

# Activity plan 2017

## Introduction

The Swedish federation of LGBTQ students (SFQ) is the national association for norm critique and LGBTQ perspectives in higher education, with local branches based at some of the country's universities and colleges. SFQ works to strengthen the quality of education in higher education including through norm critique and LGBTQ perspectives to highlight how the learning environment and educational content are affected by hetero- and cis-norms. The association wants to see all students regardless of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation have the same rights and opportunities in higher education. SFQ can also be a safe place for those looking for a context outside of these norms.

SFQ works to improve the study of the situation in universities and colleges, both for the individual and for the study environment. The knowledge or fear of hetero-/cis-normative study environments with a narrow norm system can deter students from choosing a specific program of study, or from becoming students at all. These cis- and hetero-norms do not only affect LGBTQ people; these norms mean that all students do not receive sufficient knowledge and skills to face the reality and the diversity of people in society. These norms mean that the space to allow for standard critical thinking is small, which affects the quality of education. Because studies from workplaces show that most professionals feel that they lack sufficient competence to deal with LGBTQ people SFQ wants universities and colleges to challenge the hetero- and cis-normativity in their courses in order to increase the quality of training and to lift focus to an inclusive university and college environment.

## Background to the work plan 2017

During the years 2015-2016 SFQ's economy has been strengthened through organizational contributions from the Swedish agency for youth and civil society (MUCF).

The work plan guides and inspires SFQ's upcoming work during 2017 and is an expression of the Association's vision and objectives for the fiscal year in question. For the board of SFQ, the business plan a policy document for the future work of the organization. A major focus for 2017 is to push for SFQ to be more recognized by students and higher education

institutions, as well as to expand the number of local branches so that more people have a safe place to turn to.

### Focus issue: advocacy and an inclusive high school

In 2017, SFQ will focus even more to effect universities and to expand their knowledge about norm critique and LGBTQ. In May and November 2016 SFQ arranged local branch conferences in Malmö and Stockholm. The vision in 2017 is to again organize two conferences, one of which shall be further north in the country, for example Umeå. During 2017, SFQ will focus on exchanging experiences between existing local branches in SFQ, as well as to assist in the launching of new local branches to create more places for students that don't belong to society's norms.

In the report *Reveal the hetero-norm!* (2015) it is seen that students, due to cis- and heteronormer, are marginalized daily and are at risk for discrimination on the basis of, for example, their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. It was even found that the universities' own equality documents do not ensure a safe place for all students. The project even reports how people chose not to study further due to vulnerability and abuse. SFQ thinks that local branches' support to individuals that have been discriminated against and suffered such abuse can be significant for people to feel good and strong enough to continue their studies. During the fiscal year 2017, SFQ will continue educating important people working with higher education, such as the equal treatment counsel, staff and unions with the knowledge carried by our organization, as well as contribute to local branch's continued work with individual students to have the opportunity to support from others when exposed to negative discrimination at their campus.

## Organization

### Office

In 2016 have SFQ acquired an office space at the Open Lab at KTH in Stockholm. Having a physical office as a workplace and meeting point can be considered as important for the Organization's continuity.

## Archive

In conjunction with the Office site on Open Lab we ended our storage contract with Shurgard and materials were moved to our local branch Spectrums office at KTH. With this our storage space shrank drastically which meant that all non-essential material was either donated to other organisations, recycled, or destroyed. In 2017, the board of SFQ should sort out our remaining materials. The Board should sort the archived material between 1999 and 2007, according to the National Archives ' (Riksarkivet, RA) Regulations (see attached document) and explore ways to deliver this material to RA.

## Administration

The Board shall monitor financial practices and ensure good administration. The Board shall, where possible, hire (such as pay) assistance to take care of the administration such as member management, email system, ongoing economic work, e.t.c. Local branches should be trained in how the membership system works, and how one can get information on its own members. **The board shall go through the membership service details and come up with ways to improve the current membership system. This may include changing or improving membership system services (Membit) that the federation is already using.**

## The National Board

The Board should consider in 2017 to reimburse duties so that there shall be a reasonable opportunity to perform the work that the duty requires.

Previously, the Board sought to have at least half of its meetings as physical meetings. However, this prevents the opportunity for Board members to live in remote parts of the country and at the same time be able to attend meetings within a reasonable time and for a reasonable cost. The Board for 2017 should therefore endeavor to have a third of their meetings physically and to instead invest time and financial resources on the **goal of representation.**

People from local branches should be invited to Board meetings. These have the right to speak but not to vote.

## Congress

The congress is SFQ's highest decision-making body and the only formal opportunity for members to affect the work of SFQ. As many members as possible should participate in the congress and make their voice heard, and at the same time, the congress is even a meeting place and an opportunity to get inspiration.

## Partnerships with external organizations

SFQ should continue to develop partnerships with organizations that have similar focus areas in order to share experiences, expertise and jointly drive advocacy. The main focus here should be on organisations active in higher education to increase SFQ's opportunity to influence higher education. **In this year focus, SFQ should get in touch with the already existing intersex activist groups or organizations to learn from them how SFQ can be inclusive towards intersex population.**

## Communication

It is important that the members have the opportunity for an SFQ to keep up to date on what's happening in the the organization. It is also important that information on the organization is easily accessible to those seeking it. This requires well-functioning communication channels such as the website, newsletters, Facebook and Twitter. All these tools are good and working and will be updated continuously and developed to suit current needs. SFQ's communication channels, in addition to information about the organization also offer the opportunity for visibility for local branches.

The majority of all information and communication should be in both Swedish and English. The Board shall actively seek resources to translate the website into English (preferably also several languages) in 2017.

To facilitate the work with SFQ's communication is the Board from the year 2015 divided themselves into an internal group and an external group. Each group has a convener who coordinates with the other group. Since 2016, there is an economic delegation which regulates the groups' opportunities to make financial decisions.

## Internal norm critique

The Board shall work against norms in SFQ that limit and or alienate people who support the organizations purpose and values. Therefore, the Board should counter such ideological conformism (for example in terms of party politics, urban culture, eating habits

or other underground expression) by raising awareness of the organization's internal discussions and calls.

SFQ should have a discussion about what and whom it is that the organizations actually works for. Discussions and reflections are important in this process and the organization must reflect on how it talks and writes about our work and how well this matches with SFQ's purpose and values.

## Focus issue: marketing for member recruitment

SFQ should pay attention to the value of marketing. This marketing will be conducted with the aim to increase the number of paying members who can work and work more widespread than today. As well as get more people involved in the national and local branches' activities.

## Materials

The Board shall update the information material about SFQ and about how one can be active in the organization, which can be used by SFQ's local branches in different contexts. In 2017, the organization will focus on the purchase of materials to distribute to local branches and student unions to disseminate information on the organization. Examples of materials are posters, paper, pens, coffee mugs and tote bags. The organization will also develop an information kit for starting a local branch which should be sent to the student unions at the country's universities and colleges.

The organization's governing documents, such as statutes, values and policy documents will be translated into English. SFQ should also ensure that a summary of all future projects (and Reveal the heterenorm and Degree certificate in focus) is available in English.

## Project

From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 the Board is running the project *Making Space: Raising hidden voices in the Swedish lgbtq+ community*. Because the focus in 2017 will be on recruiting members there should be no new project started during 2017. On the other hand, the national board will encourage our local branches to work on projects and the national board will be available for support if desired.

## Local branches

One of SFQ's purposes is to connect and to support local branches and individual members. The Board should ensure a good working environment for the federation's activists and offer support to local involvement. At the same time, the federation should provide assistance to members who cannot join a local branch at their own university / college, and encourage the creation of new local branches.

- The Board will strive to visit all the local branches.
- The Board will clarify the policy regarding local branch pot and communicate to local branches how they apply for funding from the pot.
- The Board will examine the needs and wants of members and local branch's branch for further training and to seek opportunities to offer this.

The Board will arrange one local branch conference during the spring semester and one during the fall semester. **During 2017, at least one of these conferences will be held North of Stockholm.**

**The board shall focus on structuring and developing strategic plans on how to communicate with the local groups, how to put forward the needs of the local groups, and how to strengthen the local groups.**

**The board suggests that this is done through, but not limited to, the following methods:**

- **Virtual meetings (skype meetings or phone meeting) with LA-representatives one month before and one month after each LA-conference to plan upcoming conference and to reflect on the previous conference**
- **LA-conferences should be used as platforms for creating and producing materials and/or ideas. For example:**

- Producing derivable materials that can be shared among all the LAs and/or
- Planning campaigns and/or starting campaigns

## **Meeting places**

For the SFQ to spread knowledge, inspire and enable students, we need to meet them, be seen and be where they are: in the college and university environment. In addition to fixed locations, this is also festivals, fairs, and organizations' events, physical and online.

Examples of fixed locations is SFQ's local branches at various universities, which are repositories of knowledge and inspiration. Examples of temporary locations are, pride festivals, which are important meeting places for networking and visibility.

At the universities where there is a local branch, it is their responsibility to be a meeting place, with the help of the national board if necessary. Universities that have no local branch is the national board's responsibility.

SFQ will together in cooperation between the national board and local branches be represented at Pride festivals during the year, and the national board will support local branches who want to represent the federation at other local events, both those that specifically draws attention to LGBTQ issues or higher education and those that may be interesting for SFQ for other reasons.

In 2017 Almedalen Week (Almedalsveckan) is not relevant. Instead, more resources be spent on local branch conferences. This with the aim to strengthen cooperation between the federation and local branches.

## **International**

In 2017 will SFQ retain its membership in IGLYO (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student organization). SFQ will when possible send representatives on adequate international conferences and meetings. In particular, those organized by the above organization.

