

# LGBT EDUCATION

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## REGIONAL NEWS: EUROPE

### **GALE offers European course on SOGI-phobia again in April**

In July 2015, GALE offered a European course on combating homophobia and transphobia in schools in Sitges, Spain. The course will be repeated from Monday 4 April until Friday 8 April. The course takes place in Sitges and is hosted by SVS (Association of Sitges Volunteers).



#### ***Five day program***

The course "Combating homophobia/transphobia in schools" focuses mostly on how to change a school culture to be more LGBT friendly and less heteronormative. This is partly about how people deal with this

on a personal level, but also about how heteronormativity translates in a negative organizational culture. The course therefore also deals with how organizational change can be stimulated. The core element in the course is how schools can teach students to deal with negative emotions and opinions they may have about things that are "different" from their regular expectations, values and group norms. A more detailed program and information on how to register can be found here: <http://www.gale.info/doc/training/160222-Course-Schools-without-SOGI-phobia-Sitges.pdf>.

### **Costs and registration**

The course fee is €420 per person. The fee corresponds with the rates set by the Erasmus+ KA1 program ([[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/study-and-volunteering-in-another-country\\_en\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/study-and-volunteering-in-another-country_en_en)]|[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/study-and-volunteering-in-another-country\\_en\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/study-and-volunteering-in-another-country_en_en)]). For participants without this funding, a discount can be arranged. Potential European participants should register before 24 March 2016 by mailing [info@lgbt-education.info](mailto:info@lgbt-education.info). Interested parties outside Europe are advised to explore if some type of funding can be found to offer a course in their own region, which then can be better tailored to the regional context.

## **Scientific questions about role of religion in tolerance education**

In November last year, researcher Jean Decety published a worldwide research on the relation between religion and altruism. He concluded that children from religious households are less generous than others. This is only a next result in a series of researches that show how religious people are not only less generous but also less tolerant and more authoritarian. It raises the fundamental question about the role of religion in global peace and understanding.

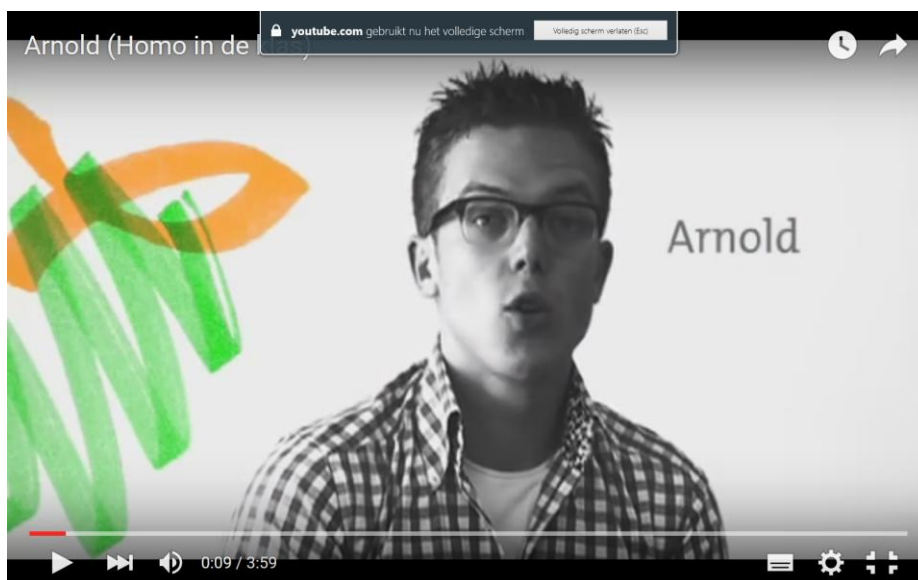


Image: Arnold, one of the Christian educators, tell his story on the website of the "Gay in the Classroom"

### **Decety's research**

Decety is a developmental neuroscientist at the University of Chicago. His study was published in *Current Biology*.

He collaborated with researchers in Canada, China, Jordan, South Africa, Turkey and Americans to look

at children aged between five and 12 and their families. Dr. Decety and his colleagues recruited 1,170 families and focused on one child per family. They asked some questions to calculate how religious each family was. They then asked the children to play a game to measure altruism.

Each child was presented with 30 attractive stickers and told that he or she could keep ten. After a child had made the selection, the experimenter told him that there was not time to play the game with all the children at the school. But that he could give away some of his ten stickers to a random schoolmate who would not otherwise be able to take part. The child was then given a few minutes to decide whether he wanted to give up some of his stickers—and, if so, how many. The researchers used the number of stickers surrendered as a measure of altruism.

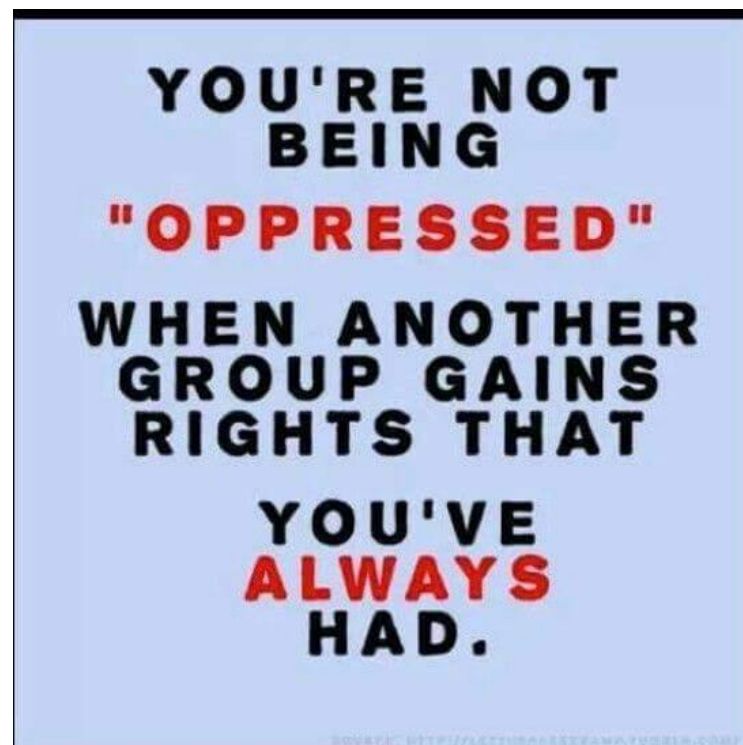
### ***Religious parents belief their children to be more sensitive to injustice***

The results showed that the children of non-believers were significantly more generous than those of believers. They gave away an average of 4.1 stickers. Children from a religious background gave away 3.3. And a further analysis of the two largest religious groups (Jews, Buddhists and Hindus were excluded because of their small numbers in the sample), showed no statistical difference between them. Muslim children gave away 3.2 stickers on average, while Christian children gave away 3.3. Moreover, a regression analysis on these groups of children showed that their generosity was inversely correlated with their households' religiosity. This effect remained

regardless of a family's wealth and status (rich children were more generous than poor ones), a child's age (older children were more generous than younger ones) or the nationality of the participant. These findings are, however, in marked contrast to parents' assessments of their own children's sensitivity to injustice. When asked, religious parents reported they thought their children would be more sensitive than non-believing parents did.

### ***Deeper fears of orthodox people***

This research is but the last in a consistent range of surveys that show how people who are part of religious communities tend to be more authoritarian, intolerant and rigid in thinking about gender, sexuality, altruism, forgiveness and peace. However, it is important to reflect more on the background of this. An important note is that there is a big difference between belonging to a religious community, religiosity and spirituality. Research shows that spiritual religious people do not differ significantly from



non-religious people on tolerance. It seems the social framework of self-contained and conservative religious communities play a much more significant role in intolerance and lack of empathy with others than religion itself. This is important to keep in mind when being confronted with orthodox religious arguments based on religious texts. These may be just a cover up for fears and aversions that are deeper rooted in social and cultural contexts. It would be useful if more research was done into such fears, especially because they seriously threaten world peace and the position of vulnerable minorities.

## Orthodox tolerance programming

It would also be useful to more publicize and research the impact of the few programs that attempt to mediate some of the orthodox religious aversions. For example, the Dutch educational program "Homo in de klas" (Gay in the Classroom) is an excellent example of education and dialogue within the orthodox Christian context. This program was developed by a community organization of LGBT orthodox Christians in cooperation with the boards of the orthodox Restored Reformed schools.

The program does not preach a specific choice in how to deal with the perceived dilemma of being Christian and having same-sex attraction. It offers a range of examples of Christian young people:

- remaining abstinent
- having a same-sex relationship but not having sex
- having a same-sex relationship and having sex, and negotiating a working relationship with the church and community
- leaving the church and sometimes also the community

The dialogue in lessons focus on the lessons about love in the Bible, but also about how church members deal with diversity and how they would feel if they were cut of their community and church if they would to adhere to all the rules. In the lessons, Christian gay and lesbian people tell their stories and discuss experiences and choices. Some research in orthodox schools has show this program to have be effective to stimulate tolerance.

Sources:

- Jean Decety, Jason M. Cowell, Kang Lee, Randa Mahasneh, Susan Malcolm-Smith, Bilge Selcuk and Xinyue Zhou, <http://www.cell.com/current-biology/abstract/S0960-9822%2815%2901167-7>





-The economist, [http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21677613-far-bolstering-generosity-religious-upbringing-diminishes-it-matthew-](http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21677613-far-bolstering-generosity-religious-upbringing-diminishes-it-matthew-2239?fsrc=scn%2Ffb%2Fte%2Fpe%2Fed%2Fmatthew2239)

[2239?fsrc=scn%2Ffb%2Fte%2Fpe%2Fed%2Fmatthew2239](http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21677613-far-bolstering-generosity-religious-upbringing-diminishes-it-matthew-2239?fsrc=scn%2Ffb%2Fte%2Fpe%2Fed%2Fmatthew2239)

- Dutch education method Gay in the Classroom, <http://www.homoindex.nl>

## China takes high school soap from Internet

February 24, 2016 - The Chinese censor agency (SAPPRFT) has taken the soap series “Addicted” of the Internet. The series is about a gay high school couple. The strange thing is that the series was already running for 12 of the 15 episodes. So one wonders why the Chinese censors belatedly decided to takes this series of the Internet now. Chinese followers of the series are furious. The 3 last episodes are now viewable on YouTube, but YouTube is blocked in China.”



### ***Unfounded arguments***

According to local media, the censors removed the soap series because it depicts “abnormal sexual behavior” and “romance between minors.” We cannot be sure if these are the real reasons. But both are nonsense. In China, homosexual orientation is not criminalized and it was taken off the list of mental diseases in 2001.

Indeed, the series is about a romance. But the age of consent in China is 14 for all sexual orientations. The couple in the soap is clearly older than 14. It adds to the ambiguity of the censors that a recent campaign “Love is not a Choice” is not blocked. This campaign runs through social media. It features short adds of gay couples in their homes. The pay-off is: “Love is not a choice. We did not choose to be homosexual. We just are. Happily, the world is big enough for all of us.”



### ***Ten million views in 24 hours***

“Addicted” started in the end of January, during the Chinese New Year holiday. It quickly became very popular among younger female fans. The first episode was viewed 10 million times in the first 24 hours. In an online poll by the Chengdu Committee for the Well-being of Youth and Teenagers, more than 93% of 20,000 respondents disapproved of the soaps removal of the Internet.

It may be this popularity has upset the censors. When visibility of sexual diversity remains limited, the censors do not seem to have so much problems with it. It has shown before that Chinese censors view high visibility of defiance from traditional or/and communist social norms as a threat towards the state policy of “harmony” and social stability. The LGBT movement is trying to make clear that “harmony” can only truly be reached when “diversity within harmony” is accepted.

### ***Ongoing struggle***

The removal of “Addicted” is just another episode in a continuing soap of publishing films on sexual diversity on the Internet and organizing semi-clandestine LGBT film festivals. It is expected // this // soap will continue. GALE is discussing with local activists if formal letters or other pressure will help. The writer/producer of “Addiction” Chaijidan (pseudonym) stated filming a second season would “not be impacted” by the ban.

Watch the [trailer for Addicted <https://youtu.be/lwkzWWhBNqU>

Source: Pink News, [http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/02/24/china-removes-gay-high-school-drama-from-streaming-sites/?utm\\_source=MOBFB](http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/02/24/china-removes-gay-high-school-drama-from-streaming-sites/?utm_source=MOBFB)

## Indonesian minister of education calls on universities to refuse LGBT students

February 11, 2016 - The Indonesian minister of research, technology and higher education, Muhammad Nasir Djamil, said on 23 January that LGBT students should be banned from university. “There are standard values and moral standards to be maintained. The campus is a moral guardian”, Nasir said, ignoring his own standard to uphold the universal right to education. He followed the lead of the Minister of Culture and Education, Anies Baswedan, who warned parents and teachers that LGBT were deviant and a danger to adolescents.

Gilang Ramadhan/Humas Fraksi PKS DPR RI



### ***Violence condoned by Indonesian government***

Nasir made the comments in response to a controversy over a poster advertising counseling services for LGBTI students at the University of Indonesia. Half January, the poster went viral. The university immediately stopped recognizing the Support Group and Resource Center on Sexuality Studies (SGRC). SGRC defended its peer support network by claiming LGBT teens in Indonesia are more prone to suicide as a result of rejection and discrimination they received from the society. In a strategic workshop by Arus Pelangi, facilitated by GALE in 2013, it became clear that the level of bullying and outright violence in Indonesian education is exceptionally high. Every year, several new students get killed in fights during

university initiation. It is to be expected more vulnerable students will suffer most from such a violent environment. The GALE/Arus Pelangi workshop therefore concluded it should be the highest priority to fight homophobia in the context of the wider violence in Indonesian schools.

### ***Attempts to stop peer education***

The GALE/Arus Pelangi workshop lead to cooperation with regular anti-bullying organizations and to the development of peer education for universities and secondary schools. The minister seems to embark on a course to stop these civil society initiatives against violence. “LGBT groups should not be allowed to develop and be given space to conduct their activities. Even more serious are those LGBT members who go into universities with scientific studies, or hold discussion groups” said Nasir Djamil.

### ***Call to the president to keep promise to defend minorities***

The Indonesian president Jokowi Widodo promised to enforce human rights and protect the rights of minorities during his presidential campaign in 2014. Democratic forces say it is his responsibility to now stop his ministers to reject the right to education, to incite discrimination, and to increase the vulnerability of minorities in schools. A coalition of human rights activists in Indonesia who are LGBTI and non-LGBTI, including the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission, have issued statements to challenge the homophobic actions of the government ministers and to demand accountability.

Sources: Republika News, <http://nasional.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/16/01/25/o1gxly361-maraknya-lgbt-ini-kata-menteri-anies-baswedan>

Gay Star News, <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/indonesia-minister-wants-lgbti-students-banned-from-university/#gs.9aTAPzY>

Huffington Pos, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/grace-poore/new-outbreak-of-state-hom\\_b\\_9191008.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/grace-poore/new-outbreak-of-state-hom_b_9191008.html)

## **UK school gives pupils 23 options to define gender**

A UK high school in Brighton has asked its students to define their own gender, with options including trans, gender fluid and androgynous. They have been given 23 options to define their own gender. Some opponents have called the survey bizarre, while others call it an opportunity to have an open discussion.

### ***Exploring what gender means to young people***

Blatchington Mill School in Brighton gave teenagers the survey as part of their homework. The various options included: girl; boy; gender fluid; agender; androgynous; tri gender; non binary; genderqueer; demi-boy; demi-girl; trans boy and trans girl.





The question was part of a national survey from the Office of the Children's Commissioner and sent to every school in Brighton and Hove. Children's Commissioner for England Anne Longfield OBE who released the survey said: "We want to know how gender matters to young people: what does gender mean to them; how does it affect their lives; what do they want to change?" To explore these important questions, we have constructed a survey, and hope to hear from as many young people (13-18 years old) as possible."

**13. How do you define your gender?** The young people we talked with used the following terms; which of these best describes how you define your gender? (Choose as many as you want.)

- Girl
- Trans-boy
- Genderqueer
- Boy
- Gender fluid
- Gender non conforming
- Tomboy
- Agender
- Tri-gender
- Female
- Androgynous
- All genders
- In the middle of boy and girl
- Male
- Bi-gender
- (Young) woman
- Non-binary
- Intersex
- (Young) man
- Demi-boy
- Not sure
- Trans-girl
- Demi-girl
- Rather not say

Others (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

***Complaints about "bizarre choices"***

Parents have described the survey as "unnecessary" and "confusing" to teenagers going through some of the most difficult years of their lives. Katy Rice, a local newspaper columnist, said she is worried about the school giving the children a survey with "multiple bizarre choices". "I'm confused by all of these terms, (...) so what on earth does this do to teenagers, in the throes of discovering their sexuality for the first time? The majority of teenagers should feel secure in the knowledge that they are simply boy or girl." Mrs. Rice does not further elaborate on how she cares for the minorities in this matter.



Left: Sophie Cook

***Opportunity to discuss things openly***

Trans campaigners suggested offering children struggling with their gender the opportunity to put a name to their feelings could help them overcome some of the

difficulties. Sophie Cook said: "I think it is good for children to be given the opportunity to discuss things openly and honestly. It is so important that children who are going through gender dysphoria are given all the support they can get. The teenage years are terrible for all of us, but if you are battling gender dysphoria as well you can feel so isolated and alone and confused."

Sources: Pink News, <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/01/29/school-gives-pupils-23-options-to-define-their-own-gender/>

The Argus,

[http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/14236195.Brighton\\_school\\_children\\_asked\\_to\\_choose\\_from\\_list\\_of\\_23\\_terms\\_to\\_describe\\_their\\_gender/](http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/14236195.Brighton_school_children_asked_to_choose_from_list_of_23_terms_to_describe_their_gender/)

Metro, <http://metro.co.uk/2016/01/28/pupils-given-24-options-to-define-their-gender-in-new-government-survey-5648942/>

## UNESCO participation program tender opened

The tender for the UNESCO participation program has opened. Member States but also a limited number of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO can submit up to two requests. For NGOs not in formal partnership with UNESCO, GALE is willing to be partner in an application (mail: [info@lgbt-education.info](mailto:info@lgbt-education.info)). The deadline is 31 August 2016.



### **Priorities**

Projects that are submitted to this program should have sub-regional, regional or interregional impact. The proposal should also be supported by at least the Member State where the project is to be implemented and another Member State concerned by the request.

For 2016-2017, projects presented should relate to the two global priorities of UNESCO. These are:

1. Africa and Gender Equality
2. UNESCO's Major Programs and interdisciplinary projects in favor of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), developing countries, Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster Countries (PCPD), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Countries In Transition (CITs).

### **Project selection**

Project selection will be done taking into account the defined priorities by the governing bodies for the regular program of UNESCO. The budget is limited. Therefore, the amounts to be approved should not exceed US\$16.000.

The deadline set for the submission of requests by NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO is 31 August 2016, and first approvals will not be granted before October 2016.

# lgbttransgendereducation.info

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#### Colophon

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