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# LGBT EDUCATION

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## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



## Vocational students exchange on how to trigger discussions on sexual diversity

*30 December 2019* - Students from European countries met in Greece to exchange ideas on how to trigger discussions about sexual diversity among fellow students. The meeting was exciting due to the cultural differences, but also because of the differences in sexual identities of the students. Most students decided to work on a video to trigger discussions, but some also had some additional campaigning ideas...

## ***Intercultural differences***

The 16 students came from Greece, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. They were invited to take part in the exchange week in October in the context of the SENSE/My-ID project. The 5-day exchange was hosted by EUROTRAINING in Athens and facilitated by CESIE (Italy).

During the week, the students got acquainted. For most, this was the first time they travelled abroad and met students of other countries. Their cultural differences were noticeable in the meetings. Students from the Mediterranean countries were more shy at first and tended to wait till the facilitators told them what to do. The Dutch group was louder and more forward; they were used to speak their opinion and to have a more horizontal relationship with their teachers.

Four of the six Dutch students were lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender, while the students from other countries were (probably) heterosexual and cisgender. This also led to some “intercultural” challenges. Some cisgender students who never saw a trans student before could not help watching one of the trans students who looked pretty genderqueer. Or gender ambiguous as some would say, but which we don’t like to use because for person in question there is nothing “ambiguous” about them. Still, being looked this way at felt uncomfortable and facilitators had to talk to the students to make them aware of what was happening and how they could make the situation more comfortable.

## ***Plans to trigger discussions***

The students were given a range of options on how to create triggers for discussions about sexual diversity. It was discussed that some students may feel uncomfortable with the topic and need to feel safe before engaging in a discussion. Others students may feel threatened and erupt with violent and prejudiced comments. How do you deal with these?

Also, you need to consider if you dare to engage in a discussion personally, as a peer educator or as a teacher. Do you feel safe and comfortable enough to do that? One way of making sure prejudiced comments are not targeting the facilitators directly, is to use a video. Students experimented with making a short stop-motion video. This also has the added advantage that the stop-motion effect creates a cartoon-like movie. This makes the confrontation with the topic less direct and this can lower the emotional impact.



## ***Information campaign***

After the exchange, most students teams had to rethink how they could best make a trigger on their own country. The Dutch team decided to make a stop-motion video showing avatars who’s life story was told. They also decided to start an information campaign. They bought a traditional post box and painted it in rainbow colors. It will be presented early next year. Students and teachers will be able to ask all their questions about sexual diversity. Under their avatar identities, the

students will answer the questions anonymously through a website specially set up for this purpose. Next to the video, the questions will also be input to trigger class discussions.

For more information: [SENSE/My-ID project](#) and the [second My-ID Newsletter](#)

## LOCAL NEWS: INDONESIA

### Indonesia introduces ridiculous test to identify and fire foreign gay teachers

*24 December 2019* - In recent weeks, foreign teachers at private schools in Indonesia have been required to answer a series of ridiculous in what the schools called “a psychological exam”. The goal was to determine if teachers were gay, bi or lesbian, or if their attitudes were favorable towards LGBT rights. Since 2015, the Indonesian government prohibits international schools from hiring foreign teachers who have “an indication of abnormal sexual behavior or orientation.”

#### ***Ridiculous questions***

The questions teachers were required to answer were, amongst others:

- The gender composition of an orgy would be irrelevant to my decision to participate (note: orgies are forbidden in Indonesia)
- Celebrations such as gay pride day are ridiculous because they assume an individual’s sexual orientation should constitute a source of pride
- A sexual education curriculum should include all sexual orientations (note: the UNESCO international technical guideline on sexual education agrees with this statement)
- Teachers should try to reduce their student’s prejudice toward homosexuality (note: see above)
- I wouldn’t want to die without having experimented sexually with both men and women
- I can be sexually attracted to anyone in the right circumstances
- I am only attracted to men



According to the authorities, the 2015 law is intended to identify predatory pedosexuals. However, most of the questions are about being liberal about sexuality and about being against LGBT discrimination. It seems the questions conflate pedosexuality with liberal sexual attitudes and with sexual behavior. Furthermore, the questions are rife with homophobia.

## ***Magical child abuse***

The teacher-testing requirement was adopted after a contentious 2014 court case. A Canadian educator and six Indonesians were accused of sexually abusing young students at the prestigious Jakarta International School. A mother sued the school for 125 million US dollars for the supposed child abuse of her 3 children. The court denied her case because nothing could be proven. But at the same time, the same judge convicted the sued teachers to long prison terms. The “evidence” included the claim that the educator used magical powers to seduce the children and render the crime scenes invisible. His sentence was ten years but he got “clemency” after five years.

## ***Background: growing state control on sex***

Same-sex relations are currently not illegal in Indonesia except in the autonomous province of Aceh. In September, the Indonesian parliament got a proposal from the extremist Muslim party to outlaw all sex outside marriage, which would make same-sex relations also punishable. It was sidelined, but it is expected the extremists will try again.

In the meantime, persecution of LGBT people is rapidly increasing in the once deemed tolerant country. In the past years, we have seen extremist Muslim raids on LGBT organizations and conferences, a police raid on a gay sauna and the closure of a Quran school for transgenders. In Bekasi Regency, a suburb of Jakarta, the Child Protection Agency recently said it had used police records to identify 4,000 people who suffer from the “disease of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender”. Like in Russia, the Indonesians use the argument that sexual diversity other than heterosexual marriage is caused by licentious lifestyles.

Sources: [NY Times](#), MSM-Asia: message 7355, [AP News](#)

## LOCAL NEWS: FIJI

### **Fiji allows trans athletes in school competitions**

*20 December 2019* - Fiji President Filimoni Vuli Waqa announced to local media that he would not be opposed to trans people participating in athletics events under their gender. He was commenting on potentially allowing transgender athletes to compete in the girls category of the Fiji secondary school athletics competition.

#### ***Limited to younger athletes in local programs***

“I believe that every Fijian has the right to enjoy the benefits of sports and physical activities,” said Waqa, though he noted that there would be limits to this new policy, especially at the professional level.

“Athletics Fiji may allow younger trans athletes to compete in its local programs but the same could not be

allowed for the same athlete in an international competition,” said Waqa, adding that international competitors would have to abide by IAAF. The IAAF recently updated its rules for trans and intersex athletes (see BBC).

# Cleared to compete

## Athletics Fiji to consider transgender athletes

By SHIRAZ KASIM

TRANSAGENDER athletes will be allowed to compete in the girls category of the Fiji secondary schools athletics competition.

Athletics Fiji president Piliomoni Vuli Waqa dropped this ‘bombshell’ amid protests from at least two former high school athletes and former students of an all-girls school.

The 2020 Coca-Cola Games is the largest secondary schools athletics competition in the Pacific.

The Fiji Times posed the question to Mr Waqa after New Zealand weightlifter Laurel Hubbard’s gold medal win at the Pacific Games this year.

Hubbard snatched gold from Russian flag-bearer and gold medal contender Fanaiga Sotouwa.

When asked if Athletics Fiji would allow a transgender athlete to compete in an event against an athlete of a different gender, Mr Waqa said the question was “a very delicate one” as there were “no established policies in place”.

“For the Coke Games participation, although we have not discussed it in any of our meetings, but I personally don’t have any objections for them participating.”

“I believe that every Fijian has the fundamental right to enjoy the benefits of sports and physical activities.”

Mr Waqa said effective October 1, 2019, the International Association of Athletics Federations (now World Athletics) had put in place a policy that transgender athletes wanting to compete in the female classification needed to comply with the testosterone limits for entry into the World Athletics Series – such as South African Caster Semenya for the World Championships and the Olympic Games.

World Athletics said under the new regulations, a transgender female athlete was no longer required to be recognised by law in her new gender but should provide a signed declaration that her gender identity was female and she must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the expert panel that the concentration of testosterone in her serum has been less than five nanomoles per litre continuously for a period of at least 12 months prior to being declared eligible.

“Because Athletics Fiji is affiliated to the IAAF and hence governed by its policies concerning transgender athletes, Oceania Athletics, the Pacific Games and all national championships will have to follow the ruling of the IAAF.”

“Athletics Fiji may allow younger transgender athletes to compete in its local programs but the same could not be allowed for the same athlete in an international competition.”

“It is fair to say that transgender athletes can compete at the annual Coke Games but not at an international level since the international competitions are governed by the IAAF and anyone who wishes to compete in those events must abide by the set policies.”

“If the IAAF’s policies allow that, then they can, if not they cannot.”

A transgender person describes an individual whose gender identity (one’s internal psychological identification as a boy/man or girl/woman) does not match the person’s sex at birth.

For example, a male-to-female (MTF) transgender person is someone who was born with a male body but identifies as a girl or a woman.

A female-to-male (FTM) transgender person is someone who was born with a female body but identifies as a boy or a man.

## It’s only fair, says Sulique

By LUKE NACEI

THE Haas of Khamseleon has welcomed the Fiji Secondary Schools Athletics Association (FSSAA) decision to follow International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) rules in the upcoming Coca-Cola Games.

Haas of Khamseleon creative director Sulique Waqa said transgender athletes in Fiji should be allowed to compete in any sporting event because it not only affirmed their self-identity but also respected and valued their self-autonomy and self-determination to be themselves.

“This conversation is more than just about inclusion in sports but more broadly the right of transgender people in Fiji to legal gender recognition that is protected under the law,” Waqa said, adding Fiji did not allow legal gender recognition “despite constitutional protection for LGBTIQ citizens under the 2013 Constitution”.

Waqa said it would be fair for transgenders to compete in the girls’ category.

FSSAA general secretary Vuli Waqa said Fiji would abide by IAAF rules which allowed transgender athletes whose testosterone levels were less than five nanomoles per litre to compete in the girls’ competition.



### New boss for WAF

By VILIMAINA NAQELEVUKI

AUSTRALIAN Barry Omdson is the Water Authority of Fiji’s new CEO.

WAF board chairman Bhavesh Kumar said Mr Omdson had an extensive water-related background and has years of experience at senior management level.

“He has the full confidence and the backing of the board to take WAF to the next level,” he said.

Water Authority of Fiji chairman Bhavesh Patel (left) raises a toast with new chief executive officer Barry Omdson yesterday. Picture: JONA KORATACI

**FLOTSAM AND JETSAM**

EDITOR

THE measles scare can mess up some people’s head, as Beachcomber found out recently.

A family was discussing the issue when someone remarked, “It’s scary because it’s airborne”.

Imagine the confusion and uproar that followed when Mr JJ responded in a very alarmed, “OMG when did it get airborne?”

Who school you buy?

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## Athletes label decision as ‘ridiculous’

By LUKE NACEI

TWO prominent athletes and former scholars of an all-girls school say transgender athletes cannot and should not be allowed to compete in the girls’ division at the 2020 Coke Games.

They oppose the Fiji Secondary Schools Athletics Association’s decision to follow World Athletics rules which allow transgender

athletes to compete in the girls’ division at athletics competitions. Jager Williams High School Old Girls Association president Mervyn Rokosa said the move would unfairly take the opportunity away from female athletes to win medals.

“I think Fiji should not allow this immoral and un-Christian behaviour just like how our Prime Minister disallows same sex marriage in our country,” she said.

Ms Rokosa said transgender athletes would still have male hormones and characteristics within their which would make them run faster, jump higher and throw longer distances than female competitors.

Similar sentiments were shared by former Adi Cakobau School head girl and sprinter Ana Kakouara.

“I believe that is unfair and I disagree with that rule because the performance gap between a female and male athlete is proven beyond

doubt based on the records we have,” she said.

“There is strong evidence that testosterone correlates with athletic performance.”

Pacific Games gold medalist and Oceania Championship high jumper Malakai Kawalo labelled the decision “ridiculous”. He said transgender athletes would most likely end up winning gold medals that female athletes trained hard for.

Sources: [Pressreader](#), [ILGA](#), [IAAF policy](#), [BBC 14 October 2019 on trans athletes](#)

## Cambodia will teach sexual diversity in schools

*11 December 2019* - The Cambodian Ministry of Education has decided students of 13 and older will receive sexual education from 2020 on. The course will consist of seven modules and include attention to bullying and LGBT discrimination. The move puts Cambodia at the forefront of LGBT education in Southeast Asia. Thailand was the first Asian nation to include sexual diversity in the curriculum.

### ***Acceptance is rising***

Over 3000 Cambodian teachers have been trained to deliver the new material, says Srun Sorn, an LGBT+ activist who developed the modules with the Education Ministry. He said there was some resistance among very homophobic teachers, but the program was generally received with enthusiasm. Five teachers had come out during the training, which is special in a conservative country like Cambodia.



### ***Sexual diversity in Cambodia***

Cambodia has no legislation that deals specifically with LGBT people. Same sex marriages are not officially recognized by the state. But there is no repression either. Still, the mostly rural population is quite conservative. Some LGBT are forced by parents into marriages or into conversion therapy. Acceptance of LGBT people in Cambodia is increasing. But one-third of LGBT report harassment in the workplace, according to a research by the Cambodian Center for Human Rights.

Source: [Openly News](#) by the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

## Greek conference on teaching against homophobic bullying great success



27 September 2019 - With over 100 participants and an equal number of people following the HOMBAT conference on homophobic and transphobic bullying online, the event was a great success. The conference “Combatting HT bullying in schools” was the final event of the HOMBAT project, which trained over 600 teachers and school counselors in Greece, Cyprus and Lithuania. The trainers were trained and coached by GALE.

### ***Innovative approach to training***

The HOMBAT project took an innovative approach to training about LGBTI issues in schools. The basis of the change perspective was that heteronormativity is *not* primarily caused by a lack of information and that giving information in a training is largely useless. Heteronormativity is caused by negative attitudes, which in turn are based on instinctive emotions of fear and anger. The trainings were focused on teaching teachers how to deal with these emotions and to start a personal development process in which they can adapt their own attitudes and create more space for diversity. Because the participants were teachers and school counselors, they also learned how to teach young people how to deal with their prejudiced attitudes and negative emotions.

## ***Transformative experiences***

This approach made the trainings different from other trainings that focus on the intellectual aspect of discrimination by explaining it. It also went beyond basic awareness by using triggers that create feelings of empathy. Many participants experienced the trainings as transformative and live-changing experiences. The HOMBAT conference presented several testimonials of teachers who tried to explain the experience. One of the trained teachers told the audience that she took part in the “corridor of shame” exercise. The participants stand in two lines and are asked to say homophobic and transphobic words that are commonly used in schools to others participant while they walk through the corridor. The participants discuss what emotions this evokes, and which participants could perceive the words as “jokes” or “not meant as discriminatory”. The teacher who recounted this experience was profoundly shocked by it. During a panel she said: “I was so angry, I have never been so angry in my life”. Even in the panel situation she got flushed and broke almost into tears while recollecting the experience. She said: “I am cisgender, but now I have to learn to deal with this anger in a quiet way and to channel my emotions in an effective teaching strategy. Because of this and other experiences in this training, I became much more capable as a teacher. Not only to combat homophobic and transphobic bullying, but also to feel more secure and empowered in general as a teacher”.

Sources: [HOMBAT website](#), [HOMBAT on Facebook](#)

### LOCAL NEWS: NETHERLANDS

## **Dutch antibullying policy critically evaluated**

*August 17, 2019*- The Dutch organization Edu-Diverse published an analysis of antibullying policies in the Netherlands today. The analysis of 40 pages concludes that much improvement is still possible. Schools are only to do research, have a plan and a coordinator, but there are no substantive criteria for quality. Edu-Diverse states that the neoliberal Dutch policy means that schools regulate themselves and that the possibilities for individuals or social organizations to help improve the quality of antibullying policies at school are very limited. Still, it suggests some ways to improve the situation.

### **De kwaliteit van het antipestbeleid**

Analise van de richtlijnen voor kwaliteit in het anti-pestbeleid in Nederland



## **Possible certification**

The analysis was carried out together with the Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE), which is participating in a [European project](#) in which an antibullying certificate for schools is being developed. It is clear that certification of schools by any external foundation or association will not make a significant contribution to improve the quality of the entire education sector. Therefore, one of the components of the project is to start a discussion in the participating countries about introducing an antibullying label to schools. To inform and stimulate this discussion, an analysis is made of the situation in each country and recommendations are made for improvement.

## **Effective elements**

In the analysis, Edu-Diverse and GALE devote a chapter to “effective elements”. These are aspects of antibullying policy that research has shown to contribute to a major impact. Most schools and politicians are unaware of those elements, so the discussion remains on a superficial level. This challenge is not restricted to the Netherlands, but plays a role in many countries. Edu-Diverse and GALE advocate a more evidence based approach to antibullying. Schools and politician should rely less on personal opinions or pressure from special interest organizations. For example, in many schools and policies, *punishment* still plays a major role even when research shows clearly it has mostly adverse effects. It is also clear that many policies only focus on incidents and commonly don't recognize the social context. For example, gender-based violence and homophobia are often not seen as part of antibullying policy but just as a topic for incidental and additional lessons. This approach is not enough to stop prejudice and bullying behavior.



## **Recommendations**

According to Edu-Diverse, the biggest stumbling block for effective Dutch antibullying policy is that all important partners (the ministry, the school board federations and even the trade unions) are opposed to substantive requirements for schools. As a result, agreement can only be reached on "empty" measures such as conducting research and making a plan, without there being any demands on the quality of research, the plan or the implementation. It is recommended that despite this national neoliberal consensus, key actors should look for a more evidence based policy and criteria for effective school

policies.

Regarding the lack of attention for diversity in tackling bullying, Edu-Diverse recommends that diversity should become be a structural point of attention in antibullying policies.

The Dutch school board federations maintain web-based database which is intended to showcase the quality of the school policies of their members. Edu-Diverse recommends that the page on school safety can be used as a benchmarking tool for good antibullying policy. For example, schools could be asked to show how they include effective elements of antibullying in their school safety plan.

[The Quality of Antibullying Policy \(Dutch, with English summary\)](#)

LOCAL NEWS: UNITED KINGDOM

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## Colophon

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