CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA TOGETHER

A Guide to Developing Strategic Partnerships in Education

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I am very happy to introduce this toolkit on good practice to challenge homophobia in education. Schools are places to learn and grow, to laugh and flourish; to form friendships and life-long lasting memories. Sadly, however, for millions of children schools are synonymous with fear and humiliation. This is particularly true for all those young people throughout Europe who are discovering that they are homosexual or bisexual, or that they are not comfortable with their gender.

A Europe where homosexual and transgender kids are bullied in schools, and where a young LGBT person is 13 times more likely to commit suicide than a straight pupil is not the Europe we want to live in.

The respect for human rights is a fundamental value for the EU, alongside democracy and the rule of law. The Charter of Fundamental Rights, which is now legally binding, prohibits any discrimination based on sexual orientation. Back in 2000, the EU adopted legislation to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment. I am very proud to say that this has raised the level of protection for LGBT people in most EU countries, old and new Member States alike. A homosexual person who is discriminated against in the workplace can now seek redress.

But simply focusing on the workplace is not enough. The European Commission has proposed a new law to EU Member States which would extend protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation beyond the work place. It would ban discrimination in areas such as education. The discussions on this law are ongoing.

As important as legislation is, alone it will not suffice to eradicate discrimination, and make equality a reality. To protect LGBT people from discrimination, we also need to challenge stereotypes and change attitudes. This is why, since 2003, the European Commission has been funding the information campaign 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination' throughout the EU. Another indispensable ingredient for progress is a vibrant civil society, who can fight for their rights. For more than a decade now, the European Commission has been supporting work by NGOs that promotes equal rights for LGBT people in Europe.

This tool kit is an excellent example of such EU support, and how useful it can be. Two very active NGOs, LGBT Youth Scotland and Legebitra (Slovenia), have joined up forces to put together this guide, which identifies good practice to challenge homophobia in education. Their 7 months of research with governments and LGBT NGOs across a large number of EU Member States has been funded by the EU Fundamental Rights and Citizenship programme.

I am certain that national government education departments, national equality bodies and LGBT NGOs will find the practical information and examples of best practice on combating homophobia and homophobia bullying in schools contained in this guide a most useful source of inspiration.

Belinda Pyke
Director for Equality
Directorate General for Justice
European Commission

CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA TOGETHER
BACKGROUND

01.

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increase the confidence of EU member states to develop strategies to combat homophobia within education settings.

The project was undertaken by LGBT Youth Scotland, who has experience of working in education, in partnership with Legebitra, an LGBT organisation in Slovenia.

The project had four main components:

▶ **Research** - a literature review of current material as well as new research with LGBT NGOs and member states' education departments/ministries.

▶ **Education pilot in Slovenia** - using strategies developed in Scotland, Legebitra piloted work in Slovenia, with the main objective of engaging the education ministry.

▶ **Resource development** - the research findings were used to develop this guide, which is designed to inform the strategies of both NGOs and governments.

▶ **Youth involvement** - utilising the UNCRC as a framework, a group of young people explored their rights within education and their experiences in schools.

Scotland's Story

In 1988, the UK Government introduced a bill to prevent local authorities (including state-maintained schools) from promoting "the teaching of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship". This amendment to existing legislation was eventually adopted after much debate and controversy.

The bill was finally revoked in Scotland in 2000, despite a high profile privately-funded postal campaign to retain the legislation. The legacy of the legislation and subsequent campaign was to leave teachers unsure about what they could say and do in relation to homophobia in schools.

LGBT Youth Scotland works to end the silence in schools around homophobia and homophobic bullying. Milestones on the way to achieving this have included:

▶ **2004** – a working group is set up by the then Scottish Executive to look at LGBT issues in education, in response to lobbying from LGBT organisations.

▶ **2005** – LGBT Youth Scotland is commissioned to conduct research with young people and teachers in schools to better understand the issues.

▶ **2007** – *Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools, Toolkit for Teachers*[1] is sent to every secondary school in Scotland.

To achieve these milestones, LGBT Youth Scotland carried out research with both school pupils and teachers to gain a broader understanding of the issues. Although literature on the subject was available at the time, no Scotland-wide research had been undertaken, which was crucial to inform further projects to prevent homophobia. This led to a series of recommendations and a follow-up project, delivered in partnership with Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), the principle curriculum

body for Scotland. This resulted in the development of a teacher's toolkit, which was piloted with 6 schools before being rolled out to all Scottish secondary schools.

The toolkit provides:

▶ explicit guidance for schools about the relevance of anti-homophobia work within the Scottish curriculum

▶ a series of lesson plans for sessions with young people,

▶ practical tools and language to manage incidents of homophobia, and

▶ guidance to support schools adopting more inclusive ethos

In parallel, LGBT Youth Scotland has been delivering youth work sessions in some Scottish schools since 2001 – after the legislation changed – which have now built on the toolkit research. These sessions use informal education techniques to offer information to young people and address attitudes towards diverse communities.

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> **European Commission**

1   www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/LGBT%20low%20res%20 7%2701%2709_tcm4-512286.pdf

Slovenia's Story

In 2008, Legebitra carried out an online survey on the everyday life of LGBT young people in Slovenia, which covered the experience of LGBT students in secondary schools. The results revealed that:

▶ Almost 98% of students had heard nothing, or very little, about homosexuality in schools.

▶ More than one-tenth of LGBT students had been faced with regular violence because of their sexual orientation.

▶ More than 35% of the students were faced with violence at least once in school because of their sexual orientation.

▶ Homophobia and homophobic bullying was not just coming from peers.

The survey also highlighted the silence of officials and the teachers/school leaders' lack of response to homophobic speech and actions.

Legebitra and LGBT Youth Scotland began working together in 2008 for a joint international seminar: *"Schools for all!"*. The seminar, held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, brought together 39 young LGBT people and focused on homophobia and discrimination based on sexual orientation in the school environment. One of the outcomes of the seminar was a clear need for future joint work in education between the two organisations, and especially for the transfer of good practice examples from one country to another.

The existence of homophobia within education is a sensitive issue in Slovenia, as it is in many member states. Many education departments, schools, parents and pupils find LGBT topics and issues difficult to imagine within the curriculum. For a number of years,

Legebitra struggled to achieve much from its contacts with the ministry. This has hindered any formal requests for support or partnership.

Based on its knowledge, Legebitra built a case that addressed the reservations of education officials, departments, schools and individuals before approaching the ministry. This was based on existing European and Slovenian data identifying homophobic incidents in schools as well as utilising contacts in the ministry that had been established during previous projects.

Although telephone and email communications were good, setting up face-to-face meetings with officials was problematic until Legebitra eventually identified the key barrier in setting up face-to-face meetings: the ministry of education did not have a designated contact for this area of work. This was resolved by nominating a relevant contact.

One of Legebitra's key objectives during the project was to develop its cooperation with the Ministry of Education in Slovenia. Although Legebitra has yet to formulate specific action with the ministry around research, teacher training or youth work in schools, Legebitra was able to achieve a closer working relationship with government, benefitting from the mentoring from LGBT Youth Scotland and learning from its experience of building alliances and cooperation with government departments.

This project is the culmination of a 3 year long partnership between Scotland and Slovenia.

KEY FACTS

Research Participants
18 Member States took part in the research, with 11 Government bodies / departments and over 19 NGOs from 15 Member States.

Research Timescale
The research was conducted over a period of 6 months, from May – October 2010.

Findings
Barriers to implementing anti-homophobic bullying programmes were: misinformation about programmes; a lack of resources; thinking that it would only benefit a few students; and a general lack of support within schools.

Important Terms	
LGBT	Refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.
LGBTQ	Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer. An umbrella term commonly used in EU countries.
Hetronormativity	Describes an environment where it is taken for granted that societies, systems, institutes and processes are constructed with the assumption that the people in them are heterosexual.
Homophobia	The dislike, fear or hatred of lesbian and gay people. It is often used to describe prejudice towards bisexual and transgender people too, but the terms Biphobia (the dislike, fear or hatred of bisexual people) and Transphobia (the dislike, fear or hatred of transgender people) are becoming more commonly used.

THE IMPACT OF
HOMOPHOBIA

02.

Homophobia and homophobic bullying are common place within schools all across Europe. Both LGBT young people and heterosexual young people experience homophobia and homophobic bullying which negatively impacts their development.

02 The Impact of Homophobia

Homophobia and homophobic bullying are common place within schools all across Europe. Both LGBT young people and heterosexual young people experience homophobia and homophobic bullying which negatively impacts their development.

LGBT Youth Scotland identified different layers of discrimination that build upon one another to cause LGBT young people to be invisible and therefore unable to access their rights within education.

The following model demonstrates how this discrimination takes place across the various layers, compounding the effect.

Peer Group Discrimination
This happens in schools when homophobia and homophobic bullying are generally accepted by peer groups.

Usually no relevant information is available to support peer groups to change their opinions.

Community Discrimination
This occurs when individual schools avoid tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying directly.

Usually anti-bullying policies that cover LGBT people are not in place, teachers lack confidence to address bullying and hetronormative events, such as prom nights, take place.

Institutional Discrimination
This happens in Member States when education structures and policies are homophobic in their design and marginalise identities that do not fit into the societal norm.

In education, homophobia can occur when government policies, processes and the curriculum do not acknowledge the existence of LGBT young people, thus making them invisible in the education community.

No Evidence = No Change
These three layers of discrimination jointly serve to make young LGBT people invisible. As such there is no evidence of discrimination and therefore no agent for change. *And therefore no change.*

Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying

Homophobia can manifest itself in many ways, both direct and indirect:

▸ **Direct homophobia** is often seen in schools through bullying actions such as name calling, physical violence and using threatening homophobic language.

▸ **Indirect homophobia** can be seen in schools when 'jokey' homophobic language is used frequently and not challenged; when the curriculum does not acknowledge the diversity of students or their families; and when social events attached to education are assumed to be heterosexual. Indirect homophobia is harder to identify and challenge as it is often embedded in culture, communities and structures such as schools.

The negative effects of homophobia can be experienced by both LGBT and non-LGBT people:

▸ Young people can be perceived to be LGBT and experience related bullying.

▸ Young people may have LGBT family members and experience negative effects of homophobia going unchallenged within the environment.

▸ Young people who are friends with LGBT peers may find it difficult to maintain these friendships and be open about them.

This guide mostly addresses sexual orientation and homophobia, however it also at times discusses the closely related issues of gender identity, transgender young people and transphobia. Throughout the document, homophobia refers to discrimination towards LGBT people.

> *It's an issue that is invisible... The assumption of heterosexuality is still there… they would have to confront the way they think and the way they act, which would be a change.*
>
> **NGO, Belguim**

Evidence

National equality bodies and NGOs state that homophobia is a problem in education across all the 27 EU member states[1]. The main reasons given to explain homophobia include:

- ▶ cultural and social context of the individual country,

- ▶ hidden identities of LGBT communities, and

- ▶ lack of leadership shown by public figures.

In studies of young people and retrospective interviews with adults, LGBT individuals across the EU mention experiences of discrimination in school as a regular occurrence[2].

During the LGBT Youth Scotland research, all the NGOs interviewed stated that homophobia was a daily experience for LGBT young people and their peers. The majority of these NGOs felt that government guidance would progress these issues faster, whilst few of the governments interviewed were able to identify LGBT equality within schools as a key priority.

There is evidence of the negative impact that homophobic bullying is having in each member state.

Impact

- ▶ All young people have the right to experience a positive education.

- ▶ Every school's purpose is to provide the best education possible.

- ▶ All education ministries in Europe aim to ensure their citizens have access to quality education that will prepare them to contribute to their society in a positive, productive and sustainable way.

To achieve this, young people must regularly attend, engage with, and trust that their education system provides the right environment to achieve their potential, that is:

- ▶ a suitable learning environment, and

- ▶ a safe environment, free from discrimination and bullying, in which pupils can learn and explore.

Research has shown that homophobia and homophobic bullying can directly undermine LGBT young people's education, making them:

- ▶ Feel worthless, isolated and excluded on a daily basis.

- ▶ Feel scared, leading to increased truanting or early school leaving age.

- ▶ Withdraw from peers, family and school staff due to a fear of being 'outed'.

- ▶ Feel distressed and anxious, interfering with their ability to engage and learn.

- ▶ Perform poorly in exams due to distress and anxiety and leave school without qualifications.

- ▶ Experience risk taking behaviour, including self

harm, suicide attempts and eating disorders, in order to control or manage the feelings of fear, shame and depression they are experiencing.

- ▶ Feel unable to 'come out' and seek the support they need.

> *It is still not so easy because some schools say they do not have the time. It is up to the teachers who are interested.*
>
> **Government, Germany**

Benefits of anti-homophobia and anti-homophobic bullying work

Anti-homophobia and anti-homophobic bullying work in schools, which complements other anti-bullying and anti-discrimination work, supports all young people to learn, achieve and develop without fear or worry. Schools which implement this work will see direct benefits to the outcomes for pupils.

Impact: when homophobia is left unchallenged	Benefit: when homophobia is addressed
Homophobic bullying has proven links with low attainment, truancy and early school leaving.	LGBT pupils who feel happy and safe in school are more likely to stay in education, learn successfully and reach their full potential.
Homophobic bullying can damage the confidence and self-esteem of LGBT pupils, those perceived to be LGBT and those with LGBT families.	Schools which are inclusive and challenge discrimination support pupils to develop into healthy, confident individuals with positive values and attitudes.

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1   Homophobia and Discrimination Part II. 2009: 68.

2   O'Loan et al. 2006: 103; Takás 2006: 6.

School Issues

Homophobic school environments not only affect students, but can also impact the experiences of teachers and school staff. During the research, LGBT Youth Scotland interviewed professionals who work closely with teachers in secondary schools and found that, when discussing issues related to homophobia or anti-homophobic work, teachers and school staff were concerned about:

▶ Dismissal as a consequence of being an out LGBT teacher or being perceived to be an LGBT teacher.

▶ Facing negative repercussions (from students, staff and parents) if challenging homophobia or homophobic bullying.

▶ Feelings of inadequacy and lack of ability to support and manage instances of homophobia and homophobic bullying.

Barriers in the Classroom

In most schools teachers have discretion on how to address sexual orientation and often shape lessons around their own comfort levels. In many schools, teachers and school staff allow homophobia to continue unchallenged and disallow or shut down discussions around LGBT identities.

"It is still not so easy because some schools say they do not have the time. It is up to the teachers who are interested." **Government, Germany**

Studies have shown that teachers are often unaware of incidents of homophobic bullying occurring, and lack sensitivity when addressing these incidents. Many teachers across all member states report feeling unprepared and unable to challenge homophobia. No member state interviewed by LGBT Youth Scotland stated that teachers currently cover LGBT issues in their initial teacher training, and continuing professional development in LGBT issues is sparse and on an opt-in basis.

For the benefit of all young people, teachers need to be trained to manage and challenge homophobia and homophobic bullying in the classroom and school environment.

"People don't know what to do with a homophobic remark even though [they] can handle racist [remarks]." **NGO, Germany**

Policies

Whilst anti-bullying policies are commonplace in schools in the member states, reference to anti-homophobic bullying is rare, either within wider anti-bullying policies or as stand-alone policies. This is most prominent in countries where homosexuality is considered a taboo or within regions where the human rights of LGBT people are regularly dismissed and ignored.

Young people often lack the confidence needed to report homophobic bullying to teachers and school staff. There is a fear that it will not be taken seriously, that it won't be acted on or that reporting the bullying could make it worse.

Where there is no school anti-homophobic bullying policy, individual incidents of homophobic bullying are not being recorded. However, in instances where procedures for reporting homophobic bullying are in place, the stigma attached to homophobic bullying can lead to under-reporting.

Policies must explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity as part of their anti-discrimination policies and state that homophobia is not acceptable, as this is a different type of bullying. Clearly including homophobia in over-arching anti-bullying policies is not about creating extra work, but making current policies as inclusive and robust as possible.

> *If you say you are pro-gay or for LGBT rights, it can be assumed that you are gay. Even if teachers have nothing against LGBT rights, it is harder to support these rights because of society.*
>
> **NGO, Spain**

Latvia

266 teachers openly opposed the plan to amend criminal law and prevent homophobic hate speak, arguing that it would persecute those against the propaganda of homosexuality.

Bulgaria

A Bulgarian NGO contacted 144 schools to invite them to take part in a discussion around homophobia in education. Of the 144 schools, 15 responded and only 7 attended the meeting.

United Kingdom

62% of 1145 lesbian and gay pupils reported that nothing happened to the bullying after telling a teacher about homophobic bullying.

Hunt, R & Jensen, The School Report, London: Stonewall, 208

The Curriculum

Not acknowledging LGBT young people within national, regional and local school curricula is a contributing factor to homophobia in education. Research has shown that LGBT identities are excluded from the core curriculum for two main reasons:

- ▶ a denial - from education institutions, education authorities and national education bodies - that LGBT pupils exist within school communities;

- ▶ a belief that including LGBT issues within the curriculum will confuse or recruit young people, reinforcing immorality.

LGBT people should be represented in the school curriculum to enable the wider population to value their contributions to society, community and families. In addition, positive role models and images reflecting LGBT identities would enable LGBT young people to identify with the curriculum and to value themselves as individuals and citizens.

Interestingly, where mention of homosexuality or same-sex relationships exists in frameworks or the curriculum, there are assumptions that schools are perfect and nothing else needs to be done.

United Kingdom

LGB pupils are 60% less likely to experience bullying and more than twice as likely to enjoy attending school where clear anti-homophobic bullying policies are in place.

Hunt, R & Jensen, The School Report, London: Stonewall, 208

> *If you ask the school board, they will say yes, they dealt with it [by placing LGBT identities in mandatory educational goals and a few lines in the biology book] so it's okay.*
>
> *If you ask the students, they will say 'it's only a few lines in biology and we never hear about it otherwise'.*
>
> **NGO, Netherlands**

Government Commitment

Government commitment was cited as one of the most powerful factors in conducting equality work within schools:

- ▶ by showing leadership and giving priority to equalities issues overall, as well as

- ▶ by including equalities in education in the frameworks and directions issued.

More specifically, governments must show consistency in their approach to equality with commitments that include:

- ▶ Public leadership to address inequalities and raise public awareness.

- ▶ Representing LGBT identities within the curriculum.

- ▶ Encouraging and promoting external experts in school programmes.

- ▶ Providing financial support to LGBT NGOs to develop school programmes.

Governments in countries where equality legislation is in place must resist becoming complacent by believing that equality has been achieved. Experience shows that legislation alone does not stop the discrimination encountered by LGBT young people in their daily lives.

> *People think that LGBT emancipation is over, that we're there. But that's not true, especially in schools.*
>
> **NGO, Netherlands**
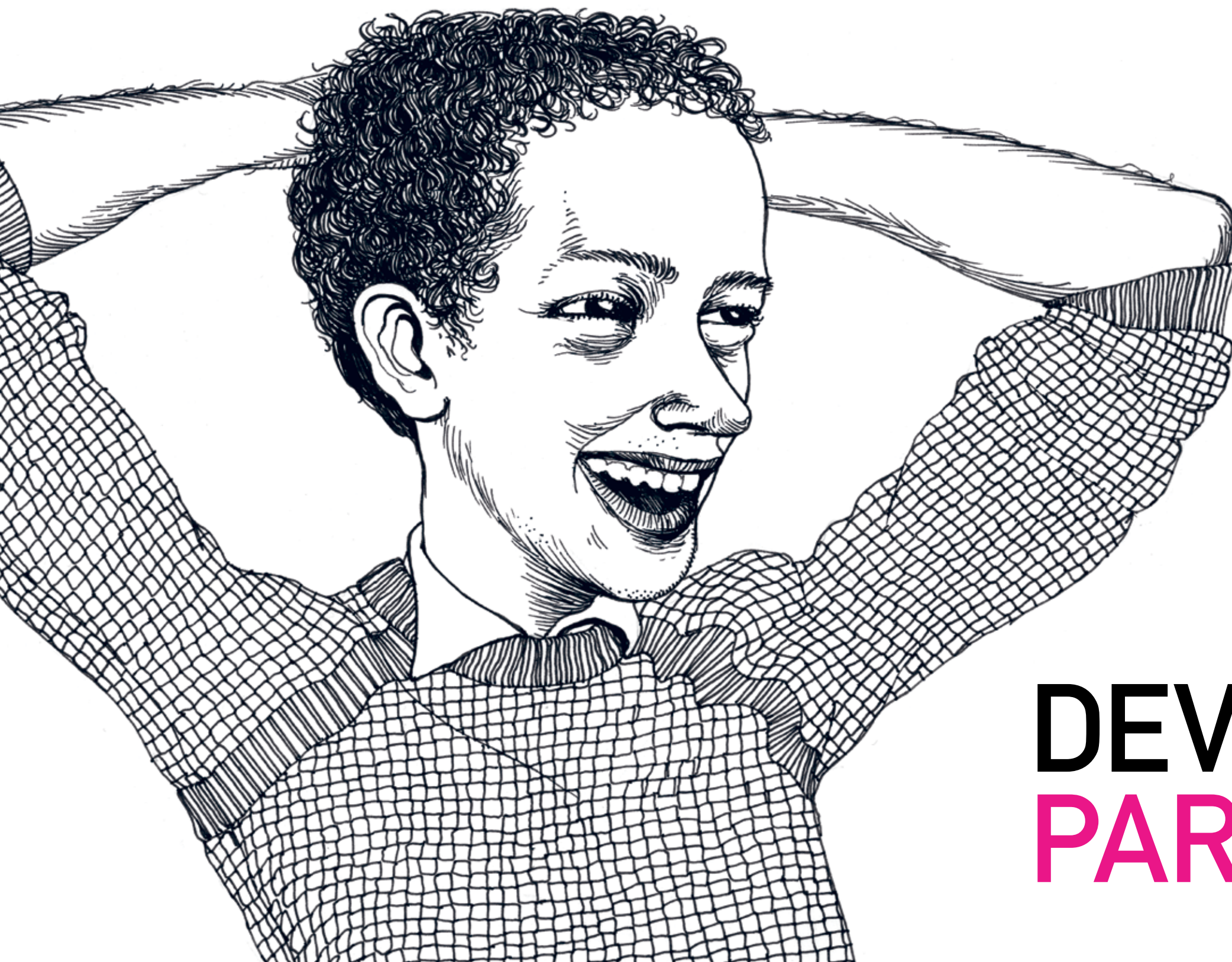
DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

03.

In recent years, partnership working has increased across the member states in recognition that closer working between organisations and governments can be key to success in the equality sector.

Research shows that active partnerships between LGBT organisations and governments achieve clear and progressive steps towards equality for LGBT young people in education.

03 Developing Partnerships

In recent years, partnership working has increased across the member states in recognition that closer working between organisations and governments can be key to success in the equality sector. The LGBT Youth Scotland research shows that active partnerships between LGBT organisations and governments achieve clear and progressive steps towards equality for LGBT young people in education. However, experiences can be mixed:

▶ In some member states, partnerships have proved beneficial and both parties felt there was progress.

▶ In the majority of member states, partnerships between NGOs and governments were far from established or unsatisfactory to at least one of the parties.

Partnerships Defined

Partnerships are an important way to bring people together to address common goals, make decisions, share ideas and experience and plan action. A successful partnership within the equality sector can make lasting changes for citizens, institutions and organisations.

Partnerships can take many different forms. They can be more or less active and organised in different ways; they can range from simply sharing information with each other to shared decision making about every aspect of a project; some partnerships may require absolute collaboration while others may have varying levels of equality among partners.

Levels of Participation

Leading action
All stakeholders within the partnership take it upon themselves to initiate new action and show leadership - requiring high levels of empowerment and confidence.

Decision making
When all groups come together to make joint decisions. They share the authority and responsibility to take action.

Consultation
This means that there is a two-way flow of dialogue. This may or may not lead to decision making, although it does mean opinions are taken into account and needs recognised.

Information sharing
The minimal level of involvement in a partnership. Often limited to keeping each other informed, ensuring a flow of information.

High Levels of Participation

Low Levels of Participation

Benefits of partnerships cited by both governments and organisations during the research included:

▶ Access to funding

▶ Shared planning

▶ Critical feedback

▶ Common goals

▶ Joint campaigns

▶ Policies and legislation based on actual experience and needs

▶ Increased influence

▶ Wider audiences and networks

▶ Cost effectiveness

Where partnerships have not yet been built, or where there are real or perceived homophobic attitudes within governments, both organisations and governments can feel considerable frustrations. Organisations may feel defensive about their work - especially if they are operating in a country that has less than inclusive policies, practice and legislation. Likewise, individuals within governments may struggle to progress LGBT equality within schools up the agenda due to institutionalised homophobia embedded within the structures.

Principles for Successful Partnerships
Developing partnerships is not always easy and takes time and commitment from both individuals and organisations as a whole. There are no checklists or rules to work through, however below are some overarching principles that apply in successful partnerships.

1. **Successful partnerships are based on an identified need:** although the need for equality within education has been addressed in various pieces of European research, evidence of the local/national needs must be presented. This will provide the partnership with a strong foundation and clear targets for change.

2. **Successful partnerships hear the voices of all stakeholders involved:** the voices in the partnership should be equal, with time and space protected so that all stakeholders can be heard.

3. **Successful partnerships operate on a professional level, with all partners accountable for their actions:** all parties must be considered in their approach, ensuring that they are approachable and trustworthy and that their individual actions and reactions are in line with the official views they represent.

4. **Successful partnerships build the capacities of each partner, regardless of their starting point:** both members should benefit from the partnership and planning should ensure that there is an equal spread of responsibility, roles and benefit.

5. **Successful partnerships experience a process of negotiation to clarify expectations and outcomes:** only through this process can both organisations and governments adapt their priorities and agree a starting point that meets both their needs.

6. **Successful partnerships have strong leadership that gathers support and resources:** this must come from the top, with government officials playing a lead role in promoting solidarity and equality.

Recommendations for success – NGOs

The research showed that the majority of organisations felt that partnerships with government departments would allow for greater progress and influence in their work with schools. It also identified four important roles for organisations in their involvement with governments:

▶ **Setting Agendas** – getting issues on governments' agendas through public awareness-raising campaigns and lobbying.

▶ **Negotiating Outcomes** – proposing initiatives that will increase impact and meet set outcomes for both the organisation and the government.

▶ **Providing Expertise and Legitimacy** – organisations' participation and endorsement can bring a sense of legitimacy and credibility to processes and any resulting agreements and initiatives. This can be instrumental in ensuring widespread public support.

▶ **Implementing Solutions** – organisations are often best placed to deliver the outcomes of the partnership agreement.

These roles cannot be achieved without:

▶ Common priorities.

▶ Open Communication.

▶ An evidence-based approach.

▶ A focus on targets.

Common Priorities

Governments and LGBT organisations often have differing priorities and needs. Although research has shown that national governments and organisations are on a level in some member states, the majority of governments are still lagging in prioritising LGBT equality.

Therefore organisations need to identify priority issues that are relevant to governments at any given time and use these to approach relevant departments and start working with them. For example, if health appears to be a higher priority for a government, then the organisation should initiate a partnership with a strong health angle. This requires political awareness, not just of LGBT issues but also of the wider youth and health agendas.

This approach can feel frustrating for organisations if it does not directly address the needs of their communities initially, however it should bear fruit in the longer run. Experience shows that positive relationships built in one government department can open up wider networks within governments and also provide valuable experience that can be drawn upon in subsequent relationships with other departments.

Open Communication

By nature, organisations can provide technical information, moral conviction and persuasive arguments to influence policies and practices. However, during the research LGBT Youth Scotland staff often heard complaints that organisations were pushing too hard and demanding too much.

There has been and still is a place for LGBT communities to demand progress from governments. Community activism and lobbying have been an integral part of the LGBT movements across the member states since the 1930s. However, the landscape of LGBT rights and equality has changed over the years. Given the progress achieved, and in some cases the professionalisation of

LGBT sector organisations, communication and dialogue with governments should be refined. Where activism may have been right in the past, there is now a need for LGBT organisations to engage in dialogue. Key to this is listening to the government and taking on board their barriers and concerns. This will eventually lead to a shared vision and common goals.

National governments face increasing pressure to ensure discrimination is tackled wherever it is taking place, but education is one of the remaining stumbling blocks where the views of parents, concerns over the morality of discussing LGBT discrimination with school pupils and the inability of school systems to deal with such issues often result in little action. LGBT organisations that can hear these concerns and reassure the government will be the organisations that succeed.

Evidence, evidence, evidence

The research indicated a clear need for further work into equality within education. However, many of the organisations surveyed highlighted a need for more local and national research to evidence the priorities in their own communities, rather than research at a European level.

When developing relationships with governments, organisations must be able to present coherent arguments that demonstrate knowledge based on evidence. Evidence may take different forms: some initial consultation with LGBT communities may provide enough anecdotal information to encourage support for more in-depth research studies; or your project/proposal may require strong evidence based on specific research.

Once the evidence is available, a few options may be available to disseminate it:

▶ Distribute research findings widely to raise awareness and support. Often used when lobbying, this can

ensure that both existing supporters and others with little knowledge have access to the information, thus reaching out to a wider audience.

▶ Withholding results from the public until key officials within governments have been briefed on the findings and given the opportunity to prepare a response with the organisation.

▶ Organisations may be asked to keep information confidential (for example, if it reflects badly on national priorities and leadership) until remedial action has been devised. This offers an opportunity to lead on the early development of projects and programmes. Both government and organisations can then show progressive responses when the research findings are released.

Delivering Targets

Organisations may be called on to lead the delivery of projects for partners and expected to complete tasks and achieve key outcomes. A crucial part of any partnership therefore includes agreeing clear, achievable goals and outcomes at the start of the project. Organisations must also plan carefully and ensure that a robust system to monitor and evaluate progress is in place throughout the project. During the life cycle of the project, any delays, changes to the projects, or risks arising should be flagged up to the partners as soon as possible.

Potential benefits of a successful project include the opportunity to propose and lead on further partnerships – an opportunity that organisations do not want to miss out on due to poor delivery of initial projects.

Recommendations for Success – Governments

Governments already working with organisations acknowledge that they have been able to tap into expert knowledge, deliver on outcomes in a more sustainable way and reduce costs through partnerships. However, they cite one key barrier to involving organisations: the performance of national NGOs not meeting their expectations. Governments express key concerns about NGOs, including:

▶ A lack of understanding of governmental processes and decision making.

▶ A strongly held disapproval of the governmental stance on certain topics.

▶ Overt lack of support on the governmental position on certain topics.

▶ A lack of transparency and accountability.

▶ A lack of capacity.

The research identified four important roles for governments to support the involvement of NGOs in partnerships:

▶ **Sharing information** - keeping partners up-to-date with policy developments, priorities and initiatives to ensure they have all the information they need to meet the outcomes in the most efficient way possible.

▶ **Acknowledging expertise** - involving experts from within the field will be more efficient and provide a direct link to minority communities.

▶ **Providing leadership** - being open and vocal on minority matters to support the organisations' initiatives.

▶ **Boosting resources** - not only offering financial resources but also on-going involvement and support and assisting with capacity building of organisations.

These roles cannot be achieved without:

▶ Listening

▶ Valuing Expertise

▶ Leadership

▶ Consistency

Listening

Much can be gained by really listening to what LGBT communities think and experience, however LGBT communities are small and those who are 'out' and happy to input into research are often over consulted as a result of this. Because organisations work with LGBT communities on a daily basis, they can facilitate access to a wider range of citizens from these communities and also represent their views. This ensures that more voices are represented into the discussions with governments.

NGOs may appear hostile towards governments, especially in countries where equalities work has not been prioritised or with outstanding laws that do not respect the human rights of LGBT citizens. However, if governments spend time listening to organisations and recognising where discrimination is taking place, this hostility will recede and some trust can be established.

Valuing Expertise

Governments must recognise that organisations can contribute connections, expertise, knowledge and experience to partnerships to develop policy and projects that make a difference to communities.

Nowadays, there is a culture of consultation with local communities to ensure that policy is meeting an identified need and is suitable for those who need it most. Organisations can assist governments by either:

▶ undertaking this consultation on their behalf, or

▶ representing the views of their community and advising on the project.

Involving organisations throughout the project and taking their input on board can lead to a shared vision for projects and ultimately more sharing of roles. Of the organisations surveyed during the research, those who have regular contact and dialogue with government report that progress is easier to negotiate.

However, partnerships should work both ways and organisations will expect some government support in return for their contributions, such as: respecting the information they provided, being clear about the actions that will result from this information, providing leadership to ensure the issues are better represented or financial support.

Leadership

LGBT organisations are acknowledged experts in LGBT issues, most often the only voice championing equality in individual member states, and are skilled in:

▶ raising public awareness,

▶ championing the needs of LGBT communities, and

▶ fighting discrimination.

Some activities undertaken by LGBT organisations have been viewed negatively and condemned in the national press, mainly due to hatred and ignorance. This is especially the case when working within the education sector, where LGBT equality work can be perceived as immoral, unnecessary and as having adverse effects on the countries' children and young people.

LGBT organisations now need governments (including individual civil servants, departments and ministers) to take a public stand on discrimination and show their support for their work. Many governments will feel nervous about speaking openly about equal rights for LGBT communities, as the perception is that the public is not ready for this.

However negative attitudes will only be challenged and changed if the government is vocal on equalities issues and praises the work done by organisations. In countries where leadership is coming from both organisations and governments, public opinion and media coverage of LGBT people have been more positive and accepting.

Consistency

Changes in interlocutors in government or changes in government priorities can put an end to partnerships and endanger any progress achieved. Although partnerships can often be driven by committed individuals at the start, governments have a role to play in ensuring continuity and consistency, with support from key figures and departments. This may require the government to address values and attitudes internally to ensure that individuals "tow the party line" and work towards the stated goals.

Governments can also mainstream equality work into areas and departments that are already established. If relevant evidence is gathered, public attitudes start shifting thanks to government leadership and significant progress is made towards equality, then any changes in government will have less impact on existing work.

" *Promote proactive policies at EU and national level to raise political and civil awareness and advance policy making on specific restrictions on homophobic bullying in school policies.*

International Lesbian & Gay Association Europe (website)

Assessing Progress Towards Equality

Once they have identified their partnership strategies, governments and organisations should take time to assess their position on the road to equality rather than rush into planning meetings and projects. This section is designed to help governments and organisations complete this assessment and puts forward possible actions to achieve further progress towards equality within education.

The research identified key stages of progress towards equality within education for both governments and organisations.

1. **Inequality**
   This stage would apply to countries just starting towards equality, and where:

   ▶ there is still far to go to change public perceptions of LGBT communities;

   ▶ laws may discriminate or ignore the rights of LGBT people; and

   ▶ little support is given to organisations for their activity.

   There may be individuals who champion equalities work in education; however there will be little evidence and no leadership.

2. **Emerging Equality**
   At this stage, progress towards equality is established but far from over. Typically, organisations, governments and the public acknowledge that there is a need for equality. Government support for LGBT organisations is present, however there may be little or no active participation from both parties besides financial support. Leadership tends to be inconsistent and not highly visible.

3. **Established Equality**
   When the journey to equality within education gets near the destination, more consistent structures which protect and promote diversity within education tend to be in place. Governments support LGBT organisations financially to work specifically within education and partnerships extend to working groups, joint decision making and initiatives. Equality within education is championed across most government agencies and by individual schools and teachers.

For each stage, this section provides a more in-depth analysis of typical activities/progress under five headings:

▶ Legislation & Policy

▶ Leadership

▶ Relationships

▶ External Input in Schools & Research

▶ Teacher Training

This aims to help governments and organisations identify their own country's position. The tables also chart a realistic picture of how progress develops across Europe.

The guide then puts forward practical actions for both governments and organisations to achieve progress at each stage of the journey.

Although this guide refers specifically to progress within education, there are clear connections with equality for LGBT communities in a wider context.

The tables on the following pages can be used as a tool to help measure progress made towards equality.

Legislation & Policy - Assessing Progress Towards Equality		
Inequality	*Emerging Equality*	*Established Equality*
No hate crime legislation, or current one does not fully protect LGBT young people within education.	Criminal law protects LGBT people, however it may not fully protect against hate crime/speech within education.	Full protection for LGB people in criminal law, however transgender individuals may not be fully protected.
No school policies that acknowledge bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.	Policies in some individual schools acknowledge bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, although this is not consistent.	Bullying policies are standard procedure within schools and bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity is explicit within these policies.
Little or no equalities legislation that protects people from discrimination in employment or in goods and services on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.	Equalities legislation in place that protects people from discrimination in employment or in goods and services on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.	Equalities legislation in place that: • protects people from discrimination in employment or in goods and services on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. • requires schools to be proactive in combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation & gender identity.
LGBT people and their families are not included in the national curriculum.	LGBT people and their families are not included in the national curriculum.	LGBT people and their families are included in aspects of the national curriculum, or included in additional curriculum resources that are delivered at the discretion of schools.
No guidelines for teachers to support inclusion of LGBT people and their families.	No guidelines for teachers to support inclusion of LGBT people and their families.	Some guidelines exist for teachers to support inclusion of LGBT people and their families within teaching, although these are not consistently used.

> **"** *We had the Gay Games and Eurogames... we would like to set the tone, to inspire others worldwide to tackle this issue in their own countries.*
>
> **Marja van Bijsterveldt**
> **Dutch Minister for LGBT and Gender Equality**

> **"** *When organisations work together, it is cheaper for the government to be able to achieve its goals.*
>
> **Dutch Government**
> **Challenging Homophobia Together research**

Leadership - Assessing Progress Towards Equality		
Inequality	*Emerging Equality*	*Established Equality*
Widespread ignorance of the discrimination faced by LGBT communities.	Attitudes towards LGBT communities are generally accepting, although not consistent across all areas of the country.	Attitudes towards LGBT communities are generally accepting, and LGBT people can be seen in most communities across all areas of the country.
No or little priority given to addressing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.	Some focus on addressing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity within individual government ministries.	The government shows strong positive attitudes towards LGBT communities and there has been a focus on ending discrimination for a number of years.
Discriminatory attitudes from government displayed publicly and consistently across a range of issues.	Government officials publicly support work to address discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity; however this is inconsistent and not embedded.	Government officials publicaly support work to address discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and regularly address this work in public arenas.

Relationships - Assessing Progress Towards Equality		
Inequality	*Emerging Equality*	*Established Equality*
LGBT organisations established, however no or little support provided by the government.	LGBT organisations well established and one or more government departments provide financial support.	LGBT organisations established and well resourced in both staff and financial terms. A percentage of core and project funding is provided by one or more government departments.
LGBT organisations are not invited to input into strategy to tackle homophobia in education.	LGBT organisations are invited to input into strategy to tackle discrimination, although this often does not include education.	LGBT organisations are invited to input into strategy to tackle discrimination, including work within education.
Events hosted by organisations are either ignored or commented upon negatively by governments.	Governments attend LGBT organisations' events, although this is not consistent and usually initiated by the organisation rather than government.	Governments attend LGBT organisations' events and are key players in instigating and organising events which deal with discrimination.
Organisations' attempts to develop relationships with governments are ignored and meetings cannot be established.	Governments have a relationship with only 1 or 2 staff members from the organisations and do not make efforts to engage with the wider staff and volunteer team.	Governments have a strong relationship with a number of staff members from the organisations and have a good knowledge of the wider work of the organisation.

" *Schools should create or maintain alliances with… LGBTQ charities… schools should support and recognise research analysing the situation of LGBTQ school students.*

International LGBTQ Youth & Student Organisation Education Guidelines

" *It is recommended that education authorities include LGBT awareness training in their organisation's programme of Continuing Professional Development and commit to training on anti-homophobia, transphobia and LGBT equality in school development planning.*

Scottish Government Hearts & Minds Summary

External Input in Schools and Research - Assessing Progress Towards Equality		
Inequality	*Emerging Equality*	*Established Equality*
LGBT organisations have limited resources to carry out research and analyse data about the experiences of LGBT young people in schools.	LGBT organisations are gathering evidence through research to identify the experiences of LGBT young people in schools.	LGBT organisations have a solid foundation of evidence to guide their work and provide credibility.
Little or no national research to highlight needs.	Little or no evidence of the attitudes of other pupils or teachers towards LGBT students.	National research provides evidence of the needs of LGBT young people in the education environment. National research shows evidence of the needs of teachers. There is little or no evidence of the attitudes of other students towards LGBT students.
LGBT organisations are perceived as immoral and are not welcome in education institutions.	LGBT organisations are working with a small number of individual schools, often using a human rights approach rather than an explicit LGBT approach.	LGBT organisations are working with a wide range of schools across the country, however they are working with the high schools and have limited access to primary school students.
Limited resources and information available to young people in schools. Existing information does not address same sex relationships and diverse gender identities.	Limited resources and information available to young people in schools. Existing information does not include information about same sex relationships and diverse gender identities.	Resources and information are available to young people in schools, including information about same-sex relationships and gender identity.

Teacher Training - Assessing Progress Towards Equality		
Inequality	*Emerging Equality*	*Established Equality*
LGBT organisations have too few resources to provide teacher training as part of an official process.	LGBT organisations have too few resources to provide teacher training as part of an official process.	LGBT organisations provide some training for teachers, although funding is limited.
Teachers not offered training around LGBT awareness and homophobia as part of their CPD.	Teachers in some areas are offered training around LGBT awareness and homophobia as part of their CPD.	Teachers in some areas are offered training around LGBT awareness and homophobia as part of their CPD.
Teachers not offered training around LGBT awareness and homophobia as part of their initial training.	Teachers not offered training around LGBT awareness and homophobia as part of their initial training.	Teachers not offered training around LGBT awareness and homophobia as part of their initial training.

Practical Steps for Governments & NGOs

This section will provide practical steps that can be taken to progress the situation for countries at each level across each of the thematic areas.

body of country specific evidence is available. In addition to this, the development of the partnerships at this stage will enhance any future work, therefore it is worth spending time getting these right.

Inequality

At this level, attention should be given to establishing a foundation for future work, including ensuring a strong

Governments	*Organisations*
1. Establish links between government departments and organisations.	
Establish links with organisations, invite them for a meeting to present their work and priorities. Find out what discrimination LGBT young people and communities face in the country.	Establish links with government departments (may not be education initially). This may be achieved by: • Going to events attended by relevant officials - try to get their contact details. • Identifying key contacts within current networks with existing links with government officials. • Analysing government priorities and trends to approach the department most likely to be interested in your work. • Inviting the government to take part in events or projects. • Arranging an initial meeting. • Joining a working group with input from government officials.
2. Negotiate the expectations and priorities of both parties.	
Agree on your priorities internally, then discuss them with the organisations e.g. are you concerned with: • Health needs of LGBT young people, especially suicide rates. • Homelessness levels in LGBT young people and reasons for it. • Attitudes of young people of school age to LGBT people.	Listen to government priorities and negotiate how best to support these.

Governments	*Organisations*
3. Gather information and data to evidence the needs.	
Consider providing support (most likely financial) to organisations to carry out research – possibly in partnership with other organisations. Asking the organisations to do this research will: • increase your knowledge of the issues; • extend your reach to LGBT communities; • build a bank of evidence to present to senior officials and other departments; • develop organisations' contacts with other relevant organisations; • support organisations' links within their own communities; • enhance their skills in data analysis.	Prepare data, both qualitative and quantitative, to present on a variety of issues. Be clear where the information has come from. If more evidence is needed, present research proposals to the government. This should consider: • What support do you need? For example financial, influential to gain access to schools, practical such as printing documents. • How will this research help you in your future work?
4. Publicly discuss the needs identified and actions required to address these.	

Emerging Equality

In all of the examples given, explicit government back-up will strengthen the case for organisations gaining access to schools.

The research carried out during the lifetime of this project found that failure to gain access to schools is a key barrier to progressing work.

Governments	Organisations
1. Consolidate the partnership.	
Build on existing relationships with organisations by: • Introducing them to other relevant government ministries. • Extending relationships to a wider group of staff and volunteers. • Helping organisations to address issues across a range of policy areas, including education.	Strengthen links with government by: • Sharing information about the range of projects you deliver. • Asking your contacts for introductions to officials working within other priority areas, such as education. • Reporting positively on the impact that working in partnership has had.
2. Collate evidence and present solutions.	
Analyse the needs and issues highlighted in the research and consider: • How the needs identified in the research fit with national priorities. • The best way to promote the findings of the research. • Which needs are of highest priority. • The best methods to address these needs.	Prepare data from research within education to present to officials. If you do not have existing links with education, you could: • Ask your network to invite relevant individuals or to send copies of the data to relevant individuals. • Extract findings relating to other policy areas that will interest your existing contacts, e.g. indicators relating to health, wellbeing, achievement or human rights.
3. Increase financial resources to support a focus on education.	
Agree internally the level of support that could be given to projects that meet the needs identified in the research. Consider: • The roles of each party and if more partners should be involved at this stage. • The outcomes you want to achieve.	Discuss the potential projects that could result from the research with the government. Ensure your preparation has considered: • What projects naturally follow on from the research. • How the proposed projects match national priorities. • Alternative sources of funding, or co-funding. • The anticipated outcomes for each project. • The role of the government in each project.

Governments	Organisations
4. Establish pilot projects.	
In partnership with organisations, develop pilot projects to address the needs identified, such as: • Conducting further research with teachers and students. • Delivering sessions for young people in schools. • Developing resources for teachers.	In partnership with the government, develop pilot projects to address the needs identified. Articulate your expectations in terms of: • Financial input • Timelines • Support required to get access into schools • Anticipated outcomes • Methods of monitoring and evaluation

Established Equality

The examples below provide the next steps for countries who already have established frameworks for including LGBT identities and issues in education. They focus on ways to ensure the inclusion is meeting all young people's needs, the progression of teacher training to ensure it is not a 'choice' but an essential component and putting a focus on the national curriculum.

Governments	Organisations
1. Extend good practice across the country.	
Consider how to extend the project reach to more young people by: • Funding a pilot within rural areas, faith-based schools or special needs schools. • Helping to train volunteers to deliver further work at a lower cost. • Providing more leadership to encourage a wider range of schools to take part. • Developing tools for teachers to allow schools to take work forward. • Promoting equalities legislation that requires the education sector to be proactive in addressing homophobia.	Disseminate good practice by: • Approaching local authorities to target more areas to work in. • Negotiating additional government funding to pilot projects within rural areas, faith-based schools or special needs schools to demonstrate the versatility of the approach. • Training more volunteers to deliver the work across a wider range of schools. • Developing tools and guidance for teachers, thus securing more resources on the ground. • Using equalities legislation as a lever to encourage more take-up from schools.

Governments	Organisations
2. Focus on supporting and training teachers.	

Support teacher training by:
• Increasingly addressing LGBT issues in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training
• Establishing links with teacher councils to integrate LGBT issues in teacher training
• Funding training pilots for specific areas.
	Now that research has identified their needs, focus on supporting teachers by:
	• Sending a research summary to all head teachers to encourage them to address these needs
	• Developing a range of training options including:
	  a) Attitudes and values training
	  b) Training around curriculum and tailored lesson plans
	  c) Training for guidance and counselling staff on supporting LGBT young people
	  d) Small group training
	  e) Full staff team training and discussion
	• Pitching affordable training options that will allow you to run a cost-efficient service
	• Making links with local authorities to agree training packages for the whole region

3. Mainstream LGBT issues into the national curriculum.	
Mainstream the curriculum to make it representative of all young people, by: • Setting up a working group to analyse the diversity of the current core curriculum • Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment of the current core curriculum • Including LGBT identities and families in more curriculum areas than just social and moral education.	In partnership with education professionals, develop a range of lesson plans that fit into many areas of the school curriculum.
4. Design a monitoring system to encourage regular use of resource.	
In partnership with the organisation, establish a system to monitor individual schools' work within equalities to identify any problem areas.	Based on current projects, develop a benchmarking tool that can be used to assess each school's position within equalities. This can be done in partnership with schools and government and may be useful to tackle schools not prioritising equalities work.

Capacity Building

The majority of LGBT organisations operating in the EU member states are small and under-funded, thus struggling to meet all the needs of their communities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the performance of organisations does not always, or is perceived to not always, meet expectations. Organisations have been criticised as lacking accountability, transparency, ability, sustainability and quality. These failings are often directly linked to the capacity of the organisation.

Small, under-resourced organisations, often set up by community members in response to discrimination, may not have the skills to:

▶ define their vision and goals;

▶ establish sound structures and systems, supported by skilled staff;

▶ organise coherent activism, public relations and strategy;

▶ generate greater financial support.

Governments have a role to play in capacity building. Existing and new partnerships with organisations are ideal conduit for these activities. For example:

▶ by opening a dialogue with an organisation, governments can build their experience in the policy making process;

▶ by inviting an organisation to submit evidence and solutions of current needs they can be supported to build their capacity to analyse, plan and evaluate;

▶ by providing support to a current campaign the capacity of the organisation may increase due to stronger more positive publicity;

▶ by providing funding, organisations can become better resourced and equipped to focus on internal improvements.

In the current economic climate, financial support for organisations is declining, however it should be noted that fewer financial resources for the organisations will impact directly on governments' ability to achieve their development, social justice and equality goals.

Organisations also have the ability to build the capacity of governments. Their solid links to, and direct support from, civil society place them in good stead to advise government on issues of concern as and when they arise. More formally, organisations will advocate and campaign for change in response to needs and can guide and significantly contribute to legislative and policy making processes - providing resources to governments that would be missing without their cooperation.

Some examples of Best Practice

The examples of best practice featured below were collected during the research and in the course of discussions with NGOs and governments. This list is not exhaustive and new projects are being developed constantly. This selection aims to encourage reflection and provide inspiration for readers.

Ireland

Ireland provides guidance for principals and school leaders to address homophobia through policy and practice.

In 2003 the National Economic and Social Forum published a report (no. 27), *Implementing Equality for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People*, which outlined commitments made by each government department with a view to implementing equality for LGB people. GLEN (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) and the then Department of Education and Science started collaborating on projects.

This led to a partnership (along with NUI Maynooth) to conduct research[1] which explored how sexual orientation issues arise and are addressed in post-primary schools. This research was supported by key stakeholders in Irish education such as management bodies, principals and parents' associations and highlighted issues and knowledge gaps amongst school leaders.

This led to the publication of *Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students in Post Primary Schools, Guidance for Principals and School leaders* in November 2009. The document provides information on such topics as sexual orientation identity, "coming out" and experiences of LGBT young people in schools and suggestions on how school leaders can address LGBT issues through policy, practice and programmes.

Jointly published by GLEN and the Department, the Guidance was issued to schools by the Department for Education and Skills and endorsed by key education stakeholders who have promoted its use amongst their members.

The partnership has benefitted all parties in a number of ways:

▶ The Department has been able to promote the Guidance amongst schools with the explicit support of key education stakeholders who are influential in education.

▶ As an NGO, GLEN recognises the importance of working with all the education partners with a view to effecting positive change for LGBT young people in schools; the partnership involved in this work has provided the necessary leverage to influence school policy and practice.

▶ The existence of the Guidance has led to the development of further specialised guidelines through partnership, such as:

• *Guidelines for Guidance Counsellors in Supporting LGBT Students*. A partnership between GLEN and the National Centre for Guidance in Education.

• *Whole-school training on combating homophobic bullying*. A partnership between GLEN, National Association of Principals (NAPD) and Deputy Principals, Belong To (LGBT) Youth Services and the Equality Authority.

• *Guidelines on including recognition of LGBT students and issues in school policies*. A partnership between GLEN and the NAPD.

No significant barriers were experienced during the partnership. The long timescale involved in completing the *Guidance for Principals* presented a challenge owing to the number of partners involved. However it was felt that it was more important to have widespread engagement by all the education partners than to issue the Guidance to schools prematurely.

The project has had a significant impact on the partners, the education establishments and the pupils within them:

▶ The partnership and its outcomes has led to a greater awareness both within schools and at broader Department level of the need to address LGBT issues in all aspects of education.

▶ A commitment within the Department to progress work on LGBT issues through collaboration and partnership, including with NGOs.

▶ A growing number of schools of all types (including faith-based schools) are now seeking support in addressing LGBT issues.

GLEN continues to enjoy a very positive working relationship with the Department, however new challenges have arisen:

▶ The implementation of the Guidance presents new challenges, such as ensuring the education partners actively promote the Guidance to their members and that LGBT issues are not treated as less important than other education issues.

▶ The current economic climate is placing a lot of pressure on the education partners, schools and the Department. The challenge is to ensure that LGB issues are not consigned to the "optional extras" category.

> " *People don't know what to do with a homophobic remark even though [they] can handle racist [remarks].*
>
> **NGO, Germany**

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1 http://www.glen.ie/press/pdfs/Valuing%20Visibility%20Summary%20Report.pdf

The Netherlands

The Netherlands address homophobia by brining together LGBT and straight young people to develop 'gay straight alliance' groups in schools.

Founded almost seventy years ago, COC was the first LGBT organisation in the world and remains one of the largest ones. COC focuses on campaigning and political lobbying to support LGBT-activists in their efforts to continue the dialogue on homosexuality in their own environment. COC has many programmes across all layers of society, all based on the principle that the activist is in charge.

COC believes that LGBT communities are responsible for their own emancipation. Typically, that process is led by active members of the community (activists), who decide on direction, pace and activities. COC's role is to support, connect, facilitate, coach and most importantly to give activists the confidence and focus to take these activities forward.

COC considers itself an outsider to the communities and limits its commitment to supporting activists, through its own approach, also known as the Inside-Out approach. This approach is embraced and widely supported by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, an important and effective partner for COC.

COC set up 3 different projects for young people and education to empower LGBT young people and achieve a safer environment for LGBT young people in schools. The backbone of COC's youth programme is Young&Out, its LGBT teenagers community.

Through the programme, 14 different groups, with almost 2000 members under the age of 18, have been established. COC provides support and facilities, however the groups organise their own activities. This includes a thriving web community, which was set up

by COC but has been gradually transferred back to the community. COC uses the Young&Out community to inform members about the Gay-Straight Alliance concept.

The Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), a joint initiative between straight and LGBT people, was set up to fight homophobia and create a safer school environment for all. Many teenagers learned about the GSA concept through Young&Out and started one in their own school.

In a classic bottom-up approach, GSA members stimulate dialogue on sexual diversity with their peers, create visibility for sexual diversity and put homophobia on the agenda of school boards. However, LGBT students in many schools still feel that the atmosphere is too hostile to come out or discuss the GSA. As a result COC developed the Pink Elephant project to tackle these cases. The Pink Elephant is like the A-Team for LGBT young people.

The Gay-Straight Alliance network in the Netherlands have organised many different high-impact activities in the past few years; two of these were particularly successful:

▶ Last year, COC asked the teenagers of Young&Out to describe very briefly how they experienced being LGBT at school. This resulted in a small booklet with remarkable and touching stories. GSA members and individuals featured in the booklet presented it to principals in 50 schools to show them the issues LGBT young people are dealing with. This resulted in the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in which schools promised to take responsibility to combat homophobia and deal with LGBT issues. A standard MOU was included in the booklet.

▶ Purple Friday was introduced in the Netherlands on 10 December 2010. GSAs asked their peers and teachers to wear purple to school that day as a

statement against homophobia. It was a huge success, with more than 150 schools taking part. Many GSAs organised activities and even schools without an active GSA made an event around Purple Friday and gave information in class. This has shown that even with limited resources the GSA network can still be an effective, massive movement. The event resulted in nationwide exposure and put LGBT issues on the agenda in a positive way. Purple Friday created such a buzz that even the Prime Minister wore a purple tie that day and made a statement against homophobia during his weekly press conference.

Sweden

Sweden produced a range of materials to address attitudes and assumptions made by teaching staff.

Between November 2004 and May 2007, a unique project was undertaken in Sweden that focused on the issues of sexual orientation and homophobia in schools. The project followed on from other Swedish projects that looked at sexual orientation as an issue in the work environment and identified the need for a project specifically focused on schools.

A number of organisations involved decided to seek funding for this under the EU Equal program. The project was entitled "Beneath the Surface" (in Swedish, "Under ytan") in reference to the need to dig beneath the politically-correct surface in Swedish schools: although overt discrimination of homosexual and bisexual teachers is rare in Sweden, schools have lagged behind in fostering an open and inclusive environment.

It was part of a transnational cooperation (TRACE) aimed at combating discrimination in the workplace so that homosexual and bisexual employees would be able to work under the same conditions as their heterosexual colleagues. The other TRACE partners were Deledios (France), Open and Safe at Work.lt (Lithuania), and Partnership for Equality (Slovenia).

Even though the policies of the school systems say schools should work against traditional gender roles, fear and hatred of the other, etcetera, the teachers aren't given any tools to do that in their training.

NGO, Sweden

The 12 partner organisations in the project represented a broad spectrum of the Swedish education system including researchers, employers, trade unions, government authorities, teacher-training institutions and NGOs.

The target groups for the project were current teachers, students in teacher training, pedagogic instructors, politicians, civil servants working in school environments and pupils.

The project consisted of several different elements, including (but not limited to):

▶ The development of educational resources and methodologies for raising awareness in a school environment

▶ Working with training institutions on the issue of how norms are created and reproduced in a school environment

▶ Skills development for the school administration and staff

▶ Research on how the assumption of heterosexuality is established and maintained as the norm in schools.

Six local authorities also actively participated in the project, primarily through training sessions for teachers and other school personnel. The training sessions formed a substantial part of the project and addressed the topics related to sexual orientation and school, such as:

▶ terms and definitions;

▶ the heteronorm and its consequences for both staff and students;

▶ Swedish anti-discrimination legislation related to sexual orientation and schools;

▶ pedagogical tips on how teachers can raise the issue of sexual orientation as a natural part of their regular classroom content.

The sessions were interactive and contained both exercises and discussions in addition to fact-based lectures. Over 3,500 people attended more than 100 different training sessions during the project. A staggering 95.8% indicated on an evaluation form that they would recommend the training session to others.

The following materials [2] were produced:

▶ *Life in the Teachers' Lounge* (on Sexual Orientation and the Working Environment in School; available in Swedish only).

▶ *Silence in the Classroom?* (on Teachers' Work with Sexual Orientation; available in Swedish only).

▶ *A Challenge to the Heteronorm* (a brief research report available in Swedish only; summary available in English).

▶ *Open Up Your Workplace* (reflections on experiences from project work in France, Lithuania, Slovenia and Sweden; in English).

▶ *Norms at Work* (a research anthology in collaboration with researchers in Lithuania and Sweden on how norms and prejudice work; in English).

▶ A DVD entitled "*What Lies Beneath the Surface?*" (Available in Swedish and with English subtitles). The DVD contains short scenes that can be viewed and then discussed with the accompanying questions. The DVD considers schools as both a working environment and a pedagogical institution.

Although "Beneath the Surface" was relatively short and small, it has had a lasting impact on furthering LGB[3] rights in Sweden and together with its predecessor and sister projects, it has contributed to placing sexual orientation on the working-life and working-environment agenda in Sweden. There's still a long way to go, but employers, trade unions and schools in Sweden can no longer completely ignore the issue of sexual orientation.

MORE INFO

Teacher Training – Ireland
For more information about the teacher training project, please contact The Gay & Lesbian Equality Network, Ireland on **www.glen.ie***, or* **info@glen.ie**

Teachers Resources – Sweden
For more information about the 'Beneath the Surface' project please contact RFSL – **www.rfsl.se** *or for the materials in English please go to:* **www.ytan.se** *or email* **karol.vieker@rfsl.se**

Gay Straight Alliances – Netherlands
For more information about the GSA project please contact COC Netherlands – **www.coc.nl** *or for copies of resources or more information please email* **info@coc.nl**

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2   All material can be ordered, and in some cases downloaded, from www.ytan.se

3   Because gender identity and expression were not included as focus areas in the Equal program, the project was unfortunately unable to produce material or conduct research related to transgender issues in schools.

DEVELOPING
PROJECTS

04.

This section outlines a range of projects that have been delivered through various partnership models: either with governments or other organisations, or with no partners.

The projects fall within the three key areas of intervention – Research, Youth Work in Schools and Teacher Training.

04 Developing Projects

This section provides examples of successful projects in the member states. These projects have been delivered through various partnership models: either with governments or other organisations, or with no partners.

The projects fall within the three key areas of intervention below:

▶ Research

▶ Youth work in schools

▶ Teacher training

Within each theme, a project overview, technical details and experiences will demonstrate how these projects can be replicated. However, it is important to note that, in each project, political lobbying always took place, either as a routine activity or a core part of the project.

The policy landscape that surrounds anti-homophobic bullying in education is significantly different in each member state. Experience and research show that a supportive policy framework is the foundation for long-lasting change in attitudes towards the inclusion of LGBT issues in education. Recognition that prejudice and inequality hinder young people's attainment, learning and wellbeing should inform the development of policies to tackle discrimination in schools.

Lobbying should be part of a comprehensive strategy to influence governments and achieve the policy change required. Lobbying can assist in educating and building relationships with government officials and develop the credibility of LGBT organisations. Ultimately, strong lobbying will set the stage for organising advocacy and progress within equality work.

Research

This document has referred to research a lot. Both organisations and governments have to research issues to evidence the needs of LGBT communities. Specifically, in an education environment where the introduction of LGBT topics is sensitive, strong evidence must demonstrate the discrimination taking place and the impact this is having on school pupils. Research covering schools or school pupils can cover a variety of topics, such as:

▶ Experiences of bullying of LGBT young people within schools and the impact this has had.

▶ Experiences of teachers in schools - what is happening, how do they challenge homophobia, what resources would help them challenge homophobia.

▶ Awareness of LGBT terminology and identities amongst school pupils, including knowledge of bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

There is a wealth of evidence available that shows the negative impact homophobic bullying has on the whole school community. Many LGBT organisations have carried out their own initial consultation with young people that demonstrates needs, albeit anecdotal. Other organisations have country specific research available that clearly shows the impact that bullying is having.

Organisations should be using research and information available to call governments to account and request support in tackling the issue.

Example of Research Within Schools

LGBT Youth Scotland approached the Scottish Government in 2004 with evidence that 90% of LGBT young people reported that school was the place where they felt most unsafe. The research was based on stakeholder surveys and was limited to around 200 young people, however the participants were from a range of ages, ethnicities and geographical locations in Scotland. This research also asked the same questions every year and demonstrated that the situation was not improving over the 3 years the research covered. Based on this evidence, the Scottish Government agreed to fund LGBT Youth Scotland to carry out further research with both LGBT young people and teachers within schools.

The research targeted Education Authorities across Scotland and young people attending, or who had recently left, school and explored the following issues:

▶ School anti-bullying policy.

▶ Awareness of homophobia.

▶ Awareness of LGBT identities and issues.

▶ Methods to manage homophobia.

▶ Confidence to manage homophobic incidents.

▶ Impact of homophobia.

LGBT Youth Scotland heavily weighted the involvement of the Scottish Government when contacting individual education authorities and schools in order to be granted access to schools. The research was robust and it built on responses from a wide range of schools. The findings from the research were published in 2 phases; the first phase being the research findings themselves and the second culminating in the publication of a detailed toolkit for schools and teachers to provide a framework for challenging homophobia[1].

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1   www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/LGBT%20low%20res%20 7%2701%2709_tcm4-512286.pdf

"You know yourself, people find some reason to say that the research - if done in another social context - isn't relevant.

NGO, Ireland

Youth Work in Schools

Working with students in schools was among the top priorities for many of the organisations LGBT Youth Scotland spoke to. LGBT organisations have a crucial role to play within education if they are to help address issues.

Young people in schools across Europe hear about LGBT people from a wide variety of sources. Introducing experts who can provide relevant and appropriate information within the education environment ensures LGBT identities are discussed positively.

Both governments and organisations recognise the value of external organisations to bring expertise into the classroom. The two key methods reported to be successful by organisations were either a human rights-based approach or a norm critical approach.

Examples of Youth Work Projects in Schools

Youth work in schools is relatively straightforward to plan as most LGBT organisations are skilled and experienced in delivering workshops and working with young people. Below are some tips on the planning process.

Resources Required

The costs associated with projects depend upon the scope and reach of the project. For this reason, it is wise to establish early on, with all partners involved, what the financial costs will be to ensure the project can be seen through from beginning to end.

Be sensible when developing the scope of the project and follow these tips to ensure projects are manageable and realistic:

▶ Utilise current staff where possible.

▶ Utilise the expertise of volunteers to keep costs down.

▶ Develop a tiered approach, starting small and developing over time.

▶ Do not rely on glossy printing and expensive hard-copy resources.

Human Rights Approach (Scotland)

For the past 6 years, LGBT Youth Scotland has been delivering youth work sessions in schools which explore students' attitudes and values towards diversity. These sessions are delivered by youth workers and young peer educators and aim to facilitate a safe space for school students to explore their own feelings about diversity and LGBT identities.

The approach taken within the sessions is based on a mix of human rights-based approach, norms approach and experiential approach. These sessions are delivered to young people between the ages of 13-18, usually without the presence of a teacher, and last between 50 minutes and 2 hours. During the sessions a mixture of interactive activities are used to open up discussion and introduce new concepts.

Youth workers and peer educators remain non judgemental at all times, offering information and opinions rather than telling students what is right and wrong. One key success of the sessions has been encouraging and facilitating peers within the sessions to challenge each other.

Norms Approach (Sweden)

In 2009 RFSL Ungdom and The Living History Forum (Sweden) produced a guide titled *Break the Norm: methods for studying norms in general and the hetronorm in particular*. This guide is intended for anyone who works with or wants to work with anti-discrimination and diversity within their school. The methods outlined in the guide focus on norms rather than on those who don't fit into them with the goal to create non-discriminatory and inclusive environments.

This method avoids the most common approach to equality and diversity work in schools, which usually focuses on developing understanding and acceptance towards difference. *Break the Norm!* feel that this approach is problematic as it ignores norms and power structures. The guide takes the opposite approach. Instead of focusing on individuals who are different from the norm, they focus on the norms that control who is perceived as normal versus abnormal. This allows a deeper questioning process about why certain people are discriminated against.

The exercises in the guide can be delivered by teachers, students, youth workers, professionals and anyone who wants to challenge discrimination.

Appropriate Partnerships

In order to begin youth work in schools, LGBT organisations will need to establish strong links with local schools. A range of methods can be used that depend upon the specific education systems within individual countries.

The most strategic of partnerships would be with education ministries who can endorse the project and provide links into a wide network of local authorities. However, working directly with individual local authorities is also an option; the project would then be limited geographically, although this can be useful to act as a pilot project to later present to governments. The final partnership model would be with individual schools, which can be useful if the other avenues do not work or if resources are very limited.

Organisations should establish partnerships prior to spending time and financial resources developing in-depth materials. Then, the materials developed can be targeted to the specific needs/issues addressed by the project. However, for this purpose the organisation will need up-to-date evidence to support the proposals and materials. This may look something like this:

Evidence

▶ Local or national research into bullying.

▶ Stakeholder survey with LGBT young people showing education is a priority area.

▶ Testimonies from young people about bullying and discrimination in schools.

▶ Media coverage of bullying/discrimination within education.

Principles

▶ Youth-centred approach.

▶ Focus on human rights and equality issues.

▶ Participant-centred activities.

▶ Non-judgemental approach.

Design Materials that are Accessible

When it comes to writing materials, make sure that you have clearly defined the needs of the audience and have a firm idea of the impact you want to make. With this in mind, you can devise activities that will achieve the impact you want and also engage your audience.

Piloting activities ensures that they achieve the desired impact and use methods that are accessible and engaging. Here are some tips that can help during this process:

▶ Use famous people to illustrate points.

▶ Diffuse any references to individuals by other students.

▶ Acknowledge and be sensitive to the fact that there could be LGBT students or young people from LGBT families within the class/school.

▶ Create a group agreement during initial introductions with students.

▶ Use a non-judgemental approach.

▶ Challenge the statement, not the individual.

Decide the priority issues you wish to address – it may be bullying behaviour, it may be attitudes towards difference. It will be difficult to address everything, therefore creating a range of workshops that complement each other and can be delivered either in succession or as stand-alone sessions is a way to offer a range of topics to schools.

Pilot the Project

A useful way to build evidence and ensure that the workshops have lasting effects is to pilot the sessions with a small number of schools. This minimises the financial pressure on organisations and the outcomes can be used to build a stronger proposal for future work.

Remember to plan monitoring and evaluation methods to capture the learning of both facilitators and participants involved in the sessions, and to record any changes in the education environment.

Training for Teachers

Teachers and school staff often report feeling nervous and unsure about the best way to challenge homophobia or support pupils, while being sensitive to those who may be LGBT or come from LGBT families. Both LGBT pupils and school staff highlighted the need for relevant training for teachers, addressing:

▶ how to challenge homophobia;

▶ how to create more inclusive environments; and

▶ how to support LGBT students in the classroom.

Training can take many forms and often depends on the willingness of school bodies, governments and individuals. However, it is clear that teachers want training and support, even in the less progressive countries, as illustrated by the situation in Poland.

Example of Training
See next page for a Teacher Training example.

Developing the Right Approach

> *We think it is important to not only work against intellectual homophobia but also against emotional homophobia…*
>
> **NGO, Spain**

Training Teachers (Poland)

Education reform has been a priority of Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH) since it was established. This includes two key objectives:

▶ To update the school curriculum in Poland, which has no accurate and up-to-date sexual education.

▶ To raise awareness of the impact of homophobia in schools amongst teachers, school guidance counselors, staff & trade unions.

KPH delivered the first teacher trainings in 2003/4. The first pilot was voluntary, with teachers invited to come in their own time. The sessions were so popular that it was repeated 3 times. KPH later carried out further training sessions on a smaller scale.

In 2005, an extremely right-wing government was elected and the Minister of Education led an overtly homophobic campaign, even attempting to outlaw the "promotion of homosexuality in schools".

▶ The atmosphere was such that schools stopped working with KPH. This curtailed activity in this field, due to lack of access to teachers and schools.

▶ In 2006, the president of KPH was forbidden to speak in a state school on Human Rights Day because it was Ash Wednesday.

▶ However, KPH managed to undertake the EC-funded "Schoolmates" Project, including a report on homophobic bullying based on a survey of 1,000 students and 4 teacher trainings.

Although there is no official ban, the atmosphere of repression around education and homophobia remains to this day. For example, four LGBT activists were invited to speak to a group of high school students and then asked to leave 30 minutes into their presentation after teachers complained that they were too "controversial and personal".

However, KPH have gained a lot of support from those in education who realize the scale of the problem. Some teachers across the country now allow sessions in classrooms with their students. KPH have also built close partnerships with the Polish Teachers Union, who have contributed to reports, spoken at various KPH events and agreed to co-host training sessions.

Devising training for teachers has the potential to impact on a wide range of young people and to contribute to changes in the overall school ethos. This method is also very cost effective as teachers can effectively challenge homophobia within the classroom, rather than relying on external organisations to run sessions in every class (although to be as effective as possible, it is advisable to deliver a combination of both to tackle homophobia).

Training for teachers must be adapted to each member state and will depend upon the support offered by governments, local authorities and schools. Training programmes should be pitched differently, based upon the existing links between LGBT organisations and governments/local authorities/schools.

Good Links With Governments and Local Authorities

Devise training that can be offered along with a range of services to tackle discrimination in schools e.g. youth work sessions and formal written guidance for teachers. Some things to remember when pitching this project:

▶ Demonstrate the need through research with teachers.

▶ Fit training into national priorities for teachers and current training systems.

▶ If possible ensure the training can be accredited or will fit into current Continuing Professional Development structures for teachers.

▶ Offer a tiered approach, establishing a pilot area.

▶ Target teachers who are responsible for personal and social education as a first stage.

"Even though the policies of the school systems say schools should work against traditional gender roles, fear and hatred of the other, etc, the teachers aren't given any tools to do that in their training.

NGO, Sweden

Good Links With Individual Schools

The majority of schools have well planned programmes and schedules that are difficult to penetrate. Early intervention with individual schools is necessary in order to plan in time to address homophobia and discrimination.

In addition to this, schools may be nervous about the reaction of the local community, including parents. It is advisable to consider how to lessen this anxiety and demonstrate the way this work fits into wider priorities. Below are some things to remember when pitching this project:

▶ Focus on the needs of the local area.

▶ Use a human rights approach to introduce the work.

▶ Demonstrate the relevance to professional standards and practice benchmarks that may exist.

▶ Be flexible with expectations and timescales – the school may only agree to 1 training session for school counsellors for 3 hours, however this is a start.

▶ Offer additional support to the school about the way to discuss this with parents and the wider community.

No Links With Schools

It is not impossible to provide training for teachers in areas where individual schools will not engage. Below are some methods to explore which may provide access to individual teachers:

▶ Make links with teachers' unions and advertise training through the union.

▶ Make links with universities providing teacher training and offer optional training for student teachers.

▶ Make links with university student societies and offer training outside of class time.

▶ Run workshops and seminars at conferences where the audience will be made up of educational professionals.

Training Content

If research has been carried out with teachers and school staff, either locally or nationally, this can be used to inform the content of training. However, previous research and experience have shown that teachers tend to ask for support with the same issues, regardless of geographical location.

Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying

It is important to ask teachers to consider why homophobia and homophobic bullying should be addressed, in order to allow them to explore the differences between other forms of bullying and the issues specific to homophobic bullying.

Key to this discussion can be the recognition that most schools will experience low disclosure rates of homophobic bullying, and the reasons for this, which may include:

▶ Fear of rejection by school staff.

▶ Fear of being outed to parents.

▶ Fear that disclosing bullying will label them as LGBT.

▶ Fear of reactions to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Supporting LGBT Young People

Teachers often have questions around how to directly support young people who come out or are openly LGBT. Training can provide participants with space to practice appropriate responses. Some key principles to cover are:

▶ Open and non-judgemental responses.

▶ Reassuring teachers who feel anxious.

▶ Reassuring teachers that they do not need all the right answers.

▶ Providing appropriate signposting information.

▶ Issues of confidentiality.

Challenging Colleagues

Not all teachers and school staff will support actions to challenge discrimination and homophobia within education. Teachers who do attend trainings may have anxieties and concerns about how to challenge homophobic attitudes amongst their peers.

Allowing the participants space to discuss their anxieties and providing motivation by explaining that homophobia anywhere in the school will undermine all equality, diversity and anti-discrimination work is useful to inspire approaches to challenging colleagues.

Talking About Homophobia and LGBT Issues in the Classroom

Many teachers who attend the training will want to promote equality within their classrooms and challenge homophobia when it happens. This can be daunting for teachers, regardless of the level of support and leadership offered by principle teachers and ministry officials. Training should address concerns that teachers have, such as:

▶ How to be sensitive to LGBT students who may be in the classroom.

▶ Dispelling the myth that raising awareness would aggravate or make the situation worse.

▶ Dispelling concerns that talking about diversity will impact the sexual orientation or gender identity of students.

▶ Methods to include LGBT issues and homophobia into existing curriculum and themes within classrooms.

Teachers should be reassured that they do already have the skills to deliver lessons on a range of sensitive topics, as they already do, and that these new topics should be treated in the same way. In cases where teachers do not have the support of their head teachers, the training should include advice on how to use a human rights approach during lessons. This should contribute to reducing anxiety around challenging the general ethos of discrimination.

LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

05.

This project involved young people in Scotland and Slovenia who demonstrated how exclusion, homophobia and bullying impact their daily lives, regardless of geographical location.

The outcome has been a Charter of Rights, which is presented in this section.

05 Listening to Young People

LGBT Youth Scotland and Legebitra are youth-focused organisations, who ensure young people are at the heart of all their work. Similarly, within the European Commission the inclusion and importance of youth participation is discussed in many documents, including The White Paper on Youth, which was adopted in November 2001.

The White Paper contained a proposal to the member states to increase cooperation in four youth priority areas including participation. It also proposed that member states and the European Commission make a greater effort to take youth dimensions into account when developing other relevant policies, such as education and training, employment and social inclusion, health and discrimination .

The project involved young people in both Scotland and Slovenia, who helped to illustrate how exclusion, homophobia and bullying impact on the daily lives of LGBT young people, regardless of geographical location. This has led to the development of a Charter of Rights, which is presented in this section.

Methodology

One of the key principles of this project has been the participation and consultation of young people. Through this involvement we aimed to achieve five main outcomes:

▶ Increase knowledge of the experiences of LGBT young people in Scotland and Slovenia;

▶ Compare the realities of LGBT young people living in different countries;

▶ Increase the skills of young people to consult with and represent the voices of their peers;

▶ Increase the knowledge that LGBT young people have about their rights in relation to education;

▶ Produce a charter of rights document researched and written by young people.

The project was split into three key areas:

1. Youth training

2. Youth consultation

3. Charter development

14 young people came together to share experiences and learn how to develop peer led research – the results supported the findings of the research.

Youth Training

The project partners identified key methods to provide young people with the skills, knowledge and opportunities needed to represent the views of their peers, based on their knowledge of youth work, peer education and participation theory.

Then 7 young people were recruited in both Scotland and Slovenia and undertook 36 hours of training. The training covered the following themes:

▶ homophobia and education,

▶ peer education skills, and

▶ consultation development.

This training equipped the young people with a comprehensive knowledge of homophobia, how it can manifest itself in education, and barriers and solutions to inclusion. The training also increased their skills in peer education, using facilitation and non-formal education techniques and representing information.

150 young people took part in the peer led research, using face-to-face methods, online collections and phone interviews.

Youth Consultation

After they completed their training, the young people set out to design a consultation to gather the views of their peers. This was administered differently in each country, reflecting the different realities of engaging with LGBT young people in each country. With young people in Scotland being more directly accessible, the group chose a face-to-face approach, whilst Slovenia opted for online consultations.

The Scottish group elected to consult with 100 young people via a national event for LGBT young people with face-to-face interviews, a short questionnaire to examine top themes and a graffiti wall to gather ideas, solutions and experiences.

In comparison, the Slovenian group developed a more extensive questionnaire, which was delivered to 50 peers via social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Bebo) and email. A small number of interviews were also conducted over the phone.

Charter Development

In August 2010 the Scottish group of young people travelled to Slovenia to meet with their counterparts there and share their findings from the project. Together the group identified common themes in their findings as follows:

▶ LGBT young people in both countries were experiencing high levels of homophobic bullying at school;

▶ LGBT young people in both countries felt that schools were not adequately equipped or prepared to deal with homophobic bullying;

▶ LGBT young people in both countries felt there was a lack of relevant information that addressed their needs: this included sexual health information and links to local LGBT youth services;

▶ LGBT young people in both countries felt under-represented within their national curriculum;

▶ LGBT young people in both countries had a low awareness of their right to education as young people.

As a result of these key themes, the young people developed the *LGBT Young Person's Charter of Rights*.

The Charter details the provisions education institutions should make in order to guarantee LGBT young people the right to an inclusive education.

LGBT Young Person's Charter of Rights

1. LGBT young people have the right not to be discriminated against.

Every student should be treated equally regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, family and other backgrounds.

2. LGBT young people have the right to learn.

All students have the right to be taught by teachers trained & informed on issues relating (but not limited) to:

▶ homophobia and discrimination

▶ respect of privacy and identity

▶ LGBT culture and histories

All students should be taught about issues including:

▶ LGBT families,

▶ relevant sexual health and relationships education,

▶ homophobia and discrimination,

▶ LGBT culture and histories.

These topics should be a core part of the curriculum.

3. LGBT young people have the right to be safe and protected.

LGBT students should not be subject to any forms of harm including:

▶ physical injury

▶ emotional damage

▶ institutional prejudice

All students should have access to counsellors in schools. These counsellors should be fully trained to deal with issues resulting from homophobia and harm outlined above.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse should be dealt with seriously, just as any other form of identity-based abuse would be (e.g. racism).

4. LGBT young people have the right to be themselves.

All school environments should be inclusive. LGBT students should have the same rights and restrictions as non-LGBT students - this may include:

▶ Same sex couples attending school dances and events;

▶ Same sex couples permitted to hold hands, show affection in line with rules for opposite sex couples;

▶ Same sex parents being welcomed to parents' evenings and treated with respect;

▶ Images of diverse communities (including LGBT identities) displayed around the school.

We believe all students should have the freedom to choose to wear clothing appropriate to their gender identity and expression.

5. LGBT young people have the right to information.

Students should have access to resources and information on sexual orientation, gender identity and sexual health.
Schools should provide a signposting service for LGBT students.

6. LGBT young people have the right to be represented.

LGBT students have the right to a voice in education and for that voice to be listened to and acted upon. This could be achieved by appointing a student representative in each school.

All students should be able to see their identities represented in images and information displayed around the school.

Final Statement

*Governments should take responsibility for ensuring schools
are properly implementing the points in this charter.*

06 Glossary of Terms

Biphobia	Biphobia is the dislike, fear or hatred of bisexual people.
Bisexual	A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to women and men.
Coming out	Acknowledging to yourself or to others that you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.
CPD	Continuing Professional Development.
Gay	A male who is emotionally and physically attracted to other males. Some girls and women prefer to refer to themselves as gay women rather than lesbian.
Gender	The socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (World Health Organisation).
Gender identity	A person's internal self-perception of their own gender.
Heterosexual	A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to people of the opposite sex. Also commonly referred to as straight.
Hetronormativity	Describes an environment where it is taken for granted that societies, systems, institutes and processes are constructed with the assumption that the people in them are heterosexual.
Homophobia	The dislike, fear or hatred of lesbian and gay people. It is often used to describe prejudice towards bisexual and transgender people too, but the terms Biphobia (the dislike, fear or hatred of bisexual people) and Transphobia (the dislike, fear or hatred of transgender people) are becoming more commonly used.
Homophobic bullying	Homophobic bullying is when a young person's actual or perceived sexual orientation/gender identity is used to exclude, threaten, hurt, or humiliate him or her.
Homosexual	A person who is emotionally or physically attracted to people of the same sex. Nowadays this term is rarely used by lesbians, gay men or bisexuals to define themselves as, historically, it has been used to medicalise or criminalise LGB people. The terms lesbian, gay and bisexual are generally preferable.

Institutionalised homophobia	Describes any kind of system of inequality based on the dislike, fear or hatred of LGBT people, leading to their unfair treatment. It can occur in public or private institutions such as public government bodies, businesses, education institutions, etc.
Internalised homophobia	Negative feelings about being gay, lesbian or bisexual. This can negatively affect the way people see themselves.
Lesbian	A female who is emotionally and physically attracted to other females.
LGBT	Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. An umbrella term commonly used in Scotland.
LGBTQ	Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer. An umbrella term commonly used in EU countries.
NGO	Acronym for Non-Governmental Organisation.
Out	Being open about one's sexual orientation or transgender identity.
Pride	Annual festival to celebrate being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
Sex	A person's biological sex includes not only their genitals but also their internal reproductive system, their chromosomes and their secondary sexual characteristics such as breasts, facial and body hair, voice and body shape.
Sexual orientation	A term used to describe a person based on who they are emotionally and physically attracted to. For example, a person who is attracted to the opposite sex might describe their sexual orientation as straight.
Sexuality	Everybody has a sexuality – this is a term which describes the ways in which people experience themselves as sexual beings and they ways in which they express this. It includes a person's sexual orientation, sexual practice and behaviour. It also involves cultural and social expectations and behaviours.
Straight	A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to people of the opposite gender. See heterosexual.
Transgender	This is an umbrella term used to describe a range of people whose gender identity or gender expression differs in some way from the assumptions made about them when they were born. Under the transgender umbrella are transsexual men and women, intersex people, androgyne/polygender people and cross dressers.
Transphobia	The dislike, fear or hatred of transgender people.
UNCRC	Acronym for United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

PARTICIPATING
COUNTRIES

Belgium
Interviews with representatives from LGBT NGOs

Czech Republic
Interviews with representatives from national government / equalities body

Finland
Interviews with representatives from both LGBT NGO and national government / equalities body

Germany
Interviews with representatives from both LGBT NGOs and national government / equalities body

Hungary
Interviews with representatives from LGBT NGO

Ireland
Interviews with representatives from LGBT NGO and national government / equalities body

Italy
Interviews with representatives from LGBT NGO and local government

Latvia
Interviews with national government / equalities body

Lithuania
Interviews with representatives LGBT NGO

Malta
Interviews with representatives LGBT NGO

Netherlands
Interviews with representatives from both LGBT NGO and national government / equalities body

Poland
Interviews with representatives from national government / equalities body

Portugal
Interviews with representatives from LGBT NGO and national government / equalities body

Slovakia
Interviews with representatives from LGBT NGO

Slovenia
Interviews with representatives from LGBT NGO

Spain
Interviews with representatives from both LGBT NGOs and national government / equalities body

Sweden
Interviews with representatives from LGBT NGO

UK
Interviews with representatives from both LGBT NGO and national government / equalities body