

EVALUATION 2007

Summary

The Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE) has finished its starting phase in 2007. The website has become operational as a working platform for members. The first 60 members registered and a recruiting campaign was prepared. Strategies and some projects were developed in Brazil (quick scan, expert meeting on teacher training), southern Africa (development of a media tool and training), Asia (quick scan, story collection and mainstream LGBT issues in feminist NGOs) and Europe (quick scan, teacher training and safer schools).

GALE prepared an application to become an allied network of UNESCO and made collaboration agreements with ILGA.

Introduction

In 2006, the Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE) was created and a board was installed. A start was made with the building of a website/platform. There were initiatives to start projects in Brazil, Southern Africa, South East Asia and Europe and to start collaboration with UNESCO, ILGA, Education International and the Outgames 2009. All these activities are part of the Starting Phase of the GALE network. This Starting Phase ended in October 2007 when the internet platform became fully operational and the first members registered. After the Starting Phase, the Implementation Phase will start. This Phase focuses on the further establishment of concrete projects and strengthening of the exchange of expertise in the network. The development of this started in the end of 2007 on the basis of strategy meetings in Europe, southern Africa and Asia. The first concrete projects will start in 2008.

Development of the learning community

Results

1. The website platform became operational
2. 60 members were recruited
3. The website counts 800 pages, which comes down to about 300 original pages and their translations
4. Authoring/editing/upload procedures were developed; a working group of moderators editors and translators still has to be created
5. The legal status of GALE was finalized

The basis of the learning community is an interactive website. The first version went online in March and was pre-tested until October. During the Advisory Board meeting in Amsterdam, the website was launched at a small party.

We planned to have 70 articles uploaded, most of which were overviews articles on the content of education. However, during the development of the website it turned out that the number of pages needed to tell about GALE, the website, projects and instructions for the members was much larger than we expected. At the end of 2007, about 650 pages had been written (220 in English, and 240 in French and Spanish). Of these, in each language view 20 pages were in progress (and still offline). In addition, 40 background articles and 100 news articles had been submitted (including translations). Members did not yet take the initiative to edit or translate articles of others. Because of this, the director asked professional translators to translate the more interesting articles.

The related work on these 800 pages took so much time that we did not get to writing the overview articles. Work on this will be carried on in 2008.

Due to the late launch of the website (planned in May, realized in October), the recruitment campaign could not start in the summer. Because the director was dealing with several strategy meetings in the fall, the recruitment campaign was postponed to early 2008. Due to this, the planned number of 200 members was not reached. At the end of 2007, there were 60 members. Half of these are members of strategy groups, the other half are Brazilians who registered after a personal call of Toni Reis, our Brazilian Board member.

The legal status of GALE as a foundation ("Stichting"), as required per Dutch law, was finalized in May. A legal exploration showed that international regulations to combat terrorism made it practically impossible to found a formal transnational board. The required procedures would take a year and it would be very costly. This is why HIVOS and Empowerment Lifestyle Services decided to keep the both the tasks and the number of board members of the formal board of the foundation small. The Advisory Board of GALE is now an informal advisory body.

Capacity Building Project

Results

6. Regional strategy groups have started
7. A quick scan plan and tool have been developed
8. It turned out it is too early to create a general educational capacity building manual/program
9. GALE was presented at IDAHO in Paris

GALE planned to create a capacity building program for developing local educational projects. This turned out to be too ambitious for 2007.

In reality, it was necessary to first organize regional strategy meetings and use these sessions to discuss the regional needs and opportunities. The results of these meetings were usually decisions on:

- Organizing a regional quick scan
- A regional focus on a theme (like media, schools, or storytelling)
- General ideas to develop some concrete projects

Most regions wanted to start the quick scan as soon as possible. Based on the comments in several strategy meetings, the Executive Director developed a short survey for a quick scan and an implementation plan. After comments of the Advisory Board, the survey was built as a tool in the website. In December, it became available in 4 languages) <http://www.lgbt-education.info/quickscan>).

The process of the strategy meetings was documented well. A lot of lessons were learned:

- Appoint an independent discussion moderator and a well informed minute taker
- Keep the executive director free from moderating tasks during these sessions
- Be careful in inviting participants. They need to be well connected, should already have voiced an interest in joining GALE and developing of enhancing educational activities and should have future time (or workers) available to join activities
- Prepare the program well. Plan plenty of time to get acquainted, to present own experiences and to understand what GALE is about and how it operates. Develop the program in such a way that teambuilding is encouraged and enthusiasm about future collaboration is created.

GALE thanks Daniel Witthaus, who took it upon himself to chair several meetings and who developed an documented ways on how to moderate regional strategy meetings.

The idea to develop a format for local implementation of the IDAHO (International Day Against Homophobia; <http://www.idahomophobia.org>) initiative failed. IDAHO already decided to have education as the theme of 2008 and GALE was not ready in early 2008 to follow this up with making a format. Instead, the Executive Director participated in a French national conference on homophobia on IDAHO and did a presentation.

Worldwide Information Campaign Against Prejudice and Ignorance

Results

10. Initiating contacts with the Outgames were made
11. In strategy groups and the advisory board meeting, opportunities were explored
12. A draft campaign plan was developed

At the end of the Outgames Human Rights Conference, the Declaration of Montréal was adopted. The Declaration asks the Copenhagen Outgames 2009 to organize a worldwide campaign to fight ignorance and prejudice against LGBT people. According to the Declaration "more information about LGBT persons and more openness on the part of LGBT persons (when this can be done safely) are conditions for further progress to be made".

GALE offered the Outgames organization to organize this campaign. The Outgames organization did not formally respond to the offer. During meetings with the Outgames management at international conferences, the Outgames first showed considerable interest, but later added that Amnesty International was a main partner and was expected to organize the worldwide campaign.

At the same time, GALE explored the opportunities to organize or take part in such a campaign in her regional strategy meetings and in the Advisory Board (October). From this, a general outline of a campaign that would be transnational as well local appeared.

Storytelling would be the key element. Storytelling about the positive and negative aspects of LGBT lives, both through interviews, panel sessions and spreading small media and using mass media, would give opportunity to combat prejudice by painting concrete and diverse images. On the local level, it would also make LGBT lives and denial of human rights more visible, and empower LGBT individuals, their organizations and allies. Stories about LGBT lives and about human right abuse would also be the raw material for education and training.

In local and a worldwide campaign, such stories could be collected and published. In Asia the idea was raised to use the quick scan in combination with concrete stories to write country reports. These reports should be discussed at national theme meetings with mainstream organizations that might be future allies in the fight for human rights and for future education and training. In this way, local, national and transnational stories can increase each others effect.

The role of GALE in such a campaign could be to collect stories by interviewing LGBT people, to put them (together with ILGA) into a social and legal context and to publish and distribute them (together with Amnesty International and the Outgames).

In the longer run (after 2009), the results of the campaign would be sustained by GALE by professionalizing storytelling. Interviewed respondents can be asked to tell their stories for first small, and later larger audiences. Training can be offered to enhance effectiveness of storytelling. Interested experienced storytellers can be trained and coached to become professional trainers for mainstream professionals.

The Advisory Board decided that GALE should pursue a format like this independent of possible collaboration with the Outgames. Still, collaboration will be sought to increase cost-effectiveness.

In December, these ideas were discussed with ILGA. From this, it became clear a transparent organizational strategy is necessary.

Asia

Results

13. A strategy group was formed
14. A first strategic analysis was made and discussed at a transnational meeting
15. Some ideas for concrete plans were developed

An Asian strategy group was invited to meet in October-November in Indonesia. This meeting was hosted by the HIVOS South East Asia Office. The group made 3 work visits to local organizations on the first day and then met for 3 days in a resort in Bogor, near Djakarta.

The aim of the meeting was to explore the situation of education about LGBT issues in Asia and of possible strategies and projects to enhance the scope and effect of this work. The meeting was hosted by HIVOS South East Asia and there were 10 participants, from India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines and Thailand.

The participants noted that "Asia" is not a coherent region. It may be useful to divide the region in about 5 or 6 sub regions, based on some common features like economic development, shared religions and cultures and political realities. It was stressed that many people are speaking local languages and there is a need for translation in these. It was noted also that the participants reflect only a small part of those aspects.

Another important note is that in a lot of Asian countries, the words "gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender" or "LGBT" are without meaning or read as Western concepts. A lot of non heterosexual activity and identities are framed in gendered or/and intergenerational contexts, for example the many traditional groups of biological men who act as women, boy-man relationships, female friendships and women priesthoods. One conclusion from this is that GALE should adapt its mission statement and goals to integrate gender issues in a more comprehensive way. It is necessary to create local analyses and interpretations. Using Westernized concepts of homophobia are often misleading to understand the varying Asian contexts and unproductive to improve living conditions.

The discussion on the situation in different Asia countries concluded with some clear conclusions. First, the needs, challenges and opportunities are not at all clear at this time. This creates a need for a more thorough mapping of the situation in all Asian countries. A second conclusion was that in a lot of Asian countries, the governments are not yet supportive for sexual diversity. In many countries, NGOs are the only ones to build capacity and networks for social support and change. Where formal collaboration with governments is not possible yet, there collaboration with NGOs will be a stepping stone to change.

A third conclusion was that basic information on the living conditions of sexual minorities is little known. Giving them a voice and support to tell their stories could be a first and basic way of education.

This very first analysis led to the planning of three projects:

1. Mapping the challenges, opportunities and stakeholders in all Asian countries and publishing them in native languages on the GALE website
2. Mainstreaming sexual diversity issues in regular NGOs in Asia, especially in countries where the authorities are not yet open to collaboration
3. Documenting the living conditions and human rights fights through storytelling, in order to collect campaign and training material and to reach out to storytellers as future educators and trainers.

The next Asian strategy meeting was planned in conjunction with the ILGA Asia conference in Chiang Mai (January 2008). This conference will be used as a start for the storytelling project as well.

Europe

Results

16. A strategy group was formed
17. A first strategic analysis was made and discussed at a transnational meeting
18. A strategy plan was developed
19. Outlines for concrete plans were developed

In February, a European meeting took place to discuss good practices and to create a Regional Strategy Group and to brainstorm about possible projects. GALE invited a group of 10 people from 7 European countries to explore the opportunities to enhance education and training about LGBT issues in the European region. The discussion was structured to focus on strategies and concrete projects in Europe and resulted in a draft strategic plan.

The group concluded that an overview of relevant research is lacking and there is not much research at all on education about LGBT issues in Europe. More research needs to be done and GALE needs to make a more systematic overview of what has been done. A needs assessment should be done in a comprehensive way, including the needs of mainstream stakeholders. The impression is there is a need to exchange good practices. This need especially becomes clear when people hear there are so many other projects and interventions going on. The biggest need is the exchange of very practical tools: educational texts and exercises.

In Eastern and Southern Europe the need is greatest for capacity building of (educational projects by) LGBT NGOs and to help building partnerships with mainstream organizations. However in these countries, there are no local funds available. In North-Western Europe the biggest need is for further development of education tools, strategies and for mainstreaming.

The group decided to focus on raising the quality of the educational interventions and strategies in schools and mainstreaming LGBT issues in the mainstream school system. The European Strategy Group stresses the pedagogical mission that teachers have, which we want to support. It would like to touch the heart of the teachers, counter the fears of the teachers to deal with homophobia and transphobia so they can fulfill their legal and pedagogical duty as educators. In addition, we would like to involve students themselves and support youth to take their full responsibility as citizens.

In addition, the group wants to collect and exchange expertise on training of professionals, for example police officers and health providers. Where possible, GALE will assist in strategy development on how to implement such trainings.

The group intends to focus on four areas: (1) sharing good practices, (2) developing a core for quality training, (3) promoting the implementation in local settings, and (4) promoting good governance in public education policies. In addition, we want to support LGBT grass roots organizations to start their own education projects, especially in cases where mainstream education institutes are not (yet) willing to take initiatives.

Priorities and concrete actions

GALE Europe will start a volunteer network of country ambassadors who research educational laws and regulations and monitor educational policies and opportunities in their countries. They will be asked to submit good practices to the website.

The first priority of GALE Europe is to collect and share good practices. To give this a good start, we want to do a Quick Scan project. Two other projects we would like to create are the development of an Effective LGBT Training Module and an LGBT Inclusive Safe Schools Program. Finally, an Educational Capacity Building Program is essential to enable initiatives in countries where these are needed most.

Africa

Results

20. Opportunities to develop education or training projects in Africa have been explored
21. Some strategic decisions have been made: initial focus on southern Africa, on the media, to involve mainstream organizations from the beginning
22. A plan and general content of a media resource tool has been developed

The Rainbow Project (TRP) took the initiative to start things going in Africa. The first step was to explore the needs of local organizations. While TRP itself and some South African organizations were interested in embarking on a teacher training or teacher training manual project, it need to be explored if other African stakeholders would be interested in pursuing this as well. The needs assessment was done by a phone round and informal discussions in some transnational meeting. It resulted in the conclusion that it would be better to focus on something concrete; many LGBTI stakeholder in Africa are asked to transnational meetings, but the yield of such strategic meetings are seldom concrete enough to enhance the capacity of local action. The preference was to focus on media, because of the negative influence of the African media of human rights and because this is a theme central to the concern of most LGBT organizations. Since concrete tools are lacking, it was decided to organize a meeting to develop a concrete tool. Furthermore, it was decided to limit participation for the moment to southern Africa, because there are the most opportunities to start a successful project. When the media tool is finished and implemented, it will be explored how the strategy can be widened to include more stakeholders in other parts of Africa.

TRP organized a meeting in Centurion, near Johannesburg. Five representatives from LGBTI organizations (from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe) and five representatives from mainstream media organizations were present. The group worked during 4 days on the objectives, content and format of a manual.

HIVOS explored opportunities to find additional funding for a Media Resource Project. A US donor was found. The African Media Resource Project will start in 2008.

South America and the Caribbean

Results

23. Moral support of several parliament members, Ministries, UNESCO and UNAIDS
24. Collaboration to organize an national expert meeting on teacher training and safer schools
25. Financial support of UNAIDS Brazil for a quick scan

Although no activities were planned in South America, GALE started some developments. Urged by Toni Reis, our Brazilian board member, several activities were initiated.

A personal mailing led to registration of about 30-40 Brazilian members.

Toni invited Peter Dankmeijer during his vacation in Brazil to visit the capital Brasilia for 3 days. The visit was successful beyond expectation. The ministries of education and health assured they were very happy with the initiatives of GALE, which link into their plans to implement LGBT issues in the health curriculum of all secondary schools. Politicians pledged their support through their parliamentary function. The ministry of justice experiments with a mandatory online course for police officers about human rights and LGBT issues and is interested in international exchange on training uniformed forces and is willing to share the expertise from the online course globally.

Meeting up with the NGO's was very successful as well. Pedro Chequer of UNAIDS was enthusiastic about the GALE plan to do a quick scan in Latin America and offered logistical and financial support. GALE will collaborate with UNAIDS as well to organize a debate during the World AIDS Conference in Mexico City to raise the need to combat stigma. Men who have sex with men and women who have sex with women are too often denied

services and their own service organizations are denied funding because of prejudice and stigmatizing attitudes. GALE agrees with UNAIDS this stigma needs to be combated to provide effective care and prevention.

UNESCO Brasil works closely with the Ministries of Education and Health and Education. One of the successes of UNESCO Brasil is a large scale research on sexual behavior and needs for sex education. This research showed a need for more attention to LGBT issues, which was a convincing argument to start acting. GALE will collaborate with UNESCO to promote and carry out such research in other parts of the world and to enhance the quality and scope of teacher training on how to deal with sexual diversity.

Teacher Training

Results

26. A presentation of 3 good practices of teacher training has been organized

GALE intended to collect, describe and analyze good practices on teacher training. Due to time constraints this could not be done. However, a presentation of 3 good practices on teacher training was done alongside the Advisory Board meeting in Amsterdam and a transnational Development Group was started.

International Collaboration

Results

27. Contacts were made with UNESCO, UNAIDS and ISIS International

28. Information has been exchanged with Educational International

29. Good relations have started with ILGA World

30. It has become clear how GALE can collaborate with AIDS Service Organizations

GALE aims to exchange information and where possible to collaborate with other international networks. The focus in 2007 was on UNESCO and ILGA.

UNESCO - GALE investigated opportunities for collaboration with UNESCO. It was difficult to get into contact with the proper authorities of the head office of UNESCO in Paris. GALE tried this both through a formal approach and through informal local contacts in Paris, The Hague and Brasilia. The formal approach initially failed. The informal contacts finally resulted in an intervention of the Dutch Ambassador for UNESCO tot the External Relations Unit of UNESCO, which is responsible for liaisons with NGOs. GALE got the forms to apply a status of allied partner. This form was partly filled in, but some of the sections could not be finalized properly because some formal documents and information was not available yet. We decided to submit the application in 2008, when all the information is available. UNESCO Brazil pledged support and will collaborate in 2008 in several activities of GALE in Brazil.

ILGA World - In December, GALE met with ILGA (World) to discuss collaboration. Both GALE and ILGA plan to build databases on LGBT issues. Both organizations decided to collaborate with the collection of information and to share findings. Were possible, the organizations will link to each others databases rather than duplicate databases. ILGA wants to make "training and education" the central theme of her World Conference in May, in Quebec. GALE will be presented at the conference at a plenary panel session on education, where several LGBT educators debate the needs and opportunities for education. ILGA asked if GALE has considered how to reach out to lesbians, who may not be as eager to be interviewed or have their stories published. GALE is very aware of this and notes it is imperative to work through formal and informal lesbian and women's networks. This needs extra attention. GALE applied to OSI for a lesbian visibility project in April, but this was not granted.

Other organizations - GALE explored opportunities to collaborate with UNAIDS Brazil, ISIS International in Asia and Educational International. UNAIDS Brazil developed a strategy

document which outlines how human rights should be integrated in an AIDS strategy. GALE would like to promote the dissemination of this documents and its principles and follow it up with training of AIDS Service Organizations and Authorities. ISIS International would like to collaborate with GALE on developing a manual and strategy to mainstream LGBT issues in women's organizations and development organizations. GALE needs to explore funding for this. Educational International is interested in exchanging information, but does currently not see concrete opportunities for more intensive collaboration.

Fundraising and Public Relations

Results

31. A format for the member's newsletter has been prepared
32. An issue of a newsletter for international organizations has been prepared
33. The GALE leaflet was made available in French, Spanish and Portuguese
34. Co-financing of GALE projects has been prepared and some of these budgets have been secured

Funding - While HIVOS is the key partner of GALE, the network needs additional funds. In 2007 we looked for such funds based on the projects presented here.

An application for a transnational lesbian visibility project failed to raise funds.

HIVOS and GALE worked together to interest US donors for GALE activities. This resulted in interest to fund the African Media Resource project.

In Brazil, UNAIDS donated 5.000 USD to the regional quick scan and is interested to donate some more for activities in 2008.

Wim Monasso explored opportunities to get funding from private philanthropists and other donors. This search will result early 2008 in a list of about 50 donors which will be available on the website (for members only).

Leaflets - To promote recruitment of members, the GALE leaflet was reprinted and made available in French, Spanish and Portuguese. However, at the Advisory Board meeting, the design was criticized for not being gender balanced. In 2008, GALE will correct this by making a more gender balanced version available as pdf.

Newsletters – Due to the late development of the website and time constraints, we did not succeed in publishing newsletters. The text of a first newsletter for (potential) international allies has been prepared but will be published in 2008.