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Standing together: Action and advocacy against bullying

Report on the Joint Study Session of

OBESSU

Organising Bureau of European School Students' Unions

IGLYO

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer Youth & Student Organisation

In cooperation with the
European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Budapest, Hungary
3-8 March 2014



This report gives an account of various aspects of the Study Session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the Study Session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

Dear friends,

The following report summarises the learning objectives and methodology from the joint Study Session Standing together: action and advocacy against bullying. The Study Session was a collaboration between the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer Youth & Student Organisation ([IGLYO](#)) and the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions ([OBESSU](#)). The two organisations came together for this collaboration to build upon a long-lasting partnership, uniting school student activism with LGBTQ youth and student activism on the specific topic of bullying.

The report is structured according to the logic of the agenda. For each session, we explain the objectives that the Prep Team sought to achieve with each activity. We then summarise the activity, concluding with a description of the knowledge produced by the participants of Standing Together. Our participants were experts in their respective fields, and we attempted to capture the results of the rich collaboration in this report.

A key outcome of Standing Together is the revision of IGLYO's Guidelines on LGBTQ-Inclusive Education, a publication last updated in 2009. The revision was done after the event and it was ratified at OBESSU's General Assembly in August 2014.

Both IGLYO and OBESSU learned a lot from each and every participant, as well as from each other. The Council of Europe helped facilitate a fruitful collaboration between the two organisations, and we look forward to working together across sectors in the future.

All the best,
Standing Together Prep Team

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Introduction

Executive Summary

This Study Session, held jointly between the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions ([OBESSU](#)) and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation ([IGLYO](#)). Around 40 participants from 25 countries from all over Europe (see Annex 1) came to the European Youth Center in Budapest, Hungary, 2nd to 8th of March 2014. The name of the Study Session was “Standing together: action and advocacy against bullying” and the aims were to

- Build upon definitions and knowledge of Stop H8 Conference and OBESSU's Social Inclusion campaign to have a common understand of bullying;
- Create synergies and establish common strategies between LGBTQ activists and school student activists to combat bullying;
- Identify actors in national, regional, and supranational institutions that can have the greatest impact on bullying;
- Formulate national, cross-border, and international projects that address bullying;
- Develop concrete methods and strategies to combat bullying both within and outside the walls of formal education, which the participants can implement in their home organisations: Exchange of expertise and best practices between the two organisations;
- Revise and update the Guidelines on LGBTQ Inclusive Education, including an appendix on bullying that updates the Minimum Standards formulated at Stop H8.

During mostly interactive non-formal education sessions and with input from two guest speakers, the participants explored basic concepts of LGBTQ rights, school student activism, bullying and – most importantly – what can be done against it.

The participants quickly realised that there are vast regional disparities when it comes to the situation of LGBTQ rights, both legally and socio-culturally. They also discovered that there is room for further cooperation between LGBTQ organisations and school student unions; this was also reflected in the action plans in which several of them pointed this out as an explicit goal to take up upon return to the home organisation.

In the evaluation (see Annex 2), the participants showed that they were in general very satisfied with the event, especially with the participant-run workshops, with the guest speaker Shaun and the “Revising guidelines”.

Background OBESSU and IGLYO

OBESSU and IGLYO have cooperated in various ways in the past. Being involved in the field of education and LGBTQ rights, respectively, there is room for fruitful cooperation whenever there is a topic crossing both of these fields.

In April 2007, the two organisations came together and held the joint Study Session *Understanding, Developing and Implementing LGBT-inclusive Policies in Schools across Europe* in Strasbourg, France, and an outcome of that event was the [Guidelines for an LGBTQ-Inclusive Education](#). As will be shown below, these Guidelines were partly revised and updated at this Study Session.

Apart from that, there is sometimes ad hoc cooperation between the organisations regarding matters which concern them both. For example, in February 2014 they wrote a [joint reaction](#) to the *EU Roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity* (the “Lunacek report”).

IGLYO was also [officially supporting](#) OBESSU's campaign "[Education, we have a problem!](#)", a campaign on social inclusion in education which had a sub-topic related to sexual orientation and gender norms.

Background participants

The participants to this event came from both organisations' member organisations. Most (but not all) of the member organisations sent one participant, so in the end approximately half of the participants came from OBESSU and the other half from IGLYO. The member organisations of both OBESSU and IGLYO are already very diverse and heterogeneous, and mixing participants from both meant that the group of participants was very diverse. The geographical coverage was also wide, with participants from Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, **Kosovo**¹, Kyrgyzstan, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom. The IGLYO participants were generally a bit older, around 20-28 years old, than the OBESSU participants who were mostly around 17-19.

Aims and objectives of the Study Session *Standing Together*

The objectives of this event were:

- To establish a common understanding of bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity that builds upon existing definition and knowledge shared between IGLYO and OBESSU and the Council of Europe
- To share practice and expertise to develop cooperation between LGBTQ activists and school student activists
- To identify actors in educational settings at local, national and international level that can tackle bullying related to homophobic and transphobic bullying
- To develop concrete methods and strategies to combat bullying both within and outside formal education, which the participants can implement in their home organisations
- To revise and update the [Guidelines for an LGBTQ-Inclusive Education](#), including an appendix on bullying that updates minimum standards at "Stop H8".

¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

Programme

Below follows a summary of the different points on the agenda. It follows the agenda chronologically. The agenda of the Study Session can be found in annex 3.

1. Welcome Space

a) Objectives

The objectives of the welcome space were:

- To get to know each other
- To understand the logic of the Study Session
- To become familiarized with some of the basic concepts of the Study Session
- To recognise differences in knowledge and skills within the Study Session

b) Methodology/activity

The participants arrived in the Study Session space and were told by the Prep Team to discover the room. There were several different stations, including:

- Hopes/fears/expectations: Point out what you want from the Study Session; throughout the session, participants moved these elements into realized/dispelled/met.
- Stakeholders: Information about IGLYO, OBESSU and the Council of Europe
- Knowledge continuum: Place yourself on a line between 'I am an expert/I work in this area/I have a lot of experience' and 'I have a lot to learn/I'm new to this/I don't know much'; topics were sexual orientation and gender identity, school student activism, and bullying.
- Mount Standing Together: The agenda of the Study Session that shows the journey we would go on together.
- Mind maps: Free flow thought processes on flipcharts around the terms education, advocacy, bullying, and school student activism.
- Portrait envelops: Everyone teamed up and drew a portrait of their partner on an envelope, which was used for messages through the week.

c) Outcomes

We created a space for the week that showed the process we would go through, and we established some understanding of what each person could learn and what each person could contribute with.

The space was interactive, and we used the different stations to evaluate our learning throughout the week, particularly during the mid-term evaluation and the closing session.

2. Group scavenger hunt

a) Objectives

The objectives were:

- To get to know each other by working in teams on common challenges
- To get to know the European Youth Centre Budapest
- To build team dynamics

b) Methodology/activity

Everyone was split into groups using a creative method of animal noises. Then each group got a list of challenges to find as a group in the European Youth Centre. Challenges varied from tasks which made them get familiar with the house, such as finding out how many types of drinks they can get for breakfast or where is the computer room is, to tasks which made them work together and become a team, such as learning to pronounce a particular phrases in all the languages spoken in the group or coming up with a team name.

c) Outcomes

Participants got to know each other more, it was a great teambuilding activity and they got to know the environment in which they were staying the whole session. Though they did not know it at this time, these groups later became their reflection groups (home groups), contributing to the safe space to discuss the day.

3. Getting to know the organisations

a) Objectives

The objectives of this session were:

- To understand the structure, objectives and activities of IGLYO/OBESSU/Council of Europe
- To be aware of the process that led to the Study Session
- To have a basic awareness of the 2007 guidelines on inclusive education

b) Methodology/activity

The participants were split into three random groups, and each group got one of the three organisations to research: IGLYO, OBESSU, or the Council of Europe. Each group was provided with a list of specific questions, researched them, and prepared a short five-minute presentation. After the planning, the groups delivered their presentations and answered questions and gave further clarifications to the other participants.

c) Outcomes

Participants got a better understanding of the contexts of each of the three organisations, which allowed them to appreciate their objectives, and capacities to provide inputs and support over the activities of the following days.

A very short summary was:

- **OBESSU** is a school student union representing secondary school student unions on a European level. It was founded in 1975 in Dublin and currently has 24 Member and Candidate Organisations that are all national, independent, school student lead and active in academic secondary education and vocational education and training. It is led by a Board of four, with a Secretariat and office based permanently in Brussels.
- **IGLYO** is an international network for regional and national LGBTQ youth and student organisations. It has 86 member organisations across the Council of Europe Member States. It runs trainings and conferences, and represents LGBTQ youth and students to European policy-makers. An eight-person Board leads the organisation, supported by a two-person Secretariat based in Brussels.
- **Council of Europe** is a European intergovernmental organisation to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law in its 47 Member States. The Youth Department focuses on the realisation of the enjoyment of their human rights by young people through policy development, Youth Participation and Human Rights Education. The Council of Europe also have a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit. The Council of Europe is based in Strasbourg, France, but has offices in several European member states

4. Terminology on sexual orientation and gender identity

a) Objectives

The objectives were:

- To gain an understanding of some of the basic terms used when discussing sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
- To understand that gender norms and the gender binary (as well as other binaries) are not fixed categories, but socially constructed.

b) Methodology/activity

- The participants were given a copy of the "Genderbread person", and the various terms on the bread person explained what this is².
- The room was used as a spectrum, with two opposite walls reflecting opposite ends of a spectrum, the categories being Woman – Man, Feminine – Masculine, Female – Male and Heterosexual - Homosexual

² See <http://danspeaksup.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/genderbread-person.jpg>

- The participants were asked to position themselves for each of the four spectra of the Genderbread person. There was also an option to stand outside of the spectrum if participants disagreed with the spectrum itself.
- For each discussion point, the participants on different positions in the spectrum (or standing outside the spectrum) were asked to share the reasons for their choice of position with the group, which led to a stimulating discussion.

c) Outcomes

The following points were discussed and brought up during the discussions. The findings presented are the broad conclusions that came out of the categories in question.

- **Gender identity:** the binary can be exclusive and this distinction (boys vs. girls) happens regularly in education, but gender is not as simple as this. Gender can be a political statement for some people rather than solely an identity (e.g. standing up to defend women's rights).
- **Gender expression:** this is often linked to socially constructed gender stereotypes which differ from one country/society to another, and is therefore highly dependent on the context.
- **Biological sex:** there was a much clearer division to opposite sides of the spectrum than in the other categories. After a group discussion, it was concluded that division shows how strongly medicine and society have imposed this specific binary, which does not reflect reality.
- **Sexual orientation:** there was a much clearer division to opposite sides of the spectrum than in the other categories, and again after a group discussion it was concluded that this shows how strongly medicine and society have imposed norms with regards to sexual orientation
- All of the four categories (gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, sexual orientation) are depicted as spectra because they reflect a broader, socially constructed and enforced binary

5. Terminology on bullying

a) Objectives

The objectives were:

- To understand the main elements and definitions of bullying
- To examine and build upon the currently accepted definitions, while considering aspects that are specific to bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity
- To have a common understanding of bullying for use within the Study Session

b) Methodology/activity

- The participants were split into groups, and provided with three definitions of bullying, one of which was elaborated by participants at IGLYO's "Stop H8" conference in Oslo (June 2013). The definitions are provided below.
- Each group was asked to look at the three different definitions and come up with their own definitions, providing any changes, amendments or additions.
- Finally, the participants were asked to brainstorm on how bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity differs from other forms of bullying.

The three definitions provided were the following:

UNESCO definition

"A student is bullied when s/he is exposed repeatedly over time to aggressive behaviour that intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort through physical contact, verbal attacks, fighting or psychological manipulation. Bullying involves an imbalance of power and can include teasing, taunting, use of hurtful nicknames, physical violence or social exclusion. A bully can operate alone or within a group of peers"³.

³ This definition comes from UNESCO, see <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/health-education/homophobic-bullying/>. It is also the definition used by IGLYO.

Bullying often targets real or perceived differences and involves unwanted interactions between people, instigated by bullies, who lack empathy and evoke vulnerability. There exists a power dynamic that cannot be changed by the bullied student.

*Language note: refer to bullied or exposed person instead of 'victim', due to passive connotation.

The Olweus definition

"A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."

National Bullying Prevention Center (United States)

- The behaviour hurts or harms another person physically or emotionally.
- The targets have difficulty stopping the behaviour directed at them, and struggle to defend themselves.
- Many definitions include a statement about the "imbalance of power", described as when the student with the bullying behaviour has more "power", either physically, socially, or emotionally, such as a higher social status, is physically larger or emotionally intimidating.

c) Outcomes

After the discussions, the participants agreed most with the UNESCO/IGLYO definition of bullying. They also agreed that bullying is based on norms, and what society considers "normal"; and that bullying does not only apply to school students, but to the entire school community, including staff members.

LGBTQ-phobic bullying:

- All forms of bullying share common features, but different approaches (verbal, physical, cyberbullying, etc.) can make a difference.
- LGBTQ-phobic bullying is based on socially constructed norms and stereotypes, and is therefore part of daily language (e.g. the norm that all people must be straight, hence legitimising terms offensive such as 'faggot' or 'dyke', or more commonly 'that's so gay' used in a negative way, to imply something is wrong or 'not cool') as well as education (if they remain unchallenged, norms are reinforced and perpetuated through education).
- It involves assumptions that are based on gender expression
- There is often lack of support at school as well as at home for students who are bullied on the basis of real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, as being LGBTQ is still considered taboo in many countries
- As a result of the lack of support, LGBTQ learners can find it difficult to open up because family, society, religion and even schools are often "shutting the door" on them

6. Human rights education

a) Objectives

The objectives of this session were:

- To experience non-formal methodology that is used to discuss human rights principles
- To understand the value of a human rights approach
- To recognize non-formal education as an effective method to teach human rights education

b. Methodology/activity

- "Star of me": Everyone wrote down characteristics about themselves on a six-pointed star. The group then mingled with each other and shared the stars. Whenever someone matched with someone else, the participants wrote their name next to that attribute.
- "Wall of Identities":
 1. Using the identity aspects from the star, as well as other identities that we recognize in society, the participants wrote down characteristics on different coloured bricks. The bricks were stuck onto a service forming a wall. Then everyone discussed what walls do: they support, keep in, keep out, protect, exclude, provide shelter, are built to last, can be torn down, serve as art,

separate, etc. Finally, the participants pointed out that the wall of identities actually performs the same function.

2. Next, we looked at the unlabelled white bricks on the wall of identity. As a group, we discussed the parts of society that are not identities, but that still create the wall. Medicine, education systems, media, government, religion, cultural rites, courts, etc. were all mentioned as examples of this.
3. Finally, we looked at ways to change the wall to make sure it still performs the good functions while minimizing the bad functions. From a human rights perspective, it is not ethical to try to change someone's identity, but you can change the systems in society (i.e., the white bricks). The participants provided various suggestions that could take away the white bricks in the wall. After a number of suggestions were made, we saw a door through the wall, and another wall in the distance.

c) Outcomes

Some of the "white bricks" that could be removed were, according to the participants, the following: changing the education system, promoting critical thinking, ensuring that good health care is available to everyone, promoting transparency and better government policies, promoting diverse families, promoting positive legislation as well as good implementation of legislation, and increase media awareness

After this exercise, the participants had:

- A better understanding of how our identities are socially constructed, and that the categories often change depending on who we want to include/exclude;
- A better understanding of the human rights approach to social change;
- Acquired a better knowledge of the human rights framework and its origins;
- Recognized the limitations that exist in the human rights framework

7. Regional realities/common challenges

a) Objectives

The objectives of this session were:

- To explore the regional realities regarding homophobic and transphobic bullying in different parts of Europe;
- To understand there are no given borders between regions in Europe and that we are all striving for the same aim;
- To discover what the issues other organisations are facing are and to share one's own organisational and personal experience.

b) Methodology/activity

The participants were divided into regional groups according to the country their organisation was based in. They were given guiding questions to get them thinking along the lines of LGBTQ rights in different regional realities, and every group was asked to perform a play based on the regional discussions. A debriefing with the whole group took place after the plays to give everyone a chance to share their reflections on whether regional realities exist, but also on what the common struggle is in Europe.

The session continued after a break, looking more into organisational background. A yes-and-no line exercise was done, where participants placed themselves according to how they answered a question. The aim was to get everyone to think about how organisational approaches might be different (or not different) according to regions. Each participant was then given an individual form to fill in. The questions in the form focused on how the different organisations deal with the same issues, how they can combine their forces and how they can efficiently reach out to schools.

After this, a silent floor method looking at different aspects of organisational work that took place. Different places around the room where for instance "Who does my organisation represent?", "Has my organisation worked with bullying before?" and "What is the most successful campaign/project my organisation has done?". A discussion on the different aspects of doing LGBTQ-activism in education wrapped up the session.

c) Outcomes

After this discussion it was clear that there were many different regional differences. In the Nordic countries, same-sex marriage, is allowed by law, but there are still problems with intersex. Also, in some rural communities there can be a lot of intolerance, sometimes related to religion. In the UK and Ireland, the laws that are in place are good but the implementation of the laws and education around it is very poor. Some religious schools tend to reject LGBT education programmes. In Georgia, Armenia, Turkey, Albania and Kosovo the governments have started to pay attention to LGBT issues after pressure from the EU. Social situation can still be violent and the LGBT community is still under development. In Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania and Estonia, the minorities try to organise initiatives like pride events, but are not supported by their societies. Estonia was an exception here, as the only country where the LGBT community receives some support for its work. The group with France, Switzerland, Belgium and Austria was the most diverse one. In France LGBT is still difficult and not talked about; Switzerland is more open to discuss the topic, but it is still a challenge; in Belgium and Austria LGBT rights are widely accepted and part of society and part of the work of student unions. The Swiss adoption of same-sex couples is still heated issue and in Belgium the legislation already makes it easier to have parental rights. The group with Portugal, Spain, Greece and Italy was split in two; in Portugal and Spain there is more LGBT acceptance, while Italy and Greece are more conservative with a stronger influence of religion in both education and wider society. The debriefing showed that while there are very real regional differences, there are also similarities. For example, the presence of religious fanaticism is clearly a problem and even in places where the situation is relatively tolerant there is a clear lack of gender binary discussions.

When discussing which approaches are the most suitable ones for taking action, one frequently mentioned answer – shared by school student activists and LGBTQ activists alike – was the human rights approach.

8. Mapping actors

a) Objectives

The objectives of this session were:

- To become familiar with the actors involved in changing the educational environment;
- To recognize the ways to access and influence actors in the education field.

b) Methodology/activity

The participants first brainstormed about which actors in our society can and do tackle bullying. After that, participants were split in five smaller groups and each group was assigned an actor: school, ministry of education, school student union, LGBTQ organisation and DG Justice (European Commission). After analysing these actors and their involvement for 20 minutes, the groups were mixed so that each group was composed of all the actors and they discussed how together they can tackle and solve bullying. After that, each group presented the outcomes to the plenary.

c) Outcomes

Even though many participants have worked with any of these actors before, the idea of being stronger together had not necessarily occurred to them or their organisations. Also, some of them did not cooperate or worked only on a local level, so this gave them a possibility to explore larger collaborations.

From the group presentations we could note the following:

Feedback to the institutions on European level about the success of implementation

It is important to ensure the safety of all school students before you can tackle bullying; this is not only important but actually essential in some regional realities.

Lobbying, advocacy and public campaigns on an EU level by European-level organisations and institutions are essential to have an international impact.

There is a clear need for strategic planning and coordination on European level. For example, the EU can cooperate with both national and international NGOs through funding projects, which can help to change the international environment.

National level

National government can also fund, but also cooperate by parliamentary hearings, involving relevant NGOs on government reports or policy papers

Inter-NGO and civil society-government cooperation is essential

EU-National Level to school level

International recommendations made by institutions such as the EU, Council of Europe, the United Nations or others, must be accepted by national-level ministers if they are to have any impact. As shown in the discussion on regional differences, mentioned above, there are many regions where the situation looks good "on paper" but where the implementation is clearly lacking.

The recommendations must also be implemented on school level; similarly to how the international level must implement what has been recommended on international level, the local school level must implement what has been recommended on national (or international) level.

Any organisation working to improve the LGBT situation should cooperate with school student unions as a partner when implementing projects.

To sum up the whole session: there is today a lack of cooperation between different levels when it comes to the implementation of well-intended but not far-reaching recommendations. The trainings and knowledge transfer is essential when it comes to cooperation between different actors; between international and national level, between national and local level, and between school student unions and LGBT organisations and probably other actors as well.

9. Expert sessions

a) Objectives

The objectives of this session were:

- To present examples from people working on homophobic and transphobic bullying and inspire and motivate participants;
- To show concrete examples of what is being done and what participants can do in their context

b) Methodology/activity

Two guests, Shaun Dellenty from [Inclusion For All](#) and Peter Dankmeijer from the Global Alliance for LGBT Education ([GALE](#)) each presented themselves, their work, projects and best practices in 45 minutes. This was followed by a joint Q&A session. Peter presented the project Right to Education which could help our participants to analyse the situation in their country and to see how that can be changed. Shaun showed them the perspective from inside the school, how he as a teacher was able to make a change and how he is still doing it not only in his school but outside as well.

c) Outcomes

- Participants were able to see successfully implemented processes that engaged different actors
 - In particular, participants saw the way teachers can be drivers of change and inclusion, and recognised the need to change their minds and attitudes
- Download the presentation from GALE [here](#).

10. Intro to advocacy

a) Objectives

The objectives to this session were:

- To get an understanding of advocacy
- To compare the European-level advocacy of IGLYO and OBESSU

b) Methodology/activity

First there was a brief plenary discussion about advocacy, settling on the idea that advocacy is presenting a problem and then providing a solution for that problem, targeting decision-makers. IGLYO then presented how the organisation gathered information from young LGBTQ activists, translated that information into policy objectives, and presented positions to the relevant decision-makers. IGLYO used the example of the launch of its "anti-bullying materials" at the European Parliament in January 2014, which began at a conference with 40 young people.

OBESSU presented its current European Parliament election campaign, through which potential Members of the European Parliament who were committed to school student activists were targeted and contacted.

In groups composed of school student activists and LGBTQ activists, the participants analyzed different scenarios that could happen and for each scenario they were given one task: "Please outline the different steps you would take and which actors within the education sector that you would contact in order for your advocacy to reach the best possible solution".

Scenario I:

A group of students at your secondary school wants to set up a Gay Straight Alliance – an extra-curricular group of students that meets to provide a safe space for LGBTQ students and to discuss ways to promote inclusion. At your school, student groups must be sponsored by a teacher.

Please describe the steps you would take to convince a **teacher** to sponsor the Gay Straight Alliance at your school.

Scenario II:

At your school, an optional course in advanced computer training is being offered. However, the course costs 100€ to attend. Students have said that they want to attend the course, but that they cannot afford the fee.

Please describe the steps you would take to convince a **principal or school administrator** to remove the fee from the course.

Scenario III:

Your country has a large linguistic minority, but education is only taught in the official language of the country. Teachers and administrators will not use the minority language, even though some of the teachers and administrators speak both languages.

Please describe the steps you would take to convince a **legislator** (law maker) to pass a law for inclusive linguistic education in your country.

Scenario IV:

In your country, science textbooks have inaccurate information about sexual orientation and gender identity. They label some of the identities as unnatural and suggest that there is a 'cure.' Science class is the only time that sexual orientation and gender identity are discussed.

Please describe the steps you would take to convince **your government** to change the textbooks.

c) Outcomes

The main understanding from the discussions that followed after the group work was that the participants got a better understanding of how objective-driven advocacy is *targeted at specific stakeholders* who can enact the desired change.

Here the participants also noticed the idea that there are complementary types of activism and that each group of activists can bring in their certain experiences, expertise and contacts in order to make a change – and that these complimentary types must work together. The most obvious example is of course cooperation between school student activists and LGBT activists, which, together with what had been discussed at the previous sessions, made a lot of sense to the participants. With cooperation between school student activists and LGBT activists being an overall aim of the whole Study Session, this realisation was a very welcome one.

11. Participant-run workshops

To further showcase the work done by participants and their expertise, two parallel participant-run workshops were held.

“Working Towards the Ideal School”

a) Objectives

The objectives were:

- To familiarise the participants with methods of how to approach schools and do anti-LGBTQ bullying work in schools.
- To create a vision for the ideal LGBTQ-inclusive school and brainstorm how to achieve it

b) Methodology/activity

- Presentation of Flemish LGBTQ organisation Cavaria’s work in Belgian schools;
- Presentation of useful multimedia and printed materials;
- Discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of conducting work in schools;
- Discussion on the importance of adopting different approaches to different kinds of schools;
- Brainstormed on the ideal school by drawing a schoolhouse and writing one quality of the ideal school in each of its windows;
- Participants sharing what they had learned and how they would take action in their own organisational contexts after the session;
- Wrap-up and conclusions.

c) Outcomes

- It was agreed that there is still a lot of homophobia and transphobia from school students, teachers and headmasters in schools around Europe.
- Suggested actions in schools include: Training for trainers; lessons and assemblies in schools
- Potential partners include: educational publications, LGBT groups, educational umbrella organisations, school book publishers, other non-profit organisations;
- The participants further agreed that the objective of working in schools was to break through heteronormativity and to create more gender awareness;
- Strengths include: reaching out to all kinds of people (in educational institutions), providing basic info, creating visibility;
- Qualities of the brainstormed ideal school were:
 - o Non-gender binary
 - o Culturally inclusive
 - o Inclusive language
 - o Education on citizenship to learn democracy and tolerance
 - o Critical thinking on issues such as social determinism, family etc.
 - o No stereotypes
 - o Safe space for all
 - o Equality
 - o Free education, available to all (with no hidden costs)
 - o Student councils included in decision making processes
 - o Fun
 - o Interactive evaluation
 - o internationally agreed-upon general standards
 - o Open-minded
 - o Good student-teacher communication
 - o Non-formal education
 - o Prepares you for life
 - o One participant concluded: “We are already lobbying the government but today I realised we should approach book publishers too”

Conclusions:

The arguably most important conclusion from this session was that it is important to work together, which, as can be seen above, was an outcome from several sessions. Those who wish to bring about a change in the environment surrounding them must search for allies in individuals, politicians, non-profit organisations, students and others.

Trans* 101

a) Objectives

The second participant-run workshop was called "Trans* 101" and the objectives of this workshop were:

- To familiarise the participants with basic terminology and definitions related to trans identities;
- To increase participants' awareness of issues faced by the trans community

b) Methodology/activity

- Presentation of key terminology, definitions and concepts (please feel free to email George (george@iglyo.com) if you would like a copy of the presentation);
- Gender stereotypes activity: participants were asked to think about a specific time where they were told not to do something, or that it was wrong, because of their gender (boy/girl);
- Scenarios exercise: in groups, participants were given specific scenarios and asked to discuss how they would respond if in the given situation.

c) Outcomes

- Transgender issues affect everyone, at some point in life told to conform to specific gender roles/stereotypes;
- Gender binary imposes the necessity for only male/female - forces intersex individuals to be 'boxed into' a category, most frequently without their consent, when they are an infant just after birth;
- Become an ally: get to know the person, refer to them in the right pronoun - the one they prefer (or if you are not sure, avoid pronouns), do not make assumptions, do not ask about medical treatment, surgeries, "real" names, or about people's genitals, respect people's privacy, do not expect everyone to be an open encyclopaedia, do not ask inappropriate comments, respect people's identity, and finally ask yourself: "Would I say/ask this if they were a cis (not trans) person?"

12. Revising Guidelines on LGBTQ-inclusive Education

a) Objectives

At this point, the whole Study Session was getting close to the end and it was time to get into one of the main objectives of the whole event. The concrete objectives were:

- To become familiar with the Guidelines for LGBTQ-inclusive education;
- To obtain feedback from participants in order to update the Guidelines, following the release of the Minimum Standards to combat homophobic and transphobic bullying

b) Methodology/activity

- Printed copies of the guidelines were spread across the room and all participants were given time to briefly look over them, leaving any notes/ideas;
- Participants were then split up into several groups and asked to discuss between 1-3 specific guidelines (guidelines were assigned to groups thematically, so guidelines with a similar theme were grouped together);
- Each group revised the guideline(s) assigned to them;
- "Ideas boulevard": the revised guidelines from each group were displayed in plenary, allowing the participants to have time for a second and final round of input and feedback;
- Each group reconvened and finalised their guideline(s) based on the final feedback;
- Groups presented their final, revised guideline(s).

c) Outcomes

- The revised guidelines are now [available online](#). Printed copies will be available at a later stage. Please contact the IGLYO Secretariat for information about this.

13. School student activism

a) Objectives

The objectives of this session were:

- To understand what school student activism is and why school student representation is important on many different levels;
- To understand the basic values and aims bringing European school student activists together;
- To explore ways in which LGBTQ-activists can co-operate with school student activists when working on issues concerning both groups.

b) Methodology/activity

The session started with defining a few core concepts to shift the thinking in the right direction. The concepts were among others: early school leaving, vocational education and training, student council, PISA and learner centred approaches. After this, the participants were split into separate groups – there were four groups with participants with OBESSU background, and four groups of participants with IGLYO background. The groups were asked to discuss and try to answer the questions:

- What are the strengths we have as a school student unions or LGBTQ organisations in tackling bullying?
- Who can we reach out further?
- How can we co-operate with each other (i.e. with “the other” group)?

After this, the groups were paired up so that each IGLYO group would sit down with an OBESSU group. This way, they could compare their answers and discuss how to cooperate when tackling bullying and what their different strength could be if working together. Presentations and discussions with the whole group followed.

c) Outcomes

The participants realized that both groups have many advantages and that both do a great job in tackling bullying, but that there are many new ways open once they start working together. School students have a direct link to schools, their peers listen to them and they know both the school system and the problems that exist well. LGBTQ activists, on the other hand, are the real experts on the topic and they know how to educate people about the issue and how problems can be tackled. The LGBTQ groups also realised the basic ideas of school student activism, which many of them did not know much about prior to this Study Session. They also got a better understanding about why it is important for groups within the education system to work and understand LGBTQ issues. Finally, both groups got ideas on how to cooperate and hopefully carry out joint campaigns in the future.

14. Reflection & action planning

a) Objectives

Finally, it was time for the second-last session. The objectives of this session were:

- To reflect on key learning points and highlights throughout the Study Session;
- To develop personal action plans that contain strategies and methods to combat homophobic and transphobic bullying both within and outside of formal education, based on the learning throughout the week;
- To encourage LGBTQ activists to work with school student activists in developing action plans.

b) Methodology/activity

- Participants were given time to reflect on their personal learning throughout the week, focusing on: what was the most important/interesting thing learnt, what was most shocking, what was most inspirational, and what was disappointing;

- Speed dating: participants were given time to speak briefly, one-to-one in a structured manner and feedback on their own personal reflections;
- Action planning ideas: participants brainstormed based on the following questions: Which problem do I want to address? What is my target audience? What changes do I hope to see? How is change expected to come about? What means will I use to influence my audience? What resources do I need (human, financial, material, etc...)?;
- "Minute of fame": participants were given 1 minute to present and "sell" their idea to the rest of the group, which could accept or reject the offer.
- The "RMSOS star" (Rights, Means, Space, Opportunity, Support) was applied by participants to their action planning ideas. The participants were asked to draw a star with one of the letters in each point of the star:
 - o **Right:** are my activities supported by my rights? Does the law support me?
 - o **Means:** will I have human and financial resources for my actions? If no, what can I do to receive that?
 - o **Space:** do I have a physical space to work in? Am I given space to participate in the relevant policy processes (if needed)?
 - o **Opportunity:** do I have the time to take action, do I have access to information and access to relevant events or processes?
 - o **Support:** do I have support among my peers, among decision-makers or among other NGOs? How can I use them?

The action plan was in the form of seven questions, where the participants could write in different ways what they are planning to do upon return to their respective home organisation. The questions were the following:

CONTEXT

What does/can my organisation (and/or I) do to address homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools?

OBJECTIVE

What can I and do I want to do when returning home from the study session?

KEY STEPS

What key steps do I need to take in order to reach my objective(s)?

STAKEHOLDERS

Are there any other stakeholders (groups, individuals, etc...) that I can or should contact/involve?

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

What are some of the key challenges I will face in reaching my objective(s)?

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

What can I do to mitigate or address the key challenge(s)

The answers were, of course, very different from organisation to organisation (and also individual to individual), and some answers also overlapped over several of the questions. However, a few trends could be seen. Here are a few things which came up under the different questions.

CONTEXT

Several participants wrote that as a first step they can add different activities – campaigns, trainings and others – to their internal work plans. Several of them realised that the topic of LGBTQ right, or working with school students, is not part of their "normal" work.

OBJECTIVE

Under this question there were, understandably, lots of differences between the OBESSU and IGLYO participants. The ones from OBESSU tended to reply that they would try to get homophobic bullying into their school student activism, while the IGLYO participants were more concerned about how to reach out to schools and be visible there.

KEY STEPS

Quite in line with the previous question, several IGLYO participants replied in the line of contacting a local school student organisation, and similarly some OBESSU participants replied among others finding a local LGBTQ organisation. The Icelandic participants were quite concrete and talked about doing a project together in Iceland, and the Finnish participants (all with OBESSU background) talked about establishing a youth LGBTQ organisation. (Apparently, where they came from there are LGBTQ organisations but no youth wings.)

STAKEHOLDERS

Apart from what has already been mentioned (LGBTQ organisations and school student unions), at least one participant wanted to reach out to teacher unions.

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

Sadly, many participants with IGLYO background reported that a big challenge is that it is downright dangerous to be an LGBTQ activist. This has also been mentioned in other places in this report. Also, even where it is not dangerous many governments are far from willing to work for LGBTQ rights. Another big challenge which is particularly true for trans rights is that there is a lot of ignorance out there and that even well-meaning people have a huge lack of knowledge on the issue.

For the OBESSU participants, challenges that were mentioned include being in an organisation with very different priorities than LGBTQ rights. After all, most organisations work according to annual work plans or something similar, where this particular topic might not be a priority at the moment. It might also be that other activists in a home organisation (Board members or others) are simply not interested enough.

Finally, referring back to the "KEY STEPS" above, a challenge can be that even when wanting to reach out to other organisations, they simply do not exist. Not every place in Europe has a well-developed school student union and/or LGBTQ organisation.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

The challenges mentioned above are very different from each other. If a country has a homophobic government, there are not so many things one can do to change the situation quickly. Instead, taking small steps can be a better way, for example contacting schools to explore future cooperation. Regarding the challenge of having a Board (or other internal structure) which is not interested in the topic, some mentioned having an internal training on the topic at the next Board meeting (or equivalent).

15. Closing

a) Objectives

The one objective of the very last session was:

- To provide a space for reflecting on the Study Session, on the learning as well as on the social aspects of the programme.

b) Methodology/activity

First, the participants walked through the Welcome Space (see "2. Welcome Space" above) – which had been posted on the wall throughout the event and which now become the Closing Space, and the participants could now reflect on how their hopes, fears, and expectations were met. They were able to see where they began and reflect on where we were now.

Next, the entire group stood in a circle. One person threw a ball, with a string attached to it, to another person while holding on to the end. The thrower then said a positive statement about the person to whom the ball was thrown. The tossing continued, with each person holding onto the string, until the group had heard from everyone. After this there was a reflection on how each participant's experience was connected to the experience of other participants. The facilitators then cut the string while participants held on to their piece. They were then able to tie it around their wrist, a bag, or something else.

c) Outcomes

- The participants saw the agenda as it had come together, recognizing how the different sessions fit into an overall learning process.
 - Everyone reflected on their own journey, and how the experience will affect their time back home.
- For more information on the evaluation outcomes, see Annex 2 below.

Conclusion

All in all, this must be considered a successful event. Looking at the evaluation, it is clear that the participants learned a lot during the event and looking at the action plans it is clear that several of them are planning to follow up in different respects, most notably (and unsurprisingly) by reaching out to “the other” group – LGBTQ organisations for OBESSU’s participants and school student organisations for IGLYO participants.

Despite these good aspects, one should not downplay the difficulties associated with organising an event with participants from two quite different organisations such as OBESSU and IGLYO. These difficulties have been explained both in the text above and in the evaluation in the annex. For future Study Sessions (or, for that part, any events) we still believe that cooperation can be very beneficial – after all, there are plenty of things that can be learnt from one another – but we also recommend that both organisations are careful with the preparation of the participants. When arriving to the event, it is important that all participants have some knowledge on both the topic as such, as well as knowledge about the organisation with which they will cooperate.

If the whole Study Session should be summarised into one short message, it would certainly be that in order to fight homophobic and trans- bullying, it is important to involve as many actors as possible – most notably LGBTQ organisations and school student unions, but preferably also other organisations or individuals who are interested in the topic.

Annex 1: Participant list

Name	Country of Residence	Organisation
Aleksander Gjørseter	Norway	IGLYO
Anna Cheishvili	Georgia	IGLYO
Arman Sahakyan	Armenia	IGLYO
Blrta Avdili	Kosovo ⁴	IGLYO
Daniela Prisacariu	Romania	IGLYO
Gabriela Bergan	France	IGLYO
Joshua McCormick	United Kingdom	IGLYO
Kaj Poelman	Belgium	IGLYO
Maria Lukina	Kyrgyzstan	IGLYO
Noah Keuzenkamp	United Kingdom	IGLYO
Penny Kaouni	Greece	IGLYO
Peter Miley Emil Nielsen	Denmark	IGLYO
Rafail Bilidas	Greece	IGLYO
Rui Seixas	Portugal	IGLYO
Sam Cairns	United Kingdom	IGLYO
Sevcan Gugumcu	Turkey	IGLYO
Stivi Shehu	Albania	IGLYO
Ugla Stefania Jónsdóttir	Iceland	IGLYO
Isabel Rosade Ribas	Spain	OBESSU
Lucia Ďurajková	Slovak Republic	OBESSU
Marcus Duch	Denmark	OBESSU
Hrefna Ósk Jónsdóttir	Iceland	OBESSU
Alexander Hoor	Austria	OBESSU
Rob O' Donnell	Ireland	OBESSU
Elsa Lengeler	Switzerland	OBESSU
Eemeli Rajala	Finland	OBESSU
Giuseppina Tucci	Italy	OBESSU
Gabriel Toth	Romania	OBESSU
Alexandra Wolf	Belgium	OBESSU
Margit Kajak	Estonia	OBESSU
Matic Matjašič	Slovenia	OBESSU
Robert Sellerup	Denmark	OBESSU
Carl Bjorkman	Finland	OBESSU
Mikko Saksanen	Finland	OBESSU
Eliott Pavia	France	OBESSU
Jordan Long	Belgium	Prep-team
Ida Kreutzman	Finland	Prep-team
Luke Shore	United Kingdom	Prep-team
Dasa Koribanicova	Slovakia	Prep-team
George Charonis	Greece	Prep-team

⁴ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

Annex 2: Summary of evaluation outcomes

An online evaluation was done right after the end of the event and it was filled in by 32 participants (16 from OBESSU and 16 from IGLYO). The main outcome was, quite unsurprisingly, and as has been mentioned in the text above several times, that the participants' knowledge on LGBTQ issues and school bullying increased. In general, their hopes and expectations were also met.

- One part of the evaluation was that the participants were asked to evaluate the individual sessions. On a scale from 0 to 10 ("least satisfied" to "most satisfied"), almost all of the average scores ended up somewhere between 7.0 and 8.0 – indicating that the participants were satisfied with the sessions but that there were also room for improvement. A few sessions, however, stuck out a bit. The question about "Workshops" was given the extraordinarily high average score of 9.48, meaning that there was almost an extreme satisfaction with this. The session on the last day, "Revising guidelines (group work on the Guidelines on LGBTQ Inclusive Education)" got an average of 8.28 and the session with the guest speakers (Peter from GALE and Shaun from Inclusion for All) got 8.50. Both of these are clearly above average. The only session going under 7.0 (disregarding some of the evening activities which were also evaluated) was "Mapping actors (world cafe method to discuss various decision makers)", with an average of 6.97.
- The last question was about "Overall evaluation of 'Standing together: action an advocacy against bullying'", which was rated an average of 7.97, which must be considered satisfactory.

Of course there was also space to fill in individual comments, in addition to the simple number given. While it is difficult to summarise a large number of diverse comments into a short text, here follows a few comments which are worth to point out.

- Regarding the session "Concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity", several participants commented that they found it too basic and that they would have liked to explore it further. This is maybe quite logical, since most of the IGLYO participants had quite a lot of knowledge on the topic while the OBESSU participants' knowledge was in most cases quite basic.
- The session "Terminology on sexual orientation and gender identity (Genderbread Person and discussion of norms)" got several comments pointing out that the level was too advanced for the relative inexperience that many of the participants had on the topic. One of them pointed out explicitly that the "gap of knowledge between obessu/iglyo participants was too big".
- The session "Regional realities (discussion of personal context with others from your region)" got a lot of comments, most of them pointing out in some way that they would have liked to have more time to further explore certain aspects of the discussion.
- There were many comments about the guest speakers; most of them stating their satisfaction with Shaun's presentation.
- The session called "Workshops" was, as pointed out above, very highly rated. In the comments field many participants pointed out especially the workshop called "Trans 101".
- Many comments were also given about the selection process. Some of them pointed out the lack of experience on LGBTQ issues from the sides of OBESSU participants.
- In the very last question, "Anything else you'd like to tell the Prep Team?", many participants said generally positive comments such as "it was amazing! Thank you, well done :D", "Thank you really much for organising this wonderful event. Now I will take home a lot of knowledge", "Thank you!!!", or simply "See you!"

Annex 3: agenda

 OBESSU <small>Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions</small>		Study Session - Standing together: action and advocacy against bullying					 IGLYO <small>International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation</small>	
2nd - 8th March 2015								
	2nd March Sunday	3rd March Monday	4th March Tuesday	5th March Wednesday	6th March Thursday	7th March Friday	8th March Saturday	
09:30 - 11:00	Arrival Day	Introduction	Unintentional bullying	Map the actors	Open space workshops	Action planning	Departure Day	
11:00 - 11:30		Coffee Break						
11:30 - 13:00		Teambuilding	Unintentional bullying and HRE	Actors sharing	Open space workshops	Needs & resource analysis		
13:00 - 14:30		Lunch						
14:30 - 16:00		Organisational settings	Who are we?	Free afternoon	Working on Guidelines	Action planning		
16:00 - 16:30		Coffee Break			Coffee Break			
16:30 - 18:00		Say what?	Common challenges		Working on Guidelines	Closing		
18:00 - 18:30		Home groups			Home groups			
19:00 - 20:00		Dinner			Dinner			
21:00 - 22:30	Welcome evening	Quiz night	Challenging stereotypes	No hate speech movement	Farewell party			