

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021 2030

BULGARIAN CENTER FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW



БЪЛГАРСКИ ЦЕНТЪР
ЗА НЕСТОПАНСКО
ПРАВО

STRUCTURE:

- I. What we have achieved in 20 years
- II. Expectations towards us
- III. The most important issues for NGOs and the environment in which they operate
- IV. What will our priorities be?
- V. Theory of change



I. BCNL ACHIEVED CHANGE

Over the past 20 years, BCNL has steadfastly pursued its mission to support the development and implementation of laws and policies aimed at the development of civil society, civic participation and good governance in Bulgaria. Therefore, the Foundation's most notable achievements have been in developing the working environment for civil society organizations and improving their capacity.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

For 20 years, BCNL has achieved change, important for people and civil society organizations, on several levels:

ENCOURAGING LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

We influenced over 20 regulations and policies to enable civic organizations to operate in Bulgaria, raise donations, communicate their achievements, and participate more easily in the decision-making process.



ADMINISTRATIVE EXTRAORDINARYNESS

We have helped over **5,700** organizations bring their legal documents, registrations, and policies into greater order and accountability.

MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND POWERFUL CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS

Over **1,000** civil society organizations improved their skills to better develop their advocacy plans, conduct mission-related business, build public-private partnerships, share their achievements, raise support, and develop innovative models that help vulnerable individuals.

HIGH AUTHORITY

BCNL has established itself as an authoritative organization in the NGO sector - a benchmark for good standards of governance, accountability and advocacy for a better environment for civil society organizations in Bulgaria, with a team dedicated to the values and mission of the organization.



TODAY WE CAN PROUDLY STATE THAT BCNL:

- ▷ is a name that is recognized as something meaningful, important for the sector, with a serious reputation, authority and role model;
- ▷ is a financially stable organization that sets its agenda in accordance with its mission and vision for the development of the sector;
- ▷ has a team committed to the mission and values.

OUR STRENGTH LIES IN THE FACT THAT WE:

- ▷ we have key expertise in a variety of areas important to the sector, and we can consult, train and/or develop the potential of organizations;
- ▷ we are guided by principles and values that are the basis of our stability;
- ▷ we always build on each of our programs with a new element;
- ▷ we have the ability to translate complex topics into understandable language for civil society organizations;
- ▷ we are constantly learning, because an organization is something that is constantly evolving.



WE ALSO LEARNED MANY USEFUL LESSONS:

- ▷ How to be a good team, to seek a balance between workload and opportunities, to take responsibility;
- ▷ The professional standard is a benchmark in our work;
- ▷ Change begins with leadership;
- ▷ In order to build a good working environment for civil society organizations, not only a good legal framework is needed, but also prepared organizations and communities to accept and lead the change.

**OUR VALUES: EXPERTISE, NON-PARTISANSHIP,
WILLINGNESS TO WORK FOR THE ENTIRE SECTOR.**



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II. WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF US?

THE ROLE OF BCNL AND THE EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS US ARE GROUPED INTO 3 AREAS:

1. LEGISLATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT:

Civil society organizations recognize in BCNL their legislative center: on the one hand, it is important for civil society organizations that we are involved in the process of developing legislation that affects them, but also in its interpretation and implementation (examples: LLNCPA, LSPA, LSPU, LSIP, etc.). For them, BCNL is an important center of knowledge that will help them figure out how to develop the legal framework, understand it and how to create mechanisms to implement it.

▷ The other important element of the support they expect is the monitoring and analysis of legislation – a watchdog function that makes them feel safe that there is someone to protect them. This creates both great authority and influence when we give messages for certain changes.



2. DEVELOPING THE SKILLS OF ORGANIZATIONS IN SEVERAL AREAS:

- ▷ The legal support that everyone can receive is highly valued, there is trust built in the team: professionals, committed and understanding the sector, we are part of it.
- ▷ For many organizations, increasing capacity through BCNL training programs and offering new initiatives remains key.

3. LEADERSHIP IN ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY BUILDING:

- ▷ BCNL's advocacy and leadership for change in legislation is highly appreciated and there is an expectation that this leadership position will remain, as it is seen as a tool for including small NGOs, vulnerable groups, etc.
- ▷ BCNL as a hub - a place that brings together different organizations, helps with collaborations, cooperation, alliances.
- ▷ Common campaigns that help with mobilization and greater visibility are a tool for joint actions and cohesion.
- ▷ An important direction is for BCNL to act as a bridge between civil society organizations and the authorities, including promoting the use of new tools for interaction.



III. WHAT ARE THE MOST KEY ISSUES FOR NGOS AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY OPERATE, FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTITUDES:

Deterioration of the institutional environment for work:

According to the NGO Sustainability Index, almost all areas important for the environment for NGOs are deteriorating. A key problem remains underfunding, especially for issues related to civil rights and freedoms. This chronic difficulty weakens the sector, including its ability to respond and adapt to rapid changes, new issues and challenges.

Increasingly, organizations are becoming the target of negative campaigns by political figures and media outlets with an anti-European and anti-liberal agenda. The negative international context cannot be ignored either - attacks on similar organizations in Russia, Hungary, Poland create a favorable environment for the "exchange" of techniques and tools to discredit the entire non-governmental sector.



THE KEY ISSUES THAT CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS THEMSELVES IDENTIFY:

- ▷ Growing negative institutional attitudes and alienation of the administration;
- ▷ Stigmatizing campaigns and shrinking space for NGOs;
- ▷ In Bulgaria, it is difficult for an NGO to ensure its financial sustainability;
- ▷ Lack of public debates and public discussion on the topic of rights.





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IV. WHAT WILL OUR PRIORITIES BE:

VISION AND MISSION

We pursue our mission, believing that civil society organizations can be sustainable and independent, be both a corrective and a partner to institutions, protecting our rights and freedoms and being a driving force for the development of our society.

Our mission is to work to change the laws and environment in Bulgaria so that people can associate freely and be civically active. Our top priority is the well-being of civic organizations, which are the engine of any prosperous civil society.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS OPERATE

Civil society organizations operate in different sectors of society. In order to develop their potential, it is important that they can operate without undue burden, have access to diverse funding that makes them sustainable and financially independent, without an overwhelming administrative burden, and have easy access to mobilizing actions.

An important element of the development of the environment is the creation of good conditions in which to operate, in which everyone can easily exercise and enjoy the right to association. Therefore, it is important to continue to develop the institutional (legal and financial) environment in which organizations operate, including:

A) Development of policies and legislation that encourage and facilitate civic engagement and association.

B) Reducing the administrative burden and increasing opportunities for public and private funding.

C) Better modern and effective mechanisms for public consultations and citizen participation in decision-making.

D) Development of mechanisms for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, with particular priority given to groups that are in a vulnerable position such as people with disabilities and children.

2. ACTIVATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Protecting civil society organizations from attacks also involves mobilizing community support and collaborating with other key community actors. This helps sustain the cultural change that organizations want to create, and is an important tool for protection. Therefore, it is important for organizations to have strong and stable partnerships with businesses, and more opportunities to engage young people in direct activities of the organizations.



In order to maintain trust, their proposals must be related to real problems and possible adequate solutions based on knowledge and progress. Therefore, our priority in the coming years is to continue increasing the capacity of organizations in various directions:

A) More sustainable and independent organizations with greater administrative and financial capacity.

B) More and more visible advocacy campaigns, both general and sector-specific.

C) Higher public support for civic organizations and more like-minded people/partners/followers from other sectors and groups for their causes.

3. BCNL TO MAINTAIN ITS KEY ROLE AS AN OPINION LEADER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIL SECTOR

BCNL remains a leader in the sector, operating as a legislative center that monitors and analyzes NGO legislation, encourages the process of providing proposals by organizations, and advocates for more favorable legislative changes.

An important task for the development of the organization is to continuously upgrade its programs for the capacity of organizations, which aim at their financial sustainability, development of advocacy skills, and building better and more successful partnerships.

An essential element of the development of the organization is the initiation and development of its own social entrepreneurial initiatives, whose medium-term and long-term goals are related to ensuring their sustainability and self-sufficiency.

V. THEORY OF CHANGE

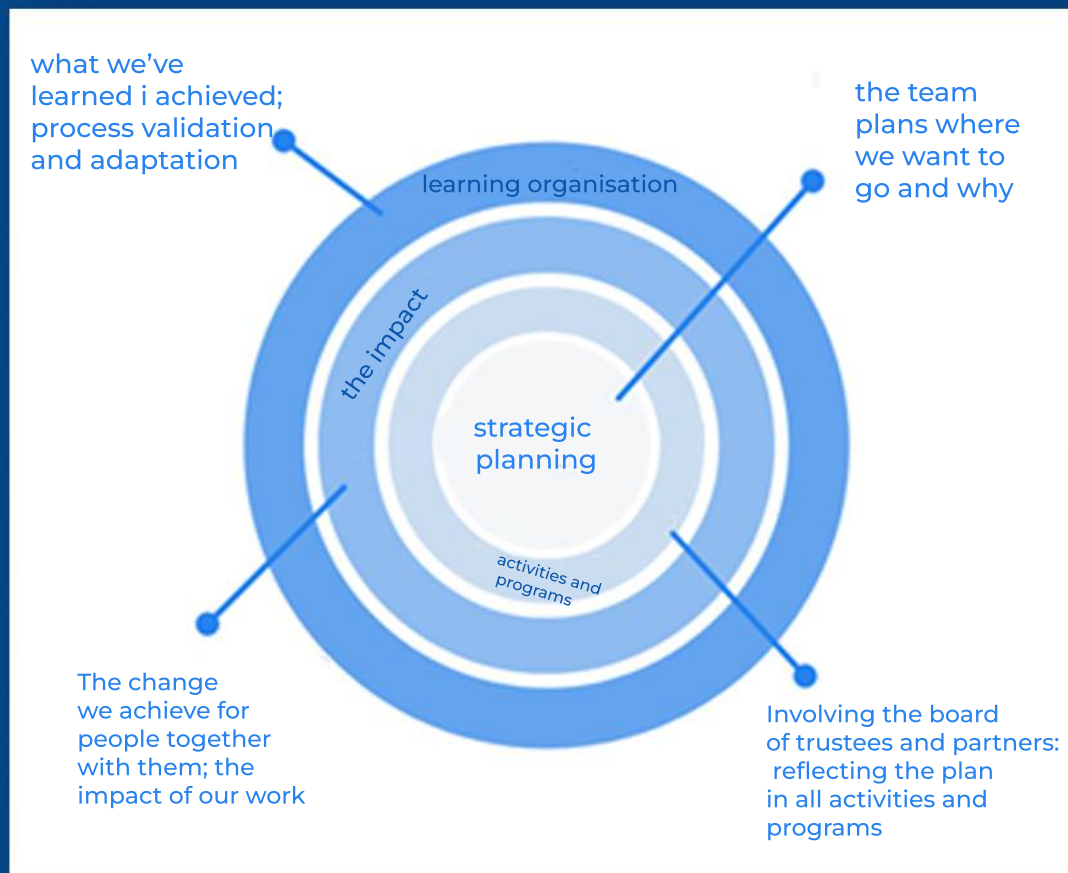
THE PROCESS OF CHANGE GOES SEQUENTIALLY THROUGH 4 CONCENTRIC CIRCLES (FROM THE INSIDE OUT)

First circle – internal, it includes the team that develops the specific plan – where and why we want to go there.

Second circle – involving other organizations, partners, institutions, like-minded people, etc., reflecting cascade in all actions, programs, etc.

Third circle – the change we achieve – we do it together with them.

Fourth circle – what we learned from the change – giving feedback on what we achieved and what we learned, validating, adapting, to be a learning organization.



CHANGE PROCESS MANAGEMENT /ACHIEVING PRIORITIES/

BCNL creates a Development Council, which includes public figures and partners of the organization. The Council, together with the Board of Trustees and the Foundation team, annually assists the team in the development of the civil sector, discusses the main threats and opportunities that support positive change.

Every two years, the Foundation team prepares an action plan, which is based on a specific snapshot of the analysis of the environment for the development of civil society organizations, their capacity and important social trends, and proposes specific goals for the period, activities to be implemented and results to be achieved.



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