
LGBT EDUCATION

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GLOBAL NEWS: UNITED NATIONS

Vitit Muntarbhorn remains UN independent expert despite fierce opposition

19 December 2016 - The new independent expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity remains in function. This became clear after a second attack of a block of 77 countries. Vitit Muntarbhorn held a keynote speech at the ILGA World Conference in Bangkok, where he outlined that he will take his mandate to not only include physical violence but also to other forms of violence common in schools.

Image: Vitit Muntarbhorn giving a keynote speech at the ILGA World Conference in Bangkok, November 309 (photo ILGA World).



Muntarhorn includes education

The mandate of the independent expert was created last June by the UN Human Rights Council. Vitit Muntarhorn, who is Professor Emeritus at the Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, was appointed for the role in September, and formally started his mandate on 1 November 2016. The job is an unpaid function, but in the UN system "independent experts" are seen as truly independent experts who can offer impartial advice.

At a [keynote speech for the ILGA World conference|<http://ilga.org/vitit-muntarhorn-ilga-world-conference-2016>], Muntarhorn gave 5 priorities he wants to work on: decriminalization, depathologization, status recognition of transgenders, gender diverse cultural inclusion and empathization. Especially the last two are very relevant for educators. Muntarhorn defines "gender diverse cultural inclusion" as integration of LGBTI people in all ways of life, in other words: mainstreaming. With "empathization", Muntarhorn means to promote a human rights sensitive and less binary (or non binary) educational and socialization process to address violence and discrimination from childhood onwards; to prevent bullying from a young age; and involve teachers, parents, communities, and children/youth in nurturing an all-inclusive understanding of sexual and gender diversity.

GALE has written a letter to the independent expert to cooperate on issues related to education.

Ongoing resistance of 77 States

However, a block of 77 countries has repeatedly tried to block the creation of the mandate and of its implementation. The block is composed of African, Caribbean and Islamic States as well as Russia and China. They cooperated first several times to stop the creating of a mandate in the first place. Their key argument is that LGBT people deserve no human rights, because in some cultures homosexual behavior and gender nonconformity

are seen as a sin or a threat to local traditions. (Image:

votes on November 23 proposal)

When they failed to do this, a group of African States tabled a resolution at the Third Committee of the Human Rights Council to "allow time for further consultations to determine the legal basis" of the mandate. Almost 900 organizations from 157 countries mobilized to



support the mandate, leading this hostile initiative to a failure. Nevertheless, only a few weeks later, a further attempt was tabled at the General Assembly plenary. Luckily, with a few votes, this second attempt to block the mandate was also voted down. This type of opposition to an independent expert is unheard of in the UN: never has any independent expert mandate been challenged after it was established. Even when losing the vote, the denying States made clear that they were not going to cooperate with the independent expert.

GALE NEWS: EDUCATION STRATEGY

GALE researches new strategic education guide

24 November 2016 - GALE called activists on LGBTI education to help improve a new guide for LGBT education strategy. They are asked to read the guide, fill in a short survey and possibly being interviewed. The improved guide will be published in May 2017.

GALE THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR LGBT EDUCATION



The GALE Committee Guide

A Guide for Activists to Start a National
Strategy Committee to Enhance the Quality of
Education Dealing with Sexual Diversity

Peter Dankneijer
October 2016

GALE THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR LGBT EDUCATION
THE GALE COMMITTEE GUIDE version 31 Oct 2016



Call to proofread

In November, GALE called LGBTI activists who work on education to help proof-read the draft guide. [The draft guide can be downloaded here](#). The GALE intern Youssuf Abdelnour is carrying out the pretesting research. The closing date for data collection is 8 January, 2017.

After reading or browsing through the guide, activists can take a [short survey](#). Youssuf will also Skype-interview some experts from different regions and with different backgrounds. This interview will take about an hour. If you are willing to be interviewed, please mail info@gale.info. Youssuf speaks English and Spanish.

Based on strategic workshops and training experience

The draft guide is based on 10 years with strategic workshops on LGBTI education strategy and peer/teacher training in a range of countries across the world. The key message of the guide is that steadily building a cooperation between LGBTI organizations, the

education sector and the government is essential to make effort to make the education system safe and equitable in a more effective way. Of course, how to do this and where to start depends on whether

States or local education regions are denying, ambiguous or supportive and on a range of other local factors. The guide attempts to capture this and suggest way to act more strategically for more impact.

GALE is considering to develop a similar guide for government officials later in 2017.

GLOBAL NEWS: UNDP

UNDP works to ensure safer and inclusive schools for LGBTI students

National level consultations were organized this year by UNDP in China, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, as part of a collaboration with UNESCO to address SOGIE-based bullying at education settings and promote LGBTI-inclusive schooling.

[The Philippines consultation](#) was convened on 23-24 August 2016 in Quezon City by UNDP and UNESCO in collaboration with the Civil Society Coalition on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CSC-CRC), Department of Education, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus and TLF SHARE. In Hanoi, Viet Nam, UNESCO worked closely with the Ministry of Education and ICS Centre, an LGBTI advocacy organization, to hold a one-day policy dialogue on 28 July 2016. In Beijing, China, the national consultation was held jointly with UNDP, UNESCO, UN Women and the Collaborative Innovation Centre of Assessment toward Basic Education Quality of Beijing Normal University on 4-5 July 2016.



The Thailand consultation was held from 20–22 June 2016 in Bangkok in collaboration with UNESCO and the Office of the Basic Education Commission of the Ministry of Education. In total, more than 300 education sector stakeholders participated, including government, civil society, student and teacher groups, development partners and donors. [Watch video](#)

Source: Being LGBTI in Asia Newsletter - December 2016

Half of Scottish teachers did not read government guidance on LGBT-inclusive education

15 September 2016 - Fifty-five of Scottish teachers say they did not know or read the government guidance on LGBT-inclusive education. The research was done by TIE (Time for Inclusive Education), which campaigns for adequate implementation of anti-bullying schools policies. This week, the TIE campaign launched a report highlighting high rates of bullying, attempted suicide, self-harm and mental health issues among LGBT young people.

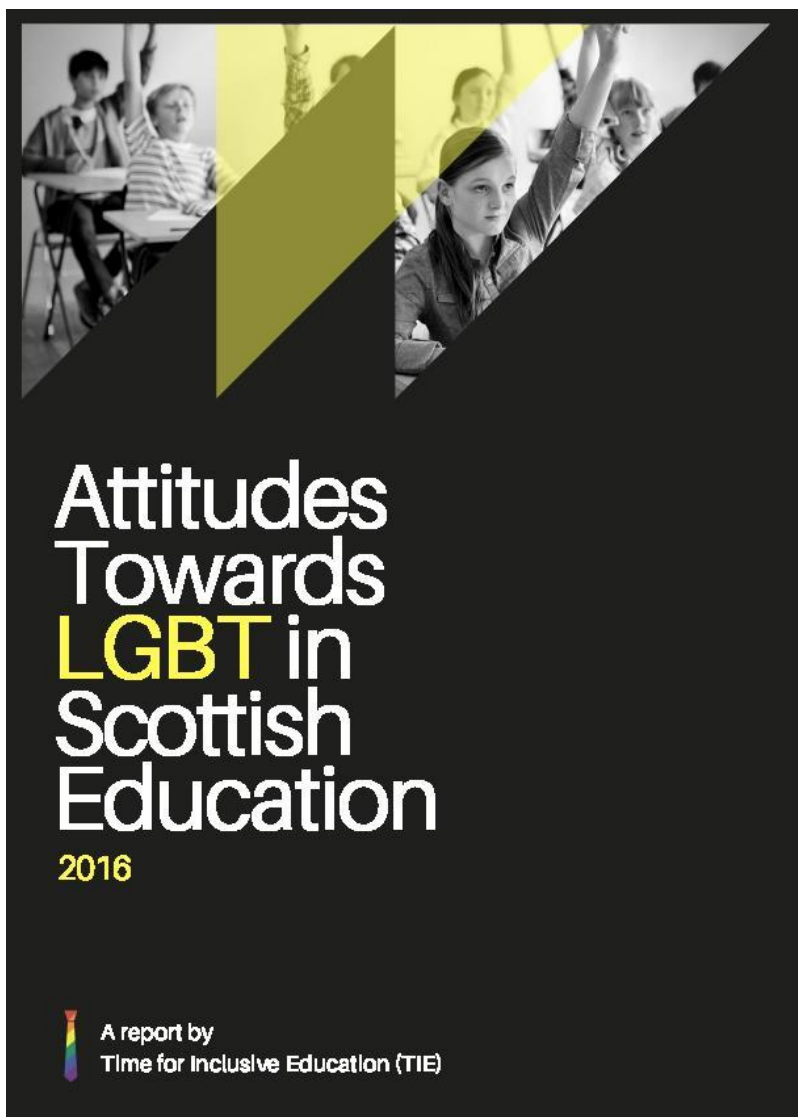
Guidance does not equal implementation

In 2014, Scotland updated its Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education guidance to include LGBT issues. Scottish Education Secretary John Swinney recently said he was confident that the guidance would address issues facing LGBT learners. However, the TIE research revealed that 55 per cent of teachers said they had not

read or did not know about the guidance and 35 per cent said that they did not feel that the materials were good enough.

A TIE spokesperson said: "There is a culture of silence around LGBT in most classrooms across the country, and we should not be satisfied until all schools are fully inclusive of LGBT issues and identities in order to ensure that all of our young people can thrive and achieve their full potential in a safe and supportive learning environment.

TIE thinks there is no requirement for schools to deliver upon the LGBT inclusive guidance or more general sexual health education. "This has to be addressed. Indeed, 79 per cent of teachers agree with us that LGBT inclusive education should be a legislative requirement for all schools."



Personal roadblocks

GALE director Peter Dankmeijer comments: "It is not a surprising result. In numerous countries where the government has offered additional laws or guidance on LGBT inclusive education, teachers don't know about it or don't implement it. An active inclusive policy requires much more communication by the government, including dialogue with school boards, training of teachers and support for school on where and how to implement the attention. In addition, even in supportive countries, some schools, teachers, parents or students will feel challenged and may refuse to cooperate. This resistance, or "personal roadblocks" as I prefer to label them, need to be overcome by dialogue and training.

Sources: Pink News: <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/09/12/half-of-teachers-didnt-read-government-guidance-on-lgbt-inclusive-education>, the TIE report http://media.wix.com/ugd/e904fd_3aeb571e4e584001a7956dca4991a34e.pdf

GALE NEWS: UNESCO

GALE failed to address lack of NGO influence on conventions at UNESCO

14 December 2016 - At the world conference of UNESCO affiliated NGOs, GALE tried to discuss the failure of UNESCO to include NGOs in the review of the implementation of conventions. The attempt failed, but may be put on the agenda next year. In the mean time, GALE keeps working on improved participation of NGOs in the UNESCO standard setting mechanisms, especially to make our voices heard in the consultation of the Convention Against Discrimination in Education and the Recommendation on Human Rights Education.

Image: Peter Dankmeijer offering information to the participants of the UNESCO NGO conference, Paris, 13 December.



Standard setting mechanisms

As a consultative partner of UNESCO, GALE has been active for a number of years to make the voices of LGBTI organizations heard in the reviews of international conventions that are relevant for LGBTI students. Conventions are agreements between States on issues they think are important to uphold human rights. Next to Conventions, States can agree on Recommendations. These have a lesser status than Conventions, which are true agreements. Both types of agreements are summarized under the term "standard setting mechanisms", because they represent issues where States agree on standards for the adequate implementation of human rights.

For LGBTI students, six conventions and a number of recommendation are relevant. GALE summarized these in the brochure [Advocate for Sexual Diversity Education](#) and the [GALE Right to Education Checklist](#). The impact of each convention and recommendation is monitored by different UN bodies.

Homophobic bullying in schools



Why specific attention to homophobic bullying?

- The level of bullying for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) students is **3 to 6 times higher** than for the average student.
- In Argentina, **48% of transgender students drop out of school** because of bullying or simply because of being excluded from school.
- 80-95% of teachers know about **homophobic name-calling** in their school. Very few act against it.
- Teachers rate homophobic name-calling as the second most frequent form of bullying (after abuse relating to weight).
- Studies consistently demonstrate **higher rates of harassment, exclusion and assault** experienced in schools by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students compared to their heterosexual peers.
- Almost half of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students experience physical abuse during the past year because of their sexual orientation.

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students have 3 to 6 times **higher suicide rates**, and research shows this is highly related to the abusive context in schools.

Role of UNESCO affiliated NGOs

With help of GALE, UNESCO got funded for four years to research on homophobic bullying and possible education sector responses.

- UNESCO published two reports on violence in schools related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression (SOGIE); **read them** to become more aware.
- Explore what you can do **to raise SOGIE issues among your members**.
- If you are interested to combat bullying and to promote diversity skills, **join** as a member of GALE, or as a member of the new No-Bullying-Coalition of NGOs **to cooperate on a joint strategy**.
- Download our new draft **strategic GALE Committee Guide** at <http://www.gale.info/en/right-to-education>
- Contact us at info@gale.info

www.gale.info



Image: poster used to inform participants of the UNESCO NGO Conference

UNESCO's review of discrimination and human rights education

The Convention Against Discrimination in Education and the Recommendation on Human Rights Education, which are very relevant for LGBTI students, are monitored by UNESCO. The implementation of the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960) is reviewed every 6 years and 9th consultation will end in 2017. The Recommendation on Human Rights Education (1974) is happening every 4 years and the 6th consultation will also end in 2017.

GALE has had several communications with the relevant departments of

UNESCO to lead the way for LGBTI NGOs to submit their experiences in these areas and to assist the dialogue between the NGOs and their State authorities, who are responsible for reviewing their progress. To the surprise of GALE, it gradually became clear that it is virtually impossible for NGOs to have a real influence or voice in the consultations. Despite the political language of UNESCO about the high appreciation of cooperation with NGOs, their participation in the standard setting mechanism processes is minimal. Potentially, UNESCO affiliated NGOs are being informed about consultations that are about to start, but without any guidance about how to get involved. When NGOs try to find out, they are told that they can approach their own State to advise on how the State can report. Some UNESCO officials are even willing to give insight in the questions that States are asked. But there is no way NGOs can get a voice independently of their government. To GALE, this seems counterproductive, especially when discussing the implementation of discrimination in education and human rights education. It may well be that State authorities and NGOs disagree on these themes and where a community voice is imperative to create a good implementation process.

Image: scene from the UNESCO NGO Conference

GALE actions

GALE has attempted several times to get access to standard setting procedures. These attempts have failed because UNESCO does not provide opportunities for NGOs to



get involved on an international level. This is not just an LGBTI related challenge. This is why GALE tries to ally with other Right to Education organizations to stimulate UNESCO to open up to community voices. One way to do this was to raise the issue in the annual conference for UNESCO affiliated NGOs, which was held in Paris from 12 to 14 December. GALE suggested the theme to be part of the conference agenda and when this was refused by the UNESCO NGO Liaison Committee (the "board" of the UNESCO affiliated NGOs), it proposed to add it as a point of attention in the Joint Recommendations of the UNESCO affiliated NGOs to the UNESCO Board. However, the Liaison Committee decided not even to table and discuss this proposal.

Peter Dankmeijer, GALE director said: "I was disappointed. I was not even allowed in the final meeting to ask for the reason to not want to discuss our amendment. I got the impression that the Liaison Committee

is heavily dominated by French speaking representatives of international organizations with an office in Paris. They seemed to be very happy with the Joint Recommendations they formulated and did not want too much discussion about it. They do not seem to realize this way of operating leads to the exclusion of other voices."

After the conference ended, GALE communicated its frustration with members of the Liaison Committee. It was agreed to meet early next year and to see how this discussion can be put on the agenda of the next conference.

RESOURCES: INTERSEX

Being an ally to intersex students in schools

10 December 2016 - Recently, ILGA-Europe and the federation of Intersex organizations OII-Europe published a [toolkit on how to be a good ally of intersex people|doc/goodpractices/ILGA&OII-Europe-2016-How_to_be_a_great_intersex_ally.pdf]. The document provides some pointers to how schools, school consultants and educators can take intersex issues into account in their work.



Intersex?

Not all LGBT educators are already aware of what intersex is. Intersex individuals are born with sex characteristics (such as chromosomes, genitals, and/or hormonal structure) that do not belong strictly to male or female categories, or that belong to both at the same time. Doctors often advise parents to perform surgical and other medical interventions on intersex newborns and children, to make their body (seemingly) conform to male or female characteristics. In most cases, such interventions are not medically necessary and can have extremely negative consequences on intersex children as they grow older.

For some time, intersex people were ambiguous about being connected to the LGBT movement. Many of them see themselves as "having an intersex condition", which is not, or they do not want to view as an important part of their identity. Joining an identity based movement could be seen as a risk. But recently, intersex organizations have begun to cooperate when they saw that a good cooperation between the LGB and T organizations could lead to real legal and social benefits for transgender persons.



Image: the board of OII Europe, courtesy photo ILGA-Europe

A school challenge

Not much research has been done on the experiences of intersex students in schools. However, a recent Australian study managed to get data on 272 intersex individuals, aged 16-85+. This study showed that only a quarter of participants rated their overall experience at school positively. The overwhelming majority of participants (92%) did not attend a school with inclusive puberty/sex education. About 18% of people with variations of sex

characteristics had primary school education only (compared to 2% of the general Australian population). Many participants (66%) had experienced discrimination ranging from indirect to direct verbal, physical or other discriminatory abuse. Well-being risks were reportedly high.

Problems can exist for intersex people in educational settings from the very outset. To start with, intersex people are not constructively included in any educational curriculum. Most often, they do not appear at all. If they are mentioned, they find themselves treated as

an imaginative product of mythology (hermaphrodite), as an example of abnormality or viewed in a pathological way (in biology texts, medical handbooks or encyclopedias). In addition, sex education does not refer to their existence or their bodily experience.

Image: GALE quiz for beginners, intersex question

Question 7

What does intersex mean?

- a) Sexual interest for both men and women
- b) Hermaphrodites
- c) People with both a vagina and a penis
- d) The body has both male and female aspects



Binary gender views are the core of discrimination

Earlier this year, UNESCO published a series of studies which showed how gender nonconformity lies at the core of both LGB and T discrimination in schools. Obviously, this also applies for intersex students. Sex education and the school environment tends to perpetuate the notion that only two sexes exist. Intersex students may face direct discrimination at school and in further education if their gender expression, stature or other parts of their appearance do not conform with the female or male norm. Places where the body becomes visible to others, such as toilets and changing rooms, are common areas of anxiety and reported harassment.

Operations during school holidays

On an even more alarming level, intersex individuals also face educational impairments directly linked to the violation of their bodily integrity. Most surgeries, which are performed at an early age, lead to several follow-up operations over the years. These are often performed during the school holidays, at the expense of the child's need to relax and have fun. Some children drop out of school as a result of this long-term recovery process.

Unwanted hormonal treatment, in childhood or puberty, with the aim of altering the body towards the assigned sex has also been reported to coincide with a decrease in school grades. This physical and psychological strain often prevents intersex people from developing their full potential and leads to under-achievement at school. As a result, these children and young adults face significant difficulties in obtaining a higher education degree and are at risk of poverty when growing older.

Integrate intersex in your education

A small but important support LGBT educators can offer is to integrate intersex issues in their education. For example, GALE often uses a "knowledge quiz" in its trainings to both create an interactive discussion and to give up-to-date information about sexual diversity and school change. Standard are questions about what words like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transvestite and intersex actually mean and where they come from. Of course, educators should make sure that they are up-to-date and correct themselves and that they know how to limit their information to the facts that are really needed to create the necessary understanding and sensitivity. Too much and too detailed information can lead to adverse effects.

The OII-Europe and ILGA Europe toolkit warns against starting full projects on intersex when intersex people are not involved in the project. When you intend to create a specific training or project on intersex, make sure you build intersex leadership in your own organization first.

[Read the full OII-Europe and ILGA Europe toolkit here](#)

Tips for LGBT activists

Please don't apply for extensive funding just to start working on intersex, especially if you have no intersex leadership in your organisation.

Please bear in mind that the needs of intersex people differ from LGB and T needs. Do not take action without being sure that you understand the issues at stake and the wider consequences of your action.

Remember that the very simple rule "Nothing about us without us!" also applies for intersex people and their allies.

GALE NEWS: ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS

GALE organizes elections for the Association Committee

27 December 2016 - In February, GALE will hold elections for the first GALE Association Committee. The Committee will be a representation of the members and will advise about the global strategy of GALE in the following five years. Now, the call for candidates has opened. Members are asked to make their interest to be a candidate know to p.dankmeijer@gale.info and to submit a short campaign text to be published on the GALE website.

The GALE Association Committee has the role to

1. strengthen the GALE platform
2. to increase the participation of GALE members in the global strategy
3. to advise on the strategy of the GALE Foundation.

The GALE *Foundation* maintains the GALE website, develops projects and asks the GALE Association Committee advice on its strategy.

The new GALE Association Committee may decide to remain an informal advisory body or an independent international association. Depending on this decision, the GALE Foundation can agree to hand over the maintenance of the website and part of the formal international contacts.



[Read the full call for candidates \(for GALE members\) here.](#)

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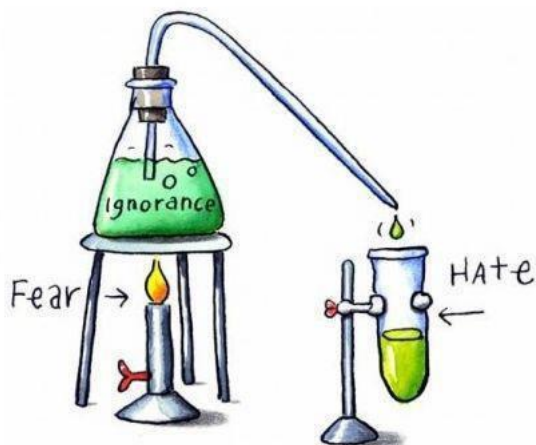
LGBT Education is the external newsletter for non-GALE members.

[You can register as a reader of LGBT Education here.](#)

[Join as GALE member.](#) Membership is free!

[Únete eje miembro GALE.](#) La membresía es gratis!

[Rejoignez axe membre de GALE.](#) L'adhésion est gratuite!



Colophon

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