

On 16 June 2014 in Brussels, Belgium, IGLYO held the second in its Roundtable Series on Intersectionality. Representatives from Queer Strike at Crossroads Women's Centre (London, England), the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (Brussels, Belgium), Amnesty International- EU (Brussels, Belgium), We For Civil Equality (Yerevan, Armenia), and ACCEPT Association (Bucharest, Romania) met to discuss the ways young people experience gender, sexual orientation and gender identity. The roundtable also received input from Transgender Europe (Berlin, Germany) and Trans-fuzja (Warsaw, Poland).

The roundtable brought together these representatives from the fields of women's rights and LGBTQ rights to explore the importance of recognising gender diversity within the LGBTQ movement, as well as to recognise the expression of all sexual orientations and gender identities within the fight for women's equality. All around the table recognised that women of all backgrounds still live in societies that heavily discriminate based on gender, particularly in terms of socioeconomic opportunity.

The participants in the roundtable promoted the idea that everyone should have the ability to express one's gender, regardless of biological makeup. The autonomy of an individual to express gender should not be dependent on the norms that society links to sex assigned at birth, including assumptions of binary gender identities. IGLYO recognises that gender norms, which dictate how one should act according to sex assigned at birth, can be restrictive and harmful for LGBTQ young people who might have non-normative sexual orientations or gender identities. Moreover, gendered expectations can exclude women, men, and genderqueer people of all ages who do not conform to societal norms. Everyone agreed that gender equality benefits everyone in society.

For organisations within the women's movement and within the LGBTQ movement, the roundtable promoted representation of gender diversity, with engagement of people whose genders are not represented within the organisations. The participants discussed the fact that organisational structures and processes are not always inclusive of all genders, and they urged LGBTQ and women's organisations to work for ways to ensure involvement is open to all. The roundtable emphasised effective leadership and meaningful participation at all levels of organisations, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

The roundtable also discussed a number of challenges faced by trans individuals, building on the input provided by Trans-fuzja and Transgender Europe. Autonomy to live as one's gender, without one-size fits all approaches to gender reassignment, was emphasized by the group. In line with the idea of autonomy, the roundtable found it very important for the women's movement to include all who identify as female, regardless of biological or genetic makeup. Objectives of the women's movement should include those who do not necessarily fit within the gender binary, and should take into account women who also have or have had a female experience at any point in their life.

Overall, the roundtable emphasised that the LGBTQ movement and women's movement should work to be inclusive of all people, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Organisations within each movement should provide accurate information about gender and sexual orientation. The participants agreed that safe spaces should be created for expression of genders and sexual orientations. Using a human rights approach, methods for creating a world inclusive of all genders and sexual orientations can be implemented, tailoring those methods to local realities.

IGLYO extends its thanks to the participants of the roundtable for the rich discussion of gender. Through the Roundtable Series on Intersectionality, IGLYO is hosting meetings on gender, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status along with a concluding roundtable bringing together rapporteurs from each of the meetings.



Government of the Netherlands