RESPONDING TO HARASSMENT OF LGBT YOUTH IN SCHOOLS:
Snapshots from Three Trend-Setting Countries

Advocates for Youth
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Advocates for Youth is dedicated to creating programs and advocating for policies that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Advocates provides information, training, and strategic assistance to youth-serving organizations, policy makers, youth activists, and the media in the United States and the developing world.
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Acknowledgements

The report was written by Todd Sekuler, MPH, independent consultant and Brian Ackerman of Advocates for Youth.

The authors would like to thank all those who graciously offered their time and insight in interviews for the project, (mentioned throughout the paper in references), all those who reviewed the report and offered substantial edits and feedback, and to the design team at Advocates for Youth who formatted our report into a visually appealing product.

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### Acronyms/Glossary

1. **Harassment** – both interpersonal acts of emotional or physical violence, and structural violence that stems from hetero- and gender-normativity within school systems and curricula, and among school personnel.
2. **Heteronormative** – practices and institutions that legitimize and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and ‘natural’ within society.
3. **Homophobia and transphobia** – negative attitudes, feelings, and practices towards people who are LGBT or transgender.
4. **IGLYO** – International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organization.
5. **LGBT** – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transvestite and transsexual youth and youth questioning their sexuality.
7. **UN** – United Nations.
9. **EU** – European Union.
I. Introduction


Advocates for Youth (Advocates) organized its first European Study Tour (EST) in 1998 to explore the differences between Western European and U.S. approaches to adolescent sexual behavior and responsibility. Through this tour, Advocates sought to explore why rates of teen birth, abortion and sexually transmitted disease are consistently lower in Western Europe than in the United States. Participants visited the Netherlands, France and Germany, and attended lectures from public policy representatives, examined media campaigns, visited clinics and schools, and conducted a wide range of interviews with parents and young people in each of the three countries.

Following the tour, participants determined that the societal factors contributing to the improved reproductive and sexual health outcomes experienced by youth in these nations, include:

- A pragmatic approach to adolescent sexual health where science, not religious ideology, dictates public health policies and programs, and comprehensive sex education is valued, not feared;
- A public acceptance of adolescent sexual development as normal and healthy;
- An investment in youth as valued members of society; and
- The effective use of mass media public education campaigns.

Participants concluded that the values rights, respect and responsibility (3Rs) underlie the Dutch, French and German approaches to adolescent sexual health. Over the past decade, Advocates for Youth has come to embrace these three values as the core philosophical tenets that animate its vision:

Rights: Youth have an inalienable right to accurate and complete sexual health information, confidential reproductive and sexual health services, and a secure stake in the future.

Respect: Youth deserve respect. Valuing young people means partnering with them in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs and policies that affect their health and well-being.

Responsibility: Society has the responsibility to provide young people with the tools they need to safeguard their sexual health; and young people have the responsibility to protect themselves and their partner from too-early childbearing and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.

Building a 3Rs Advocacy Campaign for LGBT Youth

Advocates for Youth believes that the 3Rs philosophy should extend to all young people, regardless of their class, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity. That said Advocates recognizes that youth who are or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender—as well as youth questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity (LGBT)¹—are marginalized in societies around the globe. Assessment and amelioration of this marginalization, and the context in which it develops, must be a critical component of any effort to improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health.

Marginalization Contributes to Poor Health Outcomes for LGBT Youth

LGBT youth face tremendous difficulties growing up in societies where heterosexuality is presented as the only acceptable orientation, youth are not free to self-determine gender identity and expression, and homosexuality is regarded as deviant. Research in the United States suggests that homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism greatly contribute to higher rates of suicide, violence, victimization, risk behavior for HIV infection, and substance abuse among LGBT youth as compared to their heterosexual peers. For example:

¹ The term “queer” - rooted in queer theory - is important to this discussion because it emphasizes that the labels lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other gender and sexual identity labels are social and political constructions, and highlights that an individual’s sexuality and gender are not singular, static or essentially definable. Nonetheless, the labels LGBT are utilized in this paper primarily for facility, because the preponderance of data collected also employs those labels, as do many of the public policies referenced in the report.
A recent report by the Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Coalition for the Homeless estimates that between 20 and 40 percent of homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. In a nationwide survey, over 86 percent of LGBT students between the ages of 13 and 21 reported verbal harassment at school. Over 22 percent reported being physically assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation while over 14 percent reported physical attacks because of their gender expression.

The consequences of physical and verbal abuse directed at LGBT students have been shown to include truancy, dropping out of school, poor grades, and having to repeat a grade. For example, over 32 percent of LGBT youth reported missing a day of school in 2007, compared with less than five percent of a national sample of secondary school students.

LGBT youth also suffer higher rates of suicide and suicidal ideation. One study indicated that 30 percent of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender high school students between the ages of 13 and 19 reported thinking about suicide in the previous year, compared to six percent of their heterosexual peers, and youth perception of having been treated badly or discriminated against accounted for an elevated risk of self harm and suicidal ideation. In another study, 25 percent of transgender youth reported attempting suicide.

Comparable international data on the health and wellbeing of LGBT youth is hard to come by. Although certain exceptions do exist, statistics are rarely disaggregated by age, sexual orientation or gender identity. More importantly, cross-cultural comparison of the impact of marginalization on LGBT youth is difficult. However, qualitative studies and anecdotal evidence from the field indicate that homophobia and harassment of LGBT youth exists in many, if not most societies. It is also safe to conclude that this marginalization, discrimination and harassment negatively impacts the health and well being of many LGBT youth across the globe.

Developing National Intervention Models:
The Interdependence of Research, Civil Society and Government

This report explores three countries’ responses to one aspect of LGBT marginalization—school harassment of LGBT youth. In particular, the authors studied the policies and programs of the United States, Germany and Brazil in an effort to identify lessons learned that could help ameliorate school harassment of LGBT youth and create the beginnings of a 3Rs movement to end homophobia and transphobia and the negative impact they have on young people. These countries where selected as snapshots of important, trend-setting work being done in different regions of the world.

This report has, at its core, three main goals:

- To spur local, national and international advocacy around adolescent sexual and reproductive health that incorporates the rights and needs of LGBT youth;
- To advocate for improved qualitative and quantitative data collection on the health issues affecting LGBT youth; and
- To foster international exchange of intervention strategies, research methods and findings, and lessons learned concerning the health issues affecting LGBT youth.

Research indicates that there have been many efforts by schools across the globe to address the harassment of LGBT youth in schools. Many of these are well documented, but alone, these efforts often prove insufficient to interrupt cycles of marginalization. Some of the most common school interventions to date have included:

- The development of zero-tolerance school policies with regards to harassment;
- Training school staff, teachers and administrators to be more sensitive to the needs of LGBT youth and to respond to

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4 Same as above

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2 www.advocatesforyouth.org
incidents of harassment in the school and classroom;

- LGBT peer-to-peer support; and
- Incorporating LGBT-relevant material into school curricula.

While these interventions may incrementally improve the school lives of LGBT youth, the authors of this report believe that they are insufficient to create systemic, sustainable cultural change. To create such change, models of intervention must include various levels of interrelated and interdependent efforts by stakeholders in government and civil society, and must be aimed at ending both interpersonal and structural marginalization/harassment of LGBT youth.

To examine this hypothesis a bit closer, this report provides a broad snapshot of efforts to break cycles of marginalization of LGBT youth in three countries—the United States, Germany and Brazil. None of these countries presents a perfect model, and in each much work remains to be done. However, our research found that in each of the societies studied, three levels of interrelated and often interdependent interventions exist, and that there are lessons to be gleaned from such findings. The three points of intervention include:

- Research (qualitative or quantitative) and its dissemination regarding LGBT health statistics; the experiences of LGBT youth; and/or others’ attitudes towards LGBT youth,
- Civil society mobilization and advocacy in reaction to that research or in efforts to spur such research efforts and/or policy and program response to the needs of LGBT youth, and
- Governmental policies and programs in response to civil society mobilization and/or dissemination of research findings on the health and wellbeing of LBGT youth.

Ultimately, marginalization stems from interpersonal and structural ignorance and inaction. (Figure 1.1) To break a cycle of marginalization, three points of intervention exist: the dissemination of data and research regarding the extent and impact of the marginalization, civil society mobilization and advocacy by and for the marginalized population, and improved governmental policies and programs to redress the issue. (Figure 1.2).

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Defining Harassment

In this report, the term harassment refers to both interpersonal acts of emotional or physical violence, as well as structural harassment that stems from hetero- and gender-normativity within school systems and curricula, and among school personnel.

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Which point of intervention occurs first, or is in response to the other, varies by country. Further, as is made clear via brief introductions to each section, the national models discussed reflect each country’s social, political, cultural and historical context. Nonetheless, all three levels of intervention can be found in each model. Challenges faced and lessons learned from each country are summed up at the end of each section and recommendations for action by key stakeholders are included at the end of the report.
II. Country Response Models

United States: an Identity-Based Model
Relying on Research, Advocacy and Policy

The changes we need to see in our schools will only happen if we all work for them. Improvements come because of the intentional acts by state legislators who enact comprehensive, LGBT-inclusive anti-bullying policies, by administrators who institute training for school staff, by teachers who include LGBT issues in their curriculum, by students who establish student clubs dealing with LGBT issues—all of which are shown in this survey to have a significant positive impact on the experience of LGBT students.

- Kevin Jennings, Executive Director, GLSEN

Introduction to the 2007 National School Climate Survey

Introduction

Minority identities and research on minority communities have become important characteristics of the United States. Efforts to ensure the rights of LGBT people follow in the steps of the civil rights, women's rights and farm workers' rights movements, to name just a few. Indeed, identity-based movements in the United States have altered legislative, health care, education and employment systems, redefined family structures recognized by the state, and created specialized community spaces for consumption, leisure, advocacy and support. Efforts to define and protect the rights of LGBT youth have been an important component of these battles.

Simultaneously, conservative groups have not only worked to oppose these changes, but have also sought to enact new laws and practices that openly affirm heterosexual privilege. Existing legislation (such as the Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy and the Defense of Marriage Act) and current health care practices (such as the psychological diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder) reveal that LGBT experiences and identities in the United States remain under attack.

There is, however, the beginning of a cultural shift afoot. Young people ages 18 to 29 make up one of the most progressive youth generations ever to exercise its political right to vote in the United States. The majority of this generation—known as the Millennials—support LGBT rights and mobilized in record numbers to vote in the 2008 presidential election and in state elections where anti-gay initiatives were on the ballot.

Statistical Context

The neglect and abuse of LGBT youth in the United States became increasingly apparent in the 1980s via research that focused on LGBT youth health, suicide and homophobia in schools. This research was critical in efforts to acquire financial support, spur mobilization and advocacy, and improve program implementation. As the statistics from

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the introduction of this paper indicate, research continues to be a very essential component of U.S. efforts to address the needs of LGBT youth.

Most recently, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) – the leading research organization on the topic of harassment of LGBT youth in schools in the US – conducted a study with youth between the ages of 13 and 21, via an on-line survey. Results indicated that:

- 86 percent of LGBT youth experienced verbal harassment in school
- 44 percent experienced physical harassment
- 22 percent were victims of physical assault, and
- 32 percent missed classes compared with 5 percent of a national sample of students.22

Civil Society Mobilization

Concurrent to efforts to quantify the extent and impact of homophobia and school harassment on LGBT youth, civil society began to mount a campaign to help sexual minority youth feel safe at school. One of the earliest school-based LGBT youth organizations, the Gay, Straight Alliance (GSA), was established in Los Angeles in 1984 under the name Project 1023,24. Later Project 10 East was created in Cambridge Ridge and Latin School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Both organizations were founded by teachers who recognized that the needs of LGBT students were going unmet. Project 10 focused on training school personnel in suicide prevention and conflict resolution, helping youth to participate in developing school protection policies, and providing student access to information on human sexuality 25.

Estimates indicate that today there are more than 4,000 GSA’s nationwide26, although only slightly more than a third of students surveyed by GLSEN in 2007 reported having a GSA at school. Just like other school-based and school-funded organizations in the US, these groups – composed of LGBT youth and their student allies – meet on school grounds to discuss issues affecting LGBT youth. The focus of meetings may range from counseling, to social events, to organizing group-based or school-based educational events27, to leadership development. Although groups typically have teacher advisors, GSAs are student initiated and student run, demonstrating the significance of youth empowerment in the US model.

Additionally, several states have GSA Networks. These networks are privately funded, state-wide civil society organizations that provide resources for youth interested in creating and sustaining GSAs in their schools, and that often help develop GSA Networks in states where youth are not accessing services. An employee of the first GSA Network28, located in California, explained that, while each GSA is unique, there are three stages of development common to all of them:

25 http:/ /project10.org/index.htm
27 Popular events that are organized by GSAs include the Transgender Day of Remembrance, the Day of Silence, and Gay Pride. Information on these events is available here: http://www.gsanetwork.org/
28 Interview Oct. 29, 2009
Early stages focus on recruitment and social activities;

Mid-stage GSAs begin to engage in activism, organize awareness raising events around school, and push for more visibility of LGBT issues on school grounds; and

For GSAs in advanced stages, youth attend GSA Network conferences, become youth trainers in GSA Network programs and help build political campaigns.

On a local level, civil society has also developed unique programs in schools, towns and cities across the country. For example, the Hetrick-Martin Institute in New York City, a civil society organization that developed in the early 1980’s in response to growing homelessness and drop-out rates among gay and lesbian youth in NYC, joined the NYC Department of Education to establish the first and only comprehensive school with services and referrals designed for LGBT youth who experience severe abuse and violence: The Harvey Milk School. In addition, other non-governmental youth groups, counseling services, health services and support groups designed for LGBT youth exist in different areas throughout the country.

YouthResource (www.youthresource.com), a project of Advocates for Youth, offers web-based access to lists of these services in each state.

Political Activism and Governmental Policy Responses

With a history of civil rights and identity based movements, and armed with statistical data regarding the extent and impact of homophobia on LGBT youth, civil society in the United States organized against conservative opposition to LGBT rights. Advocacy, mobilization and political activism have been central components of US efforts to address the needs of LGBT youth in schools. As a result, laws, policies and government supported programs have developed to redress interpersonal and systemic LGBT harassment in schools. For example, through efforts of organizations such as the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), several court cases have established schools’ legal responsibilities to:

- Allow same-sex couples to attend the prom;
- Protect LGBT youth from harassment;
- Allow LGBT and straight youth to congregate as school-based clubs.

Civil Society Snapshot

The Safe Schools Coalition

Background: A public-private partnership that developed in 1993 out of Seattle’s Advisory Committee on Gay/Lesbian Youth and Schools. The Safe Schools Coalition supports LGBT youth by working to help schools become safe.

Specific work: The Safe Schools Coalition provides resources and training for students, schools, teachers, parents/guardians and other educators in the US and abroad. Within the state of Washington they intervene and advocate on behalf of individual students, educators and families experiencing harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and work to hold legislators, school boards and school administrators accountable for making schools safe and free of bias-based bullying and violence.

30 Although the Hetrick-Martin Institute is privately funded, the Harvey Milk School is a public high school in New York City funded by the NYC Department of Education. http://www.hmi.org/Page.aspx?pid=230
31 http://www.amplifyyourvoice.org/youthresource
37 When a group of students attempted to form a GSA in 1998 at East High School in the Salt Lake City School District, the school refused to allow it. But to avoid a violation of the federal Equal Access Act, the district said it was banning all non-curricular student groups so they could argue that the GSA was treated equally. Ultimately the school allowed the GSA to meet.
In addition, mobilization and advocacy efforts in 10 states\(^38\) and Washington D.C. have led to the enactment of laws that prohibit discrimination, harassment and/or bullying of students based on sexual orientation and gender identity. An additional four\(^39\) states have anti-discrimination laws based only on sexual orientation\(^40\). However, Massachusetts is the only state to have developed training materials for school providers of LGBT youth, and even there materials were never used due to funding problems\(^41\).

Most recently, as a result of public awareness and advocacy, the House of Representatives approved the Safe Schools Improvement Act. This bill, if also passed by the Senate, would amend the existing Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to include a federal mandate that schools must implement anti-bullying and harassment programs and adds explicit protection from violence based on sexual orientation and gender\(^42\). The US government has also prepared guides for schools to protect students from harassment and hate crimes in schools\(^43, 44\).

Additionally, sustained advocacy efforts to end federal funding of abstinence-only until marriage programs have been successful. From 1996 to 2009, conservative activists successfully worked to limit sex education in schools to only abstinence and to preclude discussion of homosexuality, among other topics. During the 12-year period, more that 1.5 billion dollars was spent in federal and state funds to support these programs. Further, these funds represented the only dedicated source of federal dollars for “sex education”. By law, abstinence-only programs had to teach young people that sex outside of marriage is likely to cause psychological and physical harm and that the only acceptable standard of human behavior is to abstain from having sex until marriage. Further, these programs limited the definition of marriage to heterosexual couples\(^42\). Research regarding the ineffectiveness of these programs along with their inability/unwillingness to address the needs of LGBT youth led to widespread, sustained mobilization and advocacy efforts against them. Government—both state and federal - responded. By 2009 more than 22 states had turned back federal funding for these abstinence-only programs and Barak Obama zeroed-out funding for the program in his first presidential budget.

Several state governments have also created initiatives to help meet the needs of LGBT youth in schools. The Washington Education Association’s Safe Schools Anti-Violence Documentation Project, for example, provides incidence data specific to LGBT youth, strategies for preventing harassment and fostering climates of respect, harassment-prevention curricula, and strategies for responding to anti-gay harassment and ensuring the safety and well-being of LGBT youth\(^45, 46, 47, 48\). The Massachusetts Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students – often considered the benchmark in state-initiated interventions – outlines methods that schools might use to make climates safer for LGB youth\(^49, 50\):

- Develop school policies protecting LGB students from harassment;
- Train school personnel in crisis and suicide intervention;
- Support student establishment of GSA’s; and
- Provide school-based counseling for family members of LGB students.

Beyond the end of abstinence-only-until marriage funding in the federal budget, the recent election of President Obama signaled another significant turning point in federal support for LGBT youth. The appointment of Kevin Jennings – the founder of the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network – to the position of Assistant Deputy Secretary of Education

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50 Evaluation of these recommendations has yielded very positive results (Goodenow, Szalacha, Wiesterheimer, 2006).
in charge of the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools indicates that the federal government may be ready to take a more active role in protecting LGBT youth from harassment in schools.

**Challenges**

Efforts to improve the life of LGBT youth in schools have progressed greatly in the United States, yet challenges remain. Funding for these efforts is still limited and school personnel are often unable or unwilling to follow through with recommendations and policies, even in states where school anti-discrimination policies exist. For example, the fourth recommendation of the Massachusetts Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students, to provide school-based counseling for family members of LGBT students – had not been actualized in any school in Massachusetts as of 2003.51

In addition, reliance on unique identity categories in the United States, and on specific “minority” experiences, poses certain problems for the construction of rights-based interventions. It is critical to remember that even the labels lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender are labels that have been constructed by society. Although these labels have been useful tools for promoting community development and advocacy, they exclude the identities and experiences of those who might use different identity categories. Even within the LGBT framework, certain communities, such as women, transgender people and people of color, are repeatedly marginalized in data collection, advocacy and support. These issues are particularly relevant to youth-based efforts given that many young people are still exploring their sexuality and gender, and therefore may not (yet or ever) identify with pre-existing categories.

Moreover, in focusing on singular identity elements, the U.S. model risks neglecting the interaction of systems of oppression on LGBT youth. Indeed, queer scholars of color have criticized the mainstream LGBT community in the United States for assuming that issues of color could simply be added on to existing support and interventions for LGBT youth.52 In addition, an educational focus on youth who identify as LGBT risks limiting the extent to which discussion of sexual diversity can reach other students.

**Lessons Learned**

While there are many challenges yet to be faced in the United States to break the cycle of marginalization for LGBT youth, lessons can be gleaned from the U.S. model of intervention.

- **Focus on specific LGBT identities has been useful for fostering community, promoting health interventions and developing a rights-based movement.** However, by focusing on singular and unique identity elements, this model risks excluding non-LGBT identified youth from education about sexual diversity, and has proven particularly troublesome for transgender youth and LGBT youth of color.

- **Extensive research projects by members of academia and civil society have provided helpful information about the health risks faced by LGBT youth in locations throughout the US.** This research has been particularly valuable for advocacy regarding public policy and health interventions. Nonetheless, only limited in-depth qualitative analysis on this topic exists, which could be helpful for considering the limitations of current intervention strategies and for creating new ones.

- **Civil society became the major source of support and proponent of change, relying on research, private donations as well as financial assistance from state and local governments to create resources for advocacy and support networks.** Dependence on local resources, however, has made it difficult for research, advocacy

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and support to reach youth in politically conservative regions of the US. However, civil society and government working in LGBT-friendly areas have engaged in research projects and created intervention strategies that have been replicated throughout the US and in regions around the world.

- **Legal battles and progressive federal and state policies have helped to advance rights for LGBT youth in schools**, despite the general division in public attitudes regarding LGBT issues in the US.

- **School efforts, especially those regarding the widespread implementation of GSAs by and for LGBT youth and their allies, have helped to empower LGBT youth and to build their advocacy and leadership skills.** The incorporation of these support networks directly into the school system and the empowerment of LGBT youth themselves, is invaluable as it facilitates future structural interventions and future leaders for LGBT movements in the US and globally.
Germany: A Unity Based Model
Fostering Integration and Accord

A major strength of German efforts to address LGBT harassment in schools is that many programs try to incorporate other important concepts such as migration, integration and classism.

- Ammo Recla, Project Manager, ABQueer e.V.

Introduction

Germany was home to one of the earliest known homosexual rights’ movements at the turn of the 20th century. Following the destruction of that movement during the Nazi regime, post-war Germany has been reluctant to establish concepts of identity in public policy and debate. In fact, genocide based on difference during the Holocaust made it largely taboo to inquire about identity among the general population.

Following World War II, an overall focus on unity rather than differences in East German society (German Democratic Republic) – and to a lesser extent in West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany) – helped to eliminate certain prejudiced policies, such as the anti-sodomy laws, but simultaneously restricted government and civil society’s ability to consider the specific experiences of LGBT youth.

Although a new LGBT movement had gained strength in the west during the 70’s and 80’s, a general focus on unity was further reinforced following German reunification in 1990. Consequently, concrete policies addressing discrimination have only recently entered national debate, largely due to pressures from LGBT and migrant communities, as well as policies of the European Union (EU).

Research: Limited but Telling

The first studies on gay and lesbian youth in Germany began in the 1990s and were qualitative, employing interviews with small samples of youth. Even today quantitative data is limited, but what does exist indicates that LGBT youth in Germany suffer from discrimination at the hands of their peers.

53 Interview Sept 29, 2009
54 Led by the physician Magnus Hirschfeld, researchers from the Scientific Humanitarian Committee and the Institute for Sex Research sought to eliminate § 175, the German anti-sodomy law, arguing that a biological “third sex” made homosexuality and gender non-conformity scientific realities that could not be repressed.
56 Homosexuality was relatively accepted in the GDR, although homosexual magazines and organizations were prohibited there until 1988. The anti-sodomy law was abolished first in East Germany, in 1968, whereas in west Germany it was amended to allow homosexual sex between adults over 21 in 1969, and then it was abolished altogether with the fall of the wall in 1989.
58 From 1955 to 1973, following a period known as the “economic miracle”, West Germany invited Turkish workers (Gastarbeiter) into the country to fill a demand for employees. Turkish people represent the largest migrant community in Germany and, beginning in the 1980’s, became politically active demanding increased government recognition.
A study from 2002 found that 61 percent of German youth between the ages of 12 and 17 had a negative opinion of gays and lesbians, compared with 35 percent in 199862;

In 2005, a national on-line study found that nearly 40 percent of LGBT youth reported experiencing some form of discrimination63;

One 1999 study in Berlin found that 60 percent of LGBT youth between the ages of 15 and 27 thought about committing suicide, and 18 percent had made a suicide attempt64;

When asked why so few research projects exist on this topic in Germany, people cited a general lack of funding along with the fear of ‘outing’ oneself within academia. However, it also became clear that there is limited resistance to LGBT activism in Germany compared with the United States, and as such, the need for focused research to spur mobilization is less critical there.

Civil Society Spearheads Germany’s Response to LGBT Harassment in Schools

While there is relatively little resistance to LGBT activism in Germany, homophobia, transphobia and heteronormativity are still very much present in German society, and school harassment of LGBT youth still occurs throughout the country. As in the United States, civil society has taken on the responsibility of spearheading action to protect LGBT students. Lambda, an umbrella organization for most groups working on LGBT youth issues in Germany, has become the major resource on school harassment. The first Lambda chapter developed in 1990 in former East Germany where homophobia was less present than in the West, but where organizing around homosexuality was forbidden. Supported entirely with government funds, Lambda is a resource for local LGBT youth seeking counseling, political activism, and/or a place for socializing. On occasion, Lambda has also initiated independent research projects65. There are currently five Lambda chapters spread throughout the 16 German Bundesländer (states).

To address homophobia and transphobia in schools, Lambda and other organizations offer Aufklärungsprojekte - 90-minute workshops for students about sexuality and gender. The idea for these projects originated in Sweden in the 1970s and arrived in West Berlin in 198166. One group leader estimated that there are now 30-40 groups offering Aufklärungsprojekte throughout Germany. Because peer education is strongly valued in these interventions, young people often serve as workshop leaders. These youth leaders are encouraged to respond to student questions with personal anecdotes. The “biographical quality” of the workshops is seen as both an advantage and a weakness of the intervention. Personal stories allow students to readily connect to the topic, but the diversity of stories presented is limited by the lack of diversity of the youth leaders. Further, while some project leaders place the experiences of LGBT youth as the primary point of discussion for these workshops, others focus on exploring sexuality more broadly, integrating information about sexual diversity only as it becomes relevant.

Civil society has also taken responsibility for training educators on issues of sexual orientation. In 1999 Lambda Nord in Lübeck published the first collection of German teaching materials focused on sexual orientation and founded NaSowas, an organization charged with training teachers throughout the country on LGBT issues. However, representatives from Schwule Lehrer, a political and social organization for gay teachers in certain cities throughout Germany, noted that very few teachers take advantage of these trainings. In fact, even for those who have gone through training, few teachers feel equipped to address issues of homophobia and transphobia in schools.

As discussed earlier, the emphasis of many civil society efforts on behalf of LGBT youth is to unify and seek accord. One noteworthy example of such an effort is a teaching tool developed by MILES – the center for gay and lesbian migrants – and supported by a number of organizations in Berlin. The tool encourages discussion of stereotypes regarding gay and lesbians as well as Turkish people. Students are presented with a photo of five women in which two are lesbian – one with a Turkish name and one with a German name (image 1). The students are asked to think about how they decide who the two lesbian women are, and then are asked their opinions about the billboard as an anti-discrimination advertisement exercise. This resource and others like it are available in a teacher’s aid published by the city of Berlin. Importantly, these materials are directed at educators who teach biology, German, English, ethics, history, Latin and psychology – a wide range of departments.

### Government Partners with Civil Society

As noted earlier, broad public discussion about discrimination remained relatively latent in Germany until the 1990s. Recently, however, opposition to LGBT activism has been limited and as such, civil society’s efforts to work towards LGBT safety are primarily funded by the Bundesländer or national government. In particular, two political forces pushed Germany to more fully examine discrimination and identity beginning in the late 1980s and continuing through the turn of the century. The first force demanding change included the newly empowered LGBT and migrant civil society organizations, which advocated for their rights in society and helped to elect the Social Democrats and Green party to control of the federal government in 1998.

The second constituted pressure from the European Union, including the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999 and the Anti-Discrimination law of 2000. Together these forces promoted laws that acknowledged identity and began to redress identity-based discrimination. For example:

- In 2000, citizenship and nationality reform granted people who had migrated and were living or born in Germany the right to become citizens;
- In 2001, The Lebenspartnerschaftsgesetz, Germany’s Same Sex Partnerships Act, was passed and later revised with limited resistance, to grant same-sex couples nearly the same legal rights as heterosexual couples; and
- The Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (General Equal Treatment Act) was passed in 2005, preventing discrimination based on factors including sexual orientation.

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67 This is a project of the Lesben- und Schwulenverbandes Berlin-Brandenburg (Gay and Lesbian Union of Berlin-Brandenburg).
Aside from these legislative changes, the German government has worked to address discrimination of LGBT youth by setting educational standards. According to the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BZgA – the Federal Center for Health Education), courses on the body and sexuality are expected to address homosexuality, and teachers are trained to discuss issues of sexuality in creative ways\textsuperscript{69, 70}. Sex education is presented to students either directly by teachers, or by non-governmental organizations trained in the content and pedagogy of sex education. One such organization is Pro Familia\textsuperscript{71}. Another, is the Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe (German AIDS Association). Importantly, the BZgA encourages education about sex and gender to begin in early education\textsuperscript{72}, and promotes positive, personal and political reflection about sexuality in general as well as within a multicultural context\textsuperscript{73}.

While the BZgA sets expectations nationally, course requirements are defined by the Kulturministerium (Ministry of Culture) in each of the country’s 16 Bundesländer. The Kulturministerien also provide funding for most of the organizations working on LGBT issues. In 2002, the Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft\textsuperscript{74} (German Education Union) collected data from the Kulturministerium from each Bundesland regarding the attention given to gay and lesbian youth in schools, as well as the statewide incorporation of homosexuality into sex education and other courses, such as history, foreign languages, religion, ethics and biology. Every state that responded identified a local policy requiring discussion of sexuality in schools, and certain states explicitly require that homosexuality be addressed in coursework. In addition, certain regional governments have created special departments that specifically address LGBT issues, such as the Fachbereich für gleichgeschlechtliche Lebensweisen in Berlin.

In summary, the German model of intervention is one in which through remarkable cooperation, governmental and civil society organizations - often in collaboration with the European Union - work together to promote the health and well being of LGBT youth.

**Challenges**

Even as Germany has created progressive policies, programs and educational models to assist LGBT youth, some challenges remain. There continues to be a deficit of research regarding the experiences of LGBT youth in schools. Further, discussion with German educators and civil society indicates that not all schools are in compliance with sex education standards and recommendations. Concurrently, while teacher training is available, very few educators avail themselves of the opportunity. In addition, some of those interviewed expressed concern that many of the educational tools designed to promote understanding of sexuality in general and sexual orientation in particular have never been evaluated\textsuperscript{75}.

Similar to the United States, Germany continues to struggle in its efforts to adequately address the needs of trans youth and LGBT youth of color. In particular, because most of the youth Aufklärungsprojekte leaders are white and identify as gay, bisexual or lesbian, the biographical approach encouraged by the program has at times unintentionally excluded issues of trans youth and LGBT youth of color.

Finally, there is the challenge of the changing make-up of German society and its reaction to diversity. Several scholars have expressed concern that migrant youth are often seen by society and the government as “homophobic”. As such, some argue that blame for homophobia is exclusively placed on migrant communities rather than on the broader German society and structural factors. Further, prejudice becomes directed at these migrant communities and the needs of non-migrant LGBT youth.

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\textsuperscript{70} One recommended activity within the framework of “Aggression, Loss of Desire, Pornography and Deviance”, suggests that teachers watch 15-minute segments of ‘hard pornography’, including pornography with two men, to explore bodily reactions and sexual desire.

\textsuperscript{71} Pro Familia provides 170 clinics throughout Germany that focus on contraception, pregnancy, infertility, sexuality and relationships, abortion and sexual violence, in addition to free contraception and special services for adolescents, migrants, older people and people with handicaps.


Lessons Learned

While challenges remain to improving the German model of intervention, there are lessons to glean.

- **Close cooperation between national and international governing bodies and civil society** has helped to spearhead progressive policies and programs in support of LGBT youth within schools. However, cooperation runs the risk of mistakenly defining prejudice as 'outside' the government.

- **International treaties can be used to advocate for improvements in national policy and practice.** EU treaties were influential in promoting the development of minimum standard of protection for LGBT people under German law.

- **Government financing of civil society has enabled the latter to turn policy into practice, offering educational content, teacher training and resource materials** to promote widespread implementation of sex education. However, in times of political change, the lack of diversified funding may render civil society financially vulnerable.

- **Government standards regarding the content of sex education has led to certain state and school policies that meet these standards.** However, many schools still fail to adopt government standards and recommendations due to insufficient monitoring of schools and education curricula.

- **Sex education in Germany is widespread, embraces sexuality as normal and healthy** and promotes positive discussion of sexual diversity starting at a very young age. This may have something to do with the fact that LGBT youth report less harassment from peers in Germany than in many other countries.

- **Germany’s strategy does not rely on identity labels nor limit which educators can incorporate sex education topics into their classroom discussion.** As such, Germany’s intervention model is intended for all youth, not only for those who use LGBT labels, and offers youth multiple messengers with reinforcing messages regarding sexuality and sexual development.
Brazil: Making Change from the Top
A Bold Response from Da Silva’s Administration

I feel that the public policies and/or initiatives here in Brazil are still in the beginning stages, but I recognize the important role of the Lula in developing these policies. To the contrary, Brazilian society remains uncomfortable with the topic... in many places, this is a “prohibited topic.”

Brazilian Youth - 22 years of age

Introduction

Until recently, policymakers have most often considered the Brazilian family to be white, heterosexual, and Christian. Consequently, structural barriers inhibited the enjoyment of full citizenship by those Brazilians who did not fit this profile. These structural barriers were rooted in a widespread aversion to officially identifying social strata along identity-based lines. Instead, Brazilian society adopted a post-World War II European model of unity politics (such as the German model described above) in which the acknowledgement of disparities based on identities was viewed as more dangerous than beneficial to social cohesion.

However, over the past several decades and particularly since the start of the 21st century, political and economic reform has begun to address the needs of excluded segments of Brazilian society. The human rights framework has helped inform the advocacy work of LGBT civil society and has given the executive branch of government legitimacy for bold action on behalf of LGBT people despite vocal opposition from powerful political and religious institutions.

The Brazilian response to the widespread discrimination and harassment of LGBT people in Brazil and the harassment of LGBT youth in schools is part of this larger social and political shift towards the meaningful participation of all members of Brazilian society. Young people are viewed as uniquely crucial in the Brazilian response to generalized homophobia and transphobia because investments in changed attitudes and education about diversity could make significant social and political transformations within a generation.

Research: A Window into Diverse Generational Experiences

As in the case of the United States, research has been a crucial component in the development of the Brazilian national response to homophobia and discrimination. For decades, the violence and discrimination faced by LGBT people in Brazil went largely undocumented. More recently, however, civil society has begun to collect and disseminate data regarding their marginalization.

According to George Lima, a specialist in the Brazil without Homophobia program, there is no national data on homophobic bullying in schools. What does exist is documentation of the extent of anti-gay sentiment within the school environment and a subtle change in LGBT experiences over the past number of decades. For example:

- A 2008 study by the Foundation Institute for Economic Research found that 87 percent of people in the school community - including students, teachers, parents, and staff - harbor homophobic and transphobic sentiments;
- A 2004 UNESCO Brazil study found that 27 percent of all students harbor homophobic sentiments and that this
Surveys conducted at LGBT pride parades provide some of the most consistent data collected over the past decade. These surveys have included questions about school harassment. When the responses are disaggregated by age, reports of harassment in school decrease with age. It is unclear whether this can be attributed to fewer acts of violence in decades past and/or greater awareness and therefore reporting in more recent years. Nonetheless, the “older generation” of LGBT people in Brazil experienced school differently than their younger counterparts. This contradiction of experiences provides a potential entry point for LGBT youth to educate the broader LGBT advocacy community about the present-day challenges they face in the classroom. Researchers noted in the report on São Paulo’s pride parade that these findings on the high percentage of young people experiencing discrimination and aggression in the classroom “indicate the need for more in depth studies to describe those [in school] dynamics, revealing if we are dealing with “bullying” experiences (jokes, name-calling, etc.) or more violent types of exclusion.”

83 According to several interviewees, this study had a very significant impact on the response to homophobia and general exclusion in schools, however, those interviewed also noted that many challenge the report’s methodology, claiming that it does not accurately convey the level of harassment experienced in schools. Researchers noted in the report on São Paulo’s pride parade that these findings on the high percentage of young people experiencing discrimination and aggression in the classroom “indicate the need for more in depth studies to describe those [in school] dynamics, revealing if we are dealing with “bullying” experiences (jokes, name-calling, etc.) or more violent types of exclusion.”

Civil Society: Sustained Advocacy and Mobilization leads to Government Action and Partnership

The contrasts in Brazilian views on sexual diversity are no secret to LGBT civil society or to policy makers. Brazil’s modern civil rights movement for LGBT people began in the very late 1970s and developed significant traction with the end of the military dictatorship in 1985. Further, the HIV epidemic, which disproportionately affected gay men, acted as another catalyst to mobilize the movement. In the late 1980s, as the new national constitution was being written, civil society advocated strongly to include protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation to the document. Although the battle for constitutional inclusion was lost at the national level, state-level inclusion of protection against discrimination proved invaluable in identifying the very real existence of societal homophobia and helped prompt public discussion of the problem and, importantly, action among Brazilian policy makers. Moreover, the 2004 UNESCO Brazil study had a very significant impact on the perception of marginalization of LGBT students in Brazilian schools by policy makers and the public, though some remain critical of the study’s methodology.

Throughout the 1990s, LGBT rights groups across the country worked to effect change, many times focusing on documenting what the state and general media would not. The Grupo Gay de Bahia, Brazil’s oldest rights organization for LGBT people, is well known for documenting homophobic violence from bullying to murders. This documentation proved invaluable in identifying the very real existence of societal homophobia and helped prompt public discussion of the problem and, importantly, action among Brazilian policy makers. Moreover, the 2004 UNESCO Brazil study had a very significant impact on the perception of marginalization of LGBT students in Brazilian schools by policy makers and the public, though some remain critical of the study’s methodology.

The largest network of LGBT organizations in Latin America, the Brazilian Association of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transvestites, and Transsexuals (ABGLT) led the effort to develop what is known as the Mixed Parliamentary Front for Free Sexual Expression in the national legislature. While their efforts were successful in increasing membership to about 38 percent of the total national Congress, the national Congress has remained reluctant to expend political capital on LGBT rights. One particular example of this inaction is a piece of legislation introduced in 1995 to criminalize discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, and race that failed to gain significant support.


83 According to several interviewees, this study had a very significant impact on the response to homophobia and general exclusion in schools, however, those interviewed also noted that many challenge the report’s methodology, claiming that it does not accurately convey the level of harassment experienced in schools.

84 As a caveat, the authors caution that the data from these reports offer something similar to what this report claims to offer—a snapshot—of the experiences of LGBT people (certainly limited to those LGBT people who choose to participate in LGBT pride festivities), rather than a comprehensive study of the LGBT population. However, the sample populations were predominantly young people under the age of 29 (the youngest being 14 years); nonetheless, the “older generation” of LGBT people in Brazil experienced school differently than their younger counterparts. This contradiction of experiences provides a potential entry point for LGBT youth to educate the broader LGBT advocacy community about the present-day challenges they face in the classroom. Researchers noted in the report on São Paulo’s pride parade that these findings on the high percentage of young people experiencing discrimination and aggression in the classroom “indicate the need for more in depth studies to describe those [in school] dynamics, revealing if we are dealing with “bullying” experiences (jokes, name-calling, etc.) or more violent types of exclusion.”


86 Responding to Harassment of LGBT Youth in Schools: Snapshots from Three Trend-Setting Countries. 16 www.advocatesforyouth.org


sexual orientation and gender identity. This legislation has remained in the national Congress with no movement. At the same time, the group has successfully defeated attempts to codify discrimination.91

Specifically regarding the experience of LGBT youth in schools, the Brazilian civil society response has been impressive, but at times paternalistic. Many civil society organizations support youth and work to combat harassment against LGBT young people in the classroom in a multitude of ways (see section on the “Schools without Homophobia” project). Some organizations train educators on how best to teach topics of sexual diversity and maintain safe spaces in their classroom, while others also assist LGBT youth to organize locally in conjunction with other general advocacy and mobilization activities. Others are conducting research on harassment against LGBT students in schools while others are advocating for improved curricula in classrooms.

The leadership of adult-led organizations has been the driving force which pushed the government to take action and partner with civil society to improve the structures which create the experience that LBGT youth face in schools. At the same time, however, few of these organizations have prioritized empowering young people to lead their own movement. In some ways, the different experiences across generations of LGBT people noted in the surveys from Brazil's pride parades also reflects what Deco Ribeiro, founder of the E-Jovem (E-Youth) network found to be a frustrating part of advocating for the needs of LGBT youth within the broader LGBT community. “We found in our practical experience here that in many LGBT groups, youth couldn't speak, and when they did speak they were not listened to,” Ribeiro noted. “Even in LGBT groups where people are used to being oppressed, they didn't listen to the young people, and that is the main reason we started a youth organization.”

E-Jovem exemplifies the success that can be achieved when models of youth empowerment are “borrowed” and adapted across national borders to address homophobia in schools. E-Jovem has evolved into a national network with over 2,000 members and regional directors—almost all volunteers. According to Ribeiro, E-Joven translated the Homophobia Free Education document of the International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth and Student Organization (IGLYO) to promote educational standard regarding a Brazil free from homophobia in schools. The organization then adapted the Gay-Straight Alliance model from the LGBT youth movement in the United States to form local and school chapters where young people can mobilize collectively.

The result of these efforts is E-Jovem’s “Friendly Schools Program” - a campaign in which young people are trained to make their schools safer for LGBT youth and to evaluate their school's efforts based on a six point scale of “LGBT friendliness”. Schools that meet the criteria, such as providing support for LGBT students and including LGBT materials in the school's library are awarded a “Friendly School” certificate. (2009 was the first year of the program, so initial reports on success and failure of various schools from around the country were still forthcoming at the time of this report’s publication.)

In December 2009, E-Jovem publicly announced that its founder, Deco Ribeiro, would be taking a position as the principal of the first school exclusively for LGBT students in Brazil. The school, set to open in March 2010, will be supported jointly through the state government of São Paulo and the Ministry of Culture. Its curriculum will focus on education that helps students to understand LGBT identity through cultural studies, including film, dance, and even drag performances. The creation of the specialized school and Ribeiro's appointment as its principal is illustrative of civil society’s partnership with the Brazilian government to improve the lives of LGBT youth.

Da Silva’s Bold and Visionary Response

Of the three models of intervention presented in this report, Brazil’s may be most driven by bold political will. Brazil’s model is dominated by the Schools without Homophobia project, an initiative of the Ministry of Education’s work on the “Brasil Sem Homofobia” (Brazil without Homophobia) program, which was initiated in 2004 by President Lula da Silva’s government. In addition, the government has advocated at the international level for the recognition of sexual orientation and gender identity as human rights (Annex 1). On the other hand, at the time of this report, the Brazilian legislature has not moved to include rights for LGBT people in federal legislation.

According to one interviewee in the Brazilian government, President Lula da Silva faced significant pressure not to take on the fight for LGBT human rights due to political risk, but he did so regardless, and his approval ratings remained high.

The program itself has evolved considerably from an unfunded initiative to a funded department, now known as the General Coordination of the Promotion of LGBT Rights, which “consolidates LGBT policy in a state policy.” During the first several years of the program, conferences were sponsored throughout the country to bring the conversation about homophobia into the Brazilian mainstream and coordinate the dialogue between state and civil society actors. Several years of local, state, and regional conferences culminated in 2008 at the first national conference on LGBT rights, in which President Lula da Silva participated. At this conference, participants voted on terminology and decided that the population would be identified as the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite, and transsexual (LGBT) community. More expansive terminology such as “queer” and “sexual minority” is not generally used in the Brazilian LGBT rights vernacular.

The main result of the 2008 Conference was the production of the National Plan on LGBT Citizenship, published in May 2009, which includes 51 policy directives and 180 actions across roughly 18 government agencies. Perhaps the most tangible action to date has been the allowance of youth to choose the first name by which they will be addressed in the classroom regardless of whether or not they have undergone gender reassignment surgery or are actively taking hormones.

Across the Ministries, the Brazil without Homophobia program has taken different shapes. In the Ministry of Education, a working group was formed that includes representatives from the Ministry’s departments and affiliated agencies in conjunction with experts and activists from the LGBT and HIV/AIDS movements. This working group developed the implementation plan for the Ministry of Education which includes the Schools without Homophobia project, which is being implemented by a group of four civil society organizations.

1 Hold five regional meetings with state leaders and organizers of social movements on the theme of combating homophobia in schools;

2 Conduct qualitative research in ten Brazilian state capitals about homophobia in the school environment with students and professionals of basic education; and

3 Develop a training kit for students and professionals of basic education about homophobia.

92 Interview with Francisco George Lima de Beserra, International Relations Specialist in the Brazil Without Homophobia Program, January 2009.
93 Interview, Deco Ribeiro, September 2009
94 Interview, Deco Ribeiro, September 2009
96 The organizations that have official formal relationships with the working group include Associação Brasileira de Gays, Lésbicas, Bissexuais, Travestis e Transsexuais – ABGLT, Pathfinder do Brasil, Grupo Aretê – de Cidadania LGBT, Grupo Somos – Comunicação, Saúde e Sexualidade, Grupo das Homossexuais Tildes do Amapá – GHATA, Fórum LGBT Potiguar, Lésbicas Gaúchas – LEGAU, Associação de Travestis e Transexuais – ASTRA, Grupo Esperança – Transgêneros
97 Associação Brasileira de Gays, Lésbicas, Bissexuais, Travestis e Transsexuais – ABGLT (handling advocacy work), Pathfinder do Brasil (handling managerial work), Ecos (producing the training kit), Red Prolatina (conducting the qualitative research in capital cities).
To achieve these goals, the Ministry has prioritized a number of steps: transform curricula to include sexual and gender diversity topics; train and empower educators to teach the new curricula and maintain safe spaces for LGBT students in classrooms; and commission research to provide the crucial data that is currently lacking.

In 2006, to transform the curriculum, the Ministry issued *Caderno SECAD 4: Gender and Sexual Diversity in School: Recognizing Differences and Overcoming Prejudices*. The *Cadernos* of the Ministry of Education's Secretary of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity outline and justify official policies of the Ministry. The document is clear on the Ministry’s position that the goal is to “situate questions related to gender, sexual orientation, and sexuality in the terrain of ethics and human rights, seen as part of an emancipating perspective.”

*Caderno SECAD 4* also justifies the Ministry’s direction citing related legislation and international agreements. It notes that the legitimacy with which Brazil’s executive government is acting regarding the adjustment of policies and implementation of the schools without homophobia program has a sound legal basis—citing predominantly *international* law as the source of that legitimacy, in the absence of laws passed by the Brazilian congress mandating such a program. (For an expanded explanation of the government’s use of international law to justify domestic action, see Annex 1)

In addition, the Ministry has taken the initiative to unite teachers via a national organization focused on the elimination of homophobia in the school environment. This network offers teachers a resource for support and education. Meanwhile, the Ministry is emphasizing the need for education and empowerment training for teachers to learn how to teach sexual and gender diversity and ensure a safe school environment for LGBT students. Almost all of this training is provided to teachers via civil society organizations.

Further, recognizing the need for national data on LGBT harassment in the classroom, the Ministry of Education commissioned the following two studies:

1. **Pesquisa Nacional de Diversidade na Escola (National Investigation on Diversity in School)** — a research project about discrimination in the school environment, focused on discrimination based on ethnic/racial, generational, territorial, special needs, socio-economic, and sexual orientation (already published); and

2. **Kaleidoscope Investigation on Studies About Violence in Schools in Brazil (1980-2009)** — a research project focused on the patterns and sources of violence in the school environment over the past three decades (inclusive of, but not exclusive to, violence initiated and perpetuated on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity).

The full data from the Kaleidoscope research project should be released in March of 2010 to inform efforts moving forward, as the Schools without Homophobia program has an initial implementation plan running through 2012.

Schools without Homophobia and Brazil without Homophobia have been developed from the start as partnerships between civil society and the government. As noted in *Caderno SECAD 4*, social movements for LGBT rights have prompted the
government to act. As such, the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Schools without Homophobia program is a collaborative endeavor between the Brazilian government and organizations and communities.

In terms of implementation, civil society organizations are the leading arm of the government. At the state and local level, they are training teachers on how to both implement sexual and gender diversity education and maintain a safe environment for LGBT youth in their classrooms and schools. Other organizations, such as E-Jovem, are pushing the boundary further by empowering students to hold schools accountable for implementing the Schools without Homophobia program.

Young people have participated in the development of both the Brazil without Homophobia and Schools without Homophobia initiatives by participating in the numerous local, regional, and national consultations that have been held to discuss how to create a Brazil (and a Brazilian school system) without homophobia. In addition, young people have participated as the focus of research projects on LGBT youth and prejudice, which will inform the development of long term metrics of success for the Schools without Homophobia program.

**Challenges**

Brazil should be commended for its vision of a country without homophobia. While the initiative is a partnership between government and civil society, President da Silva has demonstrated bold leadership in promoting the initiative. Nonetheless, challenges remain.

“Brazil is a very big country with a lot of differences. A large portion of the implementation of Brazil without Homophobia [including Schools without Homophobia] is done by non-governmental organizations in the LGBT movement. [But] the movement doesn’t have the same representation in all parts of the country. Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, and Sao Paulo are states where there is a strong political force, but the same does not occur everywhere.”

- Marcos Nascimento of Instituto Promundo

So while the State has collaborated with civil society, the reach of these organizations is not yet geographically adequate to meet the promise of the program in all areas of the country. Moreover, direct funding for the program did not become available until the end of 2009, leaving some skepticism as to the government’s commitment. [Those interviewed within the government claim that the bureaucratic structure of the program limited direct expenditures for programming, but now that the program has become a full department, funding will be more accessible for implementation. In addition, according to one estimate, the national government disbursed approximately $1.4 million Reais (approximately $785,000 USD) to organizations and local agencies for the implementation of programs through the 18 government agencies that were primarily responsible for its implementation in 2009 despite not having a clear funding stream.]

In addition as Rogerio Diniz Junqueira argues in “Education policies for sexual diversity: school as a place of rights,” the Brazilian government can include discussion and mention of homosexuals in the fundamental curricula to be taught across Brazilian schools, but if the curriculum does not also actively work to upend the hegemony of heterosexuality as what is “normal,” then the discussion of sexual diversity remains as marginalized in the curriculum as LGBT students do in the classroom.

Moreover, the movement against harassment of LGBT youth in schools faces considerable opposition from Brazil’s conservative movement, predominantly led by the evangelical Christian community and this is reflected in the level of commitment to ending harassment of LGBT people across the government. One interviewer noted that “we are hostage to

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101 The Schools Without Homophobia concept development was lead by a team including the Ministry of Education, Pathfinder of Brazil, ECOS, and Reprolatina, while others served on the working group as experts and activists in anti-homophobia work.

102 The organizations that have official formal relationships with the working group include Associação Brasileira de Gays, Lésbicas, Bissexuais, Travestis e Transsexuais – ABGLT, Grupo Arco-Iris de Cidadania LGBT, Grupo Somos – Comunicação, Saúde e Sexualidade, Grupo das Homossexuais Tildes do Amapá – GHATA, Fórum LGBT Potiguar, Lésbicas Gaúchas – LEGAU, Associação de Travestis e Transsexuais – ASTR, Grupo Esperança – Transgêneros

103 Written interview, Marcos Nascimento, Instituto Promundo, Brazil (November 2009).

104 Written interview, George Lima, Coordenador Geral da Promoção dos Direitos das pessoas LGBT. December 2009.

the religious groups and the Congress—you can see a big gap in the commitment between the Ministries of Health and Education.”

In addition, as was evident in the United States and Germany, effectively engaging and training teachers to redress homophobia in the classroom can be challenging. Educators in Brazil often face opposition both in the classroom and from their own families. One teacher implementing sexual diversity curricula in Brazil reflected on her experience by noting that her students use degrading terms for LGBT peers frequently and that she “didn’t have the strength to continue the discussion” because she “didn’t feel safe to argue with them...” She went on to say that “many of the things that they were saying are things that people hear all the time, [homophobia] is considered very common sense”. This same challenge is true for students as well, as the director of Pathfinder do Brasil notes, “What we want to do more than involving the [young people] alone is to go beyond the walls of the school and work with parents—we believe it is very important to do this because we can work towards making the school a safe environment but currently the home is not.”

Finally, data regarding the extent of homophobia and LGBT harassment in school as well as the impact of the Schools without Homophobia project is essential for the initiative’s success.

**Lessons Learned**

The Brazilian model is a bold hybrid spearheaded by President da Silva and his administration in partnership with civil society. The Brazilian model clearly recognizes the interrelationship of government, civil society and research as interdependent strategies to improve the lives of LGBT youth. Brazil has gleaned lessons from other countries and has begun to implement some of the most promising approaches. Lessons learned from the Brazilian model include:

- **Research and documentation was crucial to identifying and raising awareness of the challenges faced by LGBT youth.**
- **Truly comprehensive studies required the support of the national government.**
- **The involvement of youth-led and youth-driven organizations was crucial to ensuring students’ meaningful youth participation in the design, implementation, and monitoring of Brazil’s bold initiatives.**
- **International law provided some legal basis for executive action** taken by the Lula da Silva presidency in favor of LGBT youth (as noted in the Caderno SECAD 4).
- **Political support at the highest levels helped begin to shift societal response to homophobia.**
- **Effective collaboration between the national government, state government, and civil society leaders produced tangible investments at the local level that have potential for national impact, such as the school for LGBT students set to open in Sao Paulo state in March 2010.**
- **Leadership at the national level on the specific issue of LGBT citizenship and human rights bolstered efforts to bring LGBT youth rights to bear in traditionally non-LGBT spaces.** This was the case at the 2009 National Conference on Children’s and Teenager’s rights, in which the government supported a meeting of over 30 LGBT youth to produce directives based on their needs to influence the broader conference outcomes.

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106 Interview with Carlos Laudari, Director, Pathfinder do Brasil. January 2010


109 Interview with Carlos Laudari, Director, Pathfinder do Brasil, January 2010
III. Conclusion and Recommendations

This report identified and explored three national models for breaking the cycle of marginalization of LGBT youth in schools. These three models reflect each country’s national history and socio-cultural context, but lessons taken from each model may be valuable for advocates around the world.

Unfortunately, there is no “silver-bullet” solution to addressing this critical public health issue, and more research must be done to evaluate each of the intervention methods discussed in this report so that successful practices may be identified. Nonetheless, the models explored in this report each relied on three levels of intervention to begin addressing the harassment of LGBT youth in schools. These three levels of intervention—data collection and dissemination, civil society mobilization/advocacy and governmental policy response—provide a road map to begin building national intervention models.

In the United States, where opposition to LGBT activism is perhaps just as strong as the support, the emphasis of efforts remains identity-based. The rich history of identity-based movements in the U.S. (civil, women’s, etc) has provided the LGBT movement with lessons and perhaps readied the waters for social change. Research has driven the movement forward by documenting the impact of marginalization on LGBT youth. Concurrently, civil society has used the data to drive mobilization and advocacy efforts on behalf of and in partnership with LGBT youth. More recently government has begun to respond. States have passed anti-discrimination policies and anti-bullying legislation awaits Senate approval. That these policies include language to protect youth based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity shows promise. While there is still much to be done to break the cycle of marginalization of LGBT youth in schools in the US, the US model shows promise and is aimed at both interpersonal and structural harassment.

In Germany, where resistance to LGBT activism is relatively less strong, efforts focus more broadly on increasing youth knowledge and comfort with sexuality in general and on an overall interest in German unity. This model is defined by remarkable cooperation between government and civil society. Government standards promote broad, comprehensive sex education in schools. Civil society is funded by government to assist with this education and to provide teacher training. That sex education is integrated into classes such as English, biology, German, literature, etc. is remarkable and normalizing. While there are still challenges, Germany’s model is one that offers many lessons to LGBT youth advocates willing to learn.

In Brazil, where LGBT activism has more recently achieved significant progress in conjunction with efforts to engage a broad spectrum of marginalized communities, efforts rely on a hybrid of pre-existing methods. That is, they mirror a combination of both the unity model of the German response and the identity-based model of the United States. Nonetheless, Brazil’s model is unique and perhaps more planned than those of the United States or Germany. Most notable is that the model is driven by the bold political will of Brazil’s president. Social resistance to these changes remains strong, and the reliance of the government on civil society for implementation of this initiative presents a challenge for areas of the country where LGBT civil society is less developed. But the key component of the Brazilian model—the political will to take action is culture shifting. Contributing components include widespread teacher trainings, in-school support from civil society, youth-focused school evaluations, and a hybrid of state- and privately funded efforts to create schools without homophobia.

Analyses of each of these models render important lessons for advocates:

- **Resources are available for countries that are building LGBT movements, as well as for those with movements that are already long established.** An international exchange of intervention and research methods, and lessons learned by other movements, should be a critical component of advocacy strategies.

- **In countries with progressive sexual policies, as in countries with few resources, research is a critical component of advocacy** for LGBT youth and for the valuable and necessary exchange of information across regional and national borders.

- **International treaties can be used in advocacy efforts and to justify governmental action in the absence of national or state legislation.** These treaties provide valuable language on human rights and can help make the case against LGBT harassment and discrimination.
Advocacy regarding youth sexuality must take into consideration the **impact of campaigns on all youth**. It is not enough to assume that advocacy designed to protect gay males is the same as it is for lesbian females, nor is it the same for transgender youth or for LGBT youth of color.

When faced with obstacles or opposition at the national level, **locate local supporters and initiate individual or local research projects and intervention efforts**. Once projects are in place, locate the areas and communities that are most in need of assistance, and develop strategies of support so that they can initiate their own data collection and intervention efforts.

Intervention strategies should **not depend on a single source of support**. Government support of civil society is of definitive value, but it also fosters dependence and can leave agencies and their interventions insecure during periods of government transition.

A rights-based model cannot be based on progressive policies alone. A critical and often ignored component of advocacy must include **monitoring and evaluating policies** to ensure that they are being implemented and are effective.

Advocates must be wary of reinforcing policies that exclude other social groups, and of the unintentional stigmatizing impact of advocacy campaigns on other communities. Effectively addressing harassment of LGBT youth means **working in collaboration with other organizations**, particularly those oriented towards other marginalized groups.

It is critical that advocates develop campaigns that **empower LGBT youth** so that they are aware of their rights and are able to fight for them themselves.

Advocacy designed to protect LGBT youth from harassment must **incorporate education and empowerment regarding sexual pleasure, sexual exploration and sexual diversity** designed for all youth, not just for heterosexual youth but also not just for LGBT youth.

To be successful, advocacy and subsequent policy and programmatic responses must redress **both interpersonal as well as systematic and structural harassment LGBT youth face in school**.
Advocates for Youth’s Recommendations:

Youth
1. Locate supportive peers and organize with them to promote diversity in your school.
2. Educate yourself about other forms of harassment and reach out to youth who experience them.
3. Reach out to teachers and administrators by letting them know how they can best support you.
4. If comprehensive, sex positive sexual education is not commonplace in your school, advocate for adoption of this approach in the curriculum.
5. Know your rights and advocate for them in your school, and with local and national governments.
6. If policies exist in your school and government that are meant to ensure your rights, ask how these policies are monitored and evaluated.

Teachers
1. Educate yourself. Reach out to LGBT youth in your school and ask what you can do to help.
2. If no research exists, work with youth to initiate research, or locate researchers in your area.
3. Incorporate discussion of sexual diversity into coursework. If you encounter or fear retribution, seek support from local, national or international networks.
4. Find ways to promote the education of colleagues about sexual diversity and issues of harassment.
5. Intervene immediately in bullying or harassment.
6. Push for school and government policy changes that promote rights, respect and responsibility of all youth, including LGBT youth. If policies exist demand that they be monitored and evaluated.

Administrators
1. Educate yourself. Reach out to LGBT youth in your school and ask what you can do to help.
2. Be sure all faculty and staff are educated on issues of sexual diversity as well as harassment and suicide prevention.
3. Provide teachers with in-service training to effectively intervene in bullying and harassment.
4. Ensure that research is being done to assess prejudice in your school. If financial resources are a problem, reach out to external organizations or interested students and faculty members.
5. Set standards of rights, respect and responsibility in your school with regards to education about sexual and reproductive health.
6. Ensure that resources exist for youth who experience harassment in your school.
7. Engage district and with government representatives to promote policies of rights, respect and responsibility.

Researchers
1. Reach out to LGBT youth and incorporate them in your research as much as possible.
2. Collaborate with researchers in other regions to ensure data is comparable across regions.
3. Initiate qualitative research to understand the dynamic of harassment in schools.
4. Based on the qualitative research, initiate quantitative research that measures harassment based on multiple forms of oppression.
5. Initiate evaluative research to be sure that existing policies and programs are effective.
6. Share research with civil society and policy makers and researchers in other regions.

Civil Society
1. Reach out to policy makers, educators, LGBT youth and youth who experience other forms of discrimination and incorporate them into your programming and advocacy efforts.
2. Educate yourself about programs that exist in other regions, and use resources and lessons learned to shape your own programs and advocacy efforts.
3. Organize efforts that support youth who experience harassment, but also efforts that address systematic forms of discrimination.
4. Do not rely only on private or public funding sources. Much can be done with very little funding, but it is also important to acquire both sources of funding.
5. Initiate research on harassment and monitor and evaluate all program and policy interventions.
6. Advocate for local, national and international policy.

Policy Makers
1. Partner with a diverse group of youth, educators and civil society to identify and actualize necessary policies.
2. Ensure adequate funding supports political initiatives to respond to the harassment of LGBT youth in schools.
3. Commission research to inform policy making that effectively combats harassment of LGBT youth, and that evaluates and monitors existing policies.
4. Advocate for local, national and international policies that promote comprehensive, sex-positive sex education in schools and that are based on rights, respect and responsibility of youth with regards to their reproductive and sexual health.
5. Look to other national models and international organizations and treaties for ideas and warnings when defining policies.
6. Be sure that policies do not incorporate LGBT experiences while excluding other groups.
Annex 1: Brazilian International Legal Rationale for Action against Homophobia and Transphobia

Caderno SECAD 4 highlights that “it is important to note that the rights of women [in Brazil] represent a high degree of consolidation, supported in international instruments of human rights and in ordinary Brazilian legislation, strengthened by the constitution of 1988. The same is not true for the rights of gays, lesbians, transsexuals, transgender people, or bisexuals. Religious fundamentalism and the rejection of homosexuality by some religions (as these groups exert political pressure with international governments and organizations) have been the principal barriers to international regulation of the rights of women and LGBT.”

- Declaration on Protection and Promotion of Human Rights—Brazil introduced this resolution in 2003 to the UN Economic and Social Council’s Commission on Human Rights to recognize diversity of sexual orientation as a human right. The resolution failed, but should it have passed, it would have been the first resolution to protect against human rights violations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

- Meeting of the High Authorities on Human Rights of MERCOSUR and Associated Countries (2006). Countries at the meeting approved the addition of sexual orientation and gender identity to the “rights agenda the region’s countries.” It is noted that this agreement helps to facilitate the discussion of LGBT rights as human rights in the UN context since international agreement now exists.

- Statement on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity, (2008) read in the United Nations General Assembly. Brazil continued to fight for the introduction of LGBT rights at the UN level, and in December 2008 successfully co-signed a statement, introduced by the French delegation to the United Nations with over sixty delegations supporting as signatories that established sexual orientation and gender identity expression and behavior as human rights, and denounced human rights violations committed on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Resolution AG/RES.2435 (XXXVII-O/08) titled “Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity” passed by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States. The Brazilian delegation to the Organization of American States introduced this resolution which condemns violations of human rights on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and urges states to protect defenders of people whose human rights are violated on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and requests a budget line item to be procured within the OAS to monitor the implementation of this resolution within member states.

- Mexico City Ministerial Declaration: Preventing through Education (2008), the result of the 1st Meeting of the Ministers of Health and Education to Stop HIV and STIs in Latin America and the Caribbean. Brazil, along with all sovereign states in the Latin American and Caribbean region signed on to the document which commits Ministers to implementing:

“comprehensive sexuality education [which] will have a broad perspective that is based on human rights and respects the values of a democratic, pluralistic society where families and communities thrive. It will include ethical, biological, emotional, social, cultural, and gender aspects as well as topics related to the diversity of sexual orientations and identities, in accordance with the legal framework of each country, to promote respect for differences reject any form of discrimination, and foster responsible and informed decision-making among youth regarding their sexual debut.”

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Advocates for Youth

is dedicated to creating programs and advocating for policies that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Advocates provides information, training, and strategic assistance to youth-serving organizations, policy makers, youth activists, and the media in the United States and the developing world.