GALE THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR LGBT EDUCATION

Report 2009

Summary

In 2009, the Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE) shifted its focus from facilitating a global network of educators to initiating 10 concrete local projects on storytelling and on working with schools.

In Colombia, Chile and Peru, two year projects were initiated to work with schools. In the transnational GALE collaboration, baseline questionnaires, ways to approach schools and to collaborate with them, and methods to discuss heteronormativity and homophobia with students and school staff are being developed. Also, the development of a tool kit for working with schools with about 30 tools was started.

In Indonesia and the Philippines, a story collection project started in which about 50 stories will be collected and published in an educational format in 2010. In addition, a storytelling project with four small pilots and an international summer school for storytellers was developed and will be implemented in 2010. In addition, the development of a tool kit for storytellers and panel sessions about homophobia was started.

Much attention was given to the search for additional funding next to the core funding of HIVOS. A strategic fundraising plan was developed, a fundraising working group was created, over 40 donors were explored and 6 project proposals were developed and submitted. In Europe, a quick scan was done to lay a fundament of knowledge and future partners. However, partly because of the economic crisis, this considerable investment did not yet pay off.

Despite these setbacks, GALE grew with 25% to 360 members and the website had over 17000 visitors. Also, GALE was accepted as a formal operational partner of UNESCO, thus being the first UNESCO partner to focus on LGBT issues.

Introduction

GALE, the Global Alliance for LGBT Education, experienced an important shift in focus in the first half or 2009. Two consultations between Empowerment Lifestyle Services (coordinating organization of GALE) and HIVOS (main financial donor) resulted in a major shift in the collaboration and focus of GALE. The focus shifted from functioning as a global network towards facilitating local projects.

Originally, HIVOS intended to partner with Empowerment Lifestyle Services to build more mutual expertise on capacity building and education and to interest other donors to fund educational projects. The partners were not able to carry out this agreement as originally planned. The general idea to create educational expertise within HIVOS and to acquire new budgets was too ambitious for the first 3 years of the network. In early 2009, HIVOS decided to shift her focus to funding concrete projects. In this reassessment, funding the network function of GALE did not have priority.

The working plan of GALE was seriously amended in the summer of 2009. In the six months, the original plan put a strong focus on professionalizing the structure and PR of GALE. In the second six months, the focus shifted to setting up a few concrete projects.

Strengthening the GALE structure

Restructuring the GALE Foundation
The GALE Foundation, which was the legal body in which HIVOS and Empowerment Lifestyle Services collaborated, was reformed. It will become a support foundation for GALE projects. The new GALE Foundation will have Peter Dankmeijer as Operational Board/Executive Director and a Supervisory Board (Raad van Toezicht) with 3 Dutch members. Registration of a formal international board is, due to new regulations top combat terrorism, so time consuming and costly, that it was deemed not feasible. The formal installation of the reformed foundation will take place in 2010. Because the contract between HIVOS and Empowerment Lifestyle Services lasts till 31 December 2010, GALE formally remains a project of Empowerment until that date. New projects and income will be applied for and managed through the GALE Foundation.

International Advisory Committee
The International Advisory Committee decided in 2008 it wanted to function as an expert advisory

body. Because of the new focus on funding concrete local projects, there is no budget to convene the International Advisory Committee in live sessions. After the restructuring of the Foundation and the member's participation in 2010, attention will be given to a new position of the International Advisory Committee.

Alliance member's participation

The number of members of GALE grew from 261 to 360 (99 new members), a growth of 25%. The growth of Brazilian members is still continuous, but in the later part of 2009 also new members from Europe registered (due to the European quick scan) and some African members joined.
In 2010, the GALE website will have a slight overhaul to facilitate more member participation.

Fundraising

A fundraising working group was created, which worked very actively on making an overview of 40 potential funds for GALE, possible projects angles and deadlines. Based on this assessment, a fundraising plan was developed. In the fundraising plan, 3 main strategies are set out. In Europe, the main budgets should come from European funds. The focus of this budget line is schools and storytelling. In Asia and Latin America, the focus is storytelling and school respectively. In Africa, the media-project will not get a follow-up and a new strategy needs to be developed. Basic storytelling combined with capacity building of LGBT communities seems to be the most useful approach. Potential donors and partners still need to be explored before a sound funding strategy can be developed.
In most countries, a need was voiced to connect storytelling projects and capacity building with a stronger political emphasis. To meet this need, the concept of mapping the Right to Education was developed.

Internet-based knowledge sharing

Empowerment attempted to recruit volunteers to maintain the website: news, calendar, GALE Update and LGBT Education. This was not yet successful. The professional editor of the website started to change sex in late 2009; as a result of this and of the shift in focus, the news on the website was kept less up to date than in the first semester.

The website had 17462 visitors, viewing 78491 pages in 2009. The information for members, the quick scan forms and the world map/country pages were the most visited pages.
53 news articles and 36 background articles were published and translated in English, Spanish and French. In the second part of 2009, the web moderator put less energy in news articles and more in updating the country files on the world map. The world map will be updated and more interactive in 2010.

The edu system was evaluated and will be put off-line; it does not work adequately and costs too much time to maintain. Asking a real monetary contribution to GALE is not a realistic option: most members in the South cannot afford it and the administration and transfer costs are to high to make it worthwhile.
Empowerment developed several proposals to acquire funding for documenting good practices on the website (especially on schools and peer education).

Based on feedback from several projects and results from the quick scan, GALE started to think about a more direct link between interaction on the website and within GALE, education issues and political activism, which is the prime interest of local LGBT groups. This process resulted in the development of a strategy to monitor the Right to Education and Training, a start with the revision of the website and the development of a project proposal for further implementation of this monitoring.

Monitoring the Right to Education and Training

Empowerment developed a project proposal in which the existing quick scan is combined with monitoring the Right to Education and Training. This proposal has the following elements:
- GALE expands its mapping of existing educational interventions to monitoring the legal and social implementation of the Right to Education and Training. The Yogyakarta Principles are used as the legal background for this. The mapping is done by dissemination of an online survey.
- GALE reports on the mapping results by publishing summaries on country pages, which can be found by clicking on the world map on the GALE website.
- With more funds the currently available, GALE would speed up this process by recruiting country reporters and assisting them to do the mapping and report on it. The results can also be used as input in the UPR Reviews.
- Also, country or state think tanks could be established to more continuously monitor the

proper implementation of the Right to Education and Training, advocate for improvement and connect local partners to develop local strategies and projects. A stepping stone to create such groups could be to organize local "Tea and Cake" Sessions, an idea which was explored by International Advisory Committee member Daniel Witthaus in Australia.

Collaboration was sought with Education International (the world umbrella federation of teacher trade unions). A proposal for substantial funding was made and submitted. There has been some discussion about the possibility of supporting education paragraphs in the UPR reviews.

To enable GALE to start working on monitoring the Right to Education and Training while there is no proper funding yet, Empowerment edited the online quick scan survey to this end. The survey was re-translated in several languages. We started to fill the country pages on the world map with information. This process needs to be finalized in 2010.

Empowerment started to carry out the quick scan/Right to Education Monitor in Europe. In 2009, 140 contacts were identified and the preliminary results were presented at the ILGA Europe conference. This mapping is important to have a basis of information and partners to support future project proposals to EU funding agencies. The European quick scan will be finalized in 2010.

Teacher Training and Safer Schools

Empowerment started with the development of a toolbox for local projects dealing with schools and teacher training. In 2009, an outline was made and a start was made with writing first drafts. It is expected that the toolbox will be finished in late 2010.

With APROFA in Chile, Colombia Diversa in Colombia and PACT Peru contracts were made to implement two year school projects.
The three partners will collaborate on a number of concrete common issues:
1. They will develop questionnaires which are partly the same and contain questions that allow for scientific cross-cultural comparison. The questionnaires serve to explore the situation in schools and to do baseline research before starting innovation processes.
2. They will develop, monitor and evaluate ways to approach schools and to collaborate with them.
3. They will develop ways to interactively and effectively discuss heteronormativity and homophobia with students, school staff and (if possible) parents
4. They will evaluate the working processes in the collaboration
5. They will collaborate on follow-up plans to enhance the experiences or/and promote the transfer to other schools.

These projects will result in input for a reviewed toolbox and evidence based methods. Empowerment will function as a advising and diffusion partner in these projects.

Empowerment attempted but was not yet successful in acquiring funding for a documentation project to analyze and rate the success of existing school and teacher training projects and interventions.

Storytelling

The Ardhenari Institute developed a method to collect stories and use these as illustrations of (challenges to proper implementation of) the Yogyakarta Principles (additional funding by Tides Foundation, collaboration with ISIS Manila). The project started in the summer of 2009 and in the fall, the project partners started to collect about 50 stories, of L, G, B and T members of diverse regions and communities. The project will be finalized in 2010.

A Grundvig proposal by Empowerment and four organizations from Poland and the Baltic States to develop storytelling peer education methods failed to get funded.

Empowerment collected good practices on peer LGBT storytelling and started the development of a guide to create local GALE peer education groups and a training for volunteers. In addition, in the working plan of 2010 a concrete plan for 4 storytelling projects and a global exchange in a summer school on storytelling was developed. Explorations were done on the location for the summer school. After a discussion with the organizers of the Universités d'Eté Euro-Méditerranéennes des Homosexualités (UEEH), which annually takes place in Marseille, France; it was decided to organize the summer school in collaboration. Empowerment started with the development of a funding proposal to the EU Youth in Action Fund and to seek collaboration with IGLYO on this and future work with young people.

International collaboration

UNESCO
Based on the application of late 2008, GALE was granted the status of having operational relations with UNESCO in October 2009. GALE is the first network focusing on LGBT issues to acquire such a formal status. We thank especially the Dutch government for her diplomatic interventions to support this application.

In late 2009, a visit was made to Paris to establish a local volunteer group to maintain daily contact with UNESCO. We were able to interest a number of people, including representatives of the French LGBT Parents Association and IDAHO. Due to their work schedules, the group will become active after the summer of 2010.

During the same visit to Paris, several representatives of the UNESCO staff were visited. The UNESCO Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in the Education Sector of the Section HIV and AIDS presented the new UNESCO Technical Guidelines on sex education and asked GALE to be a partner in exploring how the LGBT issues, which are explicitly part of these guidelines, can be implemented.

A (hidden) UNESCO contact group was created on the GALE website, but recruiting members for it was delayed until the local working group is able to help manage it.

Outgames
GALE organized a workshop "Education about LGBT issues in five continents" during the Outgames in Copenhagen. The workshop had about 50 participants. The feedback from the audience was very positive. An issue of LGBT Education was published and 400 copies were disseminated during the Outgames.

Education International
GALE reached out to Education International, especially to seek collaboration on the worldwide "Right to Education" proposal.

IGLYO
In the work of GALE, young people have asked several times for opportunities to participate in projects or to develop specific young projects. For this, GALE has actively sought collaboration with IGLYO in 2007-2009. However, also IGLYO was very busy with current priorities. In December 2009, a new IGLYO Board was elected, and new interest arose to collaborate in 2010.

ILGA
In late 2009, ILGA announced to start an inventory on LGBT educational interventions. ILGA chose not to collaborate with GALE in the inventory stage, although GALE already has already worked for 4 years on the collection of educational interventions worldwide. ILGA intends to consult with GALE at a later stage.

GALE did a presentation of the European quick scan at the ILGA Europe Conference in Malta.

Budget
The budget of GALE in 2010 amounted to € 140,600. Due to the shift in focus, most of the budget was redirected to fund a series on 10 local projects.

It took most of the last months of 2009 to develop the partnerships and contracts for these projects, which resulted in and under-spending of € 51,000, which will be spend in 2010 in addition to the budget of € 100,000 which HIVOS, the Tides Foundation and the American Jewish World Service provide.