

EI/PSI LGBT Forum - Proposals for session:

Unions for rights, diversity and justice. Working with and for LGBTI workers: lessons learned, new alliances and activism

GICG Geneva, October 30, 2017

National Education Association (NEA) : The Road for Trans Rights

The road for embracing the rights of education unionists and students who identify as Trans has been an interesting journey for the National Education Association of the United States. It includes turns, access ramps and detours influenced by advocacy within the union and in society, in the courts and in the classrooms. This presentation will address how our union has made progress, and our very long road ahead to ensure that we fully embrace a positive education and union environment for *all* individuals. Importantly, this discussion will address intersectionality of gender identity with race, economics, immigration status and other factors in this road for Trans rights and justice for all.

Presenter: Eric Brown, Executive Committee, National Education Association – USA

NEA resources and information are on <http://educationvotes.nea.org/neaedjustice/social-justice-issues/lgbtq/>

Japan Teachers Union, JTU: From JTU LGBTI members to JTU as a whole

A solid foundation has been laid for JTU's nation-wide activity. Some JTU members voluntarily established the 'Sexual Minority Teachers' Network (STN)' in 2001, which aims to create a space for exchange and solidarity among LGBTI educators and other professionals. The Network organises learning opportunities and exchange programs, and currently has almost 80 members. JTU annually holds a National Conference on Education Research (NCER) where JTU members share and discuss their reports on teaching practices and challenges in their schools. Since 1999 STN's members have submitted reports addressing educator 'independence and equality regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity' during breakout sessions at the NCER as a form of advocacy, but the Network's activities are yet not fully integrated into JTU policies and programmes. A number of provincial unions and branches have activities to cooperate with LGBTI educators, and hold learning opportunities together, through which new members join JTU's affiliated unions.

This topic is generally addressed during JTU's Assemblies, which are held every 4 years. Starting in 2014, there have been negotiations with the Ministry of Education to enable the distribution of relevant learning materials to JTU members, from 2017. An increasing number of reports on LGBTI issues are discussed during the NCER. The challenges faced by LGBTI educators have not been shared very much in JTU, including work with the STN, though human rights and reasonable accommodation of LGBTI children are gradually being recognized. Nationally, JTU needs to not only address the challenges faced by students, but also those faced by educators and parents, through STN and with other stakeholders.

Presenter: Fumiyo Fukuzawa, Deputy Director (Education and Culture Bureau), JTU Japan

German Education Union (GEW) supporting LGBTIQ teachers and fighting for acceptance of sexual diversity in education

Working-groups of teachers and educators fighting for LGBTIQ rights in the German Education Union (GEW) were initiated 40 years ago. After the liberalization of the penal code in 1969/72, gay teachers started to organize in GEW in 1978, despite social exclusion and bans from the profession, and lesbian teachers in 1993. Today GEW has LGBTI caucuses advising their boards at the federal level and in many of the 16 German federal states.

In 2012, the second edition of the legal advice booklet for LGBT teachers at school was published. The main approach in this work is that LGBTI visibility is crucial for acceptance, but since coming out to colleagues, students or parents is always a personal risk, it must be a personal decision whether to come out or not, which should be supported by the groups and the union.

After right wing groups, inspired by the success of French "*manif pour tous*" against same sex marriage, started campaigns with petitions and rallies against newly adopted goals of acceptance and visibility of sexual diversity in education in some German states, GEW published a brochure with arguments for teachers and parents, and our caucus members join the counter-rallies with LGBTI civil society groups. Together with [ver.di](#) (the general services union) and [IG BAU](#) (the construction and gardening union) LGBT caucuses, we work on a cooperation with the German trade union council (DGB), which needs to follow up on its 2010 resolution and to foster further collaboration between its affiliated trade unions on LGBTI issues.

Presenters: Tina Breidenich, Janina Gläser, Martin Helbig and Bodo Bosh

GEW web links:

[Arbeitsgruppe Lesben, Schwule, Bisexuelle, Trans* und Inter*](#) (AG LSBTI der GEW)

GEW LGBTI caucus page with links to download German publications

[Für eine Pädagogik der Vielfalt](#). Argumente gegen ultrakonservative, neu-rechte und christlich-fundamentalistische Behauptungen. GEW, April 2017

Brochure in German, web version, including link to download shop order for print version.