EVALUATING THE UNDERSTANDING OF VIETNAMESE YOUTH ABOUT LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT)

RATIONALE

Through the research, we hope to evaluate the knowledge and understanding of Vietnamese youth on LGBT, including the knowledge about and representation of LGBT people in existing legal documents, so as to improve the comprehensiveness of the revised Youth Law and future legal documents.

RESEARCH PROJECT

“UNESCO – Youth: Evidence for Change”, which has been founded and sponsored by UNESCO Office in Vietnam and UNESCO in Bangkok: Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education with technical assistance of Pennsylvania University (U.S.), aims to collect and analyze data about multifaceted challenges that Vietnamese youth are facing in the modern society.

The research titled “Evaluating the understanding of Vietnamese youth about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)”, as part of the Project, aims to support the campaign “Promoting the representation of LGBT community in legal documents to ensure equality and justice in Vietnamese youth carrying out rights and duties” launched by the Youth Advisory Group.
1. **Research subject**

Vietnamese youth at the age of 16–30 as defined in the 2005 Youth Law currently living, studying and working in Vietnam.

2. **Qualitative method**

- In-depth interview in 3 localities: Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City and Buon Me Thuot (Dak Lak)
- Number of Participants: 21
- Duration: May 19, 2019 to June 10, 2019

3. **Quantitative method**

- Online survey (designed by Survey Monkey) published on Facebook
- Number of Participants: 875
  - Completing the survey: 480
  - Not completing the survey: 395
- Duration: 21 days
  (from February 07, 2019 to February 28, 2019)
“The majority of participants can distinguish the common acronyms of sexual orientation and identity. However, there is a gap in understanding them.”

99.4% answered correctly the definition of homosexual people;
60.8% answered correctly the definition of transgender people;
59.4% answered correctly the definition of bisexual people;

> 50%
of the participants think that the average proportion of homosexual people in the population of a country is at 3-5% and above.

49%
think that biological sex of an individual is determined by one of 4 factors.

1/2
state that biological sex of an individual is determined by the reproductive organ.

“Information related to the LGBT community is largely learnt through channels which are easily accessible but hard to control like social media, online forums, website or movies. However, this information is rarely mentioned in extra-curricular lessons or textbooks”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>458</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online newspaper</td>
<td>393</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printed newspaper</td>
<td>161</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website, online forum</td>
<td>340</td>
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<td>Friends/colleagues</td>
<td>399</td>
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<td>Media, movies</td>
<td>358</td>
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<td>Extra-curricular training</td>
<td>116</td>
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<td>Textbooks, books</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td>Others</td>
<td>13</td>
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SEARCH FINDINGS

Current education curriculum, especially education on gender and LGBT, do not meet youth demand and need.

48% agrees and strongly agrees
“There is real and fake homosexuality”

40% strongly disagrees
“Same-sex relations increases HIV/AIDS infection rates”

90% agrees wholly or partly
“Children are too young and lack knowledge to identify whether they are a LGBT person”

77% agrees
“LGBT knowledge should be learnt since childhood”

89% agrees
“Comprehensive sex education, including LGBT knowledge, should be an integral part of the education curriculum”

27% regularly to very regularly
“see or witness others make fun of/disparage publicly/directly the LGBT community or a LGBT individual”

51% regularly to very regularly
“hear others using derogatory words to refer to another individual who is or is alleged to be LGBT”

17% take action
“argue/discuss with others on LGBT behaviors”

10% regularly to very regularly
“feel unconformable when seeing a same-sex couple holding hands or expressing their feelings in public”

11% regularly to very regularly
“feel unconformable when seeing a male wearing colorful clothes or a female with short hairstyle wearing male’s clothes”

47% have no information or do not know
Whether legal documents mention LGBT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Document</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour Law 2012</td>
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<td>Education Law 2009</td>
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<td>Criminal Code 2015</td>
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<td>Civil Code 2015</td>
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<td>Law on Marriage and Family 2014</td>
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<td>Constitution 2013</td>
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0 = No recognition
1 = No specific definition, referring only to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
2 = Recognizing basic definition
3 = Recognizing comprehensive definition
4 = No information
FOR VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT

Short-term recommendations

• Develop a uniform definition of “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender” or LGBT to be used consistently between ministries and sectors with the technical assistance of international and UN agencies in Vietnam.
• Develop Decrees and guiding documents for recently revised Laws including a definition of LGBT and SOGIE to serve as a legal basis for protecting the legitimate rights and interests of LGBT people.
• Recognize LGBT people in legal documents including in Youth Law.
• Use the International technical guidance on sexuality education developed by UN agencies as a long-term reference for raising the awareness of the public and youth in particular, as well as eliminating prejudiced knowledge on LGBT community.
• Approve the draft Law on Transgender to help the transgender people in Vietnam benefit from fundamental human rights.
• Approve the clause on recognizing same-sex marriage equally in the Law on Marriage and Family to protect the legitimate interest of same-sex couples.
• Hold policy dialogues with the participation of LGBT people to identify their difficulties so as to develop comprehensive policies.

Long-term recommendations

• Include statistics of LGBT people, including LGBT youth, in the National Population and Housing Census as a primary indicator to estimate the LGBT population in Vietnam.
• Develop a comprehensive sex education in the official education system from preschool to university level as an important program for child and youth development with technical assistance from the UN and international organizations specialized in gender equality.
• Develop a Law on nondiscrimination with clauses on banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and identity to protect the legitimate rights and interests of LGBT people as well as to create equal opportunities for them in cultural, political and social access.
• Consider including clauses on banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and identity in existing legal documents to provide a legal corridor for protecting LGBT people against direct or indirect discrimination.
RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

• Continue to hold conferences and policy dialogues with the participation of LGBT people to bring their voice to Vietnamese policy-makers and Government.
• Assist the Vietnamese Government in conducting LGBT-related research over a long period of time and case study in various fields to develop a complete picture of LGBT situation in Vietnam. The assistance provided to the Government includes improving the understanding of government agencies and researchers about SOGIE.
• Advocate the policy-makers in Vietnam to promote LGBT rights based on existing evidence.
• Provide technical support for the LGBT community and LGBT-related organizations to voice their difficulties to Vietnamese policy-makers and Government due to policy gap.

FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY IN VIETNAM

• Develop a strong connection with the public through participating in forums, websites and other activities to make use of the support (human or financial resources) from stakeholders.
• Develop a LGBT community with solidarity between sexual minorities.
• Actively seek out opportunities for strengthening leadership skills and holding dialogue with policy-makers.
• Organize events or meetings with policy-makers to put forward existing difficulties and advocate for related policies.
• Develop a friendly and safe environment for the LGBT to share and learn from others.
• Organize campaigns to raise public awareness about LGBT with suitable content for different target groups.

Disclosure line:
The works done here were completed by youth researchers, trained through the UNESCO Youth as Researcher Program. The works produced follow qualified research approaches, however it should be noted that these youth researchers are not trained in robust research methodology and their work should be read with that in mind. This does not discount the rigorous and important work they have done. Copyright © 2019 by UNESCO Ha Noi Office, the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at the National University of Ireland, Galway and the UNESCO Chair in Community, Leadership, and Youth Development at the Pennsylvania State University. All rights reserved. This curricula and related tools/assessments or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the authors. Copying colleagues for noting and information