

May 17 = International Day
against Homophobia
and Transphobia (I.DA.HO)



Teach the 'IDAHO Lesson'



Make your school safer and improve
learning achievement for all!

Schools can be violent places.

Although there are many examples of schools which have over the past few years consistently been working to create conducive and safe learning environments, research from many countries still reveals the general high levels of abuse, harassment and verbal or physical violence experienced by young people in schools.

The stigma, discrimination and bullying they suffer go against their right to education

Studies have widely documented that bullying in school has a huge impact on learning achievement and dropout rates. It is a major obstacle to the right to education. The psychological damages, including low self-esteem, bear permanent marks on people's lives and can lead to self-harming conducts, including suicide.

Research in the USA has shown that students who are bullied at school are more than twice as likely to report a suicide attempt than students who are not bullied.

And these unsafe environments are bad for all students

Beyond the terrible impact bullying has on the children and students who are perceived as different, it creates generally unsafe, discriminatory, stigmatizing and violent school climates. These climates have proven to have very negative effects on the learning outcomes of ALL students, not only the bullied ones.

It is therefore in the interest of all to reverse the situation and allow education systems to construct societies, which are inclusive of diversity and respectful of the individual.

Kids who are different from the majority gender norm suffer most from violence in schools.

Violence in schools reflects wider social problems such as racism, discrimination of people with physical and mental disability, etc....

However, according to the *United Nations World Report on Violence against Children* (2006), most bullying is actually sexual or gender-based and targets those perceived as not conforming to prevailing sexual and gender norms.

Young girls who are not 'feminine' enough and young boys who are not 'masculine' enough are specifically exposed to mockery, abuse, exclusion and violence.

It goes not only against the individuals, but it undermines gender equality objectives altogether.

As this violence is bred by stereotyped gender roles (conforming to what is said to be 'masculine' or 'feminine'), to let it happen unchallenged threatens the whole construction of a more gender equal society.

Homo/transphobia is an entry point to tackle sex/gender-based violence

Homophobia and transphobia are forms of the hatred expressed towards people because they are, or are believed to be, homosexual or transgender.

Homophobia and Transphobia are forms of gender-based violence because they are based on the assumption that all people should conform to the majority representation of what are 'masculine' or 'feminine' behaviors.

This form of violence does not affect only children and students with different sexual orientation or gender expression. Surveys have shown that 80% of people who were exposed to homo/transphobic bullying define themselves as heterosexual.

In December 2011, UNESCO, other UN agencies, representatives of education ministries, NGOs, and other stakeholders issued a "call upon all governments to live up to their responsibility to provide universal access to a high quality education by eliminating the barriers created by homophobia and transphobia, including the unacceptable and devastating prevalence of anti-LGBTI bias and violence in elementary, secondary and tertiary levels."

For teachers, fighting sex/gender-based violence is therefore an essential strategy to improve learning achievements for all and should be taken very seriously.

Teachers worldwide are taking action

Teachers know they about the importance of a sustainable safe and inspiring learning environment. They act everyday to provide it to their students and have often developed innovative approaches to tackling sexuality-related bullying in general, and homophobia/transphobia in particular, in the classes. Nevertheless, teachers also often experience unease in raising this specific issue. This is why this present initiative has been developed. It focuses on making use of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia as a good opportunity for action and to provide teachers with ideas, inspiration and material for action.

The fact that the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia is recognized by many governments and international institutions, and is marked by UNESCO, provides a good argument for teachers to take action.

The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia was created in 2005 to highlight the situation which sexual and gender minorities face around the world. It is not linked to any specific organization nor policy agenda. The date of May 17th was chosen as it commemorates the decision by the World Health Organization in 1990 to take homosexuality out of the list of mental disorders.

The Day provides an annual focus for action for thousands of Human Rights defense activists in more than 90 countries. But the Day is also celebrated by international agencies like the European Union or UN agencies like UNESCO or UNAIDS, national governments or parliaments, local authorities like city councils, trade unions, and many more.

The Day has been officially recognized by several international agencies, like the European Parliament, and by countries as diverse as Brazil, Croatia, Mexico or Spain.

An international initiative around the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia : the Global 'IDATTO Lesson'

The 'IDATTO Lesson' is an international initiative by where teachers and educational staff in all contexts are invited to use the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, to organize some specific activity in their class on this subject.

While it is important to fight bullying, the initiative also suggests that homo/transphobia bullying is encouraged, if not altogether motivated, by homo/transphobic educational contents. The initiative therefore also encourages a critical examination of the curriculum.

The annexes below provide many resources for teachers, according to grades and subjects and indicate organizations, which they can turn to for advice and support.

The 'IDATTO Lesson' creates an opportunity to tackle the issue of sex/ gender based violence using the specific angle of homo/transphobia. Take Action !



Did you know that... ?

- ▲ An estimated 6 million LGBT students are dropping out of school because of harassment by peers and by staff¹.
- ▲ In the UK, 90% of secondary schoolteachers said that pupils in their schools are bullied, harassed or called names for being, or for being perceived to be, homosexual². 65% of young LGB persons state that they have experienced bullying in British schools because of their sexual orientation, including physical abuse for 41% and death threats for 17%³.
- ▲ In Serbia, 13% of surveyed students admitted physical attack on fellow students they perceived as 'gay'⁴.
- ▲ In the USA, 86% of LGB students report verbal harassment⁵.
- ▲ In the 28 random shootings in U.S. schools between 1982 and 2001, nearly all the boys who committed the violence had stories of being constantly bullied, teased and gay-baited — not because they were gay, but because they were different from the other boys: shy, artistic, theatrical, musical, non-athletic or— geekish⁶.
- ▲ Students in the USA who are bullied at school are more than twice as likely to report a suicide attempt than students who are not bullied⁷.
- ▲ In Sweden, only 2% of teachers receive training in handling homophobia⁸.
- ▲ In 22 out of the 47 Council of Europe member countries, education materials present incorrect information, not reflecting the fact that the World Health Organisation does not consider homosexuality a mental issue⁹.
- ▲ For every lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender student who reported being harassed, four straight students said they were harassed for being perceived to be gay or lesbian¹⁰. In the Canadian province of Quebec, 10% of straight secondary school students report being themselves also victim of homophobic bullying¹¹.
- ▲ Only 53% of Canadians believe public schools are making students feel welcome and included, regardless of their sexual orientation¹².
- ▲ In Ireland¹³, research amongst LGBT pupils found that :
 - 58% experienced bullying;
 - 40% were verbally threatened by fellow students;
 - 25% were physically threatened by their peers;
 - 34% heard homophobic comments by teachers and other adult professionals.
- ▲ A 2006 French study¹⁴ revealed that 8% of respondents reported dropping out of school as a consequence of homophobic bullying.
- ▲ In Canada, almost two thirds (64%) of LGBTQ students and 61% of students with LGBTQ parents reported that they feel unsafe at school¹⁵.

1. GALE – Global Alliance for LGBT Education

2. Stonewall UK, "Homophobic Bullying in Britain's Schools – The Teachers' Report", 2009.

3. R. Hunt, J. Jensen (2007) *The Experiences of Young Gay People in Britain's Schools*. The School Report. Stonewall.

4. CARE International and International Center for Research on Women, *Young Men Initiative for Prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Western Balkans*, "Baseline Research Technical Brief – Country Report. Serbia", 2009, p. 8.

5. www.GLSEN.org

6. Michael S. Kimmel & Matthew Mahler, *Adolescent Masculinity, Homophobia and Violence: Random School Shootings, 1982-2001*

7. Massachusetts Department of Education, *2005 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey January 2007* (p. 42). Available at: www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/hprograms/yrbs/05.

8. *Läraryrbundet and Lärarnas Riksförbund (LR)*, 2006

9. Council of Europe : *Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe*, 2011, page 112

10. Beth Reis & Elizabeth Saewyc, *Safe Schools Coalition of Washington, 83,000 Youth: Selected Findings of Eight Population Based Studies, 1999* (p.7) Available at: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/83000youth.pdf>

11. « L'impact de l'homophobie et de la violence homophobe sur la persévérance et la réussite scolaires ». Chercheur principal - Line Chamberland, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2010

12. 2006, national poll, commissioned every two years to track the public's perception of national issues in education by the CTF-FCE

13. Mayock, Paula, et al (2009) *Supporting LGBT Lives: A Study of the Mental Health and Well-Being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People*. Dublin: BeLonG To Youth Service and GLEN

14. *SOS homophobie*

15. *Every Class in Every School*. Egale Canada. 2011

Voices

"Homophobic bullying is a moral outrage, a grave violation of human rights and a public health crisis".

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a message delivered on December 8, 2011

"We have an obligation to ensure that our schools are safe for all of our kids (...). As a nation we are built on the belief that all of us are equal and that each of us deserves the freedom to pursue our own version of happiness, to make the most of our talents, to speak our minds, to not fit it. Most of all, to be true to ourselves."

US President Obama, in a contribution to the US 'It gets better' campaign

"In schools across Europe young persons are being harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Homophobic and transphobic bullying is an every day reality in the lives of many. It is time to react - especially in view of several national studies and reports warning that there have been a number of suicides among young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons feeling rejected by their peers and families."

Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg in a special address

Free resources for teachers to take action

INFORMATION AND POLICY GUIDELINES ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION/GENDER IDENTITY AND EDUCATION:

- ▲ **Discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence** against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. **Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2011**
- ▲ **Report of International Workshop on Homophobic Bullying.** **UNESCO, 2012**
- ▲ **Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation** and gender identity in Europe. **Council of Europe, 2011**
- ▲ **Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe** to Member States on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. **Council of Europe, 2010**
- ▲ **Social Exclusion of Young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Europe.** **IGLYO-ILGA, 2006**

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA AND THE 'IDAHO LESSON'

- ▲ **IDAHO Committee** : www.dayagainsthomophobia.org
- ▲ The Day's Facebook page

TOOLKITS FOR TEACHERS

- ▲ **International Guidelines on sexuality Education.** **UNESCO**
Offers guidelines for teachers to approach Sexuality Education in its diverse components
- ▲ **Guidelines for an LGBTQ-inclusive education.** **IGLYO**
IGLYO and OBESSU gathered 30 school student and LGBTQ activists to reflect over access to education and developed these guidelines.
- ▲ **Gay and Lesbian Alliance for Education (GALE)** has developed a toolkit to work with schools and networks teachers and experts to develop reflections on the issue.
- ▲ Organizations from Belgium, Estonia, Italy and the Netherlands have developed *the Voice Out game* for students about Human Rights and sexual diversity.
- ▲ **"It takes all kinds"** is an initiative of the Danish Institute for Human Rights together with nine partners around Europe. It offers a toolkit for elementary and secondary schools as well as a web based pedagogical approach for young people age 10-17.
- ▲ A joint initiative from 5 European countries (the Triangle project) developed a toolkit for both teachers and young people : *"Different in More Ways Than One: Providing Guidance for Teenagers on Their Way to Identity, Sexuality and Respect"*.
- ▲ **Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)** has developed **many initiatives and campaigns** in the USA to tackle homophobia in schools and offers a large set of tools to work in US schools at all levels, including primary. Specific material includes a teachers' guide on how to develop the **ThinkB4YouSpeak campaign**, and the No Name Calling Week, which address homophobic name calling. The organization has also recently released the elementary school toolkit **"Ready Set, Respect!"**.

- ▲ The Irish Youth organization BeLonG To has worked with the Irish Department of Children & Youth Affairs to produce '[Addressing Homophobia: Guidelines for the Youth Sector](#)' It runs the annual Stand Up! LGBT Awareness Week in Schools and produced a 4.5' video "[Stand Up! Don't Stand for Homophobic Bullying](#)" recognized as good practice by the United Nations.
- ▲ The '[Schools OUT](#)' Classroom initiative provides teachers in the UK with education tools and resources for every area and age group to combat homophobia.
- ▲ Through its [Education for All campaign](#) Stonewall helps primary and secondary schools prevent and tackle homophobic bullying. [Resources](#) include training DVDs for primary and secondary school teachers, research reports, practical education guides and other material.
- ▲ Still in the UK, [the Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) references tools for teachers from its members.
- ▲ The [US Human Rights Campaign](#) offers an inclusive approach to addressing family diversity, gender stereotyping and name calling in the USA K-5 learning environments.
- ▲ [The Safe Schools Coalition](#) is a public-private partnership in support of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth, that has produced a large range of resources to help schools, mainly in the USA but also beyond, to make schools a safe place for all.
- ▲ [The American Psychological Association](#) has developed a primer for Principals, Educators, and School Personnel on a scientific approach against conversion 'therapies'.
- ▲ [The Australian Pride & Prejudice Package](#) consists of a teacher manual and a video to show in classes. The package outlines six sessions and can be tailored to suit the needs of the particular class. Still in Australia, [the Safe Schools Coalition Victoria](#) has developed tools to [address sexual and gender diversity in the school](#).
- ▲ An alliance of Brazilian institutions has produced an animation short film ([part 1](#); [part 2](#)) which contains no dialogues and is relevant for various contexts.
- ▲ The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement have created the [Faith and Sexuality Project](#) for use in secondary school Religious Education in the United Kingdom. The project's focus is the three monotheistic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
- ▲ The Scottish anti-bullying service "[Respectme](#)", features advice and information for teachers on their website.
- ▲ The department of Education of the University of Victoria, Australia, has produced a [guide](#) of pedagogical references [for teachers for various parts](#) of the curriculum.
- ▲ [The Rainbownetwork](#) and Gay and Lesbian health Victoria have also listed a range of [references and resources for teachers](#).
- ▲ The Alberta (Canada) Teachers' Association has developed the [Safe and Caring Schools Project](#), which includes a guide on addressing LGBT bullying.
- ▲ [Organization Egale Canada's Safer Schools and Inclusive Education website](#) includes classroom resources and a primer for educators from Ontario.
- ▲ [The schools for all wiki resource center](#) lists dozens of policy and pedagogical documents related to fighting homophobia and transphobia, mainly in the USA and Canada.
- ▲ Resources in French and Spanish can be accessed in the corresponding language versions of this brief at www.dayagainsthomophobia.org



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IDAHO COMMITTEE

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