

## Expert Consultation on Bullying and Cyberbullying

# UNESCO's work to support education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression and other forms of school-related violence

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# Outline for presentation

1. Why a focus on school-related violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression?
2. UNESCO's activities to support education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression
3. Other activities to address school-related violence including bullying



*‘Regularly people tell me I do not have the right to live.’*

Nikita, age 18, trans man, Russia



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## Why a focus on school violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression?

I am isolated completely in class.

My classmates show reluctance

to sit with me in class or to be

around me.

Amar, 17, Intersex, Nepal



# High prevalence of school violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression

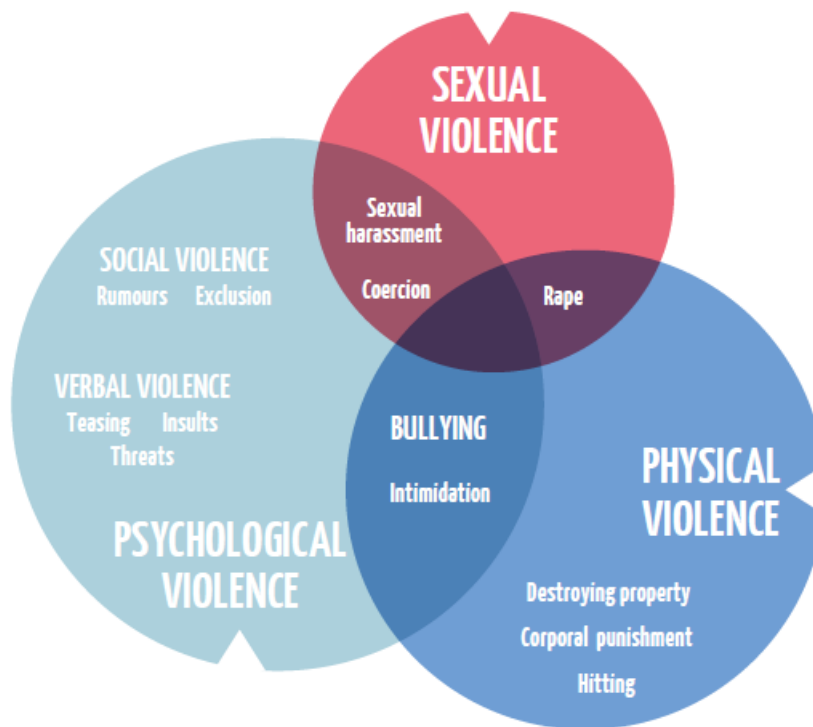
A significant proportion of **LGBT students experience homophobic and transphobic violence including bullying in school:**

- Southern **Africa**: 18.4% to 44.3%
- **Asia** / Thailand: 55%
- **Europe** / 28 countries: 68%
- **Latin America** / Mexico: 50-75%
- **North America** / USA: 85%
- **Pacific** / Australia: 61%

FIGURE 4

## MORE THAN BULLYING:

HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC VIOLENCE MANIFESTS IN A NUMBER OF WAYS



# High prevalence of school violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression

LGBT students report a **higher prevalence** of violence including bullying at school **than their non-LGBT peers**

e.g. New Zealand  
LGB = bullied weekly x 3  
T = bullied weekly x 5

## PREVALENCE OF BULLYING

REPORTED BY STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT SEXUAL ORIENTATION

7%

15%

24%

48%

HETEROSEXUAL

LESBIAN

BISEXUAL MALE

GAY MALE

Source: E. Roland & G. Aueslad, 2009[10]

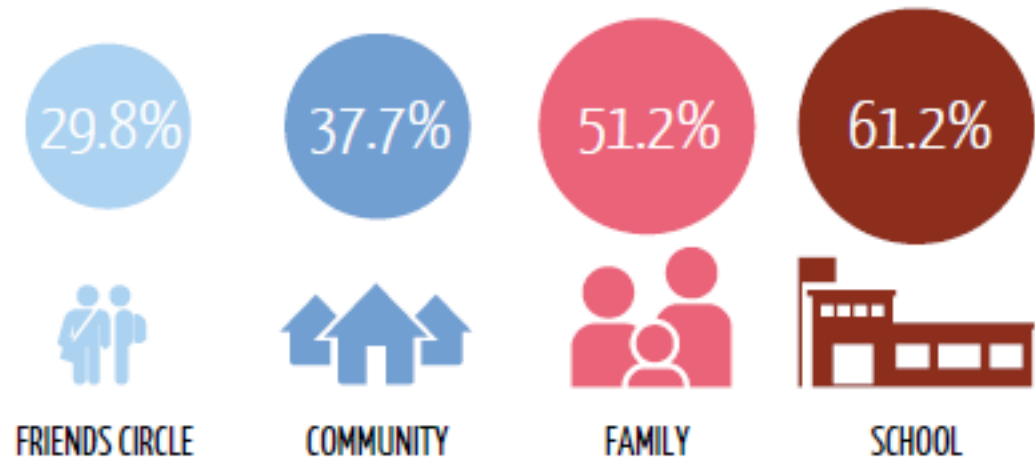


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# High prevalence of school violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression

LGBT students are **more likely to experience such violence at school** than at home or in the community.

PERCENTAGE OF LGBT STUDENTS REPORTING EVER EXPERIENCED PREJUDICE/DISCRIMINATION IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS



Source: J. Takács, 2006



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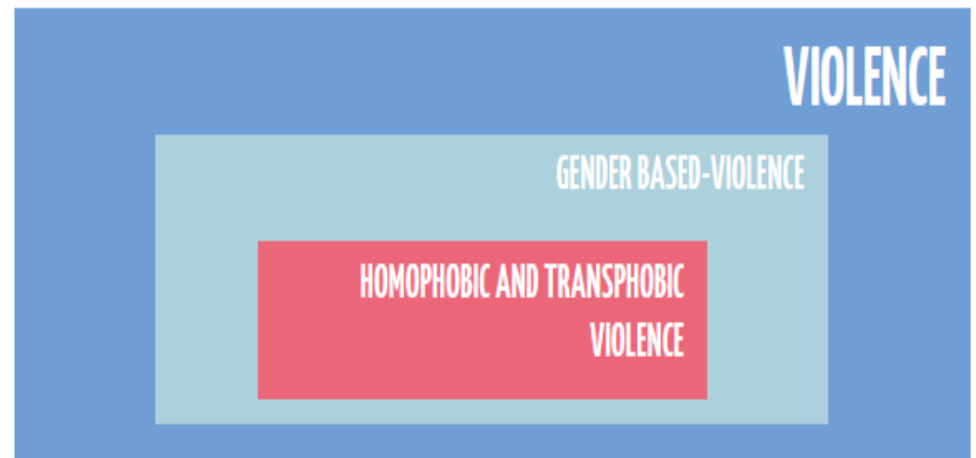
# High prevalence of school violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression

Students who are not LGBT but are **perceived not to conform to gender norms are also targets** = clearly a form gender-based violence

FIGURE 2

## VIOLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS:

HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC VIOLENCE IS A FORM OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



# Why? Negative impact on education, health and well-being

## Education

Victims more likely to:

- **feel unsafe in school**
- **miss classes**
- **drop out**
- achieve **poorer academic results** than their peers.

## Health and well-being

**Increased risk of anxiety, fear, stress, loneliness, loss of confidence, low self-esteem, self-harm, depression and suicide**, which also adversely affect learning.

LGBT students and young people are **between two and more than five times more likely to think about or attempt suicide** than their heterosexual peers.



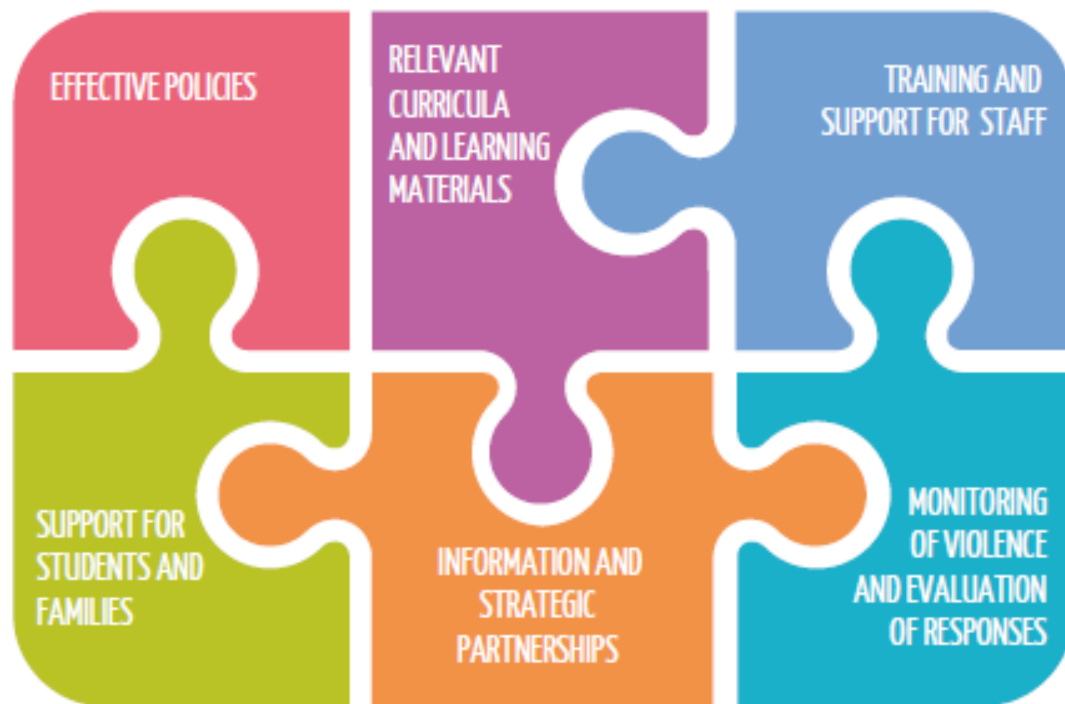
# Current national education sector responses fail to address the problem

**Few countries have education sector responses** to prevent and address SOGIE-based violence.

In countries where the education sector is trying to respond to the problem, **responses are not comprehensive** (whole-system and whole-school approach) and therefore **often ineffective**.

## VIOLENCE-FREE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:

THE ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION SECTOR RESPONSE TO HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC VIOLENCE



# Why are national responses failing to address the problem?

**Monitoring of SOGIE-based violence in schools:** few governments routinely collect data on the nature and prevalence of violence including bullying in educational settings, and only a handful of countries gather specific data on homophobic and transphobic violence. It contributes to low awareness of the problem and lack of evidence for planning effective responses.

**National education and school policies:** some countries have education sector policies that address violence including bullying, and/or discrimination. However very few refer explicitly to violence and/or discrimination based on SOGIE.

**Curricula or learning materials:** most of them are 'hostile' or 'non-inclusive'. Negative messages on LGBTI people and SOGI, or invisibility.

# Why are national responses failing to address the problem?

**Training and support for teachers and other staff:** In most countries, staff lack training and support to address SOGI and to respond to homophobic and transphobic violence. Mostly in-service training on a small scale and not mandatory.

**Support for students and families:** providers are often ill-equipped to deal with homophobic and transphobic violence

**Information and strategic partnerships:** partnerships with civil society (LGBTI organizations) and the community (parents, students, religious leaders, etc) are crucial but still limited.

**Evaluation of policies and programmes:** Only 3 countries have conducted large-scale evaluations of programmes to prevent and address homophobic and transphobic violence in schools.



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# UNESCO's activities

I was told I brought shame  
to my society and my religion.

I have endless nightmares and  
suffer depression.

Nora, 25, Lesbian, Middle East



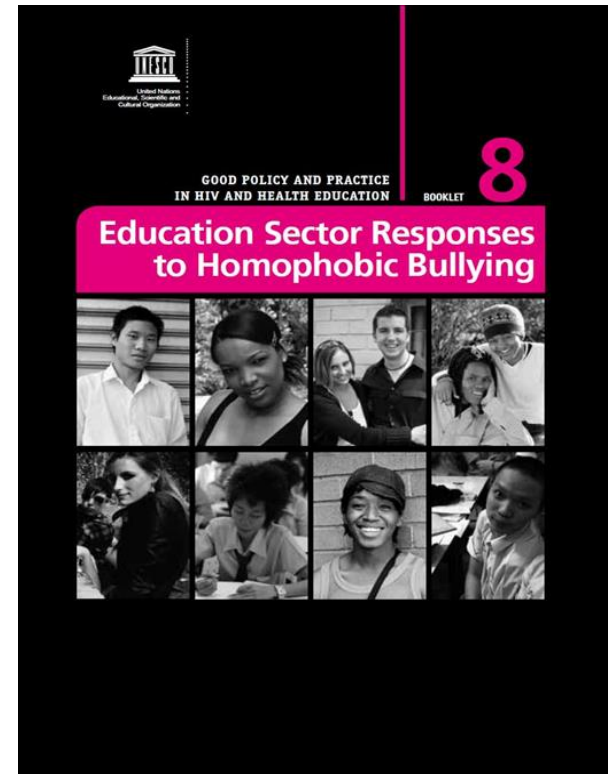
Photography by Tomas Gunnarsson



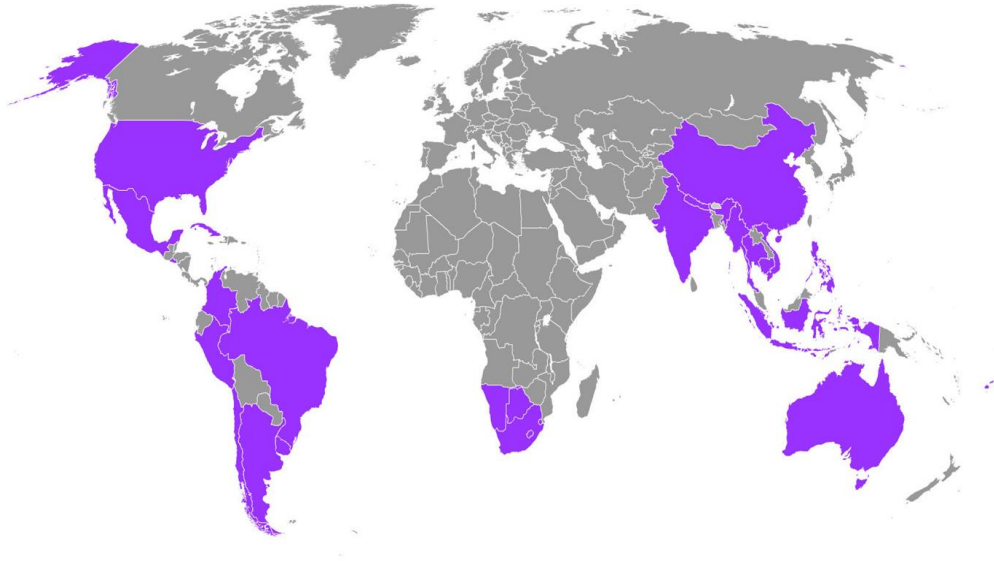
# UNESCO's activities to support education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression

In December 2011, UNESCO convened the **first-ever United Nations international consultation on homophobic bullying in educational institutions** (mostly UN, NGOs and academia).

Documentation of good policy and practice to prevent and address homophobic bullying from all over the world was compiled in UNESCO publication, launched in 2012.



# Global initiative launched in 2013: *Education and Respect for All*



- Generate **evidence** and document **best practice**
- Support **regional mobilization and leadership**
- Strengthen **international policy engagement**
- Improve national education **sector responses** in selected countries



Government of the Netherlands

# Global review and first UN report on education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression

**Global review:** data from 94 countries and territories (literature review, survey in 12 countries, 53 key informants, 2 regional consultations)

**Global report “Out In The Open:** Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression”, launched on 17 May 2016 (main report online + summary report in English and French)







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# Ministerial meeting on education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression

UNESCO HQ, Paris, 17-18 May 2016:

- **Presenting the evidence: Launch of the report**
- **Sharing best practices:** Sharing of experiences at governmental/ministerial level, and contributions from civil society
- **Political commitment: *Call for Action by Ministers*** to strengthen and scale up responses to school-related violence, including violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression







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## Other activities to address school-related violence including bullying



# UNESCO's work to prevent and address SRGBV in general

2014: **Global Partners Working Group on SRGBV** was established under the **leadership of UNGEI and UNESCO** to bring together a wide range of partners committed to ending gender-based violence in and around schools.



## Plans to expand our work on school-related violence including bullying and cyberbullying

- **New international programme**, building on past achievements and momentum, to support countries to improve how they prevent and address all forms of school-related violence and bullying (pending funding).
- January 2017: **international symposium in Seoul, Republic of Korea**. It will aim to explore actions that can be taken at country level, to address all types of school-related violence including bullying, and particularly cyber bullying, in close collaboration with other UN agencies and bodies.
- In line with the recommendations from the UN SG report on protecting children from bullying, that will be released later this year.



# THANK YOU

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/homophobic-and-transphobic-violence-education>

<https://en.unesco.org/events/international-ministerial-meeting-education-sector-responses-violence-based-sexual>

## #OutInTheOpen