

LGBT EDUCATION

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REGIONAL NEWS: AUSTRALIA

Australia forbids teaching empathy with LGBTI bullied students

30 March 2016 - The federal government of Australia chose the National Day of Action against Bullying to present changes to the Safe Schools program. The program will be forbidden in primary schools. Exercises that create empathy with gay or lesbian students have to be deleted. These changes are forced by the Australian Christian Lobby group which maintains that empathy for minorities will hurt the sensitivities of religious students.



Ridiculously unscientific review recommendations

The Safe Schools program aims to create inclusive environments for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, staff and families. It is implemented in more than 500 schools in Australia.

However the Christian lobby group lobbied for 18 months to get a review of the program. The review by Professor



Bill Loudon was not as critical as they hoped for. The review broadly found the content in the program to be suitable, educationally sound and age-appropriate for all schools. But it recommended that suggested role play would be taken out in consideration of from conservative cultural groups. In this role play students were asked to identify with how it feels to be gay or lesbian. Professor Loudon also criticized exercises about how students

could be allies of gay and lesbian fellow students.

Loudon thinks that teaching heteronormativity is completely age-appropriate, but undoing some of this damage is too complicated for 7 or 8 year olds. He also thinks that discussing the feelings of intersex children is not age-appropriate.

Killing the program's effectiveness

Education Minister Simon Birmingham chose sides with the Christian un-empathic lobby and announced that the students will also be required to get parental consent to participate in the program. Schools will have to obtain parental consent before opting to use its materials. In effect, this will make the program useless for the children who most need it. In addition, it has been confirmed that the program will not be funded beyond 2017. The program is deemed not to be suitable for primary schools at all.

Still, the Australian Christian Lobby is not happy. The group's managing director, Lyle Shelton, said that the program still contained *ideological madness*, referring to parts of the program that teach children how they can refer to people by using their preferred gender pronouns.

Protests

The decisions have sparked heated reactions. First an open letter signed by over 300 academics across the country in support of Safe Schools Coalition was circulated. Later, doctors and other health professionals have also signed and published an open letter. These letters had some impact. The education minister of one of the Australian



states said Victoria will continue to expand the program. The director of the Safe Schools Coalition said it *has been working* with the Australian Government Department of Education and Training *to further clarify the recommendations received*.

Sources: [ILGA Rainbow Bulletin](#), [Crikey.com](#), [Safe Schools Program](#), [Review of the Safe Schools Program](#), [Open letter by 362 academics](#).

REGIONAL NEWS: EUROPE

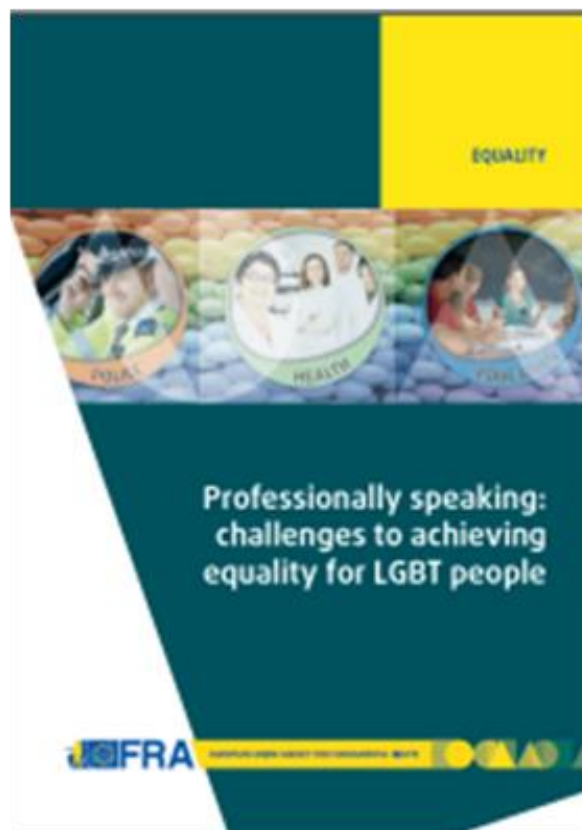
European teachers still hold homophobic/transphobic attitudes

16 March 2016 - In a [new report](#) launched in the European Parliament today, the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) present survey results that show how teachers in Europe still hold negative attitudes towards LGBT people. Such unprofessional attitudes threaten the human rights of LGBT students. They also hamper the battle against discrimination and hate crime.

Lack of objective information in schools

The FRA report "Professionally speaking: challenges to achieving equality for LGBT people" analyses the views and attitudes of the so-called *duty bearers* towards LGBT persons in the field of education, but also in the fields of law enforcement and healthcare. The key findings include:

1. There is a **lack of objective information on sexual orientation and gender identity in schools**. This can result in bullying, and force LGBT youths to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity.
2. All professional groups have **low levels of awareness and knowledge about LGBT needs**. Their social attitudes are often hostile towards LGBT people. These negative attitudes lead to negative behavior.
3. **Law enforcement** personnel often lacks awareness about the discrimination LGBT people face and have insufficient knowledge of their vulnerability to hate crimes.
4. There is a need for **professional training** to help counter prejudice in **healthcare**. Healthcare services to trans people are spread unevenly across the EU and there is a need to strengthen capacity and awareness of healthcare providers.



The European parliament LGBTI intergroup calls for more action

The report recommends that Member States should work with education authorities and schools to formulate targeted campaigns to *help make schools a safer and friendlier place for LGBT people*.

EU law and policy are seen as major drivers supporting national efforts to promote LGBT equality.

Reacting to the report, LGBTI Intergroup Vice Chair Fabio Massimo Castaldo, said: “Why do some doctors still believe homosexuality is a disease? Why are schools too often still unsafe places for LGBTI people? (...) We need to work much harder to ensure that the rights to education, to healthcare and fair treatment is equally enjoyed by all.”

Sirpa Pietikäinen, also Vice-Chair of the Intergroup on LGBTI Rights, added: “The results of this report are a good reminder that despite improvements in the legal situation, we are not there. Prejudice, discrimination and violence still hold back LGBTI people from accessing school, hospitals and the police.”

REGIONAL NEWS: SENEGAL

Senegalese student mob try to lynch student thought to be gay

23 March 2016 - Last week, a student mob in Dakar, Senegal has tried to lynch a student they thought was gay. The crowd formed Tuesday 15 March at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar. One student accused another of hitting on him in the showers. The accused student was followed by an increasingly angry mob. He fled into a bank office on campus, which is also the office of the campus security. Frightening amateur footage shows the angry mob flocking into the bank building to demand the bank staff to release the *homosexual* to them.



Violence after the student escapes

The group is shouting *you homosexual*, showing their shoes (an Islamic custom to show contempt) and demanding the victim of their attacks to show his face to the camera. A security guard said a large group of young men had gathered on campus near the bank and a restaurant, before they started the riots. The head of security told the media that the mob wanted the student to come out. There was a heated discussion between the mob and the security personnel. The bank decided to evacuate its staff until the police arrived. The police fired teargas to disperse the students. Eventually the accused student could come out and escape. Then the angry students started burning down the buildings belonging to the

campus security guards. They also destroyed the ATM outside the bank and the bank's signs. They criticized the security guards for *helping a homosexual* man flee.

SeneNews TV: Ucad, un présumé homosexuel lynché par une foule d'étudiants



Eleven cases of homophobic mob violence

Djamil Bangoura is the president of *Prudence*, an organization that supports the LGBT community in Senegal. He said mob justice was common in the country when someone was suspected of being gay. “This isn’t the first time that a mob has gone after someone suspected of being gay at Cheikh Anta Diop University. Since 2012, we’ve counted nine similar cases. Some of these students dropped out of school



because of these events. These mobs are often sparked by mere suspicions or rumors that someone is gay, not by facts.” However, the head of security said this incident was the first time students attacked security guards.

Homosexuality is illegal in Senegal and punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of 1.5 million CFA Francs or both. Last October, the Senegalese President said the country was not ready to decriminalize

homosexuality.

Bangoura: "For awhile, we ran awareness campaigns on campus but we stopped because the reactions were too hostile. Some of our student members are too afraid to continue to come to our meetings. Even if we encourage them to accept themselves, we also encourage them to hide their sexuality and to be careful about how they dress and act."



A general context of violence

Violent clashes are not uncommon at Cheikh Anta Diop University. In 2014, one student was killed after clashes between students and the police. At that time, students demanded scholarships. The police responded with extreme violence and raided students' bedrooms, destroying personal items including computers and mobile phones. In 2012 a dead student was found in the gardens of the medical faculty. Just

a few weeks before the mob attack, the university was upset by 3 students setting themselves on fire. They had protested the refusal of the university to grant them their masters title after a change in the grading structure. After a hunger strike of 40 students, three set themselves on fire. It is unclear whether the homophobic incident is in any way related to the recent disturbances and more general violent environment at this university.

Sources: [Observers France24](#), [Gay Star News](#), [Pink News](#), [Daractu.com](#), [Le Figaro](#)

GLOBAL: RESEARCH

European Youth Health Report shows shocking lack of attention to LGBT youth

28 March 2016 - Recently, the [HSBC report](#) on the health situation of youth in Europe came out. Although many reports show that LGBT youth suffer significant health risks, once again the HSBC does not give any attention to these health risks. Peter Dankmeijer, director of GALE, comments: "I am shocked that after all these years, there is still a systematic silence about sexual diversity".

Family protection most significant factor

The data shows once again that the role of family is a major protective health factor for youth. Even when this role is gradually declining, it still is very important. Adolescents rely less on their family support than younger children, but still need them. There is no mention about the lack of support for LGBT youth, which has been widely shown in other research.

Traditional gender issues persist

The new HBSC data reflect gender-specific social relationships shaped by gender socialization. This is the process by which boys and girls learn feminine and masculine identities. Gender behavior also appears to be influenced by societal expectations. The HBSC report confirms that stereotypical gender behaviors among boys and girls still persist and may lead to harmful behavior to themselves and to others. Here again, any attention to gay/lesbian or transgender youth is lacking. One of the policy recommendation is that structural factors around gender and health needs greater exploration. The United Nations Sex Inequality Index is mentioned as an instrument to assess associations between gender inequality and health outcomes. However, this instrument is also blind for LGBTI issues.

Anti-bullying recommendations

The report mentions aggressive behavior continues to be an important public health problem. It concludes activities such as parent training and meetings, improved playground supervision, disciplinary methods, classroom management, teacher training, classroom rules, a whole-school antibullying policy, school conferences, information for parents and cooperative group work are effective in reducing bullying.

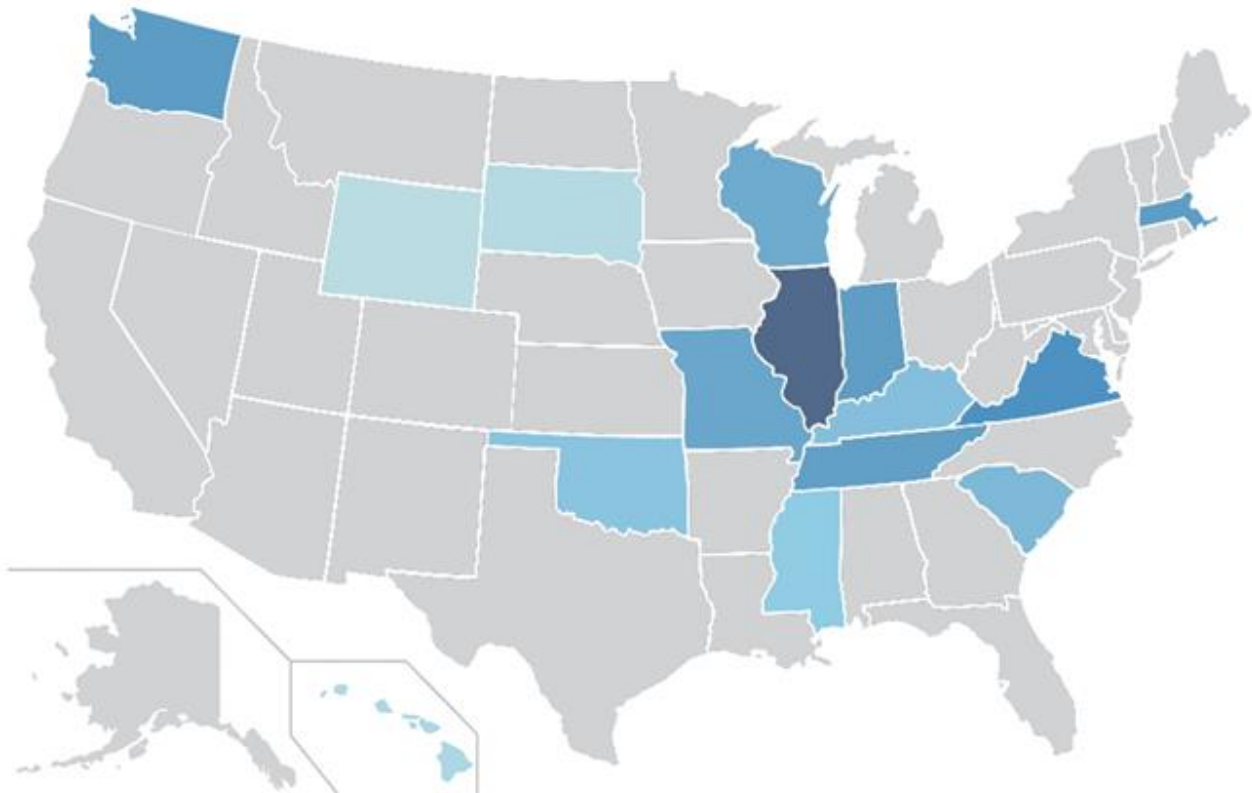
Prevention programs should be long-lasting (more than six months) and evidence-based. For adolescents programs focusing on bystanders are more effective. Here again, the HBSC report is missing the link with homophobic and transphobic bullying. Apparently, WHO is not aware of the work on homophobic bullying by other UN agencies, like UNESCO and UNDP.



Source: [Growing up unequal: gender and socioeconomic differences in young people's health and well-being](#)

Fifteen US states plan legal and social exclusion of transgender youth

9 March 2016 - Fifteen USA states have implemented, or are planning to introduce a series of anti-transgender laws. According to the Williams Institute nearly 300,000 transgender youth and adults may suffer negative consequences of these laws.



Transgender Population (ages 13 and up) Estimates

889  49,172

300,000 people discriminated

A new 8-page report by the Williams Institute researchers gives an overview of the detrimental laws. The report also gives an estimate of the number of transgender people aged 13 and older who would be negatively impacted by these laws. Based on a review of local probability convenience samples, the researchers estimate that between 1,3% and 3,2% of young people are transgender.

Negative consequences

These bills would:

1. Limit access to single-sex restrooms and locker rooms at schools and in public places;

2. Limit protections based on gender identity;
3. Permit individuals and businesses to discriminate against transgender people based on religious and moral beliefs; and
4. Limit the ability to change certain vital records documents, such as birth certificates, or enforce the use of birth certificates to establish an individual's sex for certain purposes.

Fifteen states

The fifteen states include Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

The report includes a brief description of each bill, which age groups it would affect, and how many transgender people we estimate live in each state.

Source: Williams Institute, [Estimates of transgender populations](#)

GALE NEWS: EUROPEAN TRAINING

GALE course delayed to end of May

31 March 2016 - On request of the participants, the European GALE training "Sexual Diversity in Schools" that was going to take place this week, has been postponed to 23-27 May. A few participants were not able to shift their schedule. As a result, there are a few places open for new participants.



More information about the training and how to register [can be found here](#).

lgbttransgendereducation.info

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[Inscrivez-vous en tant que membre GALE](#). L'adhésion est gratuite!



Colophon

LGBT EDUCATION 20

4 APRIL 2016

Published by the GALE Foundation,
Supporter of the Global Alliance for LGBT
Education, info@lgbt-education.info.

The GALE Foundation is financially
supported by the Dutch Ministry of
Education, Culture and Science