

Work Plan GALE 2015

Crisis and reflection

This work plan of the Global Alliance LGBT Education (GALE) for 2015 comes at a time of crisis. Although the funding of GALE projects itself is steady at a level of about €60,000 a year, the number of members is steadily growing (in 2014 from 793 to 869) and the international awareness of our name is becoming more and more established, the stability of the foundation is threatened because of the difficulty to maintain steady staff on project grants and the lack of availability of funding for international organizations since the economic crisis.

Therefore, 2015 will be a year of reflection a reorientation for GALE. Can we keep on existing with paid staff or should we redevelop our organization into a purely volunteer based initiative? Is an international organization based only on volunteers even possible? If yes, how? Alternatively, if we want to go maintain a foundation with supporting staff, what will the main tasks be of the staff and how will this financially be sustainable?

This reflection already started in 2014 but will be more prominent in 2015. We are looking for a conclusion of this reflection and debate at the end of 2015. The current staff funding by the Dutch government and by the European Community (for two specific projects) continues through 2016. We expect the Dutch funding may end at in 2017. Therefore we need to use the year 2016 to develop and start to implement a reviewed strategy.

In the meantime, the current two projects need to be carried out according to our grant agreements. Part of the reorientation of the GALE strategy can be part of these projects.

In this plan, we first go into the strategy reflection process. Then we will go into the three current projects: the worldwide "DESPOGI Right to Education Project" and the European exchange projects "LeGoP" and "ARES". Finally, we will discuss the funding strategy.

Strategy reflection

In 2014, GALE staff had a series of interviews with experts about the GALE funding strategy. This resulted in a variety of suggestions, with two opposite opinions. One strategy could be to strengthen the GALE internal structure and involvement of members, rather than mainly relying on the staff carrying GALE forward. This could raise the profile of GALE as an organization which represents real interests. When the members would be from the Global South, this would possibly also be supportive for funding by some international donors. Another strategy would be to create a very clear but limited product, which links into local needs and international interest, like LGBT suicide and bullying. Projects that market such a product may attract interested donors and facilitate cooperation with local partners.

Both views have their pro's and con's. The intention of GALE is to explore both strategies and find how these basic ideas can be translated into a feasible long term strategy. Currently, GALE develops a world map and a series of instruments to monitor the right to education. It also provides training and capacity building to start local projects.

To explore how GALE members can become more involved, GALE will produce a guide on how GALE members can become active as "GALE ambassadors". We will discuss this draft guide with the interested members and support members to develop strategic projects. GALE will explore how continued funding can be secured for such coaching after 2017, but also if and how the international staff of GALE can be financed by taking a capacity building role in local projects that are the result of this coaching. To support this discussion process, the GALE website will be updated and a new GALE Members Board will be formed.

To explore if and how GALE can develop a more clear marketable product, we will cooperate in the Dutch Gay/Straight Education Alliance. In 2015 and 2016, this national alliance between LGBT and mainstream education organizations will develop a toolkit with a series of interventions that together should have a high impact on structurally reducing homophobia and transphobia in schools. GALE will adapt and translate this toolkit for use in other countries and cultures and explore with her members and local partners if and how such a toolkit is adaptable and usable. In 2016, the result of this exploration will be finalized as a product and marketing will begin. By involving the GALE members in the development

of the toolkit and by making the GALE Ambassador Guide a part of the toolkit, the two strategies will have a synergy with each other.

The DESPOGI¹ Right to Education Project

The Dutch government has funded GALE to map and promote equal implementation of the right to education for DESPOGI students in the past four years and will continue to do so in the next two years. In this project, GALE has stimulated and supported UNESCO to engage in a global strategy to combat homophobic bullying and stimulated the Dutch government to also support UNESCO in this. This resulted in a 3-year grant for UNESCO, which will end in 2016 with a global conference of ministers of education. After UNESCO made this a priority, GALE decided to shift her attention to mapping the right to education worldwide and support LGBTI NGOs to advocate for education policy which includes DESPOGI. At the end of 2012 an advocacy guide was published and at the end of 2014 a world map. In the mean time, GALE gave trainings and strategy workshops in 9 countries, developed research tools and supported the local development of strategic projects.

In 2015 and 2016, GALE will cooperate in the Dutch Gay/Straight Education Alliance to develop a toolkit with high impact school policy interventions. This toolkit and how GALE Ambassadors (active members) can use it will be discussed among the membership and the draft GALE Ambassador Guide will be updated with and be integrated in the toolkit. Local partners will be stimulated to develop projects using (parts of) the toolkit and cooperate with GALE in these local projects.

Updated versions of the GALE World Map will be published on the occasions of IDAHO 2015 and the Ministerial UNESCO Conference in 2016.

¹ DESPOGI: "Disadvantaged because of their Expression of Sexual Preference Or Gendered Identity". GALE prefers this acronym rather than "LGBTI" because labeling people into categories hampers learning diversity skills and is often counter-productive in primary and the early stage of secondary schools (students who are not identifying as LGBTI will be ignored).

The LeGoP project

"LeGoP" is an acronym for "Learning Good Practices". With a 2-year grant from the Erasmus+ (KA2) program (the European Community education program), GALE cooperates in 2015 and 2016 with 2 schools and 2 disability organizations in Italy and Spain (Basque country). The task of GALE is to develop a teacher training e-learning course on how to combat homophobia. For GALE, this is an opportunity to implement the expertise she has been developing in the past years on e-learning and to explore how e-learning can be used cross-culturally.

The course will be developed and tested in 2015 and updated and made more widely available in 2016. In 2016, we will also decide if the e-course can be part of the GALE toolkit and how it could fit into an international sustainable strategy.

The LeGoP project also focuses on the integration of special needs students in regular high schools. GALE will explore how this aspect can be integrated in her course and in the toolkit.

The ARES project

"ARES" is an acronym for "Artistic Educational System for LGBT people". With a 2-year grant from the Erasmus+ (KA1) program (the European Community education program), GALE cooperates in 2014 and 2015 with 3 adult education organizations from Italy, the UK, Poland and an LGBT organization from Estonia. The ARES project is an exchange project (funding for travel and subsistence) focusing on the relationship between film and other artistic expressions and empowering young LGBT adults. In March, there will be a project meeting in Amsterdam.

The ARES partnership offers GALE the opportunity to explore how to combat heteronormativity in education institutions and course for young adults and how to make film and art part of the toolkit. The ARES partnership also develops follow-up multilateral projects in which GALE can partner.

The funding strategy

After 2010 (the economic crisis) it has become almost impossible for a worldwide network to get funding from international donors. Donors prefer to focus on concrete and local projects. Most of this projects are focused on basis capacity building of self-organization, hiv-prevention, small scale research and advocacy. A focus on education is still a bridge too far for many LGBT organizations and donors. After some of the strategic workshops, GALE noted that support for local storytelling projects (testimonials and peer-education) are a feasible option in Asia and Africa, where formal access to schools is most difficult. It will be explored how we can strengthen this strategy.

In Nepal, GALE supported Chetana, a local group of teachers who offer anti-transphobia workshops to fellow teachers, to enhance the quality of their training and upscale the reach of their trainings. It will be explored if this model is also feasible in other countries.

The strategy to implement pilot projects in schools in some Latin America and to then disseminate the results and use the invented methods in more countries has failed in 2010 due to a lack of willingness of the local partners to maintain cooperation. In 2015 and 2016 GALE will explore whether offering strategic workshops may result in renewed cooperation with Latin American of Caribbean partners.

In the past 5 years, GALE has developed five European multilateral projects and submitted them on behalf of a range of partners. Although none of these proposal was accepted, the quality score of the GALE proposals has steadily risen. At the same time, GALE has been a cooperating partner in 3 other European projects and has build a good network in Europe. In 2015, GALE plan to work on two European project proposals. One proposal will explore the relationship between homophobia/transphobia, religion and education. The other will focus on homophobic/transphobic bullying and involve both mainstream (trade unions) and LGBT partners. In both projects, working on toolkits will be part. The development of these projects will be part of the right to education project.

In addition, GALE will use her European networking to strengthen the network with local peer-education groups. We will attempt to establish an informal cooperation network and find funding for exchange and activities of this network.