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39

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim

2. Norms

2.1 What are norms?

2.2 What do norms do?

2.3 What is norm criticism?

3. IGLYO's work on norm criticism

4. Why is norm criticism important and what is the goal of using norm criticism for IGYLO and its Member organisations?

4.1 How do we want to use norm criticism and to what end?

4.2 Norm criticism and other approaches

5. Focus areas for IGLYO

6. Beyond focus areas: recommendations

7. Glossary

8. References

9. Useful resources



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1. Introduction

IGLYO's vision is a world where we, young people in all our diversity, are able to express and define ourselves regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics and bodily diversity, without violence and hatred. We are working towards a world where we can live our lives and participate in our communities without limitations. We want this so that we can rise to our full potential, enjoying respect, celebration and positive recognition. Recognising the multiple aspects of identity for any young LGBTQI person is a key element for realising our vision. To achieve this vision we need effective tools for change.

1.1 Aim

This position paper serves as a basis for IGLYO's work on norm criticism. By defining the key concepts, we are able to create a framework for IGLYO's future efforts on the topic of norm criticism and provide a starting point for board members, task force members and staff who are working with norm criticism.

The aim for the position paper is to articulate in clear terms IGLYO's vision on norm criticism. This position paper also provides guidance for IGLYO's member organisations to work with norm criticism and to make it applicable to them in their own context. It does this by summarising and explaining the efforts that IGLYO has undertaken and intends to do in the area of norm criticism and by giving recommendations. It also gives recommendations to the Council of Europe, the European Commission and national governments.

2. Norms

2.1 What are norms?

Norms are socially constructed notions, ideas and unwritten rules and expectations that form us as humans.

They are present in all areas of life, in every context and place and make up the limits that define acceptable behavior. Some norms are positive and guide how we act towards others. One example is the norm that discourages from plowing into people on the street. Most often we adapt to norms without thinking much of it. For example, in some parts of the world people know to shake hands with their right hand and do so without thinking twice. It is not until someone breaks the norm that it becomes visible.

2.2 What do norms do?

There are norms that affect society as a whole and they determine who is afforded power and influence. These norms and accepted realities only become visible when someone breaks them. One such norm is the norm of masculinity for persons regarded as men or boys. If a boy decides to wear something different than a shirt and tie to a party, for example a dress and nail-polish, he would break the unwritten rules for proper male behavior. Even the functioning of the human body is subject to norms. Few people who can walk think twice

85 about the fact that two steps leading into a building are a significant challenge for wheelchair
86 users.

87

88 There are consequences for those who break the norm, as norms are about power and
89 influence. There is a risk that norm breakers are perceived and treated not as individuals but
90 as representatives for a whole group. People who break norms are subjectively perceived to
91 be part of social groups and generalisations are applied to them, whereas the norm itself goes
92 unrecognised. It is much more common, for example, to hear so called “truths” about lesbian
93 and gay people than “truths” about straight people.

94

95 History shows that norms change over time and place. For example, in many parts of the
96 world it is no longer considered taboo for persons perceived as women to be dressed in
97 trousers. Norms play a great part in which people/groups are discriminated. Nowadays,
98 women in many parts of the world are not expected to stop working if they have children.
99 Though norms have changed over time, there is still much that has remained the same. For
100 example, in 2011, on average, women in the EU earned around 16 % less per hour than men¹
101 and, in many households, still take the bulk of responsibility for the home and family in
102 heterosexual relationships. For example, in the EU in 2010, the employment rate for women
103 with dependent children was only 64.7% compared with 89.7% for men with children².
104 Furthermore, as a result of oppressing norms, LGBTQI persons may be harassed at school,
105 denied a job or housing or become targeted with racist and/or homo-, bi- or transphobic hate
106 crimes.³

107

108 2.3 What is norm criticism?

109

110 Norm criticism is both a way of analysing and understanding norms and power structures as
111 well as a tool for challenging and dismantling norms. By using norm criticism one can raise
112 awareness of the privileges, power imbalances and exclusion that some norms create. It is
113 also a way to challenge power structures and combating marginalisation of groups in society.

114

115 Most norms do not exist to cause people harm or pain. Likewise, people are seldom
116 intentionally spiteful or malicious, but they are simply following the norms without thinking.
117 For example, a person might unthinkingly ask a person perceived as a woman about her
118 boyfriend. This is an example of the heteronorm. In addition, it is often difficult for those who
119 follow the norm to see how they and other persons are affected by them. They may even
120 question whether norms exist, or may not be aware of them. One example is the norm of
121 whiteness which is a part of racist oppression. White people have the privilege to interact
122 with the social and political structures of many societies as individuals, and are not perceived

¹ European Commission - Directorate-General for Justice Tackling the gender pay gap in the European Union Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_pay_gap/130422_gpg_brochure_en.pdf, accessed on 14 Sept.2015

² Busch A and Holst E, 2011 – ‘Gender Specific Occupational Segregation, Glass Ceiling Effects and Earnings in Managerial Positions, German Institute for Economic Research’

³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, “EU LGBT Survey”, available at <http://fra.europa.eu/en/survey/2012/eu-lgbt-survey> accessed on 31 July 2015

123 and treated as representatives of the whole group, which is often the case, in Europe and
124 other places, for (perceived) people of colour.

125
126 Norm criticism looks at how norms affect our values and everyday lives rather than to focus
127 on the people who break them. It is essential to remember this in order to create safer spaces
128 where the power imbalances, misconceptions and suppression that norms create can be
129 tackled as a systemic and not a personal issue.

130 2.4 Intersectionality and norm criticism

131
132 For norm criticism to be effective and valuable, there must be an understanding of the
133 concept of intersectionality.⁴ Intersectionality is, in short, the understanding of the
134 intersections of different forms or systems of oppression, domination or discrimination.
135 Examples of intersecting oppressing systems are related to ethnicity/race, bodily
136 diversity/sex characteristics, class and socio-economic status, age, (dis)ability and
137 functionality, mental health status, gender expression and identity, sexual orientation,
138 language, religious beliefs, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth
139 or other status. These all determine our position in the society and the privileges,
140 opportunities and challenges we face. One person can face multiple types of restrictive norms
141 based on the above-mentioned categories at one time. Norm criticism must be inclusive of an
142 intersectional approach as it is meant to challenge all norms that create, perpetuate or
143 support oppression, domination and discrimination.

144 3. IGLYO's work on norm criticism

145 *April 2013: Capacity Building Seminar: Norm Criticism in Education*

146
147 In April 2013, IGLYO and ILGA-Europe ran a capacity building seminar on norm criticism. The
148 event was kindly hosted by RFSL and RFSL Ungdom at their offices in Stockholm, Sweden.
149 The seminar brought together 19 activists from different organisations across Europe. The
150 participants discussed what norm criticism is, why it is important, and methods for teaching
151 norm criticism for both in and out of formal education environments⁵.

152 *March 2014: International Women's Day Statement*

153 IGLYO released a statement on the 8th of March 2014 for the International Women's Day that
154 focused on the specific issue of sexism that LGBTQI women face and the struggle for gender
155 equality in general. IGLYO highlighted that looking at the movement for gender equality in a
156

⁴ IGLYO, Position Paper on Intersectionality

⁵ IGLYO, "Call for participants at norm critical education seminar" <http://www.iglyo.com/call-for-participants-norm-critical-education-seminar/>,
accessed on 31 July 2015

162 norm critical way will make the inclusion of all people who identify other than male a reality.
163 Thus, IGLYO urged organisations to use an intersectional approach to tackle gender norms.⁶

164
165 *July 2014: IGLYO On Norm Criticism*

166
167 IGLYO published an issue that brought together several articles from across the membership
168 to explore the idea of norm criticism. The contributors looked at norms as societal powers
169 that give value to the ways people act – or fail to act and how norms structure their day to
170 day life and thought processes.⁷

171
172 *March 2015: Stakeholder Learning Network Meeting on Norm Criticism*

173 This learning meeting was targeted at organisations and European networks that work in the
174 field of youth and education. The meeting aimed at creating a learning space in which the
175 participating organisations were able to reflect on how norm-critical approaches can be used
176 to achieve a better inclusion of youth in society.

177 The participants were led through an analysis of their organization’s privileges and the way
178 norms influence their work. Additionally, the meeting encouraged participants to think
179 creatively and plan around adopting norm-criticism in their work and organisations, in order
180 to be more socially inclusive and facilitated an exchange of ideas and good practices, and
181 identified areas and opportunities for longer term collaboration in the field of norm criticism
182 and social inclusion of young people.⁸

183 *May 2015: Positive Steps Beyond (Norm) Criticism Conference*

184
185 The conference focused on the topic of norm criticism and invited participants to explore and
186 formulate ways to employ norm critical approaches to social change and activism in all
187 aspects of their work. Participants were introduced to the historical context of norm criticism,
188 as well as the Swedish perspective and experiences in the field. The participants had
189 discussions on issues such as the individual impact and societal connotations of labels and
190 societal binary norms, privilege and power structures. Furthermore, special guests analysed
191 in depth different topics on how to use norm criticism in campaigning and awareness raising
192 in relation to HIV and to break the relative norms in the school system. The participants also
193 got the chance to get familiar to the practices of norm breaking on their own terms. The
194 conference aimed to provide information and guidance on putting a norm critical approach
195 into practice, based on increasing the knowledge of the concept and the exposure of IGLYO’s
196 member organisations to what it means to apply norm criticism in LGBTQI activism. It also

⁶ IGLYO, “IGLYO calls for an intersectional approach in gender equality fight”. Available at <http://www.iglyo.com/iglyo-calls-for-an-intersectional-approach-in-gender-equality-fight/> accessed on July 31, 2015.

⁷ IGLYO, “IGLYO ON NORM CRITICISM”, SUMMER 2014, ISSUE 25. available at <http://www.iglyo.com/resources/iglyo-on-norm-criticism-2014/> accessed on July 31, 2015.

⁸ IGLYO, Stakeholder learning network meeting on norm criticism, available at [http://www.iglyo.com/stakeholder-learning-network-meeting-on-norm-criticism-equality/ - respond](http://www.iglyo.com/stakeholder-learning-network-meeting-on-norm-criticism-equality/-respond) accessed on July 31, 2015.

197 provided a platform for discussions and suggestions to the toolkit on norm criticism that
198 IGLYO would develop.⁹

199

200 *June - September 2015: Norm Criticism Task Force - position paper and toolkit*

201

202 IGLYO called for and put together a team to prepare a toolkit and position paper on the topic
203 of norm criticism. The aim for the position paper is to articulate in clear terms IGLYO's vision
204 on norm criticism with the input of the Positive Steps Beyond (Norm) Criticism Conference
205 towards the production of the Norm Criticism Toolkit. The toolkit will be available for use by
206 interested people and institutions globally.

207

208 4. Why is norm criticism important and what is the goal of using norm 209 criticism for IGYLO and its member organisations?

210

211 To be able to attain IGLYO's vision, we need to change the oppressing power structures in
212 society. There are many formalised norms in the shape of laws and regulations which limit the
213 possibilities for self-expression and definition. The non-formalised norms influence and
214 generate formalised norms (and vice versa) and often times hinder LGBTQI youth to
215 participate in their communities.

216

217 One example is the binary classifications of sex and gender. Binary classifications are
218 omnipresent in our societies and inform the way we understand and organise the world
219 around us. It separates humankind into two categories, female and male, and this is visible in
220 the entrenchment of those categories in identification documents. These documents expose
221 people who do not fit neatly into the two categories to human rights breaches. Among them,
222 intersex persons are especially vulnerable.¹⁰ In most countries a person's self perceived
223 gender is not enough for that person to be able to change their legal sex¹¹. This assumption is
224 based on cisnormativity, meaning that a person's gender identity correlates to the legal sex
225 assigned at birth, as well as the existence of only two binary sexes. Cisnormativity also
226 constitutes a collection of social norms related to sex, gender identity and expression.

227

228 Norms also work on their own, even where there are no formal regulations to suppress
229 persons in society. Therefore it is vital that we understand how norms work and operate and
230 how to challenge them in a successful way. A consequence of these forms are the fact that
231 LGBTQI youth have a poorer state of mental health and face higher levels of discrimination

⁹ IGLYO, Positive Steps Beyond Norm Criticism, available at <http://www.iglyo.com/positive-steps-beyond-criticism-a-conference-on-norm-criticism/> accessed at July 31, 2015.

¹⁰ Council of Europe, "Human rights and intersex people", Issue Paper, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights., Council of Europe, "A boy or a girl or a person – intersex people lack recognition in Europe", The Commissioner's Human Rights Comments, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. available at <https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2768767&SecMode=1&DocId=2282716&Usage=2> and <http://www.coe.int/hu/web/commissioner/-/a-boy-or-a-girl-or-a-person-intersex-people-lack-recognition-in-euro> accessed on 31 July 2015.

¹¹ According to <http://www.atn.com/stories/868/transgender-passport-status>, in 2015, 5 countries in the world allow citizens to self-select their gender marker without having to undergo surgery or other treatment: Ireland, Malta, Denmark, Argentina and Colombia.

232 and violence than other youth.¹² Without challenging and eventually eradicating these formal
233 or informal norms there can be no sustainable changes. For these changes to happen, we
234 need an understanding of norms and effective and comprehensive tools for changing and/or
235 dismantling them. Norm criticism is one such a tool.

236
237 Therefore IGLYO is developing, alongside this position paper, a toolkit for practical use by its
238 member organisations to help reshape the oppressing norms. The toolkit is sensitive and
239 adapted to the different contexts and issues that the member organisations work with.

240 4.1 How do we want to use norm criticism and to what end?

241
242
243 Norm criticism is a tool to expose, disrupt and dismantle power and privilege, also by
244 encompassing an intersectional approach. IGLYO recognises that norm criticism as a method
245 can be used in a multitude of ways with different aims. Norm criticism can be used in, for
246 example: working with human rights, all types of education and specifically sex education,
247 organizational work, policy and law making, in research, professional orientation, social
248 development, development cooperation and career counseling. It can be used working with
249 different key populations, such as children and youth, teachers, law and health professionals
250 and activists, and in different areas such as education, law, health, pedagogy, psychology etc.
251 There is a need for inclusive and norm critical language in general but specifically in
252 education, policies and legislation.

253
254 For example, norm criticism can be used by member organisations as a part of campaigns to
255 make visible the issues LGBTQI youth face in any given society. It can be used to analyse the
256 power structures within the member organisations to make them more democratic and
257 accessible. Using IGLYO' toolkits on norm criticism and intersectionality is a good way to
258 start. There might also be other norm critical materials developed by other organisations; one
259 example is "Break the Norm - Methods for Studying Norms in General and the Heteronorm in
260 Particular" by RFSL Ungdom, The Swedish Youth Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
261 Transgender and Queer Rights.¹³

262
263 A general guideline when applying norm criticism is to always criticise the norm, not the norm
264 follower or breaker. This is important as norm criticism has an overarching approach and goal,
265 to break and dismantle harmful norms. In criticising the norm, it is important not to
266 consolidate existing norms and stereotypes. This can be done by using an inclusive and norm
267 critical language as well as keeping the intersectional approach in mind. For example, in this
268 paper we have chosen to use the term "regarded as" men or boys as we recognise that the
269 labels put on persons do not have to correspond to the self-defined identity of that same
270 person. The active usage of norm critical language is a vital step in adopting a norm critical

¹² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "EU LGBT Survey", Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, "Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe", 2nd ed., "Human Rights and Gender Identity", Issue Paper, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights., available at <http://fra.europa.eu/en/survey/2012/eu-lgbt-survey> and http://www.coe.int/t/Commissioner/Source/LGBT/LGBTStudy2011_en.pdf and <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1476365> accessed on 31 July, 2015.

¹³ RFSL Ungdom, "Break the Norm - methods for studying norms in general and the heteronorm in particular" Visit www.rfslungdom.se to find the "Break the norm" toolkit.

271 approach. For norm criticism in a learning environment to be successful, the environment
272 must be a safe space for all participants. To be able to create safe spaces there must be a
273 zero tolerance for racism, ableism, sexism, mysogony, heteronormativity, cismativity and
274 classism.

276 4.2 Norm criticism and other approaches

277
278 For many years, anti-discrimination work has consisted, among many other approaches, of
279 initiatives to bring forth real life experiences of LGBTQ individuals, so that norm followers can
280 meet norm breakers, for some the first meeting with someone who is open, ask questions
281 and, generally, build a better understanding of how breaking the norm affects LGBTQ
282 individuals' life. This type of activity is meant to create understanding and sympathy, or
283 tolerance for LGBTQ people.

284
285 However, norm criticism has discovered some disadvantages typical of this approach. Firstly,
286 the LGBTQ person who is presented to the others is usually seen as a representative of all
287 LGBTQ people, and, even if some assumptions and stereotypes about LGBTQ people can be
288 dismantled this way, new assumptions and stereotypes might be made. Secondly, it is usually
289 a rather intense experience to go through and it can be traumatic for people who are
290 exposed like this to questioning (even if this should always be a voluntary, well-informed and
291 completely consented upon activity). Moreover, it focuses on the norm breaker and makes
292 the norm follower invisible, instead of having all participants look at the norm itself and
293 become aware of its consequences on those who break the norm, or feel pressured to follow
294 it. A norm critical approach brings the discussion beyond the individual stories of LGBTQ
295 individuals and to the norms in society that lead to inequality and discrimination.

297 5. Focus areas for IGLYO

298
299 Norm criticism can be used to analyse and dismantle all oppressive norms to promote change
300 for a world where young persons can express themselves and be as they like, with full
301 participation in their communities. It can, together with an intersectional approach, take into
302 account all types of norms related to social, cultural or other categories than contribute to a
303 person's identity and situation in life. However, as IGLYO's vision is explicitly related to
304 LGBTQI youth, its efforts are focused on some norms more than others, taking into account
305 the intersecting norms and issues that each young LGBTQI person may face. Gendered
306 expectations can exclude people of all ages who do not conform to societal norms.
307 Accordingly, LGBTQI young people who do not act according to gender norms are often
308 stigmatised, socially excluded, and targeted for harassment and bullying.¹⁴ The below listed
309 norms and oppressing structures are of special interest to IGLYO and its member
310 organisations.

312 *Ableism*

¹⁴ Enquete sur l'homophobie en milieu scolaire (Survey on homophobia in schools), SOSHomophobie, France (www.sos-homophobie.org/documents/analyse_enquete_milieu_scolaire.pdf) (2005/2006). Homophobic Bullying, Achievement, Mental Health, Safety and Sexual Health of LGBT Students. <http://www.schools-for-all.org/>

313

314 IGLYO recognises that LGBTQI young people are a diverse group. We acknowledge a
315 spectrum of abilities and the autonomy of individuals with impairments to identify or not
316 identify as (dis)abled.¹⁵ Another way in which some look at the issue and the language around
317 it is to speak about functionality and functional variations, instead of impairments. Ableism is
318 a form of discrimination, oppression or social prejudice against people with functional
319 variations that differ from the norm of the functional body and mind, people such as
320 wheelchair users, people with dyslexia and vision impaired persons. Discrimination based on
321 mental health status can be called mentalism.

322 IGLYO focuses on this norm as the LGBTQI community in general suffers from more mental
323 health issues than others, not because being LGBTQI itself is problematic, but because mental
324 health issues often are a reaction to and a consequence of facing oppression and violence.

325

326 The functionality of any person's body is tightly linked to their self determination without the
327 interference of norms and physical obstacles that hinder that person's participation and
328 potential. Any LGBTQI person with any (dis)ability or functional variation, whether of physical
329 or mental health nature, should be afforded the same chances and equal terms for self
330 fulfillment and participation in their community. IGLYO recognizes that the elimination of
331 ableism is a key element to allow for all to have the autonomy in relation to their sexual
332 orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics and bodily diversity.

333

334 *Socio economic status and class*

335

336 IGLYO recognises that class, also called socioeconomic status, is a key element to realising
337 full potential and having the autonomy to express one's sexual orientation and gender
338 identity. Socioeconomic status is both a material reality where some people have less means
339 to support themselves and therefore limits their opportunities in life, and a societal construct
340 that indicates an individual or group's social standing or class in respect to others in society.
341 It is in the latter part of the meaning of class and socioeconomic status, sometimes called
342 classism, that norm criticism becomes valuable.

343

344 Socioeconomic status is commonly measured by taking into consideration an individual or
345 groups' education, income and occupation. Socioeconomic status has an impact on an
346 individual's privilege in society, including access to institutions and opportunities. Since
347 socioeconomic status has an impact on educational and employment opportunities, society
348 often perpetuates a cycle that simultaneously stigmatises an individual for lower
349 socioeconomic status, while creating limitations that counteract a change in status.

350

351 Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression can detract from one's socioeconomic
352 opportunities when an individual does not conform to mainstream expectations. Additionally,
353 sexual orientation and gender identity and expression can be risk factors that drive individuals
354 into poverty and challenging socioeconomic situations, including unstable or insecure

¹⁵ See intersectionality paper

355 housing.¹⁶ In some cases, parents no longer allow their teens to remain in the home. In other
356 situations, stress and conflict at home can cause some youth to run away. As a result, LGB
357 youth are at greater risk for homelessness than their heterosexual peers¹⁷. Subsequently, the
358 services provided to persons in a challenging socio economic situation are often hetero- and
359 cis-normative, creating further stigma.

360
361 In addition, the LGBTQI community has high barriers to participation as many activities for
362 LGBTQI persons are associated with costs. This also goes for the opportunities to be an
363 active member of an organisation, such as IGLYO. Therefore a norm critical approach to the
364 assumptions made about a person's socioeconomic status is essential to allow for persons
365 from all socioeconomic backgrounds to make their voices heard, to participate in their
366 communities, in the LGBTQI community and organisations and for full self-expression.

367 *Cisnormativity*

368
369
370 IGLYO recognises that people with non-conforming gender identities and expressions and/or
371 sex characteristics and bodily diversity face discrimination, violence and stigmatisation
372 causing trans persons to suffer more from hate speech, hate crimes and mental health issues
373 than the majority of the LGBQ community. Consider, for example, that, in the European Union,
374 34% of all trans people were attacked or threatened with violence in the previous 5 years,
375 compared to 23% of lesbians (28% for bisexual women) and 25% of gay men¹⁸. Society often
376 projects and assumes a gender or gender identity onto those who conform or do not
377 conform to societal expectations. Therefore it is urgent that all LGBTQI organisations
378 recognise and challenge the cisnorm.

379
380 Cisnormativity refers to the practices and institutions that legitimise and privilege those who
381 are comfortable with and conforming to the societal expectations of the gender identity and
382 expression linked to the sex assigned to them at birth. The cisnorm systematically
383 disadvantages and marginalises all persons whose gender identity and expression do not
384 meet social expectations.

385
386 The cisnorm intersects with the gender norms and heteronorm as they all perpetuate the
387 notion of two binary and mutually excluding sexes, male and female, and two distinct gender
388 identities and expressions: woman, man; feminine or masculine. For example, transgender
389 individuals seeking medical intervention are often prescribed a 'one-size fits all' approach,
390 with the medical community adhering to rigid gender categories. Such an approach detracts
391 from the ability to define one's gender autonomously and also deters and cancels out trans
392 persons wanting medical assistance from treatment. This also cancels out non gender-
393 conforming trans persons from getting legal gender recognition in countries where medical
394 intervention is a prerequisite.

¹⁶ See the IGLYO's work on LGBTQ and homelessness, available at <http://www.iglyo.com/?s=homelessness> accessed on 31 July 2015.

¹⁷ US Center for Disease Control on LGBT Health: <http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>, accessed on 14 Sept 2015

¹⁸ EU FRA, European Union Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Survey, 2012: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-lgbt-survey-2012>, accessed on 14 Sept 2015

396 The cishnorm is present also within the LGBTQI movement where gay and lesbian persons are
397 more visible, have more events and meeting places than trans, bisexual and queer persons.
398 THE LGBTQI community should make every effort to avoid excluding its diverse identities, by
399 favoring one group over the others, in terms of visibility, representation, programs, activities,
400 social outlets and other spaces or opportunities. If it fails to do so, it will only enforce
401 oppressive norms within itself, resulting in more stigma and exclusion. Norm criticism is useful
402 as a lens through which community leaders, groups, organisations, businesses, and donors
403 can examine the way they design initiatives, communication campaigns and they take
404 decisions, so as not to enforce the norm of any of the LGBTQI identities to the detriment of
405 the others.

406
407 *Sexism and misogyny*

408
409 Sexism and misogyny incorporate norms on sex, gender and gender expression. Sexism is the
410 belief or attitude that one sex is inherently superior to, more competent than, or more
411 valuable than other any other sex. It is an impersonal bias against the competence or
412 influence of one sex. It can target persons perceived as male or female, but most researchers
413 and writers agree that it is more commonly directed towards persons perceived as women, or
414 persons perceived as men who are considered feminine or with feminine gender expressions.
415 Mysonigy is a far more personal, irrational and violent type of prejudice against people
416 perceived as women and it almost always involves scorn, hatred and/or some violent attitude
417 or intended threat. It is an expression of sexism for someone to say that women are generally
418 not good drivers but a mysoginistic person will threaten to beat a woman up because “she is
419 a bad driver”.

420
421 Sexist oppression is seen widely as women of all backgrounds still live in societies that heavily
422 discriminate based on gender, particularly in terms of socioeconomic opportunity and social
423 autonomy. Gender norms, namely expectations of a person that are attributed to people
424 based on the sex assigned at birth, are often restrictive and prohibit individual choice. Women
425 are underrepresented in decision-making bodies or in the high earning fields, positions of
426 power or cultural prestige. For example, nearly one in four large publicly listed companies
427 across the European Union had no female representatives at board level in 2013 and women
428 accounted for 16.6% of board members of these companies¹⁹.

429
430 IGLYO recognises that diversity in genders and gender expression is a key element of
431 IGLYO’s work, across focus areas. In regards to norm criticism, IGLYO also recognises and
432 challenges the bias associated with gender in society, where privilege is aligned with cis-
433 gendered males and masculine gender expressions. IGLYO recognises that, within the
434 LGBTQI movement itself, there is marginalisation of women and feminine gender expressions
435 irrespective of the gender identity of the feminine person. IGLYO utilises an intersectional
436 approach to look at the way privileges along gender lines affect LGBTQI youth and uses
437 norms criticism to dismantle the norms surrounding gender and gender expression.

¹⁹ European Commission - Directorate-General for Justice, Women and men in leadership positions in the European Union, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_balance_decision_making/131011_women_men_leadership_en.pdf, accessed on 15 Sept 2015

438

439 *Heteronormativity*

440

441 IGLYO recognises that heteronormativity and heterosexism are two of the most constraining
442 norms to LGBTQI youth. Heterosexism is the belief, stated or implied, that heterosexuality is
443 superior, religiously, morally, socially, emotionally, behaviourally, and/or in some other way, to
444 other sexualities; the presumption that all people are heterosexual or that all should be so and
445 refers to cultural and social practices where heterosexuality is made to be the only
446 conceivable sexuality. It also implies the positioning of heterosexuality as the only way of
447 being “normal” and as the key source of social reward.

448

449 The heteronorm excludes any lesbian, gay or bisexual experience from what is perceived as
450 normal. It also excludes any gender identity or gender expression that cannot be labeled
451 exclusively male or female as the heteronorm relies upon the norm of two binary sexes with
452 equally binary gender identities and gender expressions. One consequence of this norm is the
453 notion of “coming out”, as gay, lesbian or bisexual as a person is assumed to be heterosexual
454 until proven otherwise.

455

456 *Racism*

457

458 IGLYO recognises that the LGBTQI movement is composed of diverse people from different
459 racial and ethnic backgrounds. Racial diversity and the proportion of various people of colour
460 in the total population change significantly across countries in Europe, but the LGBTQI
461 community is often perceived as as homogenous group failing to recognise this race and
462 ethnic diversity. IGLYO states that people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds identify as
463 LGBTQI, and that simply ignoring the different realities of these people makes the LGBTQI
464 movement exclusive to those of diverse backgrounds as well as causing the movement to be
465 weaker.

466

467 By using a norm critical and intersectional approach regarding racial and ethnic identities,
468 IGLYO hopes to incorporate the different ways LGBTQI identities can be experienced in order
469 to address the challenges of participation in the LGBTQI community.

470

471 In both the LGBTQI movement and the movement for racial and ethnic equality, there is a
472 lack of fair representation. IGLYO also recognises the challenge of racism permeating society
473 and, as a result, the LGBTQI community within it.

474

475 Norm criticism is vital in this aspect because racism, fascism and nationalism have been and
476 continue to be an integral part of politics in Europe. LGBTQI organisations such as IGLYO
477 must be and remain clear that racist ideas and norms can never be a part of the LGBTQI
478 movement and that LGBTQI organisations must refrain from working with racist, nationalist
479 and fascist organisations and parties so as not to be used to pinkwash oppressing ideas.

480

481 **6. Beyond Focus Areas: Recommendations**

482

483 The focus areas stated above are some of the examples of oppressing power systems
484 relevant to IGLYO and its member organisations that are supported by more or less rigid
485 norms. In addition to ableism, class and socioeconomic status, sexism and misogyny,
486 heteronormativity, cis-normativity and racism, LGBTQI youth face a multitude of constraining
487 norms that intersect at any given time. In this position paper, IGLYO expanded on the key
488 normative power systems that have emerged as the most important among constraining
489 norms for LGBTQI youth and students, while recognising that other issues might be as
490 relevant depending on individual context and experience.

491
492 The following sections is a set of recommendations for local, national and international actors.

493
494 IGLYO calls on:

495
496 *Partnerships/advocacy*

- 497
498 ● Member organisations to cooperate with relevant actors to LGBTQI youth issues to
499 support them in building their capacities on working on norm criticism;
- 500 ● Council of Europe to strengthen the implementation of its Recommendations on
501 combating discrimination of sexual orientation and gender identity and in doing so
502 apply a norm critical approach;
- 503 ● Council of Europe to mainstream sexual orientation and gender identity rights in all of
504 its work related to youth, ensuring the inclusiveness of LGBTQI youth in all rights based
505 work in Council of Europe member states;
- 506 ● National governments to set up working groups on intersectionality at the level of
507 ministries, parliament, local governments, to advise decision makers and authorities in
508 drafting public policies, budgets, laws and other instruments so that they are inclusive
509 of to LGBTQI youth issues, especially with reference to anti-discrimination legal
510 provisions;
- 511 ● National and local governments, law enforcement and legal systems to enforce existing
512 laws and/ or pass laws (if such law is non existent) prohibiting discrimination on the
513 basis of sexual orientation, bodily diversity and gender identity and expression;
- 514 ● Legislators to pass laws that allow for the changing of legal sex according to the self
515 identified gender of the applicant without any restrictions or requirements.

516
517 *Education/Programming/Organisational development*

- 518
519 ● Member organisation to share learning and best practice relating to LGBTQI youth and
520 norm criticism, including providing educational materials and resources to relevant
521 actors;
- 522 ● Organisations and groups to implement capacity building seminars and awareness
523 campaigns on norm criticism;
- 524 ● Council of Europe to strengthen its work on Human Rights Education by adopting a
525 norm critical and intersectional approach to be further LGBTQI inclusive;
- 526 ● National and local education authorities to provide Human Rights Education at schools
527 which will be inclusive of LGBTQI issues using a norm critical approach;

- 528 • National and local education authorities to provide comprehensive and norm critical
529 sexuality education in schools;
- 530 • National and local education authorities to ensure that the school curriculum includes
531 norm criticism and LGBTQI perspectives;
- 532 • Member organisations to examine their own hierarchies and representational structures
533 by adopting a norm critical analysis;
- 534 • Organisations to examine and change the services that they provide in order for them
535 to be inclusive, all accessible, non-discriminatory and non-normative;
- 536 • Management of organisations to implement whistle blowing procedures to immediately
537 identify and address instances of discrimination and exclusion of young people with
538 intersectional identities/lives which they might suffer within the member organisations;
- 539 • Organisations and groups to use IGLYO’s Toolkits on Norm Criticism and
540 Intersectionality to guide this work.

541 *Research*

- 542
- 543 • Organisations to conduct research (quantitative & qualitative) mapping and
544 documenting the situation around LGBTQI youth in their countries, which can be
545 provided to policy makers for lobbying and advocacy purposes and can inform
546 programming to increase its effectiveness;
- 547 • European Commission to encourage and support research and development of
548 comprehensive norm critical tools in all areas concerning human rights adapted to
549 youth issues.

7. Glossary²⁰

Bodily diversity: see intersex

Classism: refers to the practices and institutions that legitimise and privilege persons with material and educational means. This is also connected to practices and expressions connected to class stereotypes.

Cisgender: a term referring to persons whose gender identity and gender expression match the sex they were assigned at birth and the social expectations related to their gender.

Cisnormativity: refers to the practices and institutions that legitimise and privilege those who are comfortable in the gender belonging to the sex assigned to them at birth. On the other hand, this norm systematically disadvantages and marginalises all persons whose gender identity and expression do not meet social expectations.

Gender: refers to people’s internal perception and experience of maleness and

²⁰ Mainly compiled from the ILGA Europe “Glossary”, available on <http://old.ilga-europe.org/home/publications/glossary> accessed at 31 July 2015.

femaleness, and the social construction that allocates certain behaviours into male and female roles which vary across history, societies, cultures and classes. Gender is hence strongly linked to society's expectations and is not exclusively a biological matter.

Gender expression: refers to people's manifestation of their gender identity, and the one that is perceived by others. Typically, people seek to make their gender expression or presentation match their gender identity/identities, irrespective of the sex that they were assigned at birth.

Gender identity: refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modifications of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerism (Yogyakarta Principles).

Heteronormativity: refers to cultural and social practices where men and women are 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: the belief, stated or implied, that heterosexuality is superior (religiously, morally, socially, emotionally, behaviourally, and/or in some other way) to other sexualities; the presumption that all people are heterosexual (may be conscious or unconscious); the belief that all people should be heterosexual. As an institutionalised system of oppression, heterosexism negatively affects LGBTI people as well as some heterosexual individuals who do not subscribe to traditional standards of masculinity and femininity.

Intersex: Intersex people are born with physical, hormonal or genetic features that are neither wholly female nor wholly male; or a combination of female and male; or neither female nor male. Many forms of intersex exist; it is a spectrum or umbrella term, rather than a single category.

LGBTI: Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people.

Racial/ethnic identity: Ethnic identity is a member of a particular cultural, national, or racial group that may share some of the following elements: culture, religion, race, language, or place of origin. Two people can share the same race but have different ethnicities. Race is a social construction that refers to characteristics possessed by individuals and groups. The meaning of race is related to a particular social, historical, and geographic context.

Sex: refers to the biological makeup such as primary and secondary sexual characteristics, genes, and hormones. The legal sex is usually assigned at birth and has traditionally been understood as consisting of two mutually exclusive groups, namely men and women.

Sex characteristics: see intersex

Sexism: the belief or attitude that one sex is inherently superior to, more competent than, or more valuable than other sex. It can also include this type of discrimination in regards to gender. Sexism primarily involves hatred of, or prejudice towards, either sex as a whole or the application of stereotypes of masculinity in relation to men identities, or of femininity in relation to women identities. Sexism has a parallel root to homo-, bi- and transphobia.

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.

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, pathologisation and non existent/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, marginalisation, social exclusion, exoticisation, ridicule and insults.

Queer: A dual term that is inclusive of people who do not conform to normative gender expressions and/or heterosexuality. Queer theory is challenging heteronormative social norms concerning gender and sexuality, and claims that gender roles are social constructions. Hase historically been used as a slur for LGBT persons.

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