

Intervention of the Dutch delegation, by Mr. DANKMEIJER, in workshop 2b (the role of the government and its partnerships with civil society to broaden the concept of inclusive education), Wednesday 26-11-2008 of the International Conference on Education, Geneva

I would like to thank Mr. Mamadou NDOYE of Senegal for his introduction which highlighted the need for a focus on reform focused at school success and policies of Ministries of Education that need to be integrated with policies of other Ministries.

I would like to draw your attention to the situation of students who are not able to conform to expected male or female gender roles. They are often objects of ridicule and bullying, which often remains unchallenged by school staff. We estimate this type of bullying annually results in about six millions cases of drop-out worldwide. These drop-out children often also face rejection even by their parents, and wind up having to live on the streets. They may be denied regular jobs and in such cases sometimes have to resort to prostitution to survive. In turn, they are at a huge risk of contracting and spreading HIV and other STDs.

Solving such problems is a huge challenge, because in man countries sexual diversity remains a sensitive issue and because it involves a combined approach of general gender sensitivity, social safer school policies, a targeted health policy and socially responsible police and justice policies.

It appears that these challenges can be faced best when there is an open dialogue between several government authorities, both on the national and local levels and civil society organizations.

Good examples are the Brazilian, Dutch and South African governments who have forged national alliances for this purpose, involving -among others- trade unions, professional networks, commercial companies and gay, lesbian and transgender organizations with different religious and cultural backgrounds. I could also mention more and less explicit alliances in Costa Rica, Colombia, Thailand and India.

I would advise governments to forge such alliances in their own countries. The Dutch government supports a global network, GALE (The Global Alliance for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Education) which focuses on enhancing comprehensive safer school policies including these issues. As director of this network I would be happy to connect you to members of our network to assist in such processes.

[Picture: Mr.Vernor Muñoz Villalobos, special rapporteur on the right to education (OHCHR) chairs workshop 2d]