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NGO VALUE WITHIN THE ESTONIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

Master's thesis

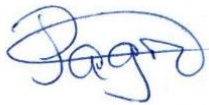
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ABSTRACT

Unlike the Western democracies that developed the civil society concept organically under their independent sovereignty, Estonia was tasked with adopting the said concept upon its return from under the Soviet Rule. Theory has proven that the Estonia's civil society comes out as rather weak. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are the primary social actors that professionally act on the civil society terrain, balancing between the public and the primary instinct. Such organisations are quite weak as well, according to research. The present study uses a professional assessment tool to reveal that the representative sample of non-governmental organisations have a rather poor organisational potential. By linking the existing theory and practice with the current quantitative research, the current work proves that there is a positive correlation between the organizational potential of the civil society and the strength and potential of its human-rights-based non-governmental sector, and that the current impassive Estonian civil society spurs weak non-governmental organisations, which are unable to successfully represent, defend, or protect their interest groups.

Keywords: civil society, non-governmental organization, Estonia, human rights, advocacy, democracy

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CEECA – Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- ECAT – Capacity Assessment Tool of Eurasian Coalition on Male Health
- ECOM – Eurasian Coalition on Male Health
- EHPV – Estonian Network of People living with HIV
- EU – the European Union
- HIV – human immunodeficiency virus
- HSNP – human service non-profits
- LGBT – lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people
- LUNEST - Estonian Association of People who use psychoactive substances
- NGO – non-governmental organization
- PLHIV – people living with HIV
- PWUD – people who use drugs
- UN – the United Nations
- UNDP – United Nations Development Program
- US – the United States of America
- USAID - United States Agency for International Development
- USSR – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

INTRODUCTION

Estonia is one of the most economically developed countries in the European Union, which, in a popular belief, would imply that it is also more developed in all other areas of state life, like politics, law, culture, and civil society. Nonetheless, its path to democratisation has been stained by the Communist rule. Many of the Western democratic concepts, particularly that of the civil society, is something that it has yet to digest and learn to use. The Estonian society tends to complacently accept the said concept and the lack of conflict or active engagement with its country's internal and external policies has resulted in it developing itself as a weak civil society. There is a level of confusion and lack of qualitative actions on the part of the Estonian government, its civil society and other social actors to actually comprehend what civil society means and develop in the respective direction. There is no progress without conflict because crisis breaks stagnation. The said societal complacency allows the government to exercise policies that disenfranchise whole territories and communities; and such discriminatory policies meet meekly resistance. Since NGOs are a subset of the civil society, they are only as strong as the civil society/interest groups they represent. The given paper argues that there is a positive correlation between the organizational potential of the civil society and the strength and potential of its human-rights-based NGO sector, and that the current impassive Estonian civil society spurs weak NGOs, which are unable to successfully represent, defend, or protect their interest groups.

The primary motivation for this research was evoked by my observation of how human-rights-based NGOs in Estonia work, cooperate and how they organize their activities, which then developed into a theoretical interest in their weakness. After having worked in the human-rights-based NGO sector in Estonia for more than two years, gathering the observations and personal critique of its work helped distil my scholarly research to a set of questions that required answering to achieve the support of the hypothesis of this paper. The impression I got from working in the said field created an feeling that the human-rights-based NGOs mirrored the state of affairs of the Estonian civil society and vice versa. Thus, the following research questions erupted:

1. What effects does NGO power provide on the state of human rights in Estonia?
2. What role do NGOs play in mobilising and strengthening the civil society in Estonia?
3. How are the NGO organizational structure and performance in Estonia representational of the Estonian civil society?
4. How does the NGO activity correlate with the Estonian state policy agenda?

To understand the state of affairs in the Estonian civil society, I decided to review and research the human-rights-based NGOs which focus on working with different underrepresented populations in Estonia. Focusing on such a type of organisations will allow seeing where the policy lacks, which populations are neglected or otherwise discriminated against and how the general population responds to its diversity. The current paper will include qualitative research, so the representative population of the human-rights-based NGOs will consist of seven different NGOs in the said sector. Having utilized the Capacity Assessment tool of the Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM) to assess the organization potential and development of NGOs during my own work at the ECOM – a regional NGO, I decided to use in the current research too since it has proved itself to be valid instrument of quantitative data gathering. Evaluating the organisational potential and development of the human-rights-based NGO sector in Estonia, as a subset of the civil society, will enable this paper to link the theoretical material regarding the civil society to its professionalised side of policy engagement.

The current research will predominantly utilize theoretical research and the ECOM Capacity Assessment Tool (ECAT) to gather its quantitative data. In terms of this paper, the theory research will manifest as a “[section that] synthesizes the extant literature and [...] identifies the gaps in knowledge that the empirical study addresses” (Paré & Kitsiou 2017). It will also “provide a theoretical foundation for the proposed study, substantiate the presence of the research problem, justify the research as one that contributes something new to the cumulated knowledge” (Paré & Kitsiou 2017). In other words, the thesis and the research questions will be examined, expanded and discussed throughout the length of this research based on the existing literature, statistical research, and case studies, all of which will allow proving the actuality of the problem and the necessity to address it. On the other hand, ECAT is a combined, adapted, external qualitative assessment tool that has been created by ECOM, that focuses on studying the sexual behaviour, health, and the right to health of non-heterosexual people who identify themselves as males in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA) region. The purpose of ECAT is to externally study the organisational development of NGOs, identify the levels of their organisational development, their organisational potential and to discover the limitations to their organisational development and pathways to overcome them. ECAT is a qualitative research tool that has been created as a result of adaptation of two United States Agency for International Development (USAID) tools: the Modified Organizational Capacity Tool and the Organizational

Capacity Tool with Non-US Organization Pre-award Survey Items (The Protocol to Conducting 2017, 1). Both of them were used multiple times to study NGOs around the world, which means that their validity and reliability is backed by empirical data and practice tendencies. ECAT has merged these two tools and adapted them, making them suitable for studying the organisational potential and development of NGOs. I completed a training at the Eurasian Coalition on Male Health on learning how to utilize ECAT, and already used it to assess the organisational potential and development of several NGOs in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. Therefore, I was entitled to use ECAT to produce qualitative data. The ECAT results will then be linked to the outlined theoretical and empirical foundation for the study. They will be discussed and, in combination with purposive sampling, provide evidence for application to the general tendencies in the Estonian human-rights-based NGO sector. Consequently, it will allow assessing the potential of the Estonian civil society through the prism of its NGOs, to establish the key role of NGO potential in developing the civil society and to create recommendations that will encourage further research into the given subject and will inspire organisational and policy action to alter and enhance the current somber state of democracy in Estonia.

The chapters will serve as a map to guide the research, answer the mentioned questions, and support the hypothesis. Chapter 1 will lay the profound theoretical foundation for the paper's thesis and will reveal the scholarly support of the fact that there is a link between the civil society, NGOs as their subset and the country's level of democracy as a result. It will describe how NGOs erupted as the contemporary major voice of diverse interest groups within a society, how they developed from social movements and other civil actions that were previously used to insight policy change on the state level. It will end with an explanation of the fact that there is a gap in research in establishing the qualitative link between the civil society and NGOs and the interrelation between the level of democracy, civil society and NGOs as an intermediary between them. It will also discuss the strength and potential of the Estonian civil society. Chapter 2 will focus on the theoretical and practical research of the character, value, and power of NGOs as the subset of civil society – advocacy potential. It will depict their nature; the forms and essence of their origin, activity, and mission; and will deliver on their validity and power within a contemporary democratic state. In the end, it will lead up to the quantitative research of the organisational potential of Estonian NGOs which is the core of their advocacy potential that will be linked with the Estonian civil society and state of democracy later. Finally, Chapter 3 will develop on the quantitative research of this paper, which is an adapted research tool used to evaluate the

organisational potential of an NGO. It will link the theoretical research on the interrelation between the civil society, NGOs, and the level of democracy with the reality of the weak advocacy potential of Estonian NGOs and, respectively, the Estonian civil society based on the acquired empirical knowledge. Relevant conclusions will be made as a result.

1. ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES DRIVE THE PROGRESS OF DEMOCRACY

1.1. The Interrelation Between Civil Society and Democracy

Diverse theories, hypotheses, and researches argue a plethora of statements regarding how social structure occurs and what elements influence its development, enhancement and its impact on democracy. This chapter will lean on the pluralistic view in this regard. Notably, on the fact that democracy's development is supported by a diversely articulated social structure that includes somewhat autonomous groups (Ishiyama 2012, 118). Consequently, for a social structure to spur democracy, a civil society must be present that encourages a checks-and-balances type of a relationship between social groups and the government.

The civil society concept is directly related to the eruption of political democracy. Expectantly enough, there is a wide variety of definitions of civil society. The concept of the civil society and interest in it is several-millennia-old. Notably, it is as old as Plato, for the commencement of the civil society concept is associated with him and his attempt to rationalize the neutral ground that exists outside of the egoistic private and public interests, that exists objectively and ensures balance (Ehrenberg 2017, 14). For the purpose of this paper, Larry Diamond's view on the notion of civil society will be applied whom Ishiyama (2012, 122) quotes in the following way, defining the concept as:

The realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by the legal order or set of shared rules ... it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions, and ideas, exchange ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable. It is an intermediary entity, standing between the private sphere and the state.

Although such a definition seems almost utopian, it does have a fair, practical application to the way things are organized in a democratic state. The 'civil society' is a "space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks [...] that fill this space" (Walzer 1995, 7). Studying the ways in which social structure develops, which intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a

greater role and which players are paramount in influencing the synergy and paradigm will allow to understand and even sanely influence the process more effectively. That is why organizational studies focus on studying social groups, their characteristics, elements, and ideas; because the aforementioned matter in comprehending the level and density of a given civil society. It is necessary to point out that civil society is not the same as simply “society.” Specifically, “civil society focuses on expressly public/political goods, not private goods. The concept thus excludes family life, inward-looking group activity, or the profit-making enterprise of individual business firms (which are organizations that pursue private gain)” (Ishiyama 2012, 122). Similarly, civil society is not a political society that represents the interests of the state, which are not the same as those of the private sector. In other words, a civil society exists in an intermediary plain where the public/political-philosophical ideas dwell and are expressed through social groups and which aim at balancing and enhancing the overall welfare of the nation.

Considering the above, it is only logical that more liberal political writings took a liking to the civil society’s concept and its interrelation with democracy. Notably, Alexis de Tocqueville emphasized the fact that had it not been for social groups in forms of civil associations, then democracy, in its common sense, would not have been possible. He argued that “the rich associational life that characterized the United States in the first part of the nineteenth century had led to the blossoming of democracy in the new republic” (Ishiyama 2012, 124). For the most part, the world sees the US as the embodiment of democracy and its herald despite diverse drawbacks it has in terms of political society. It were the labour unions, sororities, fraternities, and associations of all kinds that expressed the ideas at large, uniting people of different religious, sex, gender, ethnic, and economic background that allowed for democracy to flourish and function better in the US than in other republics. The link between the state of democracy and the civil society is exemplary in the Civil Rights Movement, for example. It was influence – boycotts, freedom rides, and sit-ins – that anti-segregation, women’s, and environmental movements used in the US, which, in turn, influenced the courts in their decisions to acknowledge the unconstitutional character of certain derogatory laws (Cohen & Arato 1994, 507). The Congress was then in no position to deny passing appropriate laws that were demanded by the respective collective identities. The movement declined because voluntary civil associations professionalised the movement and because many goals were achieved thereby enhancing the state of democracy, making it feel and be, in essence, more democratic (Cohen & Arato 1994, 507). Truth be told, it is often that the disenfranchised communities are the most powerful drivers that strengthen democracies as a result

of their movements (Batliwala 2002, 399). The collectives are still there and the NGOs are, too. They have professionalised their activity, adopting statutes and mandates, and they have focused on building their organisational capacity as a more effective approach to strategy realisation. In other words, an active civil society with acting NGOs that act to achieve equality, political participation, and quality citizenship for all, representing the collective that are underrepresented and are discriminated or otherwise 'less than' the accepted norm – proves the link between the state of civil society and democracy. Social justice is also a vital component necessary for a liberal democracy because it would be impossible to maintain order and equality without it (Chambers & Kopstein 2001, 859). In addition, democracy, being the power of the people, requires a stronger connection between its subjects to foster consistency, which may be analysed and enhanced in a perspective. With this in mind, “associations [that allow the civil society to crystallize] persistently affect one another through the lasting impact that individuals make on each other” (Ishiyama 2012, 125). People in the civil society connect beyond apparent features of appearance or character; it is mostly virtues, ideals, and philosophies that establish a connection between them after meeting even once. The said connection shapes the views of the respective social groups, which then focus on achieving their practical application on a public level by engaging with the political and private sectors.

The participatory and citizenship principles have always been at the core of democracy, but the elitists have managed to usurp the canon into their hands which caused a distortion in the perception of democracy and a confusion about civil society. The elite democracy model currently dominates most of the world, especially the countries of the West. The participatory theorists correctly criticize the elitists, stating that the latter have robbed democracy of “ideas of self-determination, participation, political equality, discursive processes of political will formation among peers, and the influence of autonomous public opinion on decision making” (Cohen & Arato 1994, 6). Despite the free ballot, period elections and superfluous civil rights protection, the reality is that the contemporary elite model of democracy simply puts the battle for political power into a more-or-less humane, controlled environment. It is the political elite who define the national agenda, which, in fact, causes the most prominent issues and needs of the society to be left unattended or overlooked (Cohen & Arato 1994, 5). It is common knowledge that only huge public manifestations, zealous social pressure, media scandals and powerful lobbying are the only few civilised ways to force the political elite to accept a burning issue into the national agenda and create a suitable policy for it. Otherwise, they follow what they consider to be politically relevant.

The people cannot act as an independent, coherent unit of political power. That is where interest gets segmented and interest groups emerge, serving both as subjects that represent the ideas, beliefs, and needs of a certain cluster of society, forcing the political elite to adopt decisions or serve as an encouragement, a mobiliser that crystallizes the scattered, unsure, discriminated needs and interests to form a power to be reckoned with. At the same time, these interest groups are not blind zealots exacting the will of the masses. Interest groups are effective tools of political participation in a participatory model. They are key in achieving congruence between the rulers and the ones being ruled, for they have the professional, organisational, and legal capacity to consider the realities of both worlds. They act to ensure participation to become a reality in democracy again, “[f]or it is through political experience that one develops a conception of civic virtue, learns to tolerate diversity, to temper fundamentalism and egoism, and to become able and willing to compromise” (Cohen & Arato 1994, 7). Hence, interest groups act as a link between the rulers and the ones being ruled which closes the rift between them, allows both ends to find a way to understand each other and to act towards the establishment of a benevolent republic.

That being said, the main nuance of Estonia’s democracy building is the return to the Western concepts after the Soviet rule. Unlike in the West, where liberal democracy emerged organically after centuries of legal, academic, and social processes, Estonia had to embrace it abruptly after a chasm erupted between itself and the Soviet Union. Alapuro (2005, 2) pinpoints this correctly by saying that the civil society context in Estonia erupted as an opposition to the Soviet system; it required constructing democracy swiftly after the disintegration of the USSR. His article successfully outlines the starting point for this and other similar studies. Namely, that institutions develop “shared meanings, values, and moral underpinnings that make people comply with those rules” (Alapuro 2005, 4). The USSR demise did not mean the immediate death of the Soviet values that had been shaping the consciousness and the national identity of Estonians for decades. Therefore, his work is fair to argue that “purposive adoption” of the Western democracy concept would spoil the desired effect - returning to the West smoothly, - which is why the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the European Union (EU) invested much in designing programmes to introduce the civil society notion and framework into Estonia’s political life (Alapuro 2005, 3 and 13). After these statements, a logical discussion erupts further that would require answering why exactly is the civil society so important to return Estonia to the West fully and to reshape its approach to democracy in terms of national values, ideas, beliefs, and morals.

In the light of the above, it becomes visible that democracy is not a chaotic exhibition of every unit that is present in the crowd. For democracy to become a reality, there has to be a plane that exists between the private and political interest. That plane is the civil society – “a new terrain for democratization” (Cohen & Arato 1994, 16). The civil society is supposed to be aware of the necessities of both sides, be able to conceptualize the non-common, non-banal, far-reaching, and sustainable needs of a social group that connects on abstract, non-apparent level and it should see the larger scale of respective political actions that need to be adopted by the political group. That being said, to achieve these goals, a certain herald needs to act on behalf of that group in that intermediate plain.

1.2. Non-governmental Organizations as Key Drivers of Civil Society’s Development

Such heralds are associated interest groups that represent the interests that unite a particular social group and that the said group wants to be tended to and met. Such associational groups are not institutional or anomic. They exist to represent a specific set of interests and issues, which is usually quite narrow and explicit. They are not subordinate to any governmental institutions nor to business entities. Hence, non-governmental organizations drive a civil society’s formation and development by opting for a narrow agenda to tend to the abstract ideals, needs, and interests of a particular social group united by non-apparent, non-immediate characteristics.

NGOs are the civil society’s core. There is a set of features that is inherent to them. As Ishiyama (2012, 125-126) outlines:

The key features of [NGOs] are that: (1) they are often highly organized, with an internal hierarchy and access to a steady stream of funds that allow them to sustain efforts on behalf of the particular interests they purport to represent (which are also characteristic of institutional interest groups; and (2) they are independent of the state in as much as they are not merely organizations that are a party of the state (which make them different from institutional interest groups).

With this in mind, NGOs do not seek political domination or office, nor do they aim at profiting in terms of business. They aim to influence and using the political group to enable a pluralistic atmosphere within the nation and create a sustainable, benevolent environment for the state as a whole. Donors view NGOs as organisations that are involved in advocacy and civic education

aimed at strengthening the country's democracy (Ottaway & Carothers 2000, 77). Almond and Verba emphasized the fact that NGOs are the most important mediators between the individuals and the state (Ishiyama 2012, 126). Democracies with denser and more developed civil societies develop more consistently and harmoniously because the plethora of NGOs there appeases the dissatisfaction of and animosity between the political group and the individuals. They mediate the process of meeting the needs of individuals in a way that will achieve the least damage and resistance between the two groups. Apart from the political agenda of NGOs, those associations that form based on other interests is also a must in a civil society. “[S]ocial organizations like bowling leagues or sporting clubs [...] build social capital, trust, and shared values, which are transferred into the political sphere and help to [facilitate an understanding of the interconnectedness of society [...]]” (Ishiyama 2012, 127). The cultural orientation is an inalienable part in the civil society concept (Cohen & Arato 1994, 512). Such an argument stands out from the rest because nations often feel quite disconnected inside and the feeling of a homogeneous folk becomes more vague and absent, considering the present conditions of globalization, immigration, traveling and cultural lines being blurred. That is why NGOs also act like a glue that keeps a nation together by seeking out those higher ideals, abstract common interests, and needs that reach beyond the obvious commonalities and differences between individuals and social groups.

Participation and intermediaries that embody this participation are paramount for democracy to reproduce itself. The pluralistic view of the civil society is often misplaced because they stuff democracy with social realism. Such an approach mirrors the distorted practices instead of setting utopian goals that will inspire action to acquire it. As Alexis de Tocqueville argued, “without active participation on the part of citizens in egalitarian institutions and civil associations, [...] there will be no way to maintain the democratic character of the political culture or of social and political institutions” (Cohen & Arato 1994, 19). The idea behind this argument is that such participation through civil associations acts both as representative and a sobering element for the political elite. The more sophisticated and elaborate the participation through civil associations (e.g. NGOs), the more aligned will the national agenda in terms of representing the interests of the larger communities within a single nation, represented without intended harm to others, of course. NGOs also act to counteract the political and economic powers that try to shore up the ‘traditional’ patriarchal, hierarchical, or exclusionary guises of many civil society institutions, and they tackle the pervasive nature of state apparatus that forces people into dependence on it (Cohen & Arato 1994, 24). Instead of empowering its citizens and creating conditions for them to be independent,

self-determined, self-limited, and congruent, the political elite creates a modicum of bureaucratic hell that forces the citizens into dependence on it. Bureaucracy and the constant dissatisfaction of certain political needs of a number of communities makes them anxious and tired of engaging with the state. Subsequently, this exasperation is extrapolated to the majority of communities, rendering the citizenship passive and dependant, allowing the political community to exercise their own egoistic agenda. NGOs act as a counterbalance to this pervasiveness, as concentrated representatives of communities united by national beliefs and private interests gathered in a group. In fact, although Foucault does use the term “civil society,” he does recognize the existence of a certain society that is the hallmark of modernity (Cohen & Arato 1994, 257). Consequently, NGOs act as drivers of progress for a contemporary nation-state. As Cohen & Arato (1994, 324) correctly state, “[a] crisis of parliamentary legitimacy can result not only from too many societal inputs and too much party conflict, but also from too much social apathy and too much absorption of conflict.” NGOs may also act to diminish the society’s overzealous discontent and aggression, creating a communication bridge between it and the political elite. Although social associations are on the communities’ team, they often use the rules by which the political elite plays to realise the interests of the former. Such civil associations, as representatives of the civil society, help it adapt to new conditions and transform the social, private, and public realities as circumstances and conditions change, and they are necessary for the reproduction of democracy.

With this in mind, the autonomous collective identity has become the new marker of civil society awareness, potential, and development that are representational of the state of democracy in a given republic. In a modern democratic republic, communist planned gatherings and obligatory participation groups have been replaced by voluntary associations. They signalled the transgression from protests and movement character of collective action to professional site management organizations, which became the new key drivers of collective action in the name of solidifying and upholding the interests of a collective identity (Cohen & Arato 1994, 507). Proactive and offensive tactics have merged with the reactive and defensive ones. Voluntary associations have become both the means and the ends to forming and realising these tactics. As such, it means that “[e]lectoral politics [...] offers an incentive to social actors to select the demonstration, public meeting, and strike as modes of collective action, since ‘those groups are more successful, on the whole, which can produce the highest multiple of numbers, commitment, and articulation of claims’” (Cohen & Arato 1994, 502). Now, social actors mobilise, assemble, and socialize on the terrain that is called the ‘civil society.’ NGOs use strategies that focus on

impacting public opinion, which, then, indirectly influences the political elite; and the goal is not to acquire patronage but to achieve public recognition that their cause is just (Cohen & Arato 1994, 507). Voluntary associations use organisational, human, financial, political, and social resources to justify their cause, increase its meaning and value, which will further allow them to gain power to influence the national agenda and make alterations necessary for the needs of its collective identity. Therefore, the effectiveness, potential, performance, and level of development of a civil society may serve as a marker of the state and quality of democracy in a republic based on the power and potential of its NGOs.

The academic world usually studies the civil society as mainly NGOs by themselves or in the context of the political and legal response to their actions. Groups of interest and organised communities - NGOs - tend to reflect the concerns the public has, upon which it acts to regulate their needs by communicating with the government. Karpushkina (2014, 21) notes that almost a third of all the Estonian NGOs are those that deal with condominium, garage or agricultural activities; the predominant majority of NGOs are located in the country's North. Karpushina's theses provide more food for thought than she actually pinpoints: garage, housing, and agricultural cooperatives were a signature legal concept of the USSR. Although rent is a valuable activity in Estonia, considering how small its population is and how recently it returned to Europe, there are direr issues to focus on than these. Her work fails to actually focus on the other two-thirds of organisations and describe their activity. Khachaturova (2016) provides a dry indication that Estonia defines non-commercial organisations, designated institutions, communities and social enterprise but fails to establish their role in the Estonian democracy or its influence on it. The mentioned facts reflect the lack of good research of the civil society in Estonia. Uhlin (2006, 52) is fair to note that:

A major study of civil society in Estonia characterizes post-communist civil society as generally weak when it comes to the articulation of common (as opposed to group-specific) interests and with very limited political influence. Most civil society groups are oriented towards recreational activities, health, self-improvement and cultural interests, but the poorest parts of the population are mostly excluded from participation in these associations.

His work is the one that heads in the right direction; it may seem outdated but the issue pertains even today. Uhlin (2006, 65) describes the inefficient tactics of NGOs in fundraising and their weakness in acquiring the desirable results because of them being reluctant in engaging in

confrontational tactics. Unfortunately, offense and proaction are key in acquiring the desired results in the most effective and efficient ways.

The above-mentioned arguments have, of course, received criticism and disagreement based on a number of reasons. Firstly, that which is in overabundance tends to be unhealthy. The heavy density of the webs in civil society sometimes overpowers the weight of the political group, which lowers the value and sense of a government and it being the keeper of social order and security (Ishiyama 2012, 129). Secondly, the maintenance of NGOs and the road to reaching its goals is excessively costly, especially when it comes to NGOs that are primarily focused on politics. That is why a multi-billion capital is leaked to the NGO sector, instead of it landing in the state or private ones (Ishiyama 2012, 129). One cannot argue with that and, indeed, these arguments have their own logical, rational weight and evidence. Thirdly, critics of the value of civil society indicate that it is hard, if not impossible, to measure the social capital that associations produce, which, in turn, is supposed to positively impact the state and its democratic level (Ishiyama 2012, 131). Such critique may be relevant, for example, in relation to the Freedom House freedom index that is allegedly representing the level of democracy being present and active in a state. There is much research that actually proves the mentioned thesis by revealing that criteria and their measurement in that index do not adequately represent the level of freedom and democracy in a state (Brooten 2013). Despite these anti-argument being true to a certain extent, one cannot deny the excessive positive influence different human rights NGOs have produced in the years after WWII.

Respectively, NGOs do have weight and place to be in modern democracies and without them, multiple crimes against humanity and human rights violations would still take place. Feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people (LGBT), ecological, animal, and human rights organizations have saved millions of lives, achieved great success and alleviated an abundance of prejudice and violence in recent decades. Nonetheless, the formula of the measurement of their success and value is still absent and undefined.

1.3. Challenges in Finding the Philosophical Net Value of Non-Governmental Organizations

Scholarly literature has met severe complexities in identifying the best tool to measure the impact NGOs produce on the state and civil society and overall. Although NGOs are organizations, have an organizational structure, operate with funds, have employees, pay taxes, and such, they are not business entities in a classical sense and their aim is not obtaining profit. There is no national or international consensus on the matter. Nonetheless, one may definitely say that measuring NGOs unidimensionally is wrong and will result in arriving at no valuable conclusion. In a cross-cut study, the idea of measuring the effectiveness of an NGO becomes more appealing and may provide more insight into the philosophical net value of NGOs.

Effectiveness is a broad category but in the context of NGOs, it levies more toward the social capital they produce. Social capital is another vague concept, but it is possible to narrow it down to some common notions that may be connected to effectiveness. “NGOs in international relations are often studied in the context of transnational advocacy networks, defining effectiveness as the ability to mobilize resources and public opinion to influence policy at the national or international level” (Lecy, Schmitz & Swedlund 2011). Elements of development and non-for-profit studies also have a place here since NGOs have an organizational structure, they require and spend economic capital, as well as they engage with managerial issues. Nonetheless, empirical studies on NGO effectiveness are stagnant and almost non-existent while the bulk of scholarly literature focuses more on conceptual and theoretical works (Lecy, Schmitz & Swedlund 2011). While measuring an NGO's effectiveness, multiple dimensions have to be assessed. These may include: financial efficiency, board effectiveness, effective use of partnerships and networks, project impact and managerial effectiveness (Lecy, Schmitz & Swedlund 2011). Simultaneously with being multidimensional, such an approach is not user-friendly and it is excessively challenging to come up with an index formula to eventually derive a single index that will reflect an NGO's overall effectiveness. “Charity Navigator, as well as other watchdogs in the non-profit field, are now exploring how impact and reputational data can supplement narrow financial metrics” (Lecy, Schmitz & Swedlund 2011). Again, the inconsistency in defining what effectiveness is leading to a disagreement in its measurement and internal and external systemic errors in the assessment.

That being said, the state of democracy is often mostly reflected in the underrepresented communities and how the government institutions are rigid or unwilling to cooperate with them in the context of people power and equality. Studies prove themselves more ardent and substantial in this vector than on the macro level of civil society-democracy and vice versa. As a result of using data collection and qualitative interviews with organisations that represent the interests of minority groups, Agarín (2011, 197) indicates that NGOs in the Baltic States, including Estonia, are weak and have extremely limited influence on policymaking and nation-building. His work provides a number of cases that show how irresponsible the Estonian government is in relation to the demands of minority groups, which often results in them growing tired of the conflict and closing their activities. That claim is proven in the overview of the Nations in Transit Ratings and Average Scores by Pettai & Mölder (2012), which shows that the civil society index dropped from 2.0 in 2002 to 1.75 in 2012. Using case studies, desk research and data interpretation, Pettai & Mölder (2012, 203) reveal that Estonia has still been unsuccessful in creating a multidimensional political and legislative framework for the civil society's organic engagement in the development of democracy. However, the article fails to articulate the reasons behind that and its implications. Kasekamp, Pernik & Siil (2006, 102) reveal the damaging complacency of the Estonian nation and, consequently, of its civil society, which results in NGOs being significantly underfunded or totally dependent on external funding, which highly influences their agendas and membership. The article correctly creates a link between the nation's full passiveness in Estonia's foreign and security policies in connection with the utter lack of "say" civil-society organizations have in state policy making (Kasekamp, Pernik & Siil 2006, 102). The article goes on to discuss the positive link between the nation's complacency and passiveness and the weakness of the civil society, which then results in the rigid or insensitive government in a democratic sense.

The above-mentioned sources reflect the common tendencies of academics in studying the civil society and the Estonian civil society in general. It is true that a set of works describes the Estonian civil society as weak and complacent, providing good cases to support the issue. On the other hand, there are studies that show the institutional rigidity that does not provide enough attention to create the conditions for the civil society to develop better and, in return, to develop the country's democracy more organically and effectively. However, there are no longitudinal or qualitative studies that expressly target the positive link between these two instances. As a result, the Estonian civil society is somehow analysed in a void, separately from its direct positive or negative impact on the country's democracy. Moreover, foreign scholars seem more interested in studying this link

than the national ones. At present, diverse ranking bureaus and social research firms, as well as consulting firms deploy their own, individual formulas and measurement frameworks to measuring NGO effectiveness. Such an instance is a problem because NGOs and governments cannot advance the civil society more consistently and NGOs are struggling with sustainable functioning because the external effectiveness assessments they receive are inconsistent, include multiple errors and often do not effectively represent the pros and cons of an organization. More empirical research is necessary to resolve the above-mentioned problems.

2. ADVOCACY: THE MAIN INSTRUMENT OF NGO INFLUENCE

2.1. Advocacy Tactics to Acquire Goals

Assessing the value of an NGO in relation to the civil society development requires understanding what routes and tools they choose to provide an impact. The common umbrella term for NGO activity in relation to human rights protection is advocacy. It has no single right definition to its but, at large, it may be defined broadly as “any attempt to influence the decisions of any institutional elite on behalf of a collective interest” (Mosley 2009, 436). This broad definition creates an ability to see an NGO as a subject, a proxy, and a decision-maker in terms of the civil society. Advocacy is what an NGO does to incite political changes for the human rights environment relevant for its interest group.

Identifying the problem and acknowledging it constitutes half of the way to healing, and advocacy presumes exactly that. Advocacy has become the staple term that is associated with the realm of non-governmental activity, and its arsenal encompasses an open list of tools the organisations use to achieve their intended goals. In terms of identifying and acknowledging problems, the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Commission in Australia fairly notes that “[a]dvocacy is about speaking out on human rights issues and taking action to improve a situation” (Advocating for Human Rights, n.d.). It may seem banal to put advocacy in this perspective but practice shows that human rights can be advanced and protected only through interest groups gathering based on their shared values and beliefs which then confront the inequalities or detriments that exist in a state and require public action to improve a situation. The previous chapters shone some light on the weakness of Estonian NGOs exactly because of the passive state in which the nation predominantly accepts the public policy on internal and foreign affairs as a given. Such a situation is only possible in a utopian case where there is no poverty, illness, inequality and interpersonal and intersocial discord or in a case of the territory being occupied by the invade when any confrontation with the established leadership will most likely result in various aggravations. The reality that people face in the objective world proves that there is always room for improvement; the congruence depends solely on the actor’s will: whether to act and make a change or not. At

this point, it is worth mentioning that during the period of 18 February - 08 March 2019, the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights reviewed Estonia's fourth report on the human rights situation in the country. Notably, only two organisations filed alternative reports, voicing the problems that exist with human rights in the country (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2019). The said committee published its official response to the official and alternative reports, indicating that there are serious concerns in the areas of the right to health, freedom of expression, sexual education, gender identity and expression and right to assembly (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2019). With this in mind, voicing the problems and seeking out ways to acquire closure, resolution, and improvement for human rights protection is exactly what advocacy is about.

Advocacy includes a diverse array of organisations and tools they use to influence state processes in the direction that would improve a particular aspect of human rights for the community they represent. NGOs are civil society subjects that are different in size, structure, and strategies. They range from large, complex international NGOs to "small, volunteer-run, social movement organisations" (Mosley 2009, 435). Their activity is directed at influencing state-level and local policy-makers, as a result of which change is acquired. The interest groups represented by NGOs are frequently marginalised and underrepresented in the area of governmental policies and state practices (Mosley 2009, 436). Among others, such groups may be people with disabilities, the mentally ill, orphans, the poor, the LGBT, women, the senile, and others. "By calling attention to the problems that affect the communities and populations that they serve, human service non-profits (HSNP) promote greater equality in a democratic system and further their mission" (Mosley 2009, 436). The facts outlined in previous chapters prove that, for example, Estonia has low rates of representation of such marginalised communities in terms of NGOs while there is a large number of questionable NGOs like condominium and garage cooperatives - more than a third of all NGOs - that receive government attention and funding (Khachaturova 2016). At the same time, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has emphasized that it has serious concerns about the neglect the Estonian government exercises in relation to its North-Eastern territories, where there are significant levels of poverty, under- or non-education and local politics free-for-all in comparison to its other territories (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2019). The tactical repertoire of advocacy tools that NGOs may use is an open list, including but not limited to providing public education, protests and other public actions, litigation, lobbying, scientific research, and others (Mosley 2009, 436). They also resort to monitoring the

state's compliance with international treaties, particularly in the human rights area, as well as they participate in conflict resolution, provide public education and alternative expertise (Kaldor 2003, 16). Depending on the goal, NGOs choose strategies that outline them and then try to tailor a set of tactical moves that will allow them to acquire these goals. Indirect tactics may involve releasing policy reports or using influential media platforms to engage audience and voice concerns; on the other hand, some more disruptive tactics may include protests, involvement in actual policymaking, boycotts and other forms of non-violent pressure on the policy-makers (Mosley 2009, 437). The actual practice shows that to achieve the desired levels of influence on state processes through advocacy, NGOs adopts quite sophisticated tactics to protect the well-being of their interest group.

Indirect and insider tactics are the weapons of advocacy choice of NGOs. There is no one right way to advocate. It is vital to understand that the combination and choice of tools an NGO uses to advocate their cause largely depend on its legitimacy, resources, and access (Mosley 2009, 439). The implication of insider tactics is just that: advocating in proximity to policy-makers. Particularly, they "include participating in government commissions and committees, providing testimony on public policy issues, and participating in the development or revision of public policy" (Mosley 2009, 439). Obviously, such actions are possible only when NGO agents are in direct contact with policy-makers and have the necessary influence within a respective political circle that allows them to affect the decisions of interest. Lobbying or direct involvement in direct decision-making is also capable of facilitating the legitimisation of an NGO, which, in turn, elevates its reputation, makes it more influential and opens more opportunities for it to gain their goals easier. In addition, insider tactics help to tailor strategies and impacting the base on which the designated policy will be created. The other camp includes public actions, cooperation with NGO coalitions or consortiums, issuing policy reports and using media platforms (Mosley 2009, 440). Public actions, like protests or boycotts, have long proven their attention-grabbing ability but it is key to combine them with insider tactics and coalition actions to converge that attention into change in state processes. Online petitioning and social media platforms have become quite exponential in how NGOs use indirect tactics. Despite scholars or NGO professionals calling such tools 'slacktivism,' implying that they are weak political actions, it has been proven that online activism through petitions or post-sharing results in higher audience engagement and such organisations like Avaaz have been highly successful in using petitions with hundreds of thousands of signees to lobby their goals, forcing even state presidents to make policy concessions

(Yanacopulos 2015, 135). The effectiveness of advocating solely depends on how the NGO members lead and manage their organisation.

The idea behind the above-mentioned argument that the state of democracy in a country is represented in the well-being of its underrepresented groups is key is seeing the link between the NGOs impact on the human rights in a given state. The said statement is only logical because those collectives that are favoured by the national agenda and the political elite usually have higher living standards and lifestyles, and their overall being is on a level that does not form a feeling of collective discontent with the public policy. Collectives that come short of the canon of the national agenda, are excluded from it or the public policy discriminated them in any manner – are the ones who develop discontent and who feel that their collective identity is being overlooked or actively violated. These collectives are, then, underrepresented but the level of their discontent, the gravity of their problem, logistics, or other factors may not be enough to form a social movement capable of acquiring change. That is where NGOs have stepped in. They mobilise the community through volunteer action, use litigation, demonstrations, close monitoring of government institutions, use lobbying and other advocacy tactics to make a change for the collective (Cohen & Arato 1994, 507-508). As a result, they mobilise the interest group, solidify their collective identity, professionally develop their agenda, make the group feel like a unity and that their needs matter on a larger scale. Subsequently, they become more visible, more inspired to invest in any means necessary in their representative NGOs which then gain the resources necessary to exercise influence and, as a result, gain power to impact the political elite to develop more inclusive and fair policies. Thanks to NGOs advocacy activity, interest groups have the ability to become a civil society, which is neither a private nor a political identity – it is a thing of its own.

That being said, the power that an NGO possesses equals to its advocacy success that is comprised of funds, legitimacy, and access. In relation to the civil society and the state of human rights as a marker of the state of democracy, NGOs, as a social actor in the civil society terrain, strive to achieve the inclusion of their interest group in the polity; their collective action focuses on the politics of influence and the politics of identity (Cohen & Arato 1994, 509). Experimenting, being resilient, and innovative are the main principles that allows advocacy to reach success. Subsequently, assessing the value of an NGO and its impact on the civil society means evaluating its advocacy potential.

2.2. The Advocacy Potential of NGOs

Human rights NGOs are diverse in their form, ranging from volunteer or interest groups to full-fledged institutions with complex organisation structures and impressive budgets. Similarly to for-profit entities, NGOs have power and influence levels that depends on their management, strategies, and portfolio. Subsequently, the combination of these macro-aspects define the NGOs advocacy potential, that is, the power to impact state processes and state policies to change in accordance with the NGO's intended goals.

NGO advocacy potential considers the ability of an organisation to incite change and capitalise on the efforts involved thereby acquiring both tangible and intangible results of its respective activities. Frankly, there is no uniqueness to advocacy potential in comparison, to say, the success of a business entity. If the tactics used by a business result in it harnessing profit and achieving constant growth, then its potential is strong and resilient. Consequently, advocacy evaluation should be utilisation-focused, meaning that assessment is made based on the intended use by intended users (Patton 2008, 1). The individuality of assessing the NGO potential lies only in the fact that it is retrospective. Using the forensic method and "eliminating the alternative or rival explanations until the most compelling explanation, supported by the evidence, remained" (Patton 2008, 2) allows reaching a conclusion about an NGO's advocacy potential. It will be exemplified by the effectiveness of the result achieved and the efficiency of the tactics used. The difference in evaluating the advocacy potential from other organisation powers lies in the fact that all causes and effects are known; the goal is to establish the right connections between them to outline those that impacted the acquired result the most. Based on the preceding sub-chapter, the end-result of the NGO advocacy potential for human rights organisations means achieving the desired state-level and/or local-level public change in a designated policy, which was targeted by a designated strategy and which allows the shape the NGO actions further based on that new policy and which, of course, served for the benefit of the collective identity. Apart from this, the advocacy potential depends significantly on the organisational structure, leadership styles, organisation governance and finance. It is to be kept in mind that the NGO ability to raise funds and coordinate them, their network building capacity, and leadership are key elements that foster the advocacy potential.

With this in mind, evaluating the NGO advocacy potential allows determining the power and representation of the interest group the respective organisation represents. Assessing a wide range

of NGOs, weighing their advocacy potential, may shed light on the power of the civil society in a country at large. Therefore, the following chapters will focus on evaluating the organisational potential, which is detrimental in defining its organisation potential, of Estonian NGOs that act in the human rights protection field, the results of which will enable seeing the value of NGOs better and understanding the power of the Estonian civil society.

3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ORGANISATIONAL POTENTIAL AND DEVELOPMENT OF ESTONIAN NGOS

ECOM Capacity Assessment Tool (ECAT) was used as an instrument for evaluation of the organisational potential and development of the designated sample. ECAT has a measurement system, ranging from scores 0 to 4 in each subcategory, which, then, in turn allows to acquire the end score that comprises a straight average of the component scores. The score range has respective levels of organisational development from nascent to mature. The organisational potential is being discussed based on the description of a respective organisational development level that is included in a subcategory section. All seven NGOs act in the interests of an underrepresented group. The NGO principal officers were interviewed to acquire answers based on the ECAT subcategories and the relative organisational development level descriptions in them. The generalised score on organisational potential and development is included in Appendix 1. The ECAT instrument is in the form of Appendix 2. The more detailed, personalised scores and discussions of each interviewee are placed in Appendices 3 through 9.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used for the sake of the given research. Purposive sampling is generally assumed to produce that may be logically interpreted as representational of the population; in the current research – of the NGO tendencies. The paper used non-probability sampling as a means of acquiring empirical data to prove the theoretical assumptions about the weaker state of Estonian civil society that correlates with the somber state of its NGOs. Purposive sampling has its limitation and, within the current research, it means that the data cannot be applied to the whole NGO sector in Estonia. Nevertheless, purposive sampling will allow to make preliminary conclusions about why the Third sector is in its current state. Human rights NGOs were used as respondents in this research because the level of human rights is generally associated with the state of democracy in a modern state. The respondents are NGOs that act for the sake of enhancing human rights for marginalised or minority groups. Such NGOs were chosen because the literature argues that the level of democracy is usually reflected in the state of human rights of underrepresented groups, the interests of which NGOs tend to represent (Mosley 2009, 436).

Therefore, the results for the chosen sample is a part of the given pilot research, which may be used under reservations or up to a point to reveal, discuss, and research the main tendencies relative to the relations between the Estonian government and the organizations that represent the interests of minority groups. That being said, the data and conclusions outlined in this research should be later used to conduct a wider and more comprehensive research, for instance, in later doctoral study. Seven NGOs were chosen for this study. They are Estonian Network of People Living with HIV (EHPV), Estonian LGBT Association, Women's Rights Initiative (this NGOs requested that their name remains confidential, which ECAT allows as per its ethics), Estonian Refugees Council, Estonian Association of People who use psychoactive substances (LUNEST), Estonian Human Rights Centre, and Development Centre for People with Disabilities - Matveika. The underrepresented groups, which the sample represents, include women, children, people living with HIV, people with disabilities, LGBT persons, and refugees.

Research Design and Measures

In the beginning, the paper focuses on studying the theoretical and practical basis of the thesis. Books, articles, and statistics were reviewed to lay the foundation of the research thereby proving the importance of the studied question and the lack of scholarly and practical interest in it. Literature was studied with the purpose of, again, highlighting the alarming nature of the weakness level of capacity of NGOs in Estonia; establishing the link between the power of NGOs, the power of the civil society and the state of democracy; showcasing that NGOs are the primary drivers of civil society development and that the more sophisticated and powerful they are, the stronger the civil society is. After the theoretical foundation for this study had been laid, the qualitative research was conducted to provide empirical proof.

ECAT has its own framework, scale and methodology of realisation. Since it primarily aims at studying the organisational potential and development of an NGO, it outlines the relative dimensions and gives prospect to interpretation regarding these dimensions. The evaluation within the ECAT framework is based on the information that has been acquired during semi-structured interviews. Nonetheless, the acquired characteristics of the organizational potential reflect the objective and quantitative reproducible data. I, as author of this paper, also acted as the main expert in gathering the information that was necessary to assess the level of organisational potential and

developments of Estonian NGOs. ECAT acknowledges three main components that are relevant to NGO organisational development; these are the institutional, advocacy, and financial potential (The Protocol to Conducting 2017, 2). Each component has its own categories and subcategories. These categories and subcategories include predefined descriptions that adhere to respective levels of organisational development. As the NGOs were interviewed, the open-ended answers they received provided room for direct consumption or interpretation, which then allowed placing the answer into a respective subcategory description. Also, a short training was conducted for the designated organisations, explaining ECAT in order for the respondents to provide educated and knowledge-based answers. Afterward, all respondents were offered to sign an informed consent which indicates that all of the gathered information is confidential unless otherwise discussed and that the organisation is entitled to withdraw from the assessment on any stage of its performance.

The organisation-respondents were represented by their principal officers whom the expert interviewed and scored them based on the answers. The subcategory descriptions reflect a distinctive level of organisational development: nascent – 0-1; emerging – 1-2; expanding – 2-3; mature – 3-4 (The Protocol to Conducting 2017, 3). As the expert received the answers, they placed the respondent into a respective section of a subcategory and put a score that reflected the level of organisational development. The expert scored in whole numbers, increased or decreased the whole number range by 0.5, depending on the provided answers. The straight average of all subcategories made up the category score; the straight average of category score equalled the component score; the straight average of the component score totalled the results for a respective organisation. The answers and the subcategory scores were analysed to establish the tendencies in NGO organisational development in Estonia. These tendencies were interpreted to explain the correlation between the NGO potential and the civil society potential, which, in turn, offered the chance to understand the value of NGOs in a civil society and their representation of the state of democracy in a country.

Considering the limitations relevant to this research, it should be noted that interviews with Russian-speaking NGOs were conducted in Russian and in English with ones that were Estonian-speaking. Such a fact may have influenced the depth of data specification and breakdown.

Findings

Only the Estonian Human Rights Centre, having a total score of 3.4 (Appendix 1), is an NGO on a ‘mature’ stage of organisational development, being an organisation that conducts research on a plethora of interest groups, ranging from women’s rights to people who inject drugs. Two organisations are ‘expanding’ – Estonian Refugee Council and LGBT Association, – scoring 2.41 and 2.70, respectively (Appendix 1). The rest – EHPV, Women’s Initiative, LUNEST, and Matveika – are expanding or nascent, scoring 1.23, 1.78, 1.25, and 0.69, respectively (Appendix 1). The subcategory/category scores will not be duplicated in this chapter; since the total score is a straight average of all the scores ranging from 0 to 4, the total score provides a representational mark for all the components of their respective organisational potential and development assessment. In addition, the detailed discussion of the organisational potential and development is foreseen by ECAT in individual portfolios for each respondent. The more detailed and individual scores and portfolios are included in the Appendices 3-9. The mentioned results showcase that the human-rights-based NGOs in Estonia have a dominant tendency to be either nascent or emerging. Although in figures this may not seem drastic, the more detailed discussion of the results will shed the light on the quality of the sample’s organisational development and potential.

Results

Appendices 3 through 9 reveal that the operational, managerial, and global activity of all the respondents is significantly lacking and dispersed. Although the Estonian Human Rights Centre, the LGBT Association, and the Estonian Refugee Council have satisfactory delegation and organisational structure within the NGO, there is functional overlapping present, no comprehensive conflict of interest policy, and no effective, standardised program and staff appraisal tools. The same is relevant to the other four respondents in addition to them lacking on all other subcategories. Appendices 3 through 9 present answers in more details, summarizing the interviews with the respondents: all of them highlight the anxiety the NGOs experience when it comes to governmental bureaucratic procedures and legal demands to establish and manage an NGO. As a result, none of the respondents have a clear, up-to-date organogram, which is vital for clearly defining functions of each structural element, avoid functional overlapping and conflict of interests, as well as it enhances the organisation’s performance. All of the respondents lack the

availability of employed or otherwise consistently involved experts, consultants, and community members. Even if it is acceptable to have fewer managerial and principal management officers on the nascent and emerging stages of organisational development, it does not encourage dereliction. Mostly, the available staff members do not have clearly defined, comprehensive employee/consultant instructions in writing. The LGBT Association and the Women's Rights Initiative, being women based, mostly hire women. Apart from this, the core resource required for the stability of the respondents' development – money – is a significant drawback in all the respondents but the Estonian Human Rights Centre. There is no trained fundraiser or a fundraising department and even if there are, they are poorly trained. There are no stable, considerable sources of funding present for the respondents. Most often, fundraising is a chaotic, reactive panic reaction when the available budget is nearing its end. The overall organisational development feels truly professional only in the case of Estonian Human Rights Centre, which has scored the highest. It is the only respondent with a professional feel to it, has a diverse, multi-member board, a relatively clear organisational structure, has consistent funding, is in touch with the community and the political elite, has members and employees, conducts periodic appraisal of its activity and has integrated, updated budgeting.

Unfortunately, the rest of the respondents lack this professionalism, especially in the sense of their presence on the civil society platform. It is mandatory that an NGO, especially a human-rights-based one, has a clearly defined mission, vision, and long-term strategy (Nagy & Fawcett, n.d.). Only the Estonian Human Rights Centre, the LGBT Association, and the Estonian Refugee Council have a mission and vision statement, and have a relatively clear or good long-term strategy plan. Even then, none of the seven respondents have a clearly defined advocacy strategy and/or plan that would create an advocacy framework for the organisation, which would guide its smaller advocacy projects. It was stated in prior chapters that advocacy is the primary form of a human-rights-based NGO activity because it adheres to the idea of collective action in the name of meeting the needs of a collective identity. Advocacy, among others, utilizes mobilising techniques as a means of connecting with the target interest group/community/collective, which strengthened the collective identity, raises its voice and spreads the influence – all of which are mandatory for the NGO to gain power as a result. Even in cases when the respondents would realise focused advocacy programmes, they would fail to allocate enough and relevant people to realise them. Not only do none of the respondents have long-term or otherwise comprehensive advocacy strategies/plans, their volunteer policy is also very weak. Despite some of the respondents, like

LUNEST or the Estonian Human Rights Centre, maintaining a constant connection with their community, little of them are actual members or constant volunteers, or transgress from volunteers to consultants/experts/employees of the respondent. The volunteer movement in the designated communities, which the respondents represent, is not structured. On top of that, the organisation's media presence and external image projection is either weak or non-existent. Only because the Estonian Refugee Council and the Estonian Human Rights Centre are closely linked to governmental funding and cooperation, they have satisfactory external relations and presence; the other respondents are poorly known in general and even often unknown in their target community. All respondents acknowledged their low number of membership, stating that Estonia is a country where it is unpopular to be a registered member of an NGO. Frankly, the same answer was met when asked about the absence of written administrative or employment instructions, of hired employees and divided departments or posts, the lack of strategic/advocacy/fundraising/volunteer plans and structures.

Discussion

Considering the aforementioned, the organisational potential and development of the Estonian NGOs is still emerging and staggering. Their internal and external activity is dispersed, poorly organised and lacking a clear understanding of and view on their collective identity and its needs. Since the above-mentioned research (Agarin 2011, 197) proves that NGOs are the key drivers of the civil society development in a contemporary democracy, it means that the civil society is mostly as strong and effective as its representational NGO sector is, which, in Estonia's case, is quite depressed.

The impression of the Estonian civil society being weak after having worked in the human-rights-based NGO sector in Estonian acquired its theoretical and empirical evidence. The surface observation of how human-rights-based NGOs worked in Estonia, how they organised their work, how their interest groups were doing and how the government designed policies for them or ignored them gained momentum in theoretical ponderisms. Scholarly research provided enough arguably solid arguments in retrospection and observation that the reintroduction of Estonia into the EU resulted in applying the civil society concept to its nation rather in the latter developing it organically. Such historical instances resulted in it being poorly understood and practiced by the

Estonian people. Since the civil society as a combination of interest groups cannot function effectively in its mass construct, NGOs act as core actors that professionally represent the interests of such groups and impact the civil society as a whole. With this in mind, there was a gap in empirical studies of the Estonian civil society, particularly, in studying NGOs as the core of civil society and its subset. The aforementioned qualitative research is an investment in narrowing this gap since it offers qualitative data on the weakness of the organisational potential and the power of Estonian NGOs as a subset of the Estonian civil society which complements the previous theoretical arguments on this hypothesis. This allows establishing a positive link between the poor organisational potential and development of the Estonian human-rights-based NGOs and the potential and strength of the Estonian civil society and what it, eventually, says about the country's level of democracy. Dissecting the gathered data below will provide a better understanding of the said hypothesis.

Firstly, the advocacy potential of the Estonian NGOs is just as irregular and weak as its organisational potential and development. Appendices 3-9 make it clear that all of the respondents – an exemplary sample of the human-rights-based NGOs – develop poorly. The respondents are quite impassive or unprofessional in approaching their NGO activity, except for the Estonian Refugees Council and the Human Rights Centre. The LGBT Association shows potential as an expanding association, it and the Women's Initiative are guilty of some prejudice in terms of sex, hiring mostly women and avoiding the potential of diversity boost from hiring men. The poor distinction of functions, roles, posts, and organisational structure results in functional overlapping that slows or impedes the organisation's performance. Also, respondents seem to exhibit grievances in relation to the Estonian government, which results in them avoiding conducting comprehensive human right, legal, and financial activities, which would often involve communication with government agencies. Apart from this, since the primary form of activity of human-rights-based NGOs is advocacy, it is peculiar that the advocacy potential of the Estonian NGOs is very weak. They almost seem to have some sort of an inferiority complex, feeling like they are neglected by the government, feeling little support from their target community/collective/group and lacking the internal, solid staff to push through. At present, the Estonian human-rights-based NGO sector has adopted a reactive collective action stance with a few dotty proactive instances that happen randomly. Such a fact is reminiscent and, frankly, exemplary of how Uhlin (2006, 52) called the post-Soviet civil societies, including Estonia, weak and impassive. As it was mentioned, the civil society, as a diversity of self-conscious groups of

people united by a commonality of a major social attribute, is unable to effectively and sustainably represent itself. Therefore, NGOs function on the behalf of such interest groups and are the main vehicle of the civil society in providing influence on the national policies and agenda in order to supply to their demands in one way or the other. Respectively, if the NGOs that represent these interests are weak in their strength and potential and their interest groups are placid, as well as them being impassive overall, it implies that there is a positive link between the weakness and complacency of two integral parts of the civil society – interest groups and NGOs. Instead of focusing on shaping sustainable practices and recruiting resilient employees or involving constant experts/consultants from the built up volunteer base, the Estonian civil society chooses to either react when there is an evidently burning issue or randomly conduct some advocacy or pro-human-rights projects to somehow alleviate the symptoms of neglect or discrimination.

The aforementioned claim does relate only to the correlation between Estonian human-rights-based NGOs and the Estonian civil society. There is no consensus on what general role and functions NGOs exercise, as well as there is no homogeneity among NGOs. NGOs range from charities, to human rights, to environment, to market aid for Third World Countries organisations, and the list goes on. In addition, there is no universal consensus on what the ‘civil society’ is (Holmén & Jirström 2009, 441). Nonetheless, this research considers NGOs that are tied to the civil society and representational of it to be human-rights-based. All of the other NGOs are predominantly professionalised, organised forms of civic engagement. That being said, civic engagement in terms of democracy lies outside of areas of state and electoral politics; they dwell in the realms of morals, human principles, good citizenship beliefs, and such (Skocpol & Fiorina 2004, 17). Also, the results of these studies mean that NGOs are synonymous to the civil society. To be clear, NGOs represent interest groups, which make up the civil society and which are often marginalised or otherwise discriminated (Holmén & Jirström 2009, 441). Therefore, in this research, the theoretical research and the ECAT tool allow establishing the correlation between the weak human-rights-based NGO sector in Estonia and the impassive civil society in it. Again, it is vital to remember that civic engagement and ‘interest clubs’ are not the same as the civil society which acts in the plane between the public and the private and which incorporates the practices of both, creating a third terrain for enhancing the republic’s democracy. NGOs simply have emerged as the chosen actors on this terrain usually happen to be the most effective in representing the interest groups. The given research is complementary to the already existing one that argues that the Estonian civil society is weak. The complementary element here is the

qualitative research of a representational human-rights-based NGO sample in Estonia, which has also proven to be inconsistent, impassive, and depressed on the majority of accounts in terms of organisational and advocacy potential and development.

That being said, the impassiveness of the Estonian civil society, albeit far from being the worst case scenario, is reflected in the placency of its human-rights-based NGO sector and vice versa, revealing the gaps in the state's national agenda and democracy building. Notably, the first chapter mentions the recent statistics regarding the striking irregularity of the income per capita, education, and health between the North-Eastern region in Estonia and the rest of its territory. The human rights reports and the UN Human Rights Committee statements point to unwelcome discriminatory government practices in the respective region and in relation to disenfranchised communities, like People who use drugs (PWUD), People living with HIV (PLHIV), people with disabilities, women, and the LGBT. There is little to no action on the civil society's account to attempt and enhance the quality of life of these communities. The Estonian civil society is neither interested in which decisions its country adopts in the foreign, military, and security policies (Kasekamp, Pernik & Siil 2006, 102). Such and other accounts point to the impassiveness of the country's civil society. The ECAT results in this paper provide a mirror-image-like situation in the human-rights-based NGO sector that is as placid as the civil society terrain on which it acts. Although NGOs in general have the capacity to provide structural support for constantly developing democratic regimes (Mercer 2002, 19), in Estonia, the respective sector is currently simply not fit to grant that kind of support. Nor is the civil society itself involved or interested in realising and achieving better democratic goals and in upholding the European values of equality and common well-being.

With this in mind, it is necessary that certain social actors from the government, the NGOs and the civil society invest in strengthening the Estonian civil society to exclude the current discrimination of disenfranchised communities and for it to become more involved in the national agenda, steering it in the way of democratization, equality, and benevolence. For that to happen, the Estonian civil society requires mobilisation and bonding. In this regard, Edwards (2011, 1) mentions an interesting quote from the Church of Ascension in London where one of the tablets read, “*Fellowship is life [...] and lack of fellowship is death, but in hell there is no brotherhood but every man for himself.*” In the context of this research, it means that the dispersity and lack of the spirit of being a civil society in the Estonian civil society will only cause the already existing discriminatory practices to aggravate and new inequalities to erupt. Notably, the development and

maintenance of a democratic system of governance requires an active civil society (Hadenius & Ugglå 1996, 1628). Since the civil society cannot act on its own, like a chaotic mass, NGOs are currently the best mediums for creating the cooperational bridge between the public and the private. The state of democracy depends on the correlation between the public, the civil society, and the private (Hadenius & Ugglå 1996, 1628). If the Estonian government is interested in fostering and enhancing its democratization, then it needs to endeavour in developing its civil society. Social conflicts in themselves help hold modern democratic societies together (Flyvbjerg 1998, 228), however, if those conflicts are avoided, ignored, or overlooked, then there is no possibility to progress. That being said, an active, resilient civil society is not a universal panacea for a thriving liberal democracy; it is merely one of its main macro-components.

CONCLUSION

The current impassiveness of the Estonian civil society and its human-rights-based NGO sector to conflicts, staggers the country's democratization processes. The given research has shown that there are whole regions, in addition to minority groups, that the government denies equal human rights. The existing human-rights-based NGOs in Estonia should be proactive to uphold the interests of their respective groups. Unfortunately, they do not provide any visible impact on the national agenda. They are more likely to act within the current boundaries, rules, or practices of the government. Due to their low organizational power and potential, they do not initiate programs to make a difference or make a change. Currently, they act reactively, which does not provide an effective impact on the state of human rights in Estonia and lets the negligent or otherwise discriminatory practices that affect their interest groups continue their damage. Apart from this, the low organizational potential has a negative effect on community mobilisation and building. Consequently, the interest groups are sporadic and unfocused, which decreases their strength. Because human-rights-based NGOs do not indulge in community mobilisation and building, they have a weak effect on increasing the strength of the civil society in Estonia. As such, the Estonian civil society somewhat resembles its human-rights-based NGO sector. Both of them lack in good structure and organisation; they have weak relations within their internal organisation and among themselves; their conduct is reaction rather than proactive or preventive; they are tacit in either accepting the discriminatory government policies or ignoring them.

This research has no intention on making the 'civil society' and 'NGOs' consonant. Nonetheless, the theoretical research on civil society as a concept and the state of affairs of Estonian civil society provided the ability to confirm the scholarly arguments on the latter being weak. The present qualitative research provides the empirical element to this argument, revealing the main subset of the Estonian civil society – its human-rights-based NGOs – as having a poor organisational development potential. Consequently, the theoretical arguments on the Estonian civil society being weak found empirical evidence in the same effect being reflected in its human-rights-based NGOs. Considering that the better part of NGOs in Estonia are the ones dealing with tenancy or rent of diverse kinds and that the minor ones being human-rights-based and with low organisational potential, the overall hypothesis about the weakness of the country's civil society finds its confirmation. In other words, the stronger the civil society, the stronger its NGO sector, the more profound its involvement in government policy making, the more enhanced the democracy. To

remedy the current weak state of Estonian civil society, the government needs to take an active participation in developing the organisational potential and capacity of its human-rights-based NGOs, to include them in dialogues, discussions, and policy making to consider the human rights and interests of the minority groups that they represent. On the other hand, human-rights-based NGOs have to dramatically enhance their approach to self-organisation, their community mobilisation and building techniques, and redefine their activities in building kinship in the Estonian civil society, in increasing its awareness regarding the state of democratic affairs and engage it in further developing the country's democracy. Thus, ignoring the current weak state of the Estonian civil society and the NGO sector only results in the current disenfranchisement of certain communities and in flawed government policies that create latent discontent and stager democratization.

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APENDICES

Appendix 1. The generalized score on organisational potential and development of Estonian Human Rights NGOs

	EHPV	LGBT Association	Women's Rights Initiative	Refugees Council	LUNEST	Estonian HRC	Matveika
Year of establishment	2005	2009	2015	2001	2016	2009	2012
OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION	1.23	2.7	1.78	2.41	1.25	3.14	0.69
1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	1.19	2.83	1.49	2.49	1.37	3.11	0.67
1.1. Governance	1.03	2.93	1.32	2.4	1.66	3.21	0.63
1.1.1. Strategic Governance	0.42	2.5	1	1.33	2.08	2.42	1.16
1.1.2. Mission	1.7	3.8	1.6	3.6	1.8	3.9	0.6
1.1.3. Governance Style and Leadership	1.67	2.58	2.16	2.42	1.67	3.25	0.67
1.1.4. Strategic planning	0.33	2.83	0.5	2.25	1.08	3.25	0.08
1.2. Management practices	1.08	2.66	1.32	2.41	1	2.93	0.68
1.2.1. Organizational structure	0.9	2	0.8	1.7	0.7	2.6	1.3
1.2.2. Program planning	0.83	2.33	0.5	2.83	1.33	3.17	0.33
1.2.3. Operations	1.1	3.3	0.7	2.6	0.6	2.6	0.6
1.2.4. Decision making and management style	1.5	3	3.29	2.5	1.36	3.36	0.5
1.3. Human resources	1.48	2.91	1.85	2.66	1.44	3.19	0.69
1.3.1. Human resources policy	1.63	2.69	1.31	2.13	1.81	2.81	0.88
1.3.2. Recruiting	0.66	2.33	0.5	1.42	0.83	3.08	0.75
1.3.3. Volunteer services	0.75	3.25	2	3.5	0.75	3.25	0.26
1.3.4. Gender and diversity	2.88	3.38	3.6	3.38	2.38	3.63	0.88
2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY	1.3	2.46	1.64	2.23	1.44	2.98	0.69
2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	1.01	2.29	1.47	1.48	1.53	2.66	0.62
2.1.1. Advocacy strategy	0.88	2.13	0.2	0.75	0.13	1.63	0
2.1.2. Advocacy practices	0.9	2	2.2	1.95	1.2	3.1	0.6
2.1.3. Community mobilization	1.25	2.75	2	1.75	3.25	3.25	1.25
2.2. External relations	1.94	2.98	2.06	2.74	1.36	3.17	0.98
2.2.1. Strategy of external relations	0.25	2.25	0.75	1.25	0.25	3	0.75
2.2.2. Collaboration with governmental authorities	2	3.17	2	2.33	1.17	3.17	0.67

2.2.3. Collaboration with other civil society organizations	2.75	3.25	3.5	3.75	2.25	3.25	1.75
2.2.4. Collaboration with international organizations and donors	2.75	3.25	2	3.63	1.75	3.25	0.75
2.3. Program activities	0.96	2.1	1.4	2.48	1.44	3.1	0.48
2.3.1. Procedures and standards of program activities	1	2.5	1.63	2.88	1.75	3.12	0.38
2.3.2. Community focus	0.92	1.67	1.17	2.08	1.13	3.08	0.58
3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	1.21	2.81	2.21	2.52	0.94	3.32	0.72
3.1. Financial management	1.52	2.68	2.03	2.87	1.02	3.21	0.67
3.1.1. Accounting	2.57	3.71	2.93	2.93	2.21	3.29	1.35
3.1.2. Budgeting	0.17	1.5	0.67	2.67	0.17	2.83	0
3.1.3. Financial reporting	1.83	2.83	2.5	3	0.67	3.5	0.67
3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability	0.89	2.93	2.38	2.17	0.85	3.43	0.76
3.2.1. Fundraising strategy	0.63	2.88	0.63	1.88	0.5	3.8	0.4
3.2.2. Internal system of raising resources	1.38	2.88	1.12	1.13	0.88	3	0.13
3.2.3. Diversification of revenues	0.67	3.17	2.05	3.5	1.17	3.5	1.76

Appendix 2. ECAT Instrument

Component: 1. Institutional sustainability
Category: 1.1. Governance

Governance refers to the entire system of authority and decision making within an organization. It includes elements such as the role and smooth functioning of board of directors, setting appropriate mission and goals, and ensuring that leadership is responsive to key stakeholder interests.

The guiding principle in evaluating governance is determining whether the entire governance system is responsive to the needs of the organization and whether the organization is fulfilling its mission to the community by incorporating stakeholder concerns. The organization's mission and goals should be based on the needs of the community and aligned with its core competencies and strengths. Also it is critical to consider the local context and address potential challenges such as cultural norms in leadership and management.

Resources: registration documents, charter or constitution, by-laws of governance bodies, their work plan and meeting minutes, strategic and operational plan, policies and procedures of governance process

1.1.1. Strategic Governance	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The Board is composed of committed members that represent the interests of the stakeholders and community	Organisation has no Board	Board is comprised of different types of members	Board composition leads to strong strategic planning	Board composition leads to diversification of donor projects/growth of organization
The Board meets regularly and attendance is good.	Board does not meet	The Board meets regularly and the NGO can produce an attendance sheet.	If they have minutes and there is a quorum.	Annual general meeting, notice served with agenda previously, minutes, circulation of minutes to the Board afterwards.
The Board carries out key roles such as policy formulation, fund raising, public relations, financial oversight and lobbying.	Members of the Board do not perform their functions	Board understands roles and is carrying some level of the points mentioned.	The Board is supportive and active.	Any NGO which can show an implemented strategic plan that has fundraising with growth, good relations with donors and others.
The Board has and uses conflicts of interest policy.	Board member or family members are also staff members	The NGO has a well defined conflicts of interest policy, but it is hardly used in practice.	The conflicts of interest policy is used in practice.	No Board member or family members are also staff members; the NGO strictly follows the conflicts of interest policy.
There is a clear division of power between the Board and the organization's management.	In fact there is not clear division of power between the Board and the organization's management	On paper, the Board is separate from staff on voting rights, oversight, and management.	On paper and according to senior staff, there is a clear division of power.	On paper and according to all staff, there is a clear division of responsibility and influence between Board and staff.
The Board provides accountability and credibility to the organization.	The Board does not provide accountability and credibility to the organization.	Board comprises of effective leaders.	Board has led to greater funding.	Board has led to national reputation.

1.1.2. Mission	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The organization has a clearly defined statement (mission, vision, and values).	The NGO has no mission and values	The NGO has mission, vision, values are clear	NGO mission, vision, values are articulated reasonably well.	NGO mission, vision, values perfectly articulate who the organization is, what it does, and who it aspires to be.
Staff, members and Board participated in the elaboration, understand and follow the mission/vision statement.	Staff, members and Board can not articulate the mission/vision	The NGO senior management can articulate the mission/vision.	The NGO staff understands the mission/vision.	NGO staff understands and can explain the mission/vision statement.
The mission statement is regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to serve the interests of the community and stakeholders and is an accurate reflection of the organization's vision.	Mission statement did not reviewed	Mission statement was reviewed at least once.	Mission statement is regularly reviewed to ensure accuracy.	Board and staff participate in the mission statement review.
The organization's strategy and programs are aligned and consistent with the vision/mission.	The organization's strategy and programs differ from the mission	The NGO has programs that roughly coincide with its strategy and vision/mission.	The NGO has a strategy that directly coincides with programs and/or mission/vision.	The NGO has a strategy that directly coincides with programs and/or mission/vision, and both strategy and programs have grown.
The organization has a clearly defined values statement that articulates the beliefs and ethics of an organization.	The NGO has no values	The organization has a clear value statement and a beliefs and ethics statement.	The organization has a clear value statement that articulated the beliefs and ethics of the organization.	The organization has a clear value statement that articulated the beliefs and ethics of the organization that staff can articulate.

1.1.3. Governance Style and Leadership	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team are clearly delineated and understood.	The roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team are not clearly delineated.	The roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team are clearly delineated and understood by senior management.	The roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team are clearly delineated and understood by all staff interviewed.	The roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team are clearly delineated and understood on paper and in practice by all staff interviewed.
The respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team maximize efficiency while maintaining accountability.	The respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team do not guarantee efficiency	The roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team on paper allow the organization to avoid overlap of functions.	In practice, the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team on paper allow the organization to avoid overlap of functions.	In practice, the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team on paper allow the organization to avoid overlap of functions, come to decisions quickly, and providing sufficient oversight and responsibility.
The leadership style of senior management is participatory and communicative.	The leadership style does not provide informational exchange	Senior management communicates decisions with staff and receives input from them.	Senior management allows input from all levels of the organization at regular intervals during the course of the year.	Senior management allows input from all levels of the organization before decision making and sits down regularly with all levels of staff for input on many areas of decision making during the course of the year.
Senior management is accountable and accessible to key stakeholders.	Senior management is not accountable and accessible.	Senior management is accessible to key stakeholders should they have questions.	Senior management is accessible to and provide them with some information should they request it.	Senior management is accountable and highly accessible to key stakeholders.
Senior management incorporates input from all levels of staff and stakeholders in decision making.	Senior management is self-contained in decision making process	Senior management listens to staff and stakeholders through an open door policy.	Senior management allows for input at regular intervals.	Senior management solicits input from all levels before decision making through a regular system of feedback.
Leadership and power are not concentrated in one or two individuals and the organization has succession policy.	Leadership and power are concentrated in one or two individuals	More than two people have check signing authority, review of confidential documents, decision making power and the organization has policy for succession.	More than two people have check signing authority, review of confidential documents, decision making power and the organization has already implemented succession.	More than two people have check signing authority, review of confidential documents, decision making power and the organization has succession policies within its governing laws.

1.1.4. Strategic planning	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The organization conducts strategic planning activities to formulate long range strategic plan (2-3 years) and annual operational plan.	The organization does not conduct strategic planning. There is no strategic or operational plan	The Executive Director and Board lead the development of the 2-3 year strategic plan and an annual operational plan.	The Executive Director and Board lead the development of the 2-3 year strategic plan and an annual operational plan, which is monitored, evaluated and changed on a regular basis.	The organization develops a strategic plan and operational plan that is based on participatory approaches involving both senior leadership and staff.
The long range strategic plan includes an analysis of internal and external factors.	No analysis is performed	The long range strategic planning process has used the mentioned analysis in some fashion at some point in time.	The long range strategic planning process routinely uses the mentioned analysis.	The long range strategic planning process routinely uses more than the mentioned analysis on a regular basis.
The long range strategic plan is reviewed and modified during the operational planning process and is relevant to the organization's mission and activities.	The strategic plan is not reviewed and modified	Results of the operational planning process are fed into the strategic planning process, and fits with the NGO's mission and activities.	Results of the operational planning process are fed into the strategic planning process and help guide the NGO's mission and activities.	Results of the operational planning process are fed into the strategic planning process and have resulted in new programs.
The annual operational plan defines specific goals, responsibilities, budgets, milestones, and indicators to track progress over a one year period.	There is no operational plan	The annual operational plan is project specific and defines strategic goals, responsibilities, budgets, milestones, and indicators to track progress over a one year period.	The annual operational plan is for the entire organization and defines strategic goals, responsibilities, budgets, milestones, and indicators to track progress over a one year period.	The annual operational plan is for the entire organization and defines strategic goals, responsibilities, budgets, milestones, and indicators to track progress over a one year period, and feedback is used for corrective action, if necessary.
The strategic planning process, for each plan, incorporates community feedback and focuses on community needs.	The strategic planning process does not include community feedback	The NGO has a strategic planning process that incorporates community feedback and community needs at some level.	The NGO has a strategic planning process that incorporates community feedback and community needs from all projects to some degree.	The NGO has a strategic planning process that incorporates community feedback and community needs using M&E system.
Senior management disseminates the results of the strategic planning process with staff and stakeholders.	Senior management does not disseminate the results of the strategic planning process with staff and stakeholders.	Senior management disseminates the results of the strategic planning process with staff and stakeholders.	Senior management disseminates the results of the strategic planning process with staff and stakeholders and incorporates opportunities for feedback.	Senior management disseminates the results of the strategic planning process with staff and stakeholders, incorporating opportunities for feedback and making changes when necessary.

Component: 1. Institutional sustainability
Category: 1.2. Management practices

This category describes an organizational structure, process of operational planning as well as procedures and style of the decision making process in the organization. Management systems should be aligned with an organization's mission and service delivery objectives. Management practices should be responsive to the community and its changing needs.

Organizational structure should describe the roles, functions and reporting lines for all individuals in the organization. The structure should be conducive to the organization's operations, strategy and future growth. The organization structure should ensure accountability at all levels but not hamper decision making and responsiveness because of excessive layers of management.

The annual operational plan is supposed to be based on strategic plan and include aims and objectives, programs, projects and other activities, and M&E plan. Program planning refers to an organization's ability to design its own programs that are consistent with its mission and core competencies. A feasibility study should be completed when the NGO is considering entering into a new program activity. The feasibility study should evaluate the proposed activity from a community need, competitor, internal capabilities and cost/benefit perspective.

Resources: organizational structure (organizational chart), terms of reference of subdivisions, staff job descriptions, operational plan, M&E plan, internal policies and procedures on decision making process, reports

1.2.1. Organizational structure	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO's organizational structure is outlined in a clear, up-to-date chart.	The NGO does not have an organogram	The NGO has an organogram.	The NGO organogram is up to date	The NGO organogram is complete with all key areas
The organizational structure clarifies lines of authority and responsibility and staff are aware of their place within the organization.	Lines of authority and responsibility of personnel is not defined	The organizational has clarified lines of authority and responsibility and staff are aware of their place within the organization.	The organizational has clarified lines of authority and responsibility and staff support this structure.	The organization has lines of authority and responsibility that reflect participatory process and empower the staff.
The organizational structure is streamlined and maximizes operational efficiency.	The organizational structure does not guarantee efficiency	There are areas of obvious repetition or waste within the organization's structure.	There are no areas of obvious repetition or waste within the organization's structure.	The organization distributes roles and responsibilities to maximize efficiency throughout the year.
The structure of the organization is analyzed and adjusted, when appropriate, as new programs or activities are added.	The organizational structure is not analysed and adjusted	The structure of the organization is analyzed and adjusted as new programs or activities are added about once a year.	The structure of the organization is analyzed and adjusted each time a new program or activity is added.	The structure of the NGO is a key document used for strategic planning and program design as is modified strategically.
The organizational structure ensures that all activities have sufficient oversight and support.	The organisational structure does not provide oversight and support	All projects have managers.	Managers share project reporting with supervisors regularly.	The NGO has a formal reporting process that incorporates project and community feedback into senior management decision making at regular intervals.

1.2.2. Program Planning	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The organization conducts feasibility studies for new program activities	The organization do not conduct feasibility studies for new program activities	The NGO considers the feasibility for new program activities.	The NGO uses feasibility for some program activities.	The NGO uses feasibility for all new program activities.
Staff, community and stakeholder input are incorporated in program design, implementation and monitoring	Staff, community and stakeholders do not participate in program planning	Staff, community and stakeholder input are incorporated in program design, implementation and monitoring to some extent.	Staff, community and stakeholder input are systematically incorporated in program design, implementation and monitoring.	Staff, community and stakeholder input are systematically incorporated in program design, implementation and monitoring including strategic planning.
The NGO has its own monitoring and evaluation system, including M&E for each project as well as other activities	The organization has no M&E system	The NGO has its own system of monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects.	The NGO has its own system of monitoring and evaluation of programs, projects and organization as a whole.	The NGO has its own system of monitoring and evaluation of programs, projects, organization as a whole and external environment.

1.2.3. Operations	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
Organization has administrative procedures and policies in writing	There are no policies and procedures	Organization has administrative procedures and policies in writing	Organization has well formed and complete administrative procedures and policies in writing.	Organization has well formed and complete administrative procedures and policies in writing and practice.
Staff and management follow administrative procedures and policies.	Staff and management do not follow administrative procedures and policies.	Staff and management follow some administrative procedures and policies.	Staff and management follow most administrative procedures and policies.	Staff and management follow all administrative procedures and policies.
Administrative policies and operational procedures are efficient	All administrative policies and operational procedures are not efficient.	Most of administrative policies and operational procedures are not efficient.	Some administrative policies and operational procedures are efficient.	All administrative policies and operational procedures are efficient.
Systems and procedures preventing or minimizing organizational abuse are in place	There are no systems and procedures preventing or minimizing organizational abuse	Systems and procedures preventing or minimizing organizational abuse are in place.	Systems and procedures preventing or minimizing organizational abuse are in place and followed.	Systems and procedures preventing or minimizing organizational abuse are in place and followed and action taken when violations occur.
All key functions and operations have effective oversight and management	All key functions and operations do not have effective oversight and management	Some key functions and operations have effective oversight and management.	Most key functions and operations have effective oversight and management.	All key functions and operations have effective oversight and management.

1.2.4. Decision making and management style	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
Decision making process is clear, transparent, and fair.	Decision making process is spontaneous	Not all decision making processes are clear, transparent, and fair.	All decision making processes are clear, transparent, and fair on paper.	Decision making process is clear, transparent, and fair on paper and in practice.
Decision making is timely and efficient.	Decision making is not timely and not efficient.	When problems occur management is able to solve the problem before it becomes unwieldy.	When problems occur management is able to solve the problem immediately.	Management and staff anticipate problems and work to solve them proactively.
Staff and stakeholders are able to express conflicting or unpopular views within a decision making process.	There is not such possibility	Staff members vouch that they are able to express conflicting or unpopular views within a decision making process.	Management encourages conflicting views.	Management has built in processes to allow staff to express their views.
Management is responsive to conflicts and issues and takes appropriate actions or decisions promptly when required.	Management is not well-timed in reaction to conflicts	Management say they are responsive to conflicts and issues and takes appropriate actions or decisions promptly when required.	Staff says management is responsive to conflicts and issues and takes appropriate actions or decisions promptly when required, and can give examples.	Management have processes in place and allocated resources for resolving conflicts, etc..
Decision making is participatory and there are systems in place to ensure that input from staff and stakeholders is incorporated.	Decision making is not participatory	Management listens to input from their staff and there are incorporate suggestion from stakeholders.	Management has systems in place to enable staff to participate in senior management decisions and regularly survey the needs of stakeholders.	Management have routine systems in place to enable staff to participate in senior management decisions and regularly incorporate results from surveys of the needs of stakeholders into all major decision making.
Management delegates responsibility and empowers staff to complete their tasks effectively.	Responsibilities is not delegated	Job descriptions show that staff has decision making authority.	Staff is also able to demonstrate that they have responsibility to complete their tasks effectively.	Staff and management have equal say in decision making.
Management uses analysis based on data and facts to make decisions	No analysis is carried out to make decisions	Sometimes management uses financial and project data to make decisions.	In most cases management uses financial and project data to make decisions.	Management regularly uses financial and project data to make decisions.

Component: 1. Institutional sustainability
Category: 1.3. Human resources

The cornerstone of every organization is the performance of its employees. All jobs in an organization must interrelate to accomplish the organization's mission and objectives. The human resources function is the management of personnel and employment practices in the areas of individual employment rights, job analysis, performance appraisal, employee satisfaction and recruitment.

Personnel policy should be founded on the organization's values and comply with the main principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Recruiting the volunteers is also important to implement programs and projects of the NGO. Volunteer's work should be well organized and efficient.

Resources: personnel policy and procedures, staff job descriptions, plans of personnel development, guidelines on volunteers, personnel assessment tools.

1.3.1. Human resources policy	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
HR processes are compliant with local laws, documented and understood by staff and stakeholders.	There are no HR procedures	There are examples of HR processes that are compliant with local laws, documented and understood by staff and stakeholders.	There is a full range of HR processes that are compliant with local laws, documented and understood by staff and stakeholders.	There is a full range of HR processes that are compliant with local laws, documented and understood by staff and stakeholders and there are regularly updated and modified to meet high standards.
Job descriptions are documented and updated for each position within the organization.	There are no job descriptions	Job descriptions are documented and updated for each position within the organization.	Job descriptions are documented and updated for each position within the organization, and are consistent among positions.	Job descriptions are documented and updated for each position within the organization, and are reflect maximum efficiency and accountability.
The organization has a policy to prevent nepotism and favouritism	There is no policy	Prevention of nepotism and favouritism is declared and mentioned in policies and procedures	The policy on prevention nepotism and favouritism is documented and applied	The policy on prevention nepotism and favouritism is documented and applied, personnel and management are agree to this issue
Health and safety policy exists, is documented and followed.	There is no policy	Health and safety policy exists, is documented and followed.	Health and safety policy exists, is documented and followed and is complete in its coverage.	Health and safety policy exists, is documented and followed, and is complete and continuously updated for latest needs.
Staff appraisals are equitable and based on performance, standardized criteria and goals.	Staff appraisal is not conducted	The organization has a staff appraisal mechanism.	The organization has a staff appraisal process, and a sheet with criteria for promotion.	The organization has a staff appraisal process that empowers the staff, and a sheet with criteria for promotion that is supported by the staff
The organization provides staff training through formal training, workshops, conferences, self study or mentorship.	There are no staff trainings	The organization provides staff training of some kind.	The organization provides regular staff training on when-needed basis.	The organization provides staff training, encourages self study and mentorship.
Staff skills, capacity and experience are aligned with the organization's program activities, mission statement, and strategic goals.	Staff skills, capacity and experience are not aligned with the organization's program activities	Staff skills, capacity and experience are roughly aligned with the organization's program activities, mission statement, and strategic goals.	Staff skills, capacity and experience are closely monitored to be aligned.	Staff skills, capacity and experience are aligned with the organization's program activities, mission statement, and strategic goals.
Staff turnover is low.	Overall staff turnover is more than 15% per year.	Overall staff turnover is less than 15% per year.	Overall staff turnover is less than 10%.	Overall staff turnover is less than 5%.

1.3.2. Recruiting	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The organization has written recruiting guidelines and procedures that are compliant with local laws and followed by staff.	There are no recruiting guidelines or they are not compliant with local law	The organization has general written recruiting guidelines and procedures that are compliant with local laws.	The organization has general written recruiting guidelines and procedures that are compliant with local laws and followed by staff.	The organization has general written recruiting guidelines and procedures that are compliant with local laws, followed by staff, and constantly revised to stay current.
Recruitment is based on the organization's needs and goals.	Recruitment is not based on the organization's needs and goals.	Recruitment is based on an assessment of the organization's project needs and goals.	Recruitment is based on an assessment of the organization's needs and goals at a whole.	Recruitment is based on an assessment of the organization's needs and goals a whole and based on strategic planning.
Recruiting is transparent and the organization creates a formal job description and qualification statement that is widely disseminated for recruiting purposes	Recruiting is not transparent	The organization has a recruitment process and creates a formal job description and qualification statement that is widely disseminated through the internet and internally.	Recruiting is done through a formal job description and qualification statement that is posted on its website, internet employment sites, etc. with candidates going through a structured interview process.	Recruiting is done through human resources and the organization creates a formal job description and qualification statement that is posted on its website, internet employment sites, etc. with candidates going through a structured interview process.
All applicants are treated the same	All applicants are evaluated using different criteria	All applicants are evaluated using consistent criteria or ratings sheet.	All applicants are evaluated using consistent criteria or ratings sheet, interviewed by a number of people, and asked the same questions.	All applicants are treated the same; going through a formal process with an impartial committee.
Salaries are clearly structured into a transparent salary scale and competitive with the market.	Salary scale is not transparent or is not exist	Salaries are clearly structured into a salary scale and at par with the market.	Salaries are clearly structured into a salary scale and some levels are better than the market.	Salaries are clearly structured into a salary scale and all levels are better than the market.
The organization is able to find and recruit staff with the appropriate skills set.	The organization is not able to find and recruit staff with the appropriate skills set.	The organization is able to find and recruit staff with the appropriate skills set.	The organization is able to find and recruit superior staff with the appropriate skills set.	The organization is able to find, recruit and maintain superior staff with the appropriate skills set.

1.3.3. Volunteer services	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The organization has written policies and procedures to manage recruiting, training, work and supervision of volunteers	There are no policies and procedures	The organization has some procedures and periodically applies their	The organization has and regularly applied the procedures and guidelines on volunteers work.	The organization has written procedures and policies on volunteer's work which is integrated in program activities. This procedures are reviewed and updated on regular base
The organization assesses the needs in volunteers and evaluate their input as a kind of resources	Volunteers input is not assessed and evaluated	The organization recruits volunteers on ad hoc base. Their input is not assessed	The organization has a plan to work with volunteers, can evaluate their contribution as a resource	The organization has a plan to work with volunteers which compliant to operational plan. Volunteer contribution is planed and assessed in the consolidated budget of the organization.

1.3.4. Gender and diversity	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
Human resources policies and procedures address gender sensitivity and diversity issues.	Human resources policies and procedures do not address gender sensitivity and diversity issues.	Human resources policies and procedures address gender sensitivity.	Human resources policies and procedures address gender sensitivity and diversity issues.	Human resources policies and procedures promote gender sensitivity and diversity issues.
The staff and management respect gender and diversity issues through their behaviour and work.	The staff and management do not respect gender and diversity issues through their behaviour and work.	The staff and management respect gender and diversity issues through their behaviour and work.	The staff and management respect and support gender and diversity issues through their behaviour and work.	The staff and management respect and promote gender and diversity issues through their behaviour and work.
Recruitment procedures are non-discriminatory with respect to gender, race, religion, or other diversity.	Recruitment procedures are discriminatory	Recruitment procedures on paper are non-discriminatory with respect to gender, race, religion, or other diversity.	Staffing patterns indicate non-discrimination with respect to gender, race, religion, or other diversity.	Staffing patterns and salary scales are non-discriminatory with respect to gender, race, religion, or other diversity.
The composition of the staff and management reflect gender and other diversity.	The composition of the staff and management do not reflect gender and other diversity.	The composition of the staff and management reflect some gender composition and other diversity.	The composition of the staff and management reflect significant gender composition and significant other diversity.	The composition of the staff and management reflect equal gender and proportionate other diversity.

Component: 2. Advocacy sustainability
Category: 2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization

Advocacy is one of the main activities of any non-governmental organization. Advocacy activities are linked directly with public relations and external communications. Successful advocacy requires the clear vision and following the strategy, as well as involving community and other stakeholders.

Resources: advocacy strategy, presentation kit, advocacy success stories

2.1.1. Advocacy strategy	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The organization has an advocacy strategy/ plan that are compliant with mission and values of the organization	There is no strategy/ plan	Some advocacy activities are planned, in general they correspond with the strategic plan	There is an advocacy plan/ strategy, in general that correspond with the strategic plan	The advocacy plan/ strategy is a component of strategic and operational plan, it is reviewed and updated regularly
The advocacy plan has clear goals, target groups and tools of advocacy	Goals, target groups and advocacy tools are not defined	Advocacy goals are defined roughly	Goals, target groups and advocacy tools are defined in the advocacy plan	Goals, target groups and advocacy tools are clear defined and proved in the advocacy plan
The organization conducts research of external environment to plan and update its advocacy strategy	The organization does not conduct research	The organization conducts research of external environment occasionally or uses other studies to plan advocacy activities	The organization conducts research of external environment on permanent base and uses other studies to plan advocacy activities	The organization conducts research and analytics on permanent base to plan and implement advocacy campaigns, that are confirmed with examples
The organization assesses efficiency and effectiveness of advocacy activities by means of M&E indicators	There are no M&E indicators of the advocacy plan	There are some indicators to evaluate the advocacy activities	The advocacy plan contains a number of M&E indicators, that are applied to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of advocacy activities permanently	The advocacy plan contains a number of M&E indicators that are also included to the general M&E plan. These indicators are applied to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of advocacy activities on permanent base as well as to develop new advocacy activities

2.1.2. Advocacy practices	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The organization allocates adequate trained human resources to implement advocacy activities	There is no staff responsible to advocacy	Some employees are involved to advocacy activities apart from their main job	There is trained staff to implement the advocacy plan, if it is necessary other personnel may be involved	The organization has the special subdivision to implement advocacy activities. Staff of this subdivision and whole organization are trained on a regular base
The organization involves its members, community and stakeholders to participate in advocacy activities	The organization does not involve its members, community and stakeholders	The organization occasionally involves its members, community and stakeholders to participate in advocacy activities	The organization regularly involves its members, community and stakeholders to participate in advocacy activities	The organization permanently involves its members, community and stakeholders to participate in advocacy activities as a part of the external communication strategy
The organization builds partnership/ coalitions/ alliances with other NGOs to conduct common advocacy campaigns	The organization does not participate in partnership/ coalitions/ alliances	The organization has an experience of participation in partnership/ coalitions/ alliances with other NGOs to conduct common advocacy campaigns	The organization regularly participates in partnership/ coalitions/ alliances with other NGOs to conduct common advocacy campaigns	The organization initiates and is in the lead in partnership/ coalitions/ alliances with other NGOs to conduct common advocacy campaigns
The organization applies various tools/ methods of advocacy	Advocacy tools kit is minimal	The organization applies some tools/ methods of advocacy	The organization knows and applies various tools/ methods of advocacy	The organization knows and applies various tools/ methods of advocacy, moreover it develops own innovations
The organization has adequate resources (finance, information, human resources etc.) to successful advocacy activities	The organization has no resources	The organization has short resources to provide advocacy, but it tries to raise resources	The organization evaluates own needs and raises enough amount of different resources to provide advocacy	The organization has special budget line to advocacy activities, incomes are diversified

2.1.3. Community mobilization	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The organization establishes strong relations with community	The organization does not establish relations with community	The organization occasionally communicate with community	The organization permanently communicate with community	The organization permanently communicate with community and is able to demonstrate the results
The organization takes into account the opinion of community during the decision making	The organization does not take into account the opinion of community during the decision making	The organization takes into account the opinion of community during the decision making	The organization has the written policy/ procedures of consultations with community and takes into account the its opinion during the decision making	The organization has the written policy/ procedures of consultations with community and takes into account the its opinion during the decision making; the organization is able to demonstrate the results

Component: 2. Advocacy sustainability
Category: 2.2. External relations

An effective NGO recognizes and responds to the larger context in which it operates and builds collaborative relationships with external organizations. An NGO should strive to become well known and build trusting relationships with its community; establish credibility; and widen its impact through relationships with the government, international networks, and funders.

Resources: external relations strategy/ plan, presentational kit, web-site, publication about the organization

2.2.1. Strategy of external relations	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO has a well defined strategy of external relations that are correspond to strategic plan.	There is no strategy	The NGO plans and implements some external relations that are correspond to strategic plan.	The NGO has a well defined external relations strategy that is part of strategic planning	The NGO has a well defined PR strategy that is part of strategic planning and conducts a number of successful activities to get promoted on the market of services.
The NGO has a well defined media strategy and productive contacts with mass media.	There is no strategy	The NGO has a media strategy on paper and contacts with mass media.	The NGO has a well defined media strategy and productive contacts with mass media.	The NGO has a well defined media strategy and productive contacts with mass media. Mass media people solicit the NGO advice.

2.2.2. Collaboration with governmental authorities	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO has strong relationships with government authorities at the national and local levels	The NGO has no relationships with government authorities at the national and local levels	The NGO has good but irregular relationships with government authorities.	The NGO has good relationships with government authorities.	The NGO has strong relationships with government authorities and can show results.
The NGO participates in policy dialogues with government and advocacy activities when appropriate.	The NGO does not participate in policy dialogues	The NGO occasionally participates in policy dialogues and advocacy activities	The NGO regularly participates in policy dialogues and advocacy activities	The NGO initiate and permanently participates in policy dialogues and advocacy activities
The NGO collaborates with strategic information units	The NGO does not collaborate with strategic information units	The NGO collaborates with strategic information units and uses their data	The NGO collaborates with strategic information units and undertake in the research	The NGO collaborates with strategic information units and provides its expertise

2.2.3. Collaboration with other civil society organisations	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO networks (through common planning, situation analysis, membership in networks and coalitions, including international ones, agreements on cooperation) with other NGOs.	The NGO does not network with other NGOs.	The NGO networks with other NGOs occasionally.	The NGO networks with other NGOs regularly.	The NGO networks with other NGOs routinely and demonstrates results.
The NGO has joint projects with other NGOs, sharing a common budget.	The NGO has no joint projects with other NGOs, sharing a common budget.	The NGO has joint projects with other NGOs.	The NGO has joint projects with other NGOs, sharing a common budget.	The NGO has joint projects with other NGOs, sharing a common budget, and can show results.

2.2.4. Collaboration with international organizations and donors	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO has partnership relationships with international organizations and donors.	There is no partnership	The NGO has partnership relationships with some international organizations and donors.	The NGO built sustained partnership relationships with main international organizations and donors.	The NGO built sustained partnership relationships with main international organizations and donors, moreover it expands the circle of partnership and cooperation
The organization is invited to discuss strategies and initiatives of international organizations	The organization does not participate in discussions	The organization is occasionally invited to discuss strategies and initiatives of international organizations	The organization is regularly invited to discuss strategies and initiatives of international organizations	The organization plays an active role in discussion strategies and initiatives of international organizations

Component: 2. Advocacy sustainability
Category: 2.3. Program activities

Program management is an important aspect throughout all sustainable organizations. Organizations must guide own programs and services to improve them and create a culture of quality. Quality of service refers to an organization's culture and focus on target community satisfaction and understanding the needs of community. Sustainable NGOs must define the community they want to serve and then focus on its needs. NGOs should not take community requirements for granted and therefore must ensure that there are mechanisms to incorporate feedback and respond to changing community needs. Effective NGOs know their communities – how to reach them, how to meet their needs, and how to overcome obstacles to reaching them.

Resources: list of programs/ services, program procedures, reports on client needs

2.3.1. Procedures and standards of program activities	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
Management has defined standards of quality for all operational and program areas that are communicated and upheld by staff.	There is no standards	Management has defined standards of quality for some operational and program areas.	Management has defined standards of quality for some operational and program areas; that are communicated and upheld by staff.	Management has defined standards of quality for all operational and program areas that are communicated and upheld by staff.
The NGO strives to maintain excellence in core technical areas by seeking training and education opportunities for staff and providers.	There are no trainings	The NGO seeks training and education opportunities for staff and providers.	The NGO seeks training and education opportunities for staff and providers using various tools.	The NGO seeks training and education opportunities for staff and providers using various tools that have resulted in better results.
The NGO has a community communication policy/guidelines.	There are no policy/guidelines	The NGO has a community communication policy/guidelines on paper.	The NGO has a community communication policy/guidelines on paper and in place.	The NGO has a community communication policy/guidelines on paper and in place and clients think high of service quality.
The NGO evaluates and monitors its quality of community service through exit surveys and questionnaires.	The NGO does not evaluate and monitors its quality of community service	The NGO evaluates and monitors its quality of community service through exit surveys and questionnaires.	The NGO evaluates and monitors its quality of community service through exit surveys and questionnaires, and incorporates suggestions.	The NGO evaluates and monitors its quality of community service through exit surveys and questionnaires, incorporates suggestions and can show results..

2.3.2. Community focus	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO has defined and knows the characteristics of its target community in terms of income level, gender, special needs, and location.	The NGO does not know the characteristics of its target community	The NGO has defined and knows the characteristics of its target community in terms of income level, gender, special needs, and location in general terms.	The NGO performs studies to define and knows the characteristics of its target community in terms of income level, gender, special needs, and location.	The NGO performs studies to define and knows the characteristics of its target community in terms of income level, gender, special needs, and location and develops new programs for new needs.
The NGO's target group is consistent with its mission statement and strategy.	The NGO's target group is not consistent with its mission statement and strategy.	The NGO's target group roughly reflects with its mission statement and strategy.	The NGO's target group closely mimics its mission statement and strategy.	The NGO's target group is expanding consistently with its mission statement and strategy and can include tangent groups of cuommunity.
The NGO has mechanisms and methods to ensure that it understands and is continuously responsive to target group's needs.	There are no mechanisms and methods	The NGO has mechanisms and methods to ensure that it understands target group's needs.	The NGO has mechanisms and methods to ensure that it understands and is continuously responsive to target groupr's needs.	The NGO has mechanisms and methods to ensure that it understands and is continuously responsive to target group's needs and has significantly improved services..
The NGO has defined strategies to attract and reach its target community group.	There are no strategies	The NGO spontaneously uses various tools to attract and reach its target community group.	The NGO has routine tools to attract, reach and retain its target community group.	The NGO has defined strategies and tools and uses them to attract, reach and expand its target community group base.
The NGO cross-markets service delivery to community using its programs.	Market research is not conducted	The NGO cross-markets service delivery using its programs.	The NGO cross-markets service delivery using its programs, and can show examples of success.	The NGO cross-markets service delivery using its programs, and can show documented results.
The NGO monitors its effectiveness in reaching its target community through exit surveys, new community rates, etc.	The NGO does not monitor program effectiveness	The NGO monitors its effectiveness in reaching its target community through exit surveys, new community rates, etc.	The NGO monitors its effectiveness in reaching its target community through exit surveys, new community rates, etc. and takes action to increase retention.	The NGO monitors its effectiveness in reaching its target community through exit surveys, new community rates, etc. and has successfully increased retention.

Component: 3. Financial sustainability
Category: 3.1. Financial management

An organization's long-term success ultimately depends on the resources it has available and how these resources are managed. Financial resources are scarce and prudent management of financial resources is critical. A disciplined financial management system enhances the credibility, accountability and performance of an organization. An NGO with strong financial management systems will have procedures to ensure accurate budgeting, cash management, and accounting systems to record financial transactions. These procedures will ensure that financial reporting is transparent, comprehensive and frequent.

Financial systems and procedures should be integrated with the strategic goals and implementation plans of an NGO. Systems must meet internal NGO management information requirements as well as those of funders (donors) and stakeholders. NGOs should produce financial reports in the format and frequency requested by funders (donors) and submit to independent audits.

Resources: financial policy and procedures, consolidated budget, financial reports, audit reports

Interview:

- executive director and financial manager
- members of Board

3.1.1. Accounting	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO keeps accurate book keeping records and audit trails, e.g. payments, receipts, banking records, and other documents.	The NGO does not keep accurate book keeping records	The NGO keeps accurate book keeping records and audit trails.	The NGO keeps accurate book keeping records with accounting software.	The NGO keeps accurate book keeping records with accounting software and all key managers trained on software.
The NGO has clear accounting policies that specify all aspects of accounting, reporting, approvals, and payments.	There are no policies	The NGO has clear accounting policies that specify all aspects of accounting, reporting, approvals, and payments.	The NGO has clear accounting policies that specify all aspects of accounting, reporting, approvals, and payments and all are followed.	The NGO has clear accounting policies that specify all aspects of accounting, reporting, approvals, and payments that all employees utilized and has resulted in cost-savings.
The NGO uses an accounting software.	The NGO does not use an accounting software.	The NGO accounting system operates appropriately.	The NGO accounting system operates appropriately and uses an accounting software.	The NGO accounting system operates appropriately and uses an accounting software, integrated in all systems.
The NGO has inventory procedures.	There are no procedures	The NGO has inventory management procedures.	The NGO has computerized inventory management procedures.	The NGO has centralized, computerized inventory management procedures.
The NGO has clear, detailed expense management policies that are consistently followed.	There is no expense management policies	The NGO has clear, detailed expense management policies.	The NGO has clear, detailed expense management policies that are consistently followed.	The NGO has clear, detailed expense management policies that are consistently followed by all staff.
The Board regularly reviews expenses and authorizes large expenditures.	The Board does not review expenses and authorizes large expenditures.	The Board regularly reviews expenses.	The Board regularly reviews expenses and authorizes large expenditures.	The Board and managers regularly reviews expenses and authorizes large expenditures.
The NGO has clear, detailed procurement procedures that are competitive and transparent.	There are no procedures	The NGO has clear, detailed procurement procedures that are competitive and transparent.	The NGO has clear, detailed procurement procedures that are competitive and transparent; and being utilized.	The NGO has clear, detailed procurement procedures that are competitive and transparent; and utilized at all times.

3.1.2. Budgeting	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO prepares a consolidated budget according to its own fiscal year, in addition to separate project budgets.	The NGO does not prepare a consolidated budget	The NGO prepares a consolidated budget according to its own fiscal year, in addition to separate project budgets.	The NGO prepares a consolidated budget according to its own fiscal year, in addition to separate project budgets, and uses it for strategic planning.	The NGO prepares a consolidated budget according to its own fiscal year, in addition to separate project budgets, uses it for strategic planning and can show cost-savings.
The NGO analyzes its budget utilization rate and revises budget projections accordingly to maximize operational efficiency	The NGO does not analyze its budget utilization rate	The NGO analyzes its budget utilization rate and revises budget projections accordingly to maximize operational efficiency.	The NGO analyzes its budget utilization rate and revises budget projections and takes action to maximize operational efficiency.	The NGO analyzes its budget utilization rate and revises budget projections, takes action to maximize operational efficiency, and can show results.
The NGO has budget preparation guidelines that are simple and transparent.	There are no guidelines	The NGO has budget preparation guidelines that are simple and transparent.	The NGO has budget preparation guidelines that are simple and transparent, and in full implementation.	The NGO has budget preparation guidelines that are simple and transparent, in full implementation and monitored for.

3.1.3. Financial reporting	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO prepares audited financial reports that are transparent, accurate and comprehensive.	The NGO does not prepare financial reports	The NGO prepares audited financial reports that are transparent, accurate and comprehensive.	The NGO prepares audited financial reports that are transparent, accurate and comprehensive; and takes corrective actions when necessary.	The NGO prepares audited financial reports that are transparent, accurate and comprehensive; takes corrective actions when necessary, and can show effectiveness.
The NGO conducts internal and external audits.	The NGO does not conduct internal and external audits.	The NGO conducts internal and external audits.	The NGO conducts internal and external audits and takes corrective action to improve systems.	The NGO conducts internal and external audits, takes corrective action and has made improvements that show results.
NGO management uses financial reports to guide strategy and make decisions.	NGO management does not use financial reports to guide strategy and make decisions.	NGO management uses financial reports to guide strategy and make decisions.	NGO management uses financial reports to guide strategy and make decisions on a regular basis.	NGO management uses financial reports to guide strategy and make decisions on a quarterly basis.

Component: 3. Financial sustainability
Category: 3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability

Improving revenue stability and cost recovery rates requires an organization wide effort. Institutional strength and programmatic quality are prerequisites for financial sustainability. An NGO must provide high quality services in order to charge fees, attract loyal community members, secure donor funding and procure Government contracts. Institutional capacity is required to add new services, maintain quality standards, ensure community responsiveness, and manage Government contracts.

Sustainable development is also ensured by bringing in various resources. In this sense, financial resources is the most universal resource that can be used to acquire other resources. However, the effectiveness of attracting resources is largely reliant on the type of resources that an NGO seeks to get from various sources

Resources: fundraising strategy, consolidated budget, presentation kit

3.2.1. Fundraising strategy	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO has a well defined revenue strategy with goals, indicators that is consistent with its mission, strategic plan and community served.	There is no fundraising strategy	The NGO has a well defined revenue stability strategy with goals, indicators that is consistent with its mission, strategic plan and community served.	The NGO has a well defined revenue stability strategy with goals, indicators that is consistent with its mission, strategic plan and community served that is more than donor driven.	The NGO has a well defined revenue stability strategy with goals, indicators that is consistent with its mission, strategic plan and community served that ensured its stability.
The NGO has diversified income stream with either multiple donors, local income sources.	The organisation has income from 1-2 sources	The NGO has diversified income stream (not more than 50% of annual budget from one donor), with either multiple donors, local income sources.	The NGO has diversified income stream (not more than 30% of annual budget from one donor), with either multiple donors, local income sources; and can show results.	The NGO has diversified income stream (not more than 20% of annual budget from one donor), with either multiple donors, local income sources; and is not donor dependant.
The NGO continuously explores new income sources and conducts feasibility studies.	The organization does not have new sources of income	The NGO occasionally explores new income sources and conducts feasibility studies.	The NGO continuously explores new income sources and regularly conducts feasibility studies.	The NGO has new income sources and uses conducts feasibility studies.
The NGO sets total income cost recovery targets and monitors progress.	The NGO does not set total income cost recovery targets and monitors progress.	The NGO sets total income cost recovery targets and monitors progress.	The NGO sets total income cost recovery targets and monitors progress, and takes corrective action.	The NGO sets total income cost recovery targets and monitors progress, takes corrective action and shows results.

3.2.2. Internal system of raising resources	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO allocates required human resources to raise funds.	Nobody is responsible for raising resources	The NGO has several staff members, responsible for fundraising.	The NGO has several staff members, responsible for fundraising, who have relevant assignments.	The NGO has several staff members, responsible for fundraising, who have relevant assignments; the NGO can attract additional human resources to raise funds when necessary.
The NGO staff play a certain role in supporting fundraising activities.	Staff do not participate in fundraising	Several NGO staff members are engaged in fundraising.	Many NGO staff members are engaged in fundraising.	Many NGO staff members are engaged in fundraising, can measure their contribution and give examples.
The NGO staff have adequate fundraising skills, including project design, search for resources, development of contacts, PR and marketing, collaboration with donors.	Staff members are not trained	Several NGO staff members have enough fundraising skills, including project design, search for resources, development of contacts, PR and marketing, collaboration with donors.	Several NGO staff members have enough fundraising skills, including project design, search for resources, development of contacts, PR and marketing, collaboration with donors, other staff have some skills like project design.	Many NGO staff members have enough fundraising skills, including project design, search for resources, development of contacts, PR and marketing, collaboration with donors, other staff have some skills like project design.
The Board participates in fundraising.	The Board does not participate in fundraising.	Fundraising is one of the Board functions.	Board members are involved in fundraising occasionally.	Board members are involved in fundraising regularly, which can be proved with concrete examples.

3.2.3. Diversification of revenues	Nascent (score 0-1)	Emerging (score 1-2)	Expanding (score 2-3)	Mature (score 3-4)
The NGO effectively attracts other local sources of income such as business sponsorships, community fundraising, government and municipal support, individual donation.	The NGO does not attract local sources of income	The NGO has experience of attracting resources from 1-2 local sources, the share of attracted resources from local sources in the budget of the organization does not exceed 5%.	The NGO regularly attracts resources from 1-2 local sources, the share of attracted resources from local sources in the budget of the organization is not less than 10%.	The local sources of income of the NGO are diversified enough, the share of attracted resources from local sources in the budget of the organization is not less than 25%.
The NGO attracts various resources: financial, material, information, professional, and engages volunteers.	The NGO does not attract various resources	The NGO attracts only one type of resources from local sources.	The NGO has experience of attracting not less than three types of resources from local sources.	The NGO regularly attracts various resources from local sources.
The NGO has multiple sources of external financing, e.g. donors, international corporations, foundations, for programs that are consistent with its mission, strategy and community served.	The NGO does not have multiple sources of external financing	The NGO has experience of attracting external financing for programs that are consistent with its mission, strategy and community served.	The NGO has several sources of external financing, e.g. donors, international corporations, foundations, for programs that are consistent with its mission, strategy and community served.	The NGO has multiple sources of external financing, e.g. donors, international corporations, foundations, for programs that are consistent with its mission, strategy and community served.

Appendix 3. Organizational development assessment report of “Estonian Human Rights Center”

Date of assessment: 25.03.2019

Site of assessment: Tallinn, Estonia

Expert’s name: Yurii Radchenko



Indicators and analysis

OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION – 3.14 OUT OF 4

(The score reflects a distinctive level of organizational development: nascent – 0-1; emerging – 1-2; expanding – 2-3; mature – 3-4)

Summary of results:

- Estonian Human Rights Centre (EHRC) is an independent non-governmental human rights advocacy organization. EHRC was founded in December 2009. EHRC has quickly developed to be the most well-known human rights NGO in Estonia;
- The mission of EHRC is to work together for an Estonia that respects the human rights of each person;
- By 2020, Estonian Human Rights Centre is an influential and competent leader of the Estonian non-governmental human rights movement.
- EHRC develops its activities according to the needs of the society. Their current focus is the advancement of equal treatment of minority groups, diversity and inclusion, and the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees. EHRC coordinates the [Estonian Diversity Charter](#). They also monitor the overall human rights situation in Estonia and publish bi-annual independent [human rights reports](#) about the situation in Estonia. They are an [NGO partner for UNHCR](#) (the UN Refugee Agency) in Estonia.

Strengths:

- Estonian Human Rights Center is an institutionally stable organization with a strong team devoted to human rights and freedoms, who promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in Estonia and beyond;
- It has well-established relationships with governmental and intergovernmental bodies;
- Organization has a diversified and sustainable funding stream, which is independent from the State, which creates more opportunities for an alternative view of human rights in Estonia.

Possible improvements:

- Development of an organizational long-term advocacy strategy, which is aligned with the organizational strategic plan, will help to formulate common advocacy agenda and unite the efforts of all stakeholders on the national and international level to bring positive changes in Estonia in terms of human rights;
- Ineffective and weakly involved Board of Estonian Human Rights Center leads to a loss in strategic governance and fundraising of the organization;

- Organization's policies are clearly defined, well written and organized, but they need to be reviewed on a regular basis and need to be taught to the existing staff, and introduced in a full range to the new staff.

Summary of key recommendations:

- **To develop an organizational advocacy strategy;**
- **To update and put in practice an organizational organogram;**
- **To update existing Board composition;**
- **To create an Operational Manual for the organization, which will include all the organizational policies;**
- **To introduce organizational guidelines for budgeting and implementation of a general organizational annual budget, with forecasts and system of rate utilizations.**

Score by components:

	Score
OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION	3.14
1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	3.11
1.1. Governance	3.21
1.1.1. Strategic Governance	2.42
1.1.2. Mission	3.90
1.1.3. Governance Style and Leadership	3.25
1.1.4. Strategic planning	3.25
1.2. Management practices	2.93
1.2.1. Organizational structure	2.60
1.2.2. Program planning	3.17
1.2.3. Operations	2.60
1.2.4. Decision making and management style	3.36
1.3. Human resources	3.19
1.3.1. Human resources policy	2.81
1.3.2. Recruiting	3.08
1.3.3. Volunteer services	3.25
1.3.4. Gender and diversity	3.63
2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY	2.98
2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	2.66

2.1.1. Advocacy strategy	1.63
2.1.2. Advocacy practices	3.10
2.1.3. Community mobilization	3.25
2.2. External relations	3.17
2.2.1. Strategy of external relations	3.00
2.2.2. Collaboration with governmental authorities	3.17
2.2.3. Collaboration with other civil society organizations	3.25
2.2.4. Collaboration with international organizations and donors	3.25
2.3. Program activities	3.10
2.3.1. Procedures and standards of program activities	3.12
2.3.2. Community focus	3.08
3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	3.32
3.1. Financial management	3.21
3.1.1. Accounting	3.29
3.1.2. Budgeting	2.83
3.1.3. Financial reporting	3.50
3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability	3.43
3.2.1. Fundraising strategy	3.80
3.2.2. Internal system of raising resources	3.00
3.2.3. Diversification of revenues	3.50

Analysis by components

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY (3.11 OUT OF 4)

1.1. Governance (3.21 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Estonian Human Rights Center has a supervisory board. These board members are five independent organization's members, which greatly represent the diversity of Estonian civil society. They all have a background in human rights. The Board has a Chairperson. There are also founders of the organization, which have no legislative or executive rights by the Statute;
- At the moment there is a very limited amount of responsibility for the Board members: they approve the annual budget and financial reports. They meet at least once every 3 months. In practice the Board members show little interest in the activities of the NGO. The board's function is briefly mentioned in the Statute, but there is no procedure to assess and regulate the effectiveness of the Board, and there are no instruments to increase Board involvement in the life of the NGO. The executive branch of the organization is usually the initiator of any changes or activities. There is very limited initiative from the Board at the moment. The Board members are not paid for performing their roles. By the Statute they cannot work for the parliament, or be involved in any political party. There is a well-outlined Executive Board of the organization, which is in practice only the Executive Director. This person is elected for 3 years by the Supervisory Council. There are some Board policies which are included in the Statute;
- The roles and responsibilities of the Board are briefly defined, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the senior management. The existing structure of organization avoids overlapping of the functions between the executive and legislative bodies and helps to maximize the efficiency of the operational staff, while maintaining its accountability;
- There is no separate Conflict of Interest Policy, but in practice the organization avoids any incidents;
- Organization regularly conducts strategic planning sessions. As a result there were previously developed long-term strategic plans, which proved its effectiveness; At the moment the organization has an ongoing 4-year Strategic Plan, which is designed until 2020. A set of questionnaires were disseminated online among Estonian citizens to find out the opinion of society about the work of Estonian HRC. The results were incorporated in the strategic planning process. External environment assessment is usually done as well, to assess the political and socio-economic situation and possible risks;
- Organization's mission, vision and values perfectly articulate what the organization is, what it does, and what it aspires to be. Staff, Members and the Board participated in the elaboration of the mission and vision statements, and they follow it in their daily routine. The mission statement is regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to serve the interests of the community and stakeholders and is an accurate reflection of the organization's vision. The organization's strategy and programs are aligned and consistent with the vision and mission. Moreover, the organization has a clearly defined values statement that articulates the beliefs and ethics of the organization;
- Organization follows the Estonian Code of Ethics, which was adopted by the network of civil society organizations;
- Senior management communicates decisions with staff through a so called "open door policy" and receives input from them at all levels. Senior management is accountable and accessible to key stakeholders, and provides them with any relevant information, should they request it. More than two people have the authority to review confidential documents of the organization.

Recommendations:

- **To develop a separate and well-defined Board Policy, which clearly states their roles and responsibilities, highlights the system of their efficiency assessment, and procedures of reassignment, if the Board members do not perform their responsibilities;**
- **To update the existing Board as soon as possible, where newly elected Board members have the qualities and expertise relevant for the organizational development;**
- **To develop a Conflict of Interest Policy for the Board, which will help to avoid situations affecting the organization's reputation.**

1.2. Management practices (2.93 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization doesn't have an organogram. Organizational structure clarifies lines of authorities and responsibilities, and the staff is aware of their roles within the organization. But, in the future, when the organization expands their capacity and hires more staff, there might be areas of obvious repetition of tasks, within the existing organizational structure. All existing projects have managers; intermediate projects reporting is done regularly at a weekly meeting. There is no strict hierarchy within the organization. The bulk of responsibilities, related to day-to-day running of the office is delegated to the Chief Operating Officer. A few employees are missing at the moment to comprehensively fulfil the operational program gaps in the areas of "Equal Treatment Act" and "Data Protection";
- Organization is quite horizontal. Decision making is clear, transparent and fair, timely and efficient. Management is responsive to any conflicts and takes appropriate actions if necessary;
- Staff, community, and stakeholders' input is incorporated in program design, implementation of activities, and monitoring of their efficiency. The organization has monitoring and evaluation systems for separate projects, but there is no general organization Monitoring and Evaluation system as a whole;
- Organization has many administrative procedures and policies in written form and most of them are incorporated in practice, so the staff and management follow them. They are formulated as separate documents, but new employees are not obliged to be familiar with them when starting work for the NGO.

Recommendations:

- **To develop an organizational structure, which is clearly outlined and up-to-date (to develop an organogram);**
- **To develop and implement a general monitoring & evaluation system for the organization as a whole;**
- **To unite organization policies in the joint Operational Manual. To make sure that all staff and management are familiar with it, and that newcomers are familiar with it as well.**

1.3. Human resources (3.19 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has some human resources procedures that are compliant with local laws and understood by staff. Job descriptions are documented and updated for each position within the organization. There is no Policy to Prevent Nepotism and Favouritism though. The organization

has some processes related to staff appraisal, but they are not structured as a unified staff appraisal mechanism. Salaries are usually reviewed on a regular basis. The organization provides staff training, encourages self-study and mentorship. Staff skills, capacity, and experience are closely monitored to be aligned with their responsibilities. Overall staff turnover is less than 10% per year;

- Recruitment process is done through formal job descriptions and qualification statements. Candidates go through a structured interview process. Nevertheless, due to Estonian realities the organization is not always able to find and recruit staff with the appropriate skills set;
- At the moment, only newly arrived employees have job descriptions in their contracts. Otherwise, older staff knows their responsibilities, but they are not defined in written form in their contracts. All employees work full time, additional consultancy related to project implementation is filled by external service contracts;
- Organization promotes gender sensitivity and diversity issues, which are respected by the staff through their behaviour and work. Staffing patterns and salary scales are non-discriminatory with respect to gender, age, race, religion, language proficiency, sexual orientation, and other diversity. Nevertheless, the organization is struggling with the composition of its staff and management, which do not reflect Estonian diversity well enough to be compliant with the organizational mission: Russian-speaking staff is still missing. There is no Code of Conduct in the organization;
- Organization has procedures to manage and supervise volunteers, as well as their work, and some of them are in written form. The organization regularly assesses their needs in volunteers. Organization has worked with volunteers many times; as a result, many volunteers are involved in project implementation at the moment. The new “Human Rights Ambassadors” program has a system with more meaningful involvement of volunteers in the human rights work of the organization. The roles and responsibilities of volunteers are clearly defined and structured.

Recommendations:

- **To develop Policy to Prevent Nepotism and Favouritism;**
- **To design a staff appraisal system, which includes sheet with clearly-defined criteria for promotion;**
- **To develop a plan to work with volunteers which is compliant with the general operational plan, rather than to only one project;**
- **To developed and apply the Code of Conduct for the organization.**

2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY (2.98 OUT OF 4)

2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization (2.66 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no joint advocacy strategy that is compliant with its mission and vision, and articulates its strategic plan. The organization had some separate advocacy plans (e.g. for Equal Treatment Act, which has had clear goals, defined target groups, and tools of advocacy). At the same time, the organization does not conduct research on the external environment to plan and update its advocacy strategy. Advocacy is done separately on each strategic case that is followed by the NGO;
- Organization does not allocate adequate human resources to implement advocacy activities. The organization knows and applies various tools/methods of advocacy, but still doesn't have enough resources (financial, information, human resources) for successful advocacy activities.

The organization occasionally involves its community and stakeholders to participate in its advocacy activities;

- Organization permanently communicates with the community (which is hard to define for an NGO working on general human rights issues), there are some existing procedures to regularly get feedback from the community within Estonia and to take into account its opinion during decision making process.

Recommendations:

- **To develop a unified Advocacy plan for the organization, which is coherent with its Strategic Plan. The advocacy plan should have separate directions which are interlinked with the strategic goals of the organization;**
- **To conduct research of the external environment on a permanent basis to design advocacy strategy and to plan future advocacy campaigns. To include a number of Monitoring and Evaluation indicators into advocacy strategy for efficient evaluation of its success;**
- **To train existing staff on a regular basis on advocacy tools and methods. To involve the Estonian community more widely for the implementation of organization advocacy activities on the volunteer basis. Try to separate a special budget line for advocacy activities with diversified incomes.**

2.2. External relations (3.17 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has a defined strategy and clear understating of its external relations. There is a separate person responsible for public relations who updates the communication strategy on a regular basis. At the same time, there are no well-established stable contacts with media, they are rather based on interpersonal contacts;
- Organization has strong relations with government officials, which are also based on personal contacts. The organization participates in the policy dialogues with government officials, and also collaborates with governmental strategic information units;
- Organization networks with other NGOs, and previously has had joint projects with them, even sharing a common budget. There are some Human Rights NGOs in Estonia which are dependent on governmental funds and/or conservative, so the organization is avoiding any cooperation with them;
- Organization has sustainable partnership relations with the main international organizations and donors and is regularly invited to discuss joint strategies of these international organizations. Nevertheless, the involvement with UN bodies is rather weak.

Recommendations:

- **To develop a well-defined media strategy (as a part of a communication strategy) and establish productive contacts with media, so that they solicit the NGO's advice on human rights related issues;**
- **To strengthen the involvement with UN bodies and other international human rights mechanisms.**

2.3. Program activities (3.10 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Management of the organization has clearly defined standards of quality for some operational program areas and it evaluates and monitors the quality of community services. The organization seeks training and educational opportunities for the staff and provides different tools that help to increase efficiency of the employees;
- Organization doesn't know the characteristics of its community in terms of income level, gender, special needs, and location, etc. No specific assessment has been done for that, as there is hardly a defined target audience for a general human rights organization. But still there was some assessment of the organization's work within the Estonian society, which has been done by collecting data with a questionnaire disseminated among beneficiaries.

Recommendations:

- **To develop the system of exit surveys and questionnaires for the beneficiaries to evaluate the quality of organizational work;**
- **To include a system of monitoring of the characteristics of the target group and their needs.**

3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (3.32 OUT OF 4)

3.1. Financial management (3.21 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- There is an external company which does all the accounting for the Estonian Human Rights Center. Chief Operating Officer is responsible for the supervision of internal financing. The organization has a clear accounting system, procurements procedures, and detailed expense management. The board can review the expenses if they want to. There are no inventory procedures. Procurement is done mostly within the framework of separate projects;
- CEO is responsible for preparation of annual budgets and reporting. Organization prepares separate budgets for projects, but does not consolidate the budget according to their own fiscal year. The organization partly analyses its utilizations rates, which would help to maximize operational efficiency. Organization doesn't have clear budget preparation guidelines. The CEO had some financial training on budget preparations;
- Organization prepares financial reports, that are transparent, accurate and comprehensive. The organization conducts external projects audits; general organizational audits on an annual basis. The organization partly uses financial reports to guide their future strategies and/or to make decisions.

Recommendations:

- **To develop a Procurement Policy and inventory procedures. To appoint a procurement officer, when possible;**
- **To deliberate the necessity of annual consolidated budgets, with clearly established system of utilization rates. To analyse them, which will help to revise budget projections accordingly to maximize operational efficiency;**

- **To develop simple budget preparation guidelines which are easily accessible for the staff involved in fundraising and to the Board.**

3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability (3.43 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has a well-defined fundraising strategy, which is regularly reviewed. It sets total income cost recovery targets. The organization has a diversified fund stream, and it continues to explore new income sources;
- Organization has several resources of external financing for the programs that are consistent with its mission and vision. Moreover, the organization efficiently attracts resources from the local sources of income;
- Most of the staff is involved in fundraising, in the areas relevant to their program direction, but the Board doesn't participate in fundraising at all. Staff still hasn't obtained adequate fundraising skills, including project design, search for resources, etc.

Recommendations:

- **To conduct training on fundraising for the staff, which would be necessary to meaningfully involve more individuals into the process of resources attraction. Add “fundraising” in the job descriptions for the staff, so they would be aware about shared responsibility and the importance of this task for organizational sustainability.**

Appendix 4. Organizational development assessment report of “EHPV - Estonian Network of People living with HIV

Date of assessment: 1.04.2019

Site of assessment: Tallinn, Estonia

Expert's name: Yurii Radchenko



**Estonian Network of
People Living with HIV**

Indicators and analysis

OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION - 1.23 OUT OF 4

(The score reflects a distinctive level of organizational development: nascent – 0-1; emerging – 1-2; expanding – 2-3; mature – 3-4)

Summary of results:

- Estonian Network of People Living with HIV (EHPV) is a union of people living with HIV (PLHIV) organizations, an inspiring and developing resource in promoting communities of people living with HIV as leaders, as well as equal and professional partners responsible for overcoming the HIV/AIDS epidemic at the level of countries and the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
- The organization works to increase timely, comprehensive and quality treatment, care and support for adults and children living with HIV in EECA countries through effective partnership and active advocacy efforts with the PLHIV community;
- Organization promotes best practices and initiatives, implements international declarations and actively participates in the formation of policies that are in the interests of PLHIV;
- NGO strengthens the capacity of PLHIV communities by providing technical, financial and political support;
- Organization was established earlier in 2005. With a long period of the development, and difficulties faced due to inability of funding and rather high staff turnover – it was not able to obtain sustainability which might have led to a comprehensive development for its institutional, advocacy and financial capacity. Currently the organization is missing major policy and procedures which are vital for the new level of its development.

Strengths:

- Organization has a group of devoted people representing community of people living with HIV themselves, they are well aware of the problems and needs of this community;
- Organization has strong external relations with local authorities, national level private sector organizations, international networks and foundations, multilevel stakeholders and donors. All these connections were arranged by the Head of the Board, who is currently the acting Executive Director.

Possible Improvements:

- The weak Board of Directors, and absence of a clear division of responsibilities between the Board and senior management, leads to insufficient governance and management which slows down organizational development process;
- Organization is dependent on one individual leading the Board and staff. Should this individual leave, the network as a whole could disappear;
- Organization is operating at “crisis-management mode” within the span of its existence, and has to start immediately to operate strategically, by developing its long-term strategies;
- Most of the policies and procedures are not working or non-existent resulting in chaos in understanding amidst the staff, overall operational weaknesses and lack of clear steps to be taken in certain work-related situations;
- Fundraising is erratic, executed mostly as “crisis-fundraising”. Strategy, as well as responsible for the fundraising staff, are missing.

Score by components:

	Score
OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION	1.23
1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	1.19
1.1. Governance	1.03
1.1.1. Strategic Governance	0.42
1.1.2. Mission	1.70
1.1.3. Governance Style and Leadership	1.67
1.1.4. Strategic planning	0.33
1.2. Management practices	1.08
1.2.1. Organizational structure	0.90
1.2.2. Program planning	0.83
1.2.3. Operations	1.10
1.2.4. Decision making and management style	1.50
1.3. Human resources	1.48
1.3.1. Human resources policy	1.63
1.3.2. Recruiting	0.66
1.3.3. Volunteer services	0.75
1.3.4. Gender and diversity	2.88
2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY	1.30
2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	1.01
2.1.1. Advocacy strategy	0.88

2.1.2. Advocacy practices	0.90
2.1.3. Community mobilization	1.25
2.2. External relations	1.94
2.2.1. Strategy of external relations	0.25
2.2.2. Collaboration with governmental authorities	2.00
2.2.3. Collaboration with other civil society organizations	2.75
2.2.4. Collaboration with international organizations and donors	2.75
2.3. Program activities	0.96
2.3.1. Procedures and standards of program activities	1.00
2.3.2. Community focus	0.92
3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	1.21
3.1. Financial management	1.52
3.1.1. Accounting	2.57
3.1.2. Budgeting	0.17
3.1.3. Financial reporting	1.83
3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability	0.89
3.2.1. Fundraising strategy	0.63
3.2.2. Internal system of raising resources	1.38
3.2.3. Diversification of revenues	0.67

Analysis by components

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY (1.19 out of 4)

1.1. Governance (1.03 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organizations Board of Directors consists of 4 devoted members of PLHIV community. The Board is composed of members who are following organization's mission and vision. The Board is ineffective due to low engagement of members and no clear division of power between the Board and management. The Board doesn't meet on regular basis, and the members do not understand their roles and do not carry their functions;
- NGO has mission, vision and values statements that have been reviewed and understood by senior management, however existing programs are not fully relevant to the mission and vision of the organization. Therefore, there is a need to update the mission, vision and values of the organization;
- The leadership style of senior management is rather easy reachable. But the leadership is still concentrated in the hands of one individual;
- The organization has conducted the strategic planning process several times. Once it was conducted for the project needs within the consortia of organizations in region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, but the process was not finalized, and the long-term strategic plan of the organization itself has not been finalized resulting in the organization is working rather spontaneously (project-wise) than strategically.

Recommendations:

- **To develop a Board Policy with clearly defined the composition of the Board (number of members), their roles, election process and rotation period. Indicate the clear division of responsibility and influence between the Board and Senior Management;**
- **The roles of the Board and Senior Management should be defined on paper, that will allow organization in the future to avoid overlapping of functions and help to come up with decisions quickly and efficiently. This will ensure Senior Management is accountable to the Board, and that Senior Management solicits inputs from all the levels before making decisions, through a regular system of feedback;**
- **To include the Conflict of Interest Policy for the Board, to avoid presence of family members, partners or friends in the Board. Make sure that Board members are also not full-time or part-time employees of the NGO;**
- **To conduct a strategic planning meeting, where a plan will be formulated for at least 2-3 years' period, as well as an operational plan that will be based on participatory approaches involving both senior leadership and staff. The strategic plan should include the analysis on internal and external factors, and incorporate community needs. Senior management will have to disseminate the results of the strategic planning process with staff and stakeholders, by incorporating opportunities for feedback and making changes if necessary.**

1.2. Management practices (1.08 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organizational structure is not clearly outlined, which leads to obvious overlapping of responsibilities. There is an outdated organogram, and it is not applicable for the organization at this stage of its development. Nevertheless, intuitively the structure of organization is analyzed and adjusted each time when a new program or activity is added;
- Organization does not conduct feasibility studies for new program activities. However, staff, community and stakeholders input are incorporated in program design, implementation and monitoring to limited extent;
- NGO has no unified monitoring & evaluation system;
- Organization has few administrative procedures and policies in writing, thus it's hard to track oral agreements with management, and difficult to evaluate if those agreements are efficient or not. There is no system preventing or minimizing organizational abuse of power. Just some key functions and operations have efficient oversight and management;
- All decision-making processes are clear, transparent and fair, however not many of them are fixed on paper. When a problem occurs, management is able so solve the problem immediately. Management has built its processes to allow everyone to express their views, and everyone has equal "say" in decision making.

Recommendations:

- **To update or develop new organization organogram, where all key areas are included and the system might be applicable for the future development of NGO (new staff members, new roles);**
- **To develop and implement system of monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects for organization as a whole;**
- **To develop comprehensive Operational Manual, which will include administrative procedures and policies in writing (e.g. Ethic Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Human Resources Policy, etc.) many of such policies can be found online and shall be just adapted to "EHPV" needs. To approve previously drafted documents at the next General Assembly meeting.**

1.3. Human resources (1.48 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- There are some human resources procedures, but not in written form, there are job descriptions for consultants, but there are no policies to prevent nepotism and favoritism. Presently, staff appraisal system is non-existent, but needs to be established. Staff skills, capacity and experience are vaguely aligned with the organizations program activities. The organization provides opportunities for trainings, encourage self-study and mentorship for the staff. Overall staff turnover is quite high, due to financial instability of the organizational;
- Organization has no written recruiting guidelines and procedures. At the moment new staff is recruited by the responsible managers, and later on approved by the Head of the Board. But

the system is not clearly outlined in the written form, and there are no clear criteria for the new applicants to be hired. Hiring practices are not transparent and there is no assurance that applicants share the values of NGO. Salaries scale in written does not exist;

- Organization has some procedures to manage and work with volunteers, but they are rather situational than systematic. There is an agreement with labor exchange on volunteers' involvement in NGO work, but the organization has no plan to work with volunteers, and cannot evaluate their contribution as a resource, and therefore the number of new volunteers joining the organization is quite small;
- Organization's staff respects gender and diversity issues through their behavior and work. The composition of the staff and management reflects significant gender composition and other diversity, however there is no specific written policy on gender and other diversity inclusion.

Recommendations:

- **To develop human resources policies which are compliant with local laws, documented and understood by staff and stakeholders;**
- **To document job descriptions for each position within organization;**
- **To design a Policy to Prevent Nepotism and Favouritism;**
- **To create a staff appraisal system, which can empower the staff;**
- **To draft written recruiting guidelines and procedures that are compliant with local laws and followed by staff;**
- **To design policy and aligning procedures to work with volunteers (finalize and approve with General Assembly a document which has been previously drafted);**
- **To develop plan on work with volunteers which will be compliant with operational plan. To plan and assess volunteers' contribution in the consolidated organization budget.**

2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY (1.30 OUT OF 4)

2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization (1.01 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no advocacy strategy, which sets clear advocacy goals, based on research of external environment. Organization doesn't assess efficiency of advocacy activities. There was a joint advocacy strategy for a consortia uniting different vulnerable to HIV groups, but no separate strategy for the NGO;
- Few employees are involved in the advocacy activities as a part of their main job, organization occasionally involves community and stakeholders to participate in its advocacy activities. Organization regularly participates in partnership/coalitions/alliances with other NGOs to conduct common advocacy campaigns – this is one of organization's strength. Organization knows and applies some tools/methods of advocacy, but they are not diverse enough and not all applicable for Estonian realities. Organization has limited resources to implement efficiently advocacy activities, but it tries to increase them;
- Organization permanently communicates with its community. It has its own channels for communication (private Facebook group, and some community-mobilization events), but there is no clear procedure of consultations with community, so that its opinion would be taken into account during the decision making.

Recommendations:

- **To develop organization’s advocacy strategy, that is compliant with mission, vision and values of organization. Advocacy strategy has its clear goals, target groups and tools of advocacy, based on research and analytics of internal and external factors;**
- **To raise and/or allocate enough resources (finance, information, human) to successful advocacy activities which are diversified and applicable for Estonian realities. Permanently involve members, community and stakeholders to participate in advocacy activities. To create a separate subdivision to implement advocacy activities with specially trained staff;**
- **To develop written policy and procedures of consultations with community so that its opinion would be taken into account during decision making.**

2.2. External relations (1.94 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no well-defined strategy of external relations; just some activities of external relations are implemented intuitively, and they do not correspond to the strategic plan of organization. There is also no media strategy and rather erratic than sustainable contacts with media;
- Organization has good, but irregular relations with governmental authorities, so it occasionally participates in policy dialogues and advocacy activities, but does not regularly collaborate with strategic information units and uses their data. The main obstacle at the moment in communication with government authorities – the Institute for Public Health which is responsible for health programs in Estonia and is not supportive of “EHPV” work;
- Collaboration with other NGOs is strong and demonstrates its results. Organization had joint projects with other NGOs, sharing a common budget, but not at the moment;
- Organization has partnership relations with some international organizations and donors, but hasn’t built sustained partnership with main international organizations, e.g. UN bodies and donors, and has no intentions for that. However, due to a good reputation and valuable connections, organization is permanently invited to discuss strategies and initiatives of international organizations.

Recommendations:

- **To develop well-defined and well-thought external communication strategy and media strategy which are interconnected. Arrange productive contacts with media, and to make sure that media people solicit the NGO advice;**
- **To establish strong and sustainable relations with governmental authorities by making agreements on cooperation, arranging regular meetings with defined periodicity;**
- **To expand organization’s partnership with main international organizations, to play an active role on the discussion strategies and initiatives of these international organizations.**

2.3. Program activities (0.96 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no standards of quality for operational and program areas, they are not clearly defined. Organization does some evaluation of its activities, but not regularly and not in standardized way. There are no community communication guidelines. Organization seeks training and education opportunities for staff and provides them by using various tools;
- Organization has no defined characteristics of its target group, as there is no comprehensive data on income level, gender, special needs, location, which would allow to sensitize and reprioritize its strategies. Organization has some mechanisms and methods to ensure that it understands target group needs (e.g. Facebook page and website), but its efficiency is questionable. Organization spontaneously uses various tools to attract and reach its target audience, and it does not monitor effectiveness in reaching out its target group through exit surveys, new community rates, etc.

Recommendations:

- **To develop defined standards of quality for all operational and program areas that are communicated and upheld by staff;**
- **To develop community communication policy/guidelines on paper, which can prove its efficiency;**
- **To conduct regularly exit surveys and questionnaires to evaluate the quality of organization's activities, and incorporate results and suggestions in the future program planning;**
- **To conduct a comprehensive study to define characteristics of organization's target group in terms of income, language, location, special needs, sexual orientation and gender identity, to help develop new programs.**

3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (1.21 OUT OF 4)

3.1. Financial management (1.52 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has a well established financial system, but there is no overview of the expenses due to the fact that Board is not separated from the Senior Management of NGO, and there are no expenses management policies;
- There are separate project budgets, but organization does not prepare a consolidated budget according to its own fiscal year, in addition to separate project budgets. Therefore, there is no analysis of utilization rates and no budget revision, to maximize operational efficiency;
- Organization has no budget preparation guidelines that are simple and transparent;
- Organization prepares financial project reports, which are transparent, accurate and comprehensive. The last year's financial report hasn't been published on the organization's website and organization doesn't prepare program annual reports. Organization had external project audit, but it's not conducted on the annual basis. Financial reports are not used to guide strategies and maintain decisions.

Recommendations:

- **When the independent Board is established, its members should regularly review expenses and authorize large expenditures;**
- **For the future, it will be crucial to develop budget preparation guidelines, and prepare consolidated annual budget for the organization on the regular basis;**
- **To conduct annual financial external audit for all excising projects, and publish them on organization's website. Transparency is crucial for non-governmental organization, to build the trust with the community.**

3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability (0.89 out of 4)**Conclusions:**

- Organization has no fundraising strategy. Fundraising process is rather spontaneous. Organization has income from limited number of sources, and does not explore new opportunities, it also does not conduct feasibility analysis. Organization does not set total income cost recovery targets and does not monitor the progress;
- Organization doesn't allocate required human resources to raise funds. Several staff members are responsible for fundraising if they have relevant assignments, not many staff have adequate fundraising skills;
- The organization partially attracts local sources of income, such as governmental support. Organization has just few sources of external financing, e.g. donors and foundations, for programs that are consistent with its mission and strategy.

Recommendations:

- **To develop organization long-term fundraising strategy, which will set the goal to diversify and increase income source;**
- **To conduct fundraising training for the staff and the Board, to define roles of each person in this process. When possible to hire a professional fundraiser for NGO;**
- **To maintain the process of fundraising with private sector/business and diversify revenues, by attracting different resources (not only financial): material, informational, professional or volunteers input.**

Appendix 5. Organizational development assessment report of “Women’s Rights Initiative”

Date of assessment: 2.04.2018

Site of assessment: Tallinn, Estonia

Expert’s name: Yurii Radchenko

Indicators and analysis

OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION – 1.78 OUT OF 4.

(The score reflects a distinctive level of organizational development: nascent – 0-1; emerging – 1-2; expanding – 2-3; mature – 3-4)

Summary of results:

- Organization is an independent feminist NGO in Estonia. They are interested in an intersectional perspective and have a soft spot for queer issues. They like different feminist voices to be heard and offer a platform for feminist writers in Estonia and abroad, representing a variety of perspectives. Organization arranges feminist creative writing workshops.
- Organization was established in 2015, so its “newbie” period (first 2-3 year of existence) has already finished and it is time to build the organizational capacity to obtain sustainability in long-term run.
- Lack of developed and fixed on-paper policies can significantly influence the future development of NGO and threaten, not only its sustainability, but also existence. Everything rests at the moment on close friendship, trust and cooperation among existing organizations members. However, when new funding appears, and new people join the team, all the procedures have to be clearly stated to secure efficiency of established processes.

Strengths:

- Organization has a solid team of like-minded people. The unity is really strong. All people share same values and respect diversity;
- Organization is very vertical, which helps with decision making most of the time;
- Organization has well-established volunteers/supports network, and it’s growing;
- Organization has strong ties with other civil society organizations in Estonia and internationally.

Summary of key recommendations:

- To develop organizational long-term strategic plan;
- To develop organizational Manual, which would include Code of Conduct, Ethic Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Human Resources Policy, Procurements and Accounting procedures, etc.;
- To develop organizational statute which would clearly indicate the roles and responsibilities of the Board;
- To develop organizational organogram, and establish different departments to obtain programs efficiency;
- To develop organizational Monitoring and Evaluation system;
- To develop organization's fundraising strategy and diversify sources of income.

Score by components:

	Score
OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION	1.78
1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	1.49
1.1. Governance	1.32
1.1.1. Strategic Governance	1.00
1.1.2. Mission	1.60
1.1.3. Governance Style and Leadership	2.16
1.1.4. Strategic planning	0.50
1.2. Management practices	1.32
1.2.1. Organizational structure	0.80
1.2.2. Program planning	0.50
1.2.3. Operations	0.70
1.2.4. Decision making and management style	3.29
1.3. Human resources	1.85
1.3.1. Human resources policy	1.31
1.3.2. Recruiting	0.50
1.3.3. Volunteer services	2.00
1.3.4. Gender and diversity	3.60
2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY	1.64
2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	1.47
2.1.1. Advocacy strategy	0.20

2.1.2. Advocacy practices	2.20
2.1.3. Community mobilization	2.00
2.2. External relations	2.06
2.2.1. Strategy of external relations	0.75
2.2.2. Collaboration with governmental authorities	2.00
2.2.3. Collaboration with other civil society organizations	3.50
2.2.4. Collaboration with international organizations and donors	2.00
2.3. Program activities	1.40
2.3.1. Procedures and standards of program activities	1.63
2.3.2. Community focus	1.17
3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	2.21
3.1. Financial management	2.03
3.1.1. Accounting	2.93
3.1.2. Budgeting	0.67
3.1.3. Financial reporting	2.50
3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability	2.38
3.2.1. Fundraising strategy	0.63
3.2.2. Internal system of raising resources	1.12
3.2.3. Diversification of revenues	2.05

Analysis by components

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY (1.49 OUT OF 4)

1.1. Governance (1.32 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has an Advisory Board, which does not meet on a regularly basis. Advisory Board is comprised of effective leaders. Board understands roles and carries some level of task performance, but Board members do not execute their functions fully (such as fundraising, or strategic litigation, building relationships with donors or other stakeholders);
- There is no regulation (policy) regarding the Board, which would define their roles, election procedures, period of rotation, definition of their tasks. There is no clear division of power between the Board and organizational managements, which would guarantee the efficiency of both branches;
- Organization has its mission and vision statements, which were reviewed only once. Unfortunately, mission and vision are not publicly visible on website;
- Nevertheless, organization has some kind of strategy that directly coincides with mission/vision. But not all management and/or organization's allies can articulate mission and vision;
- There is no clearly defined values statement of organization;
- Governance style and leadership in organization is very equal, the organization can be classified with horizontal power division. But all decisions are taken rather intuitively, based on trust and good relationship between staff, and are not regulated at all. Power is concentrated in hands of 1-2 persons, which might negatively affect NGO in its future development process;
- Organization does not conduct regular strategic planning meetings to develop long-term strategy, and interrelated operation plans.

Recommendations:

- **To develop a Board Policy which would clearly define the composition of the Board (number of members), their roles, election process and rotation period. To define the clear division of responsibility and influence between the Board and staff;**
- **To include the conflict of interest policy for the Board, to avoid presence of family members, partners or friends in the Board. Make sure that Board members are also not full-time and partly involved as a staff;**
- **The roles of the Board and Senior Management should be fixed on paper. That will allow organization in the future to avoid overlap of functions, and help to come up with efficient decisions more quickly. Make sure that Senior Management is accountable to the Board, and that Senior Management solicits inputs from all levels before taking decision through a regular system of feedback;**
- **To update mission and vision statements together with organization's Board, staff, allies and volunteers, so that it perfectly articulates what the organization is, what it**

does, and what it aspires to be. To develop clear value statement that articulates the beliefs and ethics of the organization, and make sure that staff can articulate it. Publish mission, vision and values statements on Women's Rights Initiative website in the part "About us" as well as on Facebook page;

- **To conduct Strategic Planning meeting, where a long-term strategic plan for 2-3 years will be formulated, and supporting operational plan that will be based on participatory approaches involving both senior leadership and staff. The strategic plan should include the analysis on internal and external factors, and incorporate community feedback and community needs assessment. Senior management will have to disseminate the results of the strategic planning process to staff and stakeholders, incorporating opportunities for feedback and making changes when necessary.**

1.2. Management practices (1.32 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organizational structure is not clearly outlined, which leads to obvious overlapping of responsibilities. Nevertheless, intuitively the structure of organization is analysed and adjusted each time a new program or activity is added;
- Organization does not conduct feasibility studies for new program activities. However, staff, community and stakeholders' inputs are incorporated in program design, implementation and monitoring to some extent;
- NGO has no comprehensive Monitoring & Evaluation system;
- Organization has just some administrative procedures and policies fixed on paper, which makes it difficult to understand due to oral agreements made by management. It's hard to evaluate whether those agreements are efficient or not. There is no system preventing or minimizing organizational abuse, just some key functions and operations have efficient oversight and management;
- All decision-making processes are clear, transparent, and fair. When problem occurs, management is able to solve the problem immediately. Management has built its processes to allow everyone to express their views, and everyone has equal opportunities in decision making processes.

Recommendations:

- **To develop organization's organogram, where all key areas are included and the structure is relevant to the future development of the NGO (new staff members, new roles);**
- **To develop and implement comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation of programs, projects, organization as a whole;**
- **To develop comprehensive Operational Manual, which will include administrative procedures and policies in writing (e.g. Ethic Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Human Resources Policy, etc.). Many of such policies can be found online and shall be just adapted to Women's Rights Initiative needs.**

1.3. Human resources (1.85 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- As organization is quite new, there are no human resources procedures, there are no job descriptions, and there are no policies to prevent nepotism and favouritism. For now, staff appraisal system is not relevant, but has to be established in the future. Staff skills, capacity and experience are aligned with the organizations program activities, and organization provides opportunities for trainings, encourages self-study and mentorship. Overall staff turnover is low, but it's the beginning of organization lifespan, and there can be changes in the near future;
- Organization has no recruiting guidelines or procedures. Therefore, any recruiting process in the future might be not transparent, and there is no assurance that all applicants can be vetted the same, especially if they are not sharing values of NGO. Salaries scale does not exist;
- Organization has some procedures to manage and work with volunteers, but they are more intentional than systematic. The organization has a plan to work with volunteers, and can evaluate their contribution as a resource;
- Organization's staff respects gender and diversity issues through their behaviour and work. The composition of the staff and management reflects significant gender composition and other diversity.

Recommendations:

- **To develop Human Resources Policies which are compliant with local laws, documented and understood by staff and stakeholders;**
- **To document job descriptions for each position within organization;**
- **To design a Policy to Prevent Nepotism and Favouritism;**
- **To create the staff appraisal system, which can empower the staff;**
- **To draft written recruiting guidelines and procedures that are compliant with local laws and followed by staff;**
- **To design policy and aligning procedures to work with volunteers;**
- **To develop plan to work with volunteers which will be compliant with general operation's operational plan. Plan and assess volunteers' contribution in the consolidated organization budget.**

2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY (1.64 OUT OF 4)

2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization (1.47 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no advocacy strategy, which sets clear advocacy goals, based on research of external environment. Organization doesn't assess efficiency of its advocacy activities;
- Some employees are involved in advocacy activities within their main duties, and organization occasionally involves community and stakeholders to participate in its advocacy activities. Organization regularly participates in partnership/coalitions/alliances with other NGOs to conduct common advocacy campaigns. At the same time, organization knows and applies some tools/methods of advocacy, but they are not diverse enough and not all applicable for Estonian realities. Organization has short resources to provide advocacy, but it tries to raise them;

- Organization effectively communicates with its community. It also has its own channels for communication. But there is no clear procedure of consultation with community, so that its opinion would be taken into account during the decision-making process

Recommendations:

- **To develop organization's advocacy strategy, that is compliant with mission, vision and values of organization. Advocacy strategy has its clear goals, target groups and tools of advocacy, based on research and analysis of internal and external factors;**
- **To raise and/or allocate enough resources (finance, information, human) for successful advocacy activities which have to be diversified and applicable for Estonian realities. Permanently involve members, community and stakeholders to participate in advocacy activities. To create a special subdivision to implement advocacy activities with previously trained staff;**
- **To develop written policy/procedures of consultations with community so that its opinion would be taken into account during decision-making process.**

2.2. External relations (2.06 out of 4)

Conclusions

- Organization has no well-defined strategy of external relations, some plans of external relations are implemented intuitively, and they do not correspond to general organizational strategies. There is also no media strategy and sporadic, rather than sustainable, contacts with media;
- Organization has good, but irregular relationships with governmental authorities. Organization occasionally participates in policy dialogues and advocacy activities. Organization sometimes, but not regularly, collaborates with strategic information units in Estonia and uses their data.
- Collaboration with other NGOs is strong and demonstrates its results. Organization has planned joint projects with other NGOs, sharing a common budget;
- Organization has partnership relations with some international organizations and donors, but hasn't built sustained partnership with main international organization, e.g. UN agencies and related donors, and has no intentions for that. Organization is occasionally invited to discuss strategies and new initiatives of international organizations.

Recommendations:

- **To develop well-defined and well-thought external communications strategy and media strategy which are interconnected. To establish long-term contacts with media, to make sure that media outlets solicit the NGO advice;**
- **To establish strong and sustainable relationships with governmental authorities (make agreements on cooperation, arrange regular meetings with clearly defined periodicity). To participate, but most importantly, initiate policy dialogue, where organization can share their own strategic data and receive most up-to-date governmental data and statistics;**
- **To expand organization's partnership with main international organizations, and to play an active role during their strategies discussion.**

2.3. Program activities (1.4 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has standards of quality just for some operational and program areas, but they are not clearly defined. Organization does some evaluation of its activities, but not regularly and not in standardized way. There are no community communication guidelines. Organization seeks training and education opportunities for staff by using various tools;
- Organization has defined characteristics of its target group, but there is no comprehensive data on income level, gender, special needs or location, which would allow the organization to sensitize and reprioritize its strategies. Organization has some mechanisms and methods to ensure that it understands target group needs (like Facebook page and website analytics) but its efficiency is questionable. Organization intermittently uses various tools to attract and reach its target audience, but it does not monitor effectiveness in reaching its target group through exit surveys, new community rates, etc.

Recommendations:

- **To develop defined standards of quality for all operational and program areas that are communicated and upheld by staff;**
- **To develop community communication policy/guidelines on paper, which can prove its efficiency;**
- **To regularly conduct exit surveys to evaluate the quality of activities, and incorporate results and suggestions in future program planning;**
- **To develop a system of exit surveys to monitor organization's effectiveness in reaching target group;**
- **To conduct a comprehensive study to define characteristics of organization's target group in terms of income, language, location, special needs, sexual orientation and gender identity, to help develop new programs.**

3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (2.21 OUT OF 4)

3.1. Financial management (2.03 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has a well-established financial system, which is external. Thus it's not clear what the procurement procedures are, or who and how is assessing all the expenditures;
- There are separate project budgets, but organization does not prepare a consolidated budget according to its own fiscal year, in addition to separate project budgets. Therefore, there is no analysis of utilization rates and no budget revision to maximize operational efficiency. Organization has no budget preparation guidelines that are simple and transparent;
- Organization prepares financial project reports, which are transparent, accurate and comprehensive. Organization had external project audit, but it's not conducted on an annual basis. Apparently financial reports are not used to guide strategies and maintain decisions.

Recommendations:

- **For the future, when the NGO is developed, and has its own office and more staff it will be important to have internal accounting system, bookkeeping and inventory software, that all management is familiarized with. When the Board is established, they should regularly review expenses and authorize large expenditures;**
- **For the future, it will be also crucial to develop budget preparation guidelines, and prepare consolidated budget for the organization on an annual basis;**
- **To conduct annual financial external audit for all existing projects, and publish them on organization's website. Transparency is crucial for non-governmental organizations to build the trust with the community.**

3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability (2.38 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no fundraising strategy. Fundraising process is rather inconsistent. Organization has income from limited number of sources, but occasionally explores new income sources and conducts feasibility analysis. There is an intent to fundraise in private sector/businesses which is relevant and efficient, but organization does not set total income cost recovery targets and does not monitor the progress;
- Organization doesn't allocate required human resources to raise funds. Several staff members are responsible for fundraising if they have relevant assignments, not many staff have adequate fundraising skills, and no Board members are involved in the fundraising process;
- The organization partially attracts local sources of income, such as community fundraising, private donations, governmental support, individual donations. Organization has just few sources of external financing, e.g. donors and foundations, for programs that are consistent with its mission and strategy.

Recommendations:

- **To develop organization long-term fundraising strategy, which will set the goal to diversify and increase income sources;**
- **To conduct fundraising training for the staff and the Board, to define roles of each person in this process. When possible, to hire a professional fundraiser for NGO;**
- **To maintain the process of fundraising with private sector/business, but also diversify revenues by attracting different resources (not only financial): material, information, professional or volunteers input.**

Appendix 6. Organizational development assessment report of “Estonian LGBT Association”

Date of assessment: 3.04.2019

Site of assessment: Tallinn, Estonia

Expert’s name: Yurii Radchenko



Indicators and analysis

OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION - 2.70 OUT OF 4

(The score reflects a distinctive level of organizational development: nascent – 0-1; emerging – 1-2; expanding – 2-3; mature – 3-4)

Summary of results:

- The Estonian LGBT Association is a non-profit organization working for LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other sexualities and gender identities) people and their loved ones;
- The mission of the Estonian LGBT Association is supporting the LGBT+ community and their loved ones by offering support services and engaging in advocacy work, as well as raising awareness on LGBT+ topics in society;
- The vision of the Estonian LGBT Association is a strong community and a caring and inclusive society, in which individuals are valued regardless of their sexual and/or gender identity. The Estonian LGBT Association is an effective and continuing speaker on LGBT+ topics in Estonia;
- The organization continues to develop its capacity. Basic systems and structures are in place and functioning. There are significant opportunities for further development and capacity building.

Strengths:

- The organization has a good community touch; its offices are constantly accessible to community members;
- The organization is actively involved in the global LGBTI movement;
- The organization has a large number of volunteers who provide valuable input on the organization and contribute significantly to the organisation;
- The organization regularly publishes information about its activities on a number of social media groups; this information is easily accessible;
- The organization has demonstrated the ability to attract well-educated senior staff for management of projects;
- The composition of the organization’s staff in terms of sexual and gender identity is reflective of groups for and with which the organization works;

- Management of the organization is able to respond to problems in a timely manner and accepts input from other members of staff during the process of making decisions;
- Staff turnover is low;
- The organization is not over-reliant on a single or small number of income sources.

Summary of key recommendations:

- To formalise and document decision-making procedures within the organization thereby enhancing transparency and legitimacy of process;
- To consult with staff to develop staff-appraisal process to be used in relation to promotions and which process will be known to staff and will be based on clear listed criteria summarised for and made available to staff in an appropriate document;
- To map capacity-building and professional-growth needs of staff, board and volunteers, prepare training plan in accordance with the mapping results and implement it;
- To formalize recruitment and ongoing-activity procedures for use in relation to volunteers, develop Terms of Reference and memoranda of understanding for use with volunteers, conduct assessments of volunteer input and prepare volunteer recruitment plan;
- To compose unified salary scale with several grades/bands. This will tie in with implementation of new staff-appraisal procedure and new program-based structure;
- To develop a formalized system for collecting important data relating to the design of new programs and develop a formalised monitoring and evaluation system for use with programs;
- To develop and implement monitoring and evaluation plans and processes in relation to projects, and develop and implement similar plans in relation to overall organizational strategies;
- To develop and implement client-satisfaction surveys, develop quality assurance and other related systems and standards;
- To develop external-relations and media strategies;
- To target state authorities with the aim of achieving regular partnerships and with the aim of developing and consolidating ongoing relationships with these state authorities;
- To increase collaboration and joint-project activities with other LGBTI NGOs, other human-rights NGOs and other groups at local, national, regional and international level;
- In line with the movement from a project-based to a program-based structure, to introduce a consolidated budget;
- To update the organization's fundraising strategy.

Score by components:

	Score
Overall score of the organization	2.70
1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	2.83
1.1. Governance	2.93
1.1.1. Strategic Governance	2.50
1.1.2. Mission	3.80
1.1.3. Governance Style and Leadership	2.58
1.1.4. Strategic planning	2.83
1.2. Management practices	2.66
1.2.1. Organizational structure	2.00
1.2.2. Program planning	2.33
1.2.3. Operations	3.30
1.2.4. Decision making and management style	3.00
1.3. Human resources	2.91
1.3.1. Human resources policy	2.69
1.3.2. Recruiting	2.33
1.3.3. Volunteer services	3.25
1.3.4. Gender and diversity	3.38
2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY	2.46
2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	2.29
2.1.1. Advocacy strategy	2.13

2.1.2. Advocacy practices	2.00
2.1.3. Community mobilization	2.75
2.2. External relations	2.98
2.2.1. Strategy of external relations	2.25
2.2.2. Collaboration with governmental authorities	3.17
2.2.3. Collaboration with other civil society organizations	3.25
2.2.4. Collaboration with international organizations and donors	3.25
2.3. Program activities	2.10
2.3.1. Procedures and standards of program activities	2.50
2.3.2. Community focus	1.67
3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	2.81
3.1. Financial management	2.68
3.1.1. Accounting	3.71
3.1.2. Budgeting	1.50
3.1.3. Financial reporting	2.83
3.2. Revenue / resource base stability	2.93
3.2.1. Fundraising strategy	2.88
3.2.2. Internal system of raising resources	2.88
3.2.3. Diversification of revenues	3.17

Analysis by components

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY (2.83 OUT OF 4)

1.1. Governance (2.93 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The Board of the organization is composed of 3 committed members of diverse backgrounds who represent the interests of the community and stakeholders. They are elected for 2 years leading to strong strategic planning. The Board meets regularly and there is also an annual general assembly meeting. Taking into account Estonian realities the Board members also operate as part of the organization's management and there is no clear division between the two. The Board has no Conflict of Interest Policy. The Board provides the organization with accountability and credibility;
- The roles and responsibilities of the Board are not clearly defined but the roles and responsibilities of senior management are. In practice, after years of experimenting with Board/management functioning, the existing system allows the organization to avoid overlap of functions, as well as to maximize efficiency while maintaining accountability. As the organization develops further, however, it will be necessary to separate Board and Senior Management.
- Senior management communicates decisions with staff through a so-called "open door policy" and receives input from them at all levels. Senior management is accountable and accessible to key stakeholders and provides them with information should they request it. More than two people have review authority in relation to confidential documents;
- The organization's mission, vision and values statements perfectly articulate who the organization is, what it does, and who it aspires to be. Staff, members and Board participated in the elaboration of the statements and follow them. The mission statement is regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to serve the interests of the community and stakeholders and is an accurate reflection of the organization's vision. The organization's strategy and programs are aligned and consistent with the organization's vision and mission. The organization has a clearly defined values statement that articulates the beliefs and ethics of the organization;
- The organization conducts strategic planning activities to formulate long-term strategic plans (3 years).

Recommendations:

- **To develop a defined Board Policy which clearly states the roles and responsibilities of the Board and its members, and which roles and responsibilities do not overlap with Senior Management ones;**
- **To develop a Conflict of Interest Policy for the Board with the aim of minimizing the potential for reputational damage to the organization relating to conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest;**
- **To arrange a system where more ordinary staff members have authority to check after the decision-making process made by the persons who have signing authority, so they would have more input into decision in the first place.**

1.2. Management practices (2.66 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization doesn't have an organogram. The organizational structure, however, is relatively transparent. Lines of authority and responsibility are clear and staff are aware of their place within the organization. There are, however, areas of obvious repetition within the organizational structure (e.g. while there are personnel specifically dedicated to communication and advocacy these tasks are also performed by various other personnel within the organization). All projects have managers, but because of the overlap between the Board and senior management, formal examinable reports of managers to the Board are often lacking;
- Staff, community and stakeholder input is incorporated in program design, implementation and monitoring. The organization has separate monitoring and evaluation systems for separate projects, but there is no general organization monitoring and evaluation system for the organization as a whole;
- The organization has some administrative procedures and policies in writing and/or in practice, which staff and management follow and which are efficient;
- Organization is horizontal. Decision making is clear, transparent and fair, timely and efficient. Management is responsive to conflict of issues and takes appropriate action to deal with such conflict when necessary.

Recommendations:

- **To develop formalised organizational structure, which is clearly outlined and up-to-date (develop organogram);**
- **To develop and implement general monitoring and evaluation system for the organization as a whole;**
- **To unite all the organization's administrative procedures and policies in an Operational Manual, make sure that all staff and management are familiarised with this and make such familiarisation part of the induction procedure for new members of the organization.**

1.3. Human resources (2.91 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has some human resources procedures that are compliant with local laws and understood by staff but there is no full range human resources process that is fixed in writing. Job descriptions are documented and updated for each position within the organization. There is no Policy to Prevent Nepotism and Favouritism. The organization has some processes related to staff appraisal but they are not formalised in a structured staff-appraisal mechanism. The organization provides staff training, and encourages self-study and mentorship. Staff skills, capacity and experience are closely monitored to be aligned with organizational programs. Overall staff turnover is less than 10%;
- The recruitment process is done through advertisement of positions in terms of formal job descriptions and qualification statements. Candidates go through a structured interview process. Nevertheless, due to the relative lack of appropriately qualified candidates in Estonia and the difficulty of attracting foreign candidates the organization is not always able to find and recruit the staff it would like to;

- The organization has procedures to manage, work and supervise volunteers, but not in written form. The organization assesses the needs of volunteers;
- The organization promotes gender sensitivity and diversity issues, which are respected by the staff through their behaviour and work. Staffing patterns and salary scales are non-discriminatory with respect to gender, race, religion, age, or other group-membership characteristic. Nevertheless, the organization struggles with the degree of diversity of its staff and management, which does not always reflect the diversity central to the organization's mission to the degree it would like.

Recommendations:

- **To develop clear, formalised, written human resources procedures within the organization and communicate these to staff;**
- **To develop Policy to Prevent Nepotism and Favouritism;**
- **To design staff appraisal system which includes written document clearly identifying criteria relevant to promotion;**
- **To develop recruiting guidelines for the organization;**
- **To develop a plan to work with volunteers which is compliant with the organization's operational plan;**
- **To diversify staff and management in the areas of gender identity (more male-identifying staff) and language (more staff with Russian as their native language)**

2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY (2.46 OUT OF 4)

2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization (2.29 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has an advocacy strategy which is compliant with its mission and values. It has clear goals, target groups and effective advocacy tools. At the same time, the organization does not conduct research on the external social and political environment so as to be able to plan and update its advocacy strategy;
- The organization doesn't allocate adequate human resources to the implementation of advocacy activities – having only one designated advocacy co-ordinator. The organization knows and applies various tools/methods of advocacy but doesn't have enough resources (financial, information, human resources) to successfully advocate to the degree necessary. The organization occasionally involves its community and stakeholders in advocacy activities;
- The organization regularly communicates with the community but there is no defined procedure to regularly get feedback from the community and take into account community opinions during the organization's decision-making process.

Recommendations:

- **To conduct research of external social and political environment on a continuing basis with the aim of helping to plan advocacy strategy and future campaigns. Include a number of monitoring and evaluation indicators in advocacy strategy to efficiently monitor its success or otherwise;**

- **To create a separate subdivision to implement advocacy activities and train existing staff on a regular basis on advocacy tools and methods. Involve more volunteers in advocacy and involve stakeholders in the community in advocacy. Allocate a specific budget to advocacy, and identify various sources of revenue to support this budget;**
- **To establish a procedure involving continuing consultation with the community on the organization's work with the aim of taking its opinions into account during the decision-making process.**

2.2. External relations (2.98 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has a defined strategy and understating of external relations, but there is a lack of stable contacts with the media, the organisation relying, rather, on the personal contacts of individuals;
- The organization has strong relations with government officials which are, however, also based on personal contacts. The organization participates in policy dialogues with government officials and collaborates with strategic information units;
- The organization networks with other NGOs. The organization has had joint projects with NGOs including ones in which there was a common budget;
- The organization has sustainable partnership relationships with its main international counterpart organizations and with its donors and the organization is regularly invited to discuss strategies on international co-operation. Significant involvement with the UN is, however, lacking.

Recommendations:

- **To develop a well-defined media strategy and foster productive contacts with mass media, so that the media solicits commentary from the organization;**
- **To strengthen involvement with the UN and other human rights mechanisms.**

2.3. Program activities (2.10 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Management has defined standard of quality for some program areas but it doesn't evaluate and monitor the quality of community services;
- The organization doesn't have specific demographic information in relation to the community it aims to serve in terms of income level, gender, special needs, urban/rural divide, location within the country, age, etc. and no overall needs-assessment of the community has been carried out.

Recommendations:

- **To develop a system of exit surveys and questionnaires for the community to evaluate the quality of community services;**
- **To institute a system of monitoring of the demographic makeup of the community and of the needs of the community and its various constituent demographic parts.**

3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

3.1. Financial management (2.68 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has a clear accounting system, clear procurements procedures and clear and detailed expense management procedures. The Board can review expenses;
- The organization prepares separate budgets for projects but does not consolidate budgets over the fiscal year. As a result of this, the organization cannot analyse its various expenditure rates with a view to maximizing overall operational efficiency. The organization doesn't have clear budget preparation guidelines;
- The organization prepares financial reports, which are transparent, accurate and comprehensive. The organization conducts external project audits but general organizational audits are not conducted on an annual basis. The organization uses financial reports to some degree to guide strategy and make decisions.

Recommendations:

- **To consider preparing a yearly consolidated budget with an agreed system of expenditure allocation, and with a procedure to revise budget projections as necessary with the aim of maximizing operational efficiency;**
- **To develop simple budget preparation guidelines which are easily accessible to the staff involved in fundraising.**

3.2. Revenue / resource base stability (3.17 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has a well-defined fundraising strategy which was developed in the context of a previous project. The organization, however, lacks an overall strategy linking income and expenditure which would allow the setting of fundraising targets in the context of this information. The organization has a diversified fund stream and it continues to explore new income sources;
- Many people are involved in fundraising in the organization with relevant program staff responsible for fundraising in relation to their particular program. The Board also participates in the fundraising process. Staff, however, continue to lack adequate fundraising skills, including project design, search for resources, etc.;
- The organization has several sources of external financing for the programs that are consistent with its mission and visions. In addition, the organization efficiently attracts donations from national-level sources.

Recommendations:

- **To update organizational fundraising strategy and set yearly revenue targets;**
- **Where possible, to allocate more human resources to fundraising in order to consolidate financial sustainability of the organization. To train a greater number of staff in fundraising and involve more people in the resources attraction process.**

Appendix 7. Organizational development assessment report of “LUNEST – Estonian Association of People who use Psychoactive Substances”

Date of assessment: 5.04.2019

Site of assessment: Tallinn, Estonia

Expert's name: Yurii Radchenko



Indicators and analysis

OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION - 1.25 OUT OF 4

(The score reflects a distinctive level of organizational development: nascent – 0-1; emerging – 1-2; expanding – 2-3; mature – 3-4).

Summary of results:

- LUNEST is the NGO which brings together people who speak different languages, have different citizenships, and have no citizenship. It represents and defends the legitimate human rights of people who use drugs (PWUD) in Estonia;
- Their goal is to reduce the level of comprehensive discrimination against PWUD;
- The organization is in its developing capacity. Basic systems and structures are present and functioning, but there is a significant potential for development and capacity building.

Strengths:

- LUNEST is community-based and community-led organization, which has strong ties and trust from the community of drug users in Estonia;
- Organization thinks strategically, and plans strategically its activities for 2-3 years ahead;
- Organization closely collaborates with other CSOs and has good relations with them, not only on the national but also on the international level.

Possible improvements:

- To develop organizational long-term Strategic Plan, and to fix it on paper;
- To develop organization's Operational Manual, which would include such documents as Code of Conduct, Ethic Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Human Resources Policy, Procurement and Accounting procedures, etc.;
- To adopt the organization's Statute which would clearly indicate roles and responsibilities of the Board;
- To develop organization's Organigram, whereas establish different departments to obtain more programs' efficiency;
- To develop general organization's Monitoring and Evaluation system;
- To develop organization's Fundraising Strategy and diversify sources of income.

Score by components:

	Score
OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION	1.25
1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	1.37
1.1. Governance	1.66
1.1.1. Strategic Governance	2.08
1.1.2. Mission	1.80
1.1.3. Governance Style and Leadership	1.67
1.1.4. Strategic planning	1.08
1.2. Management practices	1.00
1.2.1. Organizational structure	0.70
1.2.2. Program planning	1.33
1.2.3. Operations	0.60
1.2.4. Decision making and management style	1.36
1.3. Human resources	1.44
1.3.1. Human resources policy	1.81
1.3.2. Recruiting	0.83
1.3.3. Volunteer services	0.75
1.3.4. Gender and diversity	2.38
2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY	1.44
2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	1.53
2.1.1. Advocacy strategy	0.13

2.1.2. Advocacy practices	1.20
2.1.3. Community mobilization	3.25
2.2. External relations	1.36
2.2.1. Strategy of external relations	0.25
2.2.2. Collaboration with governmental authorities	1.17
2.2.3. Collaboration with other civil society organizations	2.25
2.2.4. Collaboration with international organizations and donors	1.75
2.3. Program activities	1.44
2.3.1. Procedures and standards of program activities	1.75
2.3.2. Community focus	1.13
3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	0.94
3.1. Financial management	1.02
3.1.1. Accounting	2.21
3.1.2. Budgeting	0.17
3.1.3. Financial reporting	0.67
3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability	0.85
3.2.1. Fundraising strategy	0.50
3.2.2. Internal system of raising resources	0.88
3.2.3. Diversification of revenues	1.17

Analysis by components

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY (1.37 OUT OF 4)

1.1. Governance (1.66 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The Board of organization consists of 2 community members who represent the interests of the community and stakeholders. The Board is elected for 2 years, which leads to a strong strategic planning process. The Board meets regularly, besides an annual general assembly meeting. The Board members also operate as a part of organization's management, which leads to an unclear division between the Board and the Senior Management. The Board has no Conflict of Interest Policy. The Board provides accountability and credibility to the organization;
- Roles and responsibilities of the Board are not clearly defined, unlike roles and responsibilities of the Senior Management. The existing system does not allow to avoid overlap of the functions, in order to maximize efficiency of accountability maintenance. But in the future there is a strong need to separate the Board's and Senior Managements' areas of responsibilities, and to put some effort to find more credible people for the Board;
- The Senior Management discusses decisions with staff through the so called "open door policy" and receives feedback from them at all levels. The Senior Management is accountable and accessible to key stakeholders, and provides them with information should they request it;
- Organization's mission and vision statements perfectly articulate what the organization is, what it does, and how it aspires to be. Staff, members and Board participated in the elaboration and follow mission and vision statements. The mission statement was reviewed at least once to ensure that it continues to serve the interests of the community and stakeholders and is an accurate reflection of the organization's vision. The organization's strategy and programs are aligned and consistent with the vision and mission although the organization has no clearly defined values statement that would articulate beliefs and ethics of the organization;
- The organization has conducted strategic planning activities to formulate a long range strategic plan (3 years). But it has to be finalized.

Recommendations:

- **To develop the Board Policy which clearly states their roles and responsibilities, and which do not overlap with Senior Management ones. To enhance the Board with at least one more member;**
- **To develop the Conflict of Interest Policy for the Board, which won't affect the organization's reputation;**
- **To arrange the system within the organization, where more people from the staff have authority to check after the decision making process made by the persons who have signing authority (head of the Board at the moment);**
- **To approve new Strategic Plan and develop a separate annual operational plan;**
- **To disseminate new strategic plan among donors and stakeholders ("TAI" and other relevant stakeholders) so they would be aware about upcoming interventions of the organization;**

- **To assess the implementation of previous Strategic Plan, develop a report, and disseminate it within the community and ask for their feedback in the form of the evaluation survey.**

1.2. Management practices (1.00 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization does not have an organogram. Nevertheless, existing organizational structure clarifies lines of authorities and responsibility, so the staff is aware of their place within the organization, which is clearly reflected in their job descriptions. But, there are areas of obvious overlapping within the organizational structure (e.g. Executive Director who is performing tasks in all of the areas of organizational work). All projects have managers, but it is unclear rather the managers share project reporting with their supervisors regularly, because the Board and Senior Management are the same people;
- Staff, community and stakeholders input partially incorporated in program design, implementation and monitoring. The organization has its monitoring and evaluation system for separate projects, which is required by donors, but there is no general Monitoring and Evaluation system for the organization as a whole;
- The organization has some administrative procedures and policies, which are very “raw”, so the staff and managements follow them and which are only partially efficient. These policies are not combined into a separate Operational Manual;
- The organization is still quite vertical. Decision making is partially clear, transparent and fair, timely and efficient. The organization can be characterized by existing hypertrophied leadership. Management is responsive to conflict of issues and takes appropriate actions if necessary.

Recommendations:

- **To develop the organizational structure (organogram), which is clearly outlined and up-to-date;**
- **To develop and implement the general Monitoring and Evaluation system for the organization as a whole;**
- **To develop the Conflict of Interest Policy;**
- **To finalize all the administrative policies, unite them all in the Operation Manual, and make sure that all staff and management is acknowledged about it, and that “newcomers” are taught on that as well (you can contact “HEAK”, rather they can share their examples of these policies).**

1.3. Human resources (1.44 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has some human resources procedures that are compliant with local laws and understandable by staff, but there is no full range of human resources processes fixed on paper. Job descriptions are documented for each position within the organization. Although, there is no policy to prevent nepotism and favouritism. Organization has no clear process related to staff appraisal and it is not structured as staff appraisal mechanism. The organization provides staff training, encourages self-study and mentorship. Staff skills, capacity and experience are closely monitors to be aligned with program needs. Overall staff turnover is quite low;

- Recruitment process is rather erratic. Candidates are not going through a structured interview process, there are no clear recruitment criteria. Nevertheless, due to Estonia realities, the organization is not always able to find and recruit staff with an appropriate skill set;
- The organization has no procedures to manage, work and supervise volunteers, it should be in written form, and it should assess the needs of volunteers. Now the process is rather motivated by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund. The capacity assessment of the community has been done at least once. There is an unofficial coordinator of volunteer activities, who is the executive director at the same time, which run to an obvious overlapping with other duties, and affects efficiency of LUNEST work with volunteers;
- The organization in practice promotes gender sensitivity and diversity issues, which are respected by the staff through their behaviour and work. Staffing patterns and salary scales are non-discriminatory with respect to gender, race, religion, age, or other diversity. The organization's composition of its staff and managements reflects diversity which is compliant with organizational mission, prevalence of PWUD, who knows the needs of the community.

Recommendations:

- **To elaborate the organization's human resources procedures, which is documented and clearly understandable to staff;**
- **To develop the Policy on Nepotism and Favouritism Prevention;**
- **To design the staff appraisal system, which includes criteria for promotion;**
- **To develop the recruiting guidelines for the organization;**
- **To develop the plan to work with volunteers which is compliant with the operational plan.**

2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY (1.44 OUT OF 4)

2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization (1.53 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has no advocacy strategy that is compliant with mission and values. It doesn't have clear goals, target groups or tools of advocacy. Moreover, the organization does not conduct research on external environment to plan and update its advocacy activities;
- The organization doesn't allocate adequate human resources to implement advocacy activities, as only one Board member is not enough for this work. The organization knows and applies some tools/methods of advocacy, but doesn't have enough resources (financial, information, human resources) for successful advocacy activities. The organization occasionally involves its community and stakeholders to participate in advocacy activities;
- The organization permanently communicates with the community, but there is no defined procedure to regularly get the feedback and take into account its opinion during decision making process.

Recommendations:

- **To develop the separate advocacy plan of the organization, which is coherent with the Strategic Plan;**

- **To conduct research of external environment on permanent basis to plan advocacy strategy and future campaigns. To include a number of monitoring and evaluation indicators into advocacy strategy to efficiently evaluate on its succession;**
- **To create a separate subdivision to implement advocacy activities, train existing staff on regular basis on advocacy tools and methods. To more involve the community for the implementation of advocacy activities on the volunteer basis. Try to separate a special budget line to advocacy activities with diversified incomes;**
- **To establish procedure of permanent consultation with the community on organization work, to take into account its opinion during the decision making process.**

2.2. External relations (1.36 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has no defined strategy and understating of external relations, and there are no stable contacts with media, they are rather based on personal contacts;
- The organization has some connection with government officials (mostly via “TAI”), which is more based on personal contacts. The organization participates in the policy dialogues with government officials, and collaborate with strategic information units;
- The organization networks with other NGOs, and had joint projects with them previously, including sharing a common budget;
- The organization has partnership relations with relevant for the PWUD international organizations and donors, and the organization is regularly invited to discuss strategies on international organization. Nevertheless, the UN involvement is rather weak.

Recommendations:

- **To develop the well-defined media strategy and productive contacts with mass media, so that media solicits the NGO advice. To incorporate it in the separate strategy of external relationships;**
- **To strengthen the involvement with UN institution and other human rights mechanisms.**

2.3. Program activities (1.44 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The management has defined standard of quality for some operational program areas, and it doesn't evaluate and monitor the quality of community services;
- The organization is not aware of the characteristics of its community in terms of income, gender, special needs, and location, there was no needs assessment of the community.

Recommendations:

- **To develop the system of exit surveys and questionnaire for the community to evaluate the quality of community services;**
- **To include the system of monitoring of the characteristics of the community and their needs.**

3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (0.94 OUT OF 4)

3.1. Financial management (1.02 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has a clear accounting system, procurements procedures, clear and detailed expense management. The Board can review the expenses. The financial system is external, which is affecting the NGO negatively;
- The organization prepares separate budgets for projects, but does not prepare single consolidated budget according to its own fiscal year. Therefore, the organization doesn't analyse its utilizations rates to maximize operational efficiency. The organization doesn't have clear budget preparation guidelines;
- The organization prepares transparent, accurate and comprehensive financial reports. The organization doesn't conduct external projects audits; so they are not conducted on the annual basis. The organization doesn't use financial reports to guide their strategies and make decisions.

Recommendations:

- **To deliberate on the necessity to prepare the yearly consolidate budget, with established system of utilization rates, so that its analysis is used to revise budget projections accordingly to maximize operational efficiency;**
- **To conduct the external financial and program audits of the organization on annual basis;**
- **To develop the simple budget preparation guidelines which are easy accessible for the staff involved in fundraising.**

3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability (0.85 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has no defined fundraising strategy. Therefore, it doesn't set total income cost recovery targets. The organization does not have any diversified fund stream, so it has to continue to explore new income sources;
- Very few people are involved in fundraising within the organization, the Board partially participates in the fundraising process. Moreover, staff still doesn't have adequate fundraising skills, including project design, search for resources, etc.;
- The organization has three resources of external financing for programs which are consistent with its mission and visions. They are eligible until the end of the 2019, but expected to be prolonged. Although, the organization efficiently attracts resources from the local sources of income.

Recommendations:

- **To develop the organizational fundraising strategy and to yearly set the revenue target;**
- **To prepare a list of previously accomplished projects, with names of the donors, amounts, short description of the activities and achievement and put it on organization's website;**
- **To allocate, when possible, more human resources to fundraising to obtain financial sustainability of the organization;**
- **To conduct a training on fundraising for the staff to involve more people meaningfully in resources attraction process.**

Appendix 8. Organizational development assessment report of “Estonian Refugee Council”

Date of assessment: 5.04.2019

Site of assessment: Tartu, Estonia (via Skype)

Expert’s name: Yurii Radchenko



Indicators and analysis

OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION – 2.41 OUT OF 4

(The score reflects a distinctive level of organizational development: nascent – 0-1; emerging – 1-2; expanding – 2-3; mature – 3-4)

Summary of results:

- Estonian Refugee Council is providing humanitarian assistance in Ukraine, Jordan, and Lebanon. They help the populations affected by armed conflict to restore and regain their livelihoods.
- Estonian Refugee Council provides support services to beneficiaries of international protection in Estonia and humanitarian aid to people who have fled their homes abroad. They are one of the main competence centers on forced migration and integration in Estonia.
- Estonian Refugee Council was established back in 2001. Although it was practically reborn just in 2011 after the new study about Refugees, conducted and released by the Ministry of Interior, after which the new management of the organization appeared. As a result, new advocacy direction of the organization has been established. The organization is members’ based, although consists of only 6 members at the moment. Geographically the organization is really wide, so the staff, Board and members are located all over the world;
- The organization has a three-pillars based system: integration support to refugees in Estonia, functional office to provide aid in Ukraine and Jordan, and competence centre to build the refugee’s capacities.

Strengths:

- Institutionally well-established organization, with clearly defined policies and procedures;
- Diversified sources of income;
- Strong staff capacity, devoted to human rights and freedoms of people involved in the organization’s work.

Possible improvements:

- **Organization is overly reliant on one person, so that it is undermining its sustainability largely. The decentralization of power is a necessity to ensure the security of operational processes within its future work.**

More detailed recommendations set below.

Score by components:

	Score
OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION	2.41
1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	2.49
1.1. Governance	2.40
1.1.1. Strategic Governance	1.33
1.1.2. Mission	3.60
1.1.3. Governance Style and Leadership	2.42
1.1.4. Strategic planning	2.25
1.2. Management practices	2.41
1.2.1. Organizational structure	1.70
1.2.2. Program planning	2.83
1.2.3. Operations	2.60
1.2.4. Decision making and management style	2.50
1.3. Human resources	2.66
1.3.1. Human resources policy	2.13
1.3.2. Recruiting	1.42
1.3.3. Volunteer services	3.50
1.3.4. Gender and diversity	3.38
2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY	2.23
2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	1.48
2.1.1. Advocacy strategy	0.75

2.1.2. Advocacy practices	1.95
2.1.3. Community mobilization	1.75
2.2. External relations	2.74
2.2.1. Strategy of external relations	1.25
2.2.2. Collaboration with governmental authorities	2.33
2.2.3. Collaboration with other civil society organizations	3.75
2.2.4. Collaboration with international organizations and donors	3.63
2.3. Program activities	2.48
2.3.1. Procedures and standards of program activities	2.88
2.3.2. Community focus	2.08
3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	2.52
3.1. Financial management	2.87
3.1.1. Accounting	2.93
3.1.2. Budgeting	2.67
3.1.3. Financial reporting	3.00
3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability	2.17
3.2.1. Fundraising strategy	1.88
3.2.2. Internal system of raising resources	1.13
3.2.3. Diversification of revenues	3.50

Analysis by components

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY (2.49 OUT OF 4)

1.1. Governance (2.40 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The Board of the organization is composed of 2 committed diverse members that represent the interests of the community and stakeholders, they are elected by the General Assembly for 2 years, but they are not community members (refugees) themselves. The Board meets regularly online (once a month at least). Taking into account Estonian realities the Board members also operate as a part of organization's management, so there is no clear division of responsibilities between the Board and Senior Management. The Board has no Conflict of Interest Policy. Within existing structure, the Board provides accountability and credibility to the organization;
- The roles and responsibilities of the Board are not clearly defined, but the roles and responsibilities of Senior Management are. In practice, one Board member who is also Head of executive power is covering the bulk of the organization's supervision. But in the future it would be necessary to separate Board and Senior Management, and to put some effort into finding credible people for the Board, to enlarge it, and to involve them more efficiently in the organization's work;
- Organization's mission, vision and values perfectly articulate who the organization is, what it does, and who it aspires to be. Staff, members and the Board participated in the elaboration of these statements and follow them. The mission statement is regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to serve the interests of the community and stakeholders and is accurate reflection of the organization's vision. The organization's strategy and programs are aligned and consistent with the vision and mission. The organization has a clearly defined values statement that articulates the beliefs and ethics of the organization;
- The organization conducts strategic planning activities quite regularly to formulate a long-term strategic plan (3 years), based on the three-pillared system, although, the last version of the plan was not finalized. The strategic planning process most of the time is done internally, without an invitation to external partners, stakeholders or refugees themselves. Operational plans accompanying the strategic directions of the organizations;
- Senior management communicates decisions with staff through so called "open door policy" and receives input from them at all levels. Senior management is accountable and accessible to key stakeholders, and provide them with information should they request it.

Recommendations:

- **To develop defined Board Policy which clearly states their roles and responsibilities, which are not overlapping with Senior Management, update the Board's composition and possibly enlarge it to obtain more efficiency;**
- **To develop a Conflict of Interest Policy for the Board, which won't affect the organization's reputation;**
- **To arrange a system where more people from the staff have authority to check after the decision-making process made by the persons who have signing authority;**
- **To finalize the organization's Strategic Plan and to approve at the General Assembly.**

1.2. Management practices (2.41 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has an outdated organogram. Organizational structure clarifies lines of authority and responsibility and staff is aware of their place within the organization. But, there are areas of obvious repetition within the organizational structure. All projects have managers, but it's unclear whether managers share projects reporting with supervisors regularly, because the Board and Senior management are the same people. There is an intent to create heads of the Pillars, to make the work of organization more efficient, but this has not been formalized yet;
- Staff, community and stakeholders' input is incorporated in program design, implementation and monitoring, depending on the pillar of the organization's operations. The organization has its monitoring and evaluation system for separate projects, which is an online system for the organization as a whole, but milestones and expected results indicators are tied to the projects and not the strategic plan;
- The organization has some administrative procedures and policies in writing, they are stored in google docs, they are followed in practice, staff and managements knows about them, so they are rather efficient. Nevertheless, not all employees are strictly aware about existing policies, and they are not combined in one Operational Manual;
- The organization is quite horizontal. Decision making is clear, transparent and fair, timely and efficient. Management is responsive to conflicts of issues and takes appropriate actions if necessary. But at the same time, a problem is that most of the power practically is concentrated in the hands of one person, who is at the same time Board member and Head of executive power. Decentralization has to be done, so that management have some more authority rights, and these decisions are supervised afterwards by the Head of the Board.

Recommendations:

- **To develop organizational structure, which is clearly outlined and up-to-date (develop organogram), where the heads of the pillars are assigned, and have decision-making authority within their pillars;**
- **To develop and implement a general monitoring & evaluation system for the organization as a whole, which is integrated with the strategic plan, and not separated by projects;**
- **To unite all the organization's administrative procedures and policies in the Operational Manual, and make sure that all staff and management acknowledged it, and that "newcomers" are taught about it as well.**

1.3. Human resources (2.66 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has some human resources procedures that are compliant with local laws and understood by staff, but there is no full range of human resources processes that is documented. Job descriptions are documented and updated for each position within the organization. There is no Policy to Prevent Nepotism and Favouritism though. The organization has some processes related to staff appraisal but they are not structured as a staff appraisal mechanism. The organization provides staff training, encourages self-study and mentorship. Overall staff turnover is less than 10%, but last year there was an exceptional case with

employees leaving the NGO. Usually employment gaps are filled internally, but if there is no possibility – the call is announced widely;

- The recruitment process is done through a formal job description and qualifications statement. Candidates go through a structured interview process. Nevertheless, due to Estonian realities, the organization is not always able to find and recruit staff with the appropriate skill sets, usually new employment gaps are filled internally;
- The organization has procedures to manage, work and supervise volunteers, and it assesses the needs of volunteers, there is a framework to work with volunteers. But volunteerism is one of the values of the Estonian Refugee Council, and much work is done to encourage volunteerism for the NGO. The organization has received an award for work with volunteers, from the president of Estonia and partner organizations;
- The organization promotes gender sensitivity and diversity issues, which are respected by the staff through their behaviour and work. Staffing patterns and salary scales are non-discriminatory with respect to gender, race, religion, age, or other diversity. Nevertheless, the organization is struggling with the composition of its staff and management, which do not reflect gender diversity (female prevalence). The organization operates under a so-called “open door policy” and is a part of the diversity charter.

Recommendations:

- **To develop the organization’s human resources procedures, to be documented and clearly understood by staff;**
- **To develop a Policy to Prevent Nepotism and Favouritism;**
- **To design a staff appraisal system, which includes criteria for promotion;**
- **To develop recruiting guidelines for the organization;**
- **To diversify the staff and management with respect to gender identity diversity (those who identify as male).**

2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY (2.23 OUT OF 4)

2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization (1.48 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has no advocacy strategy that is compliant with its mission, vision and values. There was an advocacy plan previously for the projects. It’s more an overarching direction, than a separate field of work. So there are no clear goals, target groups and tools of advocacy. Moreover, the organization does not conduct comprehensive research on the external environment to plan and update its advocacy strategy. Some advocacy planning has been done project-wise, but it’s rather “obligation by the donor” based. Some major advocacy achievement has been reached;
- The organization doesn’t allocate adequate human resources to implement advocacy activities, as obviously one responsible person (Head of the Board) and some program employees is not enough for this strategic direction. The organization knows and applies various tools/methods of advocacy, but doesn’t have enough resources (financial, information, human resources) for successful advocacy activities. The organization occasionally involves its community and stakeholders to participate in advocacy activities. The organization collaborates with a range of other NGOs on advocacy, including UN agencies;

- The organization permanently communicates with the community, but there is no defined procedure to regularly get feedback from the community and take into account its opinion during decision making process.

Recommendations:

- **To develop and approve a long-term advocacy strategy for the organization;**
- **To conduct research of the external environment on a permanent basis to plan advocacy strategy and future campaigns. To include a number of monitoring and evaluation indicators into advocacy strategy to efficiently evaluate its success;**
- **To train existing staff on a regular basis on advocacy tools and methods. Involve the community more widely for the implementation of advocacy activities on a volunteer basis. Try to separate a special budget line to advocacy activities with diversified incomes;**
- **To establish a procedure of permanent consultation with the community on organization work, to take into account its opinion during the decision making process.**

2.2. External relations (2.74 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization doesn't have a defined strategy of external relations, and there are no stable contacts with media, they are rather based on personal contacts. The organization had some negative experience with media as well, but generally – collaboration is positive;
- The organization has good relations with government officials, which is mostly based on personal contacts. But Estonian Ministries are aware of the NGO's work and occasionally collaborate with them on refugee issues in Estonia. The organization participates in policy dialogues with government officials, and collaborates with strategic information units;
- The organization closely and productively networks with other NGOs, and had joint projects with them previously, even sharing a common budget;
- The organization has sustainable partnership relationship with main international organizations and donors, and the organization is regularly invited to discuss strategies with international organizations. The organization is a part of ECRE (European Council on Refugees and Exiles).

Recommendations:

- **To develop well-defined media strategy and establish productive contacts with mass media, so that media solicits the NGO's advice. Media strategy should be incorporated into the external relations strategy, which has to be established as well, accompanying the NGO's strategic plan;**
- **To strengthen collaboration with NGOs which are operating outside of Estonia, but which are target countries of the NGO (such as Ukraine and Jordan).**

2.3. Program activities (2.48 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Management has defined standards of quality for some program areas, as project management is made by an online system where all the data on the projects is integrated to

some degree. But the organization doesn't evaluate and monitor the quality of community services on a permanent basis;

- The organization knows the characteristics of its community in terms of income, level, gender, special needs, and location in general terms, but there was no needs assessment of the community done. There are some data which has been collected within case management work, and this can partly be applied to all the beneficiaries that the organization works with.

Recommendations:

- **To develop the system of exit surveys and a questionnaire for the community to evaluate the quality of community service;**
- **To include the system of monitoring the characteristics of the community and their needs.**

3. PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY (2.52 OUT OF 4)

3.1. Financial management (2.87 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has an accountant, but all other functions of financial manager are done by the Executive Director. The organization has a clear accounting system, procurements procedures, clear and detailed expense management. The Board can review the expenses, but due to the inefficient Board as a structure, it is done by the same person from executive management;
- The organization prepares separate budgets for projects, but there are not consolidated budgets according to own fiscal year. Within the existing financial system the organization analyses its utilization rates to maximize operational efficiency. The organization doesn't have clear budget preparation guidelines. All budget preparation process is on the shoulders of the Executive Director, so this process is quite unsustainable in the long-term perspective;
- The organization prepares financial reports, that are transparent, accurate and comprehensive. The organization conducts external projects audits; general organizational audits are not conducted on an annual basis, due to financial reasons (no funds). The organization partly uses financial reports to guide strategies and make decisions.

Recommendations:

- **To deliberate on the necessity to prepare a yearly consolidated budget, with an established system of utilization rates, its analyses to revise budget projections accordingly to maximize operational efficiency;**
- **To develop simple budget preparation guidelines which are easily accessible for the staff involved in fundraising.**

3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability (2.17 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization doesn't have a well-defined fundraising strategy, which sets total income cost recovery targets, so that organization can monitor the progress. The organization has very diversified fund streams, and it continues to explore new income sources;
- Not many people are involved in fundraising within the organization, it is mostly concentrated in the executive director's hands. The Board doesn't participate in the fundraising process (second person apart from the Head of the Board). But staff still haven't got adequate fundraising skills, including project design, search for resources, due to the fact that Executive Director doesn't believe in the efficiency of such events;
- The organization has multiplied resources of external financing for the programs that are consistent with its mission and visions. Additionally, the organization efficiently attracts resources from the local sources of income. Now the funds are secured for at least 2,5 years ahead.

Recommendations:

- **To develop organizational fundraising strategy and set yearly revenue target;**
- **To allocate when possible more human resources to fundraising to obtain more financial sustainability for the organization. Training on fundraising for the staff can be a necessity to involve more people meaningfully in resources attraction process.**

Appendix 9. Organizational development assessment report of “Development center for people with disabilities MTÜ Matveika”

Date of assessment: 6.04.2019

Site of assessment: Narva, Estonia

Expert’s name: Yurii Radchenko



Indicators and analysis

OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION - 0.69 OUT OF 4

(The score reflects a distinctive level of organizational development: nascent – 0-1; emerging – 1-2; expanding – 2-3; mature – 3-4)

Summary of results:

- **Organization was established in 2012 and serve for the needs of people with disabilities in Narva and Estonia in general;**
- **Organization has its own bowling, playing room, summer camps which are social entrepreneurship projects, to help with societal integration of people with disabilities;**
- **Organization is run by the passionate leaders, who have a child with a disability, so they share the values and needs of this target group.**

Possible improvements:

- To establish all the operational and strategic systems within the NGO to build a base for the organizations sustainability. Most of the basic procedures and policies required for the organization developments are missing;
- Switch day-by-day oriented organization running, to long-term strategic planning;
- Decentralization is needed. Change the structure of the organization, so that it would be shared responsibility for overall management between more than two people.

Detailed recommendations indicated below.

Score by components:

	Score
OVERALL SCORE OF THE ORGANIZATION	0.69
1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	0.67
1.1. Governance	0.63
1.1.1. Strategic Governance	1.16
1.1.2. Mission	0.60
1.1.3. Governance Style and Leadership	0.67
1.1.4. Strategic planning	0.08
1.2. Management practices	0.68
1.2.1. Organizational structure	1.30
1.2.2. Program planning	0.33
1.2.3. Operations	0.60
1.2.4. Decision making and management style	0.50
1.3. Human resources	0.69
1.3.1. Human resources policy	0.88
1.3.2. Recruiting	0.75
1.3.3. Volunteer services	0.26
1.3.4. Gender and diversity	0.88
2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY	0.69
2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	0.62
2.1.1. Advocacy strategy	0.00

2.1.2. Advocacy practices	0.60
2.1.3. Community mobilization	1.25
2.2. External relations	0.98
2.2.1. Strategy of external relations	0.75
2.2.2. Collaboration with governmental authorities	0.67
2.2.3. Collaboration with other civil society organizations	1.75
2.2.4. Collaboration with international organizations and donors	0.75
2.3. Program activities	0.48
2.3.1. Procedures and standards of program activities	0.38
2.3.2. Community focus	0.58
3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	0.72
3.1. Financial management	0.67
3.1.1. Accounting	1.35
3.1.2. Budgeting	0.00
3.1.3. Financial reporting	0.67
3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability	0.76
3.2.1. Fundraising strategy	0.40
3.2.2. Internal system of raising resources	0.13
3.2.3. Diversification of revenues	1.76

Analysis by components

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY (0.67 OUT OF 4)

1.1. Governance (0.63 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The Board is composed of two members who are in the same time Executive Managers of the organization, and in the same time united by family ties: husband and wife. The Board represents interests of the target group, as they have a child with disability, so they have personal connection to the issue organization work with. The Board meets regularly, but not as a Board, just as day-to-day running senior management. The Board understands their roles and is carrying some level of responsibilities which Board should. In fact, there is no clear division between the Board and the Senior Management. The Board provides some accountability and credibility to the organization;
- Organization has no clearly defined statements of organization (mission, vision and values), so there is no strategy to be aligned and consistent with the mission/vision;
- The roles and responsibilities of the Board and the senior management team are not clearly delineated and understood. The leadership style in the organization is very hierarchical, most of the power is concentrated in hands of two individuals which makes it hard to define rather than receive input from all levels of staff in the decision making process;
- Organization has never conducted strategic planning activities to formulate long-term strategic plan and accompanying annual operational plan.

Recommendations:

- **To expand Board to at least three persons. Involve new person with the skills which can assist organization with fundraising, public relations and cooperation with business;**
- **To develop a separate Board Policy, where the clear division of power between the Board and senior management is stated. Decentralize the decision making process to no longer concentrated in 1-2 hands;**
- **To design mission, vision and values statements of the organization which articulate the beliefs and ethics of the organization, serve the interests of the community, and are elaborated jointly by the staff, Board, members and community itself (parents of people with disabilities);**
- **To conduct a strategic planning workshop to formulate long-term Strategic Plan (2-3 years) with accompanying annual operational plan;**
- **To disseminate finalized Strategic Plan among community and partners of the organization, as well as present it during a separate event to stakeholders.**

1.2. Management practices (0.68 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has gone through a long management crisis period;
- Organization has almost no administrative procedures and policies in writing, and senior management is strongly against bureaucracy in the organization. Organization has hired a

development director, who is necessary to bring systematic innovations to the NGO, but it didn't work out for some reasons. The wrong belief, that one "almighty" person can handle all the process in organization, or one external expert can solve all the problems failed in the situation. When there are no shared responsibilities in the organization, and lack of trust on different layers within the organization – capacity development potential is really low;

- Organization consists of 23 employees at the moment, which have project-based involvements, but two people are officially hired as a full-time staff. The organizational structure is not outlined in a clear, up-to-date chart. The lines of authorities and responsibilities are not clearly defined, so there are some areas of obvious repetition or waste within the organization's structure. Senior management doesn't delegate responsibilities in a trusted way;
- Organization doesn't have its own monitoring and evaluation system, just some indicators which are mostly project based.

Recommendations:

- **To develop organization's organogram, where all key areas are included and the system might be applicable for the future development of NGO (new staff members, new roles), and clearly define areas of responsibility and the power, with decentralized decision making;**
- **To develop and implement system of monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects for the organization as a whole;**
- **To develop comprehensive Operational Manual, which will include administrative procedures and policies in writing (e.g. Ethic Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Human Resources Policy, etc.) Many of such policies can be found online and shall be just adapted to "MTÜ Matveika" needs.**

1.3. Human resources (0.69 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- There are no clear human resources procedures, which are in written form. Job descriptions for the projects-involved staff are prepared for each position. There is no Policy to Prevent Nepotism and Favouritism. There is no system for the staff appraisal, so the skills, capacity and experience of the personal are not strongly aligned with the organization's program activities. Staff turnover is high;
- The recruitment process itself is based on the organizations needs and goals, there is some unofficially approved recruitment procedures, but there are no recruiting guidelines which are compliant with local laws. There is no general organizational salary scale, which would be competitive with the market, so organization is not able to find and recruit staff with the appropriate skills set;
- There are no policies and procedures regulating volunteerism within the organization to manage, recruit, work and supervise volunteers. The organization doesn't meaningfully assess the needs of volunteers and doesn't evaluate their input as a resource. There is an experience in work with American students and volunteers, and organization just recently joined Erasmus+;
- Organizational policies and procedures do not directly address gender sensitivity or other forms disability diversity. The composition of the staff and management doesn't reflect gender or other diversity;

- Very few people within the organization speak proper English which would be sufficient for external representations, search of new funding, building new partnerships outside of Estonia.

Recommendations:

- **To develop human resources procedure in the organization, where the recruitment process would be clearly fixed, to make it more transparent. Make sure that all new applicants are treated the same way and they are evaluated by using consistent rating sheet;**
- **To develop organization's plan on work with volunteers, and clear system for their appraisal, their work possibilities and level of involvement in the organization's activities;**
- **To insure that human resources policies and procedures address gender sensitivity and other diversity issues.**

2. ADVOCACY SUSTAINABILITY (0.69 OUT OF 4)

2.1. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization (0.62 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no advocacy strategy or plan. There are no clearly defined goals, target groups and advocacy tools. Organization has never conducted research of external environment to plan its advocacy activities, and efficiency of advocacy work has never been assessed before;
- There is in fact no staff responsible for advocacy. The organization does not involve its members or stakeholders in advocacy activities. Advocacy tools kit is minimal. In general organization has no resources for advocacy. Organization has minimal experience of participation in partnership with other NGOs to conduct common advocacy campaigns;
- Organization occasionally communicates with its target community, but it's hard to evaluate with the existing leadership style in the organization. The opinion of the target community is not taken into account during the decision making process.

Recommendations:

- **To develop a separate direction of budget advocacy to work with local and national authorities to allocate more resources for kids with disabilities, and not to fight for the same money with existing in the region NGOs. Second direction – is sport, social entrepreneurship, work with kids. Third direction – organizational development;**
- **To design first advocacy strategy to make sure that all required policy changes are incorporated in the goal and objectives of the strategic plan;**
- **To raise and/or allocate enough resources (finance, information, human) to increase successful advocacy activities which must be diversified and be applicable for Estonian realities. Permanently involve members, community and stakeholders to participate in advocacy activities. Possibly to create a special subdivision to implement advocacy activities with specially trained staff;**
- **To develop written policy/procedures of consultations with community so that its opinion would be taken into account during decision making process.**

2.2. External relations (0.98 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no well-defined strategy of external relations, some plans of external relations are implemented intuitively, and they do not correspond to strategic plan. There is also no media strategy and rather erratic than sustainable contacts with media. Recently NGO started involving public relations expert on volunteer basis, but her work objectives are not defined yet, without existing Strategic Plan and its long-term goal;
- Organization has just a few efficient but irregular interactions with governmental authorities, but it does not participate in policy dialogues and advocacy activities, at least related to budget advocacy. Rarely collaborates with strategic information units and uses their data so the Head of Board knows exactly how many kids with disabilities are there in Narva. The main obstacle at the moment in communication with government authorities – existing second NGO in Narva which has stronger ties with them, and not willing to collaborate with “MTÜ Matveika”;
- Collaboration with other NGOs is occasional and demonstrates its results. Organization has one joint project with other NGOs, sharing a common budget. Good collaboration with one Tallinn-based organization. “Matveika” is also a member of Chamber of Non-Profit Organizations in Narva, but this structure inefficient;
- Organization has partnership relations with some international organizations and donors, but hasn’t built sustained partnership with main international organization, such as UN bodies and donors, but has some intentions for that. The organization doesn’t participate in the discussion on the strategies and initiatives of international organizations.

Recommendations:

- **To develop well defined and well thoughtful external communication strategy and media strategy which are interconnected. Arrange productive contacts with media, to make sure that media people solicit the NGO advice;**
- **To establish strong and sustainable relationships with government authorities (make agreements on cooperation, arrange regular meetings with defined periodicity);**
- **To expand organization’s partnership with main international organizations, to play an active role on the discussion strategies and initiatives of international organizations.**

2.3. Program activities (0,48 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no standards of quality for operational and program areas, they are not clearly defined. Organization does some evaluation of its activities, but not regularly and not in standardized way. There are no community communication guidelines. Organization seeks training and education opportunities for staff and providers by using various tools;
- Organization has no defined characteristics of its target group, as there is no comprehensive data on income level, gender, special needs, location, which would allow to sensitize and reprioritize its strategies. Organization does not have mechanisms and methods to ensure that it understands target group needs, no standardized community feedback is gathered. Organization spontaneously uses various tools to attract and reach its target audience, and it does not monitor effectiveness in reaching out its target group through exit surveys, new community rates, etc.

Organization does know its coverage of community by its services (at least 40 out 240 persons with disabilities in Narva are attending “Matveika” events).

Recommendations:

- **To develop defined standards of quality for all operational and program areas that are communicated and upheld by staff;**
- **To develop community communication policy/guidelines on paper to improve efficiency;**
- **To conduct regularly exit surveys and questionnaires to evaluate the quality of activities, and incorporate results and suggestions in future program planning;**
- **To develop system of exit surveys to monitor organization’s effectiveness in reaching target group;**
- **To conduct a comprehensive study to define characteristics of organization’s target group in terms of income, language, location, special needs, to help develop new programs.**

3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (0.72 OUT OF 4)

3.1. Financial management (0.67 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- The organization has its established financial system, but its external, which is why it’s not convenient and hinders the efficiency of the processes within the NGO. There is no Board overview of the expense (due to the fact that Board is not separated), and there are no expense management policies;
- There are only project budgets, and the organization does not prepare a consolidated budget according to its own fiscal year, in addition to separate project budgets. Therefore, there is no analysis of utilization rates and no budget revision, to maximize operational efficiency. Organization has no budget preparation guidelines that are simple and transparent;
- Organization prepares financial project reports, which are transparent, accurate and comprehensive. Financial report is not published on the organization’s website. Organization doesn’t prepare program annual reports. Organization have never had external project audits. Financial reports are not used to guide strategies and maintain decisions;
- Head of the Board has financial background, and some knowledge in terms of fundraising, budget preparation, financial procedures, but no other people are involved in financial management at all.

Recommendations:

- **In the future, when the independent Board is established, the board members should regularly review expenses and authorize large expenditures;**
- **In the future, it will be crucial to develop budget preparation guidelines, and prepare consolidated budget for the organization on the annual basis;**
- **To conduct annual financial external audit for all excising projects, and publish them on organization’s website. Transparency is crucial for non-governmental organization, to build the trust with the community;**

- **To establish financial department within the NGO, hire an accountant to work full time;**
- **To develop inventory procedures, accounting policies and procurement policies.**

3.2. Revenue/ resource base stability (0.76 out of 4)

Conclusions:

- Organization has no fundraising strategy. Fundraising process is rather spontaneous. Organization has income from limited number of sources, and does not explore new income sources and does not conduct feasibility analysis. Organization does not set total income cost recovery targets and does not monitor the progress;
- Organization doesn't allocate required human resources to raise funds. No staff members are responsible for fundraising, except the Head of the Board. Staff does not have adequate fundraising skills;
- The organization partially attracts local sources of income, such as governmental support. Organization has just few sources of external financing, e.g. donors and foundations, for programs that are consistent with its mission and strategy.

Recommendations:

- **To develop organization long-term fundraising strategy, which will set the goal to diversify and increase income sources;**
- **To conduct fundraising training for the staff and the Board, to define roles of each person in this process. When possible to hire a professional fundraiser for NGO;**
- **To maintain the process of fundraising with private sector/business and diversify revenues, by attracting different resources (not only financial): material, information, professional or volunteers input.**