

LGBTQI Inclusive Education project

Preview report and index summary

Over the course of 2016, IGLYO asked LGBTQI young people from across Europe to share their experiences of school. Regardless of the country in which they lived, many of their stories were frighteningly similar. Research also shows that the prevalence of violence in schools is between three and five times higher towards LGBTQI young people. The Council of Europe Member States, however, have made specific commitments to warrant the right to education for all students.

The LGBTQI Inclusive Education project aims to provide information about the concrete measures that all member states have taken to ensure inclusive education and to tackle discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and variations in sex characteristics. This research has been carried out by IGLYO in partnership with civil society organisations and education experts. It is intended to be a resource for governments to evaluate the current levels of inclusion within their own country, learn from good practice examples and build international commitment. One of the important elements of the project is that the information is segregated between sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and variations in sex characteristics, to ensure all learners within the LGBTQI spectrum are included.

IGLYO has developed a list of ten comparable indicators to assess the extent to which governments have implemented measures to ensure education is inclusive of all LGBTQI learners. This research will be presented in the meeting, together with recent European overviews developed by other organisations and institutions.

[Anti-discrimination law applicable to education](#)

Education should be safe and accessible for all learners. A legal framework is therefore necessary to ensure effective enjoyment of the right of education. All states should guarantee the right to education to all by explicitly tackling discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or variations in sex characteristics. **Civil society organisations report that 31 member States have developed anti-discrimination laws that are applicable to education and protect at least one of these grounds.**

[Policies and action plans](#)

National or regional policies to promote a safe and inclusive environment for all learners are crucial for outlining the necessary processes and actions that schools should follow to tackle homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and interphobia, and provide teachers and other school staff with the framework to prevent and address discrimination with confidence and support. **Civil society organisations report that 21 member States have developed national or**

regional action plans to prevent and address discrimination in, at least, one of the mentioned grounds.

[Inclusive national curricula](#)

General invisibility and lack of positive representations of LGBTQI people in schools have negative consequences for all students. The affirming inclusion of LGBTQI identities and realities across curricula and learning materials ensures that teachers have many opportunities to discuss diversity. Ensuring that curricula and learning materials convey positive messages and avoid negative representations or stereotypes of LGBTQI people in specific subjects is also necessary. **While there is evidence in 26 countries of voluntary or random inclusion of LGBTQI issues, they have only been embedded throughout the full curriculum or, at least, been mandatory for all students in 17 member States. As a result, countries have been scored only on mandatory curricula.**

[Teacher training on LGBTQI awareness](#)

Teachers play a vital role in creating a safe atmosphere for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or variations in sex characteristics. Many teachers, however, still report that they lack the confidence and knowledge to discuss LGBTQI issues or support learners who are LGBTQI. A national or regional training programme for teachers and other school staff on LGBTQI awareness and inclusion is essential to translate policies into reality. **Although civil society organisations report that more than 20 countries have provided some sort of training, only 4 member States have enabled mandatory teacher training.**

[Gender recognition](#)

In order to meet the needs of trans, non-binary, gender variant and intersex students, all learners should have the right to have their own name and gender marker recognised. That decision should be supported by the whole school with all documents and certificates using the chosen name and gender and the learner being able to use the gendered spaces of their choice. **Legal gender recognition with self-determination for LGBTQI young people under 16 has only been reported in 4 member States.**

[National or regional data collection on bullying and harassment](#)

Monitoring the nature, prevalence and impact of violence at school is necessary to plan effective interventions to tackle homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and interphobic bullying. Bullying based on learners' (perceived or actual) sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or variations in sex characteristics must be recorded as such to build up an accurate record of the issue within each school. **Although several countries have evidence of data collection, civil society organisations report that only 6 member States are either systematically collecting data directly through governments, a funded institution, or NGOs that received government funding to work on inclusive education.**

[Support systems for young people](#)

Teachers and school staff are responsible for the health and wellbeing of all learners. At times, LGBTQI students may require additional support and guidance, so school staff should be trained and ready to deal with any requests. Links to relevant LGBTQI youth services and groups should also be established for signposting and referrals. Furthermore, specific support for everyone affected by homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and interphobic violence should be provided. **Civil society organisations report that 18 member States provide have enabled services or have funded projects that provide support.**

Information and guidelines

Learners should have access to information and guidance regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and variations in sex characteristics. Information should be provided in different formats, and posters and leaflets should be on display in both public and more private areas of the school and relevant websites should be accessible from all school computers. **This is also helpful for creating an environment that encourages greater understanding and respect from all learners. Civil society organisations report that 21 member States directly provide guidance or fund projects that create such information.**

Partnership between governments and civil society

Partnerships between the education sector, civil society organisations and other relevant service providers and organisations ensures that schools have access to the most up to date information and guidance on LGBTQI inclusion. LGBTQI organisations can often provide expertise on school policy, staff training, curriculum development and supporting learners. **According to local NGOs, 23 member States have partnered with civil society organisations to develop strategies and/or build up project in the field of education.**

International commitment

Homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and interphobic bullying remains a global issue and requires attention beyond local and national levels if it is to be eradicated. International commitment to the issue from Member States shows political leadership to other countries and highlights the importance of cooperation. Membership of the **European Governmental LGBTI Focal Points Network (29 Council of Europe member States)** and the signing of the **UNESCO Call for Action by Ministers on inclusive and equitable education for all learners in an environment free from discrimination and violence (signed by 28 Council of Europe member States)**, both highlight such commitment on LGBTQI inclusive education.