GALE - THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR LGBT EDUCATION

GALE Association Committee Election Plan 2017

Content

History of the GALE organization & need for a association committee

In 1998, participants of the first global workshop on LGBT education during the Gay Games in Amsterdam recommended that it would be good to have a global network to keep on exchanging experiences about sexual diversity in education. Seven years later, the organizer of the workshop, Peter Dankmeijer (operating as a private company Empowerment Lifestyle Services), spent a sabbatical on exploring how to organize such a network. He published on this needs assessment in 2005. HIVOS, a Dutch development organization, decided to support Empowerment for the foundation of a global LGBT Education Network and gave 3 project grants to start up.

In 2006, the first grant was used to set up a global board which two members per region. It was decided to *not* make this board a formal legal entity, because the foundation and registration of a global legal body had been made very cumbersome and costly since the 9/11 counter terrorist measures. Also, the 2014-2015 needs assessment showed that the potential members of GALE preferred a task-oriented action based organization like Arc International or Human Rights Watch rather than a representation based organization like ILGA. The first (informal) International Advisory Committee decided on the name "GALE" and the mission. The second grant (2007-2008) was an operating grant to establish the organization. The International Advisory Committee met once a year, and a series of regional strategic meetings were organized. Next to the informal International Advisory Committee, a small *formal* operating GALE Foundation Board was set up in 2007 to guide the strategy. This small Board had two members: Peter Dankmeijer and a representative of HIVOS. According to the Dutch legal system, a foundation board appoints its own members (as opposed to an association, where members are elected).The third grant (2009-2010) was a break with the two earlier grants. HIVOS did not want to proceed with funding exploitation costs and asked for a new work plan which focused on carrying out local projects. Since this was the only available funding, the director/Empowerment felt forced to comply and look for additional funding. These decisions ran counter the recommendations of the International Advisory Committee to

focus more on the internal process of GALE. The International Advisory Committee stopped functioning in protest to the directors and the GALE Foundation's strategy to focus outward rather than inward. Halfway this funding period, HIVOS decided to decentralize her granting and not fund international organizations any more. The HIVOS representative left the Foundation Board.

In 2010, Empowerment decided to abolish itself and split the activities in two independent foundations: the GALE Foundation for international projects and the EduDivers Foundation for Dutch projects. Both foundations had a "supervisory" model. This means that Peter Dankmeijer became the director and board, while each foundation had 3 (Dutch) members forming a Supervisory Board. In the Dutch legal system, supervisory boards are not involved in the operational management of the foundation. Their function is to monitor the foundation strategy from a distance and their main task is to check whether the financial and formal management is done according to proper procedures while not taking unacceptable risks. The new Foundation Board formally abolished the defunct International Advisory Committee in 2012.

From 2011 on, HIVOS stopped funding GALE. However, a new multi-year (small) grant was given by the Dutch government. This grant was also project-bound and task-oriented: the main goals were to map the right to education for LGBT students, stimulate the improvement of the implementation of the right to education and cooperate on this with UNESCO. The grant was not large enough to initiate local development projects.

After the banking crisis, it became very difficult for GALE to access other funding, except in Europe where the European Union has several project budgets in which GALE could partner.

In 2012, the GALE Foundation Board recommended to research how GALE could remain a global organization in the context of the very limited global funding opportunities and the low relationship with the members. The website platform was not very active because most members were very busy with their own local work and did not see much added value in sharing their experiences. Without GALE being a (re)funder, their interest in GALE was limited. As long as GALE did not have a strategy that really makes a difference on the local level, it would be difficult to break through this vicious circle of not having funding to support local projects and no local involvement of activists in GALE. The research and development of a reviewed strategy took some time because the effort could not be integrated in the available budget and the director had to do this in limited voluntary time. In 2016, the Dutch government gave permission to integrate some budget for this effort in the Right to Education budget 2016-2017.

The strategy to revitalize GALE on the global *and* local level consists of 3 priorities:
1. Monitoring the right to education per country and involving LGBT activists, the education sector and government officials in this
2. Offering strategic workshops and a strategic guide to support local allies in making more impact by cooperation and by raising the quality of their interventions

3. Strengthening the involvement of local GALE members with the global organization by reviving a worldwide advisory committee

In order to avoid the cumbersome and costly procedure of establishing a formal global board and to make sure that the foundation financial situation would remain transparent, controllable and independent of local financial interests, the GALE Foundation Board recommended to distinguish between the current formal GALE Foundation and a new informal GALE Association Committee.

Mission and status of the GALE Association Committee

The GALE Association Committee will be set up 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 and asks the GALE Association Committee advice on its strategy.

Suggested tasks of the first GALE Association Committee

1. The GALE Association Committee decides whether it wants to be an informal advisory body or an independent international association (and carry its own costs for registration).
2. In case the GALE Association Committee decides to be advisory to the Foundation, the GALE Foundation will ensure the maintenance of the Internet platform and a way for the GALE Association Committee to delegate the consultative relations with UNESCO delegates to the staff of the GALE Foundation. In case the GALE Association Committee decides to establish a legal body (association), the GALE Foundation transfers the website and all responsibilities and obligations to the GALE Association and proposes a cooperation agreement.
3. The new GALE Association Committee is asked to adopt a constitution (including a reviewed election procedure) and a strategic plan. The director of the GALE Foundation can support this process until the end of 2017.
4. The GALE Association Committee is asked to comment of the GALE Foundation Work Plan 2017 and the GALE Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (to be developed end of 2017).

First election procedure

1. The director organizes online elections.
2. After the call for candidates, there will be a one month period for members to decide to stand for election. Each candidate will be asked to write a short text why they want to stand for election and if necessary to update their profile, so members can check who they vote for. To stimulate the election,

the director invites active and expert members to stand for election. He makes sure that these invitations reflect both expert and community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, heterosexual, non-labeled) participation.

3. Any member can stand for election, except persons with financial interests including the director of the GALE Foundation, Foundation Supervisory Board members, GALE Foundation staff or employees of current project partners. Candidates are elected on personal merits, not on the basis of their membership or employment of organizations. There are no demands or criteria related to the sexual orientation, gender identity, their expression, region or other background features of candidates.

4. A maximum of 10 candidates will be elected. Each candidate has to surpass a threshold of at least 10 votes.

5. GALE Association Committee members are asked to be candidate for two years. It is proposed they can be re-elected two times. The GALE Association Committee arranges this in its own constitution.

6. The elections take (at least) two weeks.

7. The voting will be organized with a Google survey format. Every member will have one vote. The validity of the votes will be checked by merging the membership list with the vote results, which allows a check of possible double voting and non-respondents. In case of double votes, the most recent vote will be counted, while the other doubles will be ignored. After two weeks, non-respondents will get a reminder to vote.

8. The day after the election closes, the members will be informed of the results.

9. Within one month after the elections, the director arranges a Skype meeting of the GALE Association Committee.

Planning

27-12-2016: election procedure

27-12-2016: status of the GALE Association Board

27-12-2016: article in GALE Update

2-1-2017: development technical voting procedure

1-2-2017: presentation of candidates

15-2-2017: opening elections

1-3-2017: closing elections, informing candidates, arranging Skype meeting

2-3-2017: article in GALE Update to inform the members