

What Steps Can Be Taken For Non-Heteronormative Social Services?

Result Report on Meeting with Social Services Experts

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The Kaos GL Association is organising a series of activities and workshops aimed to strengthen the best practices on social services and develop the theory and practice of social services from the non-heteronormative perspective. In the context of social services practices, we continue to search for various ways to contribute to extending LGBTI + as a political subject.

As part of these activities and efforts, we came together with experts on social services under the facilitation of Emrah Kırımsoy on 12th of December 2020. In this event, Yogyakarta Principles were used as a framework for reflecting the issues and feedback on current LGBTQ + rights regarding social service practices.

Throughout the studies in the field of practising social services, concepts of Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability has been necessary. These concepts reflect that institutions and programmes need to meet the following conditions to practice social services: sufficient capacity; physically and economically accessible under the principle of non-discrimination; promote social justice and by ensuring that services are accessed in human dignity and the protection of human rights, and flexible enough to tailor services on uniqueness and needs of the individuals.

Experts on social services met on 12th of December 2020 to evaluate the issues and needs in the field of social services, and expand their suggestions, which was outlined during a meeting that was held in July and August 2020. These efforts also contributed to where to start distributing roles and responsibilities; and setting up goals for change and transformation for non-heteronormative social services as a result of

participation on social services experts on various institutions and organisations.

Given the current situation of the social service practices cooperation with the international organisations is foreseen. This cooperation involves the transformation of activities and actions of the local organisation in line with the international standards and principles. Assessing and outlining the issues of the LGBTI + refugees and addressing individuals assigned name and gender (while accessing social services) are examples of the issues in this field (access to social service practices).

Ministries (and other national authorities) should be contacted and encouraged to the (LGBTI +) events that the universities organise, as panels presented during these events can be utilised as a strategic role on promoting LGBTI + visibility and enhancing the discourse on LGBTI +. (Using these events as a platform) to familiarise senior and junior level officers with LGBTI + advocacy is a strategic step that can be taken.

The need for supervision/supervisor in social service also creates a ground for a variety of (strategic) ideas and suggestions. The interviews conducted with the (social service workers) reflected that supervisors play a supportive role in sensitising (social service workers') approach LGBTI + (individuals). To ensure that supervision can be provided accordingly, the supervisors need to be equipped with various skills. Selection of experts who worked with the LGBTI + organisations can better address the needs (on supervisor training) in this context.

On the other hand, awareness and knowledge on available social service practices among LGBT + organisations should be discussed. In this context, the organisational structures and hierarchies can de-prioritise the recruitment of social services experts on the agenda. This shows that LGBTI + organisations also need to enhance inclusiveness in the context of social services. While, in-depth knowledge is necessary for providing supervision (in social service practices) as the needs of facilitating relationships, and acquiring organisational skills should be addressed. These examples reflect that certain criteria will emerge while establishing and developing a supervision mechanism. Softening the criteria while maintaining the quality of the supervision can solve the deadlock on developing a supervision mechanism considering the lack of expertise in this field. At this point, it is important to note the difference between supervision, professional solidarity and the exchange of practices and knowledge (between

counterparts). There is a clear need for knowledge exchange; however, supervision and knowledge exchange are different mechanisms.

Empowering the right-holders and associating the right-holders with the legislation is another topic that should be emphasised. Even though legislation encapsulates all the citizens, including gender identity and sexual orientation to the statutes and legislation on social services, would ensure that LGBTI + rights are abided. The reports that are prepared on this subject must be submitted to the ministry. Given the legislation, trans-women are still not admitted to women's shelters and LGBTI + shelters do not exist, which restricts inclusive solutions (on LGBTI + access to social services). In addition to this, frequent collaboration and meetings between the social services experts who have an all-inclusive approach would accelerate the efforts. A network among the (social services) experts should be established to ensure that the communication between the experts is strengthened. (In the context of social service practices) Developing training models and material on working with LGBTI + individuals would help the efforts. (While creating training models and material) The uniqueness, experiences and stories of the LGBTI + social services experts should be taken into consideration as suggestions. In the period of increasing conservatism, demands on statute/law amendments can lead to worse conditions (for LGBTI + access to social services). While the demands on sexual orientation and gender identity are persistently denied, the advantages and disadvantages of this persistence should be thoroughly analysed. It can be benefiting to save power before legislation and statute/law amendments.

The sustainability of the intervention of social service also needs to be discussed. Increasing conservatism hinders interventions by discouraging social services experts. Because of this, it is necessary to discuss the sustainability of social services.

On the concept of sustainability, professional bodies need to take steps for LGBT + awareness and inclusivity to ensure social services are sustainable. In this sense, it is a useful example that the bodies came together to empower each other holistically. The experts who work with the LGBTI + bodies need to be involved in professional bodies and the headquarters. In addition to this, professional bodies dedication to LGBTI + awareness would empower the LGBTI + experts who are involved in the professional bodies.

Increased visibility on the best practices would empower the experts while developing material. In line with this, a course where inspiring practices are communicated can be arranged and social service workers can be encouraged to focus on the LGBTI + field. The vision for merging the separate groups of social service experts would be useful for expanding the organisation. Thus, knowledge exchange among the experts on their practices will strengthen the transformation.

In terms of additional materials; submitting the material to the relevant academics would ensure that the content of the lectures/courses includes LGBTI + awareness.

LGBTI + consultants also need a secure environment where critical thinking on social services theory and advocacy as a result of support would empower the LGBTI + consultants.

In addition to the aforementioned suggestions, it is important to list the topics suggested in the previous workshops. A series of responsibilities fall on civil society, local government, ministries and provincial migration directorates on LGBTI + and social services. These responsibilities should be carried on especially for LGBTI + children, elderly, disabled and refugees; and by the military and criminal enforcement institutions. The topics of social services/support, health, shelter, education, labour/work life, protection and sport and communal spaces need to be transformed into LGBTI + inclusive in the areas of expertise, assistance and support, prevention, consultancy and legislation. Transforming/changing the rhetoric, embracing the rights-based approach, ensuring that LGBTI + causes are on the agenda, ensuring the empowerment of the right-holders, transforming the legislations, advocacy, fighting against the culture of impunity, empowering the individuals who have efforts in the field, ensuring the facilitation of the inter-disciplinary studies and activism are prominent topics in the field of social services.

It can be concluded that; trying to find a solution on expanding the suggestions on social services is both difficult and important under the current climate/conditions. It is necessary to increase the frequency of these gatherings and meetings and put suggestions into practice.