and children (ACWC) while exploring spaces for engagement with other ASEAN Pillars and communities. During this period, ASC will explore potential entry points to influence the work of the ASEAN Committee of Migrant Workers (ACMW) while at the same time building its internal resource and capacity to integrate SOGIESC within issues of migrant workers. ASC will continue engaging these mechanisms through advocacy meetings, dialogues, submission of reliable information and other relevant and innovative approaches.

ASC is aware that both the AICHR and ACWC do not have a formal communications procedure nor a monitoring and reporting mandate; this hinders the two mechanisms from formally receiving and acting upon human rights concerns raised by civil society. Despite this limitation, ASC has established and will continue to build linkages with AICHR and ACWC officials. ASC will continue to produce reliable information and researches as basis of its submissions to ASEAN.

ASEAN has a role in human rights standard setting. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of AICHR states that the mechanism has a function to “develop strategies for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms to complement the building of the ASEAN Community” (AICHR TOR Paragraph 4.1). In addition, they also have the role to “develop common approaches and positions on human rights matters of interest to ASEAN “ (AICHR TOR Paragraph 4.11). These mandates have not yet been fully maximized in order to advance the rights of LGBTIQ persons. ASC will engage AICHR in developing a proposed regional framework aimed at having a common standard on the respect of human rights of all persons regardless of SOGIESC and on approaches to protect persons from discrimination and violence on the basis of SOGIESC. This regional framework is envisioned to complement the Yogyakarta Principles.

Influencing ASEAN necessitates a complex set of approaches that will entail different actors who can be allies in pushing for a SOGIESC agenda. The national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in Southeast Asia and its regional network called the Southeast Asia National Human Rights



Institutions Forum (SEANF) play a role in influencing both domestic and regional policies. The Permanent Missions of friendly governments, e.g. those who are members of the Equal Rights Coalition (ERC), can utilize diplomatic tools within bilateral and multilateral platforms. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN member states may provide foreign policy directions to ASEAN officials concerning human rights matters. Parliamentarians within ASEAN who are part of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) may exert domestic influence for global or regional SOGIESC resolutions.

In engaging ASEAN, ASC recognizes the potent role of other regional, sub-regional, and national civil society organizations and networks. In the past years, ASC has been an active player within ASEAN civil society processes such as the ACSC/APF, the SAPA WG on ASEAN, and WEAVE (Weaving Women's Voices). Since 2010, the ACSC/APF conference statement, which reflected the advocacy agenda of ASEAN civil society, has included protection and promotion of the rights of LGBTIQ persons. ASC will also closely work with key regional organizations that are engaging ASEAN, including FORUM Asia, Human Rights Working Group, ARROW and International Commission of Jurists (ICJ).

In pursuing this strategic priority, ASC will undertake the following work:

- Continue to pursue AICHR consultative status;
- Submit reliable information concerning human rights violations and analyses concerning human rights situation of LGBTIQ persons in the region;
- Conduct advocacy meetings and dialogues with ASEAN officials, ASEAN permanent missions, SEANF and other key stakeholders;
- Conduct public campaigning using creative and context-based advocacy messages and tactics;
- Engage AICHR in developing an ASEAN framework on the advancement of SOGIESC and human rights in ASEAN, which will complement international human rights standards;
- Organized the ASEAN Advocacy Week.

#### **Envisaged Results for Strategic Priority 5**

By 2022, ASC will have achieved the following:

- A comprehensive advocacy strategy to engage with ASEAN human rights mechanisms (SP5.2022.1)
- An updated regional analysis of the human rights of LGBTIQ persons in Southeast Asia (SP5.2022.2)
- Draft an ASEAN framework on the advancement of SOGIESC and human rights developed by AICHR and ACWC with civil society input (SP5.2022.3)

By 2024, ASC will have achieved the following:

- ASC has consultative status with AICHR (SP5.2024.1)
- SOGIESC is recognized and included in the policies, guidelines of frameworks of the AICHR, ACWC and ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (SP5.2024.2)
- LGBTIQ organizations in ASEAN are recognized and included in the processes or methods of work of AICHR, ACWC and ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (SP5.2024.3)
- AICHR and ACWC takes action on the draft framework on the advancement of SOGIESC and human rights (SP5.2024.4)



## 8

## Institutional Arrangements

The effective implementation of this strategic plan must be coupled with an enhanced institutional restructuring of ASC Secretariat. The following are the proposed strategies to improve ASC's institutional arrangements:

- Restructure the Secretariat by creating the position of Deputy Regional Coordinator who will focus on administrative and operational matters, including grant management, human resource management, finance management, and monitoring and evaluation. The Regional Coordinator then will focus on external relations, program direction and resource mobilization.
- Restructure the Secretariat by creating key program areas composed of a program specific team and headed by a designated Program Officer. The proposed program areas are as follows: a) Advocacy Program that will focus on steering all evidence-based and innovative strategies and tactics to influence ASEAN and other stakeholders, b) Capacity-building Program that will focus on conducting activist trainings, activist leadership development, and provision of technical support for local activism. Creating these two program areas will ensure better delegation of tasks, manage lines of communication, manage staff workload, and avoid overlap of roles.
- Increase the number of staff to handle finance and administrative functions. Consider hiring part-time finance staff who will work on specific project grants and thereby assist the work of the Finance Officer. Consider hiring project-specific assistants to address administrative, logistics and technical functions of the Administrative Officer.
- Strengthen members engagement in the implementation of the Strategic Plan through the following measures: activate the functional working groups (FWG) who mandate and functions are defined in the OMG; continue involving members as collaborators in project or activity implementation (e.g. an activity done in one country will involve an ASC member as a co-organizer); and involve members as collaborators for grant applications.

**ASEAN:** This term pertains to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, an intergovernmental body composed of 10 member states. In the context of ASC's work, ASEAN includes its different pillars, mechanisms and programs. As a human rights organization, ASC will primarily focus on two key human rights mechanisms: the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), and the ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). As an intergovernmental body, the work of ASEAN is directly influenced by and implemented by national government agencies such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Social Welfare, Ministries of Interior, Ministries of Justice, among others.


ASEAN also pertains to the geographic, political and cultural region that encompasses the 10 countries. ASC recognizes that within this region, there are cultural and ethno-linguistic groups that are not part of the current nation-state formations or are struggling for their right to self-determination.

**ASEAN Engagement:** ASEAN engagement means diverse and interrelated tactics to influence the policies and programs of ASEAN's bodies and mechanisms. This includes the following: submitting communications and reports to ASEAN's human rights mechanisms; providing inputs to the work of ASEAN mechanisms; conducting dialogues, consultations and meetings with ASEAN officials; issuing press releases and public statements highlighting the accountability of ASEAN towards human rights issues; and participating in ASEAN-level civil society spaces such as the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC/APF).

Considering the complex political dynamics and diverse actors in ASEAN, this term also includes work to engage political entities that have influence on ASEAN, such as Permanent Missions to ASEAN, ministries of foreign affairs of ASEAN member states, national human rights institutions within the ASEAN region, academics and media.

**ASEAN Perspective:** ASC's engagement with ASEAN will always carry a critical and transformative perspective characterized by the following. First is the rejection of states' use of the principles of non-interference, national sovereignty, respect for domestic particularities and consensus-based decision making as barriers towards addressing human rights concerns of marginalized groups. Second is the recognition that the human rights of marginalized groups are anchored on ASEAN government's obligations to universal human rights as reflected in international law and on the shared visions and struggles of progressive civil society groups as reflected in various ACSC/APF statements. Third is the need to continuously create spaces for meaningful participation of LGBTIQ activists from the ASEAN region and ensure that their voices are amplified in various political arena.





**Alternative Regionalism:** This refers to a collaborative process of holding accountable a regional institution through people-oriented approaches within and outside state territories and functions. It entails strengthening the political leverage of transnational civil society movements to counter hegemonic regional governance arrangements that excludes the human rights of marginalized groups. This includes focused learning programs based on grassroots needs, new paradigms for regional engagement, and mobilizing interactions between civil society in different countries. These efforts, of which ASC is a part through the ACSC/APF, are currently ongoing.

**Human Rights Mechanisms:** These pertain to institutions, processes and mandates that are aimed at ensuring state's accountability towards their human rights obligations. Human rights mechanisms also have a key role towards norm-development or standard-setting. Human rights mechanisms may exist at the UN-level (e.g. the Human Rights Council, the treaty bodies and the special procedures), at the regional-level (e.g. the AICHR and the ACWC), and at the domestic-level (e.g. national human rights institutions).

**Sexual Orientation:** This refers to each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender.

**Gender Identity:** This refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms.

**Gender Expression:** This refers to each person's presentation of the person's gender through physical appearance – including dress, hairstyles, accessories, cosmetics – and mannerisms, speech, behavioural patterns, names and personal references, and noting further that gender expression may or may not conform to a person's gender identity.

**Intersex:** This refers to people whose biological sex cannot be classified as clearly male or female. An intersex person may have the biological attributes of both sexes or lack some of the biological attributes considered necessary to be defined as one or the other sex.

**Sex Characteristics:** This refers to each person's physical features relating to sex, including genitalia and other sexual and reproductive anatomy, chromosomes, hormones, and secondary physical features emerging from puberty.