



OUTRIGHT
ACTION INTERNATIONAL

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2020

Where We Stand and Where We Are Going

For over 25 years, OutRight Action International (“OutRight”) has fought for LGBTIQ rights internationally. We have become a seasoned organization with a reputation for responsive partnerships and high-quality work.

Today, the LGBTIQ rights landscape is changing rapidly. We have achieved many of our organizational goals, there are many new colleagues with whom to work, and the pace of both progress and backlash has accelerated. These developments prompted us to take a close look at our role and articulate how we can most effectively advance LGBTIQ rights in the years to come.

After consulting community members, activists, governments, donors, board and staff, OutRight adopted a 4-year strategic framework in October 2016. The framework will guide our programmatic, communications, development and governance priorities and can also be applied to the governance structure.

I. **Our Vision, Mission, and Inclusivity Statement**

- **Vision:** OutRight envisions a world where LGBTIQ people everywhere enjoy full human rights and fundamental freedoms, exercise self-determination, form strong communities, and thrive personally and economically.
- **Mission statement:** OutRight seeks to advance human rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people around the world by developing partnerships at global, regional, and national levels to build capacity, document human rights violations, advocate for inclusion and equality, and hold leaders accountable for protecting the rights of LGBTIQ people.
- **Inclusivity statement:** LGBTIQ people are at the core of our work. OutRight honors the commonalities between and the different needs of LGBTIQ people. We emphasize that LGBTIQ identities and behaviors are intersectional with other markers of identity and experience such as race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, language, religion, economic background, and any other status. We strive to prioritize vulnerable groups within LGBTIQ communities.

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II. Strategies

OutRight relies on four strategies in our work:

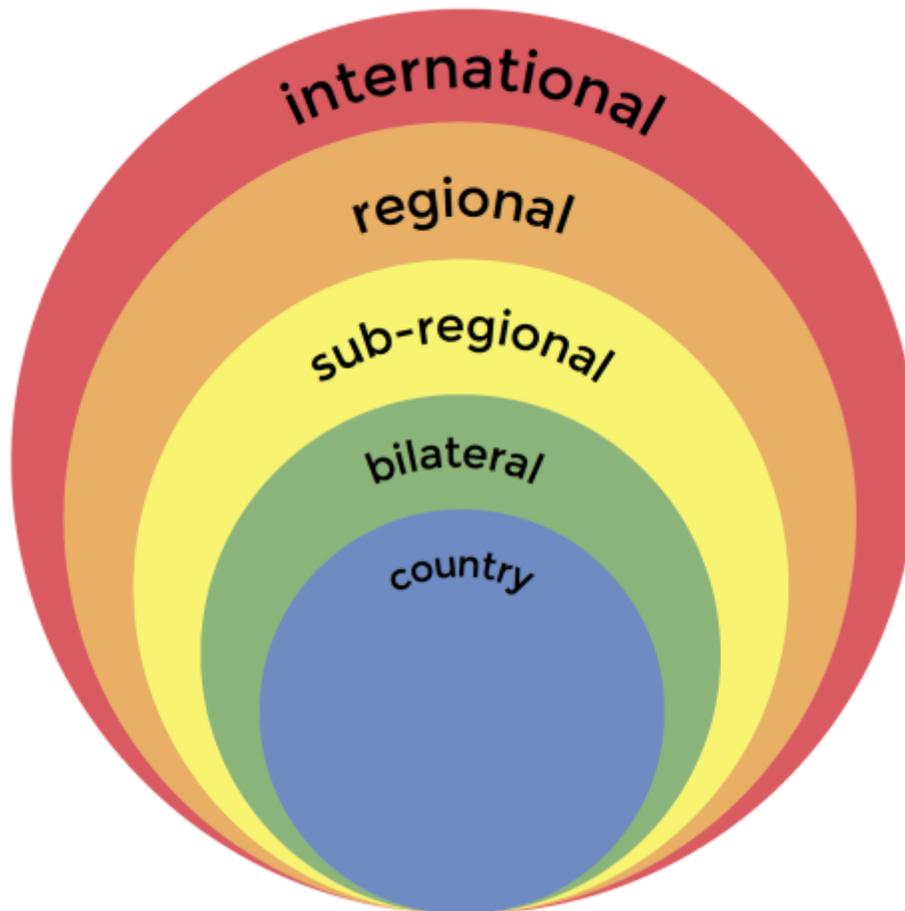
- a. Advocate: We advocate globally, regionally, and nationally— from the United Nations to individual countries – to advance LGBTIQ rights. Sometimes our advocacy take the form of giving advice -- i.e. to donors, United Nations agencies, NGOs, and others -- on strategic, sensitive, and safe approaches to defending and advancing LGBTIQ human rights
- b. Connect: We are a convener and connector of activists, advocates, governments, multilateral agencies, NGOs, donors, and other existing and potential allies.
- c. Research: We vigilantly monitor and document the discriminatory and life-threatening conditions LGBTIQ people face to spur action and stop human rights violations when they occur and hold perpetrators accountable.
- d. Resource: We access, provide and leverage resources to strengthen the capacity of partners and activists throughout the Global South. The resourcing can be in the form of funds, trainings or other ways we can bring capacity to our partners.

III. Our organizing principle: The Ladder of Influence

OutRight has previously put great emphasis on capacity-strengthening at the national level, and our work has been successful. We see the emergence of local and country-level LGBTIQ organizations with significant strengths of their own in all corners of the world. At the same time, we have more access than ever to national, regional and international decision-makers and influencers. Under the new strategic framework, our focus is shifting from *gaining access* to *using access* to push our agenda for change.

Our efforts will now pivot to emphasize the ways in which OutRight can advocate for and influence change at all levels of power—national, bilateral, sub-regional, regional, and global. We are referring to this interlocking spectrum of power as the “Ladder of Influence.”

The Ladder of Influence refers to 5 levels of power and engagement



- Country Level: Country level projects are a crucial component of our work. Yet, there is a need to reorient OutRight’s country-level work to reflect the changes in geopolitics, the global LGBTIQ movement, and our unique position to connect country level partners to other levels of influence on the ladder. Going forward, OutRight’s new country-level criteria (explained below) will guide our decision-making.
- Bilateral level: Bilateral relations refer to the political, financial and cultural relations between two states. It involves trade negotiations between nation states resulting in a set of agreements (i.e. treaties) between two state parties. OutRight has built expertise negotiating with governments at crucial moments, expertise that is allowing us to work more deliberately at the bilateral level in the coming years.
- Sub-regional level: Sub-regional initiatives involve subsections of continents that collaborate in more or less institutionalized ways, e.g. ASEAN and SADC. At the sub-regional level, there are

many more opportunities for multi-stakeholder collaboration on advocacy than 5 years ago, and this is an area of opportunity for us to fill an unmet need.

- Regional level: What happens at the regional level (e.g. OAS, AU, EU) has a huge impact on the international level, and trickles down to the sub regional level and vice versa. This is an area of opportunity that we will continue to build upon.
- International level: OutRight is the only international LGBTIQ organization headquartered in the same city as the United Nations, allowing us to advocate year-round at UN headquarters. The UN has increased its engagement on LGBTIQ issues significantly over the last few years, a development OutRight has contributed to through its work with UN agencies, the LGBT Core Group and other international institutions.

IV. Our Strategic Entry Points

OutRight is a human rights organization and will continue to have human rights at our core. In addition to human rights, we are looking to systematically explore our ability to penetrate the other two pillars of the international community as entry points for advocacy: the right to development along with peace and security.

- Development: In 2016, the United Nations adopted the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) to tackle the causes of poverty. The SDGs offer a unique opportunity because LGBTIQ people have historically been left out of the development framework. LGBTIQ people are not named specifically in any of the adopted goals, but its *'leave no one behind'* framework offers significant inroads for our concerns, especially during the implementation of the SDGs over the coming 15 years.
- Peace & Security: We will be building on developments around safety and security globally, both generally and in LGBTIQ issues, e.g. at UN level working with the Security Council and at country level through our safety and security trainings and small grants program. Humanitarian programming in disaster, conflict, and post-conflict national reconstruction are vital forces that historically have overlooked the specific needs of LGBTIQ people, but there is no excuse or need for this ongoing exclusion.