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Government of the Netherlands

## 1. Introduction

IGLYO envisions and advocates for a world where we, young people in all our diversity, are able to express and define our own sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions, and are able to participate fully in all aspects of life, achieve to our full potential, and enjoy respect and positive recognition.

According to the Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)<sup>1</sup>: “Everyone has the right to education” and to the principle 16 of the Yogyakarta Principles (2007)<sup>2</sup>: “Everyone has the right to education, without discrimination on the basis of, and taking into account, their sexual orientation and gender identity”. This will never be possible without an open, inclusive, human rights – friendly, less heteronormative education at all levels.

IGLYO believes that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) young people shall be included, respected and recognised in the field of education. Furthermore, IGLYO believes that the entire educational system should be a safe and inclusive environment for the LGBTQ young people, a place free from homophobic and transphobic bullying. In order to achieve our vision strong advocacy is required and capacity building in the field of education not only in primary and secondary education, but in higher education as well.

This position paper on education builds on the principles of IGLYO and the work the organization has done in the field since 2005. This paper is following up of the policy paper on education, which was adopted during the General Assembly (GA) in 2009 as part of the 2008-2010 Strategic Plan.

This paper outlines the key issues, concerns and challenges for young LGBTQ people in the educational systems mainly the formal educational systems, proposes solutions in order to address the key issues and concerns and proposes recommendations targeting different levels from European level institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission to national/ local ones such as National Governments and School administrations. Furthermore, IGLYO hopes that this position paper will be an important and useful tool for its Member Organizations (MO’s), friends and young LGBTQ activists in their advocacy work for inclusive and safe educational environments for all young people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE).

## 2. Background to IGLYO’s work on Education

IGLYO as an LGBTQ youth and students organization has been working in the field of education, focusing on such issues as bullying, teacher training, curriculum development, student organizing, and safe space since 2005. Education has been in the core of IGLYO’s strategic planning in both plans of 2008-2010 and 2011-2013.

These projects and events throughout the years aimed at building the capacity of MO’s through international events, carrying out and disseminating research, in order to highlight youth-specific issues, monitoring developments around education in the pan-European region, raising awareness about LGBTQ youth and student issues within wider education policy debates not only in primary and secondary education, but in higher education as well with the intention to mainstream these issues and working against heteronormativity and for intersectional approaches through norm-critical methods.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles\\_en.htm](http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.htm)

### **April 2005, Strasbourg, France, Study Session “Bullying And Harassment In Education”<sup>3</sup>**

The study session which was implemented with the support and cooperation of Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport aimed to develop and share the knowledge and the skills of young LGBT activists, officers and youth workers that work with(in) educational settings and provided the participants with a kind of theoretical and practical background on how to deal with bullying and harassment based on sexual orientation in relation to education.

### **April 2006, Research report “Social Exclusion of LGBTQI young people in Europe”<sup>4</sup>**

The research report, which was a joint project with ILGA -Europe, examined the main mechanisms of social exclusion, which affect young LGBT people as young people and LGBT people, in relation to education, health, employment and active citizenship. This study emphasized the effects of the discrimination that young LGBT people encounter in their family, of the mechanisms of social exclusion, which affect young LGBT people and it illustrated the everyday discrimination and marginalisation which LGBT youth continue to experience in all EU Member States.

The report was presented at the European Parliament I (lobbying for the European Parliament declaration 11/2007 against homophobic bullying in schools with the European Parliament LGBT Intergroup) and at various occasions thereafter, including at IGLYO events, to the Council of Europe’s All Different All Equal campaign team, to Norwegian government workers and policy-makers, etc.).

### **April 2007, Strasbourg, France - Study Session “Understanding, Developing and implementing LGBT-inclusive Policies in Schools across Europe”<sup>5</sup>**

This Study Session was a joint one in partnership with the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU<sup>6</sup>) and the support from Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport aiming to establish a standard for school policies that aim to recognize and respect the diversity of the school students’ sexual orientations and gender identities, and are inclusive of LGBT people.

As follow up and based on the outcomes of the Study Session, the **Guidelines for an LGBTQ-Inclusive Education**<sup>7</sup> were published and are the only resource to fight homophobia in education produced by young people themselves. They lay down, in 10 concrete points, what can be done in schools to tackle discrimination, and make schools a better place for human rights for minorities and majorities, students and staff, young people and adults alike.

### **December 2007, Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Commission Staff Working Paper (SEC (2007) 1009), joint written contribution from ILGA-Europe and IGLYO for the consultation process<sup>8</sup>**

ILGA-Europe and IGLYO contributed jointly to the consultation regarding the future of Europe’s school, by highlighting the situation of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in education. This contribution intended to emphasise the importance of a rights-based approach to Community action and policies related to education through a discussion of the specific issues and concerns of young LGBT people. This paper also provided a response to questions raised by the Commission in its working paper from a human rights perspective aimed at combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity and promoting equality.

### **February 2008, Oslo, Norway - Training course “Enlightenment I”<sup>9</sup>**

The training course, which was organized in partnership with OBESSU, brought together 29 young participants from IGLYO MO’s, as well as other youth NGOs from Europe. The event aimed to follow-up and put in practice the guidelines created a year ago in Strasbourg (UDIP, Understanding, Developing

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Training/Study\\_sessions/2005\\_IGLYO\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Training/Study_sessions/2005_IGLYO_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2006-Report-SocialExclusion.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.iglyo.com/ai1ec\\_event/iglyoobessu-study-session/](http://www.iglyo.com/ai1ec_event/iglyoobessu-study-session/)  
[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Training/Study\\_sessions/2007\\_OBESSU\\_IGLYO\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Training/Study_sessions/2007_OBESSU_IGLYO_en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.obessu.org/>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/IGLYO\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/IGLYO_Guidelines.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/results/ilga\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/results/ilga_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.iglyo.com/2008/02/20/latest-iglyo-obessu-event-in-oslo-a-big-success/>

and implementing LGBT-inclusive Policies in Schools across Europe, April 2007), and allowed participants to go to real Norwegian classrooms to test out their methods.

#### **May 2008, publication of IGLYO on...Education<sup>10</sup>**

This publication contained information about: IGLYO's lobbying work for the horizontal anti-discrimination directive, a seminar in Slovenia called Schools for All and an educational method on how to get into schools and talk to young people about homosexuality. Furthermore, the Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE<sup>11</sup>) network was presented, a UK student presented practical ways in which LGBT students can influence their learning environment, an activist from Macedonia highlighted some of the characteristics of Macedonian educational system and the absence of connection with LGBT politics and last IGLYO contributed with an article about the conference in Norway.

#### **December 2009, Edinburgh, Scotland - Adoption of the 1<sup>st</sup> Policy Paper on Education at the General Assembly<sup>12</sup>**

The paper consisted of three parts - background to IGLYO's work around education, information on recent activities and good practice in the field of education, and focus points for future advocacy in this area.

#### **May 2011, Bucharest, Romania - Conference "Enlightenment II, Exploring formal education experiences of LGBTQ youth"<sup>13</sup>**

The conference was organized in partnership with IGLYO's MO, Accept and brought together young LGBTQ activists to make contact with each other, exchange experiences, expertise and good practices, and build each other's capacity to work on LGBTQ education issues. This conference resulted in better skilled activists with increased knowledge of strategies to actively challenge discrimination in education settings through positive action and to the creation of strong networks for further activism and projects.

#### **March 2012 - Set up of IGLYO's Working Group on Education<sup>14</sup>**

The Working Group was set up with the following objectives:

- To gather the views and experiences of IGLYO MO's in the field of education (formal and non-formal)
- To carry out collective advocacy to promote the educational agenda and tools among IGLYO's members and LGBTQ youth at the national/regional and international levels
- To play an active role in LGBTQ international educational networks by encouraging effective dialogue between civil society and LGBTQ youth and
- To promote accessible education for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression

### **3. Education and LGBTQ youth**

Education plays a pivotal role in developing young people's capacity to reach their full human potential. It is also generally agreed that the environment in which young people learn is of significant importance in their personal development, growth and well-being. Unfortunately, many young people do not experience education in a climate of safety, support, acknowledgment and affirmation in their school. This is particularly true for many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning young people across Europe who face stigma, discrimination and marginalization. Indeed, a European-wide survey

<sup>10</sup> <http://issuu.com/iglyo/docs/iglyo-on-05/3?mode=embed&documentId=090109093902-f318ddac3fab40a687d6a7cae865a45f&layout=white>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.lgbt-education.info/>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Education\\_policy\\_paper\\_091.pdf](http://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Education_policy_paper_091.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.iglyo.com/ai1ec\\_event/enlightenment-ii/](http://www.iglyo.com/ai1ec_event/enlightenment-ii/)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.iglyo.com/about/working-groups/education/>

carried out by ILGA-Europe and IGLYO in 2006 (Takács, 2006) with over 750 respondents from 37 European countries, found that education is the field in which LGBTQ youth experience most discrimination: 61.2% of young LGBT people in Europe responded that they had experienced discrimination at school.

Discrimination and marginalisation in schools takes many forms: from verbal and physical bullying and prejudice in the school curriculum and teaching content, to insulting or degrading treatment during classes and refusing access to information about sexuality and sexual health. The experience of stigmatisation and marginalisation of lesbianism, homosexuality & bisexuality and of different gender identities & expressions at school can have a profoundly negative impact on young LGBTQ people. Researchers have emphasised that if the social environment is disapproving of their emerging sexual orientation, LGBTQ adolescents may experience profound isolation and fear of discovery, which then interferes with achieving the main developmental tasks of adolescence related to self-esteem, identity, socialization and ability to become autonomous, as well as with their achievement at school.

#### 4. Key issues and concerns for LGBTQ youth in formal education systems

##### 4.1. *Homophobic and transphobic bullying and harassment*

A serious problem for young people dealing with their emerging LGBTQ identity is the prevalence of homophobic and transphobic bullying and harassment in schools. Homophobic and transphobic bullying is a particular type of bullying, which is related to a person's sexual orientation, or assumed sexual orientation, and/or gender identity & gender expression. Bullying, which often goes unnoticed, includes a wide spectrum of negative experiences from name calling and verbal abuse, to ostracism and physical attacks. Abuse can be verbal, physical or psychological. Bullies can be both fellow pupils and students or teachers.<sup>15</sup>

Numerous academic studies have found that homophobic and transphobic bullying and harassment are pervasive features of many European educational systems. The 2006 ILGA-Europe and IGLYO survey found that 53% of respondents had experienced bullying at school (e.g. verbal attacks, harassment, threats, physical violence). Research funded by the Department of Education & Science in Ireland (Norman, Galvin & McNamara, 2006<sup>16</sup>) showed the high incidence of homophobic bullying in Irish schools; the survey found that a majority of teachers (79%) were aware of instances of verbal homophobic bullying and a significant number (16%) were aware of physical bullying in their school. The research also found that 90% of respondents reported that their school's anti-bullying policy did not include any reference to lesbian and gay related bullying.<sup>17</sup> Other research data corroborate the findings of the ILGA-Europe & IGLYO survey, including the "Homophobia in the Educational System" research

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<sup>15</sup> Written Contribution from IGLYO and ILGA-Europe, Schools for the 21st Century, Commission Staff Working Paper (SEC (2007) 1009) (December 2007).

<sup>16</sup>[http://www.academia.edu/407564/An\\_exploratory\\_survey\\_of\\_the\\_experiences\\_of\\_homophobic\\_bullying\\_amongst\\_lesbian\\_gay\\_bisexual\\_and\\_transgendered\\_young\\_people\\_in\\_Ireland](http://www.academia.edu/407564/An_exploratory_survey_of_the_experiences_of_homophobic_bullying_amongst_lesbian_gay_bisexual_and_transgendered_young_people_in_Ireland)

<sup>17</sup> Research funded by the Gender Equality Unit of the Department of Education & Science (Norman, Galvin & McNamara, 2006).

project in Spain (2005)<sup>18</sup>, the SOS Homophobie survey in France (2007)<sup>19</sup> the School Report of Stonewall in the UK (2007)<sup>20</sup> and the Observatório de Educação in Portugal.

Bullying can occur in nearly any part in or around the school building, though it may occur more frequently in physical education classes and activities, recess, hallways, bathrooms, on school buses and while waiting for buses, and in classes that require group work and/or after school activities. Bullying in school sometimes consists of a group of students taking advantage of or isolating one student in particular and gaining the loyalty of bystanders who want to avoid becoming the next victim. These bullies may taunt and tease their target before physically bullying the target. Bystanders may participate or watch, sometimes out of fear of becoming the next victim.

It should be noted that homophobic and transphobic bullying is not only experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people. It can also affect any child, young person or teacher who does not conform to ways of behaving that are traditionally associated with being ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’. Anyone seen as “different” or as having characteristics considered to belong to LGBT people can suffer from homophobic bullying. Bullying also affects those who are not directly targeted, since where bullying takes place, young people are learning in an environment where homophobic language and comments are commonplace. Hearing phrases like “that’s so gay” or the use of homophobic remarks, such as “poof” or “queer” as insults contribute to making LGBT youth feel isolated and make them hide their identity.

Bullying and violence experienced by LGBTQ youth has negative effects on their educational achievement, mental health, safety, sexual health and overall healthy development. Recent studies in several countries report that bullied sexual minority students are more likely to be absent from school, are likely to have more trouble connecting with school and fellow students and experience greater challenges with their academic work. The stresses experienced by LGBTQ youth and those who are questioning their sexual orientation or LGBTQ also put them at greater risk for mental health problems, substance use, and physical health problems.<sup>21</sup>

Homophobic and transphobic incidents have led to elevated rates of suicide and suicide attempts, absenteeism from school, truancy, limited achievement and the desire to stay in education. 50% of adult lesbian and gay men reported contemplating harming themselves as result of being bullied at school, 40% indicated they had attempted to harm themselves or had attempted suicide on at least one occasion.<sup>22</sup>

NGOs and studies in several member states point to the negative impact that bullying has on the school performance and well-being of LGBT students generally. LGBTQ adolescents may not seek support from their families and/or community because they have not yet “come out” with their sexual orientation or gender identity & expression, or because they had previously been rejected for doing so. Several studies

<sup>18</sup> Research project from Spain available at

[www.felgt.org/\\_felgt/archivos/4066\\_es\\_Homofobia%20en%20el%20Sistema%20Educativo%202005.pdf?cl=es-ES](http://www.felgt.org/_felgt/archivos/4066_es_Homofobia%20en%20el%20Sistema%20Educativo%202005.pdf?cl=es-ES) and Project of rede ex aequo (Portugal): <http://ex-aequo.web.pt/observatorio.html>

<sup>19</sup> This community-led research project on homophobia in schools carried out by the French non-governmental organisation SOS Homophobie found that 89% of the respondents considered that homosexuality is silenced in text books. 79% of the respondents to the survey said that homosexuality is not mentioned by teachers. SOS Homophobie also found that 58% of students had been victim or had witnessed acts of homophobia. Moreover, the study showed that 44% of these students didn’t feel secure enough to turn to administration for support in cases of bullying. [http://www.sos-homophobie.org/documents/analyse\\_enquete\\_milieu\\_scolaire.pdf](http://www.sos-homophobie.org/documents/analyse_enquete_milieu_scolaire.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> The School Report - The experiences of young gay people in Britain’s schools by Ruth Hunt and Johan Jensen, Stonewall, 2007 ([www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school\\_report.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school_report.pdf)). This report produced by Stonewall presents the results of a survey conducted with more than 1100 of those young people, the largest poll of its kind ever carried out in the UK. It reveals that homophobic bullying is almost epidemic in Britain’s schools: Almost two thirds of young gay people at secondary school (65%) have experienced homophobic bullying.

<sup>21</sup> Homophobic Bullying, Achievement, Mental Health, Safety and Sexual Health of LGBT Students. <http://www.schools-for-all.org/>

<sup>22</sup> Rivers, I. (2001) The bullying of sexual minorities at school: its nature and long-term correlates, Educational and Child Psychology, page 18.

show that a homophobic or transphobic environment at school may lead to higher drop-out rates of LGBT young persons from secondary school. These young people are also more likely to contemplate self-harm and engage in high-risk behaviour.

### 4.2. *Prejudice in the curriculum*

Another key element affecting the school environment is the school curriculum. Stigma and reluctance to address SOGIE in the school curriculum as a normal part of human identity has led to many young people who are dealing with an emerging LGBTQ identity or those perceived to be LGBTQ experiencing significant inequalities. According to the ILGA-Europe and IGLYO survey, 43% of LGBT youth have encountered prejudice in curriculum and teaching content. This prejudice is often expressed through the inclusion of discriminative elements targeting LGBTQ people, but it also demonstrated by the lack of representation of LGBTQ issues in school curriculum. (Takács, 2006: 55)

In many schools, LGBTQ issues are still too often presented in negative contexts such as being a disease, a sin or an unnatural way of being, which only strengthening old, well-known stereotypes. Equally widespread is the silencing of LGBTQ issues in the school curriculum, i.e. the fact that LGBT issues are not included, mentioned or covered in the school curriculum, which is interpreted by many as a tool at the institutional level for maintaining LGBTQ invisibility in school and as such an instance of discrimination in itself. Also widespread is the practice of not including non-heterosexual, non-cisgender forms of SOGIE in sex education and health education classes, which can have dangerous potential consequences on, for example, the sexual health of young LGBTQ people. This actively participates in the institutional exclusion of LGBTQ young people, since the curriculum carries the educational institution's authority, and therefore carries even more weight, as it becomes formal and official.

### 4.3. *Role of teachers*

Educators in general have a pivotal role to play in the level of inclusion of LGBTQ issues in school life; they are also critical to creating school environments that are free from homophobia. Teachers in schools across Europe also find themselves accountable for a major part of institutional discrimination experienced by young LGBTQ people. This is particularly problematic, as usually teacher training does not address issues such as discrimination or homophobic & transphobic bullying, and teachers do not know how to deal with such occurrences.<sup>23</sup>

Yet, according to the IGLYO and ILGA-Europe survey, 14% of respondents who had negative experiences in school mentioned teachers as being the source, or being part of their problems. They talked about teachers who “failed to provide help and guidance”, who did not want to or couldn’t “guess where my problems were coming from at the age of 16-19”, who “were not supportive at all”. In some cases, teachers were described as passive outsiders who, instead of helping the isolated, hurt and/or bullied students, were perceived to be siding with the LGBTQ opposing camp. Some respondents reported homophobic and heterosexist manifestations of teachers who “have spoken against homosexuality without knowing that there are gays in their class”, who “laugh when they briefly talk about this subject”, who “often made me the target of jokes publicly”. (Takács, 2006).

Teachers in schools across Europe also find themselves accountable for a major part of institutional discrimination experienced by young LGBTQ people. It is all the more important, as they are vested with the institution’s discourse, and therefore are perceived to produce and speak the school’s official discourse. This is particularly problematic, as usually teacher training does not address issues such as discrimination or homophobic bullying, and teachers do not know how to deal with such occurrences.

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<sup>23</sup> Recent research showed that teachers often know about incidence of bullying. Indeed, research funded the Department of Education & Science (Norman, Galvin & McNamara, 2006) found that a majority of teachers (79%) were aware of instances of verbal homophobic bullying and a significant number (16%) were aware of physical bullying in their school. The research found that 90% of respondents reported that their school's anti-bullying policy did not include any reference to lesbian and gay related bullying.

Teachers often mention the fear of children's or parents' reactions to the bringing up of LGBTQ issues in schools. Such circle leads to situations whereby teachers enforce silence around SOGIE issues or actually partake in homophobic & transphobic jokes with pupils, be it in class or, more likely, in informal settings such as during breaks. This circle can be broken if clear guidelines are given by the school or a higher institution, which would then protect teachers against complaints.

#### **4.4. Inclusiveness**

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer students, have a right to feel safe at school and be free from bullying or being the target of unacceptable behavior. The overall goal of inclusive education is to ensure that school is a place where all children participate and are treated equally. Inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems in order to respond to the diversity of learners.<sup>24</sup> Still, the LGBTQ in school, as well as sexuality and gender in whole, is big taboo in almost every country in Europe. Note just that sexuality, and emotional and physical health connected to it, are not likely to be in curriculum, it is in general that LGBTIQ issues are considered inappropriate or even forbidden. This kind education in school is sending the message that everyone in the classroom is heterosexual and this assumption is making LGBTIQ students more invisible. Since there is still no aim to strengthen and develop ideology of inclusiveness and diversity, LGBTIQ issues - if ever recognized - are only mentioned in a negative context.

The invisibility of LGBTQ in school, as well as the lack of knowledge about the diversity of genders and sexualities, is increasing the alienation and exclusion of this group and making them more vulnerable for bullying and discrimination. School is the most important arena to prevent negative attitudes and bullying towards LGBTQ and we should all give our best to prevent it of becoming a strong instrument of conveying prejudice and giving them legitimacy - as it can sometimes be case.

### **5. IGLYO's solutions to address the issues and concerns in the field of education**

This is a list of suggested solutions to address the issues and concerns in the field of education in relation to LGBTQ people. This list is indicative and therefore not exhaustive.

#### **5.1. Curriculum includes LGBTQ perspectives and contains LGBTQ-inclusive materials**

The curriculum should include LGBTQ perspectives and contain LGBTQ-inclusive materials, both as part of generic materials, and if possible as standalone materials which specifically deal with LGBTQ issues. Inclusive materials and textbooks should use LGBTQ examples, both within questions and as sources. When a sexual orientation is mentioned implicitly or explicitly, all sexual orientations should also be mentioned.

Teaching methods should be varied, mixing formal and non-formal education. This teaching could also be provided by youth or other non-governmental organisations, or by teachers. The school curriculum, lesson plans and materials should be developed together by both teachers and students, and revised regularly. This will make for a more relevant and interesting curriculum for all. Students, teachers or non-teaching staff's complaints about the curriculum, lesson plans or materials should be easily communicate at the relevant school, local, regional or national levels.

#### **5.2. Schools have anti-bullying policies developed and in - place**

Every school should have an anti-bullying policy addressing all kinds of discrimination, and explicitly including homophobic and transphobic bullying. Anti-bullying policies and other

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/inclusive-education/10-questions-on-inclusive-quality-education/>

inclusive policies should be regarded as ‘living documents’, which are continuously updated, reviewed and evaluated to respond to the changing needs within the school environment. This policy should cover every member of the school community, and be respected by all. All teachers should receive training to recognise and act upon homophobic and transphobic bullying. Monitoring and documenting systems for bullying shall be in place covering specifically homophobic and transphobic bullying in order to be able to on-going follow the situation in relation bullying cases within the school system. Collaboration systems shall be put in place between school, students and parents for a comprehensive and holistic approach towards the development of anti-bullying policies.

### 5.3. Students have access to information and support on LGBTQ issues

Within the school system, students shall be able to have access to informational and supporting services in relation to LGBTQ issues, which are provided by trained staff and experts in a safe and confidential framework.

Those services shall include: counseling, informational materials (printed and electronic ones) including LGBTQ related books in the school library. Individual and/or group support, such as a trained counsellor or a voluntary ‘trust person’ should be available for individuals or groups to talk to in confidence during and outside of school hours (for instance Schools should provide support for support groups between LGBTQ teachers, LGBTQ parents, LGBTQ students and parents of LGBTQ young people.

Student councils should be supported to set up LGBTQ clubs and societies for students. Every school should regularly remind the whole community about inclusive policies in a variety of ways. These could include on posters, on fliers, on banners, through media on internal websites, through school magazines or journals, on stickers, etc. Students should be involved in the creation of all these resources. Members of the school community should have the opportunity to attend informative events about the school’s inclusive policies. by e-mail or through sites such as social networking sites. The school or its information centre should keep a database of useful websites dealing with issues of discrimination and prejudice. These websites can be used by teachers when planning their lessons in order to generate ideas for ways to teach more LGBTQ inclusively.

### 5.4. LGBTQ people are included and represented within schools (mainstreaming)

Mainstreaming means making the existence of LGBTQ people in society a usual thing. Within a school, this should be done by ensuring that LGBTQ people are included and represented. LGBTQ students should be visible in campaigns run by the school student union, especially any campaign which deals with issues of diversity. Schools should make use of statistics and publications about LGBTQ-related issues, which can be accessed through public media, on the internet, or via specialised organisations. This will help to inform about the importance of LGBTQ inclusion, and the problems that occur when LGBTQ people are discriminated against. Members of the school student union should be made aware of their responsibility to multiply and spread their LGBTQ-friendly values to other areas of their lives, such as youth groups and other areas where they have influence. Every school should make their policies visible and well-publicised at all times, but especially when they are open to parents or members of the public (e.g. open days or parent evenings).

The school should avoid heterosexist language as much as possible. Some ways of avoiding using heterosexist language are:

- Using neutral pronouns when referring to someone, unless one is certain that person identifies as a man or a woman. Ask the person in question otherwise. Refer to students as ‘people’ or ‘students’ rather than as ‘boys and girls’.
- Keep all language as inclusive as possible. Avoid making gender-normative statements such as ‘football is a man’s game’, ‘boys don’t cry’, or ‘sciences aren’t for girls’.
- Refer to ‘parents’ rather than ‘mother and father’, as this will never be the reality of all students.
- Avoid asking about ‘boyfriends’ or ‘girlfriends’, as doing so makes assumptions about the person you’re asking. Instead, use neutral terms such as ‘partner’.
- In representations of people, use gender neutral names and colours (not genderrelated colours such as blue or pink) as far as possible in order for all students to be able to identify with the representation.
- Most importantly, never assume that all your students or staff members are heterosexual, nor that they could be homosexual.

### 5.5. Schools are treated as safe spaces

Schools should be treated as safe spaces. These are safe learning environments in which discrimination of any sort, including homophobia or transphobia are not tolerated, with penalties for those who do not respect this. Parents and all members of the school community should be informed that this is the school’s ethos.

Such schools could label themselves ‘LGBTQ-friendly’ or diversity friendly for public acknowledgment. Schools should set up instances where students can talk openly about themselves without fear of being judged by others. One way of doing this could be to run support groups at which a trained ‘trust person’, ombudsperson, mediator or counsellor is present to allow students to express themselves. Schools should ensure that students’ and teachers’ right to privacy is enforced. This means allowing students or teachers to keep their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression private unless they choose otherwise.

## 6. Recommendations

### a) *IGLYO calls on Council of Europe to*

- Strengthen the implementation of its Recommendations on combating discrimination of sexual orientation and gender identity, particularly Article VI which addresses the right to education in a safe environment, free from violence, bullying, social exclusion or other forms of discriminatory and degrading treatment related to SOGIE;
- Mainstream SOGIE in its work on education, ensuring the inclusiveness of education systems and schools in all Council of Europe member states;
- Strengthen its work on Human Rights Education (eg through COMPASS and COMPASSITO) to be further LGBTQ inclusive.

### b) *IGLYO calls on European Commission to*

- Produce and adopt EU roadmap to LGBT equality;
- Promote the passage of the Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive with the strongest language available to protect from discrimination on basis of SOGIE within education;

- Encourage and support research and the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on the experience of LGBT youth in Europe, in particular comparative data on the situation of young LGBT people in education.

**c) IGLYO calls on National Governments to**

- Enforce existing laws and/ or pass laws (if such law is non existent) prohibiting discrimination on the basis of SOGIE;
- Develop and promote anti-bullying policies and programs;
- Provide Human Rights Education at schools which will be inclusive of LGBTQ issues;
- Provide comprehensive sexuality education in schools;
- Require and provide life-long continuing education for teachers in order to further develop their capacities in relation to SOGIE;
- Ensure that curriculum includes LGBTQ perspectives and contains LGBTQ-inclusive materials.
- Ensure that everyone has access to opportunities and resources for lifelong learning without discrimination on the basis of SOGIE, including adults who have already suffered such forms of discrimination in the educational system.
- Ensure that education is directed to the development of each student's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, and responds to the needs of students of all SOGIE.

**d) IGLYO calls on School systems and administrations to**

- Develop an anti-bullying policy, which will be specific mentioning homophobic and transphobic bullying;
- Develop non-discrimination and diversity policies which are LGBTQ inclusive and is visible throughout the school;
- Include LGBTQ materials (books, posters, leaflets etc) in their library;
- Provide support for support groups between LGBTQ teachers, LGBTQ students and parents of LGBTQ young people;
- Support students in setting up LGBTQ clubs and societies (fe Gay - Straight Alliances);
- Create alliances and partnerships with parents of LGBTQ students, LGBTQ parents, LGBTQ- friendly politicians, LGBTQ civil society groups and others in order for LGBTQ issues to be further addressed within the school system;
- Further develop the capacities of their teachers and staff members in working on LGBTQ issues through trainings;
- Organize LGBTQ awareness events to improve teachers and students understanding on LGBTQ issues.;
- Schools shall be treated as safe spaces and wherever possible be visibly as LGBTQ friendly and/ or Human Rights friendly;
- Ensure that LGBTQ people are included, visible and represented in the school environment;
- Create an LGBTIQ-inclusive school teaching about norms and questioning norms must be an obligatory part of all education. Teachers must learn norm-criticism in the teachers education program and use it actively in the classroom.
- Avoid use of heterosexist language;
- Empower school student union to lobby for the mainstreamed inclusion of LGBTQ people and issues.

**e) IGLYO calls on its Member organizations to**

- Cooperate with school student unions, teachers unions to support them in building their capacities on working on SOGIE issues and anti-bullying campaigns;
- Share learning and best practice relating to LGBTQI youth and education;
- Provide educational materials and resources to teachers;
- Organize capacity building seminars and awareness campaigns on SOGIE, anti-bullying, and inclusive education for teachers;
- Conduct research (quantitative & qualitative) mapping and documenting the situation around LGBTQ youth and education in their countries, which can be provided to policy makers for lobbying and advocacy purposes.

## 7. Glossary

**Advocacy** – the practice of advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcomes. More specifically, advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make or have responsibility for implementing policy decisions. As such, the word “advocacy” is quite pliable and is used variously to suit organizational agendas. It is understood in terms of the work of an organization does and the fundamental mission of the organization.

**Bisexual** – an individual who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted to those of either male-identified or female-identified persons. Within bisexual communities, many find themselves attracted to multiple gender expressions and gender identities, and actively oppose a binary gender system.

**Bullying** – when a person is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Negative action is when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, words or in other ways. It consists of three types of abuse – emotional, verbal, and physical. It typically involves subtle methods of coercion such as intimidation. It can include verbal harassment or threat, physical assault or coercion and maybe directed repeatedly towards particular victims, perhaps on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or ability.

**Cisgender** – in Latin meaning ‘static’ or ‘same’, this is the term used for non-transgender people, whose gender identity and expression match that which is traditionally associated with that of their birth sex.

**Discrimination** – unequal or unfair treatment which can be based on a range of grounds, such as age, ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Can be divided into four different types of discrimination, which all can lead to victimisation and harassment: (1)

**Direct discrimination:** a situation where a person is treated less favourably than others on grounds of his or her sexual orientation or gender identity. (2) **Indirect discrimination:** where an apparently neutral provision or practice would put persons having a particular sexual orientation or gender identity at a disadvantage compared to others. (3)

**Multiple discrimination:** based mix on two or several grounds of discrimination such as religion or belief, race, disability, age, gender and gender identity and/or sexual orientation. (4) **Experienced discrimination:** also called subjective discrimination, is the experience of being discriminated against. Experienced discrimination does not necessarily entail discrimination in the legal sense. **Victimisation:** victimisation is a specific term to mean discrimination against a person because they have made a complaint or been a witness in another person’s complaint.

**Harassment:** any act or conduct that is unwelcome to the victim, which could be regarded in relation to the victim’s sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and/or as offensive, humiliating or intimidating. It can include spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materia

**Gay** – a person who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to members of the same gender. Someone who accepts their same-gender attraction and identifies as gay.

**Gender expression** – the outward intentional and unintentional ways we communicate our gender to other people such as our hair, clothes, makeup (or no makeup), the name we call ourselves, our mannerisms, speech, and the pronouns we use, the things we do such as jobs, classes, sports or activities, and who we might hang out with. Gender expression is interpreted by other people who then ascribe to us a gender role that may not always match how we present ourselves or how we identify.

**Gender identity** – the inner sense of ‘being’ man/male, woman/female, butch, femme, trans, both, all, multi, or neither. This can match with one’s physical anatomy, but often does not. Gender identity includes one’s sense of self and the perception the world has of an individual.

**Heteronormativity** - the reference to cultural and social practices where men and women is being led into believing and behaving as if heterosexuality were the only conceivable sexuality. It also implies the positioning of heterosexuality as the only way of being “normal” and as the key source of social reward.

**Heterosexism** - is a system of attitudes, bias and discrimination in favor of opposite-sex sexuality and relationships. It can include the presumption that everyone is heterosexual or that opposite-sex attractions and relationships are the only norm and therefore superior.

**Homophobia** - the fear, unreasonable anger, intolerance or/and hatred towards homosexuality. Homophobia can appear in various ways: Internalized homophobia: when lesbian, gay men and bisexual people are considering and accepting heterosexuality as the correct way of being and living. Institutionalized homophobia: when governments and authorities are acting against equality for LGB people. This be hate speech from public elected persons, ban on pride events and other from of discrimination of LGB people.

**Inclusion** - Inclusion can be seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 2009). It implies a radical reform of the school in terms of educational policy and curricular frameworks, which includes educational content, assessment, pedagogy, the systemic grouping of pupils within institutional and curricular structures. It is based on a values system that welcomes and celebrates diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language, social background, level of educational achievement, disability, etc. Inclusion also implies that all teachers are responsible for the education of all learners.

**Intersectionality** - the understanding that inequalities and oppression are crosscutting across different identity categories, and that social identities have multiple dimensions; for instance, sexual orientation and gender identity and constituted differently in relation to a number of other social subjectivities, such as age, ethnicity, region or country of origin.

**Lesbian** - a person who identifies as a woman, who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to members of the same gender. Someone who accepts her same gender attraction and identifies as a lesbian.

**Mainstreaming** - Mainstreaming means making the existence of LGBTQ people in society a usual thing. Within a school, this should be done by ensuring that LGBTQ people are included and represented.

**Norms** - Sociologists describe norms as laws that govern society’s behaviors, while psychologists have adopted a more general definition, recognizing smaller group units, like a team or an office, may also endorse norms separate or in addition to cultural or societal expectations. The psychological definition emphasizes social norms’ behavioral component, stating norms have two dimensions: how much behavior is exhibited and how much the group approves of that behavior.

**Queer** - has become an academic term that is inclusive of people who are not heterosexual - includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans. Queer theory is challenging heteronormative social norms concerning gender and sexuality, and claims that gender roles are social constructions. For many LGBTI persons, the term “queer” has negative connotations as it was traditionally an abusive term, however many LGBTI persons are now comfortable with the term and have “reclaimed” it as a symbol of pride.

**Sexual orientation** - refers to each person’s capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender.

**Social exclusion** - The European Commission defines social exclusion as: ‘a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feeling powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day to day lives.’ Social exclusion may result from ‘rootlessness’ and migration; rural exodus; dispersed families; disorganised urbanisation; rupture of traditional society and higher levels of education required to gain employment, amongst other things. (Acedo et al., 2008)

**Stigma.** Stigma is a social process, experienced or anticipated, characterized by exclusion, rejection, blame or devaluation, that results from experience, perception, or reasonable anticipation of an adverse social judgment about a person or group (Weiss & Ramakrishna)

**Transgender** - an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/ or gender expression differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. This term can include many gender identities such as: transsexual, transgender, crossdresser, drag performer, androgynous, genderqueer, gender variant or differently gendered people.

**Transphobia** - refers to negative cultural and personal beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviors based on prejudice, disgust, fear and/ or hatred of trans people or against variations of gender identity and gender expression. Institutional transphobia manifests itself through legal sanctions, pathologization and inexistent/inadequate mechanisms to counter violence and discrimination. Social transphobia manifests itself in the forms of physical and other forms of violence, hate speech, discrimination, threats, marginalization, social exclusion eroticization, ridicule and insults.

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4. [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Training/Study\\_sessions/2007\\_OBESSU\\_IGLYO\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Training/Study_sessions/2007_OBESSU_IGLYO_en.pdf)
5. [http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/results/ilga\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/results/ilga_en.pdf)
6. <http://www.lgbt-education.info/>
7. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/inclusive-education/10-questions-on-inclusive-quality-education/>
8. [http://www.academia.edu/407564/An\\_exploratory\\_survey\\_of\\_the\\_experiences\\_of\\_homophobic\\_bullying\\_amongst\\_lesbian\\_gay\\_bisexual\\_and\\_transgendered\\_young\\_people\\_in\\_Ireland](http://www.academia.edu/407564/An_exploratory_survey_of_the_experiences_of_homophobic_bullying_amongst_lesbian_gay_bisexual_and_transgendered_young_people_in_Ireland)

### 9. Useful Recourses

Here is a list of useful resources for working in the field of education and LGBTQ young people & issues:

- [www.iglyo.com](http://www.iglyo.com)
- [http://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/IGLYO\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/IGLYO_Guidelines.pdf)
- <http://ilga-europe.org/>
- <http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/>
- <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002157/215708e.pdf>
- <http://www.obessu.org/>
- <http://www.lgbt-education.info/>
- <http://www.glsen.org/>
- <http://www.dayagainsthomophobia.org/-Reports-and-documents,72->
- [http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles\\_en.htm](http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.htm)
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- <https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/pro-resources.html>
- [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_school/education\\_for\\_all/default.asp](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_school/education_for_all/default.asp)
- <http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/>
- <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2012/homophobia-transphobia-and-discrimination-grounds-sexual-orientation-and-gender>

- <http://www.iglhrc.org/binary-data/ATTACHMENT/file/000/000/551-1>



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