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INTERNATIONAL NEWS: GALE

GALE offers EU subsidized courses on education strategy and peer education

Interesting news and opportunities for Europeans! The new Erasmus+ program on education offers opportunities to get funding to do courses in other countries than your own.



GALE offers 5 courses which are almost free when you get a grant: Assess homophobia and transphobia in your schools, Strategic advocacy to mainstream attention for homophobia in schools, Schools without homophobia, Dealing with strong opinions and Peer education on sexual diversity. The first two workshops focus on national or local strategies and are useful for advocacy organizations and government officials.

Schools without homophobia and Dealing with strong opinions are especially useful for teachers, but also for peer educators from NGOs. Note: the applications for funding can only be done by organizations, not by individuals. GALE is assisting organizations to develop the application before the deadline (17 March).

Read more » http://www.lgbt-education.info/en/training/open_courses

Spanish research shows need to frame anti-homophobia education in social and diversity education

In January, a large Spanish research was published. The report concludes that in general, staff and teachers perceived the school environment to be positive, but there is also a clear awareness that there remain persisting insults, teasing, exclusion and discrimination against persons who have characteristics that do not conform to the norm, especially the norms on beauty, gender and sexual orientation.



Teachers are unanimous that such behaviors constitute discrimination but high school students tend to consider this kind of insults as mere jokes. However, in practice these insults do generate a hostile environment not only for LGBT students, but for anyone who does not fit rigid heteronormative gender roles.

Although insults persist, a major change has taken place in Spain. For LGBT students, their expectations have become more positive. They can now consider to have a partner, to live with her or him and to have children and / or be in a marriage. While schools still exert institutional resistance to dealing with sexism and homophobia, boys and girls are willing to engage in meaningful assertiveness exercises and

to question heteronormativity and even the sex or gender that was assigned to them in their early years. The report concludes training for both students and staff is of crucial importance. Such training needs not only to focus on the problem of homophobia but especially on how to live and work together with respect to the rich variability of human beings. A short Spanish documentary can be found on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPxo-_cRtgg; see image)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS: GALE

GALE maps the right to education in the 50th State

At the end of 2013, GALE mapped the Right to Education in the 50th State. Still 150 to go!



Els Weersta, who worked as an intern with GALE in the last 6 months, has intensively reached out to a range of NGOs across the globe to fill in the Right to Education Checklist. A lot of NGOs were very enthusiastic. In Azerbaijan, the NGO Nefes decided to put the checklist online and check their input with the constituency. The Checklist is not meant as a survey for individuals, so GAE is now working on a version that can be used by individual LGBTI persons. Els left us (thank you Els!), but the mapping goes on. We hope to finalize the world map in the summer of 2014 and to present a global overview at the ILGA World Conference in Mexico (October).

Do you want to be part of this effort? Fill in the [Right to Education Checklist (<http://www.lgbt-education.info/en/r2echecklist>) for your country!

LOCAL NEWS: IRAN

Iranian cyber police persecutes LGBT information websites

The head of the Iranian Cyber Police in the Western province of Ilam confirmed the arrest of an internet user who used social networks to "teach and promote immorality and homosexuality."

Speaking to the semi-official ISNA News Agency, Major General Ali Abbasi stated that the online activities of the suspect - including inciting the public to engage in immoral acts and homosexuality- was first discovered through the routine online surveillance and monitoring by the Iranian cyber police. "Given the sensitivity of the issue and the widespread outreach of the suspect, the cyber police used different techniques and methods to identify the internet user responsible for those posts".



"Upon the arrest, the individual first denied all charges, but the mounting evidence was such that the person had no choice but to confess.", the police chief told the reporter.

According to the media reports, the case of the suspect was referred to the court for trial. The Iranian Cyber Police has invited the public to report similar cases to the authorities...

Source: Iranian Students News Agency

(<http://isna.ir/fa/news/92111510907/%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%DA%AF%DB%8C%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D9%87%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%B3-%DA%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1>)

LOCAL NEWS: NETHERLANDS

Dutch education alliance publishes quality criteria for LGBT inclusive schools

January 28, 2014 - Today, the Dutch National Alliance for Sexual Diversity in Schools published a booklet "Open & Out: 10 rainbow keys for schools" The booklet, which was published in Dutch, contains 10 criteria for LGBT inclusive schools. The "rainbow keys" are also included in an online test which offers schools tailored advice on how to make next steps in their school safety and their curriculum on "essential citizenship skills", like dealing with diversity and differences between people.

There are two innovative aspects about this new set of criteria. First, they are based on solid empiric evidence from Dutch and international research about what works in schools to make them more supportive towards LGBT students and staff. Secondly, they are formulated in a general way, which makes clear that attention to LGBT safety and issues are integral parts of the general safety and quality of a school for all students and staff. The 10 rainbow keys explicitly link into the quality criteria of the Dutch school Inspectorate.

The 10 keys are:



- Key 1: Do you know how safe your students and staff feel?
- Key 2: Does your school have a vision on how to deal with "teasing", bullying and discrimination?
- Key 3: Does your school have a shared vision on citizenship and diversity?
- Key 4: Do you have clear agreements about respectful behavior?
- Key 5: Does your school consistently deal with negative behavior?
- Key 6: Does your school take action so everyone can express their identity at school?
- Key 7: Does the school have an inclusive curriculum on basic skills for citizenship?
- Key 8: Does the curriculum include specific lessons on sexual diversity? Key 9: Do all the pupils get good quality guidance?
- Key 10: Do you involve students in the quality of the school?

In the text with each key, information is given about the relative impact of measures on the school policy. This way, the widespread myth that a gay and lesbian curriculum will have most effect is dispelled. Dutch research shows that discussing behavioral guidelines and agreeing on them with students in the first week of the school year (includes no name calling) is far more effective than any lesson that may be offered later.

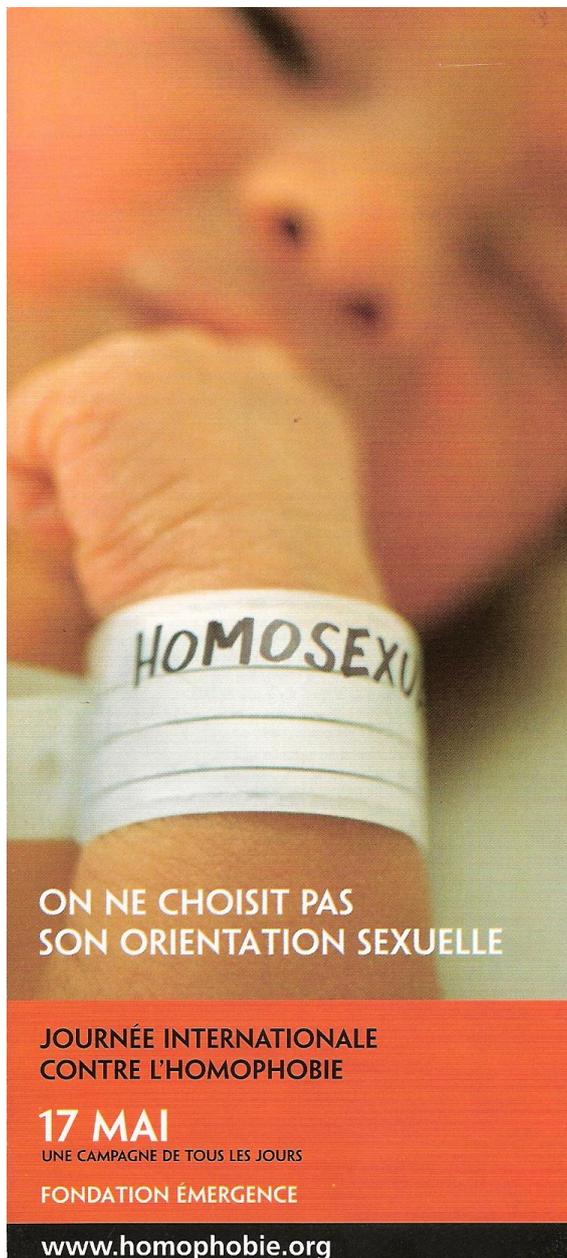
The Dutch alliance states in her press release: "Dutch schools are often willing to change something, but they don't know how. The rainbow keys are meant to make high impact choices."

Apart from publishing the booklet and the online test, the alliance partners (trade unions, public school boards and EduDivers-Expertise Centre on Schools and Sexual Diversity) now visit schools personally, doing a new region each month. In these personal conversations, they give advice and build a "MyID" (my ID, my idea for change) ambassador network. The mission is to end up with MyID ambassadors in each schools you keep promoting "being able to be yourself in school".

The Dutch booklet is available at <http://www.edudivers.nl/doc/onderwijsalliantie/tienregenboogsleutels.pdf>

Genes influence male sexual orientation, but not entirely

Early February, a US study was published which shows that genes play a more significant role than previously thought. This seems to collide with the Darwinian theory of evolution. This seems to favor heterosexual tendencies over homosexual preferences. At least, so would many heteronormative academics and some African presidents argue.



Already since the early 90s it is known that a genetic factor at least partly determines sexual orientation. Homosexuality is more common among brothers and maternal relatives. It has also been shown that there are physical differences can be observed in the brains of gay and straight adults. Academics never seem to think much about studying lesbians.

How can this knowledge be reconciled with the theory of evolution? Scientists have no ready answer to this puzzle, but there are several theories. The [BBC was so kind to list the theories][<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-26089486>].

1. "Gay genes have different effects"

According to the gene theory, the genes that program homosexual orientation in one person, may have a different effect on someone else. It is known that women are often attracted to men with more feminine characteristics. A small dose of these genes can enhance the chance of leading her partnering to such a man and lead to reproduction of less heteronormative offspring. This would give a Darwinian advantage to less heteronormative men. However, genes can also lean the other way. Andrea Camperio-Ciani from

the University of Padova found that women who are related to gay men through their mother's family tend to have more children. So according to Camperio-Ciani, this leads to more heterosexual females.

2. "Gay people are family supporters"

A second theory was stated by Paul Vasey of the University of Lethbridge in Canada. His hypothesis is that homosexuals compensate their lack of children by promoting procreation by others by supporting them financially or by babysitting. Skeptics counter this theory by calculating that homosexuals should



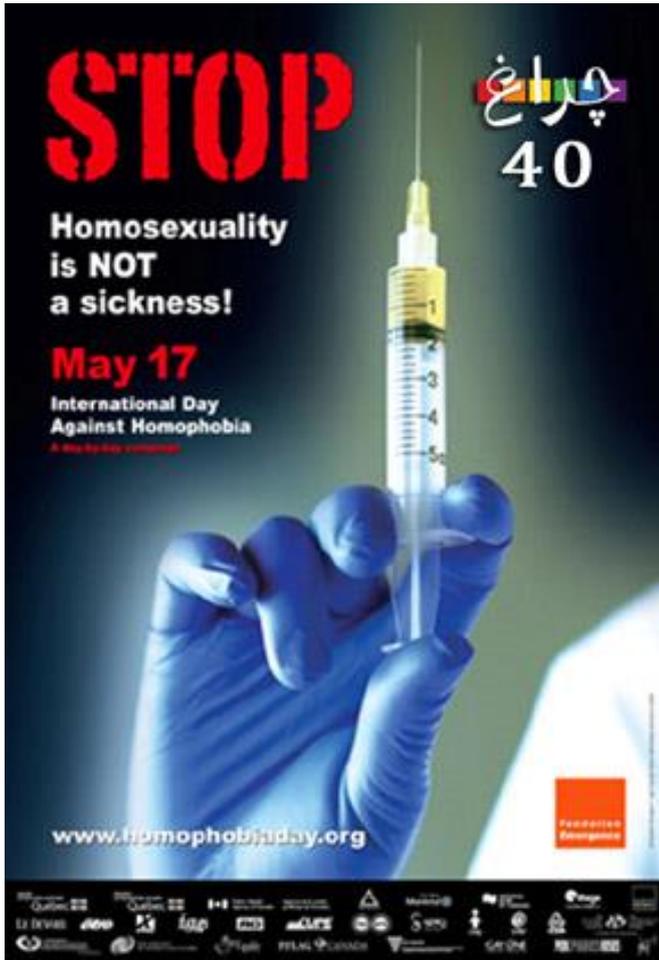
compensate every child that don't have with taking care of at least two nieces or nephews, who would otherwise not be able to survive. Other research in Japan, the US, UK and Canada showed contemporary gay men are not so caring for their cousins. However in Samoa the situation was different . Vasey studied the fa'afafine, a third gender of men who dress as women, have sex with men and consider themselves heterosexual . These fa'afafine spent more time on "aunty" activity than heterosexual men.

3. Even gay people have children

In the United States, about 37% of gays, bisexuals and transgenders have children of which 60% biological children. These figures are not high enough to maintain genetic characteristics, but evolutionary biologist Jeremy Yoder pointed out that homosexuals have suppressed they orientation during much of modern history. Because they were forced by society to marry and have children, they may have reproduced gay genes more than they do now.

4. Big brother effect

According to Qazi Rahman (co-auteur of "Born gay; the psychobiology of sex orientation") genes explain only a part of human sexuality . With one in seven gay men the "big brother" effect plays a role. Boys with older brothers are much more likely to be gay. With each older brother the chance increases by about one third. No one knows why this is. It is suspected that at each pregnancy of a boy, a women's body builds an immune protein that plays a role in the development of the male brain. Because homosexual boys are often born after some heterosexual boys have been produced, academics speculate that maybe evolution does not work so strong anymore after a few children.



Another puzzling research result is about twin brothers. Research has shown that when one of two brothers from an identical twin is homosexual, there is a 20% chance that his brother has the same sexual orientation. That is much less than you would expect from two people with the same genetic code. So although 20% is much more than random, this percentage leads to serious questions about the genetic make-up of sexual orientation.

William Rice of the University of California Santa Barbara tries to explain this by not looking at the genetic code, but to the way it is transmitted. Some parts of our DNA can be "turned on" and "turned off". We don't really understand yet why and how. And sexuality comprises tens or maybe even hundreds of genes groups. This is probably not any specific "gay gene".

Source: The Guardian

(<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/feb/14/genes-influence-male-sexual-orientation-study>)

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Colophon

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