

NGO Liaison Committee UNESCO
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The Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE) is a learning community of educators which aims to promote the full inclusion of people who are disadvantaged because of their sexual orientation or sexual identity by identifying, enhancing and sharing educational expertise. GALE has consultative status with UNESCO.

Amsterdam, 14 April 2017

Reference: PD2017-04

About: forum in Saudi-Arabia

Dear members of the UNESCO Liaison Committee,

As a consultative member of UNESCO, you have invited me to attend the thematic forum "Youth and their social impact" which will take place on 3-4 May in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. I would like you to know that your choice of this country makes it impossible for me, and any other lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) person, to attend the forum.

Not only is cross-dressing and homosexual contact forbidden in Saudi Arabia, but also even voicing a positive or neutral opinion on human rights for LGBT people would be considered a crime. Anyone who would try to support LGBT rights for young people at this forum, would "promote the vice and practice of homosexuality", which may lead to a conviction of 450 lashes. Homosexual relations may be punished with the death penalty.

My conclusion is that this forum therefore will both for social and legal reasons be unable to discuss "the social impact" of LGBT youth and negate the needs and impact of about 10% of the world youth population. I am very sorry about this and on behalf of the Global Alliance of LGBT Education (GALE) I urge you strongly to consider the impact of your country selection on LGBT people in the future.

Sincerely,



Peter Dankmeijer, director