

NGO CASA

Integrated Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Approved by NGO CASA Board of Directors

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Mission

The mission of the Center for Affirmative Social Actions – CASA is to build a viable future for Serbian and other non-majority communities in Kosovo, safeguarded by attainable laws, accomplished by equal developmental opportunities, and valued by recognized ethnic distinctiveness.

Vision

Kosovo is an inclusive, diverse, and just society in which all communities and individuals enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and freedom to cooperate.

Guiding principles

- We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit initiative.
- We represent the genuine interests of our constituency identified in the inclusive and participatory process.
- The views, interests, and priorities of the constituency are embedded at the core of our operations. These interests are not to be compromised.
- Gender equality is a must. We reflect strongly this also in our staff composition.
- We endorse the principle of "beneficiaries' benefit".
- In pursuit of our mandate, we seek strategic partnerships with beneficiaries, peers' initiatives, and decision-makers, acting as trusted and predictable partners.
- We act honestly and with integrity, by law and the highest standards of practice aiming to bring about meaningful changes and results.
- We value and affirm diversity in its many forms.
- We are a learning organization.

Target group

The activities of NGO CASA are focused on Kosovo Serb and other non-majority communities, such as Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Bosniak, Gorani, and Turkish throughout Kosovo. The project activities of the organization are directed to both civil society organizations (CSOs) and individuals coming from these communities.

Project activities are targeting all age groups, with a particular focus on youth, women, vulnerable and marginalized groups, and individuals, that are mainly underrepresented in decision-making processes and other mainstream socio-economic processes in Kosovo. By targeting these specific groups within the

Kosovo Serb community and other non-majority communities and addressing their unique needs and challenges, the NGO can foster greater citizen participation, trust building, and cooperation, leading to a more cohesive and resilient society.

Context

Kosovo society faces systematic difficulties in the socio-political accommodation of non-majority communities. The overall societal atmosphere in Kosovo is characterized by deep ethnic mistrust, political tensions in Pristina-Belgrade relations, and resulting structural deficiencies in democratic practices at all levels of governance. In such an environment, Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities in Kosovo face systemic obstacles in realizing their rights and freedoms, facing multi-layered discriminatory practices by both central-level Kosovo institutions and local political structures within the Kosovo Serb communities themselves.

With the central level of governance, Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities struggle with the arbitrary implementation of the Kosovo constitutional-legal framework designed to protect the rights of non-majority communities. Numerous reports from local and international monitoring mechanisms, including the Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices, attest to systematic disregard for legal provisions affirming the rights of non-majority communities, alerting significant obstacles in accessing information, services, and resources, including the right to use their language, proportional representation in the public sector, property protection, and the protection of cultural heritage.

Equally pressing are the issues that the Kosovo Serb community faces at the local level, where responsibility lies with Kosovo Serb elected leaders. The monopoly in the political representation of the Serbian community is under the control of official Belgrade. Uncontested by political opponents or citizens' criticisms, this political faction has instituted a system of governance based on privileged access to resources, corruption, nepotism, and in many cases, utter disregard for the genuine interests of the Serbian community.

Intimidated by Belgrade and discouraged by Pristina, the Serbian community in Kosovo has fallen into a state of general apathy and passive behavioral patterns, lacking the capacity and social drive to defend its basic interest and articulate the demand for a better life. Citizen activism is nearly nonexistent due to the fear of repercussions that criticism of political representatives of the Serbian community brings. Young people confronted with corruption, nepotism, party-based employment, and other forms of discrimination, face reduced space for social inclusion or recognition. In other words, ordinary people in the Serbian community act as passive bystanders with limited or no influence whatsoever on the matter directly affecting their lives. Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities in Kosovo are often left out of the decision-making processes, among others, due to the lack of information, knowledge, and skills to actively engage.

In such an environment, a growing number of young individuals and more often entire families choose to leave Kosovo in pursuit of a better life, employment opportunities, education, and greater citizens'

freedoms. The transformation of these trends is a complex task that requires a wider societal response, long-term strategies, and coordination among actors, including the CSOs.

Kosovo Serb community, as, has a strong sense of ethnic identity and cultural heritage, including the language. Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian communities remain divided without opportunities and a safe environment for direct contact, dialog on sensitive topics, and cultural exchange. Young people who are critical for future leadership and community engagement are lacking opportunities to advance in education and cultural exchange. Women are underrepresented, facing a lack of options and capacities to actively engage in the processes in Kosovo lacking employment and educational opportunities, and carrying the heavy burden of patriarchal traditions that prevent them from enjoying equal positions with the society.

Kosovo Serb CSOs are fragmented, lacking capacities, cooperation, and coordination in advocacy initiatives. Detachment from grassroots communities is not exclusively the problem of Kosovo Serb civil society organizations, but rather a deficiency in the work of civil society organizations in the whole of Kosovo. However, the need for civic assistance in the Kosovo Serb community is far more substantial since the community's interests are being neglected and undermined by its political leaders. Control by Belgrade, Kosovo Serb political leaders prioritize the interests of their political patrons over the community they represent, exert corruptive and non-transparent governing practices, nourish the divisive attitudes in ethnic relations, and actively suppress the societal pluralisms that bring about the desired changes. The gap left by such a practice is deep and civic society representing the interests of Kosovo Serbs is challenged to address them, by acting responsibly, synced with the community and their genuine needs. There lies a problem.

The [*Consolidated Report on Characteristics of Open Society in Kosovo Serb Community*](#), produced by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society in May 2021, is one the very few research exercises that structurally examines the role of the civic society sector in the largest minority community in Kosovo. The specific focus was given to the ability of civic society organizations to represent the genuine interests of the community. The results are discouraging. Although the report merely confirms the doubts and concerns about estrangement of the civic sector from its constituency, the proportions of such discords elaborated in the report are overwhelming. For example, the report argues that only 29.3% of citizens in Kosovo Serb communities trust the intentions of CSOs, and as much as 65.5% (two-thirds) of citizens claim to have no insights into the work of CSOs in their community. This number almost matches the percentage of respondents who claim that CSO prioritizes the donors' interests over the interests of the community (61.4%). Finally, the reports reveal staggering data that only 9.2% of respondents reveal no doubts that CSO plays a constructive role in the representation of interests of Kosovo Serb communities. The reports conclude that civil society organizations representing the interests of the Kosovo Serb community act deeply fragmented, *alienated from the community whose interests claim to represent*, existentially dependent on donor support while lacking the courage, vision, and capacity to act as agents of public interests.

About us

Aiming to increase civic response to such deficiencies, and enable greater citizen participation in efforts to advocate genuine community interests in Kosovo, a group of experienced civic activists, in late 2020, in North Mitrovica, launched the new initiative Centre for Affirmative Social Actions (CASA).

The NGO CASA aspires to engage authentic representatives of the Kosovo Serb community, and emerging young leaders in initiatives contributing to the organization's mission which is the development of Kosovo as an inclusive, diverse, and just society in which all communities and individuals enjoy equal rights and opportunities. Translated into concrete strategic directions, the new civic initiatives aim to achieve grass-root actions for national changes, authenticate the interests of the non-majority community, promote the people-agenda in the decision-making process, and create a grass-root interethnic dynamic resistant to imposed political constructs and deprived of simplified and antagonized ethnic dynamics. To attain these changes, the efforts of the organization, from the very beginning, are focused on the development and enhancement of structural citizen participatory mechanisms and practices that will enable the participation of citizens in decision-making processes, policy development, advocacy initiatives, civic work, inter-ethnic dialog, trust building, and cooperation initiatives.

The inception phase 2020 - 2023

The first step was to build a wide and diverse grassroots members portfolio of the organization, which was achieved by the **establishment of the Casa Consultative Council (CCC)** – *a group of 12, geographically dispersed, professionally diverse, and gender-balanced individuals*. Its mandate is to actively participate in organizations' mandate engagement, offer input/council to the CASA program office on citizens' needs, priorities, and views, review and input the policy products of the organization, engage in advocacy actions of the organization and its civic partners (networks). In this way, CASA operations became arguably tuned with the genuine needs of its constituency and inclusive citizens' practices embedded in the core operational practice of the organization.

During the initial period, CASA worked on contributing to the creation of efficient and affirmative legal and policy framework safeguarding the rights and freedom of non-majority communities, balanced community development for non-majorities and their socio-economic prosperity and development; as well as preservation of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of Kosovo Serbs through promotion of cultural diversity, appreciation and cooperation between all communities in Kosovo.

To establish the organization, and through the operational grant of by Kosovo Foundation for Open Society, NGO CASA produced a *Development Strategy for the period 2023 – 2026*. The focus of this strategy was primarily on the strategic positioning of the organization and the development of its resources, where CASA mainly succeeded: Operations of the organization were established throughout Kosovo; a set of programs that will result in empowered communities that value positive cultural tradition, peaceful and democratic work in protection of human rights and promotion of human dignity for all citizens were created; functional, objective based-partnership with civic and non-governmental organization was

established. The core of the organization is composed of diverse, well-trained, and empowered staff that serve as a catalyst and support mechanism for stimulating programs, facilitating community cooperation, providing technical support, fostering cross-community trust building, and coordinating advocacy efforts.

Advocacy platforms: CASA has established two advocacy platforms, with one more on the way, to support citizen engagement at the grassroots level:

1. [Kosovo Inclusive Network \(KIN\)](#) for strengthening the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) dealing with persons with disabilities from non-majority communities in Kosovo, under the umbrella of CASA;
2. **Social Movement Awakening**, a national-level initiative for the promotion of grassroots citizens' activism, a flagship program of CASA; and
3. **Informal platform of CSOs coming from the Kosovo Serbs community**, where preparations for its establishment are underway, and which will serve for their capacity building, and enhancing their role in advocacy initiatives at the local and central level, and with international decision-makers.

Operational Protocols were developed to mainstream its operational modalities and to develop a functional, efficient, and inclusive consultation process in organization programming. Through external expert involvement and consultations with CCC members, two documents/protocols were developed: The *Citizens Participation Protocol in CASA Programming*, and the *Code of Ethics and Conduct of CASA Consultative Council*. Internal monitoring mechanism for gender mainstreaming of the projects is established through the Gender Equality Advisor in CASA Council.

The policy development was also identified as an essential step to bust active participation of citizens in the process of drafting and reviewing policies to reflect their interests, needs, and concerns. NGO CASA managed to become a recognized policy development organization in Kosovo promoting and safeguarding the rights and freedoms of non-majority communities. The organization developed internal mechanisms to monitor the institutional policy development process and built a competent team of staff and cooperating consultants to develop serviceable policies.

The established **internal policy-development methodologies** are designed to ensure an engaging consultative process with citizens in the identification of gaps, priorities, and solutions. This approach was grounded in the principle of active and inclusive citizen participation in the development of policy frameworks, particularly those that address the needs and concerns of non-majority communities.

The organization has also established strong **cooperation with local CSOs from the Kosovo Serb community** to ensure qualitative policy inputs and strengthen initiatives that will address the needs and concerns of the community. CASA has already established collaborative relations with central-level institutions and governmental bodies, such as the Prime Minister's Office (Advisor for Communities and Office of Good Governance), Ministry for Communities and Return, Ombudsman Institution, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Free Legal Aid Agency, Agency for Gender Equality, Language Commissioner, Ministry of Justice and others, to support active participation of Kosovo Serb representatives in policy and national strategies development.

The Barabar Center: Recognizing the need to support collaborative and respectful relations of Kosovo Serbs with other communities in Kosovo, as a precondition to ensure development and sustainable livelihoods, CASA worked toward an inclusive trust-building process. A flagship program, the Barabar Center, as an inter-community cultural and dialogue center in Pristina, was established in 2023. The Barabar serves as a central hub that facilitates direct contact, exchange, dialogue, and cooperation among stakeholders from various communities. Local authorities' support for the establishment of an operational center was secured. Several inter-community dialogues and events hosted at the Barabar Center; such as art exhibitions, concerts, and similar events, contributed to the promotion of intercultural diversity, understanding, cooperation, and respect, as well as the need to protect the cultural heritage of all communities, particularly Kosovo Serbs. The organization promoted Kosovo's diversity as one of its most valuable assets, which needs to be preserved as being essential for fostering a peaceful and prosperous society, contributing to a more inclusive society where all communities can live in harmony and mutual respect, free from discrimination and prejudice. The Barabar Center is now perceived as a valuable resource for promoting inter-community understanding and cooperation.

CASA aimed to become an **active advocate for balanced community development**, contributing to the economic and social prosperity of non-majority communities. The initial plan was to develop innovative economic boosting programs and increase employment opportunities for vulnerable populations; as well as to create programs that generate new jobs and promote entrepreneurship, with a focus on non-majority communities. Through these efforts, the organization was aiming to support the sustainable economic growth of these communities, while also addressing issues of poverty and inequality. Until the end of these four years, CASA was hoping to launch the flagship program, an innovative self-employment initiative to promote entrepreneurship and economic self-sufficiency among non-majority communities. Through this program, CASA was looking to support individuals in starting and growing their businesses, with a focus on providing mentorship, training, and access to financial resources. However, the political-security developments in the north of Kosovo which prevailed in the last few years, caused the shift in available funds. CASA had to adapt its activities to the demands on the ground and the most urgent needs and interests of primarily Serbian, but also other non-majority communities. The organization's efforts were mainly focused on the identification of needs and concerns of the Kosovo Serb community, advocacy, and mobilization of citizens to participate in decision-making processes and reconciliation, and thus to some portion, the targeted activities related to socio-economic development were not achieved.

In late 2023, due to significant programmatic expansion and the launch of several new projects that necessitated a comprehensive reassessment of organizational priorities and methodologies, the organization had to revise the existing strategic framework.

SWOT Analyses

For strategic planning of the organization's activities, a SWOT matrix was prepared, with the first two aspects of the analysis referring to the internal aspects of the organization's work and capacity, while the other two aspects of the analysis refer to external factors. This analysis was conducted in discussion with the team, partners, and beneficiaries, to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and

provides valuable insight for an organization's internal development and implementing strategy for dealing with strengthening citizen participation and trust-building and cooperation in Kosovo.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fast-growing organization with a multidisciplinary team with skills in advocacy, policy development, community mobilization, conflict resolution and trust-building, human/community rights, legislative development, social inclusion, gender equality, youth development, research and analyses, fundraising, and public relations. ○ Deep structural understanding of the political-security, socio-economic, cultural, and historical context of Kosovo; with significant experience in successful implementation of the projects. ○ Established two platforms that gather relevant Kosovo Serb CSOs coming from different municipalities/regions Kosovo-wide, advocating for people with disabilities and youth. Preparations for establishing one more platform with a different focus are underway. ○ Established Barabar Centre in Pristina as a central hub for promoting inter-community understanding and cooperation. ○ The organization has established operations throughout Kosovo and is recognized as such by various partners. ○ Strong relationships and partnerships with CSOs from both the Serb and Albanian communities; established cooperation with institutions at the local and central level, and international decision-makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Insufficient financial resources, limiting the scale and scope of projects, especially those that require long-term commitment due to the crucial changes and results they aim for. ○ Dependence on external support for financing. ○ Lack of highly specialized management staff to oversee and ensure the success of the programs and organization. ○ There is a space to improve PR and communication with the public to increase the visibility of the organization, mostly in video/audio content. ○ Lack of professional equipment that would further enable smooth and fast operations of the organizations. ○ Deficiencies in staff's ability to communicate with project beneficiaries and the public in the Albanian language.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The independence of the organization - the influence of external actors or political entities cannot hinder the independence of the organization. ○ Ongoing projects and access to multiple funding sources, including grants, donations, and partnerships, ensuring financial sustainability. Solid office equipment/furniture and office space. 	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The process of European integration. ○ Ongoing efforts and initiatives towards full compliance of Kosovo institutions with human rights standards and the rule of law. ○ Opportunities to change policies and opportunities to advocate and influence policy changes at the local and central levels. ○ One of the overall focuses of the donor community in Kosovo is on the social inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups. ○ The number of active non-governmental organizations in the Kosovo Serb community and the north of Kosovo has decreased, which opens up the possibility of expanding the activities and influence of the organization ○ Growing interest and support for youth engagement programs are creating avenues for empowerment. ○ Use of technology and digital communication tools for outreach, awareness, and education. ○ Opportunities for cooperation with international and regional organizations and agencies working on conflict resolution and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing political-security situation in the North ○ Deteriorating inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo and ongoing ethnic tensions ○ Political instability and slow progress in the European integration process ○ General unwillingness of the population to cooperate with the non-governmental sector. ○ Potential resistance from certain community members or outside entities due to political or ethnic sensitivities. ○ Fragmentation of civil society in the Kosovo Serb community. ○ Reduction of donor funds for the civil society sector due to ongoing political security and economic challenges worldwide. ○ Security risks associated with working in a conflict-prone area or dealing with sensitive topics.

The Integrated Strategic Plan 2024-2027 – the way forward

The current NGO CASA four-year Integrated Strategic Plan for the period January 1st 2024 – December 31st 2027, reflects the evolving operational demands and enhanced strategic objectives. This plan provides a roadmap, strategies, indicators, and internal system needed to maintain the integrity of the vision and the quality of NGO CASA operations during this period, creating the parameters based on which the organization will analyze its progress. The Integrated Strategic Plan covers both programmatic and internal organization development, providing the framework for a comprehensive approach toward the operations of the organization in the upcoming four-year period. The strategic document was reviewed and prepared in consultations with staff, board members, stakeholders, and beneficiaries at all levels.

The overall goal

The overarching goal of the Integrated Strategic Plan 2024-2027 of the NGO Centre for Affirmative Social Actions (CASA) is to establish a comprehensive programmatic and operational framework that maximizes the organization's impact on societal dynamics and promotes affirmative social actions fostering participation and inclusion of citizens in decision-making processes.

Programmatic development

Citizens Participation Protocol in CASA Programming is a key methodology protocol developed at the time of establishment of the organization, and it was designed to enhance policies and practices in the application of art and cultural activism at the grassroots level, serving as a means to promote inter-community cohesion and social inclusion in Kosovo. During the implementation of overall programs, CASA deployed the same methodology in enhancing citizen participation in advocacy and policy development, by mobilizing a diverse group of grassroots actors, including civic and cultural organizations, engaging women artists, and capacitating them to effectively leverage activism, art and cultural management as a driver of positive social change and enhance civic engagement in shaping institutional policies that promote human rights, social cohesion and inclusiveness through the optimized utilization of trust-building and cooperation, art and culture.

Using the citizen participation methodology, NGO CASA integrated previous, ongoing, and upcoming projects and activities into the two objectives, directed toward citizen participation and trust-building and cooperation:

Objective 1. Empower citizens to actively engage in shaping policies, influencing decisions, and participating in initiatives that safeguard and advance the rights and interests of Kosovo Serbs; and

Objective 2. Promote collaborative and respectful inter-community relations to advance the developmental opportunities for Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities thus building their sustainable life in Kosovo.

Under each objective, CASA developed two specific results followed by a set of activities that are carefully tailored to achieve maximum impact in addressing the needs and interests of Kosovo Serb and other non-majorities in Kosovo in civic participation, trust-building, economic opportunities, education and skill development, access to different rights and services, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups, social integration that will reduce inter-ethnic tensions, and protection from discrimination.

Activities foreseen within each result are grouped in clusters, to be further developed depending on the type and availability of funds.

Programmatic objective 1: Empower citizens to actively engage in shaping policies, influencing decisions, and participating in initiatives that safeguard and advance the rights and interests of Kosovo Serbs

Under this objective, CASA aims to safeguard and advance the rights and interests of Kosovo Serb and other non-majority communities through the empowerment of citizens to actively engage in shaping policies, influencing decisions, and participating in initiatives that directly impact their lives. The proposed initiatives, approaches, and activities have been carefully designed to promote citizen participation in local and national advocacy for an effective and positive legal and political framework that protects the rights and freedoms of non-majority communities. Some of the strategies to engage citizens and CSOs are consultations with citizens, advocacy initiatives, community dialogues, networking and partnership, workshops and training, mentorship, etc.

Programmatic result 1.1: Enhanced mobilization and participation of citizens in local and national advocacy actions

CASA will work toward achieving the crucial result in the programmatic efforts for achieving citizen participation. For enhanced mobilization and encouraged citizen participation in local and national advocacy actions, activities foreseen are grouped as follows, and could be further developed depending on the availability of funds:

1.1.1 Local Advocacy Initiatives – to further support two established structured advocacy platforms and one more underway to enhance grassroots citizen engagement in advocacy initiatives and their active participation in decision-making processes at local and central levels. Platforms need to be engaged in monitoring local government actions and advocate for community needs, such as participation of KIN and Social Awakening Movement platform might

participate in annual municipal budget planning. The platforms will identify the needs and priorities of the groups they represent, persons with disabilities and youth, within the specific municipalities and will prepare and submit the request for financing at budgetary hearing sessions. Follow-up meetings with local officials to ensure citizens' needs and interests are well heard and considered. Until the platforms are well established, CASA will support the platforms also with mentoring/coaching in this regard.

1.1.2 Community Consultations (in the definition of advocacy positions) – to organize public forums and town hall meetings to ensure clear identification of needs, interests, and concerns of citizens. It could be linked with consultations related to the preparation of submissions for annual municipal budgeting or any other suitable initiative or as a means of verification of the identified priorities suggested by members/platforms.

1.1.3 Central level advocacy actions – To support advocacy actions within the established platforms, including: how to participate and navigate the central level consultation mechanisms; launching of policy papers at central level forums and conferences; to enhance the role of grassroots CSOs in local and national advocacy initiatives to strengthen the community and representation of vulnerable social subgroups. To arrange/facilitate meetings between community representatives/CSOs and local or central government officials to discuss issues and advocate for change. encourage and support citizens to participate in public hearings and consultations. Establishing the communication channels between the platforms and governmental officials is crucial for early alert in emerging issues and concerns, where advocacy efforts of the platforms could reach a maximum impact in addressing the needs and interests of citizens.

1.1.4 Intercommunity dialogue – to organize interethnic dialog forums (K/Serbs-K/Albanians) to identify common needs and interests as a ground for bringing closer communities and establishing trust among them, cooperation, presentation of policy inputs, etc. This activity could be one of the CASA's "trademarks" as it would offer a sort of twist in the current inter-ethnic dialog in Kosovo and Brussels negotiations offering a substantial framework for discussions on finding the common ground and defining the way forward for peaceful coexistence of these two communities in Kosovo.

1.1.5 International advocacy actions – Facilitate annual advocacy tours of members of the advocacy platforms to strengthen the engagement and advocacy of CSOs and citizens with international policy makers in European capitals, think-tanks, advocacy actions toward diplomatic corps. Important step in strengthening the advocacy platforms and giving a voice to underrepresented voices within the Kosovo Serb community, especially to women and youth, and a population that lives south of Ibar River.

1.1.6 Capacity Building for members of advocacy platforms – to continuously build the capacity of citizen groups and CSOs through the training/mentoring initiatives in the utilization of existing consultation mechanisms at the local and central level and other, as well as on advocacy skills, public speaking, lobbying, and media engagement. To develop programs to identify and train new

community leaders with capacities to mobilize others and lead advocacy efforts, who could join the existing advocacy platforms.

1.1.7 Public Visibility of advocacy platforms - To further support the advocacy efforts and engage citizens, to support three advocacy platforms (two established and one more underway) through continuous public promotion including social and traditional media campaigns, promotion material, publications, etc. Social media platforms could be used to mobilize citizens, share information, and coordinate actions; as well as for online petitions and campaigns to reach a wider audience, and also engage citizens who cannot attend in-person events.

Programmatic result 1.2: Increased participation of citizens in the process of formulation and review of policies to reflect their interests and needs

The active involvement of citizens in the legislative decision-making process will allow them to contribute to decisions that may have an impact on their lives. The increased active participation of citizens in the process of formulation and review of policies to reflect their interests and needs will be achieved through various activities, carefully designed to consult, involve, and empower citizens and CSOs, such as:

1.2.1 Institutional monitoring reports – to establish attentive monitoring mechanisms and targeted monitoring of governmental policies to ensure that institutional policies and practices comply with international minority and human rights standards. Preparation of monitoring and alert reports with practical recommendations.

1.2.2 Policy initiatives addressing the community priorities – policy development and the formulation of national strategies to address needs and interest of Kosovo Serb and other non-majority communities, including vulnerable and marginalized groups.

1.2.3 Statistical surveys in support of policy initiatives – To support researches that will serve for evidence-based policy developments and initiatives targeting gaps, needs, and interests of citizens. Specific attention will be given to the underrepresented voices, women, youth, Kosovo Serbs south of the Ibar River, and vulnerable and marginalized groups.

1.2.4 Community consultation in support of policy initiatives – To organize and facilitate focus groups, interviews, and expert panels, to establish methodologies that facilitate comprehensive citizen consultations in the identification of critical priorities and effective solutions.

1.2.5 NGO CASA Flagship policy product Trust Index - To publish the annual research conducted to achieve a deeper understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo on the key issues of reconciliation and building mutual trust. Acknowledging the complexity of the process of reconciliation, the purpose of the research is to identify the basic attitudes of the members of the two communities about current and future mutual relations and the possibilities of reconciliation, to establish the level of ethnic distance between them, as well as to understand the influence of various demographic factors on shaping these attitudes. The

research will also reflect the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age, level of education and work status, and socio-economic determinants that influence the perception of mutual relations, reconciliation, and ethnic distance; including consultations with community and experts.

Programmatic objective 2: Promote collaborative and respectful inter-community relations to advance the developmental opportunities for Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities thus building their sustainable life in Kosovo

The goal of this program is to build sustainable livelihoods and advance developmental opportunities for Kosovo Serb through collaborative and respectful relations with other communities in Kosovo, preserving and promoting cultural identity, diversity and cooperation, and balanced socio-economic development of non-majority communities.

Programmatic result 2.1: Increased resilient peace through active citizen participation in processes that cultivate empathy, bridge cultural divides, and build social cohesion

CASA will continue to work toward promoting dialogue, intercultural exchange, social cohesion, education, and artistic expression, contributing to trust-building and reconciliation efforts within Kosovo's diverse communities, through these activities:

2.1.1 The Barabar Center (operational costs and equipment) – To secure funds for rental cost, maintenance, promotion, and smooth operations (*purchase of additional equipment required for regular daily operation of the center, public events, conferences, the translation equipment set, photo-documentation equipment, projector, sound system, presentation tools, website maintenance, etc.*) of this central hub that facilitates direct contact, dialogue, and cooperation among stakeholders from various communities. To produce an annual publication to cover the activities and events held in the Centre to highlight the Centre's achievements, activities, and plans. This publication will serve multiple purposes, such as promoting the Centre and engaging with the community. It will also contribute to the transparency of the center and emphasize collaboration and partnerships with other organizations and institutions. To enhance the PR of the Barabar.

2.1.2 The Barabar Centre (programmatic costs) – To prioritize activities that enable inter-ethnic dialog, direct contact, and exchange among stakeholders, as well as trust-building initiatives, as the core of trust-building efforts in Kosovo. To produce podcasts in bilingual media experience, that will engage with relevant guests, often focusing on a single individual, to provide a nuanced

perspective on trending topics and issues within Kosovo society. To further engage in media appearances to promote the Barabar Centre as an initiative fostering interethnic dialogue, social cohesion, and cultural interactions among diverse communities.

2.1.3 Art and culture in trust-building programs – To plan and conduct activities that utilize art and culture as a means to foster social inclusion and cohesion, cultural enrichment, and trust-building endeavors in Kosovo. To support cultural projects and civil society organizations, enabling them to organize a wide range of events including festivals, workshops, debates, concerts, exhibitions, promotion of book writers, and art-cultural dialogue forums within the Barabar Centre.

2.1.4 Grassroots trust-building programs – To support different initiatives and projects at the grassroots level, such as a small grants scheme to develop the Barabar Centre as a hub for cultural events and trust-building initiatives in Kosovo. To support meetings with community stakeholders, institutional decision-makers, organization of round tables, and debates to ensure continuous promotion of Trust Building Principles.

2.1.5 Language learning tools development – To enhance participation of women and marginalized social groups in trust-building initiatives, such as literary and artistic publications of different categories (drama, poetry, novel) of young and female writers and intellectuals. This activity could be followed with promotional events and/or on-stage reading and free distribution to the general public and interested parties. To produce an Albanian-Serbian Dictionary of phrases to advance language learning resources and encourage bilingualism in Kosovo. To organize emancipation clubs to connect young women and leaders from diverse communities and to provide a safe space for them to discuss and collaborate on various gender-related issues.

Programmatic result 2.2: Enhanced social and economic cooperation between communities to foster mutual prosperity and sustainable growth

Social and economic cooperation between communities to foster mutual prosperity and sustainable growth will be enhanced through the following activities:

2.2.1 Networking and partnerships in the private sector – To enhance the integration of the Kosovo Serb community's economic sector into the overall Kosovo market by building cooperative partnerships among businesses operating at the national level, including trade fairs and similar events. To consider reaching out to small agricultural farms in remote rural areas and linking them with stronger businesses. Support to small producers reaching out the customers and meeting the market demand. To consider supporting joint adventure, such as designing new product or service that will involve business owners from different communities.

2.2.2 Private business sector development – To enhance market integration of the business from the Kosovo Serb community, to provide various types of support for the private sector to meet the business operations standards in the Kosovo market, including capacity building of business

owners in this regard. To organize joint workshops that would involve both communities with local and international experts in business development, such as introducing innovative business practices in production, environment-friendly packaging, etc.

2.2.3 Peer-to-peer social cooperation initiatives – to utilize peer-to-peer collaboration as a tool to foster intercommunity cooperation across diverse sectors, building sustainable ties, resilient to political interference.

2.2.4 Employment and market skills building initiatives – to organize or provide “on the job training” and vocational training, desirably through the private businesses from Kosovo Albanian community; to provide soft skills training and subsidize employment programs; as well as to link central institutions/agencies and job seekers from Kosovo Serb community. To conduct a survey on deficit jobs skills and occupations in the Kosovo labor market in light of the potential engagement of Kosovo Serb job seekers with practical recommendations, that could be later translated into actions/potential projects.

Strategic Plan for Organizational Development

Besides the programmatic development, NGO CASA also strategically planned the further development of the organization in the upcoming four years. This structured approach will outline the organization's strategic directions and needs and identify areas where intervention needs to be made, to keep the organization on the upward development path.

Strategic directions

- ✓ Over the next four years NGO CASA will strengthen its operations throughout Kosovo
- ✓ By the end of 2027, NGO CASA will have enhanced its existing set of programs that directly impact the empowerment and engagement of communities that value positive cultural tradition, peaceful and democratic work in the protection of human rights and promotion of human dignity for all citizens
- ✓ By the end of 2027, NGO CASA will perfect the implementation of projects, strengthen operative mechanisms and areas, senior management structure, and diverse ethnic backgrounds of project staff to successfully respond to the current and new project initiatives in fulfilling its mission or serving as a catalyst and support mechanism for stimulating programs, facilitating community cooperation, providing technical support, fostering cross-community trust building, and coordinating advocacy efforts.

Strategic goal 1: Enhance functional, objective based-partnership with a civic and non-governmental organization

Acknowledging the importance of wider social consensus needed for the achievement of programmatic objectives NGO CASA, in the following four-year period, will take an active role in strengthening the existing NGO networks aiming to influence and participate in the adoption of coordinated strategic benchmarks in the north of Kosovo civil society circles. In the same line, NGO CASA will create an expertise-based partnership with existing organizations aiming to strengthen the internal NGO capacity-building efforts.

Some of the steps that need to be undertaken in this regard so the organization can build and enhance functional, objective-based partnerships with civic and non-governmental organizations, leading to greater collective impact and success in achieving shared goals, are:

1. Identify Potential Partners: Mapping Stakeholders - CSOs and civic organizations whose missions align with CASA's objectives. Assessment needs to be done to determine what resources, skills, or networks these organizations can offer and what they might need in return.
2. Define Partnership Objectives: Need to establish common goals and objectives that align with both organizations' missions, and clearly define the expected outcomes of the partnership.
3. Consider and develop a partnership framework (model and for each implementing partner):
 - roles and responsibilities should clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each partner;
 - develop a communication plan to ensure regular and effective communication;
 - establish a collaborative decision-making process to address issues and make joint decisions;
 - sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU);
 - draft and sign an MoU or partnership agreement that details the terms of the partnership, including goals, roles, responsibilities, timelines, and resource commitments;
 - implementation plan that will include a detailed action plan with specific tasks, deadlines, and assigned responsibilities;
 - resource allocation (necessary resources such as funding, staff, and materials) for partnership activities;
 - establish a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to track progress and measure success;
 - decide on engagement and capacity building, organize joint training and capacity-building workshops to enhance the skills and knowledge of both organizations;
 - leverage each organization's strengths by sharing resources such as data, tools, and facilities.
4. Research and design collaborative projects and initiatives, such as pilot projects, to test the partnership's effectiveness and make necessary adjustments; joint advocacy initiatives to amplify the collective voice and influence policy changes; and community to increase impact and reach.
5. Support each other in organizing events, conducting activities, and mobilization of citizens.

6. Establish regular communication and feedback to discuss progress, challenges, and next steps. Create channels for continuous feedback to ensure the partnership remains aligned with its goals and can adapt to changing circumstances.
7. Develop joint branding and communication strategies to highlight the partnership, including success stories and achievements to demonstrate the impact of the partnership on stakeholders and the public.
8. Conduct regular reviews of the partnership to assess performance, identify areas for improvement, and adapt strategies as needed.
9. Document lessons learned and best practices to inform future collaborations.

Strategic goal 2: Strengthen the NGO CASA organization for growth

NGO CASA identified these major operational areas it must strengthen to successfully strengthen current and expand future operations:

1. Fundraising and financial sustainability
2. Human resources
3. Infrastructure
4. Financial systems
5. Internal communications and public relations

1. Fundraising and financial sustainability

To meet the financial needs outlined in this document NGO CASA will have to strengthen its ability to generate the donor's funds from several sources, by both securing current partnerships and cooperation, as well as establishing the new ones. To accomplish this, NGO CASA will continue to develop its fundraising and project writing capacities, which may include the engagement of additional internal and external experts. NGO will develop detailed budget projections for the next four years. NGO CASA will also maintain low overhead costs through cost-containment strategies. Thus, with this strategic goal, CASA is seeking to:

- Increase grant-seeking and project-writing capabilities
- Increase fundraising revenue streams
- Reduce current overhead costs such as rent
- Explore options for establishing endowments and other tools for long-term sustainability.

2. Human resources

NGO CASA will focus on increasing human resources capacities as a means of building effective systems for long-term stability and growth. A human resources strategy and HR manual capable of providing clear guidelines to all staff was developed. Here are some of the needs in this regard to human resources identified so far:

- Top priority within this is engaging highly skilled senior management staff to oversee and ensure successful implementation of the programs and overall success of the organization
- Engaging project staff from preferably the Kosovo Albanian community permanently would significantly impact cooperation with local and central institutions primarily, but also with facilitating trust-building activities and inter-ethnic dialog
- Establish a more formal human resources system (including related policies, manuals, etc.) covering all aspects of NGO CASA employment practices, such as recruitment, hiring, delegation of authorities, roles and responsibilities, and employee evaluation and promotion
- Devise a leadership development strategy including recruitment of new talents, internal training, and promotions to expand NGO CASA leadership capacity at the scale and complexity of intended growth
- Establish a Council of Advisors and reinforce Board of Directors
- Improve training in essential skills for NGO CASA staff
- Improve the NGO CASA volunteering program

3. Infrastructure

NGO CASA has identified critical areas where it needs additional infrastructure:

- ✓ Informational Technology structure still needs to be reinforced as a backbone of many NGO CASA initiatives, including purchasing those in monitoring and evaluation, field surveys and questionnaires (tablets) communication (conference call equipment), public relations (professional camera), events, and training (projector), and similar
 - Purchase and integrate all relevant software
 - Develop IT policies and staff training
 - Maintenance and improvement of websites/social media profile
- ✓ Office Infrastructure

As NGO CASA grows, it will need additional adequate offices and training facilities to support its activities. Following the cost-reduction policy, NGO CASA will seek the most cost-efficient options for the additional office premises and will establish institutional cooperation with relevant entities in the areas of operation that will foresee the use of training and activity premises. Activities are:

- Expand the main office in the north of Kosovo
- Find more long-term sustainable space for the Barabar Centre
- Establish the working station in central Kosovo

- Establish cooperation with Mitrovica-based international and local institutions related to the use of training premises available in the areas.

4. Financial systems

NGO CASA will continue to professionalize its financial management system to reflect firmly organization as transparent and accountable in finance, with credible financial systems and rigorous accounting practices in place. To achieve this, NGO CASA will:

- Further reinforce the NGO CASA accounting practices, keep up with the novelties
- Strengthen procedures and policies related to financial management
- Reinforce the system of reporting and document management.

5. Internal communications and public relations

CASA still needs to develop its Communication and PR Strategy. The communication initiative will seek to reinforce channels of internal communication and public relations. This initiative will also combine with the fundraising initiative to develop a sophisticated external communication and public relations strategy capable of representing NGO CASA to its large audience of development workers, governmental institutions, donors, educators, students, media, and the general public.

This Communication and PR Strategy will accomplish the following:

- Asses the current internal communication system
- Develop an internal communication plan
- Develop a communication manual for all NGO CASA staff
- Establish a Public Relations plan, including an updated website and promotional materials coordinated by the public relations officer.

Cross-cutting issues

NGO CASA identified and integrated cross-cutting issues into this strategic document as essential for ensuring comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable development. By embedding these cross-cutting issues CASA aims to ensure that the initiatives are more holistic, effective, and sustainable, ultimately leading to greater impact and improved outcomes for the targeted communities. These issues are overarching themes that will be considered across all programs and initiatives:

Open, transparent, and participatory methods in project implementation as guarantees for substantial social mobilization. Keeping open, transparent, and participatory methods in project implementation as

a guarantee for substantial citizen participation and trust-building activities. NGO CASA operations should be based on a holistic approach that foresees cooperation with all relevant institutions, organizations, and beneficiaries to achieve sustainable intervention and community partnership. Priority is to keep open communication channels and regularly update stakeholders on project progress, challenges, and achievements. This will ensure that the community is informed and engaged in the project implementation and that their feedback and suggestions are considered.

Results-based management involves setting clear goals and objectives, measuring progress against those goals, and using data to inform decision-making. By adopting a results-based management approach, NGO CASA can ensure that its interventions are evidence-based, effective, and efficient, while also promoting transparency and accountability.

Inclusive and participatory decision-making process that involves all stakeholders, including women, youth, and vulnerable and marginalized groups, in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects. Ensure the strategic plan reflects the diverse perspectives and needs of all stakeholders. Through this process, CASA aims to promote transparency, accountability, and community ownership of the interventions.

A community-based participatory approach will enable working closely with community members to identify their needs, develop solutions, and implement interventions. By involving the community in all stages of the project, NGO CASA can ensure that the interventions are culturally appropriate, effective, and sustainable.

Implementation timeline is one of the crucial priorities in the successful implantation of the projects, by setting the key milestones and deadlines for each strategic initiative; and **responsibility matrix** where responsibilities for each action item to specific team members or departments will be assigned.

Human rights-based approach: CASA adopted a rights-based approach in all programs and activities, ensuring that they contribute to the realization of human and community rights of Kosovo Serbs and other non-majorities in Kosovo. It also means to reflect on project activities monitoring, informing, and advocating for human rights issues and advocating for the protection and promotion of human rights. CASA will monitor the compliance of central and local authorities with human rights standards and indicators, identifying cases of violations, gaps, and concerns, and providing practical recommendations. To ensure that programs are inclusive and accessible to all, including underrepresented, marginalized, and vulnerable groups.

Gender mainstreaming of the overall organization's regular operations and activities is ensured through the NGO CASA's *Gender and Vulnerable Groups Policy Mainstreaming*, which includes internal monitoring mechanisms such as the Gender Equality Advisor in CASA Council. The draft of the strategic documents, program and project proposals, and internal operational guidelines, have to be regularly shared with Council members in charge of gender mainstreaming policies, as an affirmative measure to accommodate gender mainstreaming initiatives within the organization's entire scope of work. This is a crucial procedural step in line with the existing organization policies on gender mainstreaming. The member of the Council in charge of gender policies should be encouraged to suggest alternations in the design of the

project that assure a non-discriminatory and affirmative approach of the organization towards the interest of women, and documents should be adjusted accordingly.

Youth Engagement: Develop programs specifically targeting youth, focusing on advocacy, civic engagement, leadership, volunteerism, education, employment, etc. Involve young people in program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Partnerships and collaborations are recognized as essential for achieving sustainable change, and CASA will actively seek to work with all relevant institutions, organizations, and beneficiaries to achieve its programmatic and strategic goals. This approach will enable organizations to leverage resources, expertise, and networks to create meaningful and lasting change in the targeted area. CASA needs to ensure that organizations share similar values and ethical standards and that the partnership provides tangible benefits to both organizations.

Collaborative governance involves bringing together stakeholders from different sectors and levels of government to work together on common goals. By engaging in collaborative governance, NGO CASA can promote transparency, accountability, and open communication, while also building trust and fostering cooperation among stakeholders.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships involve collaborating with diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector actors, to achieve common goals. By building partnerships with a range of stakeholders, NGO CASA can leverage its resources, expertise, and networks to achieve more comprehensive and sustainable results.

Environmental-friendly policies and practices are in place, in both project activities and CASA's internal operations. NGO is seeking to establish and operate in eco-friendly spaces, prioritizing environmentally friendly materials, banning the use of plastics, and promoting energy efficiency practices. CASA actively addresses potential environmental impacts by focusing on efficient resource consumption, including 1. Digital operational model (minimizes the use of printed materials by adopting digital forms and communications wherever possible); 2. Recycling (use of recycled materials in daily operations), 3. Energy Efficiency practices (in office spaces), and 4. Rationalization of transportation (travel by carefully planning trips and combining tasks).

Sustainability should be one of the focuses of the organization, seeking strategies and approaches that promote and ensure long-term sustainability and resilience.

Innovation could be one of the keys to adapting to the competitive fundraising environment, to encourage innovative approaches to problem-solving and program delivery.

Risks and Mitigation

During the planning stage of the Integrated Strategic Plan 2024-2027, stakeholders worked on the identification and proactive addressing of the risks that can impact operations, credibility, and effectiveness of the initiatives undertaken by the CASA. Below are the risks and potential mitigation strategies CASA has developed for enhancing the resilience and effectiveness of the organization in achieving its missions.

	Definition of risk	Occurrence probability (L/M/H)	Impact	Mitigation methods
1.	Citizens` hesitation to engage in civic initiative due to the fear of retaliation by its political leaders	High	The potential hesitation of individuals to engage could impact the overall effectiveness and reach of the programs, reducing their ability to drive meaningful social change and hindering the progress toward achieving the organization's goals.	These are structural risks integrated into the mission of CASA and its objectives since its very beginning. This means that the organization has developed a structural approach (methods), programs, projects, tools, protocols, and internal competencies to mitigate this risk. These measures are fully elaborated in the organization's Integrated Strategic Plan 2024-2027 as well.
2.	Political instability	High	Political changes or instability in Kosovo that may include shifts in leadership, policy reforms, or ethnic tensions could affect the program/project implementation timelines, involvement of community stakeholders and governmental entities, or/or affect the overall regulatory environment.	The management and project team(s) will proactively monitor political developments in Kosovo to swiftly adapt to any instability or policy changes. Flexible operational strategies will be maintained to navigate potential disruptions, ensuring continued engagement with governmental bodies and community stakeholders (using online means of communication, sensitive scheduling of public events, etc).
3.	Institutional reluctance to adapt/respond	Medium	Such a reluctance may stem from conflicting priorities,	To mitigate this risk, CASA will implement strategic advocacy efforts to build

	to proposed policy inputs		lack of consensus among stakeholders, or institutional inertia towards change. Such factors could impede the ability to achieve intended policy outcomes and hinder progress toward broader programmatic goals.	consensus, demonstrate policy benefits through evidence-based presentations, and ensure active engagement of institutions by leveraging existing partnerships and connections built through organization work in the previous period.
4.	Community prejudices and mistrust in the civic sector	Medium	The community's prejudices and mistrust in the civic sector, if ignored, could significantly undermine NGO CASA's efforts, limiting participation and support for their initiatives and thereby reducing the overall impact and effectiveness of the programs.	The main mitigation measures are structurally embedded in the operational model of CASA and include the development of direct mechanisms for citizen inclusion and insights into the organization's work (CASA Council), transparent communication, and integrity in the representation of community interests in public (media).
5.	Inconsistent and insufficient donor support	Medium	The impact of inconsistent and insufficient donor support could severely limit the organization's capacity to plan, sustain, and implement its programs effectively, jeopardizing the continuity and success of its initiatives.	The key strategies in mitigating this risk are the diversification of funding sources, programmatic consistency, and maintaining strong relationships with existing donors by demonstrating the impact of funded projects. The specific focus of the organization will be to accumulate institutional grants to enable the organization to fill in the programmatic and operational gaps.
6.	Deficiency in senior leadership of the organization	High	As CASA aspires to complex social changes that require strong and effective leadership, a	The strategies in mitigation of these risks include the inclusion of the position of Program Director in the organization's Integrated

			deficiency in senior leadership can result in poor strategic decision-making, reduced organizational effectiveness, and a lack of direction and vision.	Strategic Plan which will enable the organization a better planning and diverse means to engage the Program director on a full-time basis.
7.	Staff-related risks: High staff turnover, burnout, insufficient skills. Deficiencies in staff ability to communicate with project beneficiaries and the public in Albanian language.	Medium	Frequent staff turnover, due to unstable funding and donor dependence, can hinder program implementation, cause burnout among remaining staff, and disrupt activities if staff are not well-matched to project needs. Expansion of activities also requires staff proficient in both official languages of Kosovo, particularly for engaging local institutions and the Kosovo Albanian community.	CASA has established a supportive and healthy work environment, employing effective recruitment and retention strategies. In the upcoming period, the organization will offer extensive opportunities for professional development and training. Additionally, CASA plans to actively recruit staff members from the Kosovo Albanian community to improve communication and streamline project activities.
8.	Cultural and social resistance to women inclusion	Medium	Cultural and social resistance to the social affirmation of women leaders can manifest in various forms, including entrenched societal norms, traditional beliefs, and patriarchal structures that oppose changes toward gender	Given that this is integrated risks that have been accounted for from in the strategy of CASA, main remediation actions are embedded in its operation. This includes gender mainstreaming methodologies, affirmative gender quotas, and internal monitoring capacity (Gender Equality Advisor in CASA Council).

			equality. These resistances can significantly hinder the progress and impact of gender-related projects.	
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Monitoring and Evaluation

The NGO CASA is to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation plan that includes performance indicators established for each objective and result, regular annual (progress) reports to track the progress toward each objective and to identify any challenges or obstacles that need to be addressed, including establishing internal and external evaluation practices, such as:

Feedback Mechanisms: Establish mechanisms for collecting feedback from the community, CSOs, and beneficiaries to ensure advocacy, policy, and trust-building efforts are aligned with their needs and interests.

Impact Assessment: Regularly assess the impact of advocacy, policy, and trust-building activities and adjust strategies and approaches as needed.

Transparency and Reporting: Keep the beneficiaries and stakeholders informed about the progress and outcomes of advocacy actions through regular reports and updates on regular and social media as well.

Review of the strategic plan: Regular annual review and adjustment if needed, of the implementation progress by the organization management and members of the project teams, including consultation with the stakeholders. In 2027, review and development of the new strategy for the organization for the upcoming period (the length of the period will be decided based on the results and lessons learned).