

Supporting LGBT Young People & Combating Homophobic & Transphobic Bullying in Education



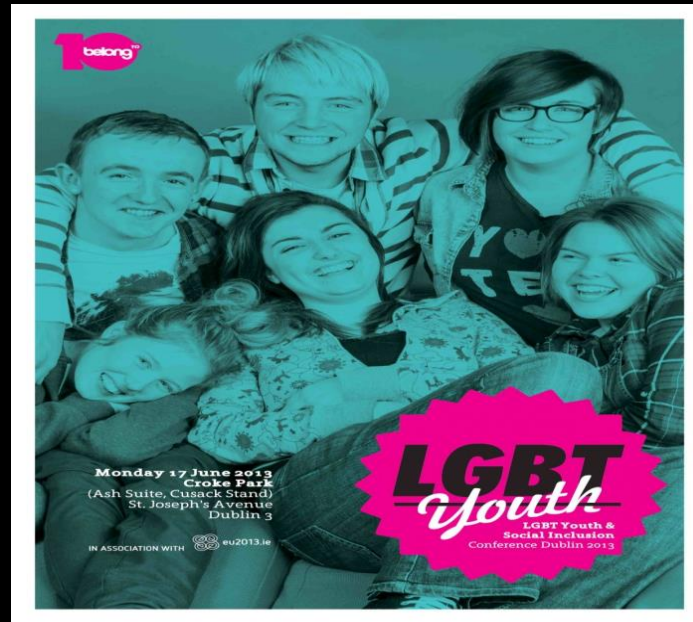
Twitter: [BeLonG_To](#) / [michaelnbarron](#)

Michael Barron, Executive Director
BeLonG To LGBT Youth Services, Ireland

(The National Organisation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Young People)

Background

Don't Stand For
Homophobic Bullying



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Overview

- Homophobic & Transphobic Bullying as a threat to the universal right to Education.
- The scale of the problem.
- Its consequences for young people.
- Good practice internationally
- Good practice from our work in Ireland .

Homophobic Bullying: A Threat to the Universal Right to Education



“Moral outrage, a grave violation of human rights and a public health crisis”

“It is also a loss for the entire human family when promising lives are cut short”

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon

Homophobic Bullying: A Threat to the Universal Right to Education



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees that students under 18 years of age are entitled to education without discrimination, including on grounds of sexual orientation

Homophobic bullying undermines the

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Universal right to education *as* reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights & the Millennium Development Goals

Recommendations of the Council of Europe on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2010, explicitly mention measures to be taken in the education field.

CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING IN DUBLIN, 6-7 DECEMBER 2012



Fifth trend: The rising level of discrimination against LGBT people.

Homophobic and transphobic bullying of LGBT young people in schools is of particular concern. Such bullying can seriously affect young people's education and health, and can be a causal factor in self-harm and attempted suicide. Such bullying is often compounded by lack of support from teachers and non-inclusive school curriculum.

Recommendations to the OSCE participating States

Take actions to provide for safe education for LGBT students and combat homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools.

The Scale of Homophobic Bullying

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Homophobic Bullying 2009

“People would try to feel me up in the corridors which was humiliating, especially when teachers saw & would ignore it. It was unnerving to have totally disgusting things said in my ear. It felt really degrading to be defined by all these gay sex jokes”



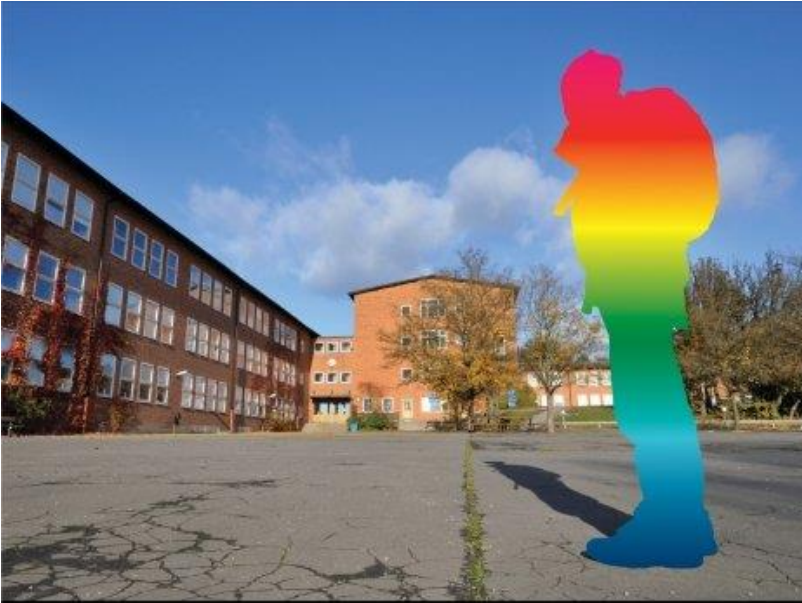
belong? is a Youth Service for Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Young People in Ireland
Parliament House, 11 Parliament Street, Dublin 2, Ireland. T: 01 670 6223 / www.belongto.org
Online support service at www.belongto.org. Friday 8-11pm, Saturday 11am-2pm, Sunday 8-10pm

The Scale of Homophobic Bullying


- UK – 90% teachers, 65 % LGBT students
- US – 84% LGBT Students
- Netherlands – 1/3 LGBT Students feel unsafe
- Ireland – 1/3 hear homophobia from teachers
- Europe – 61.2% experience discrimination in school

Consequences of Homophobic Bullying

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One In Five **LGBT** People
Skip School Because They
Fear Being Bullied.



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Consequences of Homophobic Bullying



EDUCATION

- Reduced school attendance
- Early school drop out
- Poor academic performance which can impact future employability/access to higher education

MENTAL HEALTH

- Depression
- Self harm
- Seriously thought of ending own life
- Attempted suicide

Homo/transphobic bullying and mental health:



LGBT young people:

59% experience verbal homophobic bullying in school

27% of LGBT People have self-harmed at least once.
25% of LGBT people have been physically threatened by other students

LGBT Young People who experience homophobic bullying are more likely to self harm and attempt suicide.

50% of LGBT people under 25 have seriously thought of ending their lives.
34% of LGBT people under 25 have attempted suicide.
20% of LGBT people under 25 have attempted suicide.

Responding to Homophobic Bullying

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Homophobic Bullying



Stand Up!
LGBT Awareness Week
5th - 11th March 2013

10 **belong^{TO}**

Celebrating 10 Years

BeLong^{TO} Youth Services
For Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Young People

Show Your Support
For Your Lesbian Gay Bise
& Transgender Friends

WITH AQA
THROUGH
AND SUELLAN

Responding to Homophobic Bullying: International

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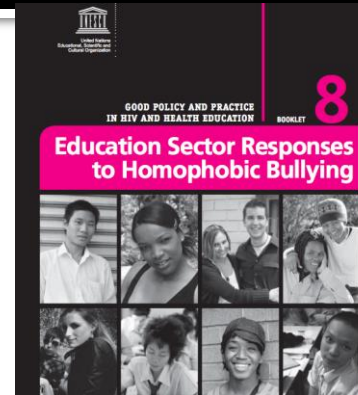


UNESCO Actions

- Global Consultation
- "Education Sector Responses to Homophobic Bullying"
- Global Gatherings – Rio 2011, Buenos Aires 2012, South Africa Conference 2013
- Regional actions – South America and Africa

UNESCO Recommendations

- The education sector response should be **both about preventing and addressing the issue of** homophobic/ transphobic bullying
- Importance of a **system-wide approach**
- UNESCO recommends to use a **rights-based approach** and **rights-based frameworks**



Responding to Homophobic Bullying: International



Rio Statement on Homophobic Bullying and Education for All:

- Safe school climates
- Access to accurate health and sexuality information
- Teachers and school staff prepared
- Mechanisms of periodic review

Responding to Homophobic Bullying

ILGA- Europe

- Building partnerships
- Conference on homophobic and transphobic bullying with Irish presidency of the EU
- **Advocacy work**
 - At national level
 - At European level
- **Capacity-building**

Responding to Homophobic Bullying

National Level Good Practice

- Anti-bullying policies in **Swedish** schools
- Pedagogical inspectors monitoring bullying in **UK**
- New students' statute prohibits discrimination on the grounds of SOGI in **Portugal**
- **France** to address gender stereotypes in curricula & textbooks

Responding to Homophobic Bullying in Ireland



Context

- Post Colonial – Republic since 1948
- Catholic Church influence
- Homosexuality Decriminalised in 1993
- + 90% primary school and + 60% High Schools are maintained by the Catholic Church

Responding to Homophobic Bullying in Ireland

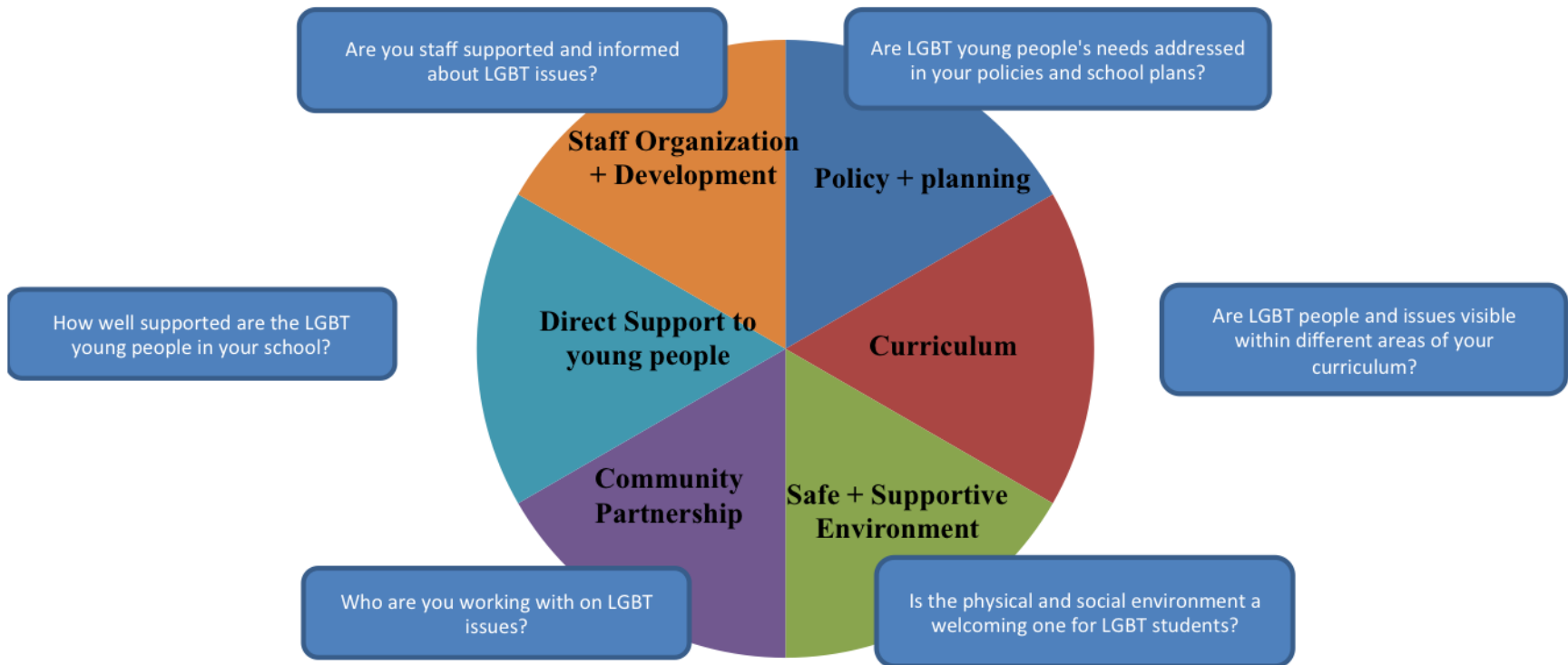


- School Level Responses
- Education Sector Responses
- National Policy Responses

Responding to Homophobic Bullying at School Level in Ireland

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Whole School Community Approach



Responding to Homophobic Bullying at Education Sector Level in Ireland



National
Association of
Principals &
Deputy Principals



New National
LGBT Curriculum



Stand Up! Don't
Stand for
homophobic or
transphobic
bullying



Teacher Training



Primary Schools –
teacher training
and piloting anti-
bullying
campaign



Show Your Support For Your
Lesbian Gay Bisexual
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Responding to Homophobic Bullying at National Policy Level in Ireland



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National Action Plan on Bullying

- School (religious) ethos cannot and should not be a barrier to preventing homophobic bullying and supporting LGBT youth.
- New mandatory national anti-bullying procedures for schools – including reporting on action each school takes to create cultures that are welcoming of LGBT young people and recording and reporting homophobic and transphobic incidents.
- Anti-bullying policies must name homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Schools must document reports of incidents of homophobic & transphobic bullying and gather that data so that they can identify trends in their school.
- Development of thematic LGBT inspections of schools by School Inspectorate.
- Financial support and co-branding for BeLonG To's Stand Up LGBT Awareness Week.

In conclusion

- Homophobic Bullying is “ *a grave violation of human rights*’
- It has detrimental affects on young people’s Education & life prospects
- It can result in young people losing their lives through suicide.
- There is national and international good practice in the OSCE region which can be adopted and applied at a country level.

Further Information



BeLong To Youth Services
Parliament House
13 Parliament Street
Dublin 2
IRELAND

Ph: + 353 1 670 6223
E: info@belongto.org
Web: www.belongto.org