

LGBT EDUCATION

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UNESCO RECOMMENDATIONS

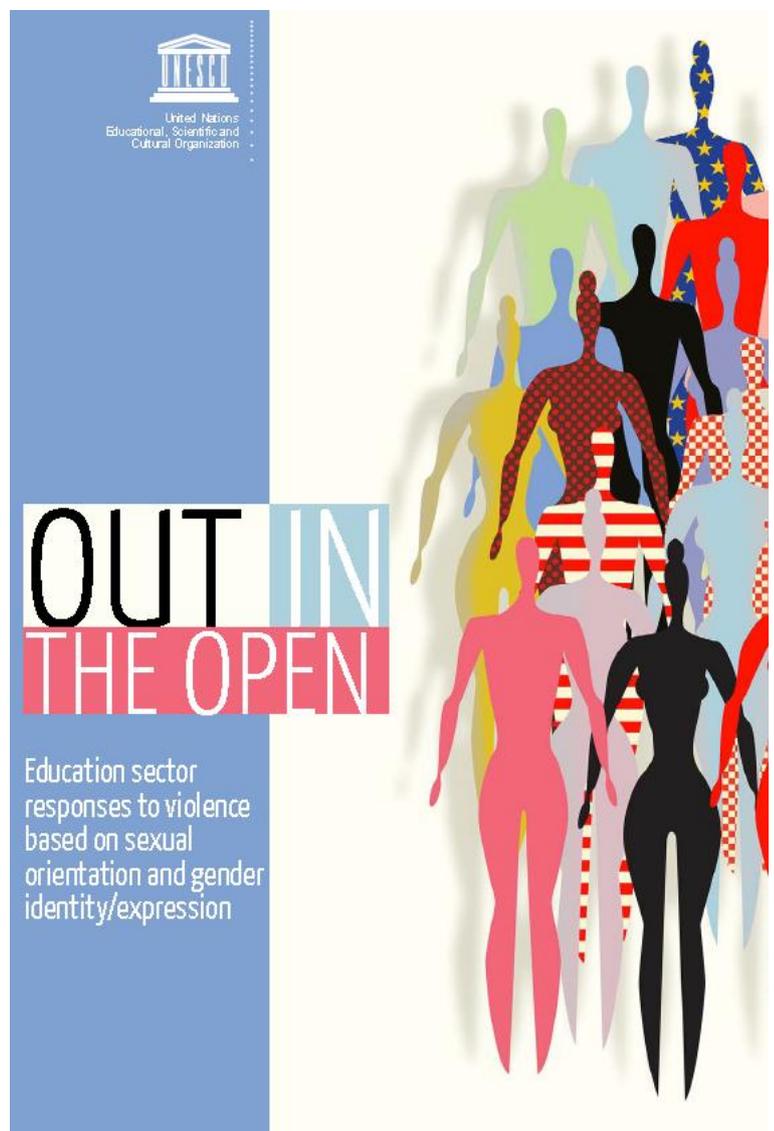
UNESCO presents second report on SOGIE bullying

17 May, 2016 - At the opening of the UNESCO Ministerial Conference on ending violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) the second state of affairs report on SOGIE report was presented. The report is full of new statistics and good practices. A good comparison with the first report of 2012 is not possible because the research methodologies are very different. Still, the report comes with 7 recommendations.

Recommendations

The global review recommends that the education sector takes the following actions to support effective responses to school-related homophobic and transphobic violence:

1. Monitor systematically the prevalence of violence in educational settings, including violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.



2. Establish comprehensive national and school policies to prevent and address violence in educational settings, including violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.
3. Ensure that curricula and learning materials are inclusive.

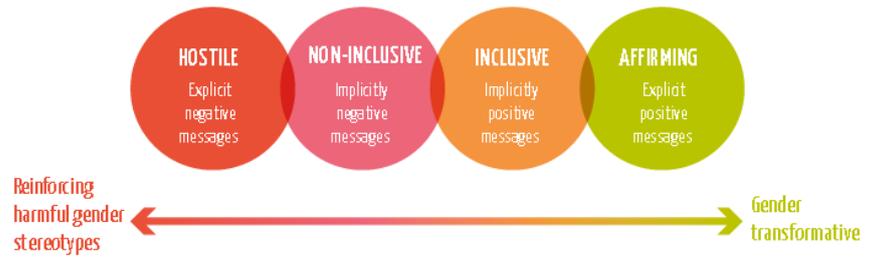


Image: UNESCO distinguishes four types of supportive on non-supportive curricula

4. Provide training and support to teachers and other education and school staff to prevent and address violence in educational settings, including violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.
5. Ensure safe school environments are inclusive and provide support for students affected by violence, including violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, and their families.
6. Provide access to non-judgmental and accurate information on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression through information campaigns and partnerships with civil society and the wider school community.
7. Evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of education sector responses to violence, including violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

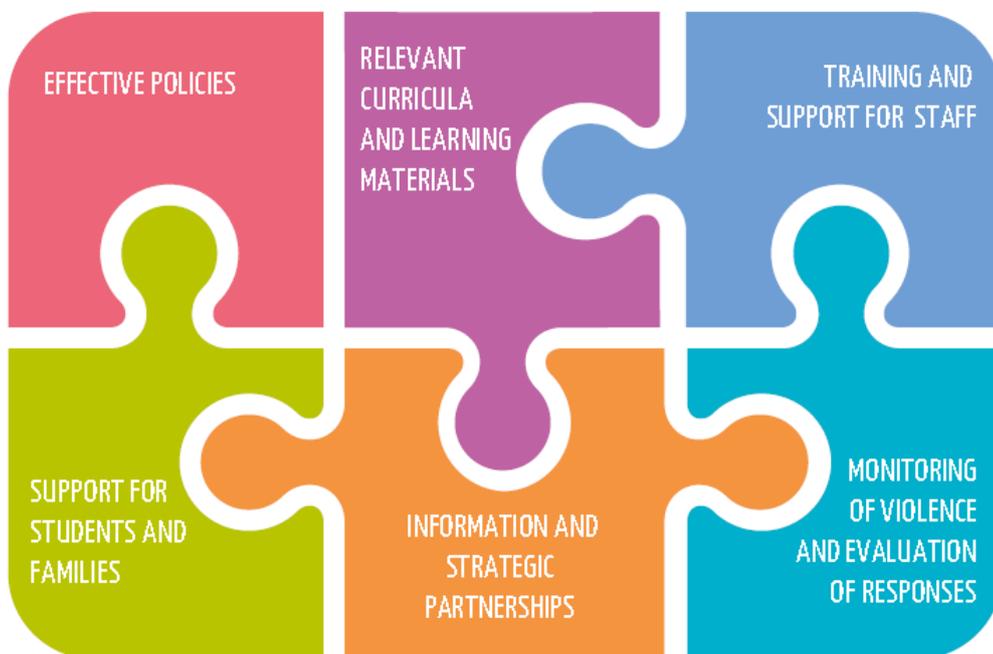


Image: 6 areas to work in for a comprehensive education sector policy to combat SOGIE related violence

Source: UNESCO 2016, "Out in the open"
<http://www.gale.info/doc/unesco/INT-2016-UNESCO-OutInTheOpen.pdf>

State and UNESCO representatives speak out against homophobic bullying

18 May, 2017 - At the UNESCO Ministerial Conference “Out in the Open”, several State officials and UNESCO senior staff representatives spoke out against homophobic and transphobic bullying. The most important ones were Qian Tang and Getachew Engida (UNESCO), Jet Bussemaker (the Dutch minister of education), Kihei Maekawa (the Japanese deputy minister of education), Catherine Lhamon (ministry of education USA), Phineas Langa Magagula (Minister of Education and Training Swaziland, Sonia Mora Escalante (Costa Rican minister of education), Ayesha Wentworth (deputy director in the Namibian ministry of education), Marta Santos Pais (special representative of the United Nations), and Kate Gilmore (OHCHR).

Image: Phineas Langa Magagula, Minister of Education of Swaziland, present the research on diversity related bullying in his country and his commitment to combating it.

Ministers of education showing support

A range of ministers of education, deputy ministers and ministries of education directors pledged support to combat homophobic entrance public bullying in their education systems. A group of about 27 progressive countries has pledged commitment to further the strategy that has been in the past four years. UNESCO project and the following strategy to get commitment from other states was initiated by the Netherlands and lead by its minister Jet Bussemaker. It was good to see that the traditionally supportive states were now joined by Japan, Costa Rica, Namibia, and Swaziland. However, the traditionally supportive Brazil was not visible at the conference.



UNESCO officials commit to maintaining the strategy

It was also noteworthy that several UNESCO officials expressed their commitment to keep on combating violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. The most notable UNESCO officials were Getachew Engida and Qian Tang. Getachew Engida is Deputy Director-General and expressed his commitment also on behalf of the Director-General, Ms. Irina Bokova. Wr. Qian Tang (left image) is Assistant Director General

for Education and spoke out two times. These expressions of commitment give the hope that UNESCO will proceed on her

strategy against violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, even when there is resistance from some states and with limited funding.

International officials speaking out

There were also some international officials that spoke out in support for the UNESCO strategy. Such support was to be expected of Marta Santos Pais and Kate Gilmore (Deputy High-Commissioner of OHCHR), but it was a disappointment that Reine Apalpinigansou (Special rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa) cancelled her participation.

UNESCO SUPPORTED RESEARCH

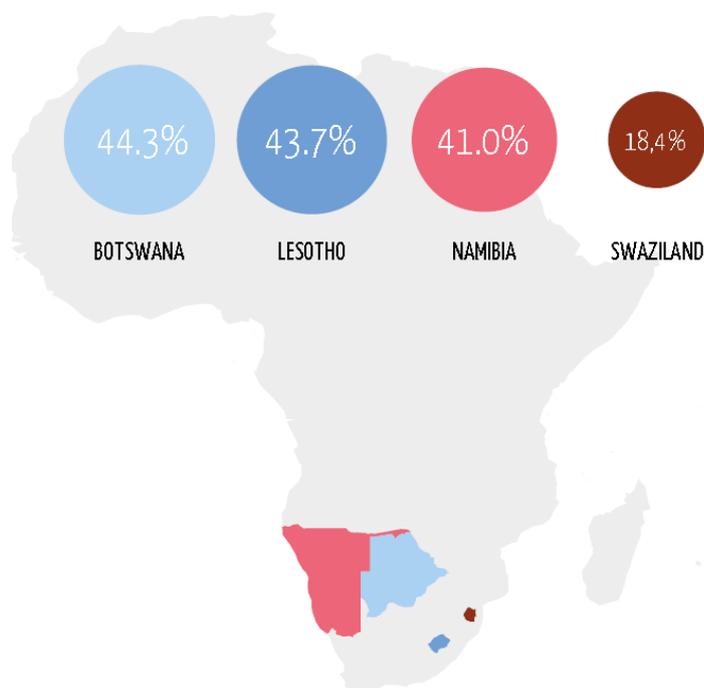
Worldwide prevalence of violence against gender nonconformity

18 May, 2016 - Two days of research presentations at the global UNESCO conference make three things clear. First, the prevalence of violence against LGBT students is high across almost all countries. And second, most violence is actually not homophobic bullying, but gender related bullying. Effeminate boys and strong girls carry the brunt of the aggression. Third, most states do not respond to this violence.

Prevalence high

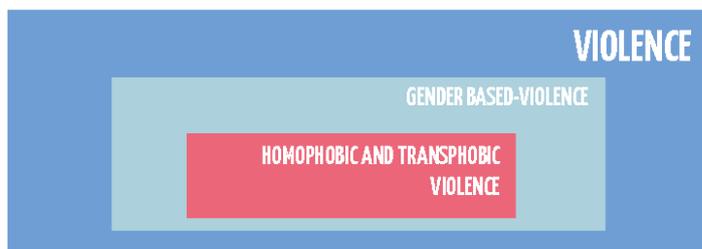
All research results have in common that the prevalence of SOGIE-related bullying is high. Although the statistics are not completely comparable because researchers use a different ways of measuring, it is clear that the level of homophobia and trans-phobia in schools is usually between three and six times as high as for other students. For example, in New Zealand, LGB students are three times more likely to be bullied than their heterosexual peers. Transgender students are five times more likely to be bullied than non-transgender students. In Argentina, 45% of transgender students drop out of school because of bullying or simply because of being excluded from school. In Chile, 33% of students have made negative remarks in relation to sexual orientation. In Thailand, 55% of LGBT students experienced physical or psychological violence in the past month. In southern African countries, "diversity related" violence was between 41 and 44% in Namibia, Lesotho and Botswana.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF DIVERSITY-RELATED VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS



Source: UNESCO, 2015

FIGURE 2 VIOLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS:
HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC VIOLENCE IS A FORM OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Homophobia is mainly gendered violence

The violence also has in common that students who are not gender conforming are bullied much more than others. In practice this means that visible transgender students are most targeted with violence. Boys who look like the girls are next in

line, followed by, bisexuals and lesbians. Also heterosexual students who are not gender conforming are targets of name-calling and bullying.

State responses are usually inadequate

In most countries, the state response to such violence is completely inadequate. According to UNESCO, one of the main reasons for this is the lack of research and data on LGBT , and gender related violence. But in many countries there is not even a willingness to do research because of negative preconceptions at outright state homophobia and trans-phobia.

GALE questions research focus

One question that can be asked is to what extent they about prevalence of homophobic and transported violence actually helps to set the agenda for improvement. In some countries the cooperation of UNESCO and local organizations with the government on the UNESCO funded research has led to a commitment of the government to do a follow-up on the results. In other countries it is unclear what the impact of the new facts is.

In a range of Western countries, there was already a longer tradition of research on LGBT violence in schools. However, many of these research reports and data never lead to a government response. In most Western countries the government response only started after steady advocacy of local LGBT NGOs. The triggers for a political change often where often high profile news items on teen suicides or examples of gross discrimination, rather than objective data.

Peter Dankmeijer, director of GALE notes: "Maybe not to research or the data itself, but the process of cooperation or advocacy with governments is the most effective determinant of success for change. For a follow-up strategy, we need to consider whether the sole focus on prevalence research is the most effective way to get governments committed to improving the education sector response. I feel it may be more useful to develop a strategy which party relies on statistical research, on documenting examples of violence and discrimination, and sharing and discussing such challenges with governments and educational institutions."

FIGURE 1 PREVALENCE OF BULLYING
REPORTED BY STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT SEXUAL ORIENTATION



Source: UNESCO 2016, "Out in the open" <http://www.gale.info/doc/unesco/INT-2016-UNESCO-OutInTheOpen.pdf>

UNESCO conference closes with whisper for action

19 May, 2016 - At the close of the UNESCO Ministerial Conference “Out in the Open”, 27 States presented a “Call for Action” to each other and to other States. The documents lists 7 possible actions States can take and calls for exchange good practices. The Call to exchange good practices may be one step further than the research on prevalence of violence UNESCO has been undertaking until now. But many of the civil society representatives perceive the call as a “whisper” compared to the earlier hope of the Dutch government that the funding of UNESCO would eventually lead to an intergovernmental resolution with some political impact.



My teacher told my parents that I was troubled because he suspected I was gay.

Antonio, age 19, gay, Mexico

Fact finding to create commitment

When UNESCO started the four year Project to Combat Homophobic Bullying in 2011, the original idea was to close the project with a High Level (Ministerial) conference. One of the aims of this conference was to discuss an international ministerial declaration which would put sexual en gender diversity on the international political education agenda. The focus on bullying was chosen because combating violence is an undisputed issue in the international arena. The strategy of the project had two main priorities. The aim of the project was to do research to map how much bullying and discrimination occurs I schools (prevalence of violence). The expectation was that such facts would create awareness in governments. Facts would also form a basis for a policy agenda to address inequalities and violence. In conjunction with this project UNESCO trained staff of local UNESCO offices on HIV prevention and LGBTI issues, so that they could take part in the local activities of the project.

Hopes for more impact

Apparently, these expectations were too high. The most visible results of the Anti-Bullying project are the results of numerous

researches done different States were such research never was done before. All research results have in common that the prevalence of SOGIE-related bullying is high. They also have in common that student who are not gender conforming are bullied much more than others. In some countries the cooperation with the government on the research has led to a commitment of the government to do a follow-up on the results. In other countries it is unclear what the impact of the new facts is.



Regularly people tell me I do not have the right to live.

Nikita, age 18, trans man, Russia



I was told I brought shame to my society and my religion. I have endless nightmares and suffer depression.

Nora, age 25, lesbian, Middle East

Civil society organizations are very happy with the initiatives but had hoped for more impact. Whether this is realistic remains to be seen. The conference was more focused on presenting research results than on discussing the next steps after this project. This means the discussion about this is just starting.

Sources: UNESCO 2016, "Out in the open" <http://www.gale.info/doc/unesco/Call-for-Action-by-Ministers-of-Education-17May2016-Inclusive-and-Equitable-Education.pdf>, Report of the Civil Society Side Meeting 18 May 2016 <http://www.gale.info/doc/unesco/160518-Report-Civil-Society-Meeting.pdf>



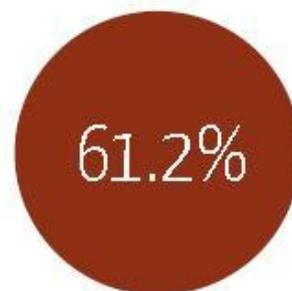
FRIENDS CIRCLE



COMMUNITY



FAMILY



SCHOOL

Source: J. Takács, 2006

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Colophon

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