

# LGBT EDUCATION

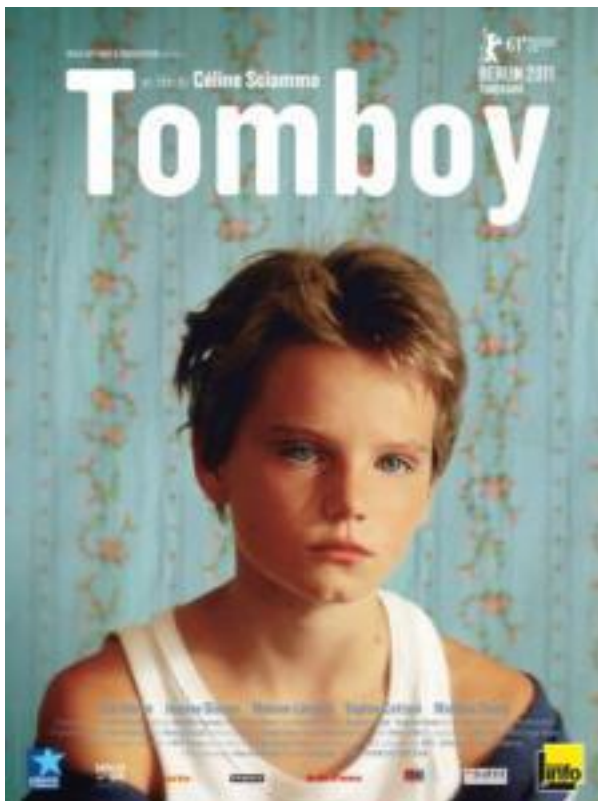
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## GLOBAL NEWS: UNESCO

### UNESCO passes resolution against gender based violence

On 16th April, 2015, during UNESCO's Executive Board meeting an historic resolution "Learning Without Fear" was passed. The resolution condemns gender-based violence in and around schools.



#### ***Call for national policies***

The Resolution was signed by 58 countries. It recognizes that "violence against children and school-related gender-based violence has a devastating effect on the dignity of children and on the enjoyment of human rights, and constitutes a major obstacle to the equal enjoyment of the right to education for all, gender equality at all levels of education and inclusive, transformational and sustainable development".

The Resolution goes on to call on governments to design and implement national policies and action plans and to promote the creation of safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all boys and girls.

*Left: The film "Tomboy" is about a girl getting in trouble for being "boyish"*

### ***Possible inclusion of LGBT***

The resolution does not seem to specifically take sexual diversity into account. It seems to refer only to traditional gender stereotypes by referring to safe environments "for all boys and girls". Still, it is a step forward that there is attention at all for gender-based violence in schools at all. Also, the resolution may be interpreted to also include boys as victims of gender-based violence.

*Right: Sissy boys are still confronted with negative responses, even by their teachers.*



The decision also invites the Director-General to submit to the next Executive Board a roadmap to better combat school-related gender-based violence.

## ***GALE invites feedback for UNESCO roadmap***

GALE will offer an advice to the Director-General on how to include transgender issues and a safe environment for boys and girls who do not conform to traditional gender stereotypes. The director calls the members for statistical facts and examples of social exclusion of transgenders and of gender-based violence based on gender prejudice in schools.



Source: <http://www.right-to-education.org/news/un-passes-resolution-school-related-gender-based-violence>

The resolution:  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002323/232369e.pdf>

*Left: Thai cheerleader boys*

## Italian and Dutch schools start exchange on sexual diversity policy

With a grant of the European Union, 3 schools in the Netherlands, Italy and San Sebastian start a two year exchange about sexual diversity in their schools. In April, the first meeting took place in Bari, Italy.



### ***Diversity***

From 19th to 25th April six Dutch students and a teacher from the Hyperion Lyceum in Amsterdam (Netherlands) met with the teachers and 24 students of the Liceo Scientifico "Gaetano Salvemini" in Bari (Italy). There was a double program: one for students

and one for teachers. In some of the events, teachers and students met to discuss homophobia. The program does not focus solely on homophobia, but also on geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity. The students attended classes at, went on local tours and participated in student activities on sexual diversity and a socially safety in school. The student activities were organized by the Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE) in collaboration with the school in Bari. Additionally GALE presented the main results of a needs assessment in the three schools that was carried out before the meeting.

### ***Surprising cultural differences for students***

The Italian and Dutch students started by discussing the film "Ruben". This 10 minute film is about a gay boy who is bullied at school and finally contemplates suicide. The students talked about situations when they felt left out at school and what the school can do to make the atmosphere more welcoming for everyone. Initially, the Dutch students found it difficult to come up with ideas because bullying and sexual diversity already gets ample attention in their school. But when the discussion widened to diversity in general, they came up with the idea that their school could have care for physically disabled people. The Italian students were shocked the Dutch school does not have an elevator for wheelchairs. On the other hand, the Dutch students were surprised about the more homophobic attitudes in Italian society and the



destructive role of religion.

## ***We have a dream...***

Based on the brainstorming, the students wrote short papers about the school of their dreams. They presented these ideas to the teachers. They asked them for more lessons on sexuality, a better approach



against bullying and more teacher training on listening to and empathy with students. One of the student groups states: "We have a dream to attend a school without any segregation and discrimination of any kind.

*Left: students present their dream school without homophobia*

By giving different types of education, like sex education, and interactive lessons given by young professional teachers, the school can help to develop different mindsets and teach us how to be respectful for the people around us. Through trips and excursions we get to know different cultures, discuss them and learn to avoid prejudice. We would like the teachers to be experts in facilitation this learning process. A big public space in this school would be ideal to interact and connect with other students. To do this, we need money and volunteers. We can get the money by organizing tournaments and parties and social networks. This is the school of our dreams." Some of the students and teacher burst into tears after their statement.

The Dutch students who traveled to Bari were very impressed by the openness and friendship the Italian students immediately showed. They expect Dutch students would be more shy and maybe less welcoming at first.

They are already thinking how to prepare the next exchange meeting in November in Amsterdam and make it as much a success.



## ***Challenges among teachers to cooperate***

While the students prepared their dream statements, about 20 teachers discussed how they could combat homophobia in their school. Marinus Schouten, of GALE, who led this workshop, said: "On one hand, I noticed that the teachers had a great need to have more information about how they can incorporate attention to sexual diversity in their classes. We worked on a spiral curriculum which starts at Day 1 and ends when the students graduate. This clarified how they can work step by step and set small but attainable objectives. We also discussed how to deal with the resistance of the church and of some parents."

"I noticed that teachers are not used to make agreements among themselves on how to combat bullying and to organize positive affirmation of students. Especially in Italy, the teachers rely heavily on the director, who enjoys an enormous authority in the school."

On the basis of the needs assessment and the schools exchange, GALE will develop an e-learning course for teachers. The needs assessment showed there are important differences in the relationship between students and teachers between the three schools. While everyone agrees that "respect" and "self-confidence" are the most skills students should learn, there are very diverging ideas among teachers about how to do this. They have different ideas as to how to teach about LGBT identity and sexuality, how to offer sex education, how to coach LGBT students and how to connect LGBT safety to general school safety.

### LOCAL NEWS: LITHUANIA

## **Almost a quarter of school bullying in Lithuania is homophobic**

The Lithuanian LGBT organization LGL has released a research on homophobic bullying in Lithuanian schools, which shows that almost a quarter of teachers (23.3%) said that verbal bullying is based on presumed or actual sexual orientation.



### ***Key results***

Some key findings include:

- Only 10% of teachers said that non-heterosexual students are studying in their school.
- One-third of teachers admit that they lack knowledge and experience in dealing with the issue of homophobic bullying in

schools.

- 79% of the students who responded to the survey faced bullying based on their sexual orientation in school.

To summarize, it can be said that the majority of teachers do not recognize the problem of homophobic bullying in schools.



### ***Teachers are blind to challenges***

Teachers seem to be quite unaware of homophobic bullying and homophobic language. The majority said that they very rarely notice homophobic bullying or are not aware of such incidents at their school.

This is in contradiction with their statement that 23% of bullying is related to sexual orientation. It is an alarming fact that almost half of surveyed teachers felt that there is no need to deal with homophobic bullying because there is no such problem at their schools.

Slightly less than one-fifth of teachers support the disclosure of sexual orientation at their school. More than half of teachers believe that school is not the place to talk about one's (homo)sexual orientation. Such an approach does not allow students to feel safe enough to be themselves at school.

### ***Censorship law aggravates problems***

Almost one-fifth of the teachers believe the issue of homophobic bullying is complicated by the political situation regarding LGBT people in Lithuania. The Law on the Protection of Minors Against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information was adopted in 2010. This law forbids any positive information about LGBT people in the public sphere. Meanwhile, stereotypes and hostile attitudes are not forbidden and are freely disseminated in the media.

### ***Recommendations***

LGL makes several recommendations:



- Raise teachers' awareness of the fact that there are LGBT young people and students in their schools and that they face bullying and harassment
- Educate teachers on how to provide support to these young people
- Incorporate homophobic bullying into the general anti-bullying program
- Ensure that sexual education is taught in school
- Create support and informational systems for students

Source: ILGA Europe

## LOCAL NEWS: UNITED STATES

### Pennsylvania high school boys wear flannel to celebrate "Anti-Gay Day"

In April, a band of Pennsylvania high school boys wore matching flannel shirts and pasted hateful poster on gay students' lockers. Some say they also drafted a "lynch list".

#### *Intimidation of GSA students*

As many as 100 students at Claysville's McGuffey High School took part in the "Anti-Gay Day" a day after the school's Gay-Straight Alliance held its Day of Silence. "The Day of Silence was organized to draw attention to and condemn bullying against gay students. The homophobic students, mostly boys, wore flannel shirts and wrote "anti-gay" funeral crosses on the backs of their hands. The group stuck offensive posters on gay students' lockers and intimidated Gay-Straight Alliance members and their supporters.



Other students said the group had a “lynch list”, although they did not say what exactly the list meant. McGuffey Superintendent Erica Kolat said officials have not seen the rumored list, but that the school district was investigating the allegations.



### ***Supportive action of teacher and management***

Teachers ran out of their classrooms and took the offensive posters down.

The Gay-Straight Alliance and other students have tried to counter Anti-Gay Day with their own protests. They held signs that said “Stick with Love” and “It Gets Better” before the morning bell rang. But the tension between the two factions remained obvious. "This is why so many students hate going to school", a student

said.

The school management is making an investigation, especially in the so-called "lynch list". The McGuffey School District administration said it is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all children and asked anyone who has more information to come forward.

Sources:

NY Daily News: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/pennsylvania-high-schoolers-organize-anti-gay-day-article-1.2192834?cid=msn>

WPXI News student report: <http://www.wpxi.com/news/news/local/students-pittsburgh-area-school-allegedly-organize/nkxJY/>

WPXI News school statement: <http://www.wpxi.com/news/news/local/investigation-anti-gay-day-continues-pastor-says-h/nkyhd/>



## New primary schools materials on diverse families made in Argentina



In March, the NGO "Argentina 100% Diversity and Rights" presented a series of educational materials for primary school children. The materials have the aim to make family diversity visible and to contribute to open cultural change in the country. This is part of a series of interventions since the enactment of the recent LGBTI equality laws in Argentina.

The materials are a coloring book and a puzzle. They portray everyday situations that allow children to that apart from the traditional family there are also different types of families.

The materials are available free of charge at the headquarters of the organization. You can contact them through email [cienporcientodiversidad@gmail.com](mailto:cienporcientodiversidad@gmail.com) or look on [www.facebook.com/100.por.ciento](http://www.facebook.com/100.por.ciento) and <https://100porciento.wordpress.com>. Argentineans can also request paper version sent by post.

NGO 100% Diversity and Rights earlier published guides for teachers and worked on creating awareness in the media and gave various workshops for children's caretakers.

Source: <http://ilga-lac.org/vuelta-al-colegio-en-argentina-familias-diversas-familias-visibles/>

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## Colophon

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