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GALE THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR LGBT EDUCATION

Special on AIDS and human rights

global news

UNDP and OSI analyze failure to address AIDS epidemic among MSM and sexual minorities

Susana Fried and Shannon Kowalski-Morton recently published an exploration of the potential of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to create space for the participation of sex workers, LGBT individuals and MSM. They conclude there is some change in the long time of neglect of these groups, but much more needs to be done.

Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals of Botswana (LeGaBiBo), the only organization in Botswana that works for the rights of the LGBT community, has been barred by the government from registering as a legal entity, which also prevents them from receiving donor funding. LeGaBiBo is not the only LGBT organization that is barred from the battle against AIDS. The exclusion of LGBT citizens from their human rights is a major threat for effective action against AIDS all over the world.

GALE's key partner is HIVOS. The exploration of Fried and Kowalski-Morton is not only relevant for Global Fund policy. Most of their analysis can be generalized to other stakeholders in combating HIV. They mention three barriers against participation of LGBT organizations in the battle against AIDS. The first one is that governments, who

coordinate the strategy to combat AIDS sometimes outlaws or excludes sex work, LGBT people and MSM. A second one is the lack of capacity of organizations of sex workers and LGBT people, which are often small and technically ill-equipped to do large scale work or to prepare the complex applications required by the Global Fund (and many others). A third one is outright discrimination and social exclusion. Open participation in care or prevention activities can be risky or even dangerous, both for the recipients and for the providers. There are numerous examples of prevention workers being harassed by the

In many countries, discrimination and hostile legal and political environments seriously impede efforts to protect the sexual health and rights of sex workers, LGBT individuals and MSM and hinder access to the HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services they need. (...) A lack of knowledge among health care providers about the specific health needs of sex workers, LGBT individuals, and MSM means that the care they do receive is often inappropriate and fragmented.

Therapeutics Research, Education and AIDS Training in Asia, pp. 22-23

GALE is convinced combating AIDS can be more effective when the AIDS strategy is blended with a human rights angle and combined with human rights education.

police, arrested, raped and even killed.

A Nepalese 15 year old meti



after an attack by local teenagers.

However, there are good examples of how this can be

different. In many countries, the authorities have changed the law to make effective work possible. In other countries, international organizations have reached out to disenfranchised populations and in some cases, funded organizations despite legal barriers. Funders also can open up a political dialogue and fund issues that governments ignore or downplay.

alliance news

GALE is getting up to steam

GALE opened up for membership in October 2007. The mission of GALE is to identify, enhance and share educational expertise in LGBT issues. The first step of this is to identify what already has been done and to ask stakeholders to join the GALE learning community to collaborate on enhancing and sharing the knowledge.

Quick Scan

The identification of what has been done and by whom, is done with a quick scan. The quick scan has started in Latin America and was done by GALE partners CEPAC en GLEFAS. The scan was partly funded by UNAIDS Brazil. About 90 responses were collected. After analysis, country reports will be made and published on country pages, which can be accessed through a world map on the website www.lgbt-education.info. The information, stripped of its privacy sensitive content, will be shared with ILGA.

Storytelling

In many countries, it is not yet possible to offer any education about LGBT issues, simply because the authorities forbid it. Advocacy is needed and other organizations focus on that. GALE supports advocacy and the start of education in these countries by organizing small projects on story collection and storytelling. The first of these is about to start in Asia. In an Asian strategy meeting in Chiang Mai, it was explored how these sensitive interviews can be

conducted and a storytelling collection project was developed.

Mainstreaming

In countries where education about LGBT issues is not prohibited, there still needs to be done a lot before LGBT issues can be mainstreamed



effectively. A big challenge for mainstreaming LGBT issues is that potential partner organizations do often not see the link between human rights for LGBT people and their own focus (like AIDS, or women's issues), and vice versa. GALE will play its role in these discussions by publishing on this theme. But GALE wants to work on implementation at the same time. In southern Africa, GALE partners have started

to develop a media manual on how to deal with LGBT issues. In Europe and Brazil, GALE will focus on teacher training and safer schools. In November, GALE will organize an international teacher training expert meeting in Warsaw.

In June, GALE collaborated with the Brazilian government to organize a national expert meeting on safer schools. This resulted in the creation of a Brazilian GALE "articulation" committee (see picture), which will collaborate in the national project which is going to assess the needs and opportunities for the federal "schools without homophobia" program.

International collaboration

GALE will submit an application to UNESCO to become an allied network soon and participate in the 4-annual World Conference of UNESCO in Geneva. GALE is closely collaboration with ILGA. GALE's key partner is HIVOS.

global news

IAS concerned about homophobic statements by political leaders

In the end of May, the International AIDS Society (IAS) expressed its deep concern about continuing inflammatory and homophobic statements by political leaders in Uganda, Poland, and most recently by the President of The Gambia, and urged national and international leaders to reject homophobia and to take affirmative steps to reduce its impact on HIV.

A report issued at the end of 2007, led by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the US, provides solid evidence that HIV among MSM continues to be widespread, and in many cases, is exacerbated by stigma, criminalization and the lack of appropriate services. The study indicates that, even in countries with low HIV prevalence in the general population, the epidemic among MSM is raging.

According to UNAIDS, fewer than one in 20 MSM around the world has access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care – and even fewer in low-income settings.

Compared to the HIV testing rates of 63-85 percent seen among MSM in Australia, Europe, and North America, rates among MSM in much of Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe are often under 20 percent.

As it has been demonstrated in many different countries, reducing the social exclusion of gay and MSM communities through the promotion and protection of their human rights (including sexual rights and the right to health) is not only consistent with, but a prerequisite to, good public health. Once discriminatory policies are abolished and stigma and discrimination are confronted, country-based

programs can be put in place to encourage gay men and MSM to stay free of HIV-infection, thus supporting national goals of reducing HIV burden.

"Homophobia – whether propagated by government leaders, enforced by outdated laws, or perpetuated through stigma and discrimination – continues to fuel this epidemic, and should therefore be the number one enemy of those who are serious about ending this global tragedy," said Dr. Pedro Cahn, IAS President, AIDS 2008 Co-Chair and President of Fundación Huésped in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Women urge for a stronger focus on gender

On 11 June, 53 women's groups from all over the world, after being present at the High Level Meeting on AIDS, urged national governments and the UN system to keep their promises to women and girls who continue to be at an alarming risk of HIV infection and of receiving inadequate prevention, treatment, care and support as a result of persisting social, cultural and economic subordination, structural inequalities, as well as pervasive violence in their homes, communities, schools, workplaces, streets, markets, police stations hospitals, and situations of institutional confinement.



More than 80 per cent of countries, including 85 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, have policies in place to ensure the equal access of women and girls to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, but only 53

per cent provide budgeted support for women-focused programs. The collective condemns the lack of action on women's human rights issues that are central to the goals of halting this pandemic.

lgbt lesbian gay bisexual transgender education

news from the global alliance for lgbt education (gale)

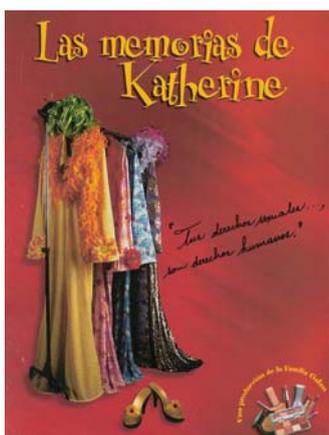
Such as ensuring the right to health and the right to live free of sexual and other forms of coercion and violence, rights to universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and education, and promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls. It urges a range of actions: ensure that access to treatment, prevention, care and support services, budget to address gender inequality, develop means for measuring action on gender equality and women's empowerment in HIV action plans, strengthen the evidence base on the

intersection of gender inequality and HIV&AIDS, give sufficient attention to frequently invisible groups of women such as , young women, older women, indigenous women; women of color, migrant women, women in situation of confinement, women who have sex with women, transgender women, drug users, women partners of drug users, and sex workers, women living with disabilities among others, articulate a policy framework that gives priority to violence against women and girls, HIV/AIDS and their inter-linkages, strengthen the UN system's capacity to work for women,

promote and protect the human rights of sex workers and drug users, ensure that human rights defenders, advocates and activists who focus on these issues are legally allowed to engage in their activities, without threats of violence, harassment, NGO closures, or other restrictions that can limit their advocacy and ensure freedom of movement of people living with HIV&AIDS by eliminating restrictions on their travel. In most of these efforts, education and training is of crucial importance.

good practices

Bolivian transvestites play the streets for prevention and against discrimination



In 2005, the Bolivian "Family Galan" took to the streets with "Las memorias de Katherine". The play is an adaptation of the book "Luminarias" by the Mexican author Emilio Carballedo and developed to support the public and transgressing presentation of the Galan family.

The play is about Katherine, who remembers her life. She would like to tell and sing about her times of excitement, triumphs, luxuries, travels, fame, but she has to acknowledge the reality of life: failure, hate, violence and discrimination.

The play is a proud representation of transgender life, including the fun and

pain that goes with it. By playing it in the streets, the general public is educated about the social context of HIV, gender based violence and discrimination.

The production was supported by the Centro de Promoción de la Mujer Gregoria Apaza and the CIES Salud Sexual y Reproductiva.



local news: Uganda

Activists arrested for “trespassing” while protesting

In June 2008, international human rights organizations and Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) called for action to request the Government of Uganda to drop all charges against the three prisoners of conscience being held for advocating for equal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment and care.

Three Ugandan gay activists were arrested for peacefully attending the 2008 HIV/AIDS International Implementers' Meeting were charged under Section 305 of the Ugandan Penal Code, which allows for a maximum penalty of one year in prison. The activists carried placards emblazoned with, 'Gay Ugandans are also Ugandans', 'Gay Ugandans also need HIV prevention and care', 'Health is a fundamental human right, gay inclusive', 'Since 1983 to 2008 zero shillings for HIV prevention for Gays'.

Dr. Kihumuro Apuuli, Director General of the Uganda AIDS Commission, had earlier stated that "gays are one of the drivers of HIV in Uganda, but because of meager resources we cannot direct our programs at them at this time." "Gay men and lesbians are not 'drivers of

disease'," said Paula Ettelbrick, Executive Director of IGLHRC. "Homophobia drives HIV. Silence drives HIV."

The prosecutor, Emmanuel Ojambo, said the three sneaked into the hotel room with the intention to annoy and insult the 2,000 delegates attending the HIV/AIDS conference. He said the suspects disrupted the meeting. The three suspects called upon the participants to consider the plight of the gays in matters pertaining to HIV/AIDS. Some colleagues stood surety for them. The judge released them on court bond and ordered them to report to the Court on June 20 for the hearing of their case."

Since their release, both individuals have faced harassment and violent attacks from individuals in

their neighborhood who were informed by police of their gender identity. These started with threats and escalated to a serious violent attack on the night of 3 June in Old Kampala, where a group of youths attacked both individuals. One of the attackers has since been arrested by police. Amnesty International calls for this attack to be investigated and any perpetrators brought to justice through fair trials.

In November 2004, the Ugandan government fined a local broadcaster, Radio Simba for airing a program that discussed anti-gay discrimination and the need for HIV/AIDS Services for lesbians and gay men. The government claimed that Radio Simba had violated federal law promoting broadcasting that is contrary to "public morality".

local news: China

Homophobia and financial hardship can lead to risky anal sex

In 2004 and 2005, Choi, Hudes and Steward of the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (San Francisco) studied the question if experiences of homophobia and financial hardship leads to HIV risk behavior among MSM in Shanghai. Their recent report shows a direct link between experiences of homophobia and financial hardship with having unprotected anal sex with men. The results suggest that homophobia, financial hardship, and sex partner concurrency should be addressed to help reduce sexual risk for HIV among MSM in China.

(Source: msm-asia@googlegroups.com, 5-6-2008)

UNAIDS Brazil launches Latin American guide to combat stigma

Last year, UNAIDS in Brazil published “Derechos humanos, salud and VIH”, a guideline on how to deal with stigma within the AIDS epidemic. The guide acknowledges that discrimination and stigma are important to fight in order to be effective in combating HIV and AIDS. It is expected an English version of this innovative guide will soon be available.

The Brazilian experience shows there are significant challenges to overcome the vulnerability of the homosexual population in Brazil. Michel Sidibé, Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS puts it like this: “As in other parts of the world, combating the epidemic transcends health issues alone as it is also a cultural issue. The distorted view of homosexuality, clearly present in a large portion of society, leads to discrimination, which, in turn, in no way favours actions intended to prevent, diagnose and treat those affected by the pandemic.

The impact of homophobia on a public health problem is less perceptible than it would appear. Explicit or subtle, homophobia is present above all in *machista* cultures where a hegemonic heterosexual viewpoint reigns, and reveals itself to be a complicating factor in combating AIDS, since it favours, for example, social exclusion, as the performance of homosexuals discriminated against at school or in the workplace may be less than expected. This results in homosexual students abandoning school,

not moving on to the next grade or absenteeism. These are factors that lead to failure to obtain qualifications at school and dismissal from employment.

UNAIDS, which in 2003 held a world campaign for the end of stigma and discrimination as an essential tool in combating the epidemic, applauds the Brazilian efforts in launching a national plan capable of serving as an example to other countries in the region and even to other countries in the world. UNAIDS will continue to support initiatives like this one which is about to be implemented and will make exerted efforts to publicize it as yet another good public health practice for combating the HIV epidemic.”

Derechos humanos, salud y VIH

Guía de acciones estratégicas para prevenir y combatir la discriminación por orientación sexual e identidad de género



Late last year, UNAIDS Brazil supported GALE to do a quick scan on education about LGBT issues in Latin America. The results of the quick scan will be discussed at the first strategy meeting of GALE for Latin America and the Caribbean, which will take place from 29 July to 31 July in Mexico City.

Challenging the disinterest in lesbians and AIDS

There are few out-lesbians who are confirmed to have been infected with HIV through female-to-female sexual transmission. However, case reports of female-to-female transmission of HIV and the well-documented risk of female-to-male transmission indicate that vaginal secretions and menstrual blood are potentially infectious and that mucous membrane (for example, oral, vaginal) exposure to these secretions has the potential to lead to HIV infection.



The following information comes from CDC unpublished data. Through December 2004, a total of 246,461 women were reported as HIV infected. Of these, 7,381 were reported to have had sex with women; however, most had other risk factors (such as injection drug use, sex with men who are infected or who have risk factors for infection, or, more rarely, receipt of blood or blood products). Of the 534 (of 7,381) women who were reported to have had sex only with women, 91% also had another risk factor, typically injection drug use.

An US study of more than 1 million female blood donors found no HIV-infected women whose only risk factor was sex with women. However, this hardly negates the possibility. Information on whether a woman had sex with women is missing in more than 60% of the 246,461 case reports, possibly because the physician did not ask or the woman did not volunteer the information. A pattern of lesbophobia may be driving this, both through a lack of knowledge and interest of physicians and the reticent attitude of the women clients.

Findings from other research suggest that some WSW have other behavioral risk factors, such as injection drug use and unprotected vaginal sex with men who have sex with men (MSM) or men who inject drugs.

Picture: The Spanish version to the guide to lesbian health, developed by ILGA in 2005

Although there are few confirmed cases of female-to-female transmission of HIV, female sexual contact

should be considered a possible means of transmission among WSW. These women need to know their own and their partner's HIV serostatus. Condoms should be used consistently and correctly during every sexual contact with men or when using sex toys. Sex toys should not be shared. No barrier methods for use during oral sex have been evaluated as effective by the Food and Drug Administration. However, natural rubber latex sheets, dental dams, condoms that have been cut and spread open, or plastic wrap may offer some protection from contact with body fluids during oral sex and thus may reduce the possibility of HIV transmission. Health care providers need to remember that sexual identity does not necessarily predict behavior and that some women who identify themselves as WSW or lesbian may be at risk for HIV infection through unprotected sex with men. (Adapted from <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/women/resources/factsheets/wsw.htm>)

lgbt lesbian gay bisexual transgender education

news from the global alliance for lgbt education (gale)

calendar

www.lgbt-education.info/en/news/international_lgbt_events_calendar

September 3-5: 61st DPI NGO Conference

Paris, France, UNESCO offices. The 61st Annual DPI/NGO Conference wants to create the framework for discussions that are forward thinking, exploring civil society contributions to advancing the respect for human rights. GALE will participate in a workshop on LGBT issues.

September 5 & 6: International Female Masculinities Seminar

Amsterdam, Netherlands. The international Female Masculinities seminar is a two-day transdisciplinary conference convened by Prof. Saskia Wieringa (UvA) and co-convened by Prof. Evelyn Blackwood (Purdue University).

October 19-24: European Teacher Training on homophobia/gender-based discrimination

Berlin, Germany. Grants possible for European educators who work in schools or adult education.

October, 23-24-25: "Sexual heterotopias"

Brussels, Belgium. This international symposium aims at thinking through the transitory transformations of the self at stake in various forms of alternative, subversive sexual experience, with a focus on colonial worlds, sexualized mobility and migrations, public space and the technologies of desire, past and present sexual utopias, research out in the sexual field.

October 30 - 2 November: ILGA Europe conference

Vienna, Austria. The theme of this year's conference is "Think globally, act locally" and reflects the work of ILGA-Europe and its members on advocating for international human rights standards and practices and their implementation at the local level.

November 3-6: ILGA WORLD Conference

Vienna, Austria. Its theme will be "Organising locally to bring on global change". This year's conference will unfortunately have a limited number of spaces.

November 25-28: UNESCO Conference "Inclusive Education"

Geneva, Switzerland. Governmental conference, NGO's allowed as observers.

2009

15 - 18 February 15-18: Conference on Gender-based Violence and SRH

Mumbai, India.

June 11-14: LASA Conference "Queer in Latin America?"

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. How does a platform for political and social justice that is based on the queer singularity of the subject intersect with the plights of the economically disenfranchised and the struggle against discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and color?

July 27-29th: Outgames Conference on LGBT Human Rights

Copenhagen, Denmark. Tracks: Sports, Culture and Media, Education, Families, Politics (National and local/community level), Out in Business, Workers Out, LGBT History.