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LOCAL NEWS: EUROPE

European conference on bullying recognizes need for more strategic approach of school bullying

On 11-12 June, a European conference on LGBT bullying in schools was organized in Athens.

The aim of the conference was not too focus only on good practices but also to identify and



address barriers to further engagement and achievement. An increasing number of NGOs, policy makers, teachers, equality bodies, and students get involved in combating LGBT bullying but there are still very few examples of measures, policies or legislation that have been put in place and have achieved results to fight specifically against homophobic and transphobic school bullying.

Influence of the economic recession

The economic crisis was not seen as relevant by all the participants. It made sense only for participants coming from countries really hit by the crisis and austerity measures. A key argument to use is to say that safe schools should be the core of education systems and not something in which you invest when you have a bit more resources. Also, the European Union tends to see social inclusion mainly as a

strategy towards the ultimate goals of employability. It needs to be stressed good education also strengthens democratic values and tolerance. But despite this, the LGBT movement also needs to do more research on the impact of school bullying and social exclusion on early school leaving.



The effectiveness of anti-bullying programs

In a number of countries there is an increasing discussion about what type of anti-bullying programs are effective. There are signs that simple awareness interventions about LGBT issues do not work to tackle homophobic bullying and also that even more sophisticated mainstream anti-bullying programs like The Olwaeus program and the KiVa program still have a lot of drawbacks. There is a need to develop indicators to assess whether policies/programs work out and to identify which elements of programs make them effective.

Heteronormativity in education

Combating homophobic bullying is not just a question of "homo" phobia, nor is it enough to change individual attitudes. Homophobia, biphobia, lesbophobia and transphobia are all rooted in sexism and the wider context of heteronormativity, which is not only embedded in mind but also in social and organizational structures. This means educational settings need to be reformed: a norm critical approach should run throughout the educational processes and should not only be introduced through individual sessions of workshops.

To be able to do that, a wide coalition is possible. Relevant stakeholders, including youth organizations, parents councils, teachers' (trade) unions and equality bodies should be made familiar with norm critical approaches and trained and coached to structurally implement it within their work. Such alliances should consist of both LGBT and mainstream organizations.

It should be noted that GALE offers to facilitate strategic workshops (<http://www.lgbt-education.info/en/training/r2e-strategy-workshop>) to help assess national situations and kick-off a more strategic approach to improve national policies and LGBT and mainstream cooperation.

Read more » http://www.lgbt-education.info/en/news/local_news/news?id=757

LOCAL NEWS:

Lithuanian censors find fairy tales about tolerance harmful to children

In Lithuania, Neringa Dangvyd wrote a book "Gintarin irdis" (Amber heart) with fairy tales for children about people with disabilities, same-sex couples, Roma, people with a different skin colour and other socially vulnerable groups. The goal is to promote tolerance towards differences between people.



Harmful, invasive and manipulative

The Lithuanian Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics (LEU) concluded that the two fairy tales about same-sex love are harmful to minors. According to these "experts", the stories violate the Lithuanian censorship law. This law is formally labelled "Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information" and forbids encouraging the concept of entry into a marriage and creation of a family other than stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and the Civil Code of the

Republic of Lithuania. The censorship defenders consider the fairy tales to be harmful, invasive, direct and manipulative.

Princess falls in love with shoemakers daughter

What do they consider to be so ominous? In one of the stories a brother falls in love with a black male dressmaker, in another one a princess falls in love with the shoemaker's daughter. The journalist censorship committee considers this to be harmful, primitive and purposeful propaganda of homosexuality". The books negative content was reported to the LEU and the Ministry of Culture by the Lithuanian parents forum and a group of conservative MPs. The book is no longer available for purchase and the information about it was removed from a database of the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (LEU), which published the book nearly half a year ago. This is the second time that the censors banned resources on sexual diversity. In September 2013 the same "experts" condemned a promotional video of the Baltic Pride 2013 March for Equality. It was decided this video could only be broadcasted only during night hours.

Read more » http://www.lgbt-education.info/en/news/local_news/news?id=740

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopts historic LGBT resolution

In April 2014, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) adopted a historic resolution on "Protection Against Violence and other Human Rights Violations Against Persons on the Basis of their Real or Imputed Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity" at its 55th session held in Luanda, Angola.

The screenshot shows the website for the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. The header includes the organization's name and a search bar. The navigation menu lists: Home, Sessions, Communications, Special Mechanisms, States, Legal Instruments, Documents, Network, and About Us. The current page is titled "275: Resolution on Protection against Violence and other Human Rights Violations against Persons on the basis of their real or imputed Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity". Below the title, there is a social media sharing section with 428 likes and 136 tweets. A section titled "Adopted Resolutions" lists three related resolutions with their respective IDs: #268, #269, and #270.

Legal basis for action against discrimination

The Resolution decisively places all human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression under the jurisdiction of the African Commission as mandated by the African Charter. Following similar initiatives in other regional and international systems of protection

of human rights to address the global problem of homophobia and transphobia, the Resolution provides a legal basis for protection to all those who are suffering and living under the threat of violence because of their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Historical resolution: same-sex relations are not "un-African"

The resolution is historical, because in many African countries there is still a myth that same-sex relations are "un-African" and that criminalization is in order. This resolution, adopted by a respected pan-African institute, challenges the violence to LGBT people that is too common.

The official versions of the Resolution on Protection Against Violence and Other Human Rights Violations Against Persons on The Basis of Their Real or Imputed Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights can be found on the GALE website »

http://www.lgbt-education.info/en/news/local_news/news?id=744

LOCAL NEWS:

Thai youth chalk rainbows near their schools

In a "School Rainbow campaign" students chalked rainbows on the streets around school gates in Bangkok. The rainbows are symbols of their support for sexual and gender diversity.



This campaign was initiated by UNAIDS, UNESCO, Youth LEAD, Youth Voices Count, and APCOM. The campaign follows the format of the DIY Rainbow campaign. This campaign asks people all over the world to draw chalk rainbows on the ground to show support to end stigma, discrimination and violence against people from LGBTI communities.

All chalk rainbows link to a website (www.schoolrainbow.org). This website includes more information on the topic of bullying, a lesson plan on sexual and gender diversity developed by UNESCO (2014 IDAHOT Lesson Plan for Thailand, English and Thai) for Thailand, and other resources.

Next to chalking, there were discussions among students on bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity during the week of the campaign. The discussions included a panel discussion at Thammasat University opened by the Rainbow All Boy Cheerleaders ([see video](#)). There also was a



"Rainbow Power" workshop and a public rally held at the Bangkok Arts and Culture Center.

LOCAL NEWS:

Council of Trent decides against removing children from LGBT parents

In May, the city council of the Italian city Trent decided not to adopt a proposal to take away the children from lesbian and gay families. A local school had proposed to remove the children to orphanages, to "prevent the children from being harmed by unnatural influences".

The "right to have a negative emotion towards non-traditional families"

In June last year, counsellor Claudio Cia proposed a motion "Save the children" to the city council. "The children are better off in the orphanage than in a family where no one knows who the man is and who is the woman" Mr. Cia said on "Mosquito Radio 24". He was accused numerous times of homophobia and discrimination. But he had support of the right parties in the council and maintained that "every person has the right to feel empowered and respected. People should not be judged when they express their emotion about children being raised outside of the natural family which has been recognized in every time and culture".



"Natural families"

Mr. Cia explains at length in the motion why LGBT families are not "natural". He claims that the word "family" should be reserved to two-parent heterosexual couples. He frames his argument as part of the Catholic crusade against relativism. The Catholic dogma states that God created man and women and heterosexual families to create children. To maintain this order, a strict role division between masculine behaving men and effeminate behaving women should be maintained. Of course, lesbian and gay relationships or transgender choices become a threat to this "unique family" concept. Any attempt to discredit this view is called "relativism" by the Catholic Church.

Mr. Cia says: "Children should not be raised by unnatural couples, then the child is deprived of the constituent elements of its identity and will be detracted from human dignity". With "constituent elements of its identity" he means binary gender role modelling by heterosexual parents.

Hatred disguised by religious symbolism

The proposal shocked LGBT families and other in Trento and across Italy. The Italian non-profit organization "Save the children" declared that the organization had nothing to do with the proposal and they would sue Mr. Cia if he would misuse their name. The national LGBT organization Arcigay stated



that Mr. Cia uses surreal arguments to support her monstrous proposal. Arcigay also called the proposal "an unprecedented act, which exceeds the worst violence in totalitarian regimes". Cynthia Gatto, the representative of the "Rainbow Families Triveneto" association, said: "We condemn any attempt aimed at legitimizing the spread of homophobic acts against our families and our children. (...) They spread messages of pure hatred

disguised by religious symbolism. (...) We will fight for our children until we die. She quoted Giampaolo Petrucci who said that it is love that creates a family".

Read more » http://www.lgbt-education.info/en/news/local_news/news?id=753

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Colophon

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